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מאז שנת תשמ"ה
להצלחה רבה בכל המצטרך

נדפס ע"י בנם הרה"ת שלום דובער שי'
שוחאט ומשפחתו



A School with a Mission

The Beginnings of Beis Rivkah

As the flagship Chabad girls' school marks 80 years since its founding, we take a look back at the history of this pioneering institution.

“Making-It” In America

On Simchas Torah 5704*, a small crowd gathered in the dining room on the second floor at 770 for the Frierdiker Rebbe’s Simchas Torah farbrengen. They expected to hear stories about Chassidim of old, words of Chassidus and inspiration. Instead, they were informed that they would be going to war...

“Yidden! Fathers and mothers!” the Frierdiker Rebbe said, directing his words to American Jews at large. “Save your children, your sons and your daughters from the *treife* Talmud Torahs! This is wartime! You must know that it is a *spiritual* war!”

“During wartime, if even a simple soldier prevents the explosion of a small bomb, he receives a medal. A

simple soldier during wartime can earn much more than a general in peacetime. Removing a *triefe* teacher before he influences the children is like preventing the explosion of a bomb.”¹

The Frierdiker Rebbe did not suffice with the *sicha*. After Yom Tov, he wrote to Reb Yisrael Jacobson, asking him to gather Chassidim for an *asifa* in his *yechidus* room, where he would speak in more practical terms. During the *yechidus*, the Frierdiker Rebbe informed them that the focus of the group would be girls’ education. After hearing basic pointers from the Frierdiker Rebbe, the participants met in the *zal*, where they divided up the various neighborhoods and split up into pairs to get to work.

Grassroots

The Frierdiker Rebbe’s *sicha* and the subsequent gathering came



16 ADAR 5709

after two years of activity under the auspices of Merkos L’inyonei Chinuch. Several months after the Rebbe had arrived, the Frierdiker Rebbe appointed him to lead the newly founded Merkos and entrusted to him the field of girls’ education.

ACHOS HATMIMIM

The founding of Beis Rivkah wasn’t the Frierdiker Rebbe’s first involvement in education for girls.

While in Riga, the Frierdiker Rebbe founded “Achos Hatmimim,” a group for the daughters and wives of *tmimim*, to study Chassidus and strengthen one another in the *darkei haChassidus*, under the leadership of Reb Elye Chaim Althaus, Reb Mordechai Chefetz and Reb Avraham Eliyahu Asherov.

“Guiding and educating the daughters of Chassidim requires the exact same care and attention from their parents and teachers as they would give the sons of Chassidim,” the Frierdiker Rebbe writes in a letter.²

In a letter written years later, the Rebbe attests to the fact that the Frierdiker Rebbe “put his holy heart into this project very, very much, investing his utmost capabilities into it a lot more than what is known to the public...”³

Seeing the success of Achos HaTmimim in Riga, girls in America asked the Frierdiker Rebbe for permission to open a chapter in New York. The Frierdiker Rebbe was very pleased with their idea, and immediately appointed Reb Yisrael Jacobson, Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky and Reb Yochanan Gordon to lead the New York group.

This group was extremely precious to the Frierdiker Rebbe, and he even asked to be notified of the *shiurim* times.⁴ Every Sunday, girls would come from Williamsburg, Boro Park, and Bensonhurst to learn about Chassidus and the Rabbeim from Reb Yochanan Gordon in Brownsville. The Rebbe insisted that Reb Yochanan, even in his old age, continue giving these classes. When he complained to the Rebbe that his ears were failing him and he could no longer hear the questions posed by the girls, the Rebbe told him that the important thing is that they should be able to hear what he is saying, not the other way around.⁵



REBBETZIN SHTERNA SARA, WIFE OF THE REBBE RASHAB, IN A GROUP PHOTO WITH THE GIRLS OF “ACHOS TMIMIM” IN RIGA, 20 TEVES 5700. (THIS WAS DURING THE MONTHS-LONG JOURNEY OF THE FRIERDIKER REBBE AND HIS FAMILY’S ESCAPE FROM WAR TORN EUROPE).

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When the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in New York, many neighborhoods were teeming with Jewish children. Hundreds of thousands of Jews had immigrated to New York over the decades, but the state of Jewish education was dismal. The vast majority of Jewish children attended public school. Those who were lucky enough to learn some Torah usually did so after school for a short time a few times a week.

