



Aliyah Of Choice

By Rev. Gary Cristofaro

A flight with more than 200 French Jews landed in Israel recently to make the Jewish state their new home. Theirs was the largest group from that country to make *aliyah* over the summer. The French Jewish community is currently the largest in Europe and the second-largest in the world outside of Israel, numbering just under half a million Jews. That may change as France is now the number one source of origin for new *olim* (immigrants to Israel). Last year, 7,800 French Jews made *aliyah*. Since the year 2000, nearly 10 percent of the French Jewish community has immigrated to Israel, with half of that amount in the past five years alone.



Chairman of The Jewish Agency for Israel Natan Sharansky, himself an immigrant from the former Soviet Union, said, “French Jews who immigrate to Israel are coming out of choice: they have a whole world of opportunities before them, and they are choosing to come to Israel. Their choice demonstrates that Israel affords a sense of Jewish identity and attachment to those Jews who wish to take an active part in the Jewish story.” (1)

I believe today we are witnessing the hand of God both pulling and pushing His children home to Israel. ***He will lift up a banner to the nations from afar, and will whistle to them from the end of the earth; surely they shall come with speed, swiftly.***

(2) The Aliyah of choice belongs to the Jewish people who can choose to go anywhere in the free world but choose to go to Israel. Within their heart God has placed a longing to go to the only place a Jewish person can truly call home.

This stands in stark contrast to the Aliyah of rescue where Jewish people have no choice and cannot help themselves. Ezra international works primarily with the poorest of the poor Jewish people of many nations. In a country like Ukraine war has made refugees of many Jewish families and they desperately need our help.

Through every situation in country after country God is fulfilling His promise to gather His people home. In some cases, pushing and pulling is working together. In the case of France anti-Semitism and Islamic terrorism have played a part in the decision for some to leave. Regardless of the reason the Jewish people may have for returning it is clear that our Heavenly Father is the author of the return. ***For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. (3) I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; they shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them,” says the LORD your God. (4)***

So the aliyah, who's choice is it really? ***“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. (5) The Holy One of Israel is faithful! The covenant He made with Abraham and His oath to Isaac that He confirmed to Jacob is an everlasting covenant. Yes, it is true that there remains millions of Jewish people in the diaspora. But in the fullness of time God has chosen to bring them all home to Israel.***

- (1) 200 French Jews to Land in Israel in Wake of Terror Attack, Adam Eliyahu Berkowitz July 19, 2016
- (2) Isaiah 5:26
- (3) Ezekiel 36:24
- (4) Amos 9:14-15
- (5) Deuteronomy 7:6