



The Hanachos: An Insider's Perspective

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Chief Choizer and Maniach

Recollections From Hanhalah

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Foreword

As part of the *Hanachos* program currently taking place in *mesivtos*, we are pleased to present the fourth edition of “*Hanachos*” — a weekly magazine designed to enrich this program.

This week we interviewed the Rebbe's chief chozer Reb Yoel Kahn. Reb Yoel was zoche to chazzer and transcribe the sichos from day one, and led the chazara, hanacha, and publication of the Rebbe's Torah throughout all the years that followed. Reb Yoel shared early memories and anecdotes with us, as well as practical tips for *hiskashrus* today.

In the column “*Recollections from Hanhalah*,” we present an interview with Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Kalmenson, longtime Rosh yeshiva of New Haven. Rabbi Kalmenson shares his early memories of the Rebbe, guidance he received regarding the yeshiva and publishing seforim, and words of encouragement for today's bochurim.

With only two weeks left until *Gimmel Tammuz*, as each of us wants to strengthen our *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, Reb Yoel's words ring ever deeper. Being that Torah is *nitzchi* - everlasting, we must connect to the Rebbe just as before. All the Rebbe told us about *hiskashrus* applies today more than ever.

Let us hope that in the *z'chus* of the current *koch* in watching and writing down the Rebbe's *farbengens*, Hashem should take us out of *galus* and reunite us with the Rebbe. Then we will no longer need to hear *zichronos* of the past, for we will have our very own, *teikef umiyad mamash*.

The Editors



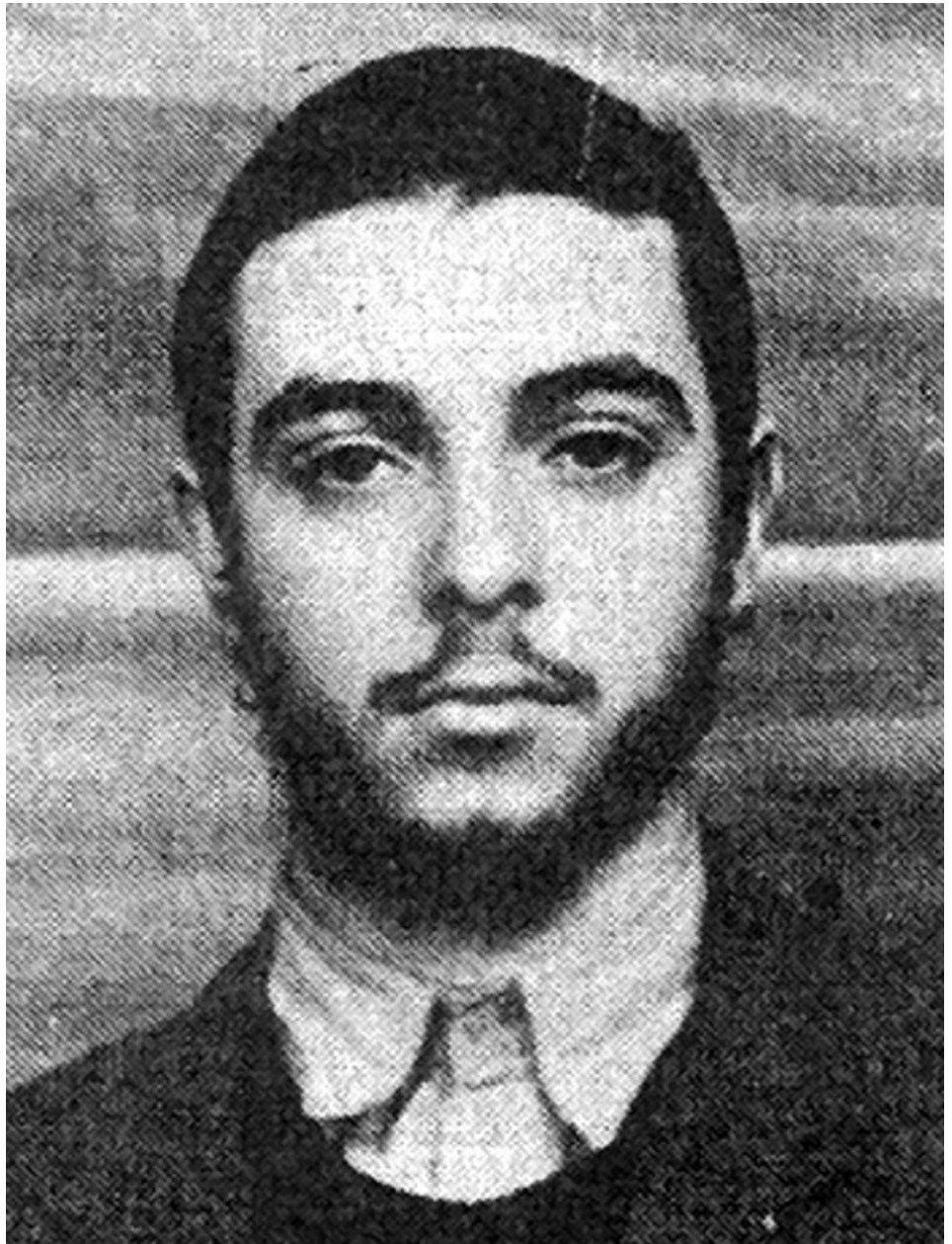
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When and how did you start writing down the Rebbe's sichos?

