

KOBLENC (KOBLINC) Józef Josek Szymon (1852-1937), preacher, Zionist, member of the Jewish Community Council (*gmina*), Zionist organisations activist. He was born in Soli, Lithuania. It was there that he began his spiritual and social activities. In his youth, he joined the *Chowewej Syjon* (Friends of Zion) movement. He remained a Zionist until the end of his life.

He came to Częstochowa at the beginning of the 1880s as a mature man. He established his own synagogue in the city (at ul. Katedralna 10), where he constantly prayed and delivered sermons, which attracted many listeners. He enriched them with numerous quotations from Talmudic literature. His particular oratorical talent and great scholarship gave him the name of the *Częstochowa Magid* (preacher) very great popularity.

Koblenc was one of the founders *Mizrachi*, a Zionist organisation of Orthodox Jews. He served as president of this Częstochowa organisation. He also sat on the board of the *Machzyke Hadas* Association Talmud Torah – a school for poor Jewish children. In 1920, he was a co-founder and board member of the “Mizrachi” co-operative (at I Aleja 10). He was also *gabbai* (manager) of the Chevra Kadisha burial society and a member of the Częstochowa Jewish Community Council.

He appeared as a speaker at communal events, his speeches attracting many people. On many occasions, Koblenc was present there in the company of the city rabbi → Nachum Asz, during the ceremonial visits, to Częstochowa, of Nachum Sokołow, president of the World Zionist Organisation and Lejb Jaffe, poet and columnist.

In his later years, he lost his sight, but he remained active for the rest of his life. He was assisted by his son-in-law, who led him to the halls where he delivered his sermons or lectures.

The Koblenc family made a living from commercial activities, including a grocery store and dairy at ul. Prosta 1 (where they lived) and at ul. Dojazdowa 1 (Piłsudskiego). In the 1930s, lived at al. Wolności 11.

He died on 7th November 1937 in Częstochowa and was buried in the local Jewish cemetery (the grave has not survived). His funeral was attended by thousands of people. The *Mizrachi* Council in Częstochowa decided to memorialise his name in the book of Keren Kayemet le-Israel (Jewish National Fund).

Czenstochower Yidn, p. CXLII; Mizgalski, *Życie polityczne Żydów*, p. 130 (her: Szymon Koblinc); Orenstein, *Churban Czenstochow*, pp. 350, 351; *Sefer Czenstochow*, vol. 1, cols. 649–652; Sobalski, *Związki zawodowe, stowarzyszenia*, pp. 135, 136. – “Częstochower Cajtung” 1933, No. 5, p. 5, 1937, No. 46, pp. 1, 6. – *Handlowiec. Kalendarz 1914*, pp. 20, 212, 213 (here: Koblinc). – USC Częstochowa, księgi metrykalne mojżedzowe, death record No. 264/1937.

Wiesław Paszkowski