

נח יצחק בן אליהו בלר:
י"ד מרחשון תשל"א (1970)
– י"ח מנחם אב תשס"ז
(2007)

THE Zera Emes זרע אמת PROJECT

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RE'EH • AUGUST 7, 2026 • 24 AV 5786



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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The Minyan Factory

Every city has a landmark; some places are special enough to have more than one.

We have already discussed the [Ledermans](#) and their enduring Zera Emes legacy through the Lederman Shul, established to perpetuate the vision of the [Chazon Ish](#). Just a short distance away stands another remarkable monument to that same legacy: Itzkowitz. It is more than a landmark—it is a living heartbeat.

Like Lederman, Itzkowitz was born from the guidance of the Chazon Ish. Unlike almost any other shul in the world, however, it never closes.

Standing on the bustling corner of Rabbi Akiva and HaRav Shach Streets, Itzkowitz is what Bnei Brak simply calls the *shteiblach*. But that modest label hardly captures its reality. Day and night, without interruption, minyan follows minyan. Every few minutes another room fills, another chazzan begins, another group answers *Amen*. As one tefillah concludes, another is already underway.

For decades, estimates placed the daily attendance at well over 15,000 *mispallelim*. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, its rooms echo with the sounds of davening and Torah learning. It is difficult to identify another shul anywhere in the world where so

many tefillos have ascended to Heaven.

It is impossible to calculate the *zechusim* that continues to accrue to R' Zvi Itzkowitz. A man who simply wanted to preserve the sanctity of Shabbos gave Klal Yisrael something far greater than he could have imagined—a home where countless Jews have poured out their hearts – and have been answered, generation after generation. Itzkowitz is undoubtedly one of if not the most-davened shul in the world. His intentions were pure and his rewards are eternal.

VASIKIN

The shul's life was shaped not only by its founders but by the quiet individuals who kept it running. Among them was R' Aharon Nachum Militzky (25 Nisan 2010), a devoted talmid of Rav Shach, who served for many years as one of the gabbaim. His beloved *vasikin* minyan had begun years earlier in Halperin's with R' Zev Eidelman before relocating to Itzkowitz, closer to Rav Shteinman's home. Even after the move, the minyan carefully preserved its original customs. Each weekday after Shacharis, the participants learned Mishnayos together; on Shabbos they studied *Chayei Adam* (see Mishnah Berurah, 155:1). Such details, almost unnoticed by the outside world, became part of the quiet rhythm that gave Itzkowitz its unique character.



R' ZEV EIDELMAN (RIGHT)
WITH HIS BROTHER, R' LIPA

ר' זאב (וועלול) בן ר' אברהם

R' Velvel Eidelman (1914 – 6 Teves 1999) was born in Brisk to a very chashuv mishpachah. A brother, R' Shraga Feivel married the sister of R' Shmuel Greineman (1889 - 1957), who married a sister of the Chazon Ish. His family's reputation helped him become close with the Brisker Rav. He studied under the Imrei Moshe until his passing in 1930, and then learned in Kamenitz one on one with R' Baruch Ber, until 1936. In 1937 he moved to Eretz Yisrael, and studied in Lomza in Petach Tikvah while R' Chazkel was still there. In 1947 he married Chana Levi (28 Tishrei 1987) from Yerushalayim, who later became a michaneches to hundreds of students.

From the moment the Brisker Rav arrived in Eretz Yisrael, he revived his closeness and served him in any way he could. As he did as well with R' Chazkel when he returned to Eretz Yisrael. He had the look of an angel and did chesed anonymously. He uplifted people and felt true joy at other's simchos.

TORAH

Nor was Itzkowitz merely a place to daven. Throughout the decades, its walls absorbed thousands upon thousands of hours of Torah. In the 1940s, Rav Nachum Meir (Tzibulnik) Karelitz, who married the sister of the Chazon Ish, delivered a Mishnayos shiur there. In later years, renowned maggidai shiur such as Rav Reuven Karlenstein author of *Yechi Reuvein*; Rav Yovel Yosef Ordentlich author of *Peninei Nefesh*; Rav Tzvi Kroizer author of *Bi'er Tzvi*; and Rav Baruch Rosenblum drew eager audiences who crowded into its rooms to hear words of Torah.

