



the WRITTEN TORAH

לקושי שיחות



לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע
נדפס ע"י
הרוצה בעילום שמו



**“ANA NAFSHI KSAVIS Y’HAVIS” SAYS THE GEMARA.
CHASSIDUS EXPLAINS THE MEANING: HASHEM PUT HIS
ESSENCE INTO THE TORAH—KEVAYACHOL. BY STUDYING
TORAH WE CONNECT WITH HASHEM HIMSELF.**

**The Rebbe writes in Hayom Yom:
“True hiskashrus is by learning the Rebbe’s Torah”;
our Rabbeim put themselves into their writings.**

**And when it comes to Likkutei Sichos—the “Torah She’biksav”
of the Rebbe’s Torah—it couldn’t be more evident. The Rebbe
invested hours upon hours of his precious time, meticulously
reviewing and editing the ideas that would guide Klal Yisroel
in our generation; illuminating every field of Torah and
crystallizing our path in avodas Hashem.**

**In preparation of this article, we held interviews and were greatly assisted by
individuals who were involved in Likkutei Sichos over the years: Rabbis Leibel
Altein, Sholom Jacobson, Berel Lipsker, Yosef Minkowitz, Dovid Olidort, Leibel
Schapiro and Nachman Schapiro. זכות הרבים תלוי בהם.**

Dictionary

LIKKUT: *Sicha* as it was prepared
and published weekly (though they
are often simply called a “*sicha*”).

MUGA: Edited and approved by
the Rebbe.

CHELEK/KRACH: Volume.

PART 1: HISTORY

Throughout his *nesius*, the Rebbe put a strong emphasis on Chassidim *chazzering* Chassidus publicly. Every Shabbos and Yom Tov, *bochurim* and *yungeleit* would fan out from 770 to various shuls in the New York area to deliver an *inyan* in Chassidus, and during the *farbrengens* in the early years, the Rebbe would occasionally point to a certain concept discussed in the *sichos* and instruct the *bochurim* that this is the material they should present in the shuls.¹

Before Pesach 5718, three *bochurim* (Rabbi Nachman Sudak, Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky and Rabbi Leibel Raskin) formed a *vaad* called *Machlaka L'chazzaras Dach B'vatei Knesiyos*.

"In my room in 770," Rabbi Raskin later related,² "I had all the *hanachos* from the beginning of the *nesius* (by Reb Yoel Kahan), from 5710, so I was able to search for a *sicha* appropriate to *chazzer* in a shul. We used to print sixty copies, which were given to those who went to the shuls. After each Shabbos I would give a *duch* to the Rebbe, listing the shuls and which *sicha* was *chazzered*."

"For Shavuos, we arranged, for the first time, a *tahalucha* to Boro Park. Before Shavuos I submitted to the Rebbe a list of the shuls where *sichos* would be *chazzered*, together with the selected *sicha*."

"Erev Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar (Shavuos was on Sunday and Monday) Rabbi Hodakov called me and asked if I submitted a *sicha* to the Rebbe. I answered that I did. He then



CIRCA 5714, RABBI PINNY LEW

showed me the *sicha*, and it was *muga* by the Rebbe!"

This was significant. Ever since the earliest months of the Rebbe's *nesius*, when the Chassidim had first realized that the Rebbe wouldn't be penning his own Torah, there had been a concerted effort that the Rebbe should agree to edit, and thus approve, the *sichos* and *maamarim* that were transcribed by Chassidim themselves—largely without success. The Rebbe explained on a number of occasions that with all the issues and challenges he was dealing with in the Jewish nation as a whole, and with individuals in particular, he simply did not have the time to do so.³

Although the *bilti-muga* versions of the *sichos* and *maamarim* were somewhat accessible to the Chassidim, they could not be printed in official *sefarim* or even officially published without being approved by the Rebbe (though this changed somewhat in the later years). For many years, the Rebbe's *sichos* and *maamarim* were largely inaccessible to anyone outside of Lubavitch, and even for "*eigeneh*" they were difficult to get hold of, almost like collectors'-items.

"It is impossible to describe the enormous *simcha* that we had, that we were *zoche* to such an *ohr gadol*!" Rabbi Raskin related. "We immediately

printed five hundred copies by stencil. That Shavuot and the *tahalucha* were very special. Even though it was raining like a *mabul*, the *hisorerus* by *anash* and the *temimim* was tremendous. This was particularly thanks to the *mugadike sicha* (with the theme of “our children are our guarantors”).

“Consequently, for Shabbos Parshas Nasso I submitted another *sicha*. Thursday night I came to Rabbi Hodakov to inquire about the *sicha*. He told me: “On the Rebbe’s desk there are more than eight hundred letters, a large portion of them dealing with matters of *pikuach nefesh*, so what is more important, to answer these letters or to be *magiah a sicha*?!”

“I answered: ‘The *sicha* will strengthen *chazzaras Dach* in the shuls, and this will help in the work of the Rebbe!’

“Rabbi Hodakov told me to wait. After contacting the Rebbe by phone, he called me back and informed me that in a half-an-hour the Rebbe will return the *sicha—mugah!*

“I asked: Which name should we give to these *sichos*-pamphlets? He suggested: תוכן ענינים בדא"ח לחזור בבתי כנסיות. [Roughly translated: Concise concepts in Chassidus for delivery in shuls].”

This continued for a year. Every week, the *vaad* would choose a *sicha* that had been said in previous years, and prepare it for publishing, adding *marei mekomos* and writing it in a more reader-friendly format, after which they would give it to the Rebbe for editing. The Rebbe would edit it, and after incorporating the Rebbe’s

comments, they would send in a second draft. After a second round of editing by the Rebbe, they would prepare the final version and copy it in mimeograph. Thousands of copies were sent all over the world, devoured by Chassidim and others alike.

