



the WRITTEN TORAH

# לקושי שיחות



PART 2



לזכות  
החייל בצבאות ה'  
זלמן יודא שיחי'  
שכטר  
לרגל יום הולדתו, ה' אלול  
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



**IN THE PREVIOUS ARTICLE OF THIS TWO-PART SERIES, WE FOCUSED ON THE HISTORICAL SIDE OF LIKKUTEI SICHOS: WHEN IT BEGAN, HOW IT WAS PUBLISHED, AND THE REBBE'S INTIMATE INVOLVEMENT. IN THIS ARTICLE, WE ATTEMPT TO TOUCH ON THE CONTENT OF LIKKUTEI SICHOS.**

There are many sefarim of the Rebbe's Torah itself—Likkutei Sichos, non-edited sichos, maamarim, igros, reshimos, and so on—and they all share the most critical common denominator: through learning his Torah, we become mekushar with the Rebbe himself in the closest way possible, for the essence of our mind becomes one with him.

In this series, we have trained our focus on Likkutei Sichos.

## OUR CAPACITY

Reb Shmuel Ber Borisover (otherwise known as *Rashda*”m) was one of the most famous Chassidim of the Tzemach Tzedek and Rebbe Maharash. Counted among the greatest *maskilim* (thinkers in Chassidus) of his time, he was also known as an exceptionally clever and wise Chossid.

He once said: “In comparison to Reb Hillel Paritcher’s depth of intellect, the cat and I are equal.” Then he explained: “One might think that I mean to say that just as the cat understands me, I understand Reb Hillel. No! The cat and I are exactly the same!” In other words, one might think that he intended to explain how distant he was from Reb Hillel’s level, but not that he and the cat were literally equal. So he added that he and the cat were literally the same; equally distant from Reb Hillel’s level.

Then Reb Shmuel Ber concluded. “And to compare the depth of Reb Hillel’s intellect to that of the Rebbe [the Tzemach Tzedek], this, no words can describe....”<sup>1</sup>

The Rebbe’s Torah is *Elokus*, fundamentally beyond the reaches of human understanding; we were gifted entry into the chambers of the king, but we dare not presume mastery or even true familiarity. Attempting to write any type of meaningful review of

Likkutei Sichos is an inherently impossible endeavor.

Furthermore, Likkutei Sichos is not a single *sefer* on a single subject; there are so many different types of *sichos*: *Rashi sichos*, *Rambam sichos*, *Chassidus sichos*, *sichos* on the *parsha*, *sichos* on Midrash, and on and on. It encompasses and incorporates all layers and approaches of Torah.

However, in the spirit of inspiring and reinvigorating our readership in the study of Likkutei Sichos, we have asked several Chassidim to provide us with their thoughts, insights, and reflections on the subject.

The following conversations touch on the many disparate aspects of Likkutei Sichos, from which, we hope, the reader will come away with a deeper appreciation and understanding of this infinite treasure the Rebbe gave us.

## THE REBBE’S TANYA

Rabbi Zushe Alperowitz says, “In order for a person to truly understand the Rebbe’s *hashkafa* and outlook, the Rebbe’s *kuk*—whether it’s on Torah, mitzvos, the greatness of a Yid, the purpose of the world, and so on—he must learn Likkutei Sichos. The Rebbe’s outlook is something you internalize from all the different types of *sichos* in Likkutei Sichos: the *Rashi sichos*, *Chassidus sichos*, the *nigleh sichos* and so on—and not only

because every *sicha* includes themes in Chassidus; the Rebbe’s *hashkafa* is expressed throughout the entire Likkutei Sichos, in all the different subjects.”

“The Alter Rebbe’s *sefer* is Tanya,” Rabbi Yosef Gurary says. “The Alter Rebbe had a *shita*, an approach, and where did he record it? In the Tanya. To put it in other words: **the sefer** of the Alter Rebbe is Tanya. So although he said *maamarim*, where one can find major foundational concepts in Chassidus, if you would have to pick one *sefer* where the Alter Rebbe recorded his *shita*, that would be the Tanya.

Similarly, Likkutei Sichos is the Rebbe’s Tanya, at least in my opinion. The Rebbe said *maamarim* and delivered Torah in many ways. But where did the Rebbe record his *shita* in everything? That would be Likkutei Sichos.”

Rabbi Alperowitz says, “When you learn a *maamar* after you learn the *sichos*—then you can understand the *maamar* better, you understand what the *maamar* is *really* saying. And the same is true with *Igros*, where the Rebbe expresses his *hashkafa* in a more practical way: when you learn *Igros* after you learn the *sichos*, you understand what’s behind it, *why* the Rebbe approaches things in certain ways.”

