



The Hanachos: An Insider's Perspective

RABBI SIMON JACOBSON
Vaad Hanachos Hatmimim

Recollections From Hanhalah

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Foreword

In collaboration with the *Hanachos* program taking place now in *mesivtas*, we are pleased to present to you “*Hanachos*” — a weekly magazine designed to enrich this program.

Each week we will feature the column “*Hanachos: An Insider’s Perspective*,” personally interviewing one of the *manichim*. We are honored to have interviewed Rabbi Simon Jacobson for the first edition of this weekly magazine. From the planned twenty minute interview that lasted well over an hour and half, to his extensive editing — we cannot thank him enough.

The top three *hanachos* from each week will be prominently featured as well. This week we are proud to present the *hanachos* of the *Tmimim* Menachem Mendel Gurarie, Yossi Kogan and Meir Twersky.

As we approach the day of Gimmel Tammuz — the inspiration for the launch of “*Hanachos*” — and we yearn to be back with the Rebbe again *b’gashmiyus*, we will feature the weekly column “Recollections from Hanhalah.” We are grateful to Rabbi Zalman Kaplan, who made the time to be interviewed for this column despite his very busy schedule this week.

Each week, we will present *kisvei yad kodesh* on the topics shown that week on the *Hanachos* videos. We thank A Chassidisher Derher for this week’s *kisvei yad*. This magazine prominently features images from JEM’s Living Archive, and we express our gratitude to them as well.

We beseech of Hashem that the *Hanachos* initiative will bring closer the day when we will be reunited with the Rebbe, *teikef umiyad mamash*.

The Editors



The Hanachos: an Insider's Perspective

Rabbi Jacobson, thank you for giving us your time for this interview. You were a *chozer* and *maniyach*, and were involved in Vaad Hanachos Hatmimim, and directed it for a number of years. Can you give us some of its background?

Sure. Since the beginning of the Rebbe's *Nesius* in 1950, Reb Yoel Kahan was the chief *chozer* and main writer (*maniyach*) of the Rebbe's Farbrengens. There were always a few bochurim and *anash* that assisted him in this work. As the years went by, and the work became more demanding (and Reb Yoel's time was increasingly demanded by other tasks with which he was charged, chief among them the composition of *Sefer HaErchim*), a group of bochurim, encouraged by the Rebbe, joined Reb Yoel as *chozrim*. This took place in 5726. Around that time they established Vaad Hanachos Hatmimim. Under the tutelage of Reb Yoel, the Vaad was committed to ensuring that all the *hanachos* of the Rebbe's Farbrengens were published in a timely fashion.

As these bochurim got married, new bochurim filled their positions in Vaad Hanachos Hatmimim, and so it continued over the years. I became involved in this work in 5736, and ultimately assumed the position of directing the *mosad* in 5740.

How would they write the Hanachos

— what was the process?

After every Farbrengen Reb Yoel and a group of mostly bochurim and some *anash* would gather together in what was called *chazara* - reviewing the *sichos* and *maamar* the Rebbe delivered in that respective Farbrengen. This was uniquely challenging after a Shabbos or Yom Tov Farbrengen, which was not recorded or written down. It therefore required a few brilliant minds to memorize almost verbatim and then reconstruct the Farbrengen. Reb Yoel would usually lead the

review with the assistance of the few *chozrim*. Others would also participate — essentially everyone could interject with their input, helping create an oral record of the Farbrengen. During *chazara* a few people took notes. Then the difficult process of researching and writing the *hanacha* would begin. This was done by the main *maniyach*, who worked from memory, assisted by the notes taken during *chazara*. He would then give the draft to others for review and comments. Often certain points



Chazara on motzo'ei Rosh Hashana 5740



Rabbi Jacobson at a Farbrengen, 5736

were clarified by the Rebbe. After a few days the final annotated *hanacha* was published. (*Hanacha* means to “set down” — to commit to paper and document the Rebbe’s words).

Whom were these *bochurim* that directed the Vaad?

The Vaad began in 5726, inspired by Rabbi Nosson (Noske) Wolf. The Vaad consisted of the *temimim* and *chozrim*: Rabbis Leibel Schapiro, Shlomo Zarchi, Efraim Piekarski and Sholom Ber Levitin.

