

באדתי לגני

Basi LeGani

Chassidic Discourses



ICHOS
IN
GLISH

5738

Volume 1



לזכות הגה"ח הרב אברהם ליב זווגתו
שיחיו שוחאט
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר למדינת ונצואלה
מאז שנת תשמ"ה
להצלחה רבה בכל המצטרך
נדפס ע"י בנם הרה"ת שלום דובער שי'
שוחאט

SICHOS *in* ENGLISH

*The inside story of the dynamic organization charged with bringing
the wellsprings of Chassidus to the English-speaking world*



Over two decades into the Rebbe's *nesius*, the number of Yidden discovering their Yiddishkeit and becoming Balei Teshuva through the efforts of Lubavitch was rapidly growing. In the late 5730s*, non Yiddish-speaking Yidden were fast becoming a permanent fixture of the Rebbe's farbrengens and aside from some isolated opportunities, there were no official tools to help them understand the Rebbe's words.

In the summer of 5737* a group of *bochurim* took initiative and started translating the Rebbe's farbrengens to English on a regular basis under the unassuming name of "Sichos in English." Eventually, this informal operation evolved into a world-class organization charged with bringing the Rebbe's words to the English speaking world.

Taking Initiative

Rabbi Levy Wineberg: When I was a shliach in the yeshiva of Melbourne, Australia between 5735* and 5737*, hearing the Rebbe's weekday farbrengens live via telephone



THE OFFICE OF SICHOS IN ENGLISH, 5740S*

hook up was extremely expensive.

In order to justify the exorbitant costs, Yossi Friedman and myself started preparing our own *hanachos* of the *maamarim* for the benefit of *anash* in Melbourne. If there was a farbrengen on Erev Rosh Hashanah, they had the *maamar* by the time Yom Tov started, well before it was possible for them to receive the official *hanachos* from New York.

However, there were many *balebatim* and even *talmidim* in the yeshiva that were unable to understand the Yiddish or Lashon Kodesh of the *hanachos* we prepared, so in addition we started preparing a synopsis of the *sichos* in English to be circulated in the yeshiva and the Lubavitcher shuls. It was completely unofficial.

This was my first foray in translating the Rebbe's *sichos* to English. Upon returning to 770 in the spring of 5737*, at the conclusion of our two-year shlichus, I noticed an amazing phenomenon. There were hundreds of Baalei Teshuva either attending the various yeshivos in the area or newly married and settled in Crown Heights. These newly minted Chassidim and many others would attend the Rebbe's farbrengens every week without understanding one word the Rebbe was saying!

Their *kabbalas ol* and dedication was a real inspiration for me.

Something needed to be done to bring the Rebbe's Torah to the English-speaking crowd.

Rabbi Dovid Leib Grossbaum: "When I returned from shlichus in the yeshiva in Miami, I suggested to my tech-savvy friend Moshe Kugel that we arrange a system for the English-speaking attendees of the farbrengens to hear a simultaneous translation of the Rebbe's *sichos*."

I wrote a note to the Rebbe about our idea and the Rebbe instructed us to get permission from the *Mazkirus*. After some trial and error we determined that a radio system would be best for this project.

With the help of Moshe's uncle Yaakov Rubin, we built a shortwave radio in the Kolel building behind 770 capable of broadcasting only in the vicinity of 770. We then purchased several dozen transistor radios with earphones and by the summer of 5737* we were offering simultaneous translations under the auspices of an organization called Simultaneous Translation System (STS).

There were three frequencies; one dedicated to English, another to Hebrew and the third channel varied based on the need, whether



A TRANSISTOR RADIO FROM THE 5730S*

it was French, Russian, Portuguese etc. Levy Wineberg, Aharon Chitrik and Yosef Yitzchok Rivkin alternated translating the Rebbe's *sichos* to English and Rabbi Alter Metzger always translated the *maamarim*.

Rabbi Levy Wineberg: Aside from the tremendous service STS provided, we understood that more official publications were needed to make the *sichos* of the Shabbos farbrengens accessible in English. In addition to helping the local English-speaking Chassidim understand the *sichos*, this would also provide an opportunity for out-of-town English-speaking *anash* to be in touch with the Rebbe's farbrengens.

The first *sicha* was produced in the summer of 5737*, printed on stencil under the unassuming name of "Sichos in English."

Dovid Leib Grossbaum dealt with the technical and financial aspects of the operation and I organized a group of 8 to 10 *bochurim* who each translated a different part of the farbrengen. I then compiled and edited the different translations to produce a full translation of the most recent Shabbos farbrengen.

Some of the *bochurim* were very good at it and others were very raw. Most of them were frightened at the thought of mistranslating the Rebbe's *sicha* and I assured them that they would remain anonymous. Initially none of the *bochurim* knew of each other but eventually they saw others submitting parts of *sichos* and it gave them more courage.

