

RABINOWICZ reb Izaak (Icchok) (1823? – 1868), Częstochowa rabbi and preacher. In all probability, he attended both a *cheder* and a *yeshivah*, traditional Jewish religious schools. He also had a secular education. An early marriage (no later than 1840) to the daughter of Benjamin Rabinowicz, a long-term worker of the Warsaw *kehilla*, secured him a job with the Jewish *gmina*.

He served as secretary to the Warsaw Districts Rabbinate at the time when the position of Chief Rabbi of Warsaw was held by the famous Dow Ber Meisels (from 1856). In 1859, he recommended Rabinowicz, to the members of the Częstochowa Synagogue District Supervision Board, to serve as a city clergyman, which means that he had previously obtained a *smicha*¹ in Warsaw.

At that time, his qualification was not recognised by the state authorities and so he had no official permission to perform this function. Yet, on 15th September 1859, the Supervision Board signed him onto a contract, which obliged him to obtain all the necessary qualifications and permits. On 3rd November 1859, he passed the examination at the Warsaw Rabbinical School and hence was qualified to serve in any city within the Kingdom of Poland.

On 3rd September 1860, the Administrative Council of the Kingdom of Poland nominated him as rabbi of the city of Częstochowa. He performed this function until his death. His activity coincided with the period of the moral renewal of Polish society and Polish-Jewish reconciliation during the patriotic demonstrations in 1861, the period of the 1983-1864 uprising and the repressions following uprising's suppression.

Even though he was a religious traditionalist, he combined this with an open attitude towards life. He supported those, locally, who wished to modernise Jewish life and to have closer relations with Poles, which benefited the Jewish community.

When, in 1862, in Częstochowa, a huge fire broke out, the rabbi joined the Firefighters' Aid Committee, alongside a Catholic priest. The founder of the Committee and its chairman was → Berek Kohn. Most of the aid funds collected, at that time, went to Jewish residents, who had suffered from the fire.

Rabinowicz was characterised by religious and also cultural erudition. He had broad horizons of thought.

¹ [TN] A *smicha* is a rabbinical certification issued by a Yeshivah or by a very senior rabbinical authority.

During the January Uprising, he had to leave Częstochowa, for a long period, and settled in Berlin, which was the capital of Jewish modernism. Here, he met the rabbi Dr. Michał Zaks (Sachs) (1808-1864), a famous researcher of Hebrew medieval poetry and a translator of the *siddur* and *machzor* (prayer books) into German. He also knew other German rabbis and preachers. In Prussia, he bought books and held discussions with German rabbis. However, he was not a follower of the German liturgy. He did not see *Haskalah* (Jewish modernism) as a danger to Orthodox Jewry.

Rabinowicz was a famous preacher. In 1863, his student and avowed *Chassid*, Mosze Majmon, wrote about him – that he often travelled to Warsaw and, there, delivered sermons which were well received by circles of scholarly *misnagdim*, the enemies of *Chassidism*. In 1863, he published, in Hebrew, his own sermons under the title of *Nidwot pi*.

He died on 18th November 1868 in Częstochowa, and was buried in the local Jewish cemetery (Grave No. 1279 II H). Szymon Peltyn, a Talmud scholar, although a *maskil* (a supporter of religious modernity), wrote an obituary of praise in the “Izraelita” weekly.

His wife was Chana Łaja née Rabinowicz. They had several children but, following Izaak’s death, all ties between the family and Częstochowa probably ceased. Other Rabinowicz people from Częstochowa were probably related to the *tzaddikim* from Radom.

His son, Juda Lewek Rabinowicz (1845–1869), unlike his father, was more a *maskil*² than a pious Jew, although he was well-known for his religious scholarship. In 1870, another son published, in Warsaw, the second volume of his father’s sermons, under the title *Nidvot pi*.

J. Szacki, *Jidn in Czenstochow bis cu der erszter welt-milchome*, in: *Czenstochower Yidn*, p.p 29, 30. – “Częstochower Cajtung” 1934, No. 46, p. 3.

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² [TN] A *maskil* was an advocate or supporter of the *Haskala* movement, often referred to as the “Jewish Enlightenment” – as practised in Częstochowa’s New Synagogue..