Rabbi Shapiro, with the help of Rabbi Avrohom Gerlitzky, continued to write *hanachos* until around 5733. Around 5731, Rabbi Yosef Hecht joined the effort. After 5733, as the “old guard” moved on, different bochurim attempted to continue running the Vaad. Around 5735, a new group of bochurim assumed the leadership of the Vaad and revived its work by beginning to publish all the *farbrengens* in an organized and consistent manner. The new Vaad, led by Rabbis Dovid Feldman and Tzvi Grunblatt from 5735 - 5740, included Rabbis Dovid Olidort, Sholom Chari-tonow, Moshe Wolberg, Hirschel

Notik and others.

Throughout the years, various bo-churim were always involved and helpful in different capacities — from the writing, research and annotating to the gashmius’dike needs: collecting dedications, printing, subscriptions and distribution.

How did you get involved in the Vaad?

After studying in Morristown, I came to 770 in the middle of 5736 at the age of 18. I was deeply intrigued by the entire *chazara* and *hanacha* process, so I began attending and participating in the *chazara*. At the time, I also secured myself a great spot at the Farbrengen, standing directly across from the Rebbe.

As I mentioned, a number of bo-churim would be present during *chazara*, and some would chime in if they felt they had something to add or correct. Slowly, I became more and more involved in the *chazaras*, getting better at it, and in time I began helping in reviewing the Farbrengens being prepared by the people working in the Vaad. In the year 5740, after Rabbi Dovid Feldman got married, I became

the head of the Vaad and the main writer of the *sichos*. I wrote my first official complete *hanacha* for Shabbos Parshas Miketz 5740.

New members joined the Vaad in the subsequent years, including Rabbi Aaron Leib Raskin, Meir Ossey, Alter Tenenbaum, Chaim Abrahams, Boruch Jacobson, Zev Cadaner, Yossi Lew, and others.

How did the Vaad develop after that?

In the next few years, technologies (such as the word processor and fax machines) made it possible to enhance and speed up the process of producing and distributing the *farbrengens*. We were the first in Chabad to purchase a computer (with the Rebbe’s encouragement and blessing).

After I married in 5743, the Vaad decided to establish itself on firmer ground to ensure consistency, and I was offered a position — the first time the Vaad was run by someone who wasn’t a bochur. The great philanthropists Rabbi Berel Weiss and Rabbi Zalman Deitsch supported us. And that’s when the Rebbe instructed the Vaad to incorporate as a legal organization.



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 Chaye 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 *farbrengen*. I wouldn't travel, go to camp, or go to the mountains in the summer — I was always at the *farbrengens*.

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 *farbrengens*.

Would you also attend the *farbrengens* when you studied in Morristown?

Yes. Whenever there was a *farbrengen*, 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 *farbrengens*,

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



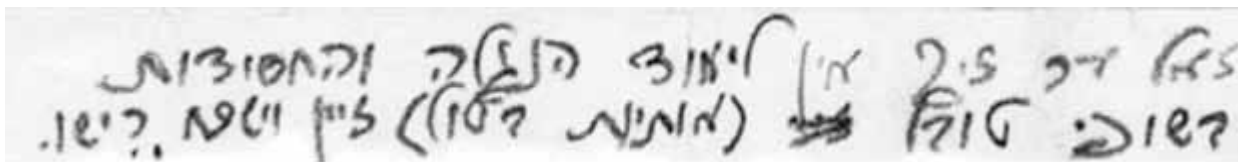
Rabbi Jacobson (left) at work in the Vaad's office

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:



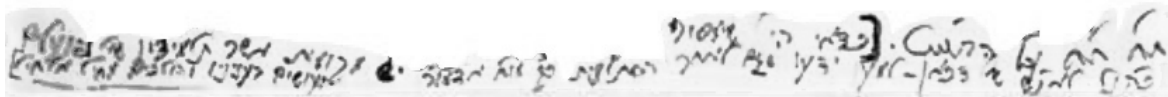
זאל ער זיך אין לימוד הנגלה והחסידות בשופי טובל (אותיות בטול) זיין וישכח רישו

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].