The Frierdiker Rebbe writes in a letter about the schools that were established during the years 5702*-4*, “Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch has been establishing schools for girls and they have already established many such institutions with great success. There were cases in which the students of Beis Rivkah and Beis Sarah — those are their names — forced their parents to begin observing Shabbat, break their non-kosher dishes and purchase kosher meat.”⁶

According to the account of Rabbi Hodakov, the very first Beis Rivkah school was established in Boro Park, in the shul of Rabbi Eliyahu Simpson. Over the next two years, according to reports in *Hakriah V'Hakedusha*, four more schools were established.

After the Frierdiker Rebbe's *sicha* on Simchas Torah 5704*, many new Chassidim got involved in the work of Beis Rivkah, and new schools sprung up all over New York and beyond.

At first, most of these schools were afternoon Talmud Torahs. An activist would visit a neighborhood, speak to parents about Jewish education, and gather a group together. A teacher would be hired for each afternoon, and the group would gather in a local shul. With that, a new school would be created. By 5706*, there were 26 separate schools operating, 12 in New York and another 14 in other cities.

What happened to all those schools? According to Rabbi Hodakov, Chabad was not interested in controlling and funding each school. The Frierdiker Rebbe would help a group get started and provide the seed money as a loan, and as soon as a local group of parents were ready to adopt it, they would be given the reins, after which many of them evolved into large Torah institutions. The first Beis Rivkah, founded in Boro Park, later served as the nucleus for the Bais Yaakov school that exists there until today.

The first full-day school (“parochial school”) was opened in 5704*. Just three years later, in the school book, they were able to look back with pride on those difficult days:

“Only three girls registered and only one English teacher was hired, but with hard work and *Yiddishe akshanus*, it has become one of the most important Jewish educational institutions in America.”⁷

BEIS RIVKAH'S MISSION

In a letter to the girls of Beis Rivkah in Paris, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote about the special mission of Beis Rivkah girls:

“In addition to the general mission of achieving *yiras Shamayim* and good character traits, fulfilling mitzvos and obtaining the Jewish and worldly knowledge needed to build your own Jewish home, you should also recognize your task as students of Beis Rivkah: To prepare yourselves for the task of educating your sisters, other Jewish girls, in the ways of Yiddishkeit.”⁸

“Veniflinu”

The Rebbe was deeply involved in the work. In a letter written in 5704*, the Rebbe apologized for a late response to a letter because “I am very occupied with the preparations of Merkos for the new school year...”⁹ When the Rebbe visited Paris in 5707* to bring Rebbetzin Chana to the United States, he was involved in establishing Beis Rivkah and Beis Sarah schools there, as well as in Prague.¹⁰

The Frierdiker Rebbe was also very involved. We know this from the Rebbe's own attestation: “My father-in-law entrusted me with the printing activities and Beis Rivkah... and he is personally involved in their affairs—much more than people think...”¹¹

The Rebbe's involvement continued into the later years, during the Rebbe's *nesius*. For example, each stage of the Kfar Chabad Beis Rivkah, such as the seminary, was opened by the Rebbe's direct instruction, and the Rebbe personally took responsibility for some of the finances.¹²



ONE OF THE EARLIEST BEIS RIVKA SCHOOLS IN BROOKLYN N.Y.

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RABBI HODAKOV ADDRESSES A DINNER BENEFITING BEIS RIVKAH IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE SCHOOL.

Each year, the Rebbe would write a letter for the Beis Rivkah dinner encouraging people to donate. In one extraordinary inscription in a Beis Rivkah fundraising book in 5710*, the Rebbe wrote the following in his own handwriting:

"I hereby participate with those mitzvah-doers who are taking part in the special campaign of Beis Rivkah to remove all debt. I hope that every one of *anash*, to whom the institutions of my father-in-law, the Rebbe מר"ק, are precious, will do the same. And he will awaken Divine mercy upon them and their households, that they may be blessed with all their needs, physically and spiritually."

In Reshimos, the Rebbe recorded a beautiful talk he had given at a Beis Rivkah dinner in 5706*, where he explained the purpose and dire need for the Beis Rivkah schools:

"This is not merely a Torah-study initiative, that the students should acquire knowledge. Our objective is that the girls should be [true] *Yiddishe kinder*!

