

The *Częstochower Maggid*

Reb Josef-Szymon Koblenz, who was known as the “*Częstochower Maggid*” [Preacher], was a remarkable figure - a man who personified all good qualities and traits of character. His sobriquet, in itself, already indicates that he was a talented orator and Torah scholar. His majestic countenance embodied the inner spiritual contentment which he possessed – [his] inner wisdom [matched his] external appearance. His sermons were interwoven with different discourses from Talmudic literature and attracted masses of listeners.

Besides that, he was [also] a political activist - [he was] the leader of the *Mizrachi* organisation, to which he dedicated a great deal of time, and also made public appearances with speeches for communal campaigns. The *Maggid* Reb [Josef-]Szymon Koblenz could be seen in the company of Rabbi Nachum Asz at all meetings of representatives, which were attended by Nachum Sokołow, President of the worldwide Zionist Organisation, or Leib Yaffe¹.

The *Maggid* Reb Josef-Szymon Koblenz founded his own synagogue at ul. Katedralna 10, where he personally led, by heart², the prayer services on the High Holidays and delivered sermons on all special days, which drew many listeners and worshippers.

In his old age, the *Maggid* lost his sight but, nevertheless, continued his activity. His son-in-law would lead him into the hall, where he would hold the sermons and lectures. Until his last living moment, the *Maggid* contributed extensive wisdom towards the development of Jewish Częstochowa’s cultural centre.

¹ [TN: Hebrew poet; among other things, he was the founder and director-general of Keren Ha’Yesod.]

² [TN: This is quite an incredible feat, as the liturgy of the High Holidays is extremely long and difficult and is obviously only recited once a year.]