SHIUR ALEF

שם: מנחם זוראר

Spoke earlier about *loshon hora* the way to give a *shema* is through *shema* and *shema* is because it's meant to be a *shema* (and *shema* covers the world) the *shema* who want to go on *shema* during the *shema* (called "vacation" meant to be used for *shema*) a good *shema* is to have *shema* *shema* in *shema* and *shema* and when you come to get a place to go you should go with a note from *shema* *shema* *shema* about how *shema* in *shema* *shema*. Also when you want a *shema* a good *shema* (not *shema*) is *shema* a *shema* for a birthday for a *shema* in *shema* any *shema* or *shema* a *shema* *shema* can with a note *shema* or *shema* how *shema* in *shema* *shema* we don't want to hold anyone back but *shema* are with *shema* need to *shema* the one giving the *shema* (he are giving because he only a *shema*) get *shema* a lot of *shema* is in covering ground and *shema*. saying this *shema* in a *shema* which is being publicized so that everyone can know this *shema*. And *shema* that it should be done *shema* and *shema* *shema* and *shema* and then *shema* all the *shema* and fulfilling the *shema* *shema* and the rest of the *shema* which after *shema* we have the *shema* of *shema*.

ה'תשנ"ח There is a דבר that people want to come for
ה'תשנ"ח to give good wishes personally know it's says celebrate with family
ה'תשנ"ח have to make sure the coming words disturb the
ה'תשנ"ח of ל"ה and especially the פ"ח. ה'תשנ"ח that it should
fulfil all the פ"ח, now it's in ה'תשנ"ח and ה'תשנ"ח

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Recollections from Hanhalah

Growing up in Eretz Yisroel, what were your experiences in regards to *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe?

My father was the Rebbe's Shliach to Tzfas, so as children, we knew that our life's purpose and the reason we lived where we lived was to fulfil the Rebbe's shlichus. We truly experienced the meaning of living with the Rebbe — and the Rebbe being the center of our lives — although we had not yet seen the Rebbe *bigashmiyus*. We would enthusiastically listen to every detail when someone came back from a trip to the Rebbe and described what he had seen and heard. Whenever the Rebbe spoke about a new *mivtza*, we would hear about it from our parents or teachers, and would immediately act upon it. For example, I remember that when the Rebbe said that everyone should have a *mashpia* (on Purim 5747), we as well - even as little children - went and appointed for ourselves a *mashpia*. The *hiskashrus* of today's generation has much in common with ours at that time.

When was the first time you came to the Rebbe? Can you tell us about it?

My father would try each year to bring a different child to the Rebbe. I was *zoche* for my turn to be *l'kavod* 10 Shevat 5750, when I was 9 years old. I was young, and didn't really know what to expect, but I remember the tremendous excitement I felt knowing that I was finally going to see the Rebbe with my own eyes. All of my friends joined in the excitement — in our community, whenever someone went to the Rebbe, it was a cause for excitement for everyone.

What was it like to see the Rebbe for the first time?

My father positioned me at the doorway downstairs where the Rebbe would enter the Shul, so that I would be able to see the Rebbe as soon as he would walk in. As soon as I saw the Rebbe I immediately said *She'hechiyanu*, and, if I remember correctly, the Rebbe answered "Amen". what can I say ... How can I describe that moment ... Even as a child it was tremendously overwhelming ... I remember feeling to myself

"*az dos is dos*," this is what it's all about. There are really no words to describe that moment.

What was it like to be at your first Farbrengen? Were you able to understand?

I was young, and my Yiddish wasn't perfect, so it was difficult for me to understand, but the whole environment — and just looking at the Rebbe — took me over. On the one hand I felt a *tzima'on* to be able to understand more — I was looking forward to the time when I would finally be able to stand at the *farbrengen* and understand what the Rebbe was saying. On the other hand, I felt a tremendous feeling of happiness to be together with all the Chassidim listening to the Rebbe at the *farbrengen*.

One special moment at the *farbrengen* was when the Rebbe asked that all the guests should say *l'echaim*. I was given a *l'echaim*, and it was a moment during which I felt a true personal connection, as the Rebbe was addressing me directly.

In those years, many children would sit near the Rebbe on the

floor. Is that where you sat?

No, I didn't sit with the children. I had some older cousins who were *bochurim* at the time, and I stood with them.

However, by *davening* I had a very special place. The *gabbai* of 770, Reb Yehoshua Pinson, was a relative of mine, and my father arranged with him that I would be permitted to stand near the Rebbe. I was *zoiche* to stand right by the Rebbe's *bima* during some of those *tefillas*.

That must have been very special. Can you describe the feeling?

I was literally standing right between the Rebbe and the *chazan*. When the Rebbe would look at the *chazan*, he would be looking at me as well. That was really special. This was another moment during which I felt that despite there being thousands of *chassidim*, I had my own personal connection with the Rebbe.

This is something that is important for *Bochurim* to know today. Lubavitch is so big, and the Rebbe is so great, but each one of us has a very personal connection as well. This was truly the reality then, just as it is now. Each of us had moments during which we knew that the Rebbe was looking at us — individually.

