

THE Zera Emes זרע אמת PROJECT

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CHODESH AV • JULY 17, 2026 • 3 AV 5786

REFUAH SHLEIMA FOR YITZCHAK NUTTA BEN MINDEL

The Zera Emes Project by Rabbi Moshe Hubner was created to honor and share the Torah of over 250 Gedolim who weren't zocheh to descendants of their own. Their legacy lives on through their words of Torah and emunah that continue to inspire and touch countless lives. By bringing their timeless divrei Torah and wisdom to life, we create a powerful connection to the past to help inspire today's generation.

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Ready to Serve

In the daily *Ani Ma'amin*, we declare our belief that the coming of Mashiach *b"b* can occur at any moment. Longing for the immediate rebuilding of the final Beis HaMikdash is not merely an emotional aspiration; it has practical halachic ramifications that apply even today.

The Gemara (*Taanis* 17b) discusses whether a kohen is permitted to drink wine nowadays. One approach is to prohibit it since a kohen who is intoxicated may not perform the *avodah* in the Beis HaMikdash. Because we believe that the Beis HaMikdash can be rebuilt at any moment, the kohanim must always remain fit for *avodah*. They must be prepared to serve immediately. Hence, alcohol is off limits.

The Gemara questions this concern.

After all, an intoxicated person can simply sleep, allowing the effects of the wine to wear off. Even if a kohen was intoxicated when Mashiach arrives, he could take a short nap and then become eligible to serve. The Gemara therefore discusses how much rest is required before a kohen is once again permitted to perform the *avodah*.

Tosafos raises a different difficulty—one that cannot be solved by taking a nap. Most people today are *tamei meis*, having contracted *tumah* through contact with the dead.

Purification from this *tumah* requires a seven-day process that includes being sprinkled with the ashes of the Parah Adumah. If so, why should we be concerned about a kohen drinking wine? In any event, everyone would first need to wait seven days before serving in the Beis HaMikdash,

to rid themselves of the *tumah*, giving ample time for the effects of the wine to disappear.

Tosafos answers that when the majority of the Jewish people are *tamei*, communal offerings may still be brought, since *tumah hutrah* (or *dechuyah*) *b'tzibbur*. Consequently, the *avodah* would not be delayed for seven days. Since corpse impurity would not prevent the *korbanos* from being offered, we must ensure that kohanim remain sober and ready to serve.



NAZIS MISTREATING THE YIDDEN OF SZCZEPRESZYN:
YAD VASHEM

INAUGURATION

Rav Yechiel Avraham Blankman H"yd cites the Imrei Emes in addressing one of the many well-known questions about the miracle of Chanukah.

What was the necessity of finding the single pure flask of oil? As noted above, when the majority of the people—or the vessels involved in the *avodah*—are *tamei*, the *avodah* in the Beis HaMikdash may continue. If so, if all of the oil been contaminated, then contaminated oil could have been used to light the Menorah. What practical

purpose, then, did the miracle of finding the *pure* flask serve? Does Hashem make pointless miracles?

An answer, cited in the name of the Kotzker Rebbe, distinguishes between continuing the regular *avodah* and inaugurating it. The principle that *tumah hutrah* (or *dechuyah*) *b'tzibbur* applies only when an existing *avodah* is continuing. However, when beginning the *avodah* anew—such as at the inauguration of the Beis HaMikdash—both the kohanim and the oil must be completely pure.

Accordingly, the miracle of finding the uncontaminated flask was indeed necessary.

IMREI EMES

The Imrei Emes, however, challenges this explanation from our Tosafos. The Gemara in Taanis discusses the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash and whether kohanim must remain sober in anticipation of its reconstruction. Tosafos answers that when the majority of the Jewish people are *tamei*, communal offerings may still be brought, since *tumah hutrah* (or *dechuyah*) *b'tzibbur*. But – according to the Kotzker Rebbe – a new inauguration requires complete purity. If so, how can Tosafos assume that because the majority

of the Jewish people are *tamei*, the offerings would be immediately brought?