In those early days our product was definitely amateurish. We worked from a typewriter set up on a chair and the operation was very primitive. Initially we faced criticism from elder Chassidim about the fact that *bochurim* were taking matters into their own hands and publishing the *sichos* in English which were far from perfect. Our rationale was that anyone

had the right to prepare *hanachos* of the farbrengens in Yiddish or Lashon Kodesh, so why could we not offer a *hanacha* in English?

On the other hand there was much positive feedback from the many hundreds who benefited from the translations and we pressed on despite the naysayers.

A Shockwave in the Moised

Rabbi Levi Avtzon: My father, Rabbi Yonah Avtzon was 19 years old when he came to learn in 770 in 5737*. He was a *kan* (- an advanced student tasked with extra learning and teaching -) in *nigleh* but was soon drafted into working with the *bochurim* in *Sichos* in English. Sometime in the spring of 5738* he assumed responsibility for the operations of the fledgling *moised*. He established a proper office space in 788 Eastern Parkway and arranged a proper system for subscriptions to enable broader circulation.

Rabbi Eliyahu Touger replaced the original collection of *bochurim* as the official writer but SIE still had the feel of an ad-hoc operation with

no official standing. Then an episode occurred that changed everything.

Vaad Lehafotzas Sichos commissioned Rabbi Emanuel Schochet to translate the first two volumes of Likkutei Sichos into English. In the winter of 5739* the *sichos* for Sefer Bereishis from the first volume of Likkutei Sichos were ready and Vaad Lehafotzas Sichos submitted the translation to the Rebbe requesting permission to publish them as a single volume. To everyone's shock the Rebbe inquired about the connection of *Sichos* in English to this project as SIE was already involved in translating *sichos*.

Rabbi Eliyahu Touger: Until then we only received general responses from the Rebbe when we submitted translated *sichos*. We were told by the *mazkirim* on numerous occasions that the Rebbe was pleased with the fact that the *sichos* were being translated regularly, but we never had specific recognition from the Rebbe as an official *moised*. This episode with the English Likkutei Sichos sent a shockwave through the *moised*. Although we were all still *bochurim*, we were now recognized by the Rebbe as the *moised* charged



REB YONAH AVTZON, AT WORK IN HIS OFFICE, CIRCA 5740S*.

MICHTOVIM KLOLIM

Reb Yosef Loebenstein: In 5740*, when Sichos In English became the first Lubavitch organization in Crown Heights to purchase a computer, the process of preparing the *sichos* changed drastically. Until then every new draft needed to be fully retyped and the risk of introducing new errors to the script was inevitable. With a computer, the text just needed to be corrected and the grueling process was shortened by many hours. It also enabled us to use many different fonts and enhance the layout. Yitzchok Turner was in charge of the typing and layout.

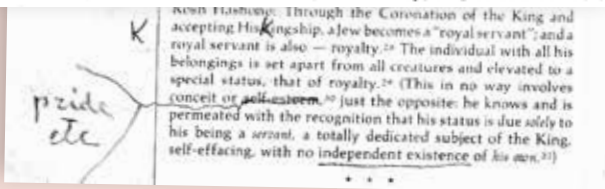
Once they realized how much time this saved them in preparing the *sichos*, Yonah approached the Rebbe's *mazkirus* with an offer to assist Rabbi Nissen Mindel in preparing the *Michtovim Klolim* in English. Instead of Rabbi Mindel retyping new drafts after each time the Rebbe edited the *michtav*, the staff at SIE would type Rabbi Mindel's first draft on their computer and update it with the Rebbe's corrections, thus shortening the arduous process by many hours.

Soon, SIE became the official conduit through which the Rebbe's English *michtavim kloli'im* were prepared for publication.

Rabbi Shmuel Avtzon: Years later, the translations of the *Michtovim Klolim* were prepared by the translators of SIE as well.

In addition to the *Michtovim Klolim*, SIE was at times instructed to prepare certain English letters for the Rebbe and my father was entrusted with a sizable amount of the Rebbe's blank stationary!

דאס זעלבן, אבער אין א גאר העכערן אומן, טוט' איין ראש השנה: דורך
הכתרת המלך' אין, תמליכוני עליכם' ווערט א איד אן עבד מלך — מלך, ער און
אלס וואס געהערט צו עם — ווערט איינגעטיילט פון אלע באשעפענישען און
אויסגעהויבן צו מדרגת מלך — [און דאס קומט צוזאמען מיט דער פולסטער
שליה פון גבוה, וואָרעם ער ווייס און אין דורךגעדורנגען מיט דעם — אן דאס איז
נאָר דורכדעם וואָס ער איז אן עבד, אן אמת' עבד פון דעם מלך, תכלית הביטול,
קיון מציאות גיט פאָר וו'ן].



