קשר רב דורי – פאפא עולה מטורקיה – סיפורו של יוסי סופר (באנגלית)

By: Yossi Sopher
Country of Birth: Turkey

The story of my grandfather's immigration from Turkey to Israel:

In 1956, when I was in sixth grade in Turkey, my parents decided to immigrate to Israel. My mother, my brother (one out of three) and I immigrated to Israel. My father stayed behind to sell our house and arrange his work in Turkey. My family moved to Israel with practically nothing. We left a house with three floors and friends behind. My mother, brother and I boarded a ship that took us to Israel. The journey took thirteen days because it was winter. The ship took us to the Syrian-Turkish border, where we stayed for three days because of strong winds, and after the strong winds stopped we continued as usual on our route to Israel and finally arrived. When we arrived in Israel we arrived in Haifa, family that was already in Israel took us in for a month to live in Tiberias. After that, we moved to Safed.
I was supposed to be in 7th grade but since the school year had already started they couldn't place me in a 7th grade class, so they placed me in a 3rd grade class. After a few months I learned how to write and knew a little Hebrew and then they decided to transfer me to a 7th grade class.

My father and my brother came to Israel six months later and I just had reached the bar mitzvah age. My family was happy to celebrate my bar mitzvah. We had great joy in the family. But just as I arrived to Israel the Sinai War began. It was scary but we stayed strong. It was difficult to adapt to the State of Israel because of the language I did not speak but I learned very quickly and learned to write very quickly.

In Turkey the children always had to do what the parents told them to, we were not allowed to argue with their decisions. Even if it seemed wrong or even if we did not want to listen we had to keep it to ourselves. The education in Turkey was rigid education that, in my opinion, did us good. In Turkey when older guests came to visit they would sit at a big table with lots of goods on it and we were not allowed to interrupt or ask for anything. Despite these rules, the Turks know how to arrange big parties that everyone was invited to.

Today my grandfather lives in Yavneh, where he moved last year after living in Jaffa for 59 years. My grandfather has four children, one of them my mother Dorit and 9 grandchildren.