



In 5747, due to the growing popularity of the fax, we began producing on Motzei Shabbos a synopsis of each farbrengen — called *tochen kotzer* — to be faxed out to communities worldwide, enabling them for the first time to actually read a transcript of the farbrengen within 24 hours of when it was delivered! At some point we were producing these summaries in 14 (!) languages, translated by 770 bochurim from all these foreign countries.

They all deserve to be mentioned by name, were it not due to limits of space. All in all I would estimate that over these years, from 5740 and on, over 70 people worked in the Vaad.

As head of the Vaad, would you sometimes write to the Rebbe?

Absolutely! Not just I, but all the *manichim* preceding me would write to the Rebbe all the time with questions and points to clarify. Indeed, the Rebbe insisted that we ask about and clarify every point to ensure that the *hanacha* be as clear and understandable as possible. We would have questions on the *farbrengen*, and I would write to the Rebbe asking for

further explanation. The Rebbe would promptly answer all of our questions. I actually can't remember there being a time that we didn't receive a reply.

Would you sign your name when writing to the Rebbe?

The general practice over the years was that those responsible for writing and publishing the Rebbe's *sichos* and *maamarim* did not sign their names when asking the Rebbe questions on these *sichos* and *maamarim*. I followed this practice. I would sign my name on questions that were related to the management of the Vaad, but not on questions about the Farbrengens. The language we usually used when writing a question was "*Lo tofasnu*" — "We didn't grasp [the meaning of a particular thing]."

Although you didn't sign your name, did you feel that the Rebbe knew you were involved?

Of course the Rebbe knew — we were writing *the Rebbe's own sichos*. Actually, one Sunday during dollars, a certain Yid went by and mentioned to the Rebbe that he knew me. The Rebbe commented "*Er arbet doch in di*

Sichos". But frankly, I wasn't a child; I didn't need recognition of my work by the Rebbe. It was a tremendous honor to do this work. I definitely felt that working on the *sichos* was the source of all *brachos* for myself — so much so that I never would write and ask for my own personal needs. I felt that by working for the Rebbe writing his *sichos*, the Rebbe took care of me.

Would you give the hanacha each week to the Rebbe?

Of course. These were the Rebbe's *sichos* — so the Rebbe was first the receive what we prepared!

Did the Rebbe edit the hanachos? If yes, what was the process of this happening? Who initiated the submission of a sicha or a maamar for hagaha? What is the difference between a hanacha bilti mugah and one that was mugah?

Generally speaking, most of the *hanachos* written were not edited by the Rebbe. In the early years the Rebbe made it clear that though he would like to edit them all, he simply did not have the time. These *hanachos* — *sichos* or *maamarim* — were identified by their prominently bearing the line "*hanacha bilti mugah*" (sometimes referred to *reshimas ha'shomim*, notes of those who listened), indicating that they were transcripts written by the *manichim*, and not edited by the Rebbe.

A number of *hanachos* did merit being edited by the Rebbe, and in those instances the *hanacha* would (usually) be published as an official kuntres, with the Rebbe's official cover page, and an introduction (*pesach davar*) dated by the Rebbe.

The editing of a *sicha* or a *maamar* came about in four different ways: 1) The Rebbe requested that it should be prepared for his *haga'ah*. 2) We would submit the *sicha* or *maamar*, feeling that the Rebbe may edit it. (At times we were right, and at times not). 3) After the Rebbe answered some of our queries on a particular *hanacha*, and at times even edited the text, we then submitted the entire section and



The view of the Rebbe from Rabbi Jacobson's place

the Rebbe would edit it. 4) After the *hanacha* was printed the Rebbe would edit the published *kuntres*. We would then of course re-publish the edited version as an official *kuntres*.

(It should be noted that in certain instances the Rebbe added the word *hanacha* even though it was edited. In addition, at times the Rebbe began — but did not finish — editing a *hanacha*. That would be indicated as well).

Additionally, as mentioned above, when the Rebbe answered our queries, we would weave the answers into the text, and at times include the Rebbe's answer as a footnote. Any page in the *hanacha* that had even one word touched or edited by the Rebbe would not carry the words "*bilti mugah*" — "unedited".

How often would the Rebbe edit hanachos?

