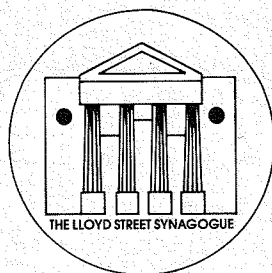


GENERATIONS

Jewish Historical Society of Maryland



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Charles Troy

This issue contains articles on families, homes and neighborhoods. The articles published in "Generations" reflect the opinions of their authors and not necessarily those of the Jewish Historical Society of Maryland.

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זכר ימות עולם בינו שנות דר-דר

REMEMBER THE DAYS OF OLD,
CONSIDER THE YEARS
OF MANY GENERATIONS

Deuteronomy 32:7

This publication was made possible through the generosity of the Peggy and Yale Gordon Trust Fund.

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BIOGRAPHY OF RABBI-DOCTOR SOLOMON MANDELKERN

BY COL. BERNARD FEINGOLD

Col. Bernard Feingold, U.S.A. (ret.) is an active member of the J.H.S.M.

Even as a child I remember having a flame burning in my mind, heart and soul about my famous uncle, Rabbi Doctor Solomon Mandelkern. This flame was kept alive by the stories told to me by my mother, Mollie (Shargel) Feingold; my grandfather, Joseph Shargel; and, above all, by my Uncle Israel Mandelkern as I affectionately called him. Israel was Solomon Mandelkern's only child.

Let me explain my relationship. My great-grandmother on my mother's side of the family, Baba Brandle, was Solomon Mandelkern's sister. This makes me Mandelkern's great, great nephew. If you came from the village of Mlynov in the province of Volhyn, Russia, and I told you I was Mollie Yenta Brandle's son, you would know who I was immediately.

During my youth, my mother took me on frequent visits to see Uncle Israel, his wife, Aunt Fannie, and his son George at their home at 2080 Grand Concourse, Bronx, New York. Uncle Israel was up in age and had suffered a stroke, and Aunt Fannie was blind. Cousin George, who was a bachelor, lived with them and devoted his entire life to their care. Their older son, Robert, was married and lived on Riverside Drive. I met him on numerous occasions at Uncle Israel's and visited him at his home. When I was old enough to travel on my own, I continued these visits. During World War II Uncle Israel and I corresponded. Upon my return I resumed these visits until each of them passed away.

As I grew older, I continued to be more and more intrigued by the accomplishments of Solomon Mandelkern. To this day I am in awe as to how a child (orphan) at that time in history, being of the Jewish faith in Tsarist Russia, could achieve so much in such a short time. From a small, insignificant village, Solomon Mandelkern rose to scholastic achieve-

ments at the seminary and universities, from which he was graduated with the highest honors. His accomplishments were recognized by the Tsar. His greatest achievement was the Hekal Ha-Kodesh (The Holy Temple), a concordance (an alphabetical index of words in their exact context of the Old Testament) whose excellence has not been exceeded to this day. This scholarly work is still universally used by biblical scholars and students. He accomplished all this in addition to his other works.

Mandelkern died in 1902 at the age of 56. His passing went with almost no acknowledgment from the Hebrew literary communities of the world. Mandelkern became the forgotten one - forgotten with the passing of time.

When Israel Mandelkern was notified that his father had passed away, he immediately made a trip to Leipzig, Germany, to visit his father's grave. On his return he brought back some of his father's belongings. Upon Israel Mandelkern's death, some of Solomon Mandelkern's memorabilia was left to me. Some of these documents I was able to preserve and are the basis and source of my information in addition to other research data.

* * * * *

Solomon Mandelkern, son of Simcha Ber, poet, writer, biblical scholar, and Hebrew philosopher, was born on the eve of the second day of Passover (16 Nisan) in the year 1846 (5606) in the village of Mlynov, province of Volhyn, Russia.

