



IBEX – Israel’s Best EXperience

Racheli Kreisberg

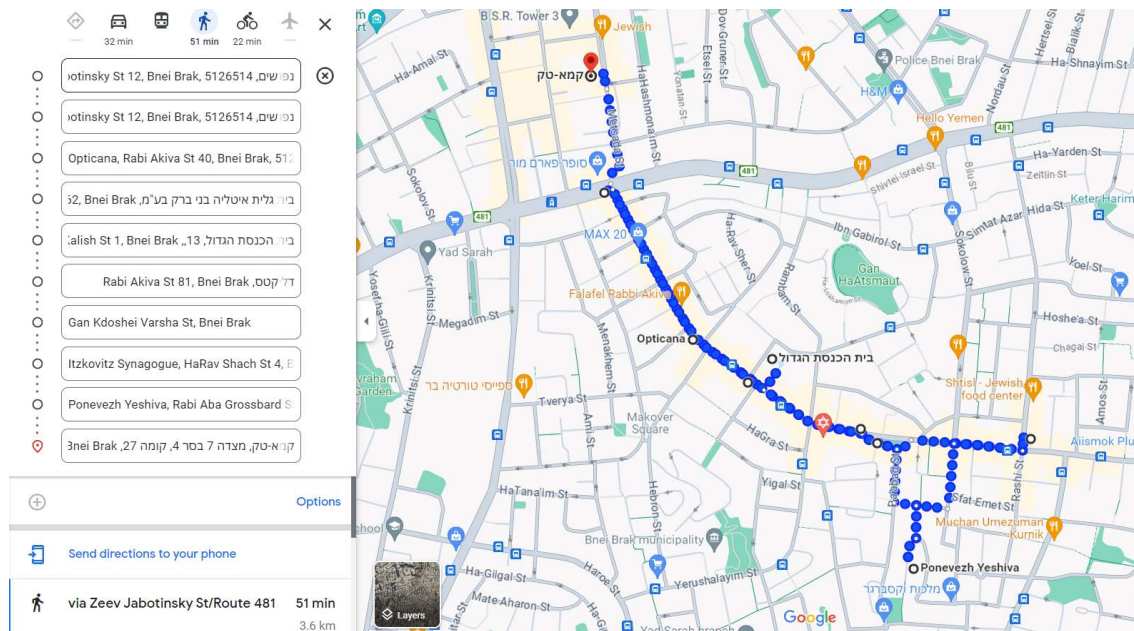
racheli@ibexperts.com, 054-4411768

Bnei Barak – innovation, history, culture and religion

By Racheli Kreisberg, September 2023

Preparations in advance:

- Comfortable shoes or sandals, modest clothes, hat, sun lotion, water
- There are very few toilets en route – should be taken into account



The tour will start from the Zeev Jabotinsky/Rabbi Akiva junction in Bnei Barak and will continue till the Itzkovitz synagogue and/or Ponevezh Yeshiva. From here, we will walk back to Jabotinsky road and end the tour at KamaTech.

Brief history:

Bnei Barak was established in 1924 (Fourth Aliya) as an ultra-religious (Haredi) agricultural settlement (Moshava) by Itzhak (Itshale) Gersztenkorn and a few families from Warsaw, Poland. Itshale was born in 1891 in Poland to Petachya and Frumat Gersztenkorn. He had 9 brothers and sisters. He was married to Sara Lea and had 10 children. He passed away in 1961 and is buried in Bnei Barak.





IBEX – Israel’s Best EXperience

Racheli Kreisberg

racheli@ibexperts.com, 054-4411768



Bnei Barak was situated on the "Black Street" which linked Tel Aviv and Petach Tikva. Its agricultural nature included, among others, orange groves, cows and cotton. It was Itshale's private initiative, for which he managed to raise funding from the Hassid of Gur in Poland who was related to Agudat Yisrael, as well as from Ha'Po'el Ha'Mizrachi. The funding enabled him to purchase 1,020 dunam (nowadays Bnei Barak is 7,000 dunam) from its neighboring village El Hiria, which preserved the name Ibn Abrik.

Origin of Name

Bnei Barak is named after the biblical Bnei Barak which is mentioned in the Joshua 19, psalm 45 in a long list of towns within the allotment of the tribe of Dan:

מ לְמִטָּה בְּנֵי-דָן. לְמִשְׁפַּחָתָם. יֵצֵא. הַגּוֹרָל הַשְּׂבִיעִי.	40 The seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families.
מֵא נִיהַי. גְּבוּל נַחֲלָתָם--צָרְעָה וְאַשְׁתָּאוֹל. וְעִיר שְׁמֶשׁ.	41 And the border of their inheritance was Zorah, and Eshtaol, and Ir-shemesh;
מב וְשַׁעֲלַבִּין וְאַיְלֹן. וַיִּתְּלָה.	42 and Shaalabbin, and Aijalon, and Ithlah;
מג וְאַיְלֹן וְתַמְנָתָה. וְעַקְרוֹן.	43 and Elon, and Timnah, and Ekron;
מד וְאַלְתֵּקָה וְגִבְתוֹן. וּבַעֲלָת.	44 and Eltekeh, and Gibbethon, and Baalath;
מה וַיְהִי וּבְנֵי-בְרַק. וְגַת-רִמּוֹן.	45 and Jehud, and Bene-berak, and Gath-rimmon;

It is also mentioned in the Haggadah of Passover as the city where the 5 Rabbis convened:

At the Seder in Bnai Brak attended by Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrkanus, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, **Rabbi Akiva** and Rabbi Tarphon, we're told, "they were telling of the exodus all night, until their student came..."¹

¹ [Rabbi Akiva's seder | Passover haggadah by Miriam Shaviv \(haggadot.com\)](http://Rabbi Akiva's seder | Passover haggadah by Miriam Shaviv (haggadot.com))



IBEX – Israel's Best EXperience

Racheli Kreisberg

racheli@ibexperts.com, 054-4411768

Rabbi Akiva street

The Moshava had a gate which no longer exists, nor does the well, both of which were situated near today's Jabotinsky street. Its main street is called Rabbi Akiva Street, along which we will walk during the tour. On Rabbi Akiva #40 there is an "Opticana" optometrist shop which refers to a psalm that mentions eyesight.



