לע"נ
התינוקת החיילת בצבאות ה'
ברכה ע"ה
בת יבלחט"א הרה"ת ר' **חיים אפרים**
וזוגתו מרת **חי' מושקא** שיחיו
גאלדשטיין
ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

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PINPOINTS

STORIES OF THE RABBEIM'S
REACH AND IMPACT AROUND THE GLOBE

BUFFALO, NY



RABBI CHAIM DAVIDOVICH

Rabbi Chaim Davidovich served as a rav *in Buffalo for 18 years and was an active member of the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of the city. During his tenure, the Frierdiker Rebbe corresponded with him on a number of occasions.*

In a letter dated 7 Mar-Cheshvan, 5689, Riga, Latvia, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote:

"Regarding what you wrote about the religious situation in your city, I read it with deep focus, for religious Jewish education in every country is incredibly important to me; for I have seen—may you not experience this—the awful and heartbreaking difficulty that many of our brothers are experiencing in Russia. They are broken and sighing—may Hashem have mercy on them—because of the bad education that a small number of evildoers received—and they are the ones causing the pain…"

The Frierdiker Rebbe went on to advise Rabbi Davidovich to come to a compromise with the other elements in the community, where he would have the last word in matters of religious education, the teachers, the curriculum, and the study schedule. He should focus on finding good teachers, and only then would he reach the goal of creating good students.[1]

In a follow-up letter two months later, among other matters, the Frierdiker Rebbe thanked him for the Mazel Tov that he had sent for the wedding of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin that had just taken place on 14 Kislev.

ACHEI TMIMIM

As soon as the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived on American shores, he set about establishing a network of *yeshivos* and schools. Among these were the Achei Tmimim schools and afternoon Talmud Torahs. Buffalo, with its sizable Jewish community, presented an opportunity for the establishment of a branch of Achei Tmimim, and in the summer of 5703, Rabbi Avraham Hecht visited the city on an exploratory mission to determine whether opening such a school was feasible.

On 19 Menachem-Av, 5703, the Frierdiker Rebbe penned a letter to the Buffalo Jewish community and its *rabbanim*. The Frierdiker Rebbe wrote that he was pleased to hear from Rabbi Hecht that the community had decided to create a branch of Achei Tmimim.

"I herewith wish to introduce you to my good friend and distinguished and most honored student, a *rav* who



REB CHAIM DAVIDOVITCH SHOWING CHILDREN HOW A SEDER IS CONDUCTED.

*🗓 5689-1929, 5703-1943

is outstanding in elevated qualities, an individual who has acted mightily in spreading Torah and the fear of Heaven…: Rabbi Yehuda Tzvi Fogelman. …"[2]

Rabbi Hershel Fogelman became the first *menahel* of this new branch of Achei Tmimim. But the *yeshiva* was to face numerous challenges. Weeks after the above letter, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent another letter addressed to Rabbi Fogelman. "All beginnings are difficult, especially when it comes to spreading Torah with fear of Heaven, which requires hard work and immense effort. Don't allow the fact that you are beginning with very few students to get to you …"[3]

A month or so later, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote to express joy that they had begun planning to purchase a building for the nascent *mosad*,[4] and later recommended that they buy a large building, for "with Hashem's help, the number of *talmidim* will increase."[5]

In the beginning of 5704, they indeed purchased a building at 42 Butler Avenue, and moved in during Teves of that year. The new *yeshiva* in Buffalo was often spoken of in *Kovetz Lubavitch.* The very first issue spoke about the newly-founded *mossad*, and the move into the new building. "Tens of *talmidim* already study there," it reported.[6] Future editions of *Kovetz Lubavitch* reported on everything from visiting dignitaries to final exams to annual banquets held for the *yeshiva*.

As the *yeshiva* grew, the physical and financial strain mounted, and it soon became clear that Rabbi Fogelman needed an assistant. Rabbi Michael Lipschutz, Ph.D. was hired as the assistant principal and co-educational director.

In 5705, Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch opened a Beis Rivkah school for girls in Buffalo, with the assistance of Rabbi Fogelman. The Frierdiker Rebbe wrote to him expressing pleasure at the news that Merkos had opened the school, and that the local branch of *Pirchei Machne Yisroel* had begun *mesibos Shabbos* gatherings. This was a group for teens which, as reported in *Kovetz Lubavitch,* Issue 4, had been founded the previous summer. "Certainly they are strengthening their efforts to increase the number of students in the *yeshiva* and in Beis Rivkah. May Hashem help them, that they should be immersed in Torah study and in acting with *yiras Shamayim*, and through them, their parents will be blessed as well."[7]

In a letter dated 23 Adar, 5705, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote to the members of *Pirchei Machne Yisroel*: "You should know that you, my dear ones, are the students of Yeshivas Achei Tmimim Lubavitch. You must [therefore] dedicate yourselves to diligent study and a conduct of *yiras Shamayim* and *derech eretz*, as the Torah directs. You should forever be fit to bear



HOUSE THAT SERVED AS THE HOME OF YESHIVAS ACHEI TMIMIM FOR MANY YEARS AND TODAY SERVES AS A SHUL.