“One example is the concept that a *tzadik* cannot do an *aveira*,” Rabbi Leibel Shapiro

*"Likkutei Sichos is the Rebbe's Tanya, at least in my opinion. The Rebbe said maamarim and delivered Torah in many ways. But where did the Rebbe record his shita in everything? That would be Likkutei Sichos."*

says. “In the *velt* this is not so clear. Avrohom can do an *aveira* sometimes *ch”v*...Moshe Rabbeinu can make a mistake... The Rebbe taught us true *emunas tzadikim*, something that you do not find much elaboration on anywhere else.”

## IMMERSING IN THE REBBE'S OUTLOOK

“One also begins to comprehend the idea of true *ahavas Yisroel*, as was expressed in the Rebbe’s constant *limmud zchus* on Yidden,” Rabbi Shapiro adds. “As much as we know that Reb Levi Yitzchok Berdichever was the defender of the Yidden, one might say that the Rebbe was even more so. The Berdichever would do it on a simpler level—when he saw a *poshuter Yid*, he would explain how everything he did was good, showing the Aibershter how good the Yidden are and that they deserve all the *brachos*. But the Rebbe did this **based on the words of the Torah itself**: Hashem must give *parnassa* to Yidden **based on the words of Torah**; every Yid must have only good **based on the words of Torah**.

“I’ll tell you a story. This happened in 5734, after I had already moved to Miami, and I was still working on Likkutei Sichos. The way it used to work was like this: I would prepare the *sicha* from Miami, send it to New York, and the members of Vaad Lehofatzas Sichos had someone type it up. Then they gave it to the Rebbe for the first round of *hagaha*, and then later for the second *hagaha*. I would not see the *likkut* again until it



CHOF AV 5734, V SCHILDKRAUT via JEM 108668



**Marei Mekomos:** The Rebbe had a special passion for *marei mekomos*. When he took the helm of Kehos in the early 5700s, *maamarim* began coming out with *marei mekomos* for the first time in history, written mostly by the Rebbe himself. During the process of working on the *likkutim*, the Rebbe was particular that every single item, even the most self-understood concepts and known *pesukim*, should have a source—and with tremendous precision. So singular was the Rebbe’s exhaustive sourcing that the Rebbe even addressed the fact that the *possuk* “*Bereishis bara*” needed a *marei makom* to “בראשית א, א.”<sup>10</sup>

Rabbi Leibel Altein relates: “In one *sicha*, it was brought down that the title *K’naani* can mean a *socher*, a merchant (in addition to referring to the *K’naani* nation). We wrote the source that is often quoted in Chassidus, from the *possuk* in Hoshea: ‘*K’naan biyado moznei mirma*.’<sup>11</sup> The Rebbe added: ‘*Pirush Rashi parshas Vayeshev*’ [38:2], and wrote, ‘וכי אף אחד מכם אינו?’ [Does not one of you learn Chitas?!]...” [It should be noted that the Rebbe often emphasized using Rashi as a source since he is *p’shuto shel mikra*.]

“The Rebbe also taught us not to quote anything unless it was confirmed,” Rabbi Leibel Shapiro relates. “When the Rebbe himself added *ha’aros*, he would either check it up himself or instruct us to do so. I remember one occasion, when the Rebbe quoted from the Radvaz (on Rambam), and added that we should check the source (for accuracy). It turned out to be word for word from the Radvaz...”

One often finds the most exotic, unknown *sefarim* quoted in the *ha’aros*. “One time,” Reb Yoel Kahan relates, “the Rebbe quoted several lines from the *sefer* Ressisei Laila by Reb Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin. But he requested that since he didn’t have the *sefer* nearby, we should double-check the *lashon*. When we went to the library to look it up, we discovered that the quote matched up almost perfectly! This is a *sefer* from previous generations, and yet the Rebbe had quoted it from memory.” (It was published later in *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 5 p. 86.)

was completed and I received it in the mail (it was sent to me right away). The first thing I always did when I got the *likkut* was compare the final product with the original version that I had prepared, in order to see what the Rebbe had fixed. Later on, when I came to New York for some reason or another, I would go to the Vaad office and look through the Rebbe’s *hagahos*.

“One time, I prepared a *sicha* from Shabbos parshas Shelach 5732, a *Rashi sicha* about

the episode of the *meraglim*. Without getting into too many details, the Rebbe explained that Rashi was trying to resolve the following question in *pshuto shel mikra*: we see in the story of the *meraglim* that although the Aibershter wanted to destroy that whole generation immediately, Moshe Rabbeinu davened for them and saved their lives; instead, they slowly passed aover the next forty years. The *meraglim* themselves, on the other hand, died right away. The question arises: if

Moshe Rabbeinu’s *tefilla* saved the rest of the Yidden from immediate death, why didn’t it save the *meraglim* from immediate death, as well?

“The Rebbe explained that, according to Rashi, this is what the *possuk* is emphasizing with the words וַיִּשְׁבוּ וַיִּלְכְּדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם, that the *meraglim*’s agenda was against **him**—Moshe Rabbeinu; meaning that the *meraglim* were fighting against Moshe personally. Being that they were battling Moshe *himself*, his *tefilla* could not help them—*ein kateigor naase saneigor* [lit.: a prosecutor cannot serve as a defender].

