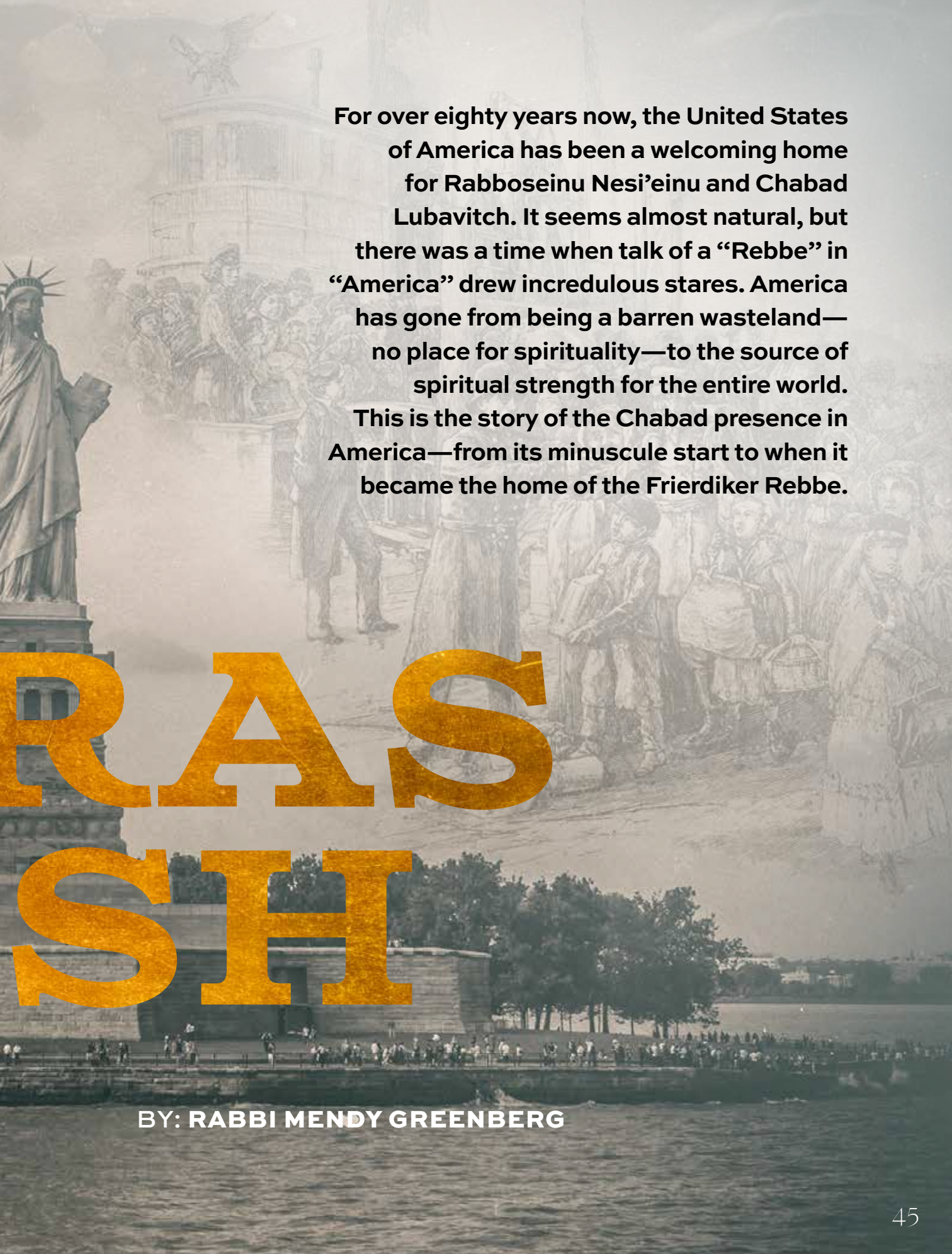


מוקדש לחיזוק
ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' שלום דוב בער וזוגתו מרת
חיה מושקא בנותיו ברכה ליפשא, עליזה,
שיינדל ובנו מנחם מענדל שיחיו
שוחאט

SACKS-FULL OF MESSIAH NEEVE

THE BEGINNINGS OF
LUBAVITCH IN AMERICA



For over eighty years now, the United States of America has been a welcoming home for Rabboseinu Nesi'einu and Chabad Lubavitch. It seems almost natural, but there was a time when talk of a “Rebbe” in “America” drew incredulous stares. America has gone from being a barren wasteland—no place for spirituality—to the source of spiritual strength for the entire world. This is the story of the Chabad presence in America—from its minuscule start to when it became the home of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

PARAS SHI

BY: RABBI MENDY GREENBERG

THE ASSASSINATION

One day in 1881, as Czar Alexander II was riding in his carriage through Petersburg, a blast was heard; a group of assassins had thrown a series of bombs at the Czar's carriage. Within a few hours, the Czar was dead.