Even the smallest policies reflected the atmosphere of the shul. The longtime gabbai, R' Yitzchak Sheinin, insisted that the popular weekly Torah *gilyonos* never be distributed inside the rooms where people were davening. They were placed outside, ensuring that the printed page would never compete with Chazaras HaShatz.

MITZVOS

There was a similar sensitivity regarding aliyos. Whenever an aliyah remained unsold on a Monday or Thursday, R' Avraham Gombo would quietly purchase it himself. "It is not fitting," he would say simply, "for a mitzvah to have no one who wants it." A single sentence, spoken almost in passing, revealed an entire worldview.

TEFILLOS

Itzkowitz is so unique that its very existence has found its way into the pages of sefarim. Its nonstop cycle of tefillah has generated not only remarkable stories but fascinating halachic discussions—questions that could only arise in a shul where the minyanim never cease.

R' Yinun Chori (1925–2004) once puzzled those around him. After finishing davening with one minyan, he quietly walked into the next room and joined another. When that minyan concluded, he moved on to a third.

Someone finally asked why.

"Recently I was ill," he explained. "I couldn't leave



ITZKOVITCH

my home and had to daven alone. I missed so many opportunities to answer *Kaddish*, *Barchu*, and *Amen*. Now that I've recovered and find myself in a place where another minyan is always beginning, I'm trying to make up for what I missed."

HALACHOS

The shul's endless succession of minyanim has also produced halachic questions found almost nowhere else. On Chanukah, for example, the menorah is customarily lit in shul before Maariv with the appropriate brachos. But what happens when that Maariv ends and another begins just moments later? Should the menorah be extinguished and relit for the next minyan? Are the brachos recited again for those who were not present at the first lighting? Does it matter whether the original lighting took place within the previous half hour? These unusual questions are discussed in *Shemen Afarsimon* (2:16) who uses Itzkowitz as his example.

Similarly, if a bris is held in one of the shul's rooms, does the exemption from saying *Tachanun* extend to the many minyanim that follow in that same room throughout the day? This, too, became a practical question in Itzkowitz (see *Shaarei Teshuvah* Orach Chaim 132:10).

In most batei knesses, these questions would remain purely theoretical. In Itzkowitz, they became part of everyday life.

In Bnei Brak, everyone benefits from this living heartbeat. The Itzkowitz' Zera Emes legacy is eternal.

ר' צבי ב"ר שלום איצקוביץ

R. Zvi Itzkowitz (1876 – 25 Tishrei 1941). His origins are somewhat unclear. While many accounts assume he was a Ger Tzedek, this is explicitly rejected by Bertha (Bamberger) Yavetz (1914–2016), who was personally acquainted with R. Itzkowitz, and remembered him as a *Ba'al Teshuva* rather than a convert. Yet another source, the Israeli journalist Avraham Rotem (1941–1998), writing in 1964, refers to him as a descendant of converts. The surname Itzkowitz, as well as his father's Jewish given name (Sholom), would seem to indicate that he was not personally a convert to Judaism. R. Zvi lived in Bnei Brak during the Mandatory period with his wife, Malka (1881–1977), and was deeply troubled by the automobiles that traveled past his home each Shabbos. Upon consulting the Chazon Ish (1878–1953), the Itzkowitzes designated their home as a Shul (to the extent of moving into a shack in the rear courtyard), thereby triggering a Mandatory policy forbidding vehicular traffic on Shabbos on thoroughfares that passed by synagogues. As the law technically only applied while actual services were being held, the 'Itzkowitz' (as the Shul is colloquially known) began to offer multiple *minyanim* for each *Tefilah*, ultimately blossoming into one of the busiest and most frequented Shuls on the globe. After R. Zvi was tragically struck by a car in 1941 and succumbed to his injuries, the Shul was officially named *Tiferes Zvi* in his honor.