

# FLOODED WITH BLESSING

*In a recent conversation with A Chassidisher Derher,  
Rabbi Chaim Goldstein, Shliach to Drexel University, shared the following story.*

**W**e moved to Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on Chof-Daled Teves 5771. When we first moved, my wife and I had our hearts set on purchasing a permanent location for the Chabad House. However, as young, new shluchim, we were obviously not in the position to afford such an expense. We rented a spacious apartment within our means, and we began tending to the spiritual and physical needs of the nine hundred Jewish students on campus.

After just a few months at Drexel, it became clear that we would soon outgrow our rented location. We began looking into purchasing a larger house, to accommodate the ever-growing number of students attending the classes and programs we offered.

Although we were, *boruch Hashem*, very successful in reaching out to the Jewish students, it seemed that a larger property would have to wait a while, as we did not yet have the means to obtain a larger space. Additionally, there was quite some time remaining on the lease

we signed for our apartment, which we could not terminate. I was hesitant to take any steps, but my wife, on the other hand, was insistent on looking to expand as soon as possible. And so, we kept our eyes and ears open.

One day, on her way to meet me on campus, my wife noticed a house for sale.

The location was perfect but the house was not. It was small and did not meet our needs. Still, we checked it out.

While there, the seller asked us if we were looking to purchase a space for a Chabad House! Shocked, we answered that, indeed, we were. He told us that he had another house for sale, a bit further



RABBI CHAIM GOLDSTEIN LAYS TEFFILIN ON A STUDENT.



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 166625



AFTER THE APARTMENT FLOODED, WRECKING THE WALLS AND DESTROYING THE CEILING, RABBI CHAIM GOLDSTEIN PRESENTS THE PLAN FOR A MOVE TO A NEW CHABAD HOUSE.

off campus, and he felt it would suit our needs perfectly. It was not yet on the market, but he agreed to show it to us.

This house was in the heart of student off-campus housing and suited our situation perfectly! Although it was a bit further from campus than we originally anticipated, this house was the ideal site for our new Chabad House. With a beautiful brand new library, which could easily be converted to a shul, a large dining room, and huge pantry, it was truly meant to be a Chabad House!

Of course, our main concern was finding the money to buy the house. The only option we could think of was to turn to the well-known philanthropist, Mr. George Rohr, who generously gives large sums towards building Chabad Houses on college campuses across America. The problem, though, was that he generally gives to well-established shlichim who are at their posts for at least a couple of years. We did not think we would be eligible. It seemed virtually impossible, but we were very determined to make the

purchase somehow. In order for that to happen, we needed to come up with a large sum of money in a short amount of time, as the house was soon to be placed on the market.

One week later, we travelled to New York. Armed with all the details regarding the house, we visited the Ohel. We wrote a *tzettel* to the Rebbe, including all the relevant information, and asked for *brachos* to be able to buy the house. We were sure that with the Rebbe's *brachos* we would be able to do the impossible.

That night, we returned home to Philadelphia. Opening the door, we were absolutely shocked by what greeted us. The entry room to our apartment was completely flooded, with water still pouring in from a pipe in the ceiling. My wife—who often tells students when it's raining that water is a blessing—laughingly turned to me and said “we must be getting lots of *brachos*!”

Seizing the opportunity to leave our apartment, we called the seller of the house and informed him that we

needed to move in immediately. He agreed to rent it to us for a brief while at a price much more than we could afford (approximately triple of what we were paying for our apartment). But fortunately, our renter's insurance kicked in. After spending time on the phone with the insurance, we managed to convince them that although the rent on the house was far more expensive than what we had been paying, it was the only arrangement that would suit our needs. This is highly unusual! Rental insurance specifically covers *just* the cost of rent. That they agreed to pay triple the amount was miraculous. Not only was our rent covered, but being that the house required a few months of cleaning and renovation, our first landlord released us from the lease.

We moved in to the new house immediately, and that helped our situation temporarily. Through the *brachos* of the Rebbe, we were given the opportunity to purchase a new Chabad House.



THE KITCHEN AFTER IT WAS FLOODED.



THE NEW CHABAD HOUSE.



THE NEW KITCHEN FOLLOWING THE RENOVATION.

Moving bought us some precious time to be able to come up with the necessary funding. Insurance would only cover the house for the duration of the renovations to our first home. Besides, the owner of our new home was not going to allow us to rent for too long without buying. We turned to Mr. Rohr, and thankfully, his grant, together with a huge fundraising campaign, enabled us to secure a mortgage, which was a real miracle on its own! We completed the purchase just days before our time was up.



The Rebbe continues to shower us with brachos, especially in connection with our Chabad House. Our students are all well aware that we are in our present location due to a *brachah* from the Rebbe. Last year at the annual “Anniversary Shabbos” marking the day we came to Drexel University, a student made a *l'chaim* and jokingly mentioned that being that we are here due to a flood, he is wishing us another flood!

A short while later, a close friend called,

out of the blue, to tell me about a letter printed in the *hosafos* to Likutei Sichos vol. 16 (p. 506).

In this letter, the Rebbe writes the following to a person struggling to pay his mortgage:

*I heard from my father-in-law the [Frieddiker] Rebbe—with regard to his charity funds—the quote from our sages: ‘He who receives a coin from Ivoy is blessed.’ I hereby enclose a check from one of these funds, which still exist and continue to this day. You should combine this sum with the money you will collect to pay off your debt, and surely the promise [of the Frieddiker Rebbe] will be fulfilled.*

*In order to increase in the brachah and to strengthen your connection with the person in charge of this fund, i.e. the Frieddiker Rebbe, you should follow the directive of Chassidus in this regard, namely by learning his Torah and adhering to his instructions and directives.*

*It would therefore be appropriate for you from now on to follow the daily shiurim of*

*Chumash, Tehillim and Tanya, and to learn from his Torah as well (preferably three days should not go by without this), and to set aside time to study his maamorim.*

At that time, we were having serious trouble with the mortgage and upon reading this letter, I was inspired to make a *hachlata* to be more meticulous in the study of the daily *shiurim*, and to set aside time to learn the Rebbe’s Torah regularly.

A couple of days later, we left for a family *simcha*. Upon our return, believe it or not, we found our entire kitchen submerged in water!

A mother of one of our students heard of the current situation, and together with her son, she initiated a fundraising campaign that brought us tremendous funds from sources we never imagined. This funding enabled us to rebuild and expand our kitchen area to double its original size. Such an expansion was not in our budget, certainly not at that time, and this new campaign opened new doors for us, allowing continued growth in our shlichus. **D**