



לזכות
הת' יוסף שיחי'
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות
י"ט אב ה'תשע"ז
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דר. משה וזוגתו מרים שיחיו פעלדמאן



PIONEER ON CAMPUS



Interview with Rabbi Nosson Gurary.

Rabbi Nosson Gurary has the distinction of being among the first shluchim of the Rebbe, and a pioneer shlich on campus. His shlichus began in the late 5720s, at the height of the hippy-era, and many of the tactics and traditions still in use by shluchim today started in his Chabad House.

Going back even earlier, Rabbi Gurary merited tremendous *kiruvim* from the Rebbe as a young child. His father was Rabbi Zalman Gurary, a prominent Chossid who was very close to *beis harav*, and he grew up in the *daled amos* of 770. As a *bochur* in the early years of the *nesius*, he received close guidance from the Rebbe in *avodas Hashem*, and in all areas of his life.

In the following interview, Rabbi Gurary shares a unique glimpse of life in 770 and on shlichus.

Childhood

I was born in New York in 5706. The Friediker Rebbe sent letters in honor of my birth and *upshernish*. My father must have brought me to the Friediker Rebbe as a young child, but I was too young to remember. One of my earliest memories is of the Friediker Rebbe's *histalkus* on Yud Shevat 5710; everyone was crying, and my father sent us home to tell my mother what had happened.

I spent much of my childhood in 770, and I merited to have many interactions with the Rebbe. One time, when I was a little boy, I was playing

near the front door of 770, when suddenly two *bochurim* ran over to me and asked me if I was under five years old. Apparently, the Rebbe had said at the farbrengen that any child under five should come and say *l'chaim*. I said yes, and the next thing I knew I was being carried through the window of the *zal* into the farbrengen and placed in front of the Rebbe. Someone gave me a cup to say *l'chaim*.

My grandfather was the Kopischnitzer Rebbe, and the custom in his court was that when saying *l'chaim* one would shake his hand, to "give *sholom*." So at this particular

farbrengen, I put out my hand to the Rebbe. The Rebbe smiled very broadly—he knew exactly where it was coming from—and he gave me his hand.

My father, of course, reprimanded me and said that we don't shake the Rebbe's hand. The following Shabbos, when the Rebbe was nodding "Good Shabbos" to people as he was exiting shul after *Mussaf* (as was his custom), he offered me his hand. However, by now I knew not to give the Rebbe my hand, so I didn't—instead I held my hands firmly behind my back. Again, the Rebbe smiled broadly—he had already understood everything that had happened...

The Rebbe was *mekarev* me on other occasions as well. One time as a young child, when I went by the Rebbe to receive matzah before Pesach, the Rebbe asked me whether I knew the "*fir kashyos*." I said yes, and then he asked me whether I knew the answers. Again, I answered in the affirmative. If so, the Rebbe asked me, why are you asking the questions...? I answered that it was a mitzvah to do so.

Another interesting story that occurred when I was a child was when I came to the Rebbe for *lekach*. The idea of *lekach* is to "*bet lekach*"—to "ask" for the *lekach*—and the Rebbe



RABBI GURARY AS A YOUNG BOY.



THE REBBE AND THE KOPISCHNITZER REBBE IN CONVERSATION AT A CHASUNA, 14 ADAR 5711.

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wanted me to verbalize “*Ich bet lekach,*” so when I came by, the Rebbe prompted me, “Can I help you? What would you like?”

I said “I would like *lekach.*” The Rebbe asked, “From whom?” “From the Rebbe,” I replied. He then gave me a piece. That was something to remember.

The Rebbe always kept tabs on me. My birthday is on Shushan Purim, and many times at the Purim farbrengen (the eve of Shushan Purim) the Rebbe would call out my name and tell me to say *l'chaim*; this was from a very young age. Once, the Rebbe said that I should say *l'chaim*, adding that in the Megillah it says עד חצי המלכות וינתן לך, which is connected to my name, Nosson.

