

My Father And His Grandchild



My father with his grandson on the balcony of my older brother's house.

My father Jak Sages was born in Bursa (1881). He was the son of a very crowded family with 9 siblings. He came and went to Istanbul often. He wasn't very educated but he was an esteemed merchant. My father's good looks were legendary. He had good relationships with the women in his factory. He was a tough father. He had an authoritarian attitude with his wife and son, when it came to me, he melted down. He was cool toward religious matters, some of the arguments he had with my mother were even about how to apply our religious traditions. When the usher knocked on our door on Saturday mornings and yelled "Monsieur Sages al kal" (Mr. Sages to the synagogue), I would respond "En la fabrika de Paskal" (at the factory of Paskal). During the hours when the usher came to the door and encouraged the community to go to the synagogue, my father would be at the factory to prevent the silk cocoons from tangling with each other. Silk commerce was his life. There was a concept of spinning wheel for silk. He was an expert in this subject. He knew how to produce more silk from less cocoons. (Even today Bursa is at the heart of textile commerce). He always protected his good name in the commercial circles.

In the last years of his life, he moved to Istanbul with my mother at the insistence of my older brother. Unfortunately the disagreements between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are like a law of nature and happened between my mother and my sister-in-law. Of course quietly... (In those days the problems within a family were not brought out to the open. They were kept within the family as much as possible or the saying "les linges sales se lavent en famille" (dirty laundry is washed within the family) was observed. My father died in Istanbul in 1975.

My older brother Menahem Sages was born in 1921 in Bursa. His wife Rene Nahmias was the sister of my uncle Michel's first wife Margeurite. She was a very beautiful woman but she was too meticulous, she was obsessively meticulous. When we went to her house, she would look at the shoes before she looked at your face. She had a very good relationship with her son. She took care of him like a baby, she paid a lot of attention to her husband too but we generally did not go to my older brother's house, he would come to our house to see me. My brother and my childhoods were not alike at all. Because our personalities were not alike. He was calm whereas I was naughty and mischievous. He did not like drinking alcohol or gambling. He did not smoke. But for whatever reason he was always the one spanked during the childhood years. I would climb trees, he would sit at home.

His son Jak Sages was born in 1946 in Istanbul. After attending elementary school in Kurtulush Elementary School, he went to the British Highschool³. And at first he went to Israel. Adventure. Later he immigrated to Canada. Currently he lives in Canada, in the city of Victoria. In those days naming after the grandfather or grandmother was a tradition. Meaning the son of Menahem carries my father's name. My older brother did not want his son to do military service in Turkey, for that reason, especially encouraged him to go out of the country. His going to Canada was an adventure like his going to Israel but it was as if my older brother continually encouraged this adventure. My older brother died in Canada where he went to see his son in 1984.