“In the *yeina shel Torah*—the Chassidus section of the Rashi—the Rebbe explained that just as Moshe Rabbeinu davened for the Yidden, there is a Moshe Rabbeinu in every generation who davens for every Yid—the *nossi hador*—and he went on to elaborate on why every Yid needs the *tefilla* of the *nossi hador*. But, the Rebbe continued, just as the *tefilla* of Moshe could not help the *meraglim*, the *tefillos* of the *nossi hador* cannot help those who fight against him, because *ein kateigor naase saneigor*.

“In short, that is what the Rebbe said at the farbrengen.

“I had actually been involved in writing the farbrengen when the Rebbe had originally said it, and I prepared the *likkut* as the Rebbe had said it at the farbrengen. When I received the finished product, I saw that the entire last piece—that the *tefilla* of the *nossi hador* does not help for those who fight against him—had been removed.

“If you read the *sicha* (in *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 13 p. 44

ff), it almost feels like it stops abruptly, because you are expecting the *hora'ah* from the Rashi to be parallel to the Rashi itself. The *sicha* begins by saying that just as Moshe Rabbeinu davened for every Yid, the *nossi hador* davens for every Yid. So you expect it to say that just as Moshe Rabbeinu's *tefilla* did not help the *meraglim*, the *nossi hador's tefilla* cannot help those who fight him. But it's not there—the climax is missing.

"Now, sometimes the other members of the Vaad would edit the *sicha* I had sent them before they submitted it to the Rebbe, so I immediately called them up to find out what had happened—why did they take it out?

"They told me that they had given the *sicha* to the Rebbe as is. In the first round of *hagaha*, the Rebbe crossed out the entire piece, and wrote that this piece does not fit. In general, when the Rebbe wrote this type of *hagaha*, it would mean that the Rebbe did not approve of the way it was written, and members of the Vaad would rewrite it differently for the second round of *hagaha*.

"That's what they did—they rewrote the same thing in different words and sent the *sicha* to the Rebbe for the second *hagaha*. The Rebbe crossed it out again, but this time he explained: 'הרי זה היפך כל החסידישע אפלייג. יישרף הנייר ולא ייאמר. This is against the entire Chassidishe way of thinking. The paper should be burned and [its content] never mentioned.'

"In other words, it's against any kind of *chassidishe* approach to say that there is a person whom the Rebbe's *tefilla* cannot help.



CHESHVAN 5740, LEVI FREDIN via JEM 193266

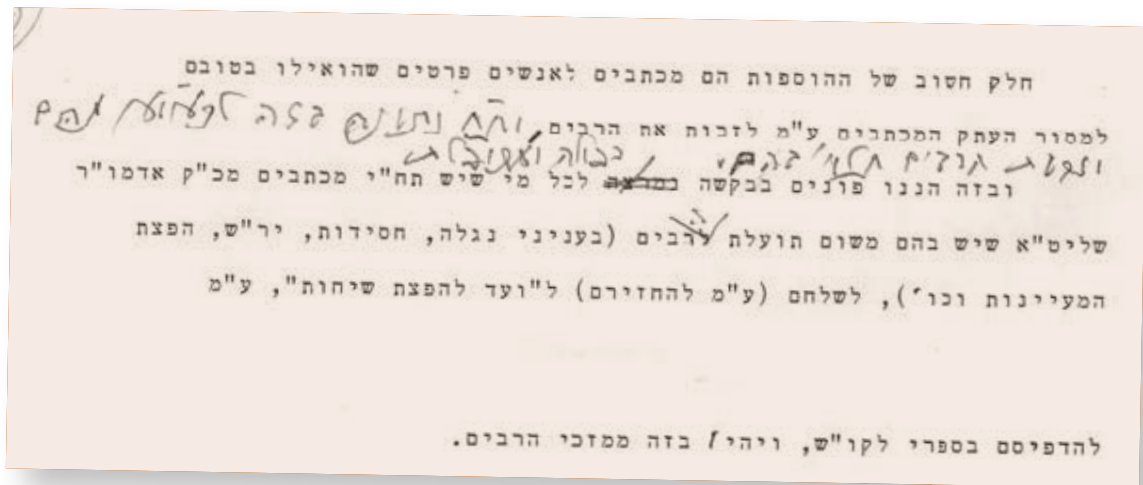
THE REBBE LEAVES HIS HOME FOR 770. OFTEN, THE REBBE TOOK THE GALLEYS OF THE LIKKUT HOME WITH HIM, WORKING ON IT OVERNIGHT.

"It had to be said at the original farbrengen for whatever reason—perhaps as some type of *hora'as shaah*, or something related to the happenings on-high—such an occurrence wasn't rare in my experience. Whatever the explanation may be for this—and also for why the Rebbe crossed out the piece regarding the *nossi hador* but not about Moshe Rabbinu himself—this illustrates the *ahavas Yisroel*

of the Rebbe and the power of the Rebbe's *tefilla*. How can you even imagine that there is someone who cannot be helped by the *nossi hador*?!"