"In most instances, girls live in an atmosphere where all anyone is concerned about is 'making a living' or 'having a good time.' There is no appreciation for the special qualities of the Jewish nation, the 'נפלאות'. Yiddishkeit is seen as a burden...

"...Beis Rivkah and Beis Sarah—founded and headed by my father-

in-law—has made its mission to impress upon the hearts of the girls that they are *bnos Yisroel*, to appreciate the *kedusha* and purity that comes along with this and the special responsibility they carry..."¹³

The Rebbe often spoke about the tremendous merit of learning in an institution of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

In 5718*, a *bochur* had difficulties finding a *shidduch* and asked for the Rebbe's guidance. The Rebbe responded with a fascinating directive:

"Chazal say that all *bnos Yisroel* are beautiful. Obviously, the true beauty according to Chazal is spiritual beauty... a student of Beis Rivkah would be a most worthy choice, because her very presence in that institution indicates her *yashrus* and fear of Heaven. And, being that she is there with the approval of her parents, it also indicates her parents' fear of Heaven..."¹⁴

In another fascinating instance, the Rebbe instructed a *kallah* to add a name (being that her name was the same as her future mother-in-law), and the Rebbe suggested the name Rivkah; one of the reasons being that she learned and taught in Beis Rivkah!¹⁵

Every year, as the school year would draw to a close, the Rebbe would receive the graduating class for a *yechidus*. As the groups grew larger and larger, the event moved

into the large shul in 770. (It was also later merged with the annual *yechidus* to girl camp counselors.)

Until the end of the 5720s*, the *yechidus* was a *bracha* and a short talk in which the Rebbe focused on the meaning of graduation (that it is not a conclusion of anything but rather a stepping stone to even greater growth). As the years progressed, it developed into full *sichos* around an hour long (followed by a "dollars" distribution via the teachers).

The Rebbe would give over lessons from the *parsha*, from the time of year, from the daily *shiurim* in Rambam, and general messages about the unique *avodas Hashem* of women and their obligations with regard to *limud haTorah*. These were very similar to the talks the Rebbe delivered to women at the N'shei Chabad conventions and before Rosh Hashanah. Quite a number of these *sichos* were later edited by the Rebbe for publication.

Being a Pioneer

From the very outset, the Rebbe defined the school of Beis Rivkah as one for every Jewish child. Nobody was allowed to be turned away.

In Beis Rivkah's early days, Reb Itche Goldin—whom the Rebbe had appointed as its administrator—would knock on doors of Jewish homes and convince parents to send their girls—tuition free.

One Holocaust survivor had wished to send her daughter to a different Jewish girls' school but had no money for tuition. The administration of that school suggested she send her daughter to public school and when she would have sufficient funds enroll her in their school.

"I did not survive the war to send my daughter to public school," she said. When she

approached Beis Rivkah, Reb Itche accepted the girl into the school without charging a penny.¹⁶

In an interview with JEM's *My Encounter With the Rebbe* project, another woman relates how she was expelled from her school in the middle of the year.

"My mother could not find another school that would accept me in the middle of the school year, until she found Beis Rivkah. There were a few classrooms in a small house and I remember some classes being held in what smelled to me like a fish shop. But from the moment I walked through the door, I was happy. Rabbi Goldin and Rabbi Majesky really took an interest in me and made sure that I was doing well."¹⁷

As the years went on and the classes grew older, the administration opened a high school as well as a seminary. The Rebbe himself put in effort in convincing parents of girls and even students themselves that they should attend Beis Rivkah.

In the 5730s*, many Russian families emigrated to the United States.

"One day," relates Mrs. Shaindel Teichtel, principal of Beis Rivkah High School, "I received a phone call from Rabbi Hodakov, and he asked me a very startling question. 'How many girls in Beis Rivkah don't eat kosher at home?'"

"I was surprised to hear such a question and replied that to the best of my knowledge, all of the students come from kosher homes.

"Rabbi Hodakov then asked, 'What about all of the many hundreds of girls from Russian families that have recently arrived in the United States?'"

"I answered that, to the best of my knowledge, many Russian immigrants attend the Nefesh girls school in Boro Park.