IN THE ORIGINAL SICHA, THE REBBE MENTIONED THE CONCEPT OF "GAAVAH" AND THE WRITER TRANSLATED IT AS "CONCEIT AND SELF ESTEEM." THE REBBE CROSSED OUT "SELF ESTEEM" AND SUBSTITUTED IT WITH 'PRIDE ETC.'

with translating the Rebbe's words into English!

Soon afterwards, at the conclusion of a farbrengen the Rebbe distributed bottles of *maskhe* to heads of *moisdos*. I was standing next to Yonah and he nudged me saying that we should both go up to receive a bottle for SIE. "No Yonah. As the one financially responsible for the *moised* you are the leader. Go up yourself." After a moment of hesitation, he squared his shoulders and approached the Rebbe on behalf of SIE.

Everything changed after that. That's when Yonah started thinking beyond just translating the most recent farbrengens, but the *sichos* always remained the main focus. There is no doubt that the translations literally made Chassidim. In fact, the biggest supporter of Sichos in English today told me numerous times that the translations of the *sichos* is what turned him into a full fledged Chossid.

Rabbi Shmuel Avtzon: The weekly English *sichos* became very popular and after some time they were compiled and published as a *sefer*. When the first volume of the *sichos* from 5738* was printed, SIE wrote in a note "We hope the Sichos in English are a source of *nachas* to the Rebbe Shlita." The Rebbe added the word "רב" meaning that they are a source of much *nachas*. From 5738* through Adar I, 5752* a total of 52 volumes entitled "Sichos in English" were published.

When Rabbi Touger moved away after Tishrei 5741*, Rabbi Yossi Loebenstein, who was then a *bochur*, assumed responsibility for the translations. When he moved away in Cheshvan 5745*, Rabbi Sholom Ber Hecht became the translator for approximately 4 years until 5749*. In 5749* Rabbi Touger returned to SIE as the main translator of the *sichos* through Shabbos *Vayakhel* 5752*. He worked remotely from Israel.

SIE received tremendous feedback from a diverse group of Yidden. Here is an example of a note from a woman in Wisconsin:

Dear Fellow Jew,

Please send me all the *sichas* of the Rebbe that are translated into English. I cannot read Yiddish or Hebrew yet my love for the Rebbe desperately seeks to hear his words. No matter how far back in time they go, I am assured their insight will give me the guidance needed.

Reb Yaakov Cohen: In the early 5740s* I started learning Chassidus with Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan, the Rebbe's shliach to Baltimore, MD. In those days

TESHURA AVTZON-GOLDBERG, 22 TEVES 5778



REB YONAH AVTZON PRESENTS THE REBBE WITH A SERIES OF TAPES WITH LECTURES ON THE SUBJECT OF MOSHIACH. 19 ADAR I 5752*.

there were very few Chassidus texts translated into English, and Rabbi Kaplan would learn *maamarim* with us from the original text. Although I could not follow in Hebrew at the time, I enjoyed the learning very much and we gradually grew in our Yiddishkeit as a family.

In addition to the regular *shiurim*, Rabbi Kaplan shared with me the translations of the Rebbe's *farbrengens* produced by SIE every week. This was the first time I was able to learn the Rebbe's words in my own language and these texts became a lifeline for me. I can say with certainty that the Rebbe's *sichos* in English are what led me to become a Chossid, and I am forever grateful for that.

Reb Yitzchok Turner: I started working in SIE together with Yonah towards the end of 5739* as a *bochur*. In those days my work was mainly keeping track of subscriptions and stuffing envelopes, but as the *moised* grew we worked hard to keep up to date with new ways to make the publication of the

sefarim more efficient and beautiful. We never went to school for this profession but we learned how to do everything on the job. Today SIE is at the forefront of publishing high quality *sefarim* in English.

Reb Yosef Loebenstein: In the early 5740s* our goal was to have the translations ready as soon as possible. The main *hanachos* were ready on Sunday night or Monday morning after the *farbrengen* and we raced to have the translation ready for Tuesday or Wednesday so *anash* in cities throughout the US were able to learn the *sichos* the following Shabbos.

It was intense work and Yonah and I were rarely able to join the regular *seder hayeshiva* in 770. We were both older *bochurim* at the time, but still enrolled as *talmidim* of the yeshiva. Members of the *hanhala* once called us in for a meeting and when we explained to them how time consuming translating the Rebbe's *sichos* was, they gave their approval to our absence from *seder*.

Essays by the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Rabbi Eliyahu Touger: In the summer of 5740* we realized there were many important topics in the *sichos* which required more in-depth clarity to the English speaking crowd. Thus the idea of preparing official essays on specific themes from the *sichos* was born.

