



ינחהו בטוב לפניו



Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Wolosow
Ramat Yishai, Eretz Yisroel

”נשיא דורנו האמ
אויפגעטאן און
אנגעזאגט צו כל
אנשי ונשי הדור
אז מצוות הדור
איז אין דעם ענין
השליחות...”

“The Rebbe *nesi doreinu* established and mandated each and every man and woman in this generation that the ‘mitzvah of our generation’ is *shlichus...*”
(ש”פ וישלח תשמ”ז)

In the years 5736-5738 the Rebbe sent three groups of *bochurim* and *yungeleit* as his shlichim to Eretz Yisroel.¹ We were *zoche* to be chosen by the Rebbe on 20 Shevat 5737 to join the second group of six couples that were sent to Tzfas. We sold our furniture, packed our belongings and were on board the plane to Eretz Yisroel just one week later! The Rebbe wanted us to leave right away.

At the time, we didn’t know how long the shlichus would last...

On Rosh Chodesh Shevat 5739*, the famous letter arrived where the Rebbe described what was expected of us shlichim. The Rebbe gave a number of options regarding our future plans. The first option the Rebbe wrote was that those who are able, ישתדלו בנוגע לרבנות ודיינות, “should

work on becoming *rabbanim* and *dayanim*.” The Rebbe added that this is the best option.

Indeed, quite a few of us looked into becoming *rabbanim* in various cities and towns in Eretz Yisroel. Ramat Yishai is a small *yishuv* in the mid-north of Eretz Yisroel. I became close with some of its residents and I started travelling there to do *peulos*. Due to its size (only a couple hundred families at the time), the chances of me becoming the town’s *rav* were more probable than in other larger cities.

In a letter that I sent to the Rebbe in the summer of 5739*, I wrote that I had never thought I would become a *rav*, but since the Rebbe had written *rabbanus* as his first choice for the shlichim, I ask if this is the right thing for me, and if I should take more steps in the direction of Ramat Yishai.

The Rebbe responded:

כעצת עסקני אנ”ש שי” שבאה”ק, כמובן.
אזכיר עה”צ.

וכמובן באופן שלא יוכרח ליתן הכשר, ח”ו, על ענינים שאינם ראויים לזה.

“Obviously, you should follow the advice of activists of *anash* in Eretz Hakodesh.

“I will mention this at the *Tziyun*.

“It is obvious that [pursuing the position is only possible] if you will not be required to give a *hechsher* on things that are not suitable.”

At first, I considered becoming a *rav* on a more unofficial level (רב שכונה). At the time, the Rebbe had asked Reb Zusha Wilimovsky and Rabbi Mordechai Ashkenazi of Kfar Chabad to help out the shlichim in pursuing *rabbanus* in the various places. We made a number of trips together to Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren, to discuss this position.

Unexpectedly, the office of the Chief Rabbinate advised me that I should pursue a more respected position and try to become the official *rav* of the city (רב עיר).

Becoming an official, recognized *rav* in Israel was no simple task. I had *semicha* and *dayanus* from Rabbi Piekarsky in 770, Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin and Rabbi Grossman from Kfar Chabad, but that was far from sufficient. I would need to get tested by the Council of the Chief Rabbinate (מועצת הרבנות הראשית), and then elected by the town’s officials. I knew that I had quite a journey ahead of me and that I would not necessarily be granted the position.

For a few days, I traveled from one *rav* to another with Reb Zusha and Rabbi Ashkenazi, each testing me and asking many questions.

During this period, I wrote frequent updates to the Rebbe. On one of my *duchos*, I asked the Rebbe for a



bracha that I should be accepted by the council. The Rebbe replied:

קראתי אזכעה צ שהש"ת ינחהו בטוב
לפניו ויבשר טוב.

"I read [your letter]. I will mention at the *Tziyun*, that Hashem should guide you on a good path before you, and may you report good news".

Finally in Adar, I was notified that the Council wanted me to get tested by a *vaadat bechira*—selection committee—headed by Rabbi Shlomo Goren to decide if I was fit for the job. Rabbi Goren was the chief rabbi of Israel.

