In July, World Mizrachi’s Shlichut Center hosted a Birkat HaDerech farewell event for shlichim (emissaries) heading to the Diaspora. This summer, 225 Religious Zionist shlichim are setting out to serve Jewish communities all over the world. Fulfilling the dream of Ki Mitzion Teitzei Torah, bringing the Torah of Israel to the whole world, the shlichim will take up positions in all six continents, from Australia to Austria, California to Canberra, and Nairobi to the Netherlands.

At the Birkat HaDerech event, former Minister of Diaspora Affairs, Omer Yankelevitch, addressed the shlichim, who represent six different Religious Zionist organizations. She spoke about her personal experience of shlichut.

Her parents escaped from Soviet Russia to Israel, but they returned as shlichim to the USSR to strengthen Jews and Jewish communities there.

“My childhood experience taught me that we are part of a large and global people. We cannot simply focus on our homeland of Eretz Yisrael and ignore the destinies of our eight million brothers and sisters living around the world.”

She also shared some of her experiences as Diaspora Affairs Minister over the past year, interacting with Jews from across the globe.

“During the Coronavirus pandemic, we have been unable to welcome Jews from around the world to Israel, but I have had hundreds of Zoom meetings with Diaspora communities. I recall speaking to a group of Australian students during Operation Guardian of the Walls. One of the students started crying, explaining how hard it is to be Jewish on campus when her friends turn against her.

“You, as shlichim, have a critical role in strengthening and supporting Jewish communities around the world, in
ensuring that no matter the circumstances, Jews will always be proud of their identity and heritage.”

Mrs. Yankelevitch concluded with the beautiful poetic words of Rav Kook:

בְּנֵי אָדָם, עָלוּ לְמַעְלָה עָלוּ, כִּי כּוֹחַ עַז לָכֶם. יֵשׁ לָכֶם כפֵּי רוח, כפֵּי נְשָׁרִים אַבִּירִים.

“People, arise up and ascend, for you have great strength. You have wings of the spirit, like wings of mighty eagles.”

The outgoing shlichim will serve Jewish communities in 62 cities across 24 countries.

We wish them success as they head out to serve Am Yisrael!  ■