

## 'Dr. Aliyah' and the Rabbi Practice What They Preach

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(Israelnationalnews.com) Dr. Rivkah Lambert Adler has been preaching for several years the importance of moving to Israel, using as a forum her own Baltimore, Maryland e-mail list, the largest and possibly only private effort to encourage Jews to make "aliyah." The Adlers practiced what Rivkah preaches.

She, her husband Rabbi Elan Adler and their two daughters [joined 228 other newcomers](#) to Israel on the first of several summer aliyah flights sponsored by Nefesh B'Nefesh (NBN), in coordination with the Jewish Agency.

The 9/11 Al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on the United States were Rivkah's "wake-call" to move to Israel after she began thinking about a future burial place in Baltimore. "It was like the Almighty bopped me over the head and spoke to me in such a loud way that our lives in the United States are temporary and that we have to leave," Rivkah says.

Although Rabbi Adler was born in Israel, he left with his parents--Holocaust survivors--at the age of six and ended up with a very comfortable position as spiritual leader of the Moses Montefiore-Anshe Emunah synagogue in Baltimore, which boasts one of the highest percentages of Orthodox Jews in the country.

His congregation respected him for his wit and wisdom – and Zionism. In his farewell sermon two weeks ago, Rabbi Adler came up with a solution for the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. "I would blast matza into that gusher- it stops everything for eight days; it would do the trick. If that wouldn't work, I would put [Helen Thomas](#) in the opening, and see what happens." Thomas, the "dean of White House reporters," recently was fired for saying that Jews in Israel should go back "home" to Germany and the United States. She later said she was referring only to Jews in Judea and Samaria.

Rivkah, who is an educator, recalls that her husband "was not ready," and four years ago, she began the Baltimore *Chug Aliyah* [Aliyah group] e-mail list "as a way to channel my aliyah frustrations."



After the outbreak in 2000 of the Second Intifada, also known as the Oslo War, she says "we thought we could do more for Israel than just buying hummus, and we decided to explore the idea of buying an apartment in Israel, which is an investment. We wanted to plant roots without making a commitment." The Adlers chose the national religious community of Mitzpeh Nevo in Maaleh Adumim (pictured), less than a 10-minute drive from Jerusalem, located on the road to the Dead Sea.

Their thoughts on Israel were not lost on the Adlers' oldest daughter Ariella, who traveled to Israel "temporarily" to learn in a girls' seminary. "Three months after she began with the intention of returning to learn at Stern College in New York, she called on the phone and said she was staying in Israel. We were very supportive," says her mother.

The Adlers actually had planned to make the big move in 2013, when their younger daughter Shani is to finish high school, but the pain of living in the Diaspora was too much for Rivkah to bear. Rabbi Adler told her, "Whenever you cannot bear it any more, tell me and we will move."

Rabbi Adler recalls that he "realized Rivkah needed to go and that Israel is not Madagascar or Mozambique, but combined with this, there was her desire and my feeling that this is where Jews should go. My inner 'sabrah' [native Israeli] came out more and more in each trip."

Parting with his congregation may have been the most difficult part of the move to Israel, particular for Rabbi Adler's devoted synagogue members. "There was no anger, but there is a bit of sadness because we would not be there for many families' simchos [happy events]," said Rabbi Adler.

"Coming home" has not stopped Rivkah from advocating aliyah. She continues to monitor her e-mail site and intends to forward or bring to Baltimore material from the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel (AACI) and books on Zionism.

Rabbi Adler noted that he always wondered why the Torah relates to the Jews getting to Israel but does not include their entering. "Maybe every single Jew has to finish the Torah by deciding to make their way to Israel," he suggested. The Torah describes the People of Israel, and every individual must complete the process."

In his farewell sermon, Rabbi Adler said, "American rabbis who make aliyah are few and far between." He quoted former New York City Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, now chief rabbi of the 10,000-member community of Efrat.

"If Israel is your Disneyland, then come only when the sun is shining," Rabbi Riskin said. "But if Israel is your Motherland, then come when your mother needs you."



(Picture: Farewell parting from several members) Rabbi Adler told his congregants, "We are going to Israel because our motherland needs us. Especially now, when there is no intifada and no terrorism to speak of, thank G-d, but there is something even more dire and urgent that draws us home. There is something happening in the world that is hard to ignore..."

"We are going because of many reasons, but certainly because Israel needs us, and needs more and more Jews to come and be a part of the Jewish cause of our time. Our motherland needs us, and we are privileged and proud to go, even while we feel sad leaving our families and friends, community "and members of his synagogue.

He recalled that when he left Tel Aviv nearly 50 years ago, "The class had a party for me, a farewell party.... What I hold in my hand is a packet of messages given to me by those classmates, all written in Hebrew, wishing me well.... Who could have imagined that 49 years later, those same letters now wish me the same thing, only in reverse? The "be well" of 49 years ago, is the "welcome home" 49 years later.

"Each letter also ends with the same Hebrew word, not Shalom, but "L'hitraot," which means, 'see you soon.' And with that I close today, not Shalom, but L'Hitraot, see you soon, G-d willing, in good health, happiness, and with peace in Israel."