As a child born into a Hasidic family, he studied in the Cheder of the "Shul" in Mlynov. As he grew older, he studied under Rabbi Pinchas, the Rabbi of Tirowitz. Tirowitz was a town near Mlynov. When he was fourteen years old (1860), Solomon's father died, and Solomon

went to Dubno where he continued his Torah studies. He studied under Rabbi Zvi Hirsch A. Cohen Rappaport and the brother-in-law of Rabbi Isaac Eliahu Landau, who was later the Maggid (Preacher) of Vilna.

Before Mandelkern left Mlynov, a marriage was arranged with Chayeh Kerman of Dubno, whom he married in Dubno in 1860. A year later in 1861 he became the father of his only child, Israel.

In Dubno Mandelkern associated with the Hasidim and went with them to the town of Kotzk, where he was received by the renowned Hasidic Rabbi Menahem Mendl of Kotzk. He studied Kabbala with Rabbi Mendl's son David.

Solomon returned to Dubno. At that time Hebrew periodicals had become popular among Hebrew scholars, and Mandelkern sent articles to those periodicals. Through these articles he became known to the Maskilim (Intellectuals) of the city. Mandelkern instructed them in Hebrew grammar, and they taught him, in return, German and Russian. Eventually he became a part of the Haskalah (Enlightened) movement and changed his views from the Hasidic to what would be considered today Conservative-Reform thinking.

Although he was a married man and the father of a son (Israel), Mandelkern entered the Rabbinical Seminary of Vilna on October 15, 1865, and completed his studies, receiving his diploma and rabbinical title on June 13, 1868. Mandelkern entered the seminary at the age of nineteen and was not quite twenty-three years old upon his graduation. He received a scholarship to the seminary. The leaders of the community of Dubno offered him the position of official Rabbi, but he refused the offer and went instead to St. Petersburg to enter the university.

During the period that Mandelkern completed the Rabbinical Seminary in Vilna and

his matriculation to the Imperial University of St. Petersburg, he divorced his wife Chayah and later married a woman from Brody, Austria named Aggatha Rappaport.

Mandelkern entered the Imperial University of St. Petersburg in the Hebrew-Arabic Department of the Faculty of Oriental Languages. There he studied under the famous Orientalist, Professor Daniel Abramovich Chwolson. He entered the University on September 19, 1869 at the age of 23 years and graduated on September 15, 1873 at the age of twenty-seven years. He received the title of Candidate and was presented with a Gold Medal as a token of distinction for his comments and dissertation on the Septuaginta (Greek translation of the Bible), the Peshitta (Syriac translation), the Arabic Translation of the Bible, and also for a scientific paleographic essay of places and names that are repeated in the Bible.

On May 11, 1873 a letter was written to the head of the Kiev Educational District by the members of the Faculty of Oriental Languages of the Imperial St. Petersburg University as well as Professors of the Historical-Philological Faculty, Sukhomlinov, Bectuzhev-Ryumin and Miller, recommending Mandelkern for the position of Inspector of the Teachers' Institute for Jews at the Zhitomir Rabbinical Seminary. Mandelkern was further honored with letters of thanks from the Tsar, Tsarina, and the Crown Prince of Russia for his Hebrew and Russian poems, books and sermons.

At the age of twenty-eight Mandelkern was appointed by the Tsar to serve as the official Rabbi of Odessa, a position he held for seven years, from 1874 to 1881. He made himself popular as a pulpit orator in the Russian language and preacher of "Progress" at the same time preaching rapprochement between the young and the old generation.

During this same period Mandelkern entered the Imperial New Russian University in Odessa, in September 1875, in the Law Faculty. He completed his studies in 1879. His dissertation under the title "The Beginning Principles of Hereditary Right According to Jewish Law" was accepted by the Faculty and the degree of Candidate (of Law) was conferred upon Mandelkern on May 31, 1880. He was twenty-nine years old when he entered the university, and thirty-four when he received his degree.