## INNOVATIONS IN CHASSIDUS

"There is an interesting two-fold nature at the heart of Likkutei Sichos," Rabbi Dovid Olidort says. "Historically, it was born as a vehicle for *hafatzas*



THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN HAGAHOS ON THE PESACH DOVOR OF LIKKUTEI SICHOS VOL. 15.

*hamaayanos*, to provide material to *chazzzer* Chassidus in shuls. It is the place where the Rebbe explained Chassidus for the *chutzah*, in a way that is relevant and accessible to all, so that even a layman who never learned Chassidus can understand it.

"At the same time, Likkutei Sichos is where the Rebbe explained some of his deepest *chiddushim* in Chassidus. In fact, for many decades Likkutei Sichos was the *only* place where one could find *muga'dike* Chassidus from the Rebbe, because up until the late 5740s, only a handful of *maamarim* were *muga*.

"A major component of the Rashi *sichos* were the explanations of *yeina shel Torah* ('the wine of the Torah'), the Chassidus in Rashi, and the Rebbe learned profound fundamentals in Chassidus from some of the most simple-seeming Rashis. For example, from the way Rashi words his commentary in Parshas Tazria on the meaning of the word '*teshev*—she shall remain,' the Rebbe learns fundamental concepts in the nature of the

revelations of *Elokus* before the *tzimtzum*."<sup>3</sup>

"By learning Likkutei Sichos, you begin appreciating the fact that every word in Torah is *true*, it's an *inyan Eloki*," Rabbi Leibel Shapiro says. "Every word in Chumash is exact, every expression in Gemara is exact, even the *dibbur hamaschil* of Rashi is exact—in *p'shat*, Kabbalah, on all levels. The *velt* doesn't look at it that way—big deal, Rashi wrote this word or that word, are you really going to ask a question on the *dibbur hamaschil*? But the Rebbe taught us how every word of Rashi is the word of Hashem. In the *sichos* you see the *emes* of Torah. There are other *sefarim* that do it from time to time, but nothing compared to Likkutei Sichos."

## NIGLEH AND CHASSIDUS AS ONE

Rabbi Gurary says, "In Likkutei Sichos, all parts of Torah come together: *nigleh* and Chassidus; *p'shat*, *remez*, *drush*, and *sod*—demonstrating how the entire Torah is one single entity.

"As an example, let's take the integration of *nigleh* and Chassidus. The Rebbe explained on multiple occasions that the primary *chiddush* of the Tzemach Tzedek was the fact that he brought *nigleh* and Chassidus together and revealed how they are a *Torah achas*. A single *maamar* of the Tzemach Tzedek is built out of a mix of Mikra, Mishnah, Gemara, *agadeta*, *nigleh*, and Chassidus."<sup>4</sup>

*It can be said that the true culmination of this idea is seen in the Rebbe's Torah, where the Rebbe shows in such an evident way how Chassidus and nigleh are a single entity—like a guf and neshama, a body and a soul...*



**Hosafos:** In the back of every *sefer* of Likkutei Sichos (besides vol. 1 and 3) there are *hosafos* (“appendixes”), which consist of two components:

*Sichos:* Any *sicha* that was *muga* by the Rebbe for whatever reason throughout the years was included in the back of Likkutei Sichos. (This continued until the Rebbe began editing the *farbrengens* every week, and they were published separately in *Sefer Hasichos*.)

*Letters:* Until the Rebbe began the initiative of printing *Igros Kodesh* in the 5740s,<sup>12</sup> the only organized place one could find the Rebbe’s letters was in the back of Likkutei Sichos. Until today, letters from the late 5730s-5750s (which have not yet come out in *Igros*) can only be found in Likkutei Sichos.

The letters in the *hosafos* are organized by *parshah* and *yom tov*, and although it takes some getting used to, you can easily find a letter on any given topic based on the *parshah* or *yom tov*. Some examples:

- Science and Torah—Bereishis (The creation of the world)
- Chassidus and *hafatzas hamaayanos*—Yud-Tes Kislev and Yud-Beis Tammuz
- Mourning—Vayechi (The passing of Yaakov Avinu)
- Medical—Mishpatim (where it says the *possuk* “*Verapo yerappe*”)
- Chinuch - Emor (Rashi quotes *Chazal* that “*Emor..V’amarta*” teaches us that the elder should teach the younger).

