

## Jakub Bromberg In The Jewish Cemetery In Lodz



This is me in the Jewish cemetery in Lodz, standing by the grave of my mother, Nacha Bromberg, nee Wajntraub. The photo was taken in the 1990s.

Mother was thirteen years younger than Father. She spent her entire life with him, at home. She was a housewife. She was a beautiful, black-haired woman. Almost like an Armenian. She had a pretty face and curly hair, which used to be long, but she wore a wig. Mother was a wise woman, but, unfortunately, a slave. We weren't aware of it then. Mother helped Father with everything, she minded the children; she did the laundry, cleaned the house and earned money for bread. She had no political views, she wasn't politically active. She knew how to pray and how to read and write in Yiddish, because we spoke Yiddish at home.

My mother had a hernia and in 1938 she went to the hospital, Poznanski Hospital in Lodz, to have it removed. It was a Jewish hospital, free. And that's where she died, during the operation, because they gave her too much anesthesia. I managed to see her once before the surgery. I brought her some oranges, or mandarins. And Mother wrote me this letter on the napkins which I had used for the fruit. A letter, almost like a will: 'Pray to God that I survive, take care of the apple of my eye - that is your sister - and pray that you're not left like these sheep without your shepherd.' That's what she called our sister, because she was our treasure, the only girl in the family: the apple of our eyes; she was everything for us. I kept this letter and ran away to Russia with it, but when they robbed me in Lublin, everything was lost then.

After we came to Lodz, we gradually stopped following traditions, especially after Mother died. She always felt hurt that her sons were moving away from religion, that they were not so superstitious [religious] anymore. She used to say: 'You won't even recite the Kaddish for me when I die.' When Mother died, we had the tombstone made, I was in mourning for 30 days, and I went to recite the Kaddish every day, in the synagogue on Baluty Market. I prayed and recited the Kaddish. Now, still, in spite of myself, although I don't really practice religion, when I go to Mother's grave I pray. I do it for her. To honor her memory. Although there should be ten people to pray, but I don't care about that. She wanted me to do it, so I do it.

I just came to understand that God punishes sinners, but my mommy was a saint. If she was a Catholic today, then the pope would declare her a saint, like Mother Teresa. She had no sins whatsoever. I knew Mother, I know that.