

Samuel Coyas With Her Daughter Fortune And Her Friend Berta Yohay



This photo was taken in the year 1962. The location is the beautiful, at the time, untouched hills of Kuzguncuk. I think this is why they had named Kuzguncuk "Bella Vista" [beautiful view]. On the left you can see my daughter's childhood friend, Berta Yohay, beside her in the middle is my daughter Fortune Coyas, and then me on the right. My daughter is wearing the blue and white skirt I had brought her from Israel. Her hair was very long and came to her waist, so my wife would braid them every morning and then tied them with big, beautiful bows. In those times, these hills were

full of daisies and poppies. The air was very clean. On weekends, whenever we had the chance we would come here. We especially liked the hill that was called Uc Fistiklar Tepesi [the hill of the three pines], which had gotten its name from the three very old pine trees that stood at the top. We would wander in the greenest meadows and pick daisies. Today you can barely see the green anymore. The place has become a shanty town. Berta Yohay was the younger daughter of Fani and Haskiya Yohay, who were good friends of ours. They had another older daughter called Ojeni. Their house was very close to ours and my daughter spent a good deal of her time at their place. Haskiya Yohay was in the tin business. Our daughters went to the same school, Ozel Uskudar Turk Kiz Lisesi [the private Uskudar Turkish Girls High School]. They started from primary school there. The Yohay family moved to Sisli in the 1970s. When distances separated us, we couldn't see each other as much any more. Haskiya died many years ago. His wife Fani Yohay still lives in Gayrettepe. My daughter couldn't continue her friendship with Berta either. Berta got married and had 2 children and 2 grandchildren. My daughter, Fortune, was born, on the 19th of March, in 1956. She was also born, at the Zeynep Kamil Hospital. On the 40th day, we had the vijola, at home. My daughter had black hair contrary to my son. She was a better-behaved child, compared to her brother. She did not crawl on her knees, but on her bottom, by rubbing it from left to right on the floor. Everyone, who saw her, laughed. When she became three years old, we also sent her to Mestra. My daughter Fortune (Tuna) was a very good student. Then she took the exams of a couple of private French schools. She passed them all, but we preferred the Saint-Benoit Girls High school because the transportation was easier. When she was a young girl, her friends she hung around with were all Jewish. She used to go to Judaic clubs like Amical [Jewish Youth Club, used to be located in the first floor at the back of the Sisli Beth Israel Synagogue in Istanbul. University students used to go to this club to take part in social and cultural activities like theater, conferences and dancing parties]. and take part in their social activities. She would organize parties and quiz contests, and play drama at these clubs. After finishing high school with a good grade, she took the university exams. She won the Business Administration department of Marmara University. In the mean time she was dating Albert Baruh Saylag, whom a relative had introduced. After 4-5 months his family came and asked for our permission for their son to marry her. We accepted, and they got engaged. My son-in-law had recently graduated from the Pharmaceutical Faculty. His father was a gynaecologist. They lived in Fenerbahce. He worked in the State Railroads Hospital. His wife did not work. At the end of the year 1975, we agreed to this marriage. Immediately after that my son-in-law went first to Samsun and then to Bandirma, to complete his military duty in 18 months as an officer. We performed the engagement ceremony in the house within the family, in April, in 1976. My uncle, Nisim, who was alive then, put on their rings. Because of the situation in the universities in those days, we did not want our daughter to continue going to school. But she insisted and started university. While she was in her second year, we had their wedding on 9th of October, in 1977.