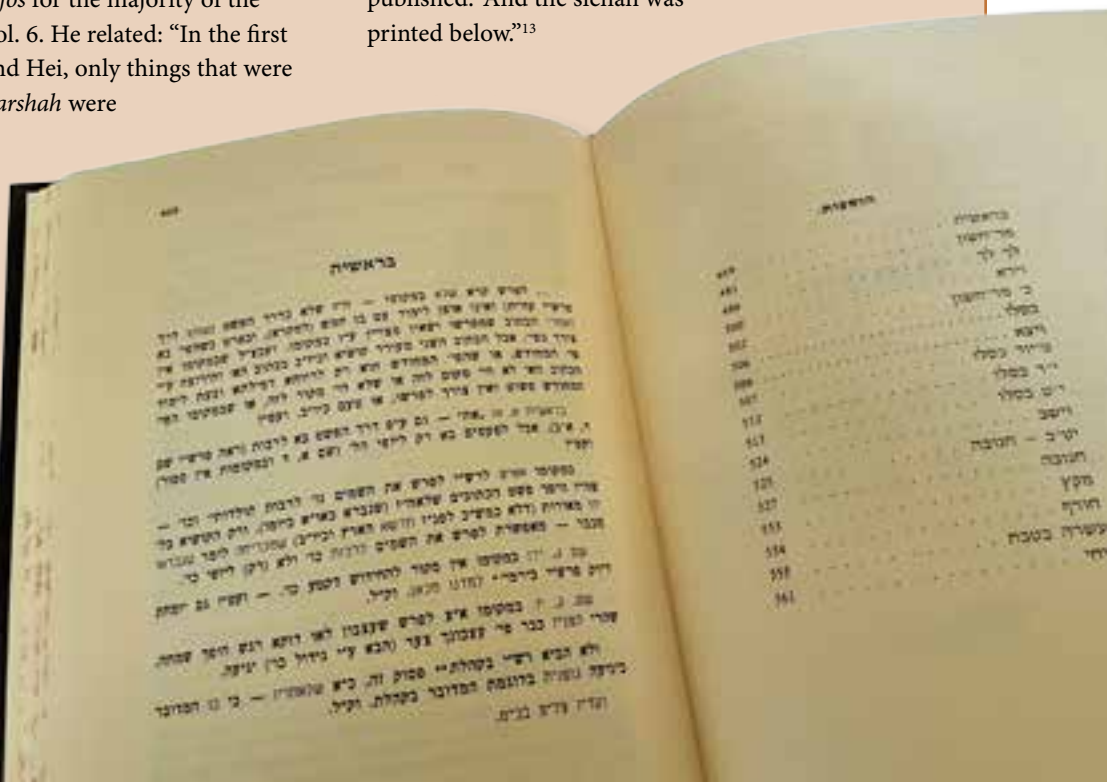
Rabbi Yosef Minkowitz was in charge of collecting and organizing the *hosafos* for the majority of the seforim, starting with vol. 6. He related: “In the first volumes, Beis, Daled, and Hei, only things that were **directly** related to the *parshah* were included. But we realized that the Rebbe’s *sichos* and letters are getting lost! There were so many *sichos* that the Rebbe was *magiah* here and there for Bitaon Chabad, Kovetz Lubavitch, and so on, and most people didn’t have access to them! So

I started collecting and publishing them in the *hosafos*. In addition, I searched through thousands of letters from the Rebbe in people’s archives or that I had copies of, and we published them even if they only had a slight connection to the *parshah*.”

Before each *sefer* was printed, the Rebbe would go through it, occasionally adding *hagahos* to the letters. There were other times when the Rebbe was involved in creation of the *hosafos* as well, as Rabbi Yosef Minkowitz relates: “In 5709, Rabbi Betzalel Wilshansky wrote a letter to the Rebbe from Australia asking what one should do when crossing the International Date-Line during *sefiras ha’omer*. This was before the *nesius*, but already then they knew that the Rebbe would have an answer.

“The Rebbe wrote a beautiful letter explaining the entire *inyan*, going through all the questions that come up, all the scenarios, and so on—but the conclusion was different from Likkutei Sichos *chelek gimmel*! I wasn’t sure what to do. On the one hand, I can’t print a letter that contradicts a *sicha*, but it was such a *geshmake* letter. I wrote in to the Rebbe and asked what to do.

“The Rebbe said to print the letter and print the *sicha* a second time together with the letter, and he wrote up a short piece to be inserted between them. It was written in third person, as if by the editors: ‘The above letter represents the original *svara* and analysis, but afterwards he analyzed it again and came to a conclusion. To give the full picture (*l’shleimus ha’inyan*), we are reprinting this *sicha* although it was already published.’ And the *sichah* was printed below.”<sup>13</sup>





“But, the Rebbe explained in a *sicha*<sup>5</sup>, that the Rebbe Rashab—through Tomchei Temimim—brought the unification of *nigleh* and Chassidus to a new level, in a fashion that was a *chiddush* even in relation to the Tzemach Tzedek: Although the Tzemach Tzedek cites concepts from both *nigleh* and Chassidus in his *maamarim*, they remain separate entities; they are two distinct elements in one *maamar*; the Rebbe Rashab’s *chiddush* in Tomchei Temimim was to take it a step further, unifying *nigleh* and Chassidus in a way that it truly becomes a *Torah achas*, a single Torah.