"Rabbi Hodakov replied: 'The Frierdiker Rebbe did not establish

LEARNING ENGLISH

Following the *sicha* of Yud Shevat 5737*, when the Rebbe spoke strongly about going on *mesiras nefesh* to keep the purity of education, Mrs. Chana Gorowitz asked the Rebbe whether they should minimize the time allotted to *limudei chol*. The Rebbe replied: "That is utterly impossible with the current laws, the *dina dimalchusa*, here [in New York]!"²⁰

In another answer from the same period, the Rebbe writes that changes could only be made if certain conditions were met:

"Obviously: 1) All this is up to the decision of Beis Rivkah's educational committee. 2) Care must be taken to ensure that students are not lost due to the changes. 3) Care must be taken to ensure that it does not weaken the name of Beis Rivkah in the circles from which Beis Rivkah should be drawing students."

Mrs. Tiechtel shares on the same topic: "Some parents suggested that we minimize the hours of *limudei chol* by following the curriculum which was necessary for a 'minimal diploma,' which was easier to achieve than a regular diploma. The Rebbe crossed out 'minimal' and said '*im biyicholes*,' i.e. for those girls who are academically able, they should study for the full diploma.

"At some point, we managed to have a system in which girls were able to learn extra *limudei kodesh* without affecting their diploma. Then the government changed the rules and this was no longer possible. We asked the Rebbe if we should continue the program, and the Rebbe responded with an interesting answer: 'You could surely do it in 12th grade without affecting the diploma.' We hadn't

mentioned it in our letter, but the Rebbe knew that the twelfth grade had less government requirements and therefore could and should continue with more Torah study."

Another answer from the Rebbe on this topic was regarding the seminary girls, many of whom would attend Touro College, a private Jewish university in New York.

The *hanhala* of the seminary wrote to the Rebbe that many girls enroll in Touro College to receive credits for a teacher's diploma, which they often needed in the course of their jobs and shlichus, etc. However, Beis Rivkah preferred that girls enroll in such courses only after concluding seminary, when they were more mature and more equipped to handle the environment. Therefore, they asked the Rebbe: "Should we continue our policy about college which is to discourage study in college, even Touro College? Or, should we make a policy that as long as a student is in seminary, she may not enroll in college at all." With an underline, the Rebbe's response was: "Continue our policy about college which is to discourage study in college..."

WHO SHOULD BE THE TEACHER FOR LIMUDEI CHOL?

In Beis Rivkah of Melbourne, *frum* teachers were apparently not available, and the faculty asked the Rebbe whom to hire instead.

"It is better to hire a non-Jew," the Rebbe wrote, "who obviously has no connection to the students outside of the specific field of study, than a Jewish woman who does not observe Torah and mitzvos... it would be very difficult to ensure that she has no influence in that regard."²¹

Beis Rivkah so that girls could attend other schools.' He told me that we should make an effort to enroll as many students as possible."

Many students from Russian homes were soon enrolled. But should they be in separate classes?

"Some local parents pressured us to set them up in separate classes apart from the *frum* students," relates Rabbi Leibel Newman, "but Rabbi Hodakov gave over the Rebbe's directive to set them up in the regular classes, so they would be able to learn from their counterparts and acclimate into Beis Rivkah. Indeed, although many parents feared they would be a negative influence, the opposite took place."

When Mrs. Tiechtel herself graduated from elementary school, the high school had just been established, and her parents expected her to enroll there. But she wanted to attend Beis Yaakov, as her sister had. They decided that she would write to the Rebbe.

"Maybe it was a little bit inappropriate to write this," Mrs. Tiechtel relates, "maybe I had no right to, but I was a teenager and very independent in my thinking. I wrote the letter in Yiddish but I used an English expression: *'Ich vil nisht zein a guinea pig.'* I don't want to be a guinea pig. (Definitely not the right kind of words...)"

"The Rebbe crossed out the words 'guinea pig' and wrote '*chalutza*'—pioneer. The Rebbe knew how to reach a teenager with one word. You tell me to be a pioneer? I'll climb the mountain, cross the river, I'll do anything! So, of course, I was part of the pioneer class of Beis Rivkah High School."¹⁸

Education for Girls?

