

Fortune Baruh And Virjini Sarfati



The people you see in this photo are my mother Fortune Baruh and my aunt, Virjini Sarfati.

My mother's side of the family, I know that they are from Edirne. My mother's father David Mitrani, had a very humorous and a cheerful nature. He made his living from his winery. Judeo-Spanish was the mother tongue of this family who were not very religious. My mother, Fortune Baruh, came from Edirne at the age of three. She didn't tell me anything about her life in Edirne. The most important thing I know about this family who are of Thracian origin, is that they were highly cultured. At the same time, the Mitrani family was famous for their humorous nature. Even my cousin Josef Sarfati (the son of my mother's sister Virjini Sarfati), was invited over to friends' gatherings on Saturday evenings, just to entertain them. His wife, Rozet Sarfati, was not very happy about this situation at all.

My mother Fortune Baruh (née Mitrani) had five siblings. Virjini Mitrani married Moiz Sarfati and had two children named Zelda and Josef.

My mother Fortune Mazalto Baruh, was educated in Istanbul. She received her diploma, from Alliance Israelite Universelle, called "Grand Brevet" [the big diploma]. My father had a colleague named Monsieur Seni, at the bank. Monsiuer Seni thought my father Josef Baruh and my mother Fortune Mitrani would be well-suited for each other. My mother got married and settled down in Ortakoy, when the families consented to this marriage. My mother never flirted with my father. My mother felt very happy when my daughter had a son, and dedicated herself to him. She would express her love by saying " I didn't know what love meant until I fell in love with Meyir (the name of my daughter's son).

The wedding took place in the synagogue in Ortakoy one Friday during the spring months of the year 1928. (my mother never knew the exact date, she would only say that the weather was warm). There was a special excitement about weddings on Fridays. Everything had to be finished before the Shabat [shabbath], and they had to be home on Friday evening. They didn't have any

photographs taken after the wedding in order not to violate the Shabat. That is why my mother doesn't have a picture of herself with her wedding gown on. According to what my mother says, they went to a hotel in Yenikoy to spend their honeymoon. They rented one room for themselves, and one room for my grandmother. My mother has never forgotten this event and she still hasn't forgiven her mother-in-law for it. How funny it seems today, a mother-in-law going on the honeymoon with the newly-wed couple.

Actually, my mother spent very nice days in Ortakoy. But she was a woman who was never quite satisfied with her own circumstances. I guess she was a little bit ambitious, while my father was a very calm man in return. Though my mother always says, that her mother-in-law had ordered her to work, I always remember my grandmother doing the work. My mother was a very affectionate person, but she showed her affection only to the ones whom she loved. She was cold towards the others. She didn't like being friends with everyone. Those she loved, she loved with all her heart, and wouldn't hesitate to make any sacrifices for them. She was never able to get over my father being diagnosed with the Parkinson disease, and said that this disease affected her life very much. She was very skilled at cooking. But she wasn't open to innovations. For this reason, in a good menu, there had to be "borekas" [Sephardic pastry filled with different kinds of fillings, either sweet or salty, like cheese, eggplants, potatoes or walnuts], not crepe. But in return she was very open-minded. She had both welcomed my son's and my daughter's flirts very nicely, and provided them with comfort at home so that they would come and go without any hesitation. She said that she did this in the name of getting to know them better. But she couldn't keep herself from asking each time "de quelle famille il/ elle est" meaning "which family is she/he from". She liked getting dressed very much. She dyed her hair till six months before her death. She always had her manicure and pedicure done. She died in the year of 1992.