“It can be said that the true culmination of this idea is seen in the Rebbe’s Torah, where the Rebbe shows in such an evident way how Chassidus and *nigleh* are a single entity—and not simply because they belong under the same umbrella of ‘the Torah.’ Rather, they are like a *guf* and *neshama*, a body and a soul. Just as the *guf* and *neshama* are two elements of a single living person, *nigleh* and Chassidus are two indivisible layers of the same Torah.

“This is something you see all over in Likkutei Sichos. Let’s take a *Rashi sicha*, for example. The first step in a *Rashi sicha* is that the Rebbe is *mechadesh* that Rashi is saying something new in *p’shat*—something that we would not have seen on our own. In other words, as a result of the Rebbe’s approach in learning Rashi, a new *p’shat* is born. This new *p’shat* often leads to a new *halacha* (as the Rebbe always quoted from the Shalah Hakadosh, Rashi contains “wondrous concepts in *halacha*”). So the first thing is,



8 TISHREI 5741, LEVI FREDIN via JEM189083

when the Rebbe learns a Rashi the way he does, a new *din* in *nigleh* is discovered, which we would not know without this Rashi. And then the Rebbe explains the Chassidus-aspect in the Rashi—how *this same concept* is reflected in Chassidus, either in understanding a concept in the *haskala* (philosophy) of Chassidus, or in *avodas Hashem*. The *yeina shel Torah* isn't an external add-on—it's the *inner layer* of the *p'shat* and *halacha*.

“The Rebbe does this with Rashi, Rambam, *hadranim*—the entire Likkutei Sichos is filled with this! The examples go on and on.

“In fact, the Rebbe’s integration of Chassidus and *nigleh* reaches such an extent, that the boundaries between *nigleh* and Chassidus begin fading: the Rebbe will utilize Chassidus in order to explain *nigleh*, and *nigleh* to explain Chassidus.

“For example, when elaborating on a concept in *nigleh*, the Rebbe will often show how Chassidus shows a new depth in this concept, and that it is necessary to understand the Chassidus-aspect in order to truly understand the *nigleh*-aspect. One small illustration: The laws of *tumah* and *tahara* (purity and impurity) are extraordinarily complex and detailed, and many of them seem to be classic *gezeiros hakasuv*, decrees of the Torah without explanation. Dishes and vessels made out of metal or wood become *tamei* when they are touched by impurity in any manner, whereas those made out of earthenware (*kli cheres*) become *tamei* only if the impurity enters through the *inside*. And if this earthenware vessel is sealed (*tzamid pasil*) it cannot become *tamei* from any impurity, even dead bodies—except if a *zav* moves it. When the Rebbe learns these same *halachos* according to Chassidus, suddenly all these seemingly random rules are in the perfect order, to teach us amazing lessons in *avodas Hashem*.<sup>6</sup>

“The same is true the other way: the Rebbe will often use concepts and terms from *nigleh*—like *kamus* and *eichus* (quantity and quality) *tzibur* and *yachid* (community and individual), and such Rogatchover-style concepts—in order to clarify an *inyan* in Chassidus. The Rebbe will even use actual *dinim* in *halacha* in order to explain Chassidus.”

## THE REBBE'S METHOD OF LEARNING



In the *pesach davar* of the Likkutei Sichos, the editors wrote: “A large portion of the *hosafos* come from letters written to private people who shared a copy of their letters for the benefit of the public. We are hereby requesting that anyone who has in his possession letters of the Rebbe should send them...”

In volume 15, the Rebbe himself edited this paragraph (the Rebbe’s words are in bold). “A large portion of the *hosafos* come from letters written to private people who shared a copy of their letters for the benefit of the public. **Thanks is given to every single one of them, and the merit of the public is theirs.** We are hereby requesting **with a double and redoubled** [request] that anyone who has in his possession letters of the Rebbe should send them.”

It is this  
multicolored nature  
of Likkutei Sichos  
that creates the  
tiferes, the beauty.  
Not only that all the  
different colors are  
contained together in  
a single area, but  
that they become  
synthesized into one  
single inyan—and  
that's what creates  
the beauty.

Rabbi Moshe Wolberg says, “I once heard from Reb Yoel Kahn in the name of Reb Chaim Tzimmerman (a brilliant *gaon* who would often come to speak to the Rebbe in learning): Every person who learns has a certain *gang*, a specific method in learning. There are many different approaches: there’s a Brisker approach; a more Polisher approach; a Rogatchover-style approach; and so on. When presented with a *kashya*, a question in learning, most people will try to resolve it by employing their personal approach.

“But not everything in the world can be painted with a single brush! Not everything can be explained with one single *gang*!