At the time, my brother Rabbi Chaim Wolosow, today the shliach in Sharon, Massachusetts, was working on a book about Rabbi Madalya, a *rav* in Belgium who was a cousin of ours. The Rebbe directed my brother to ask Rabbi Goren to find out more information, as he had known Rabbi Madalya well. My brother asked me to convey this to Rabbi Goren.

Rabbi Goren was very excited to receive regards from the Rebbe. He tested me on Shulchan Aruch with many of the commentaries and gave me *semicha* as an official *rav* of a city (רב עיר).

On 26 Av 5740*, a full year after I began the process, the local council of Ramat Yishai elected me as their *rav*. I was the first Lubavitcher Chossid to be officially appointed as a *rav* of an entire city in Israel. This was a breakthrough which paved the path for other shlichim as well.

We are American and many of the more religious residents in Ramat Yishai were members of the Sephardic and Yemenite communities, but in a short while, we built a very positive relationship with all the inhabitants of the *yishuv*. With the Rebbe's *brachos* I succeeded tremendously in my work, both as a shliach and as the *rav* of the *yishuv*.

Three years later, in the summer of 5743*, I was offered a position

to become the head of the religious council (מועצה דתית) of Ramat Yishai in addition to being the *rav*. When I asked the Rebbe if I should accept the offer, the Rebbe answered me:

יבדוק אם יש בהנ"ל תועלת להבית חב"ד.

"Check if this will bring benefit to the Beis Chabad."

I accepted the position but as time went on, I found it to be very difficult. Firstly, heading the religious council was very different and somewhat contradictory to my soft approach as a shliach. Now I had to deal with people from more of a businesslike standpoint while trying to still maintain warm relationships as a shliach. In addition, I was overloaded with all my responsibilities and it was challenging to juggle between shliach, *rav* and head of the religious council.

I wrote my concerns to the Rebbe, asking: 1) Should I remain on the religious council? 2) Maybe I should give over the administration of the Beis Chabad to one of our *baalei teshuva* who was now a full Lubavitcher Chossid.

Regarding my first question, the Rebbe wrote:

להמשיך בזה.

"Continue with this"

In response to my second question, the Rebbe wrote:

כנ"ל להמשיך כדע"ע.

"As I answered regarding the above question, you should continue the way things are being done until now."

In 5749*, the Rebbe declared *Shnas Habinyan*, and encouraged the building of new homes and extensions to homes. I wrote to the Rebbe about my plan to build a big home although I was not doing very well financially at the time. In my letter, I quoted Chazal that "דירה נאה מרחיבה דעתו של אדם." The Rebbe underlined these words and added:

כהוראת חז"ל המפורשת.

"As is the clear instruction of Chazal."

We were very fortunate that the Rebbe spoke about the name "Ramat Yishai" on a number of occasions. In the summer of 5749*, we hosted the Kinus Hashluchim of Eretz Yisroel. At the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Eikev, the Rebbe addressed the Kinus that was set to take place the following day, 19 Av. The Rebbe said: "The gathering is being held in Ramat Yishai, a name which is associated with Moshiach, Yishai being Dovid's father. Ramah—"uplifted"—means that Moshiach will come in an exalted manner." The Rebbe also mentioned this point in the letter he sent for the Kinus.

Mr. Dror Fogel was the head of the city council. He was instrumental in electing me as *rav* and he also visited the Rebbe on a number of occasions.

The first time he introduced himself to the Rebbe at dollars, the Rebbe said right away: "יש שם שליח—ברמת ישי, בוודאי תסייע לו ככל האפשרי—There is a shliach in Ramat Yishai, certainly you will help him as much as possible."

The Rebbe gave us the *bracha* that "ינחהו בטוב לפניו"—Hashem should lead you in the right path." But ינחהו could also come from the root of the word "חן—favor," meaning that "Hashem should cause you to find favor." With the Rebbe's *brachos* we have merited to find much favor in the eyes of all the inhabitants of Ramat Yishai. Chabad activities have grown and we continue to see tremendous *hatzlacha* in our work, preparing the city of Ramat Yishai for the coming of Moshiach. T

1. See Derher Adar 5778 "Historic Mission" for the full story of this unique shlichus.