Czar Alexander II had been a relatively moderate leader. He had abolished the cantonist drafts and relaxed the restrictions of the Pale of Settlement. Jews in Russia had begun to hope for a brighter future. But he was succeeded by his son, Alexander III, a rabid antisemite who would make his grandfather Nikolai proud.

To make matters worse, one of the assassins was Jewish. When news spread, pogroms broke out throughout the empire. The government turned a blind eye, and over the next two years, over 200 pogroms were perpetrated while anti-Jewish legislation resumed. Many Yidden concluded that there was no future for them in Russia.

They soon found a new destination: America.

The United States, with its famous freedom of religion, beckoned to people around the world. America had almost no immigration laws; if you could make it to American shores, you had the opportunity to achieve the "American dream." Steam ships had recently become commonplace, and Russia had just completed its railroad system. It was now feasible for a poor Russian Jew to make his way to the New World. Many began to make the trip.

Coming to America came at a steep price. Yiddishkeit

was almost non-existent; children attended public schools and parents were utterly consumed with the quest to earn a living. Shabbos observance was almost unheard of. For a Jew who was devoted to Torah and Mitzvos, America was the *treife medinah*, and traveling there was unthinkable. Still, immigration continued; many Jewish youth in Russia were swept up by movements that caused them to abandon Torah and Mitzvos, and many others couldn't withstand the temptation. Over the next four decades, some two million Jews made the trip.

A CHOSSID IN AMERICA?

On Simchas Torah תרנ"ב, in the Chassidische Shtetl of Pleschenitz, the Chassidim farbrenged and danced as usual. The farbrengen was organized and hosted by one of the town's respected Chassidim, Reb Avraham Chaim Rosenbaum. Reb Avraham Chaim was an elder chassid; in his youth, he had merited to travel to the Tzemach Tzedek, and also received many *kiruvim* from the Rebbe Maharash and Rebbe Rashab. He was close friends with Reb Shmuel Ber Barisover and a *mechutan* of Reb Chanoch Hendel Kugel.

This was a special Tishrei for Reb Avraham Chaim. He had recently been released from a two-year sentence in prison, after being accused of helping bochurim avoid the draft, among other "crimes." He was no youngster, and emerging from prison unscathed was no small miracle.

Unbeknownst to the other Chassidim, however, something was weighing on his heart that Simchas Torah. A secret message had been passed from someone in the police department; they were investigating him again, and he would be arrested shortly after Yom Tov. Reb Avraham Chaim needed to escape. As dusk fell on Motzei Simchas Torah, Chassidim noticed that he had vanished.

He soon reemerged in Amsterdam, but unable to make a living, he realized that he might have no choice but to travel to America. He asked the advice of the only known chossid living in the United States, Reb Chaim Yaakov Vidrovitz, former Rav of Moscow. Reb Chaim Yaakov had been a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek in his youth and had even edited the *sefer Tzemach Tzedek* for publication. When Jews were banished from Moscow, he emigrated to America.

"I decided not to answer anyone who asks whether they should move here," Reb Chaim Yaakov replied. He said that it was easy to find work if one was suited for physical labor, but people with weak constitutions often struggled severely. This didn't excite Reb Avraham Chaim, but he felt that he had no choice. In תרנ"ח, he and his family arrived at Ellis Island.¹



CZAR ALEXANDER



A PAINTING MADE SOON AFTER THE ASSASSINATION OF CZAR ALEXANDER WITH REMARKABLE DETAIL OF THE DRAMATIC EVENTS.

V'YATZMACH PURKANEI VIKAREIV MESHICHEI

What sort of Yiddishkeit met Reb Avraham Chaim when he arrived?

By that time, hundreds of thousands had already arrived in the United States. Despite the weak state of *chinuch* and mitzvah-observance, there were hundreds, if not thousands of shuls founded by immigrants. They also served as a way to stay in touch with their friends and communities in the immense, sea-like New York experience.

The shuls were a taste of the *alte heim*, where people could gather for some herring and schnapps. It was also an opportunity for many to feel important; in the old country, being a *macher* meant having an important position in shul, so in America, many shuls began popping up—each with a shamash, gabbai, chazan, treasurer, secretary, and president. The shuls were also associations that took care of their members. Fifty percent of a member's medical bills, for example, might be covered by the association. It was a critical source of support for destitute immigrants.