The road is quite dirty as this is not the essence of the religious Jewish life of Bnei Barak. There are also hardly any plaques commemorating historic events and/or public figures.





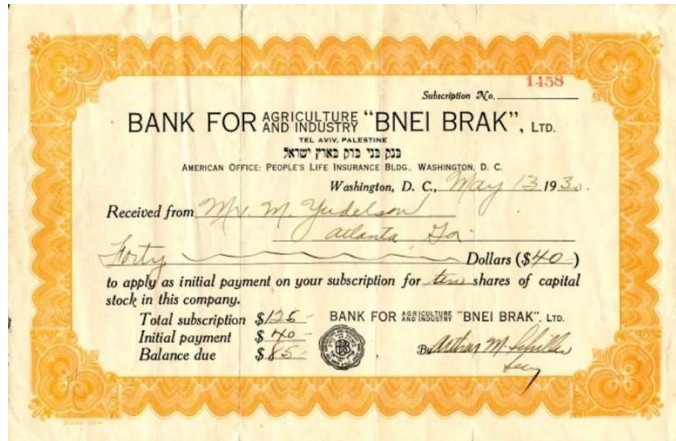
IBEX – Israel’s Best EXperience

Racheli Kreisberg

racheli@ibexperts.com, 054-4411768

At the corner of the streets Rabbi Akiva and Ehezzer stood the Bank for Agriculture and Industry of Bnei Barak² which was established by on the Moshava's founders: Haim Perl. His great-grandson, the journalist Daniel Pearl was beheaded by ISIS on the 1st of Feb 2002. His last words were:

"My name is Daniel Pearl. I'm a Jewish-American from Encino, California, USA. I come from, uh, on my father's side the family is Zionist. My father's Jewish, my mother's Jewish, I'm Je wish. My family follows Judaism. We've made numerous family visits to Israel".³



In 1928, the **Old Great Synagogue** was completed, and the village committee celebrated its inauguration by presenting statistics noting its development over the past four years. Bnei Brak, with a population of about 800 residents, covered about 2,000 dunams, including about 800 dunams which were citrus groves.



In 1962 the New Great Synagogue was built.

² [Bank for Agriculture and Industry "Bnei Brak", Ltd. - Tel Aviv, Palestine 1930 - Scripophily.com | Collect Stocks and Bonds | Old Stock Certificates for Sale | Old Stock Research | RM Smythe |](#)

³ [Daniel Pearl - Wikipedia](#)



IBEX – Israel's Best EXperience

Racheli Kreisberg

racheli@ibexperts.com, 054-4411768

Lunch

Along Rabbi Akiva Street there are many delicious food take aways, that could serve as sites to be visited during a culinary tour. One of these is "Delicatessen" דליקטס. Others are "Maadanei Zehava", "Shloimele" and more.

Rabbi Akiva street - continued

Itzkovitch synagogue⁴ is one of the most active synagogues in the world, with prayer services taking place around the clock in multiple rooms. There are an average of 17,000 visitors a day. The synagogue is named for Zvi Itzkovitch, the original owner of the house, who wanted to stop traffic passing by his home on Shabbat. He took advantage of a law requiring that streets containing synagogues be closed on Shabbat by declaring one room in his house a synagogue.

Ponevezh Yeshiva and Rabbi Shakh

Ponevezh Yeshiva, often pronounced as Ponevitch Yeshiva is a yeshiva founded in 1908 in Ponevezh, Lithuania, by Rabbi Yitzhak Yaakov Rabinovich. Upon the death of the founder, Rabbi Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman (also known as the Ponevezher Rav) became the leader of the Yeshiva. Upon the entry of the Nazis to Ponevezh, the yeshiva was destroyed, and all students were murdered. The yeshiva was re-established in Bnei Brak in 1944. The yeshiva has over three thousand students, including those of affiliated institutions, and is considered one of the leading Litvish yeshivas in Israel.



KamaTech

Kama-Tech is a social project that was established by entrepreneurs from the Haredi community to integrate Haredim into the forefront of high-tech. The initiative is supported by private donors in Israel and the US and several Israeli high-tech leaders.

Throughout the years Kama-Tech has specialized in helping Haredi entrepreneurs who set up start-ups, in conducting tech training programs, and in assisting Haredi candidates who sought to join the best high-tech companies in Israel, all while maintaining a strict Haredi lifestyle on the one hand and participating in the forefront of Israeli high-tech industry, on the other.

Kama-Tech works with over a hundred different entities in the high-tech world: leading international high-tech companies as well as Israeli growth companies and venture capital funds, including Cisco, Microsoft, Google, Citibank, Western Digital, Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Cadence, Intel, Mobileye, Check Point, Amdocs, Outbrain, Tabula, Wix, Plarium, ironSource, Orcam, Pitango, Canaan partners, and more.

KamaTech received the blessing of the Haredi Rabbis and is one of the economic engines in Bnei Barak, such as the industrial zone of Bnei Barak, the Coca Cola factory and the HiTech building. All of these contribute financially to the economic development of one of the most densely populated cities in the world.

⁴ [Itzkovitch Synagogue - Wikipedia](#)