

The Wedding Picture Of Nissim Kohen's Parents, Mihael Kohen And Sarina Kohen



This is a photo of the wedding of my parents, Mihael Kohen and Sarina Kohen (nee Haravon). It was taken in Sofia in 1922. The newly-weds are in the middle. On the left is my mother's sister Victoria or Vita and on the right is my father's niece Mindusha Yontov. Above her is Mois Haravon who is my mother's brother. The little child is the future partisan Vitka Levi.

My parents met in an interesting way. During World War I or probably at the end of the war, my uncle Azarya Kohen was injured and was sent to the family of my mother in Kyustendil to be looked after. There he decided that my mother would be the perfect for wife for his brother, my father. After the war ended and my father returned from captivity, his brother Azarya told him that he had found a very nice girl from Kyustendil for him. My father retorted that he did not need a wife and Azarya should marry her if he liked her so much. But his brother was already married. There were other attempts to bring them together at that time. But in the end, they met by accident when my mother came from Kyustendil to visit her brother Buko Haravon. Later it turned out that she was the girl that uncle Azarya was talking about to my father. They liked each other and got married. Their wedding was in 1922 in Sofia. In my family my mother did all the housework and she helped my father who had a warehouse for coal near our house.

My mother had graduated primary school and started studying in a vocational school which she did not finish due to lack of money. She kept her notebooks from the vocational school for many years. They contained sewing designs, which can be drawn only by a professional designer nowadays. My mother had a hard life. She had two more boys after me, but they died. My first brother Leon was born in 1927 but he died of diphtheria in 1933. In 1929 my second brother Albert was born. He died in 1934.

My father Mihael Kohen tried many things in life. He spent eight years in captivity during World War I. He was held captive by the French army near Salonika [Greece] as a soldier from the Bulgarian army. After that he worked as a tinsman. He took part in the construction of the roof of the first building of the Sofia University. He traded with second-hand products. Later, together with an uncle of my mother's Chelebi Haravon, and with the active help of my uncle Mois Haravon, he managed to set up a haberdashery on Lomska Street [present-day George Washington Street, near the central Sofia synagogue], but those were the years of the great crisis in 1929-1932 and he was forced to close it down. Then he started work as a street vendor and walked around the neighborhood with a tray selling elastic cords, tights and haberdashery. Then he made a warehouse selling coal near our house. At that time people could not afford to buy a lot of coal and came to buy 5-10 kilos. In this way my father was able to support us and helped the people in the neighborhood. That continued until the passing of the anti-Jewish laws when he was forbidden to work.

My mother's sister Victoria Eshkenazi, married in Sofia. Her husband's name is Gershon Eshkenazi and he was born in Ruse. She was a housewife and her husband worked in the enamel factory [factory producing dishes for Sofia]. They moved to Israel and she died there. She did not have any children.

Mois Haravon was a merchant. He went to Sofia when he was young. In 1930 he married his wife Roza Katalan, who is from Sofia. They left for Israel during the big aliyah.