Rabbi Shimon Lazaroff, today the head shliach of Texas, was a young bochur at the time. He relates: “I became their marketing man: before the Rebbe’s big farbrengens on Yud-Tes Kislev and so on, I would go around and sell the booklets for five cents. This helped cover the cost of printing.”⁴

After a year, it stopped. These *likkutim* were later published as two *sefarim*, and, for the first time, they received the name Likkutei Sichos (lit. collections of *sichos*). These later became Chelek Alef and Beis of Likkutei Sichos.

A few years passed. In honor of Parshas Bereishis 5723, the Rebbe began again editing *sichos* prepared by Reb Yoel (perhaps this was in honor of “shnas haKan”—the 150th year since the *histalkus* of the Alter Rebbe, which the Rebbe *koched* in very much⁵) and this continued for another year, until Simchas Torah 5724. These *sichos* were published as chelek Gimmel and Daled of Likkutei Sichos, and are in a similar format of the *sichos* in chelek Alef and Beis.

“I LEARN THROUGH THE ENTIRE SICHA!”

A few years later, towards the end of 5727, a group of *bochurim* and *yungeleit* decided that the time had

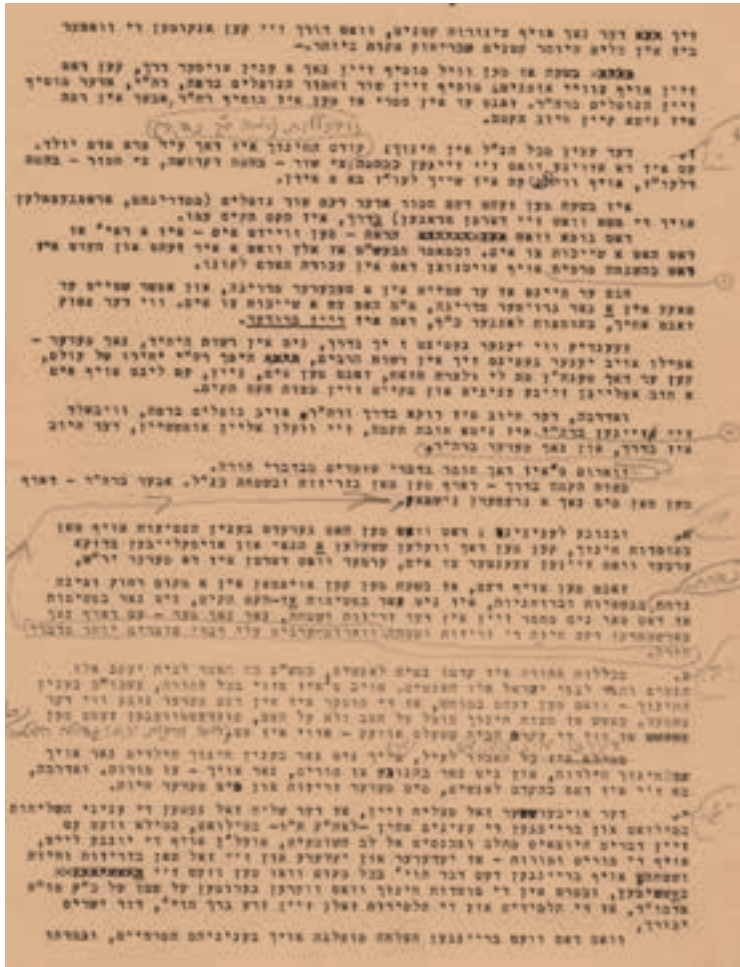
“On the Rebbe’s desk there are more than eight hundred letters, a large portion of them dealing with matters of pikuach nefesh, so what is more important, to answer these letters or to be magiah a sicha?!”

come to begin publicizing the Rebbe’s *sichos* on a new level. Every week, they would take a *sicha* that had been previously edited by the Rebbe (in 5718 or 5723) and print thousands of copies, sending it throughout the world. The *bochurim* in 770 would form an assembly line to collate and staple the pages, and prepare them for shipping. Rabbi Bentzion Shemtov, an elder Chossid at



VAAD HANOCHOS B'LAHAK

“TOCHEN INYONIM B'DACH”, THE FIRST BOOKLETS PRESENTING THE REBBE’S MUGADIKE SICHS.



that time, was very involved in this initiative, constantly *koching* in and helping fundraise for the “*shichos*” (as he would pronounce it). For the first time, the pamphlets were published with the Kehos logo—a significant step (though the published *sefarim* of Likkutei Sichos were always published by Kehos).

Before Shabbos parshas Mikeitz 5729, after two years of reprinting old *sichos*, they realized that they had run out of *sichos* for that week, Miketz. By that time they were sending out ten thousand copies a week. A new *sicha* was prepared by Reb Yoel—the first Rashi *sicha*

prepared for a *likkut*—and they asked the Rebbe to review and edit it. The Rebbe agreed.

When it came to Shemos they ran out again, and the Rebbe edited another *sicha*, and this continued periodically throughout the year. By the beginning of the following year (5730), they had run out completely. Reb Yoel submitted a new *sicha* for Shabbos Bereishis and waited to see if the Rebbe would agree to begin a full new year of *hagaha*. On the night of Hoshana Rabba, the Rebbe gave out the new *sicha*.

A new era had begun. The Rebbe started giving out an edited *sicha* every week, and

these *sichos* were eventually republished in chelek Hei through Tes of Likkutei Sichos. They continued coming out for another two years.

At the end of the summer of 5731, the Rebbe sent out a very sharp *maane* where he described how he had made a “*bechina ruchnis*” [“a spiritual test”] to decide whether he should continue editing the Likkutei Sichos, and the test was failed. The *sicha* for Shabbos Bereishis would come out—but, the Rebbe emphasized, this was only for the guests. It seemed that the age of *mugehdike sichos* was over.

Although most people didn’t know what was going on, in the following weeks a number of *eltere* Chassidim wrote letters describing the critical importance of the *sichos* for *hafatzas hamaayanos*, and how it was *nogea* to Chassidim around the world. They begged the Rebbe to continue.

