

deal with their Armenian identity as second-generation survivors of the Genocide.

When the parent's past is kept a secret

I have discussed survivors keeping their past a secret, especially from their children, in *The Armenian Genocide in Literature: Perceptions of Those Who Lived through the Years of Calamity*. Here in this category, in which the effects of this behavior on their children are assessed, a summary of the aforementioned discussion is brought in to serve as a necessary backdrop.

It is a fact that many survivors of the Armenian Genocide chose not to talk to their children about their past traumatic experience. Children were denied entry into their parents' past world of darkness. The reasons are many. There was the fear of the harmful effects these stories of blood and death could produce in the juvenile psyche. Parents consciously or subconsciously protected their children from the paralyzing memory with which they themselves had to live. Then there was the inexplicable self-blame or sense of shame and self-reproach for having survived while other family members perished in horrible circumstances; perhaps having survived by means of a temporary conversion to Islam, or providing "services" to gendarmes or a Muslim "rescuer," or enduring rape or circumcision. Whatever the dark secret of their survival, they chose not to reveal it. Some simply chose not to speak at all. Some futilely believed that by not talking about their traumatic past, they would manage to forget it and stay the frequent recurrence of painful memories and tormenting flashbacks. There were also survivors who, in their haste to