I don't recall the specific dates and times, as this goes back to my very early childhood, but I also remember how when the Rebbe would speak to individuals at the farbrengens, he would sometimes pull down their hat. I'm not sure what it meant, exactly—maybe that person was wearing his hat like a wise-guy... One time, on Purim, when the theme is *venahapoch hu*, the Rebbe put his brim up, and it remained that way for the rest of the farbrengen, including during the *maamar*.



RABBI GURARY IN HIS TEENS.

Bar Mitzvah

As I approached the age of bar mitzvah, I received many specific directives from the Rebbe. One major question was which arm to put the tefillin on, because I write with my left hand, but my right hand is the stronger one. This is a *machlokes* between the Alter Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek; the Alter Rebbe says to put the tefillin on the right arm, and the Tzemach Tzedek says to put it on the left. The Rebbe said to ask the *ziknei anash*, the elders of *anash*. My father asked Reb Shmuel Levitin, and he went to ask the Rebbe. When he came out, Reb Shmuel said that I should put them on my left arm, like the opinion of the Tzemach Tzedek.

Incidentally, years earlier my father had asked the Rebbe whether he should train me to write with my right hand, as was common practice in those years, instead of the left, and the Rebbe told him not to do so because it's not healthy.

My bar mitzvah was on Shushan Purim, and my *hanachas tefillin* was scheduled to be on 15 Shevat (since it was a leap year). The Rebbe said that being that it's so close to Yud Shevat, I should begin putting on tefillin a little earlier—without a *brocha*—on

Tes Shevat, and with a *brocha* on Yud Shevat.

A few weeks after my bar mitzvah, I was standing near the Rebbe's room when he had returned from drawing *mayim shelanu* on the eve of Erev Pesach. (*Mayim shelanu* happened twice a year: a few weeks before Pesach for matzos being sent to Eretz Yisrael, and the night before Erev Pesach for the Rebbe's own matzos.) When the Rebbe saw me standing near his room, he said, “You just became bar mitzvah—*gei loif*, go run to draw *mayim shalenu!*”

It should be noted that after the Rebbe drew *mayim shalenu* and poured it into the jar, the jar was closed, and Rabbi Mentlik would stand there like a policeman to make sure no one else would pour. Here I came, a young bar mitzvah *bochur*—the jar was bigger than me!—saying that I need to take *mayim shelanu*. Rabbi Mentlik looked at me as if I was from Mars—you've got to be kidding me!—until I finally told him that the Rebbe had sent me and he had to open it.

Yechidus

One of the most special experiences for a *bochur* was to go into *yechidus* for his birthday. I had the *zechus* to go into *yechidus* every year, from when I was ten years old (together with my father). The crowd was obviously much smaller then, and it was clearly evident how the Rebbe was utterly devoted to each and every one of us. It was so obvious how the Rebbe knows you through and through: he knows your *techunos hanefesh*, he knows your issues—he just knows you; it was unbelievable! So whenever you went into *yechidus* or wrote letters, you really felt like you were writing to your father. The Rebbe cares about you; he remembers what he told you last time, and he wants to make sure you remember. You didn't need *emunah* to feel this way, you saw it so clearly.

In fact, many times the Rebbe would continue elaborating on something at a farbrengen that he had begun telling a *bochur* in a *yechidus*, and only that *bochur* would realize what the Rebbe was referring to. This is something that I myself experienced.

After a *yechidus*, often one wasn't sure whether he had heard and remembered every word that the Rebbe told him. So you would write a *hanacha* of the *yechidus* as you understood it, and the Rebbe would check it over—adding a few words or deleting a piece, fixing something, and so on. Think about it: It was so important to the Rebbe that a young *bochur* should understand exactly what he said that not only did he answer all their questions in *yechidus*, he reviewed the *hanachos* later on as well!

One year when I was still a *bochur*, I went to the Rebbe for *yechidus* for my birthday. The Rebbe stood up and gave me a Tanya printed in Australia and said, “May the words ‘*Ki karov eilecha hadavar meod*’ be fulfilled for you.”

Any *bochur*, even the young *bochurim*, could write questions to the Rebbe in *avodas Hashem* anytime during the year, and he would answer them. I would write to the Rebbe very often, and he would write answers on the page. The Rebbe was very sensitive to the feelings of the person, and whenever it was a private matter, he would tear off the part that was personal so that the *mazkirus* wouldn't see it when they showed you the answer.