The first essay was about the Torah approach to family planning. The Rebbe spoke about the topic in the *sicha* to the N'shei Chabad convention in Sivan 5740* and after translating the original *sicha* for publication, I developed an essay on the topic with more background and context. This essay was later updated based on the later *sichos* in the topic from Shevat 5741*.

Reb Yosef Loebenstein: We published essays on many important topics such as the Torah approach to the elderly, public education and Birkas Hachamah and even controversial topics such as Shleimus Ha'aretz and Mihu Yehudi. These essays were published with the title "An Essay by the Lubavitcher Rebbe" despite the fact that the Rebbe rarely edited them.

Writing essays was an entirely different process than regular translation. Whereas in the main *sicha* translations we aimed to deliver the content of the Rebbe's *sichos* as close as possible to their original format and style, the essays allowed us to gather information from other areas of the Rebbe's Torah and to compose a full rendition of the specific topic in idiomatic English.

Such things had rarely been done before even in Hebrew and definitely never in English. Especially in light of the fact that these essays were rarely

RAMBAM ON THE TELEPHONE

Rabbi Shmuel Avtzon: In the early 5740s* my father decided to make Chassidus *shiurim* in the English language available in audio format on the telephone. He commissioned an elaborate phone system in the SIE office and arranged for various Chassidim to record *shiurim* in Chassidus and Chassidische stories in English.

On Acharon Shel Pesach 5744* the Rebbe launched Mivtza Limmud HaRambam with three respective tracks. There were no audio *shiurim* on Rambam available at the time so my father immediately arranged for a daily shiur on the one *perek* daily track to be recorded and available on the SIE phone system. This program was called Rambam-on-the-Line.

He received much encouragement from the Rebbe for this specific project. When there was a *siyum* of a sefer in the one *perek* track (which happens only several times a year) my father arranged a festive siyum and received a bottle of mashke from the Rebbe during the Shabbos farbrengen preceding the siyum.

Once the Rebbe referred to my father as “דער רבי דער ״שווער׳ס שליח ללימוד הרמב״ם”.

edited by the Rebbe, the concept was really revolutionary. For the first time a new-comer to Yiddishkeit had access to a proper comprehensive rendition of the Rebbe’s approach to many important Jewish and general topics. SIE’s publications eventually reached thousands, both in the US and overseas. Many of these essays were

also reproduced in the publications of other Lubavitch organizations.

More importantly, it was during these years, as farbrengens were broadcast more often on cable television, that the Rebbe started speaking directly to the world. The Rebbe was expressing the Torah view on hot button issues such as family planning, moment of silence, prison reform, women in positions of power and alternative lifestyles and the essays were the tool through which these messages were reaching the world after the farbrengen ended.

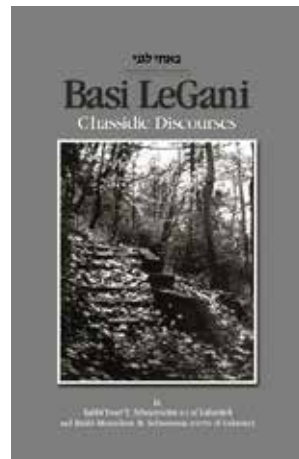
Early on we received a very powerful endorsement to the idea of writing essays.

At the farbrengen of Yud Shevat 5741* the Rebbe spoke a *sicha* about the importance of voluntary prayer in public schools. We developed the content of the *sicha* into an essay entitled “In G-d We Trust” which was edited by the Rebbe and read into the congressional record by Senator Jesse Helms on March 26.

On a similar note, on Yud-Alef Nissan that same year the Rebbe spoke the famous *sicha* about President Reagan and the duties of the office of the president. Senator Strom Thurmond read an excerpt of the English translation of this *sicha* in the congressional record on May 14.

But my proudest moments during my work at SIE were the times we saw the Rebbe walk into shul for Kabbalas Shabbos with a copy of the most recent essay in his siddur.

We also produced essays about the Yomim Tovim, Chassidische Yomei Depagra, the Arba Parshiyos, fast days and the like. Similar to the “topical essays,” the ideas were distilled from many *sichos* and *maamarim* and presented in a restructured format. These essays were appreciated even by those capable of learning the original *sichos*. Years later they were published as a book called *Days of Destiny*.



A TRANSLATION OF THE BASI LEGANI MAAMARIM BY SIE

Rabbi Shmuel Avtzon: I recently found a *duch* my father wrote to the Rebbe in which he reports these essays “have made a great impact on the general Jewish public as well as secular institutions. (To cite a few: some have been printed in the Congressional record; in England they are distributed to members of parliament; they have been reprinted in various papers and magazines such as the Jewish Press, Jewish Week, Jewish Homemaker, etc.; and are distributed on Mivtzoymim...)”

