

BAUM Majer (1845 or 1848- 1938), known as Majer Biczner, a charity activist, one of the most well-known, religious Jews in Częstochowa. He was born in Żarki (most probably no birth certificate was ever created), the son of Lewek and Laja née Rozenblum. Baum was a wealthy man, owning a house at ul. Senatorska 20. He came to Częstochowa in the second half of the 1850s (when after the death of her husband, his mother married the widower Jakub Tenebaum in 1857).

He was known for his active role, over many years, in charitable organisations. As the *shammes* (sexton) of *Machzikei Hadas*, he ran its *Talmud Torah*, a religious school for children from the poorest families. He worked in the *Hachnasat Orchim* (shelter for travellers) and *Malbish Arumim* (clothing for the poor) societies. Over many years, until his death, as *gabbai*, he ran the *Chevra Kadisha* burial society. He was one of the most well-known members of that society. At funerals, he collected donations in a box marked “*Tzedakah tatzila mimoves*” (*Alms save from death*).

His authority emanated from the importance and position as the “eldest”, which was contributed to by his patriarchal appearance. He was also known for his attitude towards death, which he regarded as an extension of earthly life. He was unafraid of the next world and the Angel of Death. He was ready, at any moment, for his call. During his own lifetime, he prepared for himself *tachrichim* (funeral shrouds) and a *matzevah* (grave headstone), which he kept in his apartment. He died on 19th March 1938 in Częstochowa (at ul. Senatorska 16) and was buried in the local cemetery (grave 1904 I).

His wife (whom he married in 1868 in Częstochowa) was Itta née Windman (1846?-1916). She was also known for her charitable works. They had five children - Lewek (1872-), Hersz Wolf 1878-1905), Uszer (1881-), Szulim (1884-) and Liba (1887-).

Czenstochower Jidn, p. V; Orenstein, *Churban Czenstochow*, p. 362.

Wiesław Paszkowski