The Rebbe kept tabs on whether you had received the answer or not. After the *mazkirus* showed you the Rebbe's answer—you weren't allowed to take the answer, only read it and copy it—they would put it in another box that went back to the Rebbe. So the Rebbe always kept track of whether you had received the answer. Sometimes the Rebbe would write to



RABBI NOSSON GURARY HANDS THE REBBE A PILE OF PANIM, 29 ELUL 5747, EREV ROSH HASHANAH.

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Many times, the Rebbe continued elaborating on something at a farbrengen that he had begun telling a *bochur* in a *yechidus*, and only that *bochur* would realize what the Rebbe was referring to.

me “I know that you got my answer...” The Rebbe spent so much time with the Chassidim, and was so busy, and yet—it was important for him to know if you had received his answer. These things just go to demonstrate how much the Rebbe loves his Chassidim, how he cares for every *bochur*... The Rebbe's love for his Chassidim is beyond anything we can imagine.

The Rebbe's Loring Guidance

One time, when I was 16 years old, I wrote a question shortly before Lag Ba'omer, and I received the answer on Lag Ba'omer itself. At the beginning of the *tzetzl*, the Rebbe wrote the date “Lag Ba'omer,” underlined it twice, and then went on to quote a Zohar word for word, noting the page for reference (it was a Zohar about *simcha*). On such a holy day as Lag Ba'omer, the Rebbe took the time to answer the question of a young kid down on his level, and he didn't simply reference

the Zohar for me—he wrote out the entire piece for my benefit! The Rebbe showed unbelievable devotion to each and every individual.

I had chest pains as a younger *bochur*, which was unusual for someone that age. I wrote to the Rebbe about it, and he replied that I should go to a doctor who would calm me down. So I went to Dr. Seligson, and, if I remember correctly, he said that I should eat grapefruit. It was a *rebbe'she* thing...

Many years later, I had these pains in my chest again, and I went to another doctor who informed me that there was an issue that needed to be corrected. I wrote to the Rebbe about what had transpired. The Rebbe replied: “I told you once to go to a doctor who will calm you down. If you went to a doctor who did not calm you down—he's not the right doctor!”

The miracle of all this is that there really *is* something wrong, and the

only reason I'm still around until this very day is because the Rebbe made this issue into nothing!

The Rebbe guided me on major issues as well as small. One time, I wrote to the Rebbe that everything I was doing was with *pnijos*, ulterior motives. The Rebbe told me that being that this simply isn't true—there are times that you do things without any ulterior motives—you should know that the *yetzer hara* is only trying to bother you, and you should say to your *yetzer hara* that you don't have time to spend with him, since the issue is *b'sheker yesodo*, it is fundamentally false. Especially, the Rebbe added,

because *mitoch shelo lishma ba lishma*, a person must continue doing Torah and mitzvos even with ulterior motives and eventually his motives will be pure.

The Rebbe even gave me *hadracha* on things like my schedule. I once wrote to the Rebbe that I was exhausted from staying up all night on Thursday night and then coming to *seder* the following morning. The Rebbe noted the Tanya in Iggeres Hateshuvah, where it says that a person who does something that hurts the health of the body is considered a *chotei* [a sinner], and that I should therefore not stay up anymore.

Another time I wrote to the Rebbe that (because I was so tired) I would take a nap on Friday afternoon. The Rebbe said that he had never heard of such a behavior, and אולי שייר למקובלים, perhaps *mekubalim* do so... He didn't like this idea of sleeping during the day.

The Rebbe always encouraged *dibbuk chaveirim*, that I should speak things over with my friends, and he also always told me that the Rabbeim gave the *mashpi'im* a special *nesinas koach* to help the *bochurim*; so when you go to them, you should know that they have a special power to assist you.

Yechidus

During my *yechidus'n* throughout the years, I merited to receive the Rebbe's guidance on many matters of *avodas Hashem*, many of which are basic principles of Chassidus and have practical application for today as well.

