

ISRAEL ROUNDUP

New Trend: Chareidi Tourism Combines Holy Sites and Kehillos

With the development of many out-of-town *kehillos* in Eretz Yisrael, as these pages frequently document, a new kind of tourism is also emerging.

In May 2017, Rabbanim from various *chareidi kehillos* in Israel's north wrote a letter encouraging people to come see for themselves these communities which have developed over the past few years. The intent was for people to gain a firsthand impression of places where many *bnei Torah* families have established themselves, and where there is potential for additional families to join. While the call was directed to those currently living in the *chareidi* centers of Eretz Yisrael, it seems the message has filtered down to *chareidi* tourists as well.

The north of Eretz Yisrael has an abundance of historical sites

that naturally attract tourists, but recently there has been growing demand on the part of *chutznik* visitors to see these new *kehillos* as well. While some are pulled by a natural curiosity, others are seeing if they can envision themselves joining such a community, as other *chutznikim* like them have already done.

In response to this growing demand, Meir Eisenman, a licensed Israel tour guide from the Old City who grew up in Passaic, New Jersey, made a preparatory trip this past Tuesday with fellow guides and shared his insights with *Hamodia*.

"While I know Eretz Yisrael well, *baruch Hashem*, visiting these *chareidi* neighborhoods 'off the beaten track' was an enlightening and eye-opening experience for me," said Eisenman.

He mentioned the nice out-of-

town atmosphere they all have, their affordability and possible suitability for *olim*, — and the unique characteristics of each one.

The trip with his fellow guides included a combination of monuments of the past and several *kehillos* in Nof HaGalil and Afula.

For example, the neighborhood of Givat Hamoreh, Afula, with its growing *bnei Torah kehillah*, is near the mountaintop village of Dahi above, with a view to the site of the Ishah HaShunamis' home right below, a 15-minute walk from the edge of the neighborhood. This is the claim of Rabbeinu Ashturi HaParchi (one of the Rishonim, in his sefer, *Kaftor vaFerach*), who researched Eretz Yisrael extensively.

In Nof HaGalil as well, there is a burgeoning *chareidi kehillah* in the Har Yona neighborhood. Kaftor VaFerach notes that Yonah HaNavi

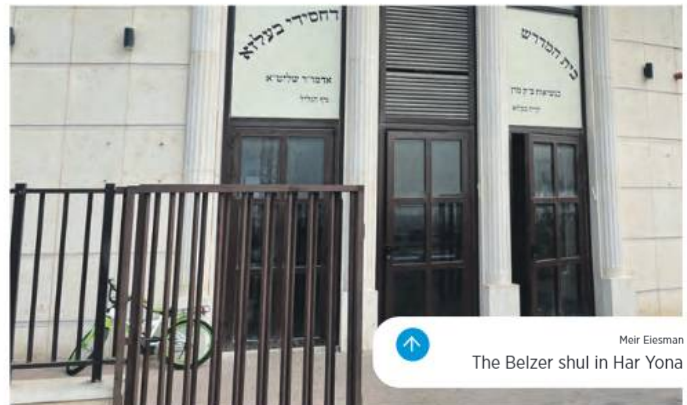
lived in this area — thus the name of the neighborhood. Residents built a *mikveh* based on a natural spring, of which there are many in the area.

The central Ashkenazi shul in an older part of Nof HaGalil, which serves the young *chareidi kehillah* there, was built years ago by Holocaust survivors. Its roof was originally held up by a single support beam — an impressive architectural feat. Its 500 seats served 100 attendees in its early days — the other seats were bought by these survivors for their relatives who were murdered by the Nazis, *Hy"d*. This explains the small lamppost by each seat — meant to serve as a "*ner neshamah*," as well as the adjacent Holocaust museum. Today, instead of being a silent monument to the past, the shul is filled with the sounds of Torah and *tefillah*.



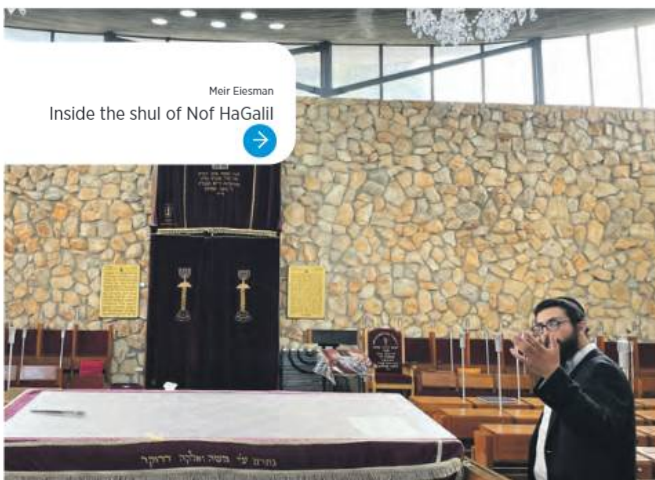
Meir Eisenman

The house of the Ishah HaShunamis



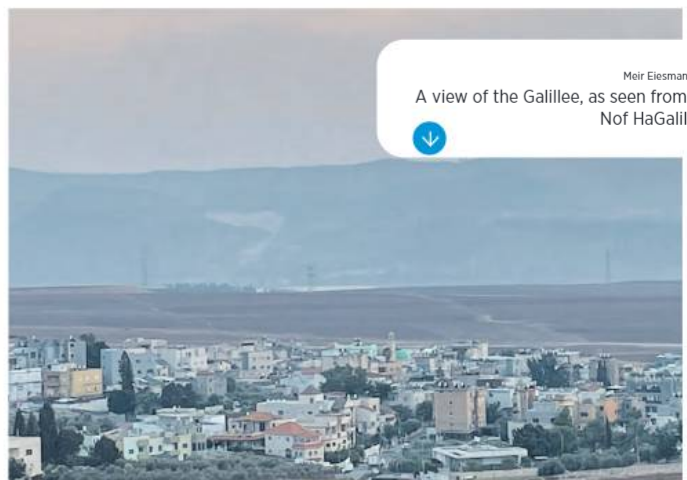
Meir Eisenman

The Belzer shul in Har Yona



Meir Eisenman

Inside the shul of Nof HaGalil



Meir Eisenman

A view of the Galilee, as seen from Nof HaGalil