“The Rebbe, on the other hand—Reb Chaim Tzimmerman said—*employs* all the approaches, but is not limited to any specific one. In one place

the Rebbe will say a profound logical *vort* (a ‘*higayon’dike vort*’), and in another place he’ll discuss a very *baalebatish* *svara* (a more practical way of thinking). In one *sicha* he will display a certain *sharfkeit* (e.g. a clever, innovative connection to another *sugya*), and in another he will state that the version was not printed correctly and offer suggestions for how it should be. [These types of approaches to learning are difficult to clearly define, but see below for some examples. Ed.] In other words—the Rebbe’s approach is that there’s room for everything.

“There are certain questions the Rebbe asked that were based on a penetration into the depth of the logic. One example that comes to mind: The Rogatchover makes a list somewhere of various things in Torah where the *shiur* is *mashehu*; the minimum size is anything above zero. Most things in Torah need to be a certain size in order to count: you have to eat a certain amount of matzah to fulfill the mitzvah in Pesach; you are only liable for eating on Yom Kippur when you eat a certain amount; and so on. But there are a few areas where the minimum size is ‘anything.’ The list includes, among other things: *ir hanidachas*; the prohibition of *avoda zara*; certain prohibitions of Shabbos; and so on.

“The Rebbe points out that there is an inconsistency in this list—*avoda zara* and Shabbos do not belong together. There are two reasons why the minimum amount could be ‘anything.’ Regarding Shabbos, it’s because even a very small amount is considered to have consequence; while the amount

that is considered consequential for matzah is larger, the amount to be considered consequential for Shabbos is much smaller. But with *avoda zara*, it is an entirely different rationale: there is no minimum amount needed for it to be prohibited. In other words, with Shabbos, the minimum amount that is prohibited is very small, anything. In *avoda zara*, there is no minimum amount—*anything* is prohibited. So they are not the same.<sup>7</sup>

“On the other hand: there are places where the Rebbe will elaborate at length on a ‘*leshitasaihu*’ of two *tannaim*—where he would go through the entire Shas, showing how one idea underlies so many different positions of the same Tannaim (see below).

“And then there was the way the Rebbe dealt with ascertaining the correct version in a *sefer* (which in itself is unique; most *sefarim* that deal with *lomdus* would not be comfortable getting into the nitty-gritty of varying versions). The Rebbe often explained that if you see two versions of a line in a *sefer*, and one of them makes less sense—that one is often more likely to be correct. Why? Because the way it used to work was that when a *sefer* was published, a *bochur zetzer* (copy editor) would go through it and fix any mistakes. Sometimes, this *bochur zetzer* would feel overconfident and “fix” a word that may have seemed strange or repetitious but was in fact correct. The Rebbe used this *svara* in many places. This is not a *logical* leap, a *lomdishe svara*—it’s a *baalebatish svara*, a more technical, practical way of thinking—it involves







PAMPHLET CONTAINING A RECENT SICHA THAT THE REBBE WAS MAGIAH. SICHOES PUBLISHED AS SUCH WERE INCLUDED IN THE HOSAFOS.

contemplating the reality of how things *happened*, and that mistakes in *sefarim* weren't made on their own, but by actual human beings.

"And in the very same Likkutei Sichos, the Rebbe will discuss the difference between the examples the Friediker Rebbe gives for the effect of Chassidus; if it's like a bright ember or pearls of the sea.<sup>8</sup>

"So in Likkutei Sichos, one sees all all kinds of approaches: *lomdus*, *sharfkeit*, questions on seemingly minor details, *baalebatish* *svaros*, *p'shat*, *remez*, *drush* and *sod*. And everything

is true, you just have to know when to use it. The Rebbe's approach is to find the truth in every part of Torah—he's not coming to say a '*vort*,' but to clarify the truth of the idea.

"It is this multicolored nature of Likkutei Sichos that creates the *tiferes*, the beauty. The idea of *tiferes*, as Chassidus explains it, is not only that all the different colors are *contained* together in a single area, but that they become synthesized into one single *inyan*—and that's what creates the beauty.

"Reb Yoel would always offer the example from when

the Rebbe spoke the *sichos* of '*leshitasaihu*,' where vastly different rulings by the same *tanna* are found to have a single underlying principle. The most famous of these is the argument between Beis Shamai and Beis Hillel—whether to look at the potential or the actuality (the *koach* or the *poel*)—which the Rebbe discussed numerous times throughout the years. The *inyan* itself was an amazing thing, but the Rebbe took it a step further: if all these different rulings share the same principle, the Rebbe asked, why do these *tannaim* need to repeat the argument over and over again? In Gemara-language, what's the *tzrichusa*? And then the Rebbe went on to find subtle differences in each *sugya* that necessitate repeating the argument. (There were, in fact, certain *sugyas* where a given set of *tannaim* did not express their opinion, and the Rebbe explained that this was because it was obvious from their general *shita*.)

"Asking for a *tzrichusa* means two things: first of all, you're taking it seriously. If it's simply a *p'shetel*, an intellectual exercise—be happy that you said a *p'shetel*! When you start looking for the *tzrichusa*—when you start asking why it needs to be repeated—that means that this is very real. This isn't just a cute connection, it's so real that you're asking why you need both.

