

Bar-Mitzvah Ceremony Of Older Son Saul



The bar-mitzvah ceremony of older son Saul

The other people in the photograph: from left to right, my mother, my older sister Regina Tabah, my father Saul Modiano, my son Saul, myself, my younger son Alberto, my wife and my sister-in-law.

I have three children. One of them, unfortunately, passed in 1958 - eight days after he was born. He passed when a neglectful nurse was carrying her from the hospital to the salon, where he was going to be circumcised. Since he was only eight days old and was not yet circumcised before he passed, we could not give him a name. He was buried without one. One of the rabbis in the Italian Jewish community took our baby with him to an Italian Cemetery, performed his circumcision, and buried him there.

All my three children were born in Istanbul. Saul was born on the 15th of December, 1954. My son, who passed was born in 1956. My younger son, Alberto, was born on the 20th of November, 1960. Ester and I usually speak to the children in Turkish though both know Spanish, French and English.

My kids do not work in the insurance business. Nor do they want to learn anything about the business. My biggest desire was to be able to work with my children, and to transfer my business over to them someday. This did not happen though. Every one of them has different jobs today.

My wife was the one who usually took care of the children. I would go to work early in the morning, and come home late. On weekends, however, I would take care of them, and we would usually go out together as a family. I believe that I have shown them the compassion a father should be able to show his children. I always tried helping them with their studies. Even though my wife had to drop out of school at seventh grade, she managed to continue educating herself at home, and augment her knowledge.

None of my children went to a Jewish school here, but they did go to the synagogue regularly when they were teenagers in order to attend Hebrew classes. They became members of the Arkadaslik Yurdu Dernegi [Friendship Center and Association] when they were teenagers, and participated in many activities there. I raised my children according to Jewish traditions. My children do not regularly go to the synagogue nowadays, but they do try and go on Yom Kippur or on some Saturday mornings - if they have the time.

The bar-mitzvah ceremonies for both my children were held at the Italian Synagogue on a Saturday. I remember them putting on the tefilim on a Thursday. On Saturday evening of the same week, we gave a cocktail party for friends and family; we cut the Bar-mitzvah cake...

My parents were both religious people. They raised us so that we learned how to observe and behave according to important traditions. My kids are interested in their religion today as a result of experiencing my parents' and my religious behavior.

Both my children live in Istanbul today. My elder son, Saul, studied at the Sisli Ondokuzmayis Elementary School, at the Saint Benoit Lysee for middle school and at the Beyoglu Commerce Lysee for high school. He graduated from there at 18. He served in the military between 1979-80. He worked in a variety of businesses including insurance, tourism and textile businesses. Last year, he retired (officially) from his work as the Import-Export Manager of a firm that sells baby products, but he is still considered the Import-Export Manager of the firm today.

My younger son, Alberto, also went to the Sisli Ondokuzmayis Elementary School. He later began attending the private Hurriyet Lysee, and graduated from there. He served his military term in Van [a city on the Eastern side of Turkey] between 1982-83. Before he served, he was managing a cosmetics and perfume store in Buyukada with his mom. After he completed his military service, he began working as an accountant in a cargo business. He later took a job as the Accounting Manager of an international firm. He had been an accountant for seventeen years when my wife got into that terrible accident. This was when his occupation as an Accounting Manager came to an end. During the period in which he was unemployed, he got interested in photography. He was able to become a successful professional at a job he once viewed as a hobby. He is now working as a photographer for the Chief Rabbi's Office and the Neve Salom Foundation. He has become quite successful. Whenever there is a ceremony or a party during which the services of a photographer will be needed, my son is there. He is also a researcher of photography.