



The Daniel Centers for Progressive Judaism

Beit Daniel | Mishkenot Ruth Daniel | Kehilat Halev

Rabbi Meir Azari

Head Rabbi and Executive Director of the Daniel Centers for Progressive Judaism



Rabbi Meir Azari is one of the unique cadre of native-born Israelis who have chosen to enter the Reform rabbinate. Prior to being ordained by Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem, he both grew up in the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) and made major contributions to it.

He was born in Haifa, in 1959, into a Sephardic family which has lived in the Holy Land for at least 600 years. Rabbi Azari was active in the IMPJ youth movement and graduated from its affiliated Leo Baeck High School. Upon completion of his national service in the Israel Navy, he studied at Haifa University, where he earned a B.A. in Jewish History and Political Science.

He continued his studies at Hebrew University, where he majored in Jewish History on the graduate level, then entered the rabbinical program at HUC. While enrolled there, he also took supplementary courses at San Francisco University and at the Graduate Theological Seminary in Berkeley, California.

In 1986, Rabbi Azari was appointed Executive Director of the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism. During his tenure in this position, IMPJ, together with ARZA (the Association of Reform Zionists of America) established the Israel Religious Action Center, while the Education Department and Outreach Department were established within IMPJ, itself.

Rabbi Azari was appointed congregation Rabbi and Executive Director of Beit Daniel when it opened its doors in 1991. He now also directs Mishkenot Ruth Daniel, a guest house and education and community center located in Jaffa which opened in May 2007. He is the current chair of the board of MARAM, the Israeli Council of Progressive Rabbis. Rabbi Azari also is a member of the administration of the School of Conversion to Judaism sponsored by the Jewish Agency for Israel and the State of Israel and is on the Board Governors of the Jewish Agency.

Rabbi Azari has written numerous articles for the Israeli press and various religious journals. He also authored a book on Yom Ha'atzma'ut, Israel's Independence Day, which explores the development of its celebration in Israel, in comparison to religious holidays and festivals. His latest publication is an edited introductory book for Israelis on Reform Judaism, the first book of its kind in Israel

He and his wife, Anna, a career diplomat in Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, whose most recent post was Israel's ambassador to Russia, two children, Adam and Daphna.