True Bitachon

I once asked the Rebbe the following question about *bitachon*: Chassidus explains that even when a person experiences *yissurim* and suffering, *Rachamana litzlan*, he must know that they are hidden kindnesses from Hashem, because the suffering cleanses the *neshama*. If even negative things are considered good, I asked, how can a person have trust in Hashem that everything *will* be good? What does *bitachon* mean in this context?

There are some *mefarshim* who answer that this is exactly what *bitachon* is—trusting that everything Hashem does will be good, whether it feels that way or not. But the Rebbe gave a different, very powerful answer. *Bitachon* means that we know that Hashem is *etzem hatov*, the essence of good, and based on Hashem's infinite kindness, we have trust in Him that He will give us good *gashmi*, a type of good that we, too, experience as good. And regarding the cleansing that a person may need, Hashem is a *kol yachol*, He is omnipotent, and He can find a way to cleanse a person without suffering.

This is a very novel approach to *bitachon*—trusting that everything will be good *even on a physical plane*. (See Likkutei Sichos vol. 36 Shemos, 1.)

Hashem Always Answers

On another occasion, I asked the Rebbe a question in Tanya. The Alter Rebbe writes in Iggeres Hateshuvah *perek Yud-Aleph* that when we complete each *brocha* in *Shemone Esrei*, “*Boruch ata Hashem chanun hamarbeh lisloach*,” and so on, we are thanking Hashem for fulfilling our request that we just made. The Alter Rebbe proves from this that there is no doubt that Hashem will definitely fulfill our requests, because if there had been any sort of doubt in the matter, we wouldn't be allowed to make a *brocha*.

Most *mefarshim* learn differently: we're not *thanking* Hashem for fulfilling our request, we are *praising* Hashem (in a general way) that he is the “gracious One, Who pardons abundantly,” and so on. In fact, the Alter Rebbe himself, in *Shulchan Aruch*, says differently. He says that sometimes a person's requests are answered and sometimes they aren't. But in Iggeres Hateshuvah, the Alter Rebbe says we are thanking Him for fulfilling our requests—that as soon as you turn to Hashem, He immediately answers you! It's mind boggling! I asked the Rebbe: What is the Alter Rebbe's proof that we are thanking Hashem and not simply praising Him? The Rebbe answered that it is from the fact that the *brocha* comes *immediately* after the request. If we were praising Hashem in a general way, there should have been a break between the request and the *brocha*, with *pesukim* and so on (or the *brocha* could have been before the request). The fact that it comes immediately after the request proves that it is thanks.

Hiskashrus

On another occasion I asked the Rebbe about *hiskashrus*. The Rebbe answered: די אמת'טע התקשרות, די בעסטע התקשרות, און די פרייליכסטע התקשרות איז צו זיין א למדן אמיתי אין נגלה דתורה און א למדן אמיתי אין פנימיות התורה. The Rebbe used three expressions: the truest *hiskashrus*, the best *hiskashrus*, and the most joyful *hiskashrus* is to be a true *lamdan* in *nigleh*, and a true *lamdan* in Chassidus.

Focusing During Davening

Once, I wrote to the Rebbe that I was having a difficult time focusing during davening, and all kinds of thoughts would enter my mind. The Rebbe wrote out a portion of Tanya in *perek Chof-Ches*, where the Alter Rebbe says that if a person is having a difficult time dismissing these thoughts from his mind during davening, he should “humble his spirit before Hashem and cry to Him in his mind to have compassion upon him in His abundant mercies, as a father who takes pity on his children.”

The Alter Rebbe concludes “ולמענו יעשה—and for His sake He will do it.” The Rebbe said that *yesh lomar* there are two ways to explain these final words.

One way to read it is that it's part of the *tefilla*, that a person is davening for Hashem to have compassion on him and help him “for His [Hashem's] sake.” But, the Rebbe added, it could also be said that it's a *havtacha*, a guarantee: the Alter Rebbe is guaranteeing that if you daven to Hashem and ask Him for help, He will help you, “He *will* do it for His sake.”

