

Children From A Jewish Elementary School



This is another class photo. It is hard to tell in which school in Goworowo it was taken. It had to be a Jewish school though, since the children in the front hold a sign with a Yiddish inscription. Personally, I did not enjoy my primary, Jewish education.

I was going to cheder since I was 4. It was an unpleasant time. All day long I was sitting at school, and had no time to play. Through the window we saw children who were walking around, playing with their toys. Whenever we wanted to play ball or something, we would sneak out of the cheder. We would leave when the melamed was busy with other children. When the river was frozen, we liked to slide. A kid always wants to move a little - we went out on ice, there was no one around, sometimes the ice gave in. I remember after one Pesach we changed cheder. I was a bit older then. I remember how they chased me on a street because I didn't want to go to the cheder. A teacher and Father came and were yelling: 'You go to the cheder!'. I really didn't want to go, because it was unpleasant. But in the end I got used to it and I studied.

My melamed, I mean teacher, was called Aaron Weinstein and was one of the three melamedims at the cheder. All day long he was at school teaching children religion. I was also going to a private teacher to learn how to write and read in Jewish - Yiddish. That Jewish alphabet I 'hob gelernt' [Yiddish: learned] and until this day I can write beautifully. I had to learn it because in the cheder they didn't teach Yiddish. They taught loshn-koidesh [Yiddish: holy language], that is Hebrew... and to pray.

I attended cheder until I was 9. Then I went to yeshivah in Lomza. Dad and Mom sent me there. It wasn't even a big expense for the family. I lived at my cousin's, who let me stay there. My parents sent me an allowance. The yeshivah was called 'Lomzer Jesziwe' [Yeshivah in Lomza]. It's a well known school. It was the only yeshivah in Lomza. Not a big building, quite a small house really, right next to the synagogue (there was a pretty synagogue in Lomza). I think there were ten or fifteen students at school. We studied all day long. We had a younger teacher (in cheder only older people could teach, but in a yeshivah teachers were mostly young rabbis). His name was Aaron, I don't remember his last name. He lived with his wife in the same building. I remember his wife

well, because she used to bake latkes, a kind of potato pancakes. Once when we were hungry we ran away at night and stole those latkes and ate them. She was yelling at us 'Kids, what are you doing!' but she didn't do anything to us. I had a few good friends there. One, whose name was Nachmen Szafran, was very skinny and had such big ears. The second one was Mates Rozencwajg. These friends were also wealthier, because they had a sawmill. I wasn't allowed to stay at school for long. I was 10 at the time and stayed at this school for over two years. Then I started to work.