*5704-1943, 5705-1945

with Jewish pride the holy banner of Yeshivas Achei Tmimim Lubavitch."[8]

From 5717 to 5719, Rabbi Hershel Slansky (an early student of Tomchei Tmimim in the US) was the *menahel*. He found it difficult to raise money for the *yeshiva*, and would, from time to time, express his concerns to the Rebbe. At one point, the Rebbe said that he would help financially if some conditions were met. First, that the money go toward the *yeshiva* and not the shul that was there as well; second, that they send an accountant's report stating that the *yeshiva* needed the funds. Indeed, the Rebbe sent a check for $1,000 (which today would equal over $10,000) from Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch to Achei Temimim (with the Rebbe's name mentioned on the memo). The next Yom Kippur, Rabbi Slansky stood before the congregation and held up a picture of the check. "There is a rabbi in Brooklyn who worries about your children," he thundered to the community. The fundraising efforts were more successful that year.

In 5720, Rabbi Mottel Zajac traveled to New York from Brazil, with aspirations to open a raincoat factory. He went into *yechidus*, and as he was leaving, the Rebbe asked him, "Where did you learn?" "Here," Rabbi Zajac responded, surprised at the question. "What did they teach you—to be a clothier?" Rabbi Zajac asked what the Rebbe desired. The Rebbe replied, "I want to know how a young man such as yourself can sleep peacefully and eat peacefully, knowing that a *yeshiva* which my father-in-law opened has closed down." "Where?" Rabbi Zajac asked. "Buffalo," the Rebbe responded.

"I want you to go to Buffalo. I don't mean that you must remain in Buffalo forever, but travel there and reopen the *yeshivos*."[9]

Rabbi Zajac served as Dean and Executive Director of the *yeshiva* for more than three years, and once again it began building up its educational offerings. In the summer of 5721, the Rebbe wrote to the *hanhala* of the *yeshiva*, expressing his pleasure at hearing that its situation was improving physically, and hoping that it was also improving spiritually.

"Since we are commanded to increase in holiness, may it be Hashem's will that you increase in this several times over."[10]

Today, while the *yeshiva* is not open, the *minyan* in the building of *Achei Tmimim* continues, and *shiurim* and *yom tov* events take place as well.



RABBI MOTTEL ZAJAC, AT THE TIME HE SERVED AS DEAN OF THE YESHIVA.



5717-1957, 5719-1959, 5720-1960, 5721-1961

CHABAD HOUSE OF BUFFALO

In 5731, Rabbi Nosson Gurary (along with his wife Miriam *a"h*) moved to Buffalo to establish the Chabad House of Buffalo, one of the first campus Chabad houses. He merited to receive unique guidance from the Rebbe, much of which continues to be taught and referenced by Chabad on Campus *shluchim* today.[11]

Once, when Rabbi Gurary wrote to the Rebbe that he was lonely on *shlichus*, especially on *yomim tovim*, the Rebbe responded, "Since you're doing the work of the Rebbe *der Shver*, he is with you, and we are also together."

1. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 16, p. 261-2.
2. Ibid. vol. 7, p. 354.
3. Ibid. p. 381.
4. Ibid. vol. 8, p. 10.
5. Ibid. p. 25.
6. Kovetz Lubavitch issue 1, p. 7.
7. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz, ibid. pg. 439–40.
8. Ibid. p. 571.
9. https://videos.jem.tv/video-player?clip=2939.
10. Igros Kodesh vol. 20, p. 300.
11. See Derher Cheshvan 5778 for an extensive interview with Rabbi Gurary.
12. JEM Here's My Story 187.

YOSSELE THE MISER

Rabbi Dovid Schochet was once invited by Rabbi Mottel Zajac to speak to local university students. Upon hearing that most of the audience would be non-Jewish, and that representatives from other religions would speak as well, Rabbi Schochet was inclined to turn the offer down, but he called the Rebbe's office. He was told that it was worthwhile to influence non-Jews positively, especially with regard to *tzedakah*, and that he should tell a story attributed to Reb Yom Tov Lipmann, the Tosafos Yom Tov.

So Rabbi Schochet spoke, and related the story of Yossele the Miser, who lived in Krakow. The local Jews hated him and buried him at the edge of the cemetery when he died, but a few weeks later, it was discovered that he had been secretly sponsoring food handouts for the city's poor. The Tosafos Yom Tov said that when he passed away, he wished to be buried next to Yossele.

A young priest came over to Rabbi Schochet and asked him to repeat the story. Even though he was not particularly interested, he invited the priest to his hotel room, where he fulfilled the request. The priest then told him, "I think I am descended from that miser." Before she died, his mother had revealed her background of Jewish ancestry, and she told him a very similar story about one of his forebears.

Rabbi Schochet told him, "That means you are a Jew. And if you are Jew, you are obligated to follow the Torah and keep its mitzvos."

Years later, Rabbi Schochet met a bearded, frum Jew in Yerushalayim, who introduced himself as that former priest.[12]



RABBI GURARY WELCOMES STUDENTS IN THE SUKKAH MOBILE.