What I took from this was that the Rebbe was relating to the difficulties of a 15/16-year-old *bochur*, and truly assisting me. The Rebbe wasn't saying, “it's no big deal,” or “it happens to everybody,” or “don't worry about it”; rather, a person must strain himself to focus on his davening and think about what he's saying. If he is trying hard and still having difficulties, it's a problem, and he must daven to Hashem for help. But, the Rebbe is adding, the Alter Rebbe guarantees that if you ask for help, Hashem *will* help you.

Chassidus before Davening

The Rebbe told me that before davening I should think over a *se'if* of Chassidus that I had learned recently—but it should be *freiliche machashavos* (joyous thoughts), I should think over *inyanim* in Chassidus that lead to *simcha*.

Carry On!

I have many memories from my years as a *bochur* in 770, but one special *farbrengen* that sticks out in my mind was early on in the *shalash* (the temporary structure built in the courtyard), on Shabbos Parshas Noach 5728. Present at the *farbrengen* was a *shliach* who had gone to a very difficult place and had experienced various hardships, including financial issues and challenges in the work itself. He was having great difficulty dealing with the situation and had therefore returned from the *shlichus*.

That Shabbos, the Rebbe said a *Rashi sicha* about “*ach Noach*”—while in the *teiva* Noach was “groaning and spitting blood because of the burden [of caring for] the cattle and the beasts.” The *sicha* was later published in *Likkutei Sichos*,¹ but at the *farbrengen* it was much more pointed



RABBI NOSSON GURARY WITH HIS FATHER RABBI ZALMAN GURARY.

than the way it was printed, and it seemed that the Rebbe was speaking to this person (though he didn't mention anyone by name).

The Rebbe said, “You are like Noach—the entire world is going through a *mabul*, a flood, and you are among the very few who merited to

be saved on the *teiva*; you are on the Rebbe's *shlichus*. And despite the fact that you have the merit to be on the boat in the middle of this great flood, you are groaning and complaining!” I can never forget how the Rebbe said, “*Du hust a kupveitik? Nem an*

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I can never forget how the Rebbe said, “*Du hust a kupveitik? Nem an aspirin!—You have a headache? Take an aspirin!*”

aspirin!—You have a headache? Take an aspirin!”

This is so important for shlichim even today—when a person is on shlichus, there will be difficulties. This person to whom the Rebbe was speaking truly experienced hardships—his pay wasn’t nearly adequate, he was having great difficulties communicating with his students, and so many more *nisyonos!* But in the Rebbe’s eyes, no matter where you are sent and no matter how hard it is—it’s such a *zechus* that you should be dancing! And if it’s hard? *Nem an aspirin*—take an aspirin and continue your work!

Marriage and Shlichus

When I was a *chosson*, I went into *yechidus* and asked the Rebbe what I should do for *teshuva* before my wedding. The Rebbe began to laugh out loud, and said that the greatest *teshuva* for me would be if I would be *b’simcha*, explaining that *teshuva* means to change from one extreme to another, and being that *simcha* is against my nature, it would be the best preparation for my wedding.

After *kollel*, my wife, *a”h*, and I wrote to the Rebbe that we wished to go on shlichus wherever the Rebbe would send us. The first proposal from Rabbi Hodakov was to go to Finland, to which I immediately agreed—although I knew nothing whatsoever about Finland—but it fell through for some reason. I didn’t ask any questions. The next idea was Greece, but that didn’t work out either.

Then a few people from Buffalo asked for a shliach to deal with the college, which was going through a particularly volatile period. There were violent protests against the Vietnam

War—there were even bombs going off at the university—and the hippy-drug culture was very popular. Since many students attending Buffalo University were Jewish, and they were getting caught up in different religions, some people from the community asked for a shliach to help them.

I was assigned this shlichus.

Before I left, I went into *yechidus* with my wife and child (as was the custom in those early days). Before we went in, I wrote to the Rebbe asking two questions that I felt would be very relevant: My first question was what I should answer if students ask

me about the Jewish opinion on the Vietnam War. This was *the* topic of the day—there were *mamesh* riots!—and I felt that I needed to have something to answer. The Rebbe’s response: You should answer them that the issues are so complex that you cannot give an opinion on it.

My next question was what I should answer when they ask me about the difference between a Jew and a non-Jew. Again, this was the hippy times, and everything was an issue—are we equal? Are we not equal?