Expanding the Mandate

Rabbi Shmuel Avtzon: Once the translation of the *sichos* had achieved a certain routine, my father felt it was appropriate to translate certain classical Chassidus texts to benefit the growing English speaking community of *anash*. In 5740* SIE published a translation of the *maamar* Basi Legani 5710*.

Reb Uri Kaploun: In 5742*, when I traveled to the Rebbe from Eretz Yisroel, a *bochur* at 770 named Yonah Avtzon approached me and inquired about translating *Likkutei Dibburim* to English. I had never met Yonah beforehand and, especially since he was still an inexperienced

bochur, I did some research about him before even considering such a large project. Everyone I asked gave me glowing reports about him and I was ready to consider the project.

I gave Yonah a sample draft and he asked me for a quote. I had just completed the second volume of *A Treasury of Chassidic Stories* - a translation of Rav Yosef Zevin's classic *Sippurei Chassidim* - published by Mesorah Publications, and I figured that translating *Likkutei Dibburim* would be similar to that.

Having no head for business, I grossly underestimated the time it would take to translate it. Yonah laughed aloud at my initial quote and insisted that I charge a higher fee.

At first the translations were published as pamphlets and eventually he was ready to publish the first volume. When he submitted the work to the Rebbe we were instructed to add only source references, without extra explanations or commentary.

The project took years to complete: it was entirely different from simply translating Chassidic stories. Later, many years ago, a young man approached me in Yerushalayim and identified himself as the son of a certain prominent Chossid. He shared that in his youth he had veered off the path of Chassidus and *yiras Shamayim*, and what brought him back was the English translation of *Likkutei Dibburim*.

Rabbi Eliyahu Touger: In the early 5740s* the Rebbe Rashab's *maamar Heichaltzu* was translated by Rabbi Chaim Citron and serialized in a Chabad periodical in California. Yonah found out about it and suggested that I prepare the translation for publication and after some time submitted the first 17 *se'ifim* of the *maamar* that focus on *avodah* to the Rebbe asking for permission to print. The later 15 *se'ifim* of the *maamar* are very deep

בשורות טובות

Rabbi Shmuel Avtzon: On 4 Teves 5747* my father notified the Rebbe that Rabbi Yossel Gutnick donated several new computers, funds to refurbish the SIE offices and committed to funding future projects. The Rebbe responded:

כן יבש"ט (יבשר טוב) תכה"י (תמיד כל הימים)
בטח תועלת בקאמפיוטער אצל כאו"א (כל אחד ואחת)
שי' מהנ"ל - כי אין קאמפ' חובת גברא ולא דנשי

So too you shall always report good tidings, I will mention it at the Tziyun.

Surely there must be a benefit in each one of the above-mentioned having a computer - because [having] a computer is not incumbent on every man or woman.

The next day, the joyous news of Didan Notzach broke at approximately 11:00 a.m. Before joining the crowds celebrating in front of 770, my father called Reb Chaim Tzvi Spiegel - a strong supporter of SIE from Los Angeles - and secured funding for the publication of another volume of *Sichos in English*. He immediately notified the Rebbe and received the Rebbe's response before Mincha!

כן יבש"ט (יבשר טוב) לע"ל (לעתיד לבוא)

You shall share good tidings in the future as well.

Rabbi Groner later related that this was one of only two *maanos* the Rebbe gave on Hei Teves 5747*.

haskalah which would be very difficult to translate. The Rebbe responded that the translation should be completed and not published piecemeal.

Reb Uri Kaploun: In 5748*, when the Rebbe strongly urged *anash* to study the *maamar Heichaltzu*, Yonah asked me to edit its translation by various hands and to prepare it for publication. The Rebbe Rashab had inserted all the short and lengthy source references in parentheses mid-sentence. However, since in English, without abbreviations, they are a few times longer, I placed them at the foot of the page as footnotes, so that they should not interrupt the flow of the sentences for the English-speaking student.

When Yonah submitted the printing templates to the Rebbe, we received this *maaneh* (see image):

מה ההכרח להכנס לשינויים? באם תתקב
עי"ז ההו"ל [= על ידי זה הוצאה לאור] למשך

זמן - בפעם הזאת להניח כפי שסודר כבר

Why the need to make changes [to the original format]? If publication will be delayed for a considerable time [to correct this], leave the format as is for this edition.



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Interestingly, although the Rebbe was not pleased with the format, he did not want to delay publication to correct it. In later editions of the *maamar*, the sources were returned to their place in the main body of the text, though in a smaller font.