Then, to everyone’s shock, on Simchas Torah the Rebbe said a *sicha* directly addressing the issue. Although it is quite a sharp *sicha*, it is also one of the few times that the Rebbe revealed how he himself viewed the Likkutei Sichos.

The Rebbe said that all the people who had sent in letters explaining the greatness of Likkutei Sichos had missed the point. “All these explanations on the greatness of Likkutei Sichos are out of place, for I *know* how good it is—to the contrary, I can add *nofech m’dilei* (a ‘personal twist’), especially since ‘a person cares for the toil of his hands.’”

Then the Rebbe revealed something particularly powerful. “I learn through the entire *sicha* from beginning to end, with all

the footnotes, after it's printed—in addition to the work on it before!”

And yet, the Rebbe said, being that this was something that he had initiated, he had decided to put a test to see whether he should continue, “a type of test which by rules of nature should have been passed.” This test had been set for a number of other things that the Rebbe had initiated, the Rebbe added, including reciting a *maamar* at every farbrengen; reciting a *maamar* for *bochurim* on Chanukah; teaching *niggunim* on Simchas Torah; and more.

But this test failed. Emphasizing again and again how he knew very well the significance of Likkutei Sichos, the Rebbe spoke about the “the pain and *tzubrochenkeit*” he felt from stopping all these

“I learn through the entire sicha from beginning to end, with all the footnotes, after it's printed—in addition to the work on it before!”

things, but being that, as the Gemara says, “an abundance of good cannot be received”—sometimes giving too much can be counterproductive—it will have to stop.⁶

“There were more *tzetlach* back and forth, with Chassidim trying to somehow push it through,” Rabbi Nachman Schapiro relates. “We went to Rabbi Hodakov, and on his advice we prepared a list of proposed *sichos* for the following year, but the Rebbe answered unequivocally: As was spoken at the farbrengen. We should ask rabbonim [about what the *vaad*'s

future should be, as the Rebbe will no longer be editing the *sichos*].”

“We went to Reb Zalman Shimon Dvorkin, and he told us that being that this is an issue of *hafatzas hamaayanos*, we must continue printing *sichos*. So we began publishing *sichos* that had been *muga* and published in various outlets over the years, like in *Di Yiddishe Heim*; sometimes we would print letters. From time to time, the Rebbe would go over the *sichos* after they were already published and add various comments and *hagahos*, but it wasn't routine.”

RENEWAL

At the end of the year, the *vaad* had a meeting and decided it was time to try again. After a whole discussion about whether the *sichos* should be written in Yiddish or Lashon Hakodesh, they settled on Lashon Hakodesh and began working. (They went back and forth over the years; when they asked the Rebbe—at a later date—which language was preferable, he responded: אין נפקא מינה, it makes no difference.)

“Throughout the entire summer,” Rabbi Leibel Schapiro says, “we worked on a number of *sichos* to give to the Rebbe, on the first *parshiyos* of the year. At the end of the summer, we sent the batch of *sichos* to the Rebbe,



FATHER AND SON, REB ZUSHE AND LEVI WILMOVSKY, STUDY THE NEWLY PRINTED LIKUT ON A BENCH IN FRONT OF 770.



and wrote that this was what we had prepared—like a sample of what we were planning on doing—and we were asking that the Rebbe should be *magiah*.

“We didn’t get a response from the Rebbe about it. Then came Tishrei, a very busy time in 770. Nothing happened.”

Before Hoshana Rabba, they sent in another few *parshiyos*. “We knew from years before that if there was something waiting for the Rebbe’s *hagaha*, he was often *magiah* it overnight on Hoshana Rabba,” Rabbi Leibel Schapiro continues. “This was probably after the Rebbe

completed Chumash Devarim, before Tehillim. Before the Rebbe would go downstairs for Tehillim, Rabbi Groner would enter the Rebbe’s room to bring out all the letters and *tzetlach*, so we all stood outside waiting and hoping for the *hagaha*. Rabbi Groner came out and...nothing. We were so disappointed.

“So we decided that at *kos shel bracha* after Simchas Torah, all of us, the entire Vaad Lehafotzas Sichos, would go by the Rebbe as a group—to show ourselves, to make a presence. This included three people who worked on the *sichos*—me, Rabbi Nachman Schapiro, and Rabbi Leibel Kaplan a”h—and the two people who managed the *gashmiyus*: Rabbi Zalman Chanin and Rabbi Sholom Jacobson.

Rabbi Sholom Jacobson says, “When he saw us—we hadn’t even said anything—the Rebbe gave us a bottle of *mashke*, and with a big smile he said, “*Dos iz*

far dem neiyem vaad [this is for the new vaad].”

Rabbi Leibel Schapiro continues: “Simchas Torah was Monday and Tuesday, which meant that we only had a few days for the Rebbe to send back the *sicha* for Shabbos Bereishis. So the next day, on Isru Chag, we came to 770 early (not such an easy thing after Simchas Torah...) and waited for Rabbi Groner to come out from the Rebbe’s room. He came out and...Nothing.

“Then we took a risk. We sent in—again—the *sicha* for Shabbos Bereishis to the Rebbe, and attached to it a small *tzetel*: This is the *sicha* we are putting out for Shabbos and we are asking the Rebbe to be *magiah* it. This was a risk because the Rebbe could respond, how are you giving it out for Shabbos if it’s unedited?! What is that supposed to mean?

“A few hours later, the *sicha* came out, fully *muga*.”

"That night was Simchas Torah in 770... the bochurim were literally dancing the entire night."

“That night was Simchas Torah in 770,” Rabbi Nachman Schapiro says. “The *bochurim* were literally dancing the entire night.”

From then on, the Rebbe continued being *magiah* a *sicha* each week.

“A few weeks later, on Shabbos parshas Va’eira, Rabbi Hodakov called the entire *vaad* into his office,” Rabbi Leibel Schapiro relates. “I was very nervous; I didn’t know what he wanted. We had just prepared our first complicated Rashi *sicha* (during this cycle), and we were afraid we hadn’t done a good job.