By that time, a large number of Jews from Chassidish homes began arriving as well. The Tzemach Tzedek famously had 600,000 Chassidim. Their descendants who came to America often felt a double dose of loneliness—immigrants in a new country, and even their fellow immigrants didn't always understand them.

In Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson's memoirs, he tells the following story about two immigrants from Chassidic homes meeting each other in a shul in Brownsville:

Reb Shmuel Hein came from a Chabad family in Russia. One Rosh Hashanah, he was davening in a Nusach Ashkenaz shul when he noticed someone saying "*V'yatzmach purkanei*" in *Kaddish Yasom*. Suspecting that he might be a chossid, Reb Shmuel approached him and asked humorously, (posing as a *misnaged*), "How dare you say *v'yatzmach purkanei* in a *makom kadosh*?"

The Jew—a recent immigrant—started to stutter and apologize, when Reb Shmuel stopped him and shared that he, too, davened Nusach Ari. The immigrant was so overwhelmed to meet a friendly face that he embraced him and started to cry. Later, the two of them established the first Nusach Ari minyan in Brownsville.²

THE NUSACH ARI SHULS

By the time Reb Avraham Chaim arrived in America, several Nusach Ari shuls had already been established; "Beis

Haknesses Lubavitch" had been founded in תרמ"ח (1888), and several others were also in existence. These shuls (often named Tzemach Tzedek) continued to grow in number; when efforts were made to bring the Frierdiker Rebbe out of Europe, Agudas Chassidei Chabad lobbied the government "on behalf of two hundred shuls and 150,000 members," referring to the many children and grandchildren of Chassidim who had arrived in America.³

Rabbi Yisrael Jacobson writes that the Frierdiker Rebbe had a special name for these Yidden: "The Frierdiker Rebbe divided Chabad Chassidim into three categories: Chassidei Chabad, Chassidei Hanusach, and Chassidei Hageza. Chassidei Chabad are those who attained *moach shalit al halev*. Chassidei Hanusach are those who daven Nusach Ari, and Chassidei Hageza are those who have Chabad ancestors—who themselves do not live a Chassidish life but who have 'chassidish blood' in their veins"⁴ (somewhat ironically, this last term is now employed as a point of pride for Lubavitchers with Chassidish grandparents).

Many of these Shuls were crucial in helping Chassidim come to America. In תרפ"ג (1923), America closed its borders, and Chassidim were able to immigrate only with special visas for religious leaders. The Nusach Ari shuls played the critical



BROWNSVILLE HAD BEEN NICKNAMED "YERUSHALAYIM D'AMERIKA." IN 5685, IT WAS RECORDED THAT BROWNSVILLE REPRESENTED THE LARGEST CENTER OF JEWISH POPULATION IN ALL OF NEW YORK CITY, WITH APPROXIMATELY 90,000 JEWS LIVING THERE.

PICTURED HERE IS ONE OF THE SHULS IN BROWNSVILLE, CONG. ADAS JESHURUN, ON THE CORNER OF EASTERN PARKWAY AND LINCOLN PLACE, APPROXIMATELY 90 YEARS AGO. THE JEWISH MARKINGS ON THIS BUILDING AND MANY OTHER FORMER SHULS REMAIN UNTIL THIS DAY.

REB AVROHOM CHAIM
ROSENBAUM DURING HIS
YEARS IN AMERICA.

role of issuing the invitations. These shuls were the center of all Chabad activities in America, and when Chassidim began to arrive, many of them were hired to serve in them as the *klei kodesh*.

Reb Avraham Chaim Rosenbaum was soon hired as a Rov in one of these shuls, and he quickly became active in gathering Jews and revitalizing the Chabad spirit within them.

In a letter to the Rebbe Rashab, he writes about the *simcha* they felt when they received the Rebbe's last letter and the new Maamarim from Lubavitch: "After reading the Megillah, we read and learned the letter again and again, overjoyed that even in our distant exile, we merit to see the Rebbe's holy handwriting seeking our welfare."⁵

Until the end of his life, the presence of this sagacious chossid was a source of connection and inspiration for the descendants of Chassidim in America. However, it was still a very lonely existence.

THE FATE OF THE LONELY CHOSSID

Until World War I and the upheavals that followed, *frumme Yidden* tried to avoid emigrating to America. The few Chassidim that did arrive here were often elderly, following their children who had come ahead of them. They sometimes came without permission from the Rebbe Rashab, which created an even greater sense of distance.

