

Nissim Kohen's Mother Sarina Kohen With Friends



This is a photo of my mother Sarina Haravon with friends probably in Kyustendil. It was taken in the 1910s. My mother is sitting first on the left. The woman sitting next to her is a friend of hers, whose family had a workshop for ironing and straightening of curtains on Stamboliiski Blvd in Sofia. They are dressed in Jewish costumes 'bindali'.

My mother's kin comes from Kyustendil. My mother's parents Yuda and Bohora Haravon lived there. I went there every summer when I was a student in the first grades of the Jewish school. My grandfather was a tinsman and my grandmother - a housewife. My mother's kin is very large. She had six brothers - Yosif, Rahamim, Shimon, Nissim, Chelebi and Mois Kohen. What is interesting about them is that my grandmother's parents left as early as the beginning of the 20th century, around 1906-1907 to the blessed land (Palestine at that time) to die there. They left their lands, their children and set off. My mother Sarina Kohen was 8-9 years old then. As far as I know my grandparents have graves in Jerusalem.

There were a lot of Jews in Kyustendil. They had their own synagogue and a community house. My grandparents lived in the Jewish neighborhood, which was around the synagogue. I remember that they lived in a small house, which had a ground floor and another floor. A relative of my grandfather's lived on the ground floor. His name was Manoah, and on the next floor lived my grandfather's family and my uncle Isak Haravon.

My mother had graduated primary school and started studying in a vocational school which she did not finish due to lack of money. She kept her notebooks from the vocational school for many years. They contained sewing designs, which can be drawn only by a professional designer nowadays. My mother had a hard life. She had two more boys after me, but they died. My first brother Leon was born in 1927 but he died of diphtheria in 1933. In 1929 my second brother Albert was born. He died in 1934.