“We walked into his office. Rabbi Hodakov handed us the *sicha* that the Rebbe had sent out *muga* (which was unusual, since it was usually sent out with Rabbi Groner or Rabbi Klein). “As a *hakaras hatov* for what you’re doing,” Rabbi Hodakov said, “the Rebbe wants to give you the job of publishing a new edition of Kesser Shem Tov.” The due date was three weeks later, on Chof-Daled Teves. We

worked very hard, and finished right before the deadline.”

After two years (5733-5734), it stopped again, with the *likkut* of Noach 5735 being the last to be *muga*, though this time the Rebbe didn’t explain why. Some speculated that the Rebbe didn’t want to create a *chazaka*

by giving out *sichos* for three consecutive years. At the end of 5735, they tried again, sending in another *sicha* for Shabbos Bereishis 5736, this time in Yiddish—and the Rebbe edited it. From then on, the Rebbe edited a *sicha* every week until Vayakhel 5752.

A NEW KOCH

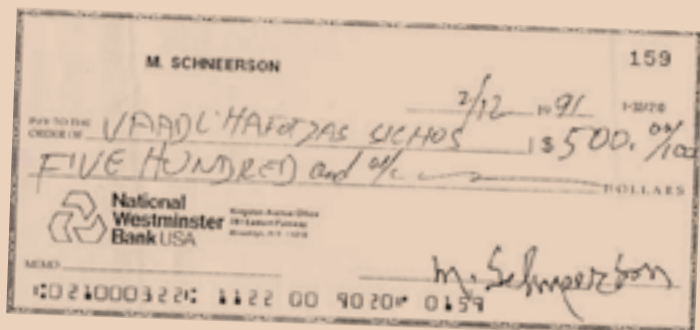
Rabbi Nachman Schapiro relates: “Following Yud Shevat 5732, a few months after the Rebbe stopped being *magiah* the *sichos*, Rabbi Leibel Altein and I—we were both yeshiva *bochurim* at the time—arranged a *seder sichos* as a *hachana* for Yud-Alef Nissan, the first *seder sichos* ever. For seventy minutes after *seder*, groups of *bochurim* would learn and discuss the *sichos*, and at the end of the week we wrote down our *haaros* and typed them up on stencils. This was the first time there were official “*haaros*,” questions and answers on *sichos* solely from *bochurim*, *mir hubbun ge’tziteret*, we were very nervous about what the Rebbe’s reaction would be. Instead of giving them to Rabbi Groner, we asked Rabbi Mentlik, the *rosh yeshiva* of 770, to give it in from the *hanhalah*.

“During the summer, we gathered all the *haaros* on Likkutei Sichos that had been written between Yud Shevat and Yud-Alef Nissan, and printed them in a booklet, Kovetz Ha’aros Hatmimim. To our surprise, the Rebbe gave a tenth of the expenses—on his own initiative—and wrote that this was because he considered it as one of the *ayin alef mosdos*.⁷ When the Rebbe started being *magiah* the *sichos* again in 5733, Rabbi Mentlik said it’s possible that one of the reasons the Rebbe started again was due to the *koch* in Likkutei Sichos created by the *haaros* of the *bochurim*.”

SPONSORSHIP

Rabbi Sholom Jacobson relates: “The Rebbe would sponsor the *likkut* three times a year: Vov Tishrei, in memory of his mother, Rebbetzin Chana; Yud-Gimmel Iyar, in memory of his brother, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib; and Chof Av, in memory of his father, Horav Levi Yitzchok; and from 5748, also on Chof-Beis Shevat, in memory of the Rebbetzin.”

In the earlier years the Rebbe would pay with a check, but in the later years the payment was with cash. The Rebbe would ask how much it cost, and he would give that amount. Once, when the price remained at \$150 over several years, the Rebbe smiled and asked why they weren’t raising the prices, as everyone raises prices once in a while, and added that he wants to pay the full price. (The Rebbe then choose to give \$250.)



PART 2: The Process

We asked members of Vaad L'hafatzas Sichos, Rabbi Leibel Schapiro, Rabbi Nachman Schapiro, Rabbi Leibel Altein, and Rabbi Dovid Olidort, to give us an inside look at the process of preparing Likkutei Sichos. But first, a short background on the difference between a *likkut* (as a *sicha* in Likkutei Sichos was called) and a regular *sicha* at a farbrengen. (It should be noted that the process below does not pertain to the first volumes of Likkutei Sichos, which are more or less the *sichos* exactly as they were said.)

During a farbrengen, the Rebbe would speak about a wide range of topics, including *pilpulim* in *nigleh*, Rashi *sichos*, explanations in Chassidus, and so on. After each farbrengen, a

group of *manichim* (transcribers) would write down the *maamarim* and *sichos* word for word. These were usually printed in booklets after they were said, and later in the series of Sichos Kodesh, Toras Menachem-Hisvaaduyos, and Sefer Hamaamarim, and were not *mugah* by the Rebbe.⁸ However, sometimes a single topic could be covered in several places. For example:

- The Rebbe would often speak about a topic—a complex Rashi, for example—over several weeks.
- The Rebbe would answer questions posed by various people (often the *manichim*) in letters and handwritten notes.

- It was a fairly typical occurrence for the Rebbe to speak about the same topic a few times over the years, adding different angles or proposing new explanations.

In a *likkut*, all the *sichos* on a given subject were collected together and formatted as a single *sicha*.