"Anash in America," writes Reb Yisrael Jacobson, "felt very disconnected and guilty, because they knew that the Rabbeim were opposed to emigrating to America. Reb Dovid Shifrin told me that before he left Russia, he came to the Rebbe Rashab and said, 'I'm not asking for advice—I already have a ship-ticket to go. But I don't want to be a Talmid who escapes his Rebbe without informing him where he is going; I came to tell the Rebbe that I'm going to America.'"⁶

Another chossid, Reb Avraham Marinson, arrived in S. Paul after his children promised that he would be able to live a Chassidische life in America. When he arrived, he was shocked to see the state of affairs and immediately regretted his decision. "Trust me," he wrote to a relative, "I haven't stopped crying since the day I arrived here, for my ill-fated decision to follow those so-called 'smart people' to come to Lubavitch to take leave of the Rebbe and trample on his holy will. Now, I find myself writing letters back to the Rebbe begging for *rachamim rabim* to be saved from America..."⁷

A slow trickle of Chassidim continued to come, spreading throughout the United States. In New York, a group slowly began to coalesce, but most others lived far from fellow Chassidim. Being a chossid in America was, for many, a terribly depressing experience.

But that would soon change.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AMERICA?

On Beis Nissan תר"ף, the Rebbe Rashab was *nistalek*. In his *tzava'ah*, the Rebbe Rashab asked the Frierdiker Rebbe to continue the work of sending Shluchim to communities to teach Chassidus and open Chadolim. "The current times have disturbed all the efforts, but with Hashem's help, the land will settle down, and it will be possible to renew the efforts."⁸

For much of the year of *aveilus*, the Frierdiker Rebbe was dangerously ill, but in Shevat of תרפ"א, the activities began; Shluchim were dispatched to strengthen Yiddishkeit throughout Russia, and the battle against Communism commenced. The Frierdiker Rebbe also opened a new front: the United States.

In a letter to Reb Aharon Shlomo Axelrod of Marietta, Ohio (father of the more well-known Reb Avraham Elye), the Frierdiker Rebbe asked about the state of Yiddishkeit in the new world.

"I've always heard that there are many people there who feel close to us, and I recall reading that they've built shuls named Tzemach Tzedek and the like. In recent years, contact has been lost..."⁹ The Frierdiker Rebbe asks for the addresses of the shuls, and wants to know the state of Yiddishkeit in all its details: Are there schools, shuls, infrastructure for *tash-mishei kedusha*, *mashpi'im* and so on and on. Despite the immense distance between Soviet Russia and the United States, the Frierdiker Rebbe wanted to know everything.

As you can imagine, the responses that arrived in Rostov



THE 5674 CONSTITUTION OF THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED NUSACH ARI SHUL IN BOROUGH PARK.



MEMBERS OF THE NUSACH ARI SHUL OF S. LOUIS, MISSOURI GATHER FOR A GROUP PHOTO ON THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KEHILLA IN 5681. THE FRIERDIKER REBBE SAID A MAAMAR IN THIS SHUL ON HIS VISIT TO THE CITY SEVERAL YEARS LATER.

weren't encouraging; most Chassidim in America were despondent; resigned to their fate, and convinced that they couldn't possibly change the situation. But the Frierdiker Rebbe wasn't ready to accept that as an answer.

"You need to consider," the Frierdiker Rebbe writes, "why did Hashem bring you to that land? What does Hashem want of you, if not to illuminate the country with Torah?"

In another letter, he addresses the Chassidim more forcefully: "Anash are overcome with despair; you say that you are in a distant land, *a vort chassidus lang nit gehert*, as if you are being punished and sent into exile *chas v'shalom*. This is causing many *neshamos* to be lost; none of this is true. It all depends on you..."¹⁰

The Frierdiker Rebbe placed a special focus on the Nusach Ari shuls. "Our brethren in America established shuls in the name of *Rabboseinu Nesi'einu*, such as Tzemach Tzedek, Anshei Lubavitch, and so on. They want to remain connected, *mekusharim*, to their source. But is it in name only? They need to be a living example for other shuls!"¹¹

The focus on America actually had its roots before תר"ו. Reb Shmuel Levitin heard from the Rebbe Rashab, in the final years before the *histalkus*, that it was time to connect with the Jews of America. Now, the Frierdiker Rebbe was pushing the Chassidim to begin the work.

WHAT'S A REVEREND?

After the rise of Communism, the number of Chassidim arriving in America began to grow.

One new arrival was Reb Yisrael Jacobson. He was a young Tomim living in Russia, not yet thirty years old, but his extended family was already in America, and by תרפ"ד, he contemplated joining them as well. When he came to Leningrad to spend Rosh Hashanah with the Frierdiker Rebbe, many Chassidim shared similar plans to leave Russia, but when they heard his destination, he got mixed reactions.

