



דער רבי וועט געפינען אַ וועג...

נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ק ר' שרגא פייוול
וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
מאן



Will You Open Chabad in Jamaica?

AS TOLD BY RABBI YAAKOV RASKIN (MOBAY, JAMAICA)

Immediately following our marriage in Elul 5773*, my wife and I started looking for a place to go on shlichus. After several months of following different leads, we were told that the island of Jamaica was ready for a permanent Chabad presence and we were offered the opportunity to visit the island to decide for ourselves.

In preparation for our trip, the Merkos Shluchim from the previous summer provided us with a list of Yidden they met in Jamaica. We were told that Raymond Doweck, a *varemech Yid* who kept kosher, was an important person to visit. When we called him before our trip to set up an appointment we learned that he had just suffered a stroke and was in the hospital.

On 3 Adar II we landed in Jamaica and headed straight to the hospital to visit Mr. Doweck. As I entered his hospital room, I was surprised to see a couple I had met a few years back at my sister's Chabad House. Michael and Debbie Flacks are regulars at the Chabad of Monte Carlo where my brother-in-law and sister, Rabbi Tanchum and Chani Matusof, are the shluchim.

It turns out that Debbie is Raymond's niece and they had flown to Jamaica as soon as they heard of his condition since his prognosis was not very good.

We spent time with them, put on tefillin with Raymond and when Debbie heard about the purpose of our visit to the island she excitedly told us that her uncle's dream for

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many years was to have Chabad in Jamaica. We cautioned her that we were only coming to check it out and there was no guarantee that we would actually move there.

The rest of our week-long stay was very successful and we kept in touch with the Doweck family, continuously giving them support and encouragement during that most difficult time.

Two weeks later another shlichus option came up and we went to the Ohel on Sunday, 21 Adar II, to ask the Rebbe for a clear sign whether we should go on shlichus to Jamaica or look into further options.

Later that day, Michael Flacks notified me that Raymond passed away on Shabbos and that the funeral would happen in Eretz Yisroel on Wednesday. Since I had been in touch with the family over the last 3 weeks, he requested that I participate in the funeral and offered to pay for my flight to Eretz Yisroel.

I was unsure about going, but the fact that this all happened within hours of our asking the Rebbe for a clear sign about shlichus to Jamaica gave me the feeling that it might actually be the right thing for me to participate in this funeral.

That year I was learning in the *kolel* near the Ohel and as I contemplated my trip to Eretz Yisroel I decided to write a letter to the Rebbe. As I prepared to write my letter I noticed the video of the Rebbe's farbrengen of Purim 5732* playing on the screen in the visitor center.

In between the *sichos* a Rabbi Singer approached the Rebbe and had a brief conversation in which he apparently

mentioned that he would be visiting Eretz Yisroel. After wishing him success the Rebbe said, "You will probably daven at the Kosel... before anything else."¹

I felt this clip was the Rebbe's answer to me and I accepted the invitation to participate in Raymond's funeral in Eretz Yisroel.

After the funeral I was speaking with Debbie's father Albert Doweck, Raymond's brother.

"So Rabbi Raskin," Albert asked. "Will you open Chabad in Jamaica or will you not open Chabad in Jamaica?"

Shocked by the directness of his question I was unsure how to respond.

"Listen, if you plan to move down soon, you can start off living in Raymond's house until you find a place of your own, and I will be your first supporter."

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On 6 Tammuz we moved down to Jamaica and lived in Raymond's home in Kingston for four weeks until we found a suitable place to live and to start our operations. And that's how our shlichus to Jamaica came to be. **1**

1. Living Torah, Disc 164 Program 653. chabad.org/3614877

YOUR STORY

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