



Mendele Mocher Sforim

The Wanderings of Benjamin III
Mendele Mocher Sforim

מסעות בנימין השלישי
מנדלה מוכר ספרים

This recording is in Hebrew.

Total running time 4:30:40
 Read by Omri Lernau

Mendele Mocher Sforim (Literary name for Shalom Jacob Abramovitsch) (1835 – 1917, b. Kapulye, Belorussia), one of the first modern Jewish writers, wrote in both Hebrew and Yiddish throughout his career. In his work he described with sharp satirical criticism the traditional life in small Jewish towns, as well as tendencies for assimilation of learned Jews at the time. He was regarded as the “grandfather of Yiddish literature” but the Hebraic-Zionist atmosphere in Odessa influenced him, and in 1886 he turned to writing Hebrew fiction. The hero of “The Travels of Benjamin the III” is a fool in a town full of poor Jews who barely manage to keep themselves alive. Benjamin is struck suddenly by a desire to travel, and joined by Sendrel he sets out to find a Jewish kingdom mentioned in legends of the Ten Lost Tribes. They hardly make it around the block. Barely escaping from their own wives, the two travel only as far as nearby towns. As the novel progresses they fall into the hands of Jewish kidnapers, who take advantage of their naiveté to sell them into the czarist army. They are caught when they try to escape, and the army’s response to this treason is a delicious twist that leaves the reader wondering who exactly is insane – and where precisely the line is drawn between an absurdity and a worthwhile dream. (Summary by Omri Lernau)

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