"I asked Reb Avraham Pariz whether he was willing to move to America (where his parents lived), but he didn't want to hear of it. When I suggested he ask the Rebbe, he refused; 'I'm not ready to go to America.'

"I told Reb Chonye Marosov that some were surprised I would go to America, but he responded, 'Yisrael, go! This is not a place for us to remain!' He personally was not ready to make the trip; he was already 47 and thought that a new country would be too difficult for him.

"I asked him which Anash in America I should contact, he said to write to Reb Dovid Shifrin. 'His address uses the title Reverend,¹² and I don't know what that means,' Reb Chonye said, 'But he is a Chassidishe Yid, and he is the main contact of Anash in America.'"¹³



REB YISROEL
JACOBSON'S
PASSPORT PHOTO.

Reb Dovid Shifrin was the central address for all things Lubavitch after the passing of Reb Avraham Chaim, and, when Reb Yisrael arrived in America a year later, they quickly became close.

Reb Yisrael, a young and energetic Tomim, became a leading activist. He was involved in practically everything that happened in Lubavitch of America before the Frierdiker Rebbe's arrival. His memoirs, *Zikaron Lvnei Yisrael*, are a rich window into the life of a Tomim from Lubavitch living in America.

More Temimim arrived—Reb Elya Simpson, Reb Avraham Elye Axelrod, Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky, Reb Yochanan Gordon, and others. It was very difficult to acclimate; Chassidim worked long hours to support their families, while simultaneously struggling to preserve their Chassidishe lifestyle and strengthen Torah and Mitzvos in their surroundings. Reb Avraham Elye Axelrod once received a letter from a fellow Tomim, asking, "What should I bring with me to America?"

Reb Avraham Elye's answer: "Sacks-full of *mesiras nefesh*."

THE VISION OF FIFTY STATES

In תרפ"ד (1924), the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed Reb Mendel Lokshin, a chossid traveling to America, to establish Agudas Chassidei Chabad there. Two years later, Agudas Hatemimim was established as well. In their own descriptions, the organizations were created to connect Chassidim with each other, to bring Nusach Ari shuls together, and to support the Frierdiker Rebbe's institutions—simple and straightforward goals.

In the Frierdiker Rebbe's letters, however, a much broader picture emerges:

"My dear friends," the Frierdiker Rebbe writes. "You

cannot imagine my inspiration when I read a newspaper clipping from your city which says that there are one thousand—*kein yirbu*—shuls, and some one million, seven hundred thousand Yidden... I thought about how many shuls of Anash there are, and just how much could be accomplished!... There are forty-eight states¹⁴ with countless towns and thousands of shuls. There must be at least some of Anash in every location, who will respond to the call...¹⁵

It boggles the mind, truthfully, to read of a vision of 'Shluchim' in every state—at the very start of the Frierdiker Rebbe's *nesius* in Russia, while in an all-out war against the Communists, and with Yiddishkeit in America barely in its infancy. This was a full 90 years before South Dakota, the last state without one, finally received a Shliach.

From those early years, the Frierdiker Rebbe continuously demanded that Chassidim make every effort to strengthen Yiddishkeit—to establish *chadorim* and a yeshiva, to arrange Torah classes, and to spread the teachings of Chassidus. True, they were a small group—some ten to fifteen Temimim, and some other Chassidim and Balebatim—but every Chossid was expected to, and did, make a real impact.

Reb Yochanan Gordon, for example, worked long hours as a shochet, but was chosen by the Frierdiker Rebbe, along with Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky and Reb Yisrael Jacobson, to be responsible for Achos Hatmimim. This was in addition to regular public shiurim that he taught and a *gemilas chesed* fund that he administered.¹⁶

Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky was the Rav of two

shuls and gave numerous public shiurim. He would host the *Shadarim* when they visited America, and was a point of contact for many grandchildren of Chassidim in the new world.¹⁷ Reb Elya Simpson, also the Rav of a shul, was likewise involved in a variety of activities.

Reb Yisrael Jacobson attracted a large group of *bochurim* from Torah Vodaas, teaching them Chassidus and being *mekarev* them to the Frierdiker Rebbe; a number of them even traveled to Tomchei Temimim in Poland.

The full story of each of these Chassidim can fill an article, even a book, on its own. Every Tomim answered the Frierdiker Rebbe's call to make a difference.