Let's preface with how I came to the Rebbe altogether.

Shortly before the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus*, he gave his *bracha* that six *bochurim* from Eretz Yisroel should come to New York and learn in 770. I was one of these six *bochurim*. The group arrived in three shifts, the first one consisting of Reb Nosson Gourarie *a"h* and myself. We left Eretz Yisroel before the *histalkus*, but only arrived after 10 Shevat.

Being that we had come precisely in order to be by the Frierdiker Rebbe, we now had a dilemma, unsure if we should stay in New York or return to Eretz Yisroel. In the meantime the weeks went by, but Pesach was coming up, and we realized that we must decide if we are planning on staying in NY or returning to Eretz Yisroel, for it would make a difference whether we would keep one or two days Yom Tov. We turned to the *mashpiya* Reb Shmuel Levitin, and asked him



Reb Yoel as a bochur



Reb Yoel leads the chazara after a farbrengen. JEM / The Living Archive

for advice. Reb Shmuel was a very intelligent individual. He told us that such a question we must ask “the Rebbe’s son-in-law,” referring of course to the Rebbe.

I came to the Rebbe and asked what I should do regarding *Yom Tov sheni*. The Rebbe said that there are others who came from Eretz Yisroel throughout the years, so why is your case different, and what’s even the question?! The Rebbe of course understood that I was asking if I should stay in New York or return to Eretz Yisroel and his decision was that we should stay, and keep two days like the bochurim had until that point.

The Rebbe then continued: “you asked the (Friediker) Rebbe, he said you should come (learn in 770), do you think he meant you

should come for a few weeks and then return?!”

The Rebbe then exclaimed with a strong tone I remember until today “*der Rebbe hot gevust altz frier* - (the rebbe knew everything beforehand),” and nevertheless he told you to come, so what’s the question.

So did you begin writing *hanachos* of the *farbrengens* right away?

The Rebbe would *farbreng* each Shabbos Mevorchim, as well as on Yomim Tovim. The farbrengens of Acharon Shel Pesach 5710 and Shabbos Mevorchim Iyar were very special, leaving an impression on all the chassidim, and we truly realized that the Rebbe was no ordinary person. As far as I remember it was after Shabbos Mevorchim Iyar,

and I wanted to remember what the Rebbe had spoken about, so I wrote down some of the *nekudos* for myself. I never dreamt that it would become a *hanacha* and the Rebbe would be *magiha*.

Shortly thereafter, Reb Berel Chaskind approached and asked me if it was true that I had written down the farbrengen. When I confirmed, he requested the *hanacha*. I asked him what for, but he wouldn’t tell me, just brushing me off that I’m young and should just listen and give him what I have. I never dreamt that he wanted it to be shown to the Rebbe.