In a fascinating *sicha* on Erev Lag Ba'omer 5750*, the Rebbe offered



REB YITZCHOK GOLDIN CAN BE SEEN STANDING IN THE BEIS RIVKA SCHOOL PHOTO (SECOND FROM THE RIGHT) IN THE EARLY 5720S.

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lengthy insight into why and what women are supposed to learn in today's day. The reasons can generally be categorized in two points:

Nowadays, the Jewish community is no longer in the "*shtetl*," we are exposed to many secular ideas that were previously not prevalent. Therefore, it is imperative that women and girls study Torah to counter the negative forces. Furthermore: We are approaching the time of Moshiach, when, as the Rambam says, "knowledge will increase in abundance." When Moshiach comes, the special unique qualities of women will be revealed and dominate even more than those of the men.

"In fact," the Rebbe said on a more personal note, "many righteous women throughout history were well versed and quite scholarly—from the times of the Mishnah and then later generations. This is likewise recounted in the memoirs of the Frierdiker Rebbe regarding the Rebbetzins in the family of the Alter Rebbe, and the Frierdiker Rebbe behaved similarly with his own daughters..."¹⁹

Based on the above, the Rebbe added that women and girls are not only required to learn those areas of Torah that are applicable to their obligations, but also deeper subjects. Not only should they learn *halachos* without reasons; they should learn the

reasons and delve deeply into them, even with שאלה וטריא—discussion and exploration, allowing them to develop their minds in a Torah way.

Can They Be Forced?

Over the years, the Rebbe gave many directives to the Beis Rivkah Schools, often through Rabbi Hodakov. In an exclusive interview with *A Chassidisher Derher*, Mrs. Tiechtel shared several examples:

"At some point, we noticed that there was intense competition between students over summer camp placement. We asked the Rebbe if we could assign our students to camps—just as the *bochurim* were assigned Merkos Shlichus—thereby avoiding the competition. The Rebbe responded that girls function best '*b'makom shelibah chafetz*' (where their hearts desire), and we should refrain from doing so. However, the Rebbe said that we could make standards about which camps they are allowed to attend, and we indeed did so.

"We once asked the Rebbe: What is the necessary criteria to accept a girl who wants to move from another school to Beis Rivkah? The Rebbe said that it should include three factors: 1. '*Kecheftz libah*' (she should want it). 2. The agreement of

her parents and the *hanhala* of the previous school. 3. That the decision will add to her *yiras Shamayim*.

“On one occasion, Rabbi Hodakov directed us to teach French as a second language, as is common in many high schools. First of all, he said, this is so that a girl should never be able to say, ‘I don’t want to attend Beis Rivkah because they don’t teach a foreign language.’ Secondly, he told us to specifically teach French, which would prepare girls to be shlichos in French speaking countries—where there was a particular need at that time.”

Rabbi Newman shared the directives he received regarding curriculum:

“There were two directives the Rebbe told me in *yechidus*. One was regarding secular books, particularly science texts that convey theories which contradict Torah—at that time there were no kosher texts as there are today. The Rebbe was very clear that we should not tear out pages, as that would only have the opposite effect. Rather, we were to explain that the opinion in the text does not conform to Torah. The second: That we should not skip any parts of Torah, such as the stories of Tamar or Dovid and Batsheva. Rabbi Asher Ehrenreich, the dean of Bais Yaakov of Boro Park, also received

these two directives in his *yechidus*.”

Another directive from the Rebbe to Beis Rivkah of Australia was regarding the use of Sephardic Hebrew:

“There are several Chabad schools in Eretz Yisrael which learn with a Sephardic accent,” the Rebbe told Rabbi Shmuel Gurevitch of Melbourne. “Obviously, if there are equal opinions in the matter, it is more worthy to study with an Ashkenazi accent, simply to allow the girls to understand the *chazzan* in the shul and to use the same *kamatz* and *patach* as their brothers and fathers. But if it will create a *machlokes*, or even if some girls will leave the school, it is not worthwhile. True, in the past it was associated with *maskilim*, etc., but today it’s just a matter of accent.”²²

When The Rebbe Looked Back

In 5747*, the Rebbe’s letter for the dinner of Beis Rivkah in Montreal included this powerful paragraph that sums up Beis Rivkah’s mission in the past, present and future:

