

## Izak Finanser



My uncle Izak Finanser in front of a park in Istanbul. The photo was taken in 1936. My mother's brother Izak Finanser had a wholesale drug supply company, buying drugs from the various producers and distributing them to the pharmacies. He attended the St. Benoit French School. He married Naile Kamhi and had a daughter named Aysel, who attended the Ste. Pulchérie French School. Towards the end of his life, he lost his eyesight due to diabetes. His daughter Aysel, who lived in Israel, came to Istanbul in 1984 and took him there. Izak died there in 1986. Although I had heard quite a bit about the house in Sirkeci from my mother, I was to learn something new concerning it years later. My uncle Izak had lost his sight due to diabetes and was about to go to Israel. We went to see him off and say good-bye properly. He gathered us around him, my children

and all and Uncle Izak said, 'I remember something strange: when I was very small, we used to live in a house in Sirkeci. Another family occupied the upper floor, but we lived as if we belonged to a single household. We would go up an open flight of stairs several times a day. In the hall above, that family had at all times a big cushion, reserved for their grandfather - a blind and very old man. After feeding him in the mornings, they would place him on that cushion for the remainder of the day. A favorite pastime for us, children, was to go up and sit on that cushion with the old man, and listen to him talk to us. I never imagined that the day would come when I myself would become a blind grandfather.'