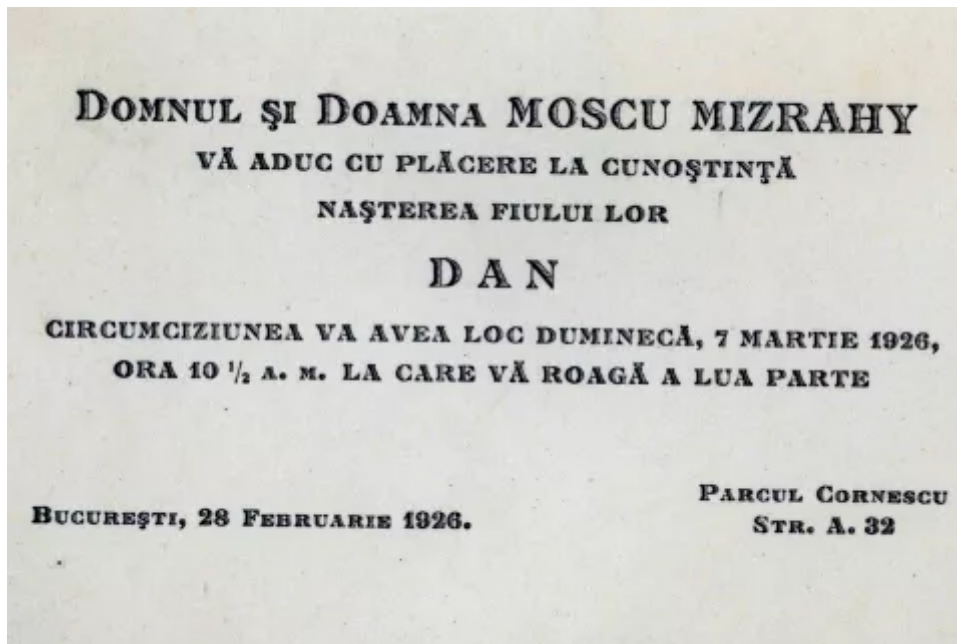


Dan Mizrahy's Circumcision Invitation



This is an invitation to my circumcision ceremony. I quote: 'Mr. and Mrs. Moscu Mizrahy are glad to announce the birth of their son, Dan. The circumcision, which we invite you to attend, will take place on Sunday, 7th March 1926, at 10:30am. Bucharest, 28th February 1926. Cornescu Park, A 32 St. [now 1 Turbinei St.].

I was born in 1926 in Bucharest. My nationality is Jewish. I was raised knowing this and, even if I hadn't known, I would have found out along the way. As far as I'm concerned, I was taught not to be ashamed of my ethnic origin, but not to brag about it either - just take it for what it is. I happened to be born in Bucharest and to bear the name Mizrahy. This stands for 'eastern' in Hebrew. My parents were born in Bucharest too; I, my parents, and my parents' parents spoke Romanian. I was taught to think in Romanian, to feel in Romanian, and to play like a Romanian. This is probably why - or this is partly why -, over the years, I found it difficult to understand the reason why I was ostracized or, in the 'happier cases', only marginalized - more or less overtly - on the sole grounds of my ethnic origin.

My father observed the main holidays of the Hebrew calendar, fasted once a year, for Yom Kippur, didn't eat bread during the seven days of Pesach, and, if he came back from work in time to catch the Friday night service, he went to the temple and read from the prayer book alongside the others. He wasn't devout, but had had a religious education. I have his old prayer books, where he thoroughly marked over the years the time of the Kol Nidrei prayer, the time of the shofar, and the time when the service ended. I carry on this tradition and I mark the times when the services begin and end.