Over the years there was no regular schedule of edited *hanachos*. It was case by case. That being said, there were special periods in time — either due to events of the time, or special directives the Rebbe was issuing — when the Rebbe edited a continuous series of his *sichos* and *maamarim*. A few examples stand out: The series of *sichos* — from Shabbos Parshas

Bereishis to Shabbos Parshas Vayeitzei 5725 — delivered after the passing of the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana; the series of *sichos* and *maamarim* — from Motzei Simchas Torah to Motzei Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah 5738 — delivered after the Rebbe's heart attack; the series of *sichos* around Shavuot of 5740 when the Rebbe called for the creating of gatherings of children; and a number of others.

During the mid *Mem's* (5745 and on) the Rebbe began to edit *sichos* more regularly, to the point that in 5747 the Rebbe began editing almost every Shabbos *Farbrengen*. This continued until Chof Zayin Adar 5752. These *mugah'dike sichos* comprise the set of *Sefer Hasichos* 5747-5752.

This all is not addressing, of course, the Rebbe's editing *Likkutei Sichos*, and in later years, the *maamarim* that were published for *yomim tovim* and special days of the year, which is out of the scope of our discussion.

Are all the sichos in Sefer Hasichos 5747-5752 written by Vaad Hanachos Hatmimim?

No. All the *sichos* in Yiddish (with a few exceptions) were written and prepared by Vaad Hanachos Hatmimim. The ones in Hebrew were written and prepared by Vaad Hanachos B'Lahak,

headed by Rabbi Dovid Feldman.

You mentioned earlier that you were deeply intrigued by the the *farbrengens* and *chazora*. Is this something you always had interest in?

Actually, not at all. As a younger *bochur* I was really kind of uninspired. I was unaware of the exciting relevance and passionate insights contained in the Rebbe's *sichos* and *maamarim*. That dramatically changed when I was about 16 or 17 years old.

What caused this change?

It's a long story, but suffice it to say that it was during those years that I started seriously learning Torah and Chassidus and discovered its dynamic vitality. You can say that the "music" of Chassidus pierced my soul and resonated with me. I was incredibly mesmerized by it in a very personal way.

This of course changed my entire attitude towards the *farbrengens*. You see, the Rebbe is the embodiment of Torah and Chassidus. As I learned to appreciate Chassidus, I became obsessed with capturing every word the Rebbe uttered.

And once I began this journey I never looked back. Once I became involved in *chazering* and writing the *sichos*,

this took over my entire life. I was submerged in these waters. After the summer of 5736 I would never miss a *farbrenge*. I wouldn't travel, go to camp, or go to the mountains in the summer — I was always at the *farbrenge*s.

As I said, I never looked back. Everything I have done since until this moment, and hopefully for many more years, is driven by that passion awakened back then when I was first touched by the Rebbe's *farbrenge*s.

Would you also attend the *farbrenge*s when you studied in Morristown?

Yes. Whenever there was a *farbrenge*, the yeshiva would come to New York. Actually, when we came back to yeshiva, the entire *beis midrash* would have *chazara* Sunday night, which would usually take an hour or more. At some point the *mashpia* Reb Meilech Zwiebel asked me to lead the *chazara* in Morristown, which I did to the best of my ability. That's where I received my first "training".

The *bochurim* in the *mesivtas* are now watching *sichos* and writing down their own "hanachos". What are your thoughts about such an idea?

I think it's a great idea. The Rebbe encouraged students to write *pilpulim*, *ha'aros* etc. Committing ideas you have learned or have developed to paper has enormous benefits that are far-reaching and everlasting.

I have personally witnessed this in the annual MyLife: Chassidus Applied Essay Contest we run. I always say that until you can write down ideas in clear language that others can understand, they remain somewhat removed from you. When you can actually put it in writing, it shows that you really understand what the Rebbe said. Putting it in writing really makes you internalize it.

I experienced this when I wrote *Toward a Meaningful Life*, presenting the Wisdom of the Rebbe to people of all backgrounds.

Can you give some advice for the *Bochurim* on how to follow the *sichos*?

"*Aydi d'torid l'mivleh lo polit. Aydi d'torid l'polit lo mivleh*" The first step is to go into absorption mode: As you listen to or watch a *sicha* or a *maamar*, suspend all prior thoughts and ideas, and concentrate on what the Rebbe is saying now. Just listen, and write down what you are listening to. Don't try to process and understand. Don't analyze and ask questions. Just listen and absorb.

When you're busy trying to understand the idea, you disturb your ability to take in the information. It will confuse you and you will lose track of the *sicha*.