CHOOSING THE TOPIC

The first order of business was choosing the topic. “We had a folder with lists of all the *sichos* on any given *parshah* that we thought could become a *likkut*,” Rabbi Leibel Altein relates. “For parshas Bereishis, for example, there was a list of all the *sichos* for Bereishis, and so on. Before preparing each week’s *likkut*,



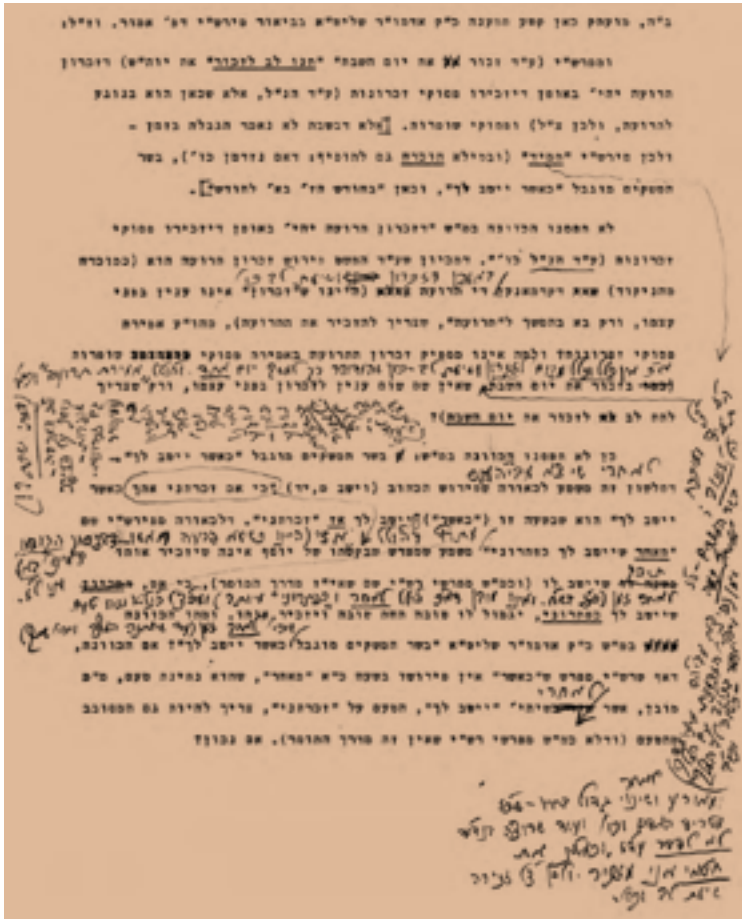
ELUL 5739, LEVI FREIDIN via JEM 193598



ELUL 5739, LEVI FREIDIN via JEM 193603



LEVI FREIDIN via JEM 141548



THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM THE MANICHIM ON THE SICHA OF SHABBOS PARSHAS BHAALOSCHA 5727 (PRINTED IN LIKUTEI SICHOV VOL. 12 P. 103).

we would check the lists, go through the *sichos*, and decide on a topic. The lists were always growing.” In addition, a list was made of *sichos* on topics that can be connected to a particular *parshah* or *yom tov*, even if the *sicha* was said on a different date. It was very rare for the Rebbe to choose or reject a *sicha*, though it did happen occasionally. One example is the *sicha* about the recitation of the *korbanos hanesi'im* from Shabbos Vayikra 5747. Although the Rebbe had already edited another *sicha* for the week—and although the *farbungen* was *muga* anyway, since by then the Rebbe was *magia* the *farbrengen* every week—the Rebbe wanted them to prepare it for a *likkut*.⁹ (It

should be noted that this *sicha* discusses the eternal nature of *nesiei Yisroel* and the eternity of *hiskashrus*—and this was during the appeal over the *sefarim* case, after the victory on Hei Teves.)

PREPARING FOR HAGAHA

Once the editors at the *vaad* had learned the subject very thoroughly with all its sources, it was time to write it up.

There were certain guidelines from the Rebbe through many years of editing. Following are some examples:

The *sicha* should be accessible and understood by everyone, including those unfamiliar with Chassidus. “The Rebbe wanted the *sicha* to always

begin with the *nigleh*,” Rabbi Altein says. “I remember that in one of the first *sichos* I worked on, the Rebbe told us to flip over the entire *sicha* so that it would begin with the *nigleh*.”

“As the years passed, the Rebbe put a stronger emphasis on this. The Rebbe wanted that even the writing-style should be one of *nigleh*. For example, there was once a *sicha* regarding the difference between *bechor*—the first-born animal that must be given to a Kohen, and *maaser*—the one in ten animals that is also give to a Kohen. During the *farbrengen* the Rebbe had said that the *kedusha* of *bechor* comes *m'lemaala lemata*, directly from above, whereas the *kedusha* of *maaser* is *m'lemata lemaala*, through the involvement of the person. That's how we wrote it up for the *likkut*, which was in the late 5740s. The Rebbe was unhappy that we used the phrases *m'lemaala lemata* and *m'lemata lemaala*—we should have used a *nigleh* phrase (like *kadosh mishmaya* and *kadosh b'yedei adam*).¹⁰ We had used this phrase countless times previously, but, more and more, the Rebbe wanted it to be accessible for the *chutzah*.

“Another time, we used a term which had been used thousands of times in Likutei Sichos. The Rebbe wrote “היכן מצאו ביטוי זה” “Where did you find such an expression in *shas* and *poskim*?”

- **Not to use extreme phrases.** Rabbi Leibel Schapiro relates: “If we wrote “*eino muvan klal*” (completely not understood), the Rebbe would cross out the words “*klal*”; “*kashe me'od*” (very difficult to understand),