“If in the early years of Beis Rivkah it was still necessary to use *emunah* and *bitachon* regarding how the Beis Rivkah institutions would

fulfill the hopes and expectations of the founder, now we can clearly see how the *talmidos* that Beis Rivkah produces are the true “*ezer kinegdo*” in fulfilling every shlichus of spreading Yiddishkeit and spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus in various, and also forsaken areas of the world. Similarly, in the widespread activities of N’shei U’Bnos Chabad, and also as dedicated educators. All this is done, with Hashem’s help, with great success, happily and with gladness of heart — in addition to the extraordinary shlichus as an *akeres habayis* and *aim habanim*.” T

1. *Sefer Hasichos* 5704 pg. 34.
2. *Igros Kodesh* Admur Rayatz, vol. 4 p. 186.
3. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 6 p. 259.
4. *Igros Kodesh* Admur Rayatz, vol. 4 p. 399.
5. See Derher Adar I 5776 pg. 19 & 26.
6. 1 Adar II, 5703. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 6, letter 1962.
7. *Toldos Chabad B'Artzos Habris* pg. 285.
8. *Igros Kodesh* Admur Rayatz vol. 9 pg. 456.
9. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 1 pg. 325
10. *Igros Kodesh* Admur Rayatz, vol. 13 pg. 431.
11. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 2 pg. 310.
12. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 13 pg. 259-60.
13. *Reshimos* Choveres 30.
14. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 16 pg. 101.
15. *Embrace* issue 4 pg. 17.
16. See Derher, Av 5779.
17. Here’s My Story, 24 Cheshvan 5777.
18. Derher Sivan 5777 pg. 13. Here’s My Story, 26 Sivan 5781.
19. *Sefer Hasichos* 5750 vol. 2 pg. 457.
20. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 32 pg. 112.
21. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 15 pg. 171.
22. Transcription of *yechidus* as recorded by Rabbi Shmuel Gurevitch.
23. Letter 11 Kislev 5711, *Igros Kodesh* vol. 4 p. 67.
24. 10 Iyar 5712, *Igros Kodesh* vol. 6 p. 32.
25. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 1 p. 111
26. *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 22 pg. 434.
27. *Techayenu* Elul 5779 pg. 27.



THE REBBE ADDRESSES THE GRADUATING CLASS OF BEIS RIVKA. ROSH CHODESH TAMMUZ 5751.

Beis Rivkah International

Morocco

DISTANT FRONTIERS

When Reb Michoel Lipsker arrived in Morocco in 5710*, he asked the Rebbe about opening a girls school, and the Rebbe gave him a framework for how to approach such a project.

“It is difficult to give a detailed opinion from here, but the general point is this: There are many areas of *tznius* that the Sephardim have taken upon themselves for many generations, pertaining to women, teenage girls, and even little girls. So when it comes to the education of their daughters, you must be extremely cautious that they shouldn’t end up saying that ‘from when Lubavitch came to their country, we went from a higher *kedushah* to a lesser one.’ Thus, you must first investigate by the *charedim* and elders in the community as to what the *minhag* of their ancestors was. Even if certain changes are necessary, it must be done in a

way that it will not spark talk that this brought them to a lesser holiness.”²³

Later on, the Rebbe gave him further instructions. After encouraging him to go ahead with establishing girls schools in Meknes and elsewhere, the Rebbe added:

“It must not be together with the boys — not only should they not learn together in one room, but they should not even use the same entrance to the building. It would be even better if they were in separate buildings and

separate streets, for the more careful you are in these matters, the better...”²⁴

The school started with Reb Michoel’s daughters, and it quickly blossomed. After a few years, it was a fully functioning school, with classes going all the way through high school. As it was the only Jewish high school in the area, even the children who went to other elementary schools attended the Lubavitch high school, and the results were such that it grew and grew in popularity.



AN EARLY PICTURE OF BEIS RIVKA IN MOROCCO.

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THE BEIS RIVKA BUILDING IN MONTREAL.