I would like to note that Yonah brought a pleasant zeal to the work of SIE. He had a way of bringing people together to do the Rebbe's work, so that everyone involved with SIE, from the translators, layout professionals and supporters,

all became like one family.

Rabbi Sholom Ber Wineberg:

In the early 5740s* I started giving a college course at one of the local universities. There was a dearth of English Chassidus texts available at the time so I started translating the Friediker Rebbe's *maamarim* from Sefer Hamaamarim Yiddish.

When Yonah caught wind of what I was doing he suggested SIE publish the *maamarim* as pamphlets with the intention of one day publishing all the *maamarim* in a *sefer* or two.

During the difficult months of the *sefarim* trial in 5746* the Rebbe made a big *shturem* to publish *sifrei Chassidus*. Days before Yud Shevat the Rebbe asked Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky whether there were any *sifrei Chassidus* being prepared for publication for Yud Shevat, and he mentioned that I was translating Sefer Hamaamarim Yiddish into English together with SIE. The Rebbe said "Wineberg can be relied on. The *sefer* should be ready for Yud b'Shevat."

When Rabbi Krinsky notified

מגולה לגאולה

Rabbi Levi Avtzon: In 5746*, as the Rebbe started speaking more frequently about Moshiach, the lack of English-language content about Moshiach needed to be addressed. My father commissioned Rabbi Eliyahu Friedman to collect all the content about Moshiach throughout the Rebbe's *sichos* and *maamarim* with the intention of translating it into English for publication by SIE.

He soon realized that the collected content would be a tremendous resource in its original language, but when he asked for permission to publish the *sefer* the Rebbe responded:

ברור:

שספר כהנ"ל יעורר מלחמה באמונה בביאת המשיח בקרוב, או יגדלה יותר - בחוגים שכבר נלחמים. והתוצאות מובנות אנ"ש והקרובים אליהם - אין זקוקים להנ"ל, כי בהנחות מתעניינים יותר מאשר בספר. הס' לא יוסיף כלל בהפצת התומ"צ וכיו"ב, יזיק להצלחת המבצעים וכיו"ב

Clearly:

Such a sefer will awaken a war against the belief in Moshiach's imminent arrival, or increase [the war] - in circles already fighting [this belief]. And the results are self understood.

Anash and those close to them - do not need this [sefer], because they are more interested in the hanachos than in a sefer.

The sefer will not contribute at all to dissemination of Torah and mitzvos and the like, it will damage the success of the mitzvaim and the like.

On Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5751* the Rebbe famously declared that the דרך



to bring Moshiach is through learning as they are explained in Chazal and *Sifrei Chassidus* and especially the *maamarim* and *Likkutei Sichos of nesi doreinu*.

A few days later the Rebbe gave permission for the *sefer* to be published and a month later my father submitted the first section of the *sefer*. He added that it was being translated into English by Reb Uri Kaploun and concluded that he hopes this will cause the Rebbe *nachas*.

The Rebbe edited my father's words "גרם נחת רוח" to read "גרם נחת רוח רב" - *this caused much nachas*.

The *sefer* מגולה לגאולה was published several months later and the Rebbe edited the publisher's forward and determined the date of publication in his holy handwriting, 6 Elul.

The English translation is entitled "From Exile To Redemption."



TESHURA AVTZON-GOLDBERG, 22 TEVES 5778

THE REBBE RECEIVES NEW VOLUMES OF "SICHOS IN ENGLISH" DURING A YECHIDUS WITH THE MEMBERS OF MACHNE YISROEL, 26 ADAR 5751*.



Yonah of the Rebbe's instruction he jumped into high gear. In point of fact, considerable work still needed to be done to ready the *sefer* for print, but if the Rebbe wanted it done in a mere few days, failure was not an option.

I immediately flew into New York and Yonah and I worked ceaselessly to prepare the *sefer* for publication. With the assistance of Empire Press who also worked through the night so that it would be published on time, the first copies rolled off the press for Yud Shevat and it was immediately submitted to the Rebbe. The finished product consists of the two volumes entitled "Chassidic Discourses."

Afterwards I started working on "The Chassidic Dimension" - abbreviated translations of *Likkutei Sichos* - in conjunction with Vaad Lehafotzas *Sichos* but always with the technical and editorial support of SIE. In general SIE was involved in many Chassidus publications in English, even when they were not

published under the SIE trademark.

How to Translate

Reb Yosef Loebenstein: When I became the official translator, Chassidim were still struggling with our style of translation. Some claimed that one must translate the Rebbe's words as literally as possible. Of course such translations are very difficult to follow or comprehend and translations of *sichos* are meant to be idiomatic; presented in the way a normal English-speaker would speak. It differed from the original style, but as long as we were true to the Rebbe's content, the style of the translation was done with the reader in mind. I prepared the translations, Yitzchok Turner typed and prepared the layout and Yonah always reviewed the content.