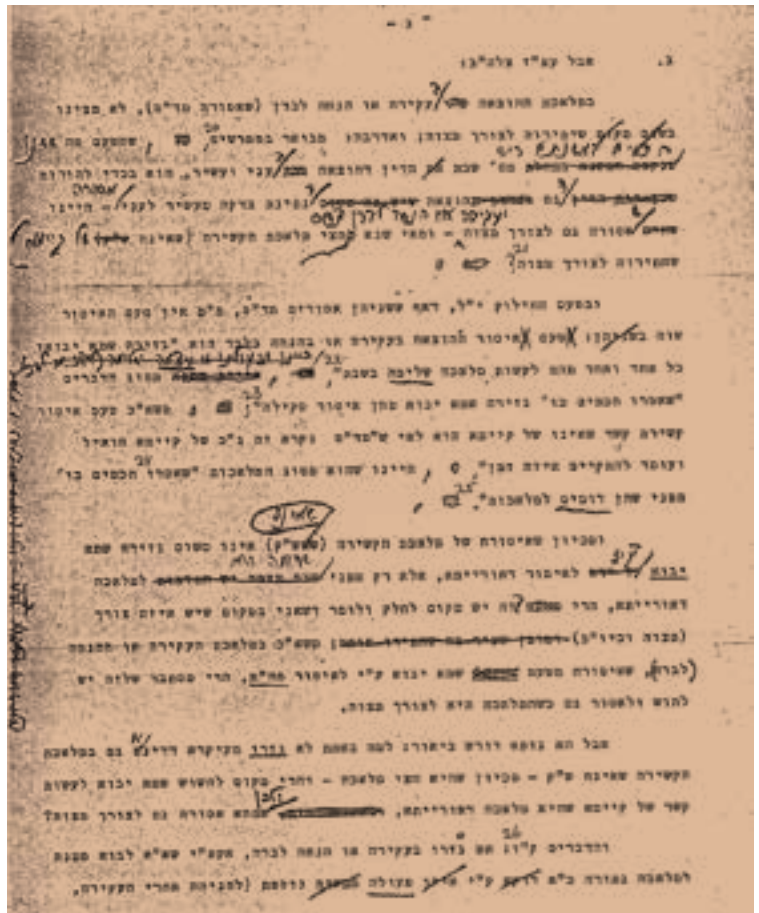
When he walked in, the Rebbe closed them and said 'Gib ze. Ein ladavor sof—Give it to them, there will be no end to this otherwise...'

he would cross out “meod”; “*pashut legamrei*” (completely obvious) cross out *legamri*. So if it ever does say such a phrase in a *sicha*, you know that it is a very strong question or very simple *inyan*.”

- **Style:** It should be written in a writing format—not as a spoken word that had been transcribed.
- **Side issues:** “If there were complicated issues, which were not directly related to the subject at hand, the Rebbe would take them out. Even something was pertinent to the *sicha*, the Rebbe didn’t want overly complex topics. The Rebbe wrote once: מדוע מכניסים? ענינים מסובכים כאלה? Why are you putting in such complicated subjects?”
- **Torah-Language:** “The Rebbe said that he wants it to be a Torah-language, not a writer-language. So, for example, instead of writing ‘*s’iz nishta kein tzeit*’ (‘there is no time’) we should use the phrase ‘*ein hazman grama*.’”

FIRST HAGAH

The first draft was typed on a typewriter with wide-spaced lines in order to give the Rebbe



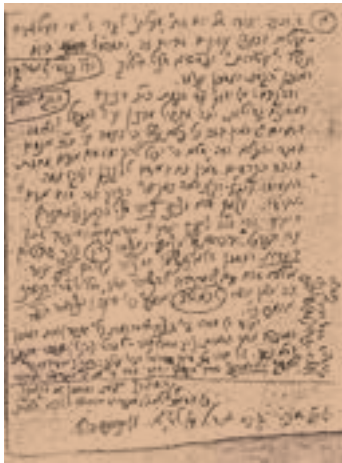
THE FIRST HAGAAH ON THE SICHA OF SHABBOS PARSHAS SHLACH 5722 (LIKKUTEI SICHS VOL. 14 P. 14).

ample space to edit, and then it was submitted to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe spent many hours being *magiah* the *sicha*—as is evident from the drafts of these *sichos*—and he would often bring it home with him. “A member of *mazkirus* once told me that the Rebbe spent ten hours one week being *magiah* the *sicha*!” recalls Rabbi Leibel Schapiro. “Rabbi Binyamin Klein told me that once when he went into the Rebbe’s room, the Rebbe was in the midst of being *magiah* the *likkut*, with sheets of paper strewn across his desk. When he walked in, the Rebbe closed them and said ‘Gib ze. Ein ladavor sof—Give it to them, there will be no end to this otherwise...’ When you

think about the value of every moment of the Rebbe’s time, and how much time he dedicated to Likkutei Sichos, you realize how important it was to the Rebbe...”

“You cannot imagine how the Rebbe was *medayek* in every word—changing a word, an expression, and so on—and how many concepts the Rebbe added and changed,” Rabbi Nachman Schapiro says. “One time, the Rebbe added a line, and it wasn’t clear to us where it belonged. So we wrote a *tzetel*: seemingly the *kavana* [the Rebe’s intent] in this line is such and such and therefore it seems to belong in such and such a place. The Rebbe answered: כמה כוונות בזה; there are several meanings in this...”

