

Family Picture



A photograph taken of the family together at an event. My older brother and his wife, Pnina, my mother, my older brother Simon Mizrahi and his wife Margaret, my older sister Miryam Zade, her daughter Suzan, her son Yosi, my older brother Simon's son called Yosi too and the children of my older brother.

My mother had lost her first husband in war. My uncle Nesim Ipekeli takes her under his wing. When my uncle meets my father and becomes friends with him, he finds him appropriate for his niece. He says "Look, he has two children but he is wealthy, and a very good person. Get married, you will be comfortable". She agreed to marry my father because of poverty, the stress of being a widow, and most importantly, not being able to contradict the words of your family elder. My father was a friend of my uncle's family. In an era when family relationships were very strong, the families' decisions were applied. There was no such thing as dating then of course. You couldn't even think about women working. The best reference for women was being a good housewife. My mother and father married in Iran. They had a civil marriage but I don't think they were married in a synagogue. They were married at home. This situation reflected on my mother's relationship with my father in reality. My father was both wealthy and handsome. He had two children, but he was older in years nevertheless, and "knew the value of a woman" according to the mentality of those times.

My mother was a very clean woman, she cooked very well. Her time was spent that way anyways. She had jewelry. When I had measles, she would put that jewelry on me so I would not get up from bed and catch cold. She was obliged to sell all of the jewelry in time. In reality, even though my mother married because of pressure from her family, she demonstrated a very decisive and tough personality in her later years. After my father died, she took my older sister and me and came to Istanbul to prevent the family from dispersing.

Among my siblings from the same mother and father, Israil Babakardash was born in Damascus in 1916. He dealt in hardware, he migrated to Israel, he worked in a military office there. Israil was a very smart young man. I don't know what would have happened if he wasn't the son of a very enlightened mother and father. He drew very well. When he came to Istanbul, he would go to the Bosphorus and draw the shoreline across. He did all my art homework from school. He married a Turkish Jew named Pnina in Israel. Pnina was a really beautiful woman. She was a productive lady. She always supported my brother by working at home. They had children named Dalya, Yosi, Sami, and Judith. Dalya had a beauty salon. Judith deals with the catering business of a kibbutz. Yosi and Sami work on computers.

Simon Babakardash was born in Damascus in 1925. He left for Israel during the Wealth Tax [4]. First he learned the language in the kibbutz. He married a lady named Margeurite that he met in the kibbutz and became a traffic cop. He was a handsome young man. There was no one in Tel-Aviv who did not know him. He was always in the very front during ceremonies. He always received support packages during the war years. Margeurite was a smart woman. My older brother had gone to his mother-in-law's house as a live-in son-in-law. He had two children named Eti and Yosi. Eti was a make-up artist. Yosi on the other hand had a certificate on diamonds. He worked in the stock market. He decided to go to the United States. He planned on doing the same work there. One night when he was going home with a bag full of money and diamonds, he was attacked by blacks. He tried to resist giving the bag to the blacks but did not succeed. The blacks killed him right there. Yosi was newly married. His mother Margeurite was extremely upset from this event and died a short while later.

Miryam was born in Damascus in 1920. Miryam was a tailor. She sewed for the most famous people in Adana. She married my cousin Mois Daniyelzade. The family objected to this marriage. Because they were cousins with Mois, and in addition they dated. Dating was frowned upon in those days. When they went out, Miryam would take me with them. She would meet Mois with the pretext of taking her sister out. She would ask me not to mention this to my mother. In time my mother accepted this union. They left for Israel too, after they were married. Miryam continued working in Israel. Mois who was a sophisticated man on the other hand, could not find work and started working in construction. First he settled in Hertzelia. He started living in a small house with the opportunities that the Israeli government provided him. Later he moved to Holon with the money he earned. But Hertzelia became a city that bloomed. And my older sister lost this opportunity that was given to her. They had children named Suzan, Yosi (my father's name), Yayir (her father-in-law's name) and Hertzel. Suzan and Yosi were born in Istanbul, Yayir and Hertzel in Israel.

These siblings who immigrated to Israel, started meeting up and socializing with each other. They were together often on holidays. Even though each one had their own lifestyle, the siblings and their spouses were very happy being together. My uncle Simon and Miryam came to visit Bodrum this past summer. From there, they came to Istanbul to visit with us too.