THE 'OFFICE' OF AGUCH

The main center of activities was the office of Agudas Chassidei Chabad. The term 'office' might be an overstatement. "The site," writes Reb Yisrael Jacobson, "was at the far end of the factory owned by the Kramers. A partition was erected, creating enough room for a desk and three chairs; when a fourth person would join, the chair would be placed outside the partition or in the doorway. Meetings would be held there every week or two, attended by Reb Mendel Lokshin, Reb Dovid Shifrin, Reb Elya Simpson, myself, and some others, to discuss sending money to the Rebbe in Russia or to Tomchei Temimim in Warsaw."

The Kramers were a family of *balebatim* devoted to the



A TELEGRAM TO THE FRIERDIKER REBBE FROM THE MEMBERS OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD IN AMERICA UPON HIS ARRIVAL IN RIGA. THE CHASSIDIM NOTIFY HIM THAT THEY SENT \$8000 TO REB MORDECHAI DUBIN:

בלב שמח מברכים הגנו אדמו"ר שליט"א. בואכם לשלום. סך הכל שלחנו לדובין שמונה אלפים דולר. במכתב יתבאר. אחים קרעמער. לאקשין. סימפסון. יעקבסאן.



A 5685 LETTER FROM THE FRIERDIKER REBBE TO THE CHILDREN OF REB MOSHE ELIEZER KRAMER URGING THEM TO CONTINUE THEIR FATHER'S WORK IN AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD.

Frierdiker Rebbe's work. The father, Reb Moshe Eliezer, didn't have much of a connection to Chassidus, but he came from the Chassidishe town of Kurenitz, davened Nusach Ari, and had a warm spot in his heart for Chassidim. When a prominent name was needed to lead the new Agudah, he agreed to take the role.

He was succeeded by his son, Chazak. "Reb Mendel Lokshin told me," Reb Yisrael Jacobson writes, "that when they were about to bury Reb Moshe Eliezer, he blocked the *kevurah* until the sons, Chazak and Avraham David, promised to continue their father's work. The sons didn't know much about Lubavitch, but they respected Reb Mendel Lokshin; they knew that their father had held him in high regard."¹⁸

Much of Aguch's work involved sending money to Europe. A significant amount of the *Maamad* funds for the Frierdiker Rebbe's household came from America, and much of the support for Tomchei Temimim in Otvozk was American-based as well. Once, they even sponsored a new printing of Likkutei Torah in Warsaw.

One early accomplishment was bringing the Frierdiker Rebbe out of Russia. The move cost several thousand dollars, and the bill was almost entirely covered by the American Chassidim.

Rabbi Jacobson writes how it happened:

"We were informed from Riga that a large amount of money was needed, and that he was still in serious danger. We gathered in the office of Aguch on an Erev Shabbos and decided that we needed to immediately send four thousand dollars. Who decided? Me and Rabbi Simpson. Rabbi Lokshin concurred, though not as forcefully.

"I said that there was no other option, but the Kramer brothers were shocked. 'Where will so much money come from?' They told us to call a larger meeting to raise the funds, or perhaps to borrow it. They walked off to their offices, leaving us upset; to them, sending so much money was unthinkable.

"We convinced Rabbi Lokshin to call them back, and he explained the severity of the situation. They finally offered one thousand dollars, and then agreed to add five hundred more. But I couldn't agree; I said I wouldn't leave the office until they sent the full four thousand dollars—and I promised to pay them back. They didn't believe me, but Rabbi Lokshin warned them that I was serious, and they finally agreed to wire the money immediately. A few days later, we received word that the Frierdiker Rebbe had arrived safely in Riga."¹⁹

THE ROYAL VISIT

A few years after the Frierdiker Rebbe left Russia, the effort to transform America received a powerful boost.

"In Shevat of 5689," writes Reb Yisrael Jacobson, "I

received a letter from Reb Chatche Feigin that the [Frierdiker] Rebbe was to visit America in the summer on behalf of Russian Jewry, and also to see the situation of American Jewry, which was now a very significant community. Naturally, Anash were incredibly excited by the prospect."

Many "Nusach Ari" Yidden were excited as well, but apprehensive about how the Frierdiker Rebbe would be received. Was America really ready to receive the Rebbe?

Mr. Isador Starr of Detroit, a young man at the time, later wrote a fascinating account of the visit. He describes the reaction to the news in his Nusach Ari shul:

"Some expressed disbelief, others asked, 'What is he going to do here?' Most listened with puzzlement and anxiety in their faces and eyes; others expressed open doubt. 'He doesn't know America, he thinks he will make Yeshivah students of American boys. Too bad! He is destined for failure and frustration.'"

Everyone, however, was very excited.

