

A Meeting Place in Nokdim



background and religious belief can succeed in breaking down long-standing barriers in Israeli society.

Meeting Place prides itself on its guided tours in the Biblical Heartland. In the past three years, 800 people took part in some 150 guided tours, educating participants about the settlement movement, as well as the geography and history of the area. Meeting Place would like to increase the number of tours to at least 6-8 a month. The goal is to reach out to peripheral, low-income Russian-speaking communities that often suffer from cultural isolation and are not connected to Jewish or Israeli life. Subsidies are needed in order to accommodate tour busses for these deprived communities. Meeting Place would also like to attract the Russian speaking public from abroad. Efforts are directed at Jewish, Christian and secular tourists alike. The idea is to encourage a refocus from considering Israel as a resort, to seeing Israel as a chance to return to the Land, an opportunity of spiritual rebirth.

These goals necessitate investing a great deal on the organization's internet site, in consulting, designing and advertising, in a network which can educate and attract. Articles need to be written and published on the site, through embassies and popular Russian sites and social networks. Cameras need to be purchased; film clips need to be created. The internet site must be promoted aggressively.

Meeting Place also organizes seminars and educational groups, and the publication of a newspaper, all chances for discussions and forums between teachers and students about topics on social, religious or political issues.

Meeting Place is successfully encouraging a meeting of minds, hearts and souls, among the Russian Jewish population in Israel. Help promote acceptance through knowledge; help melt down barriers by creating unity.

Israeli society is an amalgam of many different groups of people, each with their own background and cultural and religious assumptions. The Russian-speaking Jews of Israel came to Israel after decades of separation from Judaism, as a result of the oppression of communism. So many remain disconnected from their roots and unfamiliar with Jewish tradition, the history of their people and the state of Israel. Some of them have begun the long return home, have studied more about Judaism and have adopted a religious life-style. Others are very secular. This can create tension within a family, a community, or even within society as a whole.

Meeting Place was founded in February 2007. The main focus of its activities is direct dialogue between the various groups, with the goal of attaining unity, on the basis of everlasting Jewish values. One of the founders of this group is a young religious woman of Russian origin from Nokdim, a community built on tolerance and broadmindedness. Nokdim, located in the Gush Etzion region, was founded 20 years ago by a mixed group of religious and secular families. Today there is a flourishing community of 150 families representing a broad cross section of immigrants from the Former Soviet Union, France, Spain, Argentina, Italy, and the U.S., as well as veteran Israelis. Nokdim is a prime example of how a community based on differences in

Internet Site Improvement	\$2,970
Tour Bus Subsidies	3,570
TOTAL FUNDS REQUIRED:	\$6,540

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