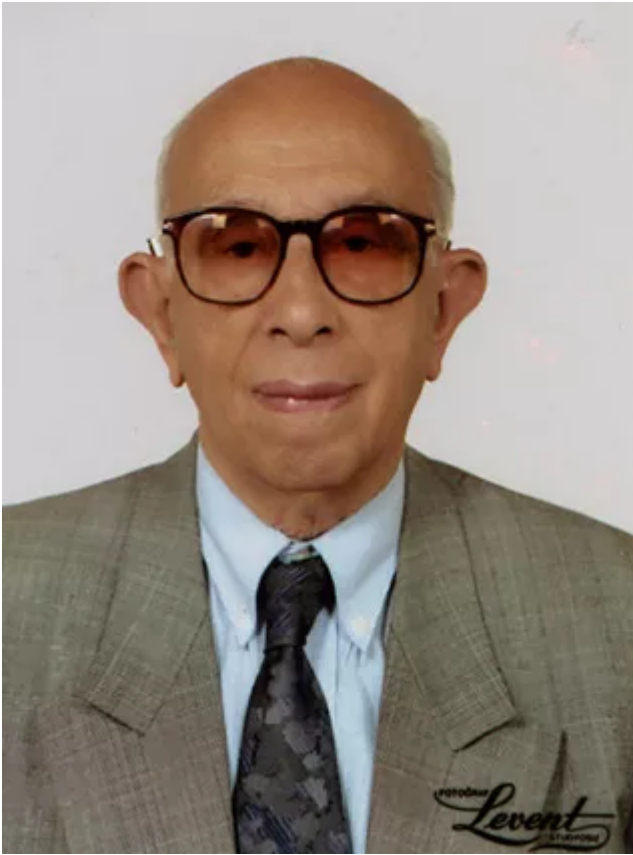


Moiz Isman 2005



This is a picture of me taken this year. We always need these kinds of photos for all sorts of legalities so here is a very recent one.

I Moiz Isman [According to Sephardic traditions, the first boy born in the family was given his father's father's name.] was born on the 25th of December in 1913, in Buyuk Hendek, Istanbul. [Jewish district on the European side of Istanbul]

I was always interested in electric wiring and devices since my childhood. We would buy supplies with my neighbor Jojo Sosino, and make a lot of things together in 'Selanik Han' [Salonika office building]. We made a little portable radio together with him. When the first sound recording machines were launched, I had already invented some sort of recording machine. Sometimes it recorded, sometimes not. It worked in the same manner as a radio did. Actually, it was more Jojo's invention. Though Jojo was 6-7 years younger than me, he was very skillful in such things. After completing his masters in engineering, and his military service, they emigrated to the States as a family. Jojo started working in NASA, and is still working there.

I started primary school, at the Alliance Israelite Universelle at Kuledibi, Yazici Sokak. Our friends and teachers were all Jewish. Our language of education, which was French during the first years of our schooling, became Turkish after the foundation of the Republic [1923] There was no French after that in the Jewish schools. There were also Hebrew classes at our school. There were also two Muslims students in our class. These students were free not to attend the Hebrew classes. They were free to stay in the class, if they wanted to learn another language, because the lessons

weren't about religion. We also had Turkish teachers at our school, after the foundation of the Republic. I was a very hard-working student, and my head-master always sent congratulations home, which made my father extremely happy.

My father's last name was Menase. But with the Surname Law [see Reforms in the Turkish Republic] that was passed in 1932-1933 [actually in 1934], our surname was changed to Isman. The officer at the registration office told me that the surname Menase had been taken by somebody else. I had to find another surname. My boss at the firm which I was working at then, used to tell me "You are a very good businessman". I was inspired by these words, and had my surname registered as "Isman" ['Is' means business in Turkish, it is attached to the English 'man'].

I started my business life at the place of the famous glass merchant of the time, called Ishak Niyego. Our place was in Karakoy. [district on the European side]. We had a warehouse, which we would call a "factory", and a shop at the exit of the "Tunel" in Karakoy. The customers' orders were taken at the shop, and then we would prepare them at the warehouse. The glass was processed according to the order, or mirrored. I was the technician of the firm, and my assistant was Israel Menase. (later on he became the president of the Jewish Community) I met my late wife Suzan there. She was the secretary of the firm.

My wife's English was very good, because she was a graduate of the British School in Istanbul (see English High School for Girls). Besides this, her French was also very good. Like I said, we were working at the same firm. We met and went out together. Her mother didn't want me, because of my low income, when we decided to get married. Nevertheless, against everything, we got married in the synagogue in Kuzguncuk, in May 1935.

We celebrated our 50th marriage anniversary, with our family and close friends, at Bizim Tepe [the association of Robert College graduates, a club with a Bosphorus view.] We were around 50-60 people, it was a very special and a very pleasurable night. The video show, which my son Seyfi had prepared, made us and our friends spend a very nice time. It was very good that we had prepared that night.

Unfortunately my wife Suzan got very sick, and though we did everything to save her, we couldn't. She died in 1989, and was buried in Arnavutkoy. [The sephardic cemetery in Ulus was always called Arnavutkoy]. I miss her so much that, I go to visit her very often, and talk to her from heart to heart.

I'm 91 years old today, and have certain sicknesses. The major one these days is the liver cancer I have. At the moment the treatment is going well, but you never know. I've had many operations. Nevertheless, I thank God for today.

I live together with my youngest son Seyfi in summer, and live in the same apartment building in the winters. We are always together. We exchange calls with my elder son, and visit each other. I was never interested in the computer, since it was not possible for me to learn after this age. As you know, I'm almost 92 years old. I meet my friends everyday in the summer, and once or twice a week in winter time. We sometimes chat, sometimes play backgammon.