"Second, it illustrates that you're not sufficing with "*hafshata*," the abstract intellectual innovations. In general, when you say a big *lomdus* there are often many loose ends—there's a little *kashya* here, a little *kashya* over there—and it's not really considered an

issue. But even after the exciting connection, the Rebbe would get into the *tzrichusa*, delving into the intricate details of each *sugya* and explaining why it's important to be repeated. Because the Rebbe was looking for the *emes*.<sup>9</sup>

## AN APPROACH OF BITTUL

Rabbi Isser Zalman Weisberg<sup>9</sup> says:

“What I find is that the Rebbe learned in a way of *bittul*—what is the Torah trying to say? Many *roshei yeshivos* use Gemara and *rishonim* to express *their geonus*, to show how they can innovate a *lomdus*. The Rebbe's approach was one of *emes*, of *bittul*—what did Rashi mean? What did the Gemara mean to say? Just like the Rebbe's *derech* in Rashi was *pshuto shel mikra*, the Rebbe's approach to Gemara was to look for the *pshuto shel Gemara*—what is the Gemara trying to say?

“In the Reshimos, for example, or in Igros, you see how the Rebbe takes apart a *sugya*. I would say that it's more of an old-fashioned style of learning, similar to the Maharsha. The Rebbe dissects all the various opinions in the *sugya*, all the Tosfos'n, analyzing how it fits in with the words of the Gemara—and you see that he's not just looking to come out with a regular *geshmake lomdus*. As the Rebbe Rashab says in Kuntres Eitz Hachayim, the true approach to learning is to search for the *emes*, and very often, the true answer is not the most exciting one. Of course, there are many questions that can only be resolved with a Rogatchover, with a *lomdus*, or with another

type of approach—but that wasn't the goal. The Rebbe's goal was finding the truth.

“This was also expressed in the fact that the Rebbe would utilize all types of contemporary tools in learning. The whole idea of using *kisvei yad* in Rashi was revolutionary when the Rebbe began using it (though it has become much more accepted today in the *velt* as well). In the past, a *sefer* didn't even have a *mafteach*, a table of contents—because it's a modern invention! But the Rebbe was very fond of bibliographies, tables of contents, *mafteichos*, footnotes—all seemingly modern approaches—because he utilized every path to find the truth.

“This also comes from the idea of *shleimus haTorah*, the totality of Torah. There were many great *geonim* and *poskim*—even in the modern age—who never looked into the later *acharonim*. Even if they would have access to the modern tools of technology, they wouldn't be interested—they learned the *sugya*, they had the confidence in how they learned it, and that was enough. Do you have to look into all the latest *acharonim*...? This is a valid approach taken by *gedolei Yisroel*, most radically by the Rogatchover himself. But the Rebbe was very interested in what everyone had to say on the topic, and if someone pointed out that a certain *sefer* discussed the topic, the Rebbe put it in to Likkutei Sichos [usually prefaced by *‘He'irani chochom echad'*]. The Rebbe wanted to take everything in—every *acharon* was important, every person who learns Torah is important—everything that a *talmid vasik* innovates is part of Torah.”

“There's a certain person I know—today he is a prominent shliach—who doesn't come from a Lubavitcher family,” Rabbi Wolberg relates. “When he was a young *bochur*, somehow or another he got in touch with a local shliach and ended up learning in the Lubavitcher yeshiva in New York. However, he had some problems with the yeshiva and was considering leaving.

“Another older *bochur* tried to be *mekarev* him and started learning Likkutei Sichos with him. What made the key difference to this young *bochur* was the fact that the Rebbe was worried about all the subtle little details—that every element was reckoned with and dealt with; the Rebbe showed you that every element in Torah—every nuance, every expression, every *diyuk*—is important. He felt that the Rebbe wasn't trying to say a ‘vort’—he was really looking to find the truth of the Torah. And that changed his life.” T

1. Reb Yoel Kahn, *B'darkei Hachassidim* p. 86-90.
2. Bamidbar 14:36.
3. Vol. 7 p. 88. See Sefer Ha'arachim-Chabad volume 3 pages 70-72.
4. See e.g. Toras Menachem 5742 vol 4 p. 2295.
5. Likkutei Sichos vol 20 p. 395.
6. See Likkutei Sichos vol. 38 p. 72.
7. Likkutei Sichos vol. 29 p. 155.
8. Likkutei Sichos vol. 20 p. 171.
9. As a bochur in 770, with the Rebbe's tremendous encouragement, Rabbi Weisberg began writing up the Rebbe's *sichos* for *veltishe* Torah-publications. The Rebbe was *magiah* all of the *sichos* that he prepared.
10. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 1 p. 270 ff.
11. Hoshea 12:3.
12. See A Chassidisher Derher Tammuz 5776 (Issue 46).
13. Likkutei Sichos vol. 7 p. 285-294.