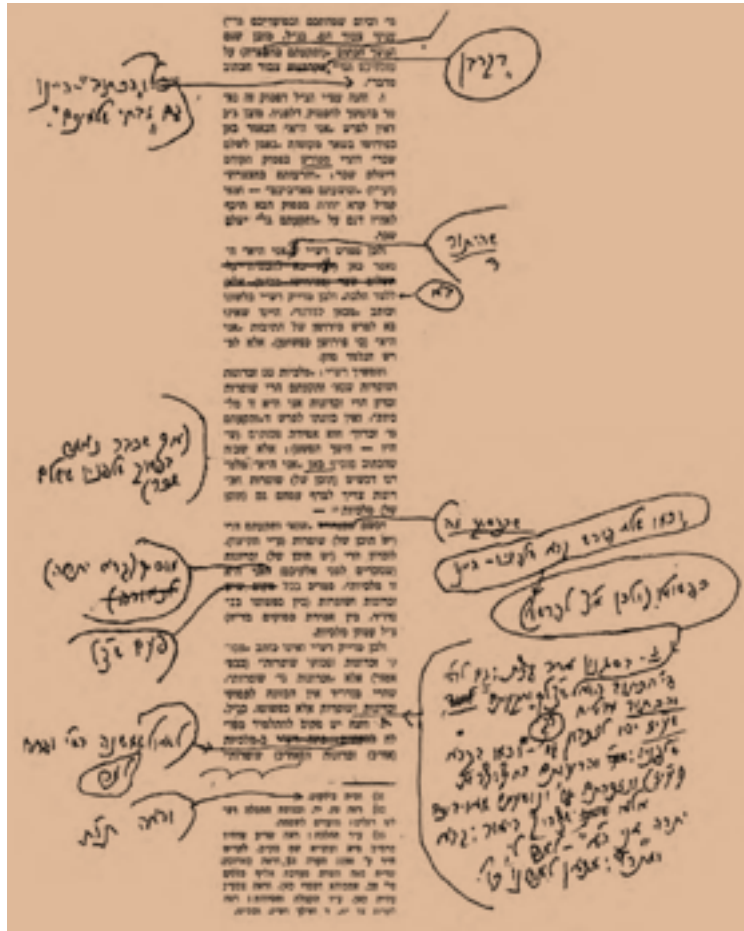


THE REBBE ADDS AN ENTIRE SE'IF TO THE SICHA FULL WITH FOOTNOTES IN HIS HOLY HANDWRITING (LIKKUTEI SICHS VOL. 11 P. 183).

Rabbi Dovid Olidort relates: “In the *likkut* of Nasso 5742¹¹ you’ll notice something interesting. Towards the end of the *sicha*, there is a new title: ‘Additional **points** for added explanation,’ after which there are another few pages. When the *sicha* was sent in for *hagaha*, the Rebbe added, in his own handwriting, a further question on the *sicha*, and went on to write an entire *se’if* with a profound explanation on the nature of Shabbos in levels beyond this world.”

“The Rebbe was often sharp when working with us,” Rabbi Leibel Schapiro recalls. “There were many things that the Rebbe simply fixed without comment, but if he expected us to know better, he would write sharply. On the one hand, there was trepidation. From when a *sicha* was sent to the Rebbe until it came back I couldn’t sleep at night—who knows what the Rebbe would say... But we also felt a tremendous *kiruv*.

“The Rebbe would keep us on our toes, so we were careful in how we wrote it.”

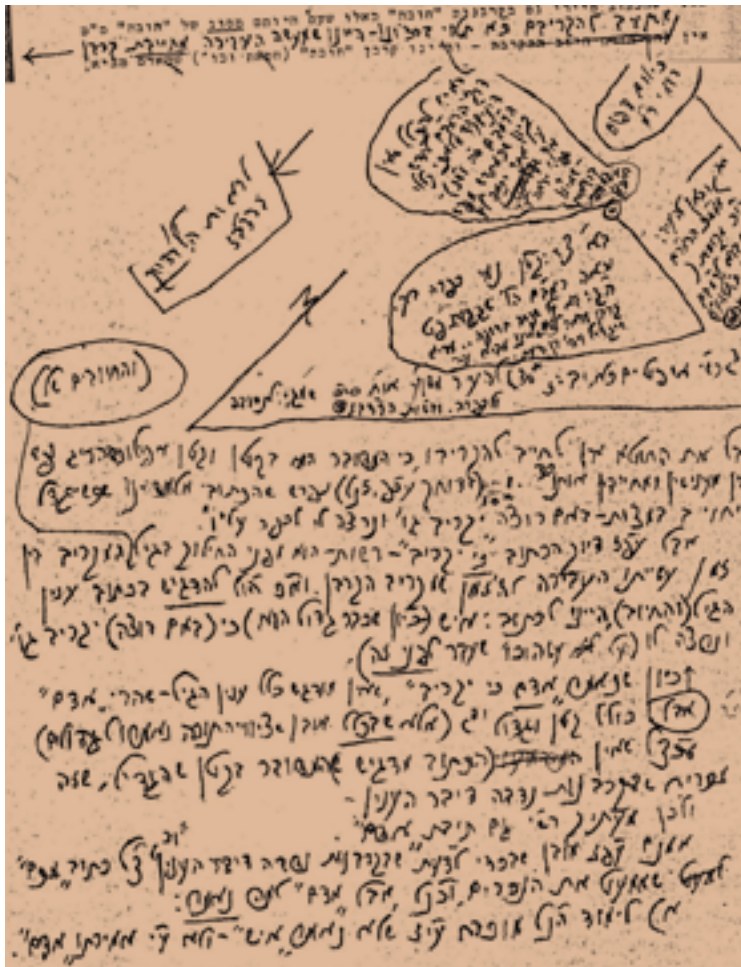


THE SECOND HAGAHA ON THE LIKKUT OF BHAALOSCHA 5734 (LIKKUTEI SICHS VOL. 13 P. 26). THE REBBE ADDED A FULL SE'IF (!) OF THE SICHA IN HIS HOLY HANDWRITING.

This was also an opportunity to clear up any questions people had on the *sicha*. “The Rebbe set up a system that several people should look over the *sichos* before *hagaha*,” Rabbi Altein says. “Only if all those examining the *sicha* agreed that a certain matter indeed needed clarification from the Rebbe, we would ask the Rebbe. Often, based on the Rebbe’s answer, we would need to rewrite a piece of the *sicha*. We would send in the section, and the Rebbe would either approve it or fix it further. There were instances that this went back and forth three or four times until we received final approval.”

SECOND HAGAHA

Once the Rebbe completed the first round of edits, the *hagahos* were incorporated into the *sicha*, and they would go to the printer to be typeset in the Likkutei Sichos font on galleys—long, thin sheets of paper, each a column-wide. First they would check it over themselves for mistakes, and then they would send it into the Rebbe for a second round of *hagaha*. “Many times,” Rabbi Altein says, “it was clear that the Rebbe waited for the second *hagaha* to deal with certain issues. There were sometimes huge differences and additions during these *hagahos*—full paragraphs and *se’ifim*!”



THE REBBE ADDS EXTENSIVELY TO THE SICHA PREPARED FOR THE WEEKLY LIKKUT IN HIS HOLY HANDWRITING (PRINTED IN LIKKUTEI SICHS VOL. 12 P. 5-6).

