



## Meet Israeli Reform Rabbis

# Rabbi Miri Gold



**Community Position:** Founding rabbi of Kehilat Birkat Shalom in Kibbutz Gezer, since 1999

**Born:** Detroit Michigan

**Ordination:** HUC, Jerusalem, 1999

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**City/region:** Kehilat Birkat Shalom, located at Kibbutz Gezer, is a regional Reform congregation, serving the Gezer Regional Council and surrounding rural areas, as well as the cities Ramla, Lod, Gedera, and Nes Ziona. It is located between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and not far from Modiin and Rehovot.

**Special activities in my community:** Special activities include work with South American new immigrants from the Amazon region of Peru, as well as Columbia and other nearby countries. We are also involved in interfaith work in a coalition of liberal synagogues in the area, together with Christian and Muslim communities. We have a long-term relationship with the small French Roman Catholic community "The Children of the Beatitudes", located at Emmaus (Nicopolis) near Latrun.

**Formative event in my history:** A significant event for me was being involved in the Supreme Court case to achieve Government monies for salaries for rabbis of non-Orthodox communities. Today there are close to fifteen rabbis in rural areas who receive funding.

**Dreams for personal and professional future:** My dream is for a democratic and pluralistic

Israel, living up to the visions of the prophets, being a beacon of justice and compassion for its occupants and neighbors in a time of peace.

**A place in the world which is special to me:** It is important to me to keep up ties with family and friends in the US where I was born and raised, and I would love to have opportunities to visit and serve Jewish communities around the world. My dream is to have a guided roots trip to the four places in White Russia where my grandparents were born: Minsk, Pinsk, David Horodok and Koitches (near Bubroisk).

**Unusual experience in the Diaspora:** In 1980 my husband David Leichman and I went to the Former Soviet Union to meet *Refuseniks* who were not on the Soviets' radar screen. The Olympics were to be held in Moscow that

summer, and it was assumed that the leaders would be forced to leave town, so those involved in freeing Soviet Jews wanted to find out about lesser-known leaders. It was a very meaningful experience, to say the least.

**A gift I would you like to give to my peers around the world:** If I were a magician, I would wish fluent Hebrew for all of my colleagues. It is so important for a two-way dialogue, for Israelis to understand Diaspora Jewry, and for Diaspora Jews to learn about Israel in depth. If I had deep pockets, I would offer free trips to Israel for our congregations abroad. Since I am neither a magician nor wealthy, I offer friendship, and am happy to host my colleagues in my home and in my congregation.