

Lejb Perelmut



This is my father, Lejb Perelmut. This photo may have been taken in the 1930s in Lublin, but I don't remember exactly. I have got this photo thanks to my two aunts: Mania and Ania, from Moscow. I am in possession of many pictures that were saved by my family in Moscow. And it happened because my parents would send many pictures and letters to them before the war broke out. And all those pictures were saved. The ones we had in our home in Bialystok got lost, naturally. After World War II I found out that my two aunts kept our family archives. I was really happy to get those precious things back. You can see what Father looked like in the photographs I have: mustache, blond hair, he was an ordinary man, he dressed normally. My first childhood memories are of Fabryczna 35 in Bialystok, the four-room apartment on the 1st floor. It was a detached house, but one room was taken up by a large weaving loom, where Father worked at home. My toys were rags from that weaving loom. Later, Father became an accountant. How this happened, I don't know. He wrote beautifully, he kept books normally. Anyway, the tax police

would go around and check if you weren't cheating in your accounting. I remember Father got busted once and had to give a bribe. I remember that, as a child, when I was being naughty, Father wanted to beat me with a towel. And in Bialystok there was this garden in front of the house, with flowers and lilacs. There was a Persian lilac, very dark, it was a tree. When my Father chased me, I'd climb up on that tree. There was a seat there, so I'd sit, dangle my legs and just wave at Father. Or I'd hide under the bed, so he wouldn't be able to catch me. And I remember this one time, I must have been very small then, when Father carried me home from Grandfather's house. I remember that. I sat on his shoulders and he carried me. Oh, God, Father was such a good man as well. I don't remember Father ever going somewhere to pray in Bialystok. Perhaps he did? sometimes he used to pray at home, he'd put on a white tallit and he'd put on tefillin. And in Lublin, because we lived in a house where there were many Jews, sometimes there'd be prayer meetings in our apartment. Some ten men would get together and pray together. Father felt very honored when this prayer meeting took place in his apartment. That was when we, the kids, were put in the kitchen and, to spite the adults, we'd buy ourselves pieces of sausage, pork, on Yom Kippur, as a sign of protest, because young people are always rebelling. And if Father used to go to a synagogue, if he had a tefillin or whether he just carried something else under his arm, I don't know, I simply didn't pay much attention to those things then.