Mandlekern also went to Germany where he attended the University of Jena. He was awarded the title of Doctor of Philosophy (with Honors) on August 12, 1880 for his thesis concerning the differences between the books of "Kings" and "Chronicles."

In the beginning of the 1880's Mandelkern left his native Russia and settled in Leipzig, Germany, where he supported himself as a translator and as an author of books. His poems, satires, epigrams, and articles were published in many magazines and periodicals. They were also published in book form.

Mandelkern was deeply involved in the Haskalah movement. Abraham Baer Lebensohn, his son Micah Joseph Lebensohn, and Judah Leib Gordon were undoubtedly the leading triad of the Haskalah movement in Russia. Next to them in importance, both from the standpoint of poetic quality and productivity, were another triad of poets, all of whom were considered masters by their generation. These were Abraham Baer Gottlober, Judah Levin and Solomon Mandelkern.

In 1884 the Jewish community of Belgrade called upon Mandelkern to become the Chief Rabbi of Serbia, but shortly after his arrival he became ill. He returned home to recuperate, and his wife and relatives persuaded him not to return.

Hechal Hakodesh

("The Holy Sanctuary")

HEBREW AND ARAMAIC

Concordance

ON THE BIBLE

INCLUDING ALL ROOTS AND WORDS OF EARLIER CONCORDANCES;

CORRECTIONS OF ALL OMISSIONS AND ERRORS OF PREVIOUS EDITIONS;

QUOTATIONS FROM ALL PASSAGES IN LOGICAL AND COMPLETE FORM;

ADDITION OF VOCALIZATION AND PUNCTUATION WHEREVER
NECESSARY TO FACILITATE READING;

ALL PREPOSITIONS, PARTICLES, PERSONAL PRONOUNS AND PROPER NOUNS WHICH
WERE OMITTED IN EARLIER EDITIONS

THE WHOLE BASED ON THE MASORETIC TEXT OF THE BIBLE AND FOLLOWING
THE ACCEPTED SEQUENCE OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

COMPILED WITH A LATIN TRANSLATION OF THE ROOTS, AND NOTES IN HEBREW BY

Dr. Solomon Mandelkern

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY AND LAW

...for the house which I am about to build shall be great and wonderful
2 CHRONICLES 2:3

LEIPZIG

Veit & Co.

1896

Translation of the original Hebrew title-page.

All these activities were secondary, but a necessary means of support while Mandelkern devoted more than twenty years of diligent study and work on his "Opus Magnum," the great and complete Biblical Concordance, Hekal Ha-Kodesh. Mandelkern's Concordance surpassed all previous concordances of the Bible and is still used universally by all biblical scholars and students. In this connection, a special pamphlet was published in Leipzig in 1884 on the shortcomings of previous concordances with documents of fifteen outstanding scholars of that period, both Hebrew and Christian, testifying to this difficult undertaking. In 1896 the Concordance Hekal Ha-Kodesh was published "complete in all its beauty." In this work Mandelkern "showed not only his mighty work to build such a mighty structure but also his all-embracing knowledge in all the fine points of the Hebrew language and its treasures." Since this work was very expensive at the time and not everyone was able to avail himself of it, Mandelkern published an abridged concordance, Tabnit Hekal, omitting the text of the verses, but in every other respect its value was no less than that of the original.

Mandelkern was an ardent Zionist and took an active part in the "Hovevei Zion" (The Lovers of Zion) movement. Mandelkern attended the First Zionist Congress convened by Dr. Theodore Herzl in Basel, Switzerland in 1897.

In 1899 Mandelkern traveled to the United States for a visit with his son, Israel, who lived in New York City. He also visited other cities in the United States, including Baltimore, Maryland, where his colleague Rabbi, Dr. Schepschel Schaffer, lived. Mandelkern returned to Leipzig in 1901. In 1902, while visiting in Vienna, Austria, he became stricken and was taken to a hospital where he passed

away on Saturday, the 13th Day of Adar II. His body was taken to Leipzig where he was buried on March 22, 1902. Mandelkern was fifty-six years old at the time of his death.

