

Rasel Baruh With Anet And Albert Uziyel



The people in this photo are my paternal grandmother, Rasel Baruh and her daughter and son-in-law, Anet and Albert Uziyel.

My paternal grandmother, Rashel Baruh (née Hatem), was from Daghamam. Daghamam, was in the hilly part of Kuzguncuk. [a neighborhood on the Anatolian side. It is across Ortakoy, which is on the European side. Both of the neighborhoods lie along the Bosphorus]. The Jewish people living in Daghamam either moved to Haydarpasha [an important neighborhood of Istanbul. All the trains that go to Anatolia, depart from this central train station, located in the neighborhood.] or to Ortakoy, due to the fire which broke out in the neighborhood. According to the reports of the time, this fire, which broke out in the 1915's, was a big disaster. The firebrigade was not able to arrive in time, and thus the wooden houses were burnt down like dominoes, thus leaving many families homeless. According to my grandmother; when everybody was trying to save something in panic, a woman was trying to save her iron. Who knows, the reaction of her husband to an unironed shirt, may have crossed her mind!

Rashel Baruh was a well-respected and liked lady in spite of her minimal education. She had finished primary school, in the Jewish Primary School in Uskudar. There was hardly a person who didn't know Rashel Baruh in Ortakoy. She helped everyone. I remember her listening to many people's problems patiently. Besides, she was the first to volunteer for duties which could be regarded as "mitzva" [mitzvah], like washing the dead or looking after sick people. She had an effective role in my life, too. They had asked me whom I would like to take with me to the hospital, for my first child's delivery. I had said that I'd like to have my grandmother with me, of course. The

one to hold my hand should be my grandmother. My mother could wait for the news at home.

Salamon Baruh, my father's father, the husband of my grandmother Rashel Baruh, was a well-respected man. He also used to work at the Karako Shop, in Beyoglu. His father-in-law had probably employed him. But Salamon Baruh died of a sudden heart attack at a young age. He couldn't see any of his children's weddings. For this reason, my grandmother would only dress in dark colors. She didn't wear a scarf or a "yemeni" [a turkish scarf with embroidered borders], and would comb her hair into a bun, which was called a "kurulika". Rashel Baruh died in 1963. She stayed at the Or-Ahayim Hospital for a year before she died. She had broken her hipbone and that was a common enough thing to happen to old people in those days. I went to the hospital two or three times a week from the day she was hospitalized till the day she died. Sometimes, when I want to remember my mother, my grandmother comes to my mind, and this makes me get angry at myself.

My grandmother's elder daughter Anet married Albert Uziyel. The Uziyel family, immigrated to Israel in 1935. The Uziyels had a liberal family outlook. They were conservative but not especially religious. Festivals were celebrated, and Shabat was respected. They went to Israel during its foundation years, and faced many difficulties there. Albert Uziyel even opened up a kiosk but unfortunately he couldn't run it for a long time. Anet supported the family by taking on sewing work at home for a while. Anet Uziyel had three daughters named Sheli, Beki, Lili. Beki and Lili still live in Israel, while Sheli lives in Austria.