There were several occasions when we were *zoiche* that the Rebbe

personally edited our work. When we received the edits I would often study them for hours to understand the depth of each word the Rebbe changed, or any change to the order of a sentence or paragraphs. I was always amazed at the brilliance conveyed in the succinctness of the Rebbe's edits. Although one can argue that for the Rebbe this was no big feat, beyond bringing clarity to the Torah teachings themselves, it taught me the power of language and how much the Rebbe respected it.

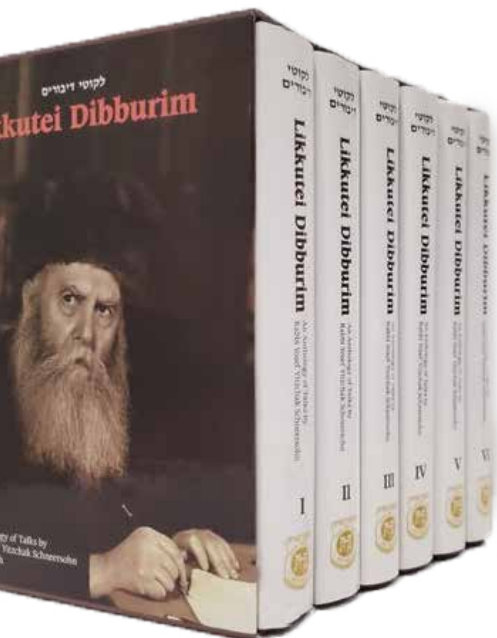
Reb Uri Kaploun: In accordance with the Rebbe's specific instructions for the translation of *Likkutei Dibburim* (mentioned above), we obviously omitted all the commentary, but took the liberty of adding important explanatory notes when necessary. For example, a newcomer to Chabad would find it strange that a participant in a *farbrengen* would interrupt the speaker, or the like. For that reason I

added specific background notes to bring the reader into the social and personal context of the stories. It's obviously important to understand one's audience. One can't take it for granted that they pick up all the sensitive nuances that flavor the insiders' vocabulary of the seasoned Yiddish speakers of the Old World.

Yonah told me on numerous occasions that the Rebbe instructed him to personally review everything published by SIE. Aside from his comments and corrections to the work, the Rebbe taught us that a writer must always have someone else review his work before it is published.

Rabbi Eliyahu Touger: I once showed my work to Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, a venerable Torah translator and author. "You're a Lubavitcher, right?" he said. "You are involved with *kiruv* work. Would you speak to young assimilated Jews in this manner? Translate as if you are speaking to them and not to express prowess with the English language." It was a very valuable lesson.

Rabbi Shmuel Avtzon: At the farbrengen of Rosh Chodesh Nissan 5740* the Rebbe delivered the famous *sicha* on the topic of אבות לב אבות



על בנים. In retrospect this *sicha* was the prelude to the establishment of Tzivos Hashem six months later and more immediately inspired the Matzah Ball Contest which inspired tens of thousands of Jewish children in New York City alone to get involved in the mitzvos of Pesach.¹

The Rebbe instructed a rally be organized for the children the next day, and everyone was surprised when the Rebbe joined the children for Mincha and started speaking a *sicha* to them afterwards. The Rebbe sent a message to SIE requesting an English translation of the *sicha* from the rally for the Rebbe to edit.

The Rebbe returned the first draft with many edits to the first two pages, and the following response:

צ"ל תרגום חפשי - בפועל
(ובמילא נוחה לקרוא)
קראתי רק ב' עמודים
ורשמתי חלק מהנכון לשנות
וישתפו עוד מומחה בתרגום לתרגום.

It needs to be a free translation – in actuality (and thus pleasant to read)

*I read only the first two pages
And I indicated some of the changes that would be appropriate*

They should involve another translation-expert to [help with] the translation

Additional writers with experience in translation were approached to help draft a second version. With a focus on making the new translation user-friendly, they completely rewrote it as a summary, an essay incorporating the key messages of the *sicha*.

Shortly after the second draft was submitted, my father received an urgent message from the Rebbe's *mazkirus* that the Rebbe wanted to know who was responsible for all the radical changes in the new version.

My father quickly conferred with the writers and editors located all around the world, to determine the correct response and they

ultimately submitted the names of multiple individuals involved in this translation in any way.

Upon receiving the list the Rebbe replied:

וכולם השמיטו המ"מ! והסעיפים!
ועוד כולם כיוונו לאותם השינויים
הנס דזקני תלמי

And all of them omitted the footnotes! And the sections!

*And moreover, they all thought of the same changes
[This is] the miracle of the Sages of Ptolemy²*

The Rebbe also returned the document with many edits to the choices of wording and the grammar, as well as the following comment at the end:

הענין דג' הקווין וכו' !!