Montreal

THE REBBE'S CLOSE ATTENTION

In preparation for this article, Rabbi Yosef Minkowitz, dean of Beis Rivkah in Montreal, shared some of his memories:

"I moved on shlichus to Montreal in Elul 5733* to be the principal of Beis Rivkah. The school was founded by the Rebbe with just a few students in 5716*, and now *baruch Hashem* has grown to 500 *talmidos*. In numerous letters to the *bochurim* who escaped the Nazis in Poland and were sent by the Frierdiker Rebbe to Montreal, the Rebbe strongly requested the opening of a Beis Rivkah in Montreal as early as in 5703*. In one amazing letter, the Rebbe wrote to them that it is worth all the effort just for the sake "of one girl saying one extra *bracha*!"²⁵

"Over the years, we merited numerous answers and *brachos* from the Rebbe in different aspects of the institution. We also had the *zechus* that the Rebbe wrote special letters to Beis Rivkah Montreal both for the graduates and for our annual dinner.

"From the beginning of my shlichus, I felt the need to forge a real *hiskashrus* of the *talmidos* with

the Rebbe himself. From the mid 5730s*, I began bringing buses of students to the Rebbe each year, first for Yud Shevat and then in later years for Chof-Beis Shevat.

"One year in the late 5730s*, the *talmidos* told me that they really wanted to see the Rebbe close up, and not just from afar in the *ezras nashim*. This was years before the Sunday dollars or other regular distributions and they wanted the opportunity to feel a closer connection to the Rebbe. We therefore gathered on the sidewalk to see the Rebbe as he entered 770 in the morning. As the Rebbe passed, he gave them a salute, and they were very touched.

"A minute later Rabbi Groner came outside and said that the Rebbe wanted all the girls to come into the foyer of 770. I was very surprised; in those years, it was very unusual for women or girls to even enter the main building of 770 (unless it was to go in for *yechidus*). "Why does the Rebbe want us to come in?" I asked in surprise, but Rabbi Groner said he didn't know. We gathered all the girls into the foyer, and soon the Rebbe came out of his room and gave them all coins for *tzedakah*.

"At the end of each school year, I instructed all the *limudei kodesh* teachers in all departments to write a

duch to the Rebbe summarizing what they learned during the year. Usually I did not receive a response from the Rebbe about these *duchos* and wasn't sure if the Rebbe actually read them, but I felt it was my responsibility to report, being that the *mossad* was under the Rebbe's *nesius*. One Erev Rosh Hashanah in the late 5730s*, I was standing at the Ohel next to Reb Aizik Schwei from Montreal, when he told me excitedly, 'Look at that!' while pointing into the Ohel. The reports we had sent were clearly visible having been brought by the Rebbe on a recent visit to the Ohel...

"In 5751*, I made a special photo album of class pictures of the girls and faculty of our school for the Rebbe. When we came as a school for Yud Shevat, I presented the album to the Rebbe during 'dollars'. The Rebbe looked at the album and asked me: דאס איז פאר מיר, צי דאס?—is it for me, or you need it to fundraise?"

"I was surprised by the question, and answered: 'ס'איז נישט אויף'—It's not for money, it's for the Rebbe!"

"The Rebbe repeated his question again, and I emphasized that we had made it for the Rebbe alone. Hearing that, the Rebbe said, זאל עס, בלייבן ביי מיר—let it stay with me' and *bentched* us with *besuros tovos*, and as I walked away, the Rebbe called me back with the most amazing words:

דורך דעם וואס עס וועט זיין ביי מיר!—You will make money, through it remaining with me!"

"*Baruch Hashem*, over the years we saw the fulfillment of the Rebbe's *brachos* and another floor and a new wing were added to the building for the growing student body.

"In Cheshvan 5752*, after Rav Mordechai Eliyahu visited the Rebbe, he visited Beis Rivkah Montreal where he gave a fiery speech about



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REB SHMUEL CHEFER IN HIS OFFICE IN BEIS RIVKA IN Kfar CHABAD IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE SCHOOL.

the Rebbe's greatness and about the importance of Beis Rivkah. That same day I wrote a letter to the Rebbe reporting about the visit and the content of his speech. A few days later we received a special answer from the Rebbe: "נת'ח ובודאי יפרסם הנ'ל באופן' להמשיך עוד ועוד תלמידות תי' בבית רבקה וכו'—אזכיר עה"צ—I received it, and many thanks. You will surely publicize the above in a manner that will draw more and more students to Beis Rivkah, etc. etc. I will mention it at the *Tziyun*."

