

My Son Selim's Wedding



This is a photo of my elder son Selim's wedding. Selim married Verjel Abuaf at the Neve-Shalom Synagogue, which is the biggest synagogue in Istanbul. [Today most Sephardic weddings, bar-mitzvahs, bat-mitzvahs, brit-millas and vijolas are celebrated in this synagogue. At the cultural center below the synagogue, the receptions take place.]

Selim was born in 1943, and Seyfi in 1945. We had been living in Talimhane, Taksim since 1942, and raised our children there. We moved to Siracevizler, Sisli in 1958 [a neighborhood on the European side].

We used to speak French and Spanish, with my late wife. Of course we also spoke Turkish. We usually spoke Turkish with the children. In this way, the children became acquainted with these two languages when they were small.

We were able to give a good education to our children. Selim went to the primary school at Yeni Kolej. [Literally New College, it is a private Turkish school that has a reputation of being very easy to finish] He then finished secondary high school in Saint Michel [French Catholic school], and the high school in Saint Benoit [French Catholic school]. [In the Turkish education system, primary school was 5 years, then came 3 years of secondary school and then another 3 years of high school or lycee] He started the Faculty of Law of Istanbul University, and graduated from there. He is working as a lawyer. He married Verjel Abuaf, whom I love very much, and regard like a daughter, at the Neve Salom Synagogue, in 1971. They had two sons, from their marriage. In 1973, my first grandchild, Eytan was born. He was a very good student. He finished Robert College [20]. He then finished Business Administration at the University of Istanbul. He started his working life. He married Sibel Almelek, in May, 2004. They moved to Izmir [third biggest city in Turkey] and settled down there, because of their businesses. My youngest grandchild, named Koray (Selim's second son) is 17 years old, and still studying at the Jewish High School in Ulus.

In the photo you can also see the Chief Rabbi of the time, Rav David Asseo, who is putting the rings on Selim and Verjel's fingers.

I did volunteer work for the community in the years of 1958 and 1959. I first worked at Matan Baseter Birkurholim. [27] Later on I did different jobs at the Associations of Protecting the Orphans, and Protecting the Poor, and the Kizba. [28]

When I was the Vice-President at Matan Baseter, we would determine the poor families, would do research about the ones who had applied, then we would take food and the financial aid to them. There was everything in the packages, required for a festival, at the time of the Pesah Festivals.

We would help the children of the families, who were in need, at the Association of Protecting the Orphans, in Ortakoy. Rone Somak was the president, and I was the Vice-President. Some of the families would give their Friday, Festival or family dinners here. We would meet the needs of the children, with the money we earned from these organizations. The office of the chief rabbi, would support us, whenever there was a need. Our expenses were too much. As you know, we would take care of the children in Burgaz, in the colony, in summer time [this is a place where the children are taken care of all through out the summer, we can call it a summer camp].

I was the president of this institution in Burgazada when my son got married and that is why the Chief Rabbi had honored us with his presence at the wedding ceremony.

In the photo you can also see my daughter-in-law, Verjel's father, Lazar abuaf on the very left, his wife Fani Abuaf beside him and Verjel herself, the bride beside her mother.

I don't remember the name of the rabbi performing the ceremony.