

Book Written By Inna Rajs kaya's Grandfather, Iosif Shif



This is the title page of a book written by my grandfather Iosif Shif. The book is written in Hebrew and is titled 'Mesikhta dereh erez'. It was published in Minsk in 1912 by the Livshits-Barshay printing-house, 12 Gubernatorskaya street. There are 52 pages in the book. My grandfather was born in 1870, but where? I don't know. He lived his entire life in Minsk. I know little about his family, just that they were not very prosperous but tried nonetheless to educate their children. In 1890 Grandpa completed his education in pedagogy and became a teacher in a Jewish school in Minsk. He taught young children both in his own family and in other families, among them the

Borishanskies children. And so it happened that my grandmother, Feiga-Tsipa Elkonovna Borishanskaya, and Grandpa Iosif fell in love and later got married. After the Revolution the family, like others, was stripped of all their properties, and the apartment in Zakhariyevskaya was confiscated. They had to buy a small house in Minsk not far from the Opera theater. It was a modest one-story house, but it was always scrupulously clean; my aunt maintained it rigorously. There were gorgeous plates and dishes and very beautiful silver spoons. Our family still has, for example, family heirlooms such as silver spoons with the inscription 'A spoonful of happiness' written on them in Yiddish. These were presented by my grandfather to a niece as a wedding present. When I got married, my aunt (she was alive at that time) gave them to me, and now I handed them down to my daughter. During the war, he was killed in the Minsk ghetto in 1942.