The concept of the 3 avenues [of avodah] etc!!

On the front page the Rebbe wrote:

ב"פ "הגהה" שלי - מספיקות והותר
באם זוהי "הגהה" ולא אגיהה יותר

My "editing" twice - is more than enough (if this is even "editing") and I will not edit it anymore.

This was a reference to the last section of the *sicha*, about how the rally included the three foundational aspects of Torah (children recited the 12 Pesukim), Tefillah (Mincha) and Tzedakah (the Rebbe distributed coins to the children.)

Thus the Rebbe educated the translators to strike a balance between remaining true to the details of the content the Rebbe spoke in the *sicha*, while still providing a text that was readable and relatable to the reader.

Round-the-Clock Operation

Rabbi Eliyahu Touger: When I returned to SIE in 5749*, the fact that I was living in Eretz Yisroel at the time presented a tremendous advantage.



A COLLECTION OF MANY OF THE TITLES PUBLISHED BY SIE OVER THE YEARS

It gave us the opportunity to present the content of the farbrengens in English in record timing.

Every Motzei Shabbos a short synopsis of the farbrengen - called a *ra"d* (*roshei devarim*) - was prepared within a few short hours after Shabbos and immediately faxed to shluchim and *anash* around the world. This operation was known as Fax-A-Sicha.

I received the *ra"d* in Eretz Yisroel early Sunday morning due to the time difference and was able to work on the translation immediately - after a full night's sleep. Several hours later the translation was complete and Chassidim all over America received a fax early Sunday morning with an English translation of the *ra"d* entitled "Digest" - barely 12 hours after the farbrengen had ended! By then the official *hanachos* were ready and I translated the full *sichos* which were available to Chassidim in the US by Monday evening at the latest.

If the Rebbe said a surprise *sicha* during the week, Yonah called me immediately afterwards with the basic rundown of the *sicha* and faxed

whatever materials were available late at night in New York. Thus we were able to prepare translations very quickly but it was all consuming work and there was no time to write essays.

In 5750* when the Rebbe made a big *shturem* about Shnas Nissim I felt terrible. The Rebbe had foretold that the year would be filled with miracles and when Soviet Russia disintegrated without a shot being fired the world was unaware of what the Rebbe had said. Although our translations made the *sichos* available to English speakers, our main readership were *anash* and *mekuravim* who wanted a genuine rendition of what the Rebbe said by the farbrengens. This was hardly the style that caught the attention of the world.

The next year when the Rebbe made a *shturem* about *Niflaos Ar'enu*, I decided to write essays on the topics of the *sichos* which shluchim had published in newspapers around the world. When the tremendous miracles of the Gulf War occurred, the Rebbe's message about the miracles of the war received global exposure.

Rabbi Shmuel Avtzon: There were some notable occasions that the Rebbe edited the SIE translations.

Following each *yechidus* for the members of the Machane Yisroel Development Fund each member received a letter from the Rebbe with a copy of the Rebbe's *sicha* in English enclosed.

On Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5750* the Rebbe spoke a powerful *sicha* about the tremendous value of every Yid based on the *possuk* of the *Haftara* "עם זו יצרת לי" in response to statement made in Eretz Yisroel against certain Yidden.

After Shabbos the Rebbe specifically requested an essay be composed based on the *sicha* which was edited and published in many newspapers throughout the world.

On the Forefront of Hafatzah

Today SIE continues to publish high quality translations of the teachings of Raboseinu Nesieinu. Aside from the hundreds of *maamarim*, *sichos* and *igros* that have been published in various formats - **all available online at www.sie.org free of charge** - SIE embarked on several ambitious projects over the years. These include: a new translation of Hayom Yom with commentary and explanations expounding on each day's entry; an unprecedented translation of the *Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch*; *Likkutei Sichos* is currently being translated and published in bilingual format, with thousands of copies in circulation; over a dozen volumes of *Lessons in Maamorim* and the Frierdiker Rebbe's *sichos*; a groundbreaking series entitled *The Basics of Chassidus*, and many more projects. Fulfilling their mandate and obligation to bring the wellsprings of Chassidus to the English speaking world. **T**

1. See *A Chassidisher Derher*, Sivan 5774 - *Children at the Forefront*.
2. This is a reference to the story in Gemara Megillah 9a: King Ptolemy, the Greek-Egyptian ruler of Eretz Yisroel at the time, placed 72 *chachamim* into separate rooms and ordered each of them to translate the Torah into Greek. Recognizing the danger of misinterpretation that could arise from a literal translation of certain phrases, they each made several changes. When they concluded, all 72 translations turned out to be identical. Through *ruach hakodesh*, every one of them was led to make the same 13 changes.