Are there any other special *zichronos* that stand out from this trip?

Yes. My father was very involved with the Lubavitcher *mosdos* in Eretz Yisroel. In honor of Yud Shevat, a special album of the activities of Lubavitch was prepared, and my father had the *zechus* — together with his good friend Reb Yossel Gutnik — to present the album to the Rebbe. They also prepared a compilation of congratulatory letters from various Israeli officials: the



Rabbi Kaplan and his father receive a dollar from the Rebbe, 16 Shevat 5750

Prime Minister, the President, and so on.

After Mincha, my father and Reb Yossel stood in *Gan Eden Hatachton*, right outside the Rebbe's room, and I had the *zechus* to stand with them as well. When the Rebbe came back from *Mincha*, they presented the album and the letters to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe started to say a few words of *brachos*. It turned out to be more like a short *sicha*, as the Rebbe spoke for approximately five minutes. The Rebbe was *meyaches* to the letters that they had brought, and it was clear to them that these letters had brought the Rebbe much *nachas*.

I remember standing there and looking at the Rebbe's room — the door was open — and in my mind I was overwhelmed. I saw *sefarim* piled up everywhere, and I was contemplating what it means that this is the personal room of the *Nossi Hador*.

And then something occurred that affected me very powerfully then, and does until today. As soon as the Rebbe walked into his room and closed the door, my father literally

jumped on Reb Yossel Gutnik and gave him a huge hug. My father wasn't a very emotional man, but here he was just overcome with emotion by seeing the great *nachas ruach* he had given the Rebbe.

This struck me very powerfully. I realized that the greatest achievement in a *chossid's* life is when he knows that he has brought the Rebbe *nachas*, for it is then that he knows that he's fulfilling the purpose for which he was created; he knows he's on the right track. That *derher* guides me until today.

Wow! That's so special. Did you come to the Rebbe any other times before Gimmel Tammuz?

Yes. I came for Tishrei 5754, shortly before my Bar Mitzvah. This trip was a mixture of emotions as I'm sure you can imagine.

Did you get to see the Rebbe during Tishrei?

It was arranged a few times during Tishrei that groups of children and *bochurim* would walk past the Rebbe's room to say "*gut yom tov*" to the Rebbe. Being that I was just



Rabbi Kaplan davening by the Rebbe's place, 17 Shevat 5750

under *bar mitzva*, I managed to get into both groups, so I had the *zechus* to pass by the Rebbe quite a few times that month. I remember a very strong, serious look on the Rebbe's face, and it was clear to us that the Rebbe was receiving much *nachas ruach* from seeing us children. The Rebbe looked at each one of us until we left the room.

That must have been very special to personally wish the Rebbe “gut yom tov”.

I can tell you that those “*gut yom tovs*” from us children were unlike any “*gut yom tov*” we’ve ever said. We said those words and we really meant them.

The last time I went by that Tishrei — which ended up being the last time I was *zoche* to see the Rebbe — was very emotional for me, even at such a young age. During that particular time it was very noticeable to me that the Rebbe was in physical

pain. I walked by and wished the Rebbe “*gut yom tov*” as usual, and then exited the room. But as soon as I walked outside, my emotions overwhelmed me, and I started crying. I was crying because I saw the pain the Rebbe had, and I was crying because I merited — in this situation — to wish the Rebbe “*gut yom tov*”.

And then came Gimmel Tammuz

...

Being a Bochur those first years after Gimmel Tammuz was very hard for us. We had a tremendous feeling of *lama nigora*. We were the first bochurim to grow up without being able to see the Rebbe.

However, because of this, we realized that we would need to put in effort to be able to experience that which bochurim always experienced. I remember the strong satisfaction I had the first time I

followed a full 40-minute *maamar* of the Rebbe. We prepared by learning the *farbrengen* in advance, and then we listened to the *farbrengen*. I remember feeling that we are still able to listen to a *farbrengen*, just as it was always done.

I guess you can somewhat relate to bochurim today, then.

I think that with just a little effort all of this can be experienced today as well. Before Gimmel Tammuz, experiencing the Rebbe came much more naturally. But nowadays, specifically because being a *chasid* demands effort, it becomes very real and *pnimiyusdik*. But in truth, no words can justify nor explain the situation in which we are. I hope very soon we’ll be back with the Rebbe again begashmiyus.

Amen! Thank you Rabbi Kaplan for sharing your zichronos with us.





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