In his last years Mandelkern was engaged in the composition of a Talmudic and Midrashic concordance, part of which is among the many and incomplete works he left in manuscript. He was the author and translator of the following books, poems, etc.:

- Teru' at Melech Rab (The Triumph of a Great King) - ode to Alexander II of Russia
Bath Sheba - Biblical love poem in six parts
Shire Sefath Eber (Poems of the Tongue of Eber) - two parts, Leipzig 1882-1889
Hitzim Shenunim (Sharp Arrows)
Lord Byron's Hebrew Melodies (Shire Yeshrun) Leipzig 1890
Henrich Heine's Jehudah Ben Halevi
Ezra Ha Sofer (Ezra the Scribe) - translated from the German by L. Phillipson, published in Vilna 1866; Leipzig 1901
Dibre Yeme Russiya (A History of Russia) - three volumes written in Hebrew, Warsaw 1875. For this book, written by special order of the Society for Culture for Jews in Russia, the Emperor, Alexander II, presented Mandelkern with a ring set with precious gems.
Bogdam Chmelnitzki - in Russian, a translation of Hanover's Yewon Mezulah, St. Petersburg 1878; Leipzig 1883
Lessing's Fables - in Russian and German, Leipzig 1885
Tamar - a novel in German, 1885, a translation of Mapu's Ahabat Ziyon (Lover of Zion)
The Blind Singer by Vladimir Korlenko, translated into German
Yom Kippur by Vladimir Korlenko, translated into German (Der Gerichstag)
 Hebrew Poems - 1882; Hebrew Poems Part II 1889

Many Sermons for Special Occasions in individual pamphlets

Jewish Suffering - translation of this historical book with introduction and notes,

Odessa 1875; Leipzig 1884

A Grammar of the Russian Language (two parts) Leipzig 1884

The Russian Echo (with Russian-German Glossary) Leipzig 1888

Geography of Russia in Hebrew Biblical language with pictures of contemporary Russia

Historical Maps of Russia with explanations

Hekal Ha-Kodesh (The Holy Temple) After twenty years of diligent study and work on his "Opus Magnum" the great and complete concordance, which surpasses all other concordances of the Bible, was published in Leipzig in 1896. This was followed by an abridged concordance Tabnit Hekal (The Pattern of the Tabernacle) Leipzig 1897.

Mandelkern contributed many articles, poems, satires, epigrams, etc. to the following publications: "Ha Maggid" (The Herald or Purveyor of Information); "Ha Melitz" (The Advocate); "Ha Zefirah" (The Dawn); "Ha Kol" (The Voice); "Ha Kochavim" (The Stars); "Ha Boker" (The Morning); "Ha Asif" (The Gatherer); "Kneseth Yisroel" (The Assembly of Israel); "Ha Kerem" (The Vineyard); "Mi Misrah Mi Ma'Erev" (East and West); "Ha Shahar" (The Dawn); "Ha Measef" (The Collector); "Ha Pardes" (The Garden); "Voskhod" (The Sunrise); "Ha Zeman" (The Times); "Sefer Zikkaron" (Book of Remembrance); "Gan Perochim" (Bouquet of Flowers).

Mandelkern also helped many scholars in their scientific work. He helped Christian David Ginsburg, who published the Great Masora, by supplying him with all the variants that are in the Septuagint and the books of Job, Proverbs, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Five Scrolls.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our beloved Lloyd Street Synagogue is undergoing extensive repairs and renovations that are necessary to keep it from falling down. We will need additional monies to pay for these emergency repairs. If you are able to contribute to either our established Endowment Fund for the Lloyd St. Synagogue or monies that can be directly applied to these emergency repairs, please come forward. A special thanks goes to Jack and Richard Pearlstone for their contribution which enabled us to paint the sanctuary.

Morton S. Oppenheimer

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Abraham Lincoln badge
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ritual slaughtering
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