"Where is he now? When does he plan to arrive? What is his itinerary?' All these were discussed with interest and enthusiasm. The jubilation in our home when my father learned that the Rebbe was coming to Detroit, is beyond description. He and Rabbi Eskin [the Nusach Ari Rav] sat around the table and exchanged mazal tovs. The general atmosphere was one of great festivity. Anyone walking in would think that a family celebration was taking place—and in a way, it was!"²⁰

The Frierdiker Rebbe arrived that summer and remained in the United States for ten months. In every city he visited, thousands came to greet him. It was a life-changing experience, a moment when many Jews felt that America was no longer the *golus* they had imagined. Perhaps, just perhaps, it



A LOCAL NEWSPAPER REPORTS ON THE THOUSANDS THAT GREETED THE FRIERDIKER REBBE UPON HIS ARRIVAL IN DETROIT, MICHIGAN.

could be a place where Yiddishkeit flourished.

The impact of the Rebbe's visit was long-lasting. "The Rebbe left Detroit, but the impression he made lingered on," Mr. Starr recounted. "Even the skeptics who were so certain, before his coming, that he could accomplish nothing, were silenced. Now they were not quite so certain of the uselessness of his coming. Somehow, things were different.

"The next time I saw the Rebbe was in New York. I went to the dedication of the first Lubavitch Yeshiva on Dean and Bedford Street. As I stood and watched the tremendous crowd, as I watched the jubilation of the multitude in reaction to the Rebbe's talk, I could not help but think that this was different from anything I had previously witnessed anywhere in this country. Thousands of Jews were stirred in their interest in Chinuch and the need to provide Yeshivos, places of study and learning for American children and young people."

Before leaving back to Europe, the Frierdiker Rebbe granted an interview to a journalist from the Morgan

Journal, in which he spoke about his vision for America. The journalist noted that in contrast to other Rabbanim, who spoke negatively about the state of American Jewry, the Rebbe was optimistic.

"America is the land where Yiddishkeit must and will rejuvenate itself.' For the Lubavitcher Rebbe, it is not just wishful thinking. He sees clear signs of it. Contrary to the pessimistic opinions expressed by others, the Rebbe sees a bright future for American youth. The Rebbe does not only focus on the old generation but also on the new, upcoming American generation.

"The young here absorb and thirst for Yiddishkeit,' says the Rebbe. 'The youth is turning back to its Jewish roots. All they lack is knowledge, education.'

"The Rebbe adds, 'Those who wish to, can make their new life in America resemble their old life overseas.' The Rebbe is fully confident that it will happen. 'The American Jews will not only support the yeshivas and Torah centers across the ocean; they will also establish and maintain their own yeshivas and Torah centers here.'"

THREE SPECIAL GUESTS

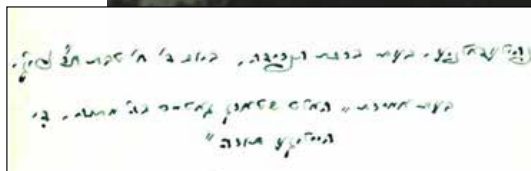
During the visit, there was serious talk about the Frierdiker Rebbe remaining in America and bringing the center of Chabad to the United States. Ultimately, however, he chose to return to Europe and settle near the Tomchei Temimim in Poland. But there were hints that it might be a temporary stay. In the meantime, he asked the Chassidim to continue their work in transforming America into a place where Yiddishkeit and Chassidus could thrive.

To help prepare the groundwork, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent a series of *Shadarim* to America over the following decade. He chose some of the most exalted and celebrated Chassidim: Reb Itche der Masmid, Reb Mordechai Chefetz, and Reb Shmuel Levitin.

Reb Itche der Masmid was like a visitor from another planet, yet he remained in America for close to two years. Upon his departure, someone wrote a letter to the editor of the Chabad bulletin describing the feeling of loss: "Reb Yitzchak, with his extraordinary *hanhaga* and his rich chassidishe talks to which even non-Chassidim were drawn, truly awoke the feelings of Chassidus among us; one genuinely felt



KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY



THIS RECENTLY DISCOVERED PICTURE WAS TAKEN AS THE FRIERDIKER REBBE ADDRESSED OVER A THOUSAND PEOPLE WHO GATHERED FOR A TZEISHEM L'SHALOM AFTER HIS MONTH-LONG VISIT TO PHILADELPHIA IN 5690. THE FRIERDIKER REBBE SENT THIS PHOTO TO REBBETZIN NECHAMA DINA IN RIGA AND WROTE THIS INSCRIPTION ON THE BACK:

פיהלעדאלפיע, בעת ברכת הפרידה, ביום ח' טבת ת"ר צדיק, בעת אמירת "האלט שטארק גאט'ס ב"ה מתנה, די הייליגע תורה" (DURING MY PARTING MESSAGE IN PHILADELPHIA ON 8 TEVES 5690, AS I SAID: "HOLD STRONG HASHEM'S GIFT, THE HOLY TORAH.")



