

## My Mother, With My Older Brother Simon



It is a photograph taken in 1977. My mother and my older brother who is now 85 years old.

My mother Varda Babakardash was a beautiful woman with a light complexion, medium height and brown eyes, she did not wear make-up but would dye her hair with henna.

My mother never went out with her head uncovered. In Adana, they would not look kindly on women with uncovered heads. She wore scarves. She was a very good housewife. Her first husband had died in war too but she did not have children. She was very fastidious about her clothing. They had 25 years of age difference with my father. She was quiet and calm. I would get the impression of a woman who had accepted her fate in my mother.

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. 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.

Simon Babakardash was born in Damascus in 1925. He left for Israel during the Wealth Tax . Simon was a somewhat lazy young man, he was very smart but used to act lazy. He would fill small bags with lemon salt and sell them. He appeared like a merchant and got his share of the Wealth Tax. My older brother came home one evening, he looked quite worried. My mother gave money and underwear to my older brother Simon. When we heard from him the next day, he had crossed the border already. With the help of a prison guard on the road, he went to Damascus, and later to Israel. He attended police academy in Israel, he improved himself, overcame his laziness like this; the officer education changed the course of his life. 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.