

# Moving To Israel

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most likely to find it in Israel," said the native of Cleveland, Ohio.

"We almost went three years ago," chimed in his wife, a slim youthful-looking 35-year-old redhead who has borne six children. One of the Atkins brood is adopted.

"When I was in college I wanted to go to Israel, but my parents wouldn't let me, they were afraid I wouldn't come back," she said adding they probably were right. She said all Jews have an automatic right to go back to Israel.

A native of one of Philadelphia's suburbs, Mrs. Atkins said her sister Michelle and family emigrated to Israel several years ago.

How do their families feel about this?

"My mother, she cries a lot," admitted Atkins, an intense, articulate man who took his training for the rabbinate at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in Manhattan where he met his wife who was also a student.

"Mine aren't too happy, they will really miss their grandchildren," Mrs. Atkins said.

Atkins said he took a position in Massachusetts so he could retrain himself, and has obtained a master's degree in math-computer science at Worcester State College.

He was a chaplain in the Air Force, where he also worked with computers, and he and Joyce and some of their children spent three years in the Philippines.

## Big Changes

Even though they are Jews, they are still Americans. How will they fare? He has no job, and they have to live in temporary quarters until a settlement is built.

He said the native-born Jews who have never been out of Israel look at people such as the Atkins and say, "Why are you coming? Are you crazy? And then they say, welcome," he grinned.

"Like most people who know nothing about the United States, they think the streets here are paved with gold," Atkins said and then added reflectively, "And for some they are. There is a lot of opportunity here."

The plan is to leave in August, when his rabbinical contract expires. The Temple Beth Shalom congregation was informed of his plans last November and has formed a selection committee to find a new rabbi. They will board an Israeli airline which only has one flight to and from

condominium-type setups.

The Atkins know they will be living in an absorption center in Carmiel, along with 20 to 30 other families who will make up the latest *garin* (the nucleus or seed group) which will help build a new village settlement on a hilltop called *Har Halutz*.

Atkins said six months ago Har Halutz was blank. Now there is a new government-built road and currently being installed are sewer and water pipes and power lines for electricity. The new residents will live in trailers until homes are built, but that is about a year away. The Atkins will be in Carmiel for a year.

Eventually the settlement, *Garin Galil*, will be home to 200 to 400 families of Jews who have decided to make Israel their permanent home.

Atkins said *Garin Galil* is "unique" among settlements because people of all ages will be included. Most *garins* are established for those age 35 and under.

"Israel is a very child-oriented society. Children are the natural resource," Atkins said.

Speaking of children, how do their older ones feel about going?

Always direct and to the point, Atkins said the older ones are "not too happy" over the new adventure.

"They're not happy, but that doesn't mean they're not going. They will adjust," he said.

Their children, all with Hebrew names, are, Shoshana, 13; Shimshona, 11; Renana, 10; Oriel, 9; Sharona, 7; Moshe, 5 and Ayelet, 16-months. Oriel and Moshe are the two boys among five sisters.

Atkins said the Israeli living standard can in no way compare to America, but noted the move will provide other, more important, things for his family. He explains some of what can be expected:

"They are very junk-food oriented, believe it or not. Meat is expensive but there is a lot of poultry, fresh fruit and vegetables available.

"You work a six-day week. There is a good network of public transportation because cars are expensive," he said.

On her last visit to Israel, Mrs. Atkins who dubs herself "the household worrier," said she just liked the feeling of the country — that intangible something that cannot be found in the U.S.

"Friday before *Shabbat* (the weekly religious observance)



Rabbi Gary Atkins and his wife Joyce stand in front of Temple Beth Shalom on Pine Street in Milford where he serves as rabbi. The couple and their seven children are leaving in August to settle permanently in Israel. (Daily News Photo by Chris Fitzgerald)

children. We also want roots. We've moved around so much and this will afford us an opportunity to stay in one community," she added.

Pay for teachers, Mrs. Atkins' profession, is low. Her husband will be the top breadwinner in the math-computer field, with a job either in industry or govern-

eyes.

Mrs. Atkins kept eyeing the unusual lacquered handpainted screens picked up when they lived in the Philippines, which her husband says have to be left behind. Walls of books, records and other treasures have to be sorted.