

The tour of Emmanuel, led by Eliezer Biller, community *askan* and developer.

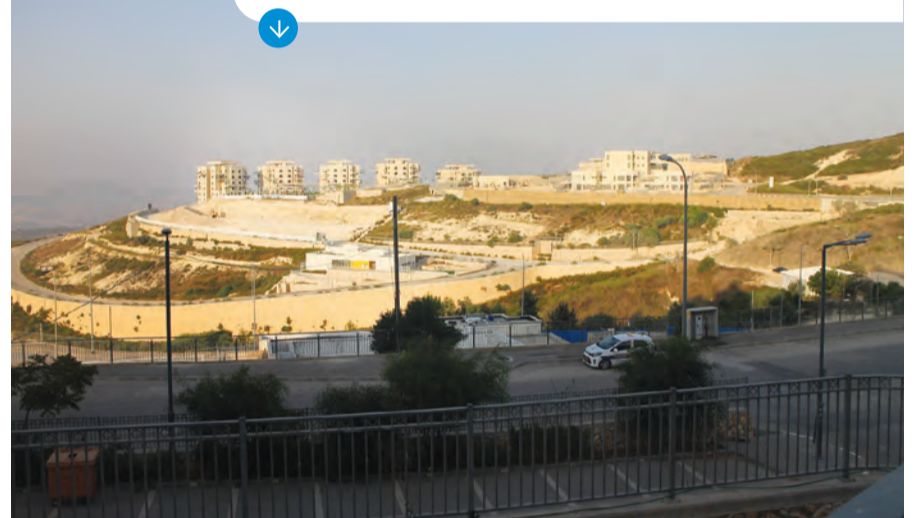


The Matan Nachliel shul in Carmiel.

Kollel in the Ohel Moshe shul, Givat Hamoreh, Afula.



Housing and educational institutions in Nof Hagalil for the Belz, Toldos Avraham Yitzchak and litvishe communities, among others.



Emmanuel, Afula, Carmiel and Nof Hagalil Visited by *Olim* Reps Seeking Housing, *Kehillos*

A team representing *olim* last Sunday visited four of the smaller *chareidi kehillos* in the north of Eretz Yisrael to see the communities and learn about housing and educational opportunities.

The group's first stop was Emmanuel, whose population jumped from 600 to 1,100 families over the past few years. The tour was conducted by Eliezer Biller, a local *askan* originally from Montreal and Flatbush; and by Daniel Epstein, formerly from the Washington, D.C., area and a longtime member of the 30-family litvishe *kehillah* in Emmanuel.

The group visited the local *cheder*, where they got an overview of the city's *chinuch* options, and saw the nearby litvishe shul and *kollel*. They then saw a model home, the first in a row of spacious duplexes under construction, all with gorgeous views of the surrounding mountains. They continued on to the city council building, where Rabbi Biller gave a more detailed presentation.

The second stop was the neighborhood of Giv'at Hamoreh, Afula, where a significant percentage of the 350 *frum* families are English

speakers. The group first visited longtime resident Rabbi Menachem Gold, a founder of several local *mosdos* and a member of the Afula City Council, who spoke enthusiastically about the future he envisions for *chutznikim* in Afula.

The group continued to the home of Binyamin Stamler, a native of England, who told them how welcoming and friendly the community is, and how affordable the housing is. A typical view from the houses on his block includes the majestic Har Tavor, mentioned in the fourth *perek* of *Sefer Shoftim*.

They then met with Binyamin Herskovits from Canada just outside the *safrus* room he built in his backyard, where he has a view of the Lower Galilee mountains. Rabbi Herskovits shared how his children have successfully integrated into the local *mosdos*.

Continuing on to the central shul, Ohel Moshe, they saw the two *kollelim* and spoke with *kehillah* members Rabbi Yehuda Orzel from Manchester and Rabbi Shmuel Ribiat from Baltimore about the *kehillah* and its potential for absorbing more

chutznikim.

The third stop was the exclusively *chareidi* neighborhood of Har Yona Gimmel in the city of Nof Hagalil (formerly Natzeret Illit). The group got an overview of the community from Rabbi Shmuel Rand, a son of American *olim*. As an inclusive community, Rabbi Rand sees much potential for the absorption of *chutznikim* in the local *kehillah*.

The fourth and last stop was the city of Carmiel. As a relatively newly built city, it stood out for its beauty. The group got a driving tour of the various housing styles from real estate broker Ms. Tamar Sobel, an American member of the city's *chareidi kehillah*. She spoke about how the Americans there are integrated with the Israelis in one *kehillah*, and how the atmosphere is one of out-of-town simplicity. They got a more in-depth overview of the city from an American Rav of one of the local shuls, Rav Ephraim Schwartz. He pointed out that the 300 *chareidi* families, who make up only a small percentage of the city, live peacefully with the others, to the extent that secular residents are comfortable with having a deputy

mayor who is *chareidi*.

"Each of the cities we visited had a different flavor or style, but what they had in common is that they offered very affordable housing, greenery, fresh air, beautiful views, and a tight-knit, dedicated *kehillah*. They offered a more wholesome existence focusing more on family, *kollel* and community. There are less conveniences and less distractions in these communities, and they each require a higher level of integration into the Israeli system," said tour participant Rabbi Avraham Shusteris of Beit Shemesh, formerly from Monsey. Rabbi Shusteris represented the Naava Kodesh organization, which helps direct potential *olim* from U.S. Torah communities.

Many participants noted the importance of getting different perspectives of a community, praising the fact that this tour introduced them to numerous local residents in each of the four cities visited. "Getting a broader picture is key to understanding how things really work in the various *kehillos*, and properly assessing which *kehillah* would be a good fit," said one.