"Another response that we received from the Rebbe:

"There was once a girl in our school from a modern family whose mother wanted to move her to public school. When the Rebbe was informed about this, he wrote the following uncharacteristically strong-worded *maaneh*:

"They should ask other women or men to speak to her and explain to her that if chas veshalom she will send her daughter to a school where she will mix with non-Jewish students—she takes upon herself full responsibility towards Hashem for whatever might result, *Rachmana litzlan*, from this choice. Vedai lameivin."

"The Rebbe concluded with an unusual line: 'They can say this in my name as well.'²⁶

Kfar Chabad

A SHINING FUTURE!

Rabbi Shmuel Chefer, dean of Beis Rivkah in Kfar Chabad for many decades, shared the followings stories in an interview several years ago:²⁷

"I once asked the Rebbe for guidance on when it was permitted to expel a student. The Rebbe told me, 'I will not answer that question. I could tell you that every *Yiddishe tochter* is a *bas Sarah, Rivkah, Rochel v'Leah*. It is one golden chain from the *imahos* until Moshiach. If you think you can break it...'

"One of the Rebbe's instructions was regarding the professions that were taught in high school. The Rebbe allowed us to teach a variety of professions like bookkeeping and others, but not those which would be considered more attractive than

teaching. It was very clear that our schools had a very specific mission.

"The Rebbe always pushed us to attract girls from communities that were not yet observant. To do so, he once instructed us to publicize the fact that Chabad is a worldwide organization, implying that students would have many opportunities opened to them by joining Beis Rivkah. To this end, he instructed us to bring visitors from United Jewish Appeal [a worldwide philanthropic organization] to demonstrate to parents and students that we were well connected worldwide.

"At times, it felt as if our efforts with some students were futile. When I mentioned that to the Rebbe, he said, 'But the *possuk* says that a person can only see with his eyes, not what is within people's hearts...'

"However, when certain students seemed wholly incompatible with our institution, the Rebbe did write that, 'In general, between a *yochid* and a *rabbim*, the *halacha* follows the *rabbim*, and in this case, the *rabbim* is the institution and its existing students.

"When the Rebbe appointed me to lead Beis Rivkah in Kfar Chabad, he said, 'Beis Rivkah has a shining future!' At the time, the school was small, with only several dozen students in a decrepit building. I couldn't foresee it, but the Rebbe's *brachos* are always fulfilled..."



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BEIS RIVKA CAMPUS IN Kfar CHABAD

Campus Chomesh

On the Shabbos following Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka's *histalkus*, Shabbos Parashas Mishpatim 5748*, the Rebbe said that he had already heard from many people who wished to establish *mosdos* bearing the name of the Rebbetzin, adding that this is indeed a very appropriate gesture.

One of the prominent *mosdos* planned in her memory was a new campus for Beis Rivkah, "Campus Chomesh"—carrying the first letters of her name in *Lashon Hakodesh*, Chaya Mushka Schneerson.

Ground was broken near the time of the *shloshim*, on Sunday 24 Adar.

Before the ceremony, Rabbi Avraham Shemtov and Mr. Ronald Perelman, the main benefactor of the project, came to the Rebbe for dollars at the Rebbe's home on President St.

The Rebbe thanked Mr. Pearlman profusely for "taking action, and beginning it in the nearest opportunity, within the *shiva*," and wished him much success both in this project as well as in his personal affairs. The Rebbe then gave a dollar to Rabbi Shemtov and said, "Thank you for bringing Mr. Perelman!" Then he gave another dollar to Mr. Perelman and said, "Thank you for bringing Rabbi Shemtov!"

Later that day, during the ceremony, the Rebbe's car appeared at the groundbreaking site. Rabbi Shemtov approached the car, and the Rebbe told him, "Tonight is the Rebbetzin's birthday. I'm now on my way to the Ohel, and I will also stop at her resting place. I would like to give you a donation on her behalf, along with mine. Enclosed is 470 dollars, the equivalent of the *gematriya* of her name."



THE REBBE'S CAR MAKES AN UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE AT THE GROUNDBREAKING OF CAMPUS CHOMESH ON LEFFERTS AND BROOKLYN AVE. 25 ADAR 5748



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