

## Romano Wedding Ceremony



The other people in the photograph: Rafael Pinto and my father and mother. Pinto is reading some stuff, my father was an usher then. My father Yuda Romano, was born in Edirne in 1905. My father first started to work as a secretary in the Edirne Jewish community. Later on he became a rabbi. But you cannot call that being a rabbi exactly. He worked as a philosophy teacher in Alliance Israélite Universelle in Edirne which was a foreign school. He was teaching philosophy classes in French. He raised a lot of students. The students he raised constantly came to visit him. He had another job also. My father started commerce, but he continued with the community work. He was serving as Grand Rabbi also. He worked as a cantor too. But he could not open the Sefer Torah as a cantor. Why: We managed a store together. I opened the store on Saturdays. And since he was my business partner, he said: "We sin on Saturdays, I cannot open the Sefer Torah in the synagogue on Saturday". But he raised important rabbis. He had more knowledge than rabbis. My father was excessively serious, very interested in philosophy, he was a good philosopher. My father was a true philosopher, they still remember his philosophy in Edirne. I inherited his principles too. He never thought negatively in his lifetime. He always thought positively. Let's think of good, may it be good, he used to say. When sometimes we would say something like it will be bad tomorrow, don't even utter it, he would say. Always think positive, he used to say. He never thought negatively and he did not let us either. My mother Ines Romano was born in Edirne. I do not remember the birthdate. She was a very humble woman. My mother was slender and graceful and her hair remained black till she died. Every mother views her child differently. But she spoiled me excessively, even my spouse complains about this. My mother and father never let me want for anything in my life. There is one synagogue in Edirne that is now demolished. In the old times, there was one synagogue in each neighborhood. They were about 40-50. For example ladies had a separate synagogue. This was like a one-room prayerhouse. They would gather and do their prayers. They had a rabbi, a gardener. There were synagogues according to professions. There even was a city club. It had no name, I even was on the board of directors. All social activities took place there. I worked on the board of that city club too. I am not a founder. This club was for Jews. There would be balls, garden parties once a month. For example, we would gather there after lunch, it had a large library, whoever wanted read, or played cardgames. From time to time, musical meetings took place. Edirne synagogue is a story in itself. We did not daven there every morning. We

gathered in the midrash that was next to it, in the back. The memory that stayed with me most was Saturday prayers. There would be lunch after Saturday prayers, then we would get together with the rabbis, all the Jews would eat their meal, and then enter the synagogue again and would sing different songs from different tones. For example from Dede Efendi, but we sang it in Judeo-Spanish<sup>3</sup>. They were all inclined towards Turkish Art music. These were in Hebrew. Today I don't remember them. In Judeo Spanish, with the tonality of Turkish Art music. Nisim Kalaora, he even practiced music with my father for an hour and a half there. That moment still lingers in my memory. They distributed cheese candy to all of us there. It was a very interesting thing. As far as I can remember, there was one usher and three rabbis. One was the famous Rafael Pinto, he worked in the Grand Rabbinate too. It had a mikveh, Talmud Torah and a Yeshiva. My wife Luna Romano was born in Edirne on August 25th, 1944. She studied in Shehit Asim school. She went to junior high and highschool in Edirne. They went out with the same group of friends for years. They would get together at homes on weekends, hold parties. My wife's family are people who are loved and respected in Edirne. Today we still continue our friendship with some of her friends in Istanbul. Our wedding was a little sad. My wife's father had passed away before the wedding. We were in mourning because of that. In our family, mothers and fathers are above everything. We were raised in formality, but attachment was more prevalent in my wife's family. In a family where everyone is so close, our wedding took place in an atmosphere of melancholy due to the absence of the father. Normally one would organize an evening for a wedding. We could not have the wedding even though we were wealthy. We were going to have fun but there would be sorrow in us. We married on September 9th, 1962 in Edirne Synagogue, we went to Istanbul by train that night, we stayed at the Hilton hotel. My older daughter Ines was born in 1964, and in 1973, my younger daughter Sima.