The Rebbe answered: You should say that it’s like building a house; you need all kinds of people—a builder, a plumber, a painter—and it is important for every person to fulfill their assigned role. The question is not who is better and who is worse;



IN CONVERSATION WITH A STUDENT.



A SUKKA MOBILE ON CAMPUS.

they are all equally important. But you must know your role, and if each person will not carry out their specific assignment, the building will never be completed.

This answer turned out to be very helpful, as it really was a burning topic at the time. Literally the first time I walked onto campus, I approached a student, a hippy-looking boy, and asked him if he was Jewish. He became so incensed at the very question, which implied a difference between Jews and non-Jews, that he ganged up with a few people and surrounded me, and declared that if not for his respect for his father he would punch me in the nose.

After such a response, I began wondering if this whole campus is for me. Will I be able to handle it? When you walked through the Student Union, everyone was rioting and demonstrating, raising their fists at each other and shouting. There were also many different religions going on—this was one was drumming, this one was burning incense. It was a very hot time on campus; it's hard to describe...

But I forced myself to realize that this was my shlichus, and it turned out that it was a very good time for Yiddishkeit, because so many people

were searching. If they had the opportunity to hear what Judaism was all about, they really went for it.

Taking Over Campus

I set up a table in the Union, but I wanted to ensure that I would be noticed amid everything else going on. So I got a record player and blasted Nichoach, and set-up a big picture of the Alter Rebbe—the one with the words of Tanya written on it—to give it an interesting, “mystical” look. I also had a shofar and other funny-looking objects. This really attracted attention, especially the music; everyone was turning around, “*What* in the world is going on?” But everything seemed accepted in those days. So I decided to use a trick and put up huge signs in the Union: POT for sale, and in small words “Put On Tefillin”; LSD, and in small words “Let’s Start Davening.” This had the intended effect to get people’s attention.

People would come over, or I would call them over, and we would talk, put on tefillin, and so on. One of the most powerful tools was that if someone looked Jewish, instead of asking them *if* they were Jewish, I would ask “What’s your Jewish name?” There were many different types of responses—some were angry: “How

He became so incensed at the very question, that he ganged up with a few people and surrounded me, and declared that if not for his respect for his father he would punch me in the nose.

did you know I was Jewish?” or “I forgot my name”—but once I found out their Jewish names, I would always address them by it. I would even call the guys from eastern religions—who called themselves by all types of interesting names—by their Hebrew names, no matter how they looked or how they were dressed. And that was an extremely powerful way to get to their core.

Of course, there were many students who tried avoiding me, too, and I must have caused many accidents from students walking into walls while trying to avoid the table. But there wasn’t a student who didn’t know us—our table was front and center. Additionally, I would constantly go to the dorms and knock on doors. I was very visible (in spite of my diminutive physical size). So they were either for me or against me, but there wasn’t a student who didn’t know about the Chabad House.

You cannot imagine how it was then. Universities today are as quiet as cemeteries compared to those days. People were frequently dying from drug overdose. It was quite common for a student to say “Oh, this guy died from drugs last night”—it was vastly different from the way it is today.

It should be pointed out, though, that most of the students were more knowledgeable of their Jewish roots and traditions than they are today—

they went to some type of *talmud Torah*, and they knew *something*.

But there were other challenges then. Women's liberation was a strong movement, and many women resented the *mechitza* or wouldn't even step into shul. There was no indifference when it came to these issues. In those days, everyone was *into* something—they were anti-something or pro-something, but they were very *passionate*.

The most important activity on campus was the meals. Once students came to the meals, we could start talking to them and build a connection. As far as davening was concerned, I would daven at the *amud* as if I had a congregation of hundreds of people, even if there was only one

student there. I did my thing, davening the real way, and people really got into it, participating in the singing and so on. Most of the people grew up in temples where davening was not a serious matter, and it was the first time in their lives that they experienced something genuine, the “real McCoy.” They saw people invested in davening, they saw people who actually believe in G-d, and many hippies became *baalei teshuva* a result.