REB ITCHE DER MASMID.

Yomtov'dik in his presence. Despite his departure, we cannot say that we fell back into our mundane, weekday existence, because the memory of his presence is so fresh.”

Then, in תרצ"ט, Reb Chatche Feigin began sending quiet messages to America; the Frierdiker Rebbe had determined that the time for the move had finally arrived. By this time, the situation in America had drastically improved. Many more Chassidim were arriving, and the state of chinuch had improved immeasurably. During those same months, several of Reb Yisrael Jacobson's *mushpa'im* were making plans to join Tomchei Temimim in Otvotzk—something unthinkable just a few years earlier.

The Frierdiker Rebbe began the process of securing visas to move with his entire family, close Chassidim, and select Yeshivah Bochurim. Ultimately, though, the war broke out, and the move took place as a rescue effort from Nazi occupation. On Tes Adar Sheni ט"ז, after a long and grueling journey, the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in the United States.

THE VISION OF THREE LOVES

During the *kabolas ponim* in the Greystone Hotel, the Frierdiker Rebbe noted that he didn't come as a refugee: “My arrival here was made possible with Hashem's help, in order that I continue my work in spreading Torah, *yiras shomayim* and *avodah*, as well as activity for the benefit of the local Jewish community.²¹

“When I was here ten years ago,” the Frierdiker Rebbe said, “I met a variety of American Jews—immigrants from many countries, local-born citizens, people of all ages, yeshivah students and secular students, and businessmen... I am certain that in these ten years, the spiritual standing of the yeshivah students, and of young people in general, has grown significantly.”

The Frierdiker Rebbe declared that now, the change would become permanent. “In the course of the last decade, American Jews have become world Jewry's crowning glory in the realm of tzedakah. The time has come for American Jews to assume their rightful place likewise in the realms of Torah and *avodah*.”

Then came the big announcement:

“It is my pleasure today to share with you the news: ...with Hashem's help, the Tomchei Temimim Lubavitch Yeshivah of America will be opened tomorrow.”²²

On Yud Shevat 5711, the Rebbe famously opened with a mission statement, saying that the three loves of Ahavas Hashem, Ahavas haTorah and Ahavas Yisroel are interconnected; one cannot have one without the other.

This exact idea was said by the Frierdiker Rebbe at that



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE IS WELCOMED AS HE ARRIVES IN THE UNITED STATES ON 9 ADAR II 5700.

same *kabolas ponim*, when the mission began to illuminate America:

“Yisrael, the Torah, and *Kudsha Brich Hu* are all one... *Ahavas Hashem* and *Ahavas Yisrael* are one and the same. Whoever has *Ahavas Hashem* also has *Ahavas Yisrael*, and whoever toils to acquire *Ahavas Yisrael* merits a higher level of *Ahavas Hashem*. As the Alter Rebbe says, ‘*V'ahavta L'rei'acha Kamocha*’ is a means to attain ‘*V'ahavta es Hashem Elokecha*.’”

That day in the Greystone Hotel, the Frierdiker Rebbe made it clear: America would never be the same. ①

1. See “Toldos Avraham Chaim” for more about this chossid.
2. Zikaron Lvnei Yisrael, pg. 182.
3. Toldos Chabad B'Artzos Habris pg. 128.
4. Zikaron Lvnei Yisrael, pg. 128.
5. Toldos Chabad B'Artzos Habris pg. 4.
6. Toldos Chabad B'Artzos Habris pg. 5.
7. Toldos Chabad B'Artzos Habris pg. 6.
8. Toldos Chabad B'Artzos Habris pg. 12.
9. Toldos Chabad B'Artzos Habris pg. 12.
10. Toldos Chabad B'Artzos Habris pg. 13.
11. Toldos Chabad B'Artzos Habris pg. 14.
12. In those days, American rabbis often used this title. This title was on Reb Dovid's letterhead as well.
13. Zikaron Lvnei Yisrael pg. 98.
14. Alaska and Hawaii had not yet attained statehood.
15. Toldos Chabad B'Artzos Habris pg. 26.
16. See “With Heart and Soul,” *Derher* Adar I 5776.
17. See “Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky,” *Derher* Tishrei 5773.
18. Zikaron Lvnei Yisrael pg. 130.
19. Zikaron Lvnei Yisrael pg. 152.
20. Teshurah, Bikur Detroit.
21. See Yud Shevat 5743.
22. Sefer Hasichos 5700 pg. 5. See Yud Shevat 5743.