After the *bochur* finishes listening or watching the video, he can then look at his notes and begin processing and trying to understand the ideas stated. Then he can bring in other information he may know from sources he

learned in the past.

This is the process we used when we did *chazara* and wrote the *hanachos*. First we absorbed and retained what the Rebbe said, undiluted and unshaped by any prior ideas we learned or developed. Once we reviewed and made notes of the Rebbe's words, we began the research stage — looking up the sources, cross-referencing and placing into context the Rebbe's thoughts. At that point we were often overwhelmed and even experienced confusion. But then, as we would continue focusing and piecing the puzzle together, the picture would begin to emerge. Then came stage three: writing the full *sicha* or *maamar*. This, of course, would then be reviewed and edited, and sometimes rewritten. We would often argue a point, and when necessary, we wrote to the Rebbe for clarification. Finally, after a number of back-and-forths which helped crystallize the ideas, we produced the final *hanacha*, which was then published for posterity

Thank you! You are involved in various projects in *hafatzas hama'ayanos*. Do you somehow see this as a continuation of your writing *hanachos*?

Most definitely. The mission of the Vaad was to document and bring the Rebbe's words to the world. We did this in its original form until Chof Zayin Adar, with the focus on documenting the Rebbe's *Ma'ayanos*. Since that time, we continue to do the same thing — this is exactly what my mission continues to be until this very day: to bring the Rebbe's words to as many people as possible in all corners of the world, with the focus on *yafutzu* and *chutza* — wide distribution to the farthest outskirts.

While we do the work of *yafutzu* reaching *chutza*, I cannot wait for Moshiach to come, when I'll be excited to go straight back to being a *chozer* and *maniyach*, remembering and writing down the *Torah chadasha* of new *farbrenge*s,

Amen. May we be *zoche b'karov* *mash*. Thank you Rabbi Jacobson!



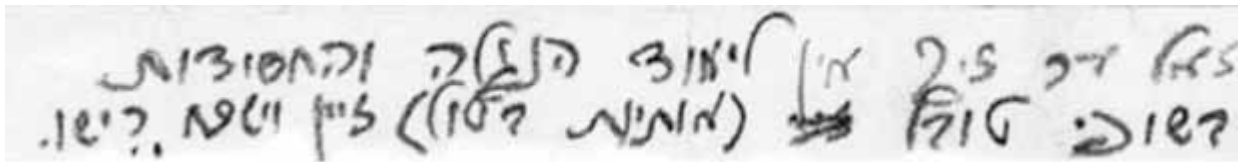
Rabbi Jacobson (left) at work in the Vaad's office

The Rebbe's *Ksav Yad*



לימוד התורה

This ksav yad kodesh is the Rebbe's written response to a bochur who wrote that his spiritual situation gives him no rest:



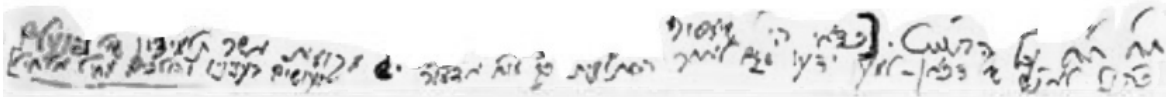
זאל ער זיך אין לימוד הנגלה והחסידות בשופי טובל (אותיות בטול) זיין וישכח רישו

You should immerse [toivel] yourself in abundant study of nigleh and Chassidus ([טובל] having the same letters as בטול); and you will forget your [spiritual] poverty.

שליחות

After a visit abroad in 5726, Reb Yehoshua Pinson wrote a letter to the Rebbe, recounting the progress the Shluchim in Milan, Italy were making with the locals; the incredible growth in the educational institutions in Kfar Chabad; and Lubavitch's purchase of a building to accommodate the growing student-body in London, England.

Here is the Rebbe's handwritten response:



ת"ח על הבשו"ט. [כדאי הי' שימסור כהנ"ל לאנ"ש שי' דכאן - למען ידעו שגם אחרי הסתלקות כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר יש מקומות אשר תלמידיו שי' פועלים ועושים בעניניו והולכים מחיל אל חיל]

Many thanks for the good reports. [It would be worthwhile to inform the above to the Anash here – so they should know that even after the passing of the Frierdiker Rebbe there are locations where his students Sheyichyu perform and accomplish in his activities, and are intensifying from strength to strength].