Horaos / Credited Courses

Over the years, I received various *horaos* from the Rebbe on a wide variety of issues. In my first couple of years on shlichus, a corporation offered that Chabad should sponsor a bingo event, offering me a very

substantial financial incentive. The bingo tournaments didn't even have to take place in the Chabad House; it was simply the name. The type of money that this corporation was offering was tremendous—it would take me ten years to fundraise such a sum, while what they were proposing would endure for only a few months. I wrote to the Rebbe detailing the proposal. The Rebbe answered “לא מיט א גרויסן אלף (lit.: no with a large Aleph), **NO!**”

Another thing the Rebbe told me in the first years was that when people ask me *shaalos* in *halacha*, I should answer them myself and not send them to anyone else; I should be the *rav*. If I don't know something, the Rebbe added, there are telephones today and I could ask *rabbonim*. But I should be the one to answer all the *shaalos*.

Then there was a seemingly very strange *hora'a* from the Rebbe—through Rabbi Hodakov—regarding my work on campus: “Do not teach on campus unless the class is credited.”

This seemingly didn't make any sense, a *Baal'shemske hora'a*: What's wrong with teaching Torah without credits? But through this *hora'a*, the Rebbe made a miracle that they allowed me to teach an accredited course in the university—it was an utter miracle *l'maala miderech hateva*. In my very first semester, I taught three courses on Judaic studies, more than most professors!

There are many advantages to this over a regular class: it's a set program where students must attend one class after another, they are tested on their knowledge, and they have to take it seriously. It's a tremendous way to teach the students that there is an *Aibershter*. The Rebbe had a great *chavivus* for shluchim teaching accredited courses, and the success of the accredited courses in Buffalo were completely beyond the natural. Eventually all the shluchim

The Essential Point

The Rebbe constantly showed us care and concern, guiding our every step. A year after moving to Buffalo, during the days of *selichos*, the Rebbe gave the *mazkirus* two *machzorim* to be given to me and my wife, *a"h*.

In the first year after I went on shlichus, when I went into *yechidus*, the Rebbe gave me a tremendous *brocha* that I should make a *dira batachtonim* in the city of Buffalo and all the surrounding cities. But, the Rebbe concluded, די נקודה הפנימית פון אלץ איז חסידישע נחת פון די קינדער, the essential point of everything is to have Chassidische *nachas* from your children.



RABBI GURARY DELIVERING AN ACCREDITED COURSE AT THE UNIVERSITY.



THE BRIDGE CONNECTING THE CAMPUS TO THE CHABAD HOUSE, PAID FOR BY THE UNIVERSITY.



who worked under me also taught accredited courses, and I went on to teach in the law school.

The Rebbe valued these courses very much, and later on the Rebbe told another shliach to find out from me how to get his courses credited. Years later, I wrote to the Rebbe how I was sort of feeling down about my work in Buffalo. The Rebbe asked me how it can be that I don't realize that כמה אלפי ישראל נתקרבו לתורה ומצוות על ידי הקורסים שלו—how many thousands of Yidden were brought to Torah and mitzvos through these accredited courses.

Miracles with Locations

For the first few years, we worked out of a Chabad House located quite far from the campus. One Shabbos there was a fire, and the entire Chabad House was burnt to the ground. *Boruch Hashem* everyone was saved. The Rebbe told us the *vort* from the Rabbeim that נאך א שריפה ווערט מען רייך—after a fire one becomes rich, and then he added כדאי לסמוך עליהם גם, שלא בשעת הדחק, the Rabbeim can be depended on even when one is not “cramped in a corner...”

Subsequently, we miraculously found a new location, a much bigger place and much closer to the campus, and we were able to build a new Chabad House. There was only one problem: there was a creek with no bridge between the university and the Chabad House. So one nice morning

The Rebbe asked me how it can be that I don't realize how many thousands of Yidden were brought to Torah and mitzvos through these accredited courses.

we found a Jewish engineer who built a floating “pontoon bridge” for us, and the students were able to get to the Chabad House.