READY-MADE

Rav Yechiel Avraham answers this question. He first cites Rashi (*Sukkah* 41a), who explains that the Third Beis HaMikdash will not be built by human hands but will descend from Heaven fully constructed.

He also cites the Gemara (*Menachos* 110a), where Rav Gidel says in the name of Rav, that Michael, the great angel, stands and offers *korbanos* upon the heavenly Mizbe'ach till today. In this sense, the sacrificial service continues in Heaven even while there is no Beis HaMikdash on earth.

Accordingly, when Mashiach arrives and the Beis HaMikdash descends complete from Heaven, there will be no need for a new inauguration. Since no inaugural service is required, the rule that when the majority of the Jewish people are *tamei*, communal offerings may still be brought, since *tumah hutrah* (or *dechuyah*) *b'tzibbur* will immediately be applicable. Therefore, as Tosafos explains, even kohanim who are *tamei* will initially be permitted to perform the *avodah* (and therefore kohanim must remain sober to be ready to serve).

SHEHBRI SHAN

Szczebrzeszyn (שעברעשין or שצ'בז'שין) is southeast of Lublin.

The name Szczebrzeszyn is infamous for being very difficult to pronounce for non-native speakers.

Between 3,000 and 4,000 Jews lived there when the German Army occupied the town in 1939. Isaac Bashevis Singer's grandmother was from the town. Singer mentions his grandmother Tema in his autobiographical novel 'In My Father's Court'. On October 14, 1939—in spite of the fact it was the Shabbos the Germans ordered the Jews to clean the streets for the entire day. They treated them brutally by cutting or tearing off their beards, cursing them, and beating them. Several hundred Jews from Kalish were resettled there. There were six separate transports to Belzec between May and November 1942—more than 5,500 Jewish men, women and children were immediately murdered. One Polish couple did shelter a Jewish family and were named Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem after the war. In 2004, Philip Bibel (1909–2006), brother of painter Leon Bibel, published his *Tales of the Shtetl*, a memoir of early 20th century life in the shtetl of Szczebrzeszyn.

Odem M'eish (1:300) cites the *Sefer Zikaron Ostrovitzer's* witness account of when the Germans *ym"sh* murdered R. Yechiel, Rochela, Meir, and Meir's wife along with 180 other yidden. They were told to dig a large ditch and to descend into it. R. Yechiel requested to say a few inspirational words and for 20 minutes he davened with them and recited *viduy*. As he stated the words *shema yisrael* they began shooting the people inside. The pit was then covered, although they knew some of the people were still alive, *H"yd*.



SZCZEBRZESZYN SHUL, NOW COMMUNITY CENTER

ר' יחיאל
אברהם
ב"ר שמואל
בלנקמן הי"ד

R. Yechiel Avraham

Blankman (1890 - 11

Cheshvon, 1942).

Born in Ostrowiec

Świętokrzyski, Poland.

R. Yechiel became

a close student of

the city's renowned

Rav, R. Meir Yechiel

Holshtok (1851-1928),

affectionately referred

to as 'the Ostrovitzer'. He

married Rochela Braun,

daughter of R. Shmuel

Shlomo (d. 1934), the

Rav of Łuków. R. Shmuel

Shlomo (a Radomsker

Chasid, who maintained

a close relationship

with the Ostrovitzer) led

a Yeshiva in Łuków, and

his son-in-law R. Yechiel

(despite being in his

early 20s) was appointed

as its Rosh Yeshiva.

When the Rabbinical

post of Szczebrzeszyn

became vacant,

the Ostrovitzer warmly

recommended his prize

student R. Yechiel for the

position, a role he filled

with distinction until

his untimely murder

by the Nazis. While

R. Blankman did not

publish any volumes,

he was a frequent

contributor to Polish

and Hungarian Torah

journals. R. Yechiel,

along with his wife and

two sons (as well as his

parents and virtually

all of his siblings) were

massacred during the

Holocaust years. His

elder son, Meir, was

renowned as one of the

prize students of R. Meir

Shapira (1887-1933) at

Chachmei Lublin.