That being said, Reb Berel was not the one who gave them to the Rebbe; someone else did. Until today I don’t know who it was. This person brought the *hanacha* to *yechidus*

and told the Rebbe that there are many chassidim from out of town who would like to know what the Rebbe speaks at the *farbrengens*, and being that a hanacha had been written, the out-of-townners would like to know if it's accurate. The Rebbe looked at it and gave his *haskama*. This was the first time a sicha was *mugah* by the Rebbe. And was really a reassurance for us that the Rebbe agreed to us transcribing the *hanachos*.

What was the hesitation? Why would you think the Rebbe might not be happy?

At that time, during the year after the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus*, the Rebbe very much turned away from anything that would make it seem like he was accepting the *nesiyus*.

There was even one time during that year that the Rebbe said that if chassidim don't stop pressuring him to accept the *nesiyus*, he would go away, and nobody would know where he is.

Writing *hanachos* on the sichos was always something done for the Rebbeim, so we were afraid that the Rebbe wouldn't be happy hearing that we were writing *hanachos*. That's why I didn't dream that Reb Berel Chaskind wanted to show them to the Rebbe. Likewise Reb Berel himself was also hesitant to present it to the Rebbe, and therefore he got someone else to.

But after the *hanacha* was shown to the Rebbe that time, was it totally settled?

There was actually another incident as well which reassured us that the

Rebbe okayed the *hanachos*.

Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein - a member of the Rebbe's *mazkirus* - was a very humorous man, sometimes using his humor even when speaking with the Rebbe.

It was during the period when there was hesitation to print the Rebbe's sichos, so Reb Moshe Leib had an idea. He made some copies of the sichos on some really old stencil paper of terrible quality; it was like the quality of the paper back in Lubavitch. The next time he came in to the Rebbe's room, he showed the copies to the Rebbe and explained that it was not worth it for him to print the sichos normal quality, for soon the sichos would anyway be in print, and printing them properly for himself would be a waste of money. The Rebbe smiled, and this was kind of a



The Rebbe gives Reb Yoel a piece of Lekach. JEM / The Living Archive

sign of approval that the *hanachos* would be printed.

Would you ever ask the Rebbe questions on the Sichos during that year?

Once, during the summer of 5710, the Rebbe discussed something at the farbrengen and we couldn't understand. Reb Leibel Groner told me to ask the Rebbe. I didn't want to, so he said that he would come along with me.

We came in and started saying "yesterday the Rebbe spoke..." continuing to elaborate on what we didn't understand. Now, when we came in, the Rebbe was not wearing a hat, but as soon as we started saying "yesterday the Rebbe spoke" he immediately put it on. This was a big sign for us that it

was connected with the *nesiyus*, because one need not don a hat just to discuss something in *nigleh* and *chassidus*. So this left a strong imprint on us.

When you would go in for yechidus, would the Rebbe make reference to your writing hanachos

I wouldn't go in for Yechidus so often, but it happened at times that the Rebbe would ask me "*vos hert zich mit di hanachos* - what is doing with the *hanachos*". Specifically I recall the Rebbe asking me this when I came in for my birthday *yechidus* just a few days after the *kabolas hanesiyus* on 10 Shevat 5711.

Thank you for sharing these *zichronos*.

Gimmel Tammuz is approaching. What is *Hiskashrus* for bochurim today?

The Torah given at Har Sinai is forever. Today the *bochurim* can have complete *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, through learning, going on *mivtzoim*, keeping the *shiurim* of *Chitas* and *Rambam*, and behaving how one is supposed to. There is nothing new. These things must all be strengthened. In addition bochurim should also feel a personal connection to the Rebbe. This connection was already formed by the Rebbe; the bochur need only behave accordingly, and put himself aside, so this feeling of *hiskashrus* can be revealed.

Thank You!



The Rebbe pours Reb Yoel Kos Shel Bracha. JEM / The Living Archive