Rabbi Sholom Jacobson recalls one such occasion: “After the incident of Shemini Atzeres 5738, we weren’t sure whether the Rebbe would be *magiah* the *sicha* for Shabbos. However, just a couple days after Simchas Torah, the Rebbe commented to Rabbi Groner, ‘*M’darf noch magiah zain di sicha af shabbos*’—I still have to be *magiah* the *likkut* for Shabbos.

“In the second *likkut* that year, of parshas Noach¹², notwithstanding the health situation (the difficulty was evident in the Rebbe’s handwriting), the Rebbe himself added an entire *se’if* against learning in college.”

Although it was very rare, there was occasionally a third round of editing. After incorporating the Rebbe’s final *hagahos*, the *likkut* was sent to print in time for Shabbos.

Over Shabbos, the entire Lubavitcher community learned and *koched* in the new revelation of Torah from the Rebbe. The Rebbe would frequently come into shul with the *likkut* tucked into his *siddur*, and, on occasion, he would discuss the *likkut* during the *farbrengen* on Shabbos.

“The first and foremost reason to learn the Rebbe’s Torah is *hiskashrus*,” says Rabbi Leibel Schapiro. “*Ana nafshi*

kesavis yehavis; the Rebbe put his essence into his Torah. This is especially true with Likkutei Sichos, considering the countless hours the Rebbe spent saying the *sichos* and editing them.” (It should be noted that on the subject of *hiskashrus*, the most constant theme the Rebbe spoke about in the years 5710-5711 was about learning the Rebbe’s Torah.)

“We would wait for the *likkut* every week,” relates the shliach Rabbi Yossi Lew, who was a *bochur* in 770 in the 5740s. “The Rebbe didn’t *farbreng* every week, so this was often the only fresh thing we had. I remember that even as children, we would *koch zich* in the fonts and the *hakdashos*...”

“When we were *bochurim* in 770, on Friday night we didn’t go home to eat—we didn’t go *anywhere*—until we finished learning the *likkut*. There were many *chavrusos* on Friday night learning the *likkut* together. We often learned it much more than once; sometimes it was because there was an especially difficult piece, and other times it was especially powerful and inspiring. One *sicha* that stands out in my mind as very powerful is the *likkut* from Shavuos 5743¹³ which discusses the eternity of Torah, notwithstanding the fact that the medicines of the Gemara and the Rambam do not apply anymore. That *sicha* was such a *bombe*; I remember that when I was saving my grandfather, Reb Zalman Jaffe’s place for the *farbrengen* on Shabbos, I was standing next to Reb Yoel. He was learning the *sicha* over and over and over again...”



DURING THE SECOND HAGA'AH, THE REBBE ADDS A LENGTHY EXPLANATION IN THE SHULEI HAGILYON, AN ASTERISK UNDER THE FOOTNOTES (LIKKUTEI SICHOS VOL. 14 P. 87).

"Throughout the entire week, we would continue learning the *sicha*, writing in the *ha'aros* if we didn't understand something, and the Rebbe would sometimes discuss the *ha'aros* during the *farbrengen*!"

"In addition to everything else," says Rabbi Leibel Schapiro, "when you learn Likkutei Sichos, you literally become a true *lamdan* in *nigleh* and a true *maskil* in Chassidus. There are so many *inyanim* in *nigleh* discussed there, so many *sugyos*—if you only knew the *sugyos* the Rebbe discussed in Likkutei Sichos you'd be a *gaon*! And it also gives you a *mehalech* in learning, a style of thinking, when you're learning anything else in Torah.

"There are many *inyanim* in down-to-earth *hashkafa*—how to approach life—that are not clearly spelled out in the standard *maamarim* of Chassidus. How to view the *Aibershter*; how to approach Torah and mitzvos; what a *Yid* is; what a *neshama* is, and so on.

"I once met a *yungerman*, not a Lubavitcher. 'You know,' he tells me, 'until Chof-Zayin Adar, I would come to 770 everyday for *mincha-maariv* to look at the Rebbe. I wasn't a Chosid, I never

even wrote to the Rebbe, but that's what I did.'

"And then he told me the story behind it. After he got married, he started having questions in *emuna*. He realized that it wasn't going in the right direction. One time, he was sitting in shul between *mincha-maariv*, and he randomly picked up a *sefer* on the table. Turns out it was a Likkutei Sichos, and the page he flipped to was speaking about one of the main issues he was dealing with. The Rebbe spoke about it in such a way that everything became absolutely clear, he said, and he started looking more and more. 'The Rebbe saved my life,' he told me, 'and that's why I went to see the Rebbe every day.' Such a story helps you appreciate what Likkutei Sichos really is." **T**

1. For more on this subject, see Derher Adar I 5776 (Issue 41), Darkei Hachassidus "Chassidus Reaches the Outside." See also Derher Sivan 5776 (Issue 45), "Tahalucha."

2. In a letter to Rabbi Hodakov in 5748. The actual letter addresses Rabbi Hodakov directly, but for the sake of clarity we have changed it from second person to third person.

3. See, for example, Igros Kodesh vol. 5 p. 313; Igros Kodesh vol. 6 p. 164.

4. See interview with A Chassidisher Derher, Iyar 5777.

5. See "The Story of Shnas Hakan"; Derher Shevat 5773.

THE REBBE LEAVES 770 WITH A VOLUME OF LIKKUTEI SICHOS, 5 TISHREI 5738.



IN A FUTURE ISSUE WE WILL
EXPLORE THE CONTENT OF
SEFARIM OF LIKKUTEI SICHOS.

6. Sichos Kodesh 5732 p. 73-76.

7. See Derher Nissan 5776, "Leben 5732," Igros Kodesh vol. 27 p. 33; 498.

8. See Derher Adar II 5776 (Issue 42) "Retaining Chassidus."

9. Printed in Likkutei Sichos vol. 32 p. 19.

10. For the published *likkut*, see Likkutei Sichos vol. 34 p. 79.

11. Vol. 23 p. 50.

12. Later printed in vol. 15.

13. Later printed in vol. 23.

LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 2714