

The Synagogue's courtyard

The spiritual leadership that the Jews had crowned upon themselves insisted on preserving the religious laws among their flock, never allowed a minor deviation, maintained life routine and norms and way of life. The whole took care of religious educational institutions, synagogues, Mikvahs (ritual baths) and Kashrus, and also a roof above the heads of the needy. All these values were completely observed until the Holocaust.

Religious life stood at the center of Jewish life. Suffice was to say 'the synagogue's courtyard' for any Jew in Poland to understand what's it all about and how deep was the meaning of this term. Not big was the building, but the importance of the basis for Jewish life was so great that every social level needed its four walls for itself.

Beit Hamidrash stood isolated, along the street of the synagogue, among the wooden homes, until the new 'Chider' was built. Along the same line of homes, on the other side of Beit Hamidrash, the community built the rabbi's home, and the new rabbi, as he was called in town, who had arrived from the Belz courtyard, settled in it and there conducted his rabbinate until the outbreak of World War 2. On the lower end of the Bridge Street, parallel to the street's slope, stood two small houses of worship: the small Beit Hamidrash, where the tailors of the town and their apprentices used to pray, and the Schtibel of the shoemakers. On the other side of the synagogue's courtyard, the ancient cemetery sprawled and behind it- the big synagogue.

Three were the entrances to the synagogue's yard: one, from the Bridge Street right you came straight to the wide doors of the house of worship. The two other entrances were from the synagogue's street, one separated the rabbi's residence from the big Beit-Hamidrash. The way was straight as a ruler. At its edge was the entrance to the women's section. Not far from there laid the 'Hekdesh', and in front of it- the new slaughtering house, and at the edge of the yard- the bathhouse and the public lavatory- 'The uprit plaz' (in Yiddish). This title was given to it because its many separate cabins were simultaneously visited and the same cabins fulfilled their designation at the same time.

Atmosphere at the synagogue's yard was heavy and full of emotions. Prayers, pleas and supplications were never missing. The Jew, who stood during prayer and voiced his pleas, washed with his blood and rinsed by the purity of his lucid tears, was standing there wrapped with a guilt feeling.

Lower, at the 'Hekdesh' (The poor people hostel), the atmosphere was even heavier. Sighs of the miserable, solitary elderly, partly famished and derelict who lay on their filthy beds with yearning eyes, day after day, longing for the pity and good heart of their fellow Jews emerged from there. Whether they are arrogant and full of self contentment, 'collectors of mitzvahs' (good deeds), or regular Jews who felt responsible for their fellowman and tried to help all those wretched and despondent even with a little bread to strengthen their spirit. On the eve of the Sabbath and festivals, Jews in their multitudes rushed to the bathhouse to purify themselves for the sacred day and to warm their skin with the steam of the hot water. As they approached the damp and half dark bathhouse, the stench increased and became unbearable. The bathhouse was maintained by the 'Merkhats Goy' (the bathhouse attendant) Martchah Boldowski was his name. Naturally, his real name was castrated by the Jews. It is more probable that his real name was Matchay Woldawski but the Jews, in their 'refined and etched' Polish, distorted names and changed them without noticing. The important thing is that they themselves understood well despite the language. Martchah's distorted name didn't bother any, including himself, and especially those whose mouths castrated it. Like the rest of the town's Jews, Martchah lived in the deep darkness of neglect and suffered shortage and hunger. Martchah was a part of the Jewish town. None considered Bilgoraj existing without him."

(Shmuel Bar-On)
Translated to English
by Daphna Brafman

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The only photos from the Bilgoraj
synagogue before the WWII.

The Synagogue's courtyard before the fire



חצר בית הכנסת

Synagogue Courtyard

SYNAGOGA



דגם של חצר בית הכנסת שעמד במפגש הרחובות נדסטבנה ולובלסקי.

[הדגם רכוש מוזיאון ז'ימי בבילגוראיי]

A Model of nonexistent Synagogue complex where Nadstawna and Lubelska Streets meet

[exhibit owned by ziemi museum Bilgorajskie]

קדושה שהאל זנחה

God deserted holiness



בית הכנסת משמאל לאחר השריפה ההריסות פונו בשנים 1957-1958

The Synagogue [left] after the fire, the ruins of which were cleared during the years 1957-1958

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חצר בית המדרש לאחר השריפה : בית המדרש מימין בית הכנסת משמאל על הגבעה.
Seminary courtyard after the fire: "Bais- Midrash" [right] Synagogue [left]



ההקדש שהיה ליד בית המדרש ובית הכנסת, לאחר השריפה הגדולה
The congregation hostel "Hekdesh" that was next to the Rabbinical
seminary and the Synagogue after the big fire