



# דער רבי וועט געפינען אַ וועג...

לעילוי נשמת  
הרה"ת ר' יעקב בן הרב  
שמואל יוסף ע"ה גרינבוים  
נלב"ע מוצאי שבת קודש  
פרשת ויחי יעקב ט"ו טבת  
תש"פ  
ע"י אשתו ביילא רישא  
ובנו מנחם מענדל גרינבוים  
ומשפחתו שיחיו

## The Timely Article

AS TOLD BY RABBI ARON SCHIMMEL (POSTVILLE, IA)

After two years of searching for a *makom hashlichus* I accepted a job in Postville, IA as a *mashgiach* in Rubashkin's meat plant and eventually became a *shochet*. But I never gave up on my dream of being a shliach. This was 25 years ago.

While I continued seeking out shlichus opportunities I became active with shlichus work in Postville, setting up Chassidus *shiurim* for the many *frum* Yidden living here permanently or temporarily as *shochtim* and *mashgichim*, and reaching out to Yidden living in the surrounding area. Over time we developed quite an operation, and I was appointed to be the official shliach to Northeast Iowa. We now have a Chabad House on the main street with a library and visitor center serving locals and tourists. *Bochurim* learning in the local yeshiva started going out on *mitvzoim* every Friday to the surrounding towns under my directorship and our list continues to grow every week.

Despite these successes, in reality our shlichus

is not the typical situation where one feels that their presence is vital. We live in a vibrant *frum* community and our long list of contacts is spread out over a vast area and it's very difficult for us to appreciate our impact. Over the years I was plagued with doubts whether this was a real shlichus and contemplated seeking other opportunities.

Finally, this year on Gimmel Tammuz I was so disturbed that I felt the need to ask the Rebbe for a clear sign that Postville was the right shlichus for us. On Sunday, Daled Tammuz I was at the Ohel and I described to the Rebbe our situation and how I was very confused as to the purpose of our shlichus. "I'm requesting the Rebbe to give me clarity on what the purpose of my shlichus is and what I should do," I concluded.

As I sat down to drink a coffee after leaving the Ohel I turned on my phone and noticed a notification that I received an email from a certain Rabbi Martin Rosenfeld. I had no recollection of

ever meeting such a person until I started reading his message.

He writes to me that he is preparing a *dvar Torah* for a tri-state area publication called the Jewish Link entitled *Making a Difference in the World of Kiruv*. In it he describes how years earlier he was in Iowa for a conference and visited Postville.

*“I davened Mincha at the local minyan and met a friendly shochet who was insistent I join him for lunch. This man was in the Charedi camp, I learned, but not at all an isolationist. He was a real mixer and very well-connected. He asked me if I would like to meet the local Chabad rabbi, Rabbi Aron Schimmel, and within minutes Rabbi Schimmel was over at his apartment.*

*I asked the rabbi how he spent his day since all the Postville inhabitants were already observant, and other rabbis also lived in this town. Rabbi Schimmel discussed what he did for the local Jews but then described the geographic area he served. In Northeast Iowa there had once been active communities in such places as Dubuque and Waterloo. The synagogues that were once traditional had long disappeared. But Jews still remained in this area. Rabbi Schimmel established relationships with many of these Jews and would visit them to talk about upcoming Chagim, counsel them, and help them in any way he could. His outreach was one-to-one except for occasions such as Chanukah when he might find a group to teach and inspire.*

*The shlichut of Rabbi Schimmel was truly a “retail undertaking and outreach in the true sense of the word. He came to his flock rather than wait for them to come to him”.*

The article continues that although the author served as a rabbi for many years, he now lives in New Jersey working as an attorney, but continues to make an effort to be involved in community work, assisting smaller congregations in surrounding cities who cannot afford to retain a full time rabbi.

*“Rabbi Schimmel of Postville, Iowa has shown the way in a new type of kiruv work. You can’t always wait for the flock to come to you, so you then must go to the flock”.*

He concludes the article by stating that anyone is qualified to do this type of work if they can lead davening, or read the Torah, or give a class or work with Jewish people one-to-one. He even gives five practical ideas on how “to meet your flock in the pursuit of kiruv.”

I stared at my phone screen in shock. Minutes after asking the Rebbe for clarity as to the purpose of my shlichus, a Yid I could barely remember notifies

me that hearing about my shlichus in Postville years ago inspired him to do the same, and he is now encouraging tens of thousands of tri-state Jews to do so as well—using my name!

In truth, the essential story of my shlichus is no different than thousands of other shluchim. Nevertheless, specifically my shlichus was the conduit through which thousands of Jewish Link readers would soon be called upon to devote themselves to helping other Yidden! I could not have asked for a clearer sign than this.

Awash with so many emotions I responded to Rabbi Rosenfeld thanking him for his message and shared how it arrived at the perfect time. The next day, Hei Tammuz, he responded:

*Rav Aron: I wanted to share a very beautiful quote from Rav Yeruchem Levovitz, who was a long-time mashgiach in Mir Yeshiva during the mid-20th century. He said:*

*“When a person does not know his faults it is unfortunate. But when he does not know his strengths it is a true tragedy.” You are giving chizuk to people in so many diverse communities. That is a very great zechus. You are the last man standing in much of NE Iowa. That is an accomplishment few can match, or are capable of matching. Continue your holy work till 120.*

In the Hayom Yom for Hei Tammuz the Rebbe describes how a Chossid once complained to the Alter Rebbe about his financial situation, to which he responded: “You are needed — to illuminate your surroundings by studying Torah and by serving Hashem with your heart. As for your livelihood and the things that you need — this Hashem must give you. Do what you must and Hashem will do what He must.”

I had legitimate doubts about my shlichus and the Rebbe sent me a clear message that I need to continue doing what I am needed for. Regardless of how small and insignificant I feel I am, I am having a real impact in places I could have never imagined. I am sure many others can be inspired by my personal experience and realize that no matter how trivial their positions may seem, as long as it’s the Rebbe’s shlichus, know that it matters very much. **T**

## YOUR STORY

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