

Aleksandar Mosaic Dressed In Purim Costume



Photo of me in Purim costume. Photo was taken in Belgrade, 1925.

Since my father was a Sephard we were members of the Sephardic community and went to that synagogue. As a student I had to go to religion classes during which we learned tefila, praying customs and Biblical history. Friday night for every Erev Shabbat I had to be in synagogue. I also had to be in synagogue, independent of my parents desire, for each holiday. It is true that sometimes we skipped these religious services like we ran away from classes in the gymnasium. Yes I was an excellent student but I was also a little bit of a hoodlum. We felt very at home in synagogue, we knew the gabai who took care of Synagogue, cantor, rabbi, chief rabbi. We also knew to read Hebrew from the prayerbook, which we called tefila. However we did not learn the language, exactly what those prayers mean, but we did know the meaning of certain blessings. We learned these blessings because they are much shorter. When we had to read prayers or psalms from 10 to twelve lines from the book were read them but we did not know what we were reading. I had a Bar Micva when I was 13 years old. I do not have a lot to tell about this, I had a Bar Micva in the same way that other boys had one. We were prepared for this in Jewish school. Today I still remember that one Saturday at the end of the morning service, I had to give a speech in which I had to show that I knew something about Judaism. I remember that I spoke about Maimonidies and while preparing this presentation I acquired a special respect for a man who is a humanist and philosopher. It was very interesting for me; studying his life was easier for me than studying his teachings because I was too young to understand his philosophy. It was very interesting to me because it showed me life of the Sephardi Jew before the expulsion from Spain. This awakened in me a special affinity for this Roman-Jewish culture.