This was right before Rosh Hashanah. Before Yom Kippur, someone was canoeing down this creek—which never usually happened—and he couldn't pass due to the bridge. He reported the violation to every place he could—the conservation department, the navy, and whoever else. Suddenly the entire city was on wheels. The headline in the newspapers was “Chabad went one bridge too far.” The university got involved and came up with a whole litany of issues: you're building a bridge from a state university to a religious institution, and you're blocking the waterway so people can't canoe! We received all types of violation notices.

The first thing we did was order a bigger bridge. I rushed the company to

ensure it would be ready for the next Rosh Hashanah. Any time they asked for payment, I would tell them there's no time to discuss money—just bring the bridge!

This entire process was very intimidating: the bridge company was always on my back for the money, and every month the interest was going up—but I was in touch with the Rebbe all the time, and the Rebbe's *mofes* was transformative—*is'hapcha chashocha l'nehora*.

They brought the new steel bridge, and then they gave me the final bill. I said, “I don't build bridges! This should go to the university!” After pulling some big connections, the university paid for the bridge! Not only that, the university built a pavement and made an official sign: Chabad House University Bridge.

This is something that only the Rebbe's miracles can achieve.

When one does the Rebbe's work sincerely, miracles abound. The Rebbe once told my father that all the success he had in business was in the *zechus* of the help he was giving me.

The Fellerbucks Foundation

In addition to my work on campus in Buffalo, I was involved with the *pegisha*, the “Encounter with Chabad,” where students from all over the country came to New York to spend a Shabbos with the Rebbe. During the *pegisha*, I would give a speech

to the girls—not only those from Buffalo—to try getting them to attend Rabbi Feller’s Beis Chana Institute in Minnesota, which was run by Rabbi Manis Friedman. One time, in the earlier years, I got up on a chair in front of the students and told a story about a man—Mr. Fefferbucks—who had passed away and had left an endowment to sponsor any student who would go from this Shabbos directly to Minnesota. Everything would be paid for, including the tickets, but they must go directly to Minnesota. I don’t know how I had the guts to do this, but that’s what happened.

I got them very enthused, and suddenly many, many girls were taking up the offer. I didn’t know where I

would get the money to pay for all of them, since in reality there was no Mr. Fefferbucks! Where would I get the money?

I wrote to the Rebbe and told him the whole story. The next thing I knew, Rabbi Klein came out and told me that the Rebbe would cover the cost of all the tickets. This continued for several years. As far as the students were concerned, this “Fefferbucks Foundation” was sponsoring trips to Minnesota. In truth the Rebbe was covering the costs. A tremendous amount of *baalei teshuva* came out of this program.

Life on Shlichus

It’s a very difficult thing to spend your life on campus; to spend your

Shabbosim and Yomim Tovim walking up and down the dorms and the unions, in an atmosphere where most people don’t care or even know about Yiddishkeit, trying to be *mekarev* them, all while you remember how Shabbos and Yom Tov was by the Rebbe. I literally spent my life walking in the dorms and sitting in the unions and bars; I went through very difficult times. This was before the era of mobile phones and internet.

At one point I wrote to the Rebbe that sometimes I get lonely on shlichus, especially on Yomim Tovim; I was all by myself for so many years. The Rebbe said, “Being that you’re doing the work of the Rebbe *der shver*, he is with you, and we are also together.”

The dividends are incredible. All over the world, there are now a tremendous number of *baalei teshuva* from the Rebbe’s *brachos* for our work on campus and especially the courses.

Even today I’m still finding out about more and more *doros*:

I once received a letter from a woman who had been in college in Buffalo. She wrote to me that as a student she had taken my course on Jewish mysticism together with her *goyishe* boyfriend. I spoke extensively about intermarriage, and how it’s like pairing half an apple with half an orange, and so on. At the time, she couldn’t separate from him, but after a while she came to the realization that it had been a mistake and she left him. She became a *baalas teshuva* and went on to marry a Lubavitcher *baal teshuva*, and they built a beautiful family together. She enclosed pictures of her family, and wrote, “This is all due to the courses.” There are hundreds and hundreds of families like this, and I find out more stories on a constant basis.

Thank you Rebbe. **T**

1. Vol. 5, p. 47.

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A “PGISHA IM CHABAD” PROGRAM, 5725.