

*“I am prepared to devote myself entirely,
body and soul,
to the peulos of the Rebbe Shlit”a.”*

These words written by Reb Zushe Wilmovsky on Rosh Chodesh Elul 5712
portray the unique nature of his dedication to the Rebbe.



Military slogans such as **“Ready for battle,”**
“We are at the front,” and **“One must not sleep,”**
were not just statements but rather part of his conduct—
the conduct of a soldier ready to give entirely,
of himself in any situation.



מוקדש לזכות
הרב התמים הנעלה והמצוי, חבר של וועד התמימים העולמי
הרה"ת ר' שמואל שיחי' גודמן
והכלה המהוללה מרת חי' מושקא שתחי' מן
לרגל חתונתם ביום כ' סיון תשע"ד

The Rebbe's

PARTIZAN

*Horav Hachossid
Reb Chaim Zushe Wilmowsky*

A REMARKABLE ACCOUNT OF A WARRIOR IN THE REBBE'S ARMY

THE MAKING OF A PARTISAN

Reb Chaim Zushe Wilmowsky was born on Daled Nissan, 5682 in Iziom, Russia. When he was two years old his family moved to Salz, Poland, where his father was appointed to serve as the town rov and av beis din.

When WWII broke out and the Russians occupied the region, all yeshivos were closed down. In order to be able to continue his studies, young Zushe stole across the border into Lita where he enrolled in the famous Baranovich yeshiva headed by Reb Elchanan Dov Wasserman.

However, when the Germans conquered Lita, the yeshiva was forced to wander from town to town, eventually settling down in a village called Samilishok, where the bochurim took up lodgings by various Jewish homes. Reb Zushe stayed by a family in which the woman of the house made a living by sewing clothing. Among her customers were high ranking German officers.

Late one evening, Reb Zushe entered the house and saw the family hurriedly packing up their belongings. They told him that one of the German officers, who often patronized the family sewing shop, had informed them that an *aktion* was planned for early the next morning, and all of the town's Jews were to be rounded up and shot in the nearby forest.

The family insisted that Reb Zushe join them but he refused. Evading the German patrols, he spent the entire night going from house to house to warn the town's Jews of the impending doom, urging them to flee immediately. Only as dawn arrived did Reb Zushe himself make his escape.

His wanderings took him to Belorussia where he was caught by the Nazis and sent to the Lida ghetto. Eventually the ghetto was liquidated and its inhabitants were deported to a nearby work camp. While there, Reb Zushe met up with his old chavrusa from yeshiva and together they escaped the

camp and joined a group of partisans headed by a man named Tuvia Bielski.

Otriad Bielski, as it was called, was part of a large network of partisan groups in Belorussia. Unlike most other groups, it was focused more on saving Jewish lives from the ghettos and camps rather than attacking Germans. As a result, the group mainly consisted of regular civilians (often entire families), as opposed to other groups that were generally made up of fighters.

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE



REB ZUSHE RECEIVES KOS SHEL BROCHA FROM THE REBBE ON MOTZEI ROSH HASHONA 5747, THE LAST TIME BEFORE HE PASSED AWAY.

Reb Zushe became involved in the rescue efforts, selflessly risking his life time and time again. In addition, he often partook in perilous scouting expeditions and always offered to go out ahead of the others.

After the war's end, Reb Zushe ended up in an Italian

D.P. camp where he met a Lubavitcher chossid by the name of Zalman Levin. The two became very close friends and through Reb Zalman, Reb Zushe was exposed to Chassidus, and over a period of time, he became a chossid himself.

Eventually they made their way to Eretz Yisrael where they both enrolled in the Achei T'mimim yeshiva in Tel Aviv. Although Reb Zushe was already 25, considerably older than the rest of the talmidim, he nevertheless threw himself into his learning with great zeal, making up for the lost years of the war.

More importantly, Reb Zushe now had the opportunity to further explore the world of Chassidus, under the tutelage of the renowned mashpia Reb Chaim Shaul Brook.

REB ZUSHE CALMLY REPLIED THAT PERMISSION HAD BEEN GRANTED BY THE LOCAL MILITARY GOVERNOR.

He began to write regularly to the Frierdiker Rebbe and received many letters of encouragement and guidance.

At one point, the Frierdiker Rebbe inquired about Reb Zushe's character. Reb Moshe Gurarie A"h, who was spending a few months in 770 during the year 5708, was approached by the Rebbe who showed him a note from the Frierdiker Rebbe, inquiring after the character of Reb Zushe. Reb Moshe recalled everything he knew about the young man and when he finished, the Rebbe immediately went upstairs to relay the information to the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Early on, Reb Zushe stood out as a very energetic and talented individual and he displayed a tremendous knack for askanus haklal (public activism). In 5709, a group of Anash families arrived in Lod from the Soviet Union and Reb Zushe decided the time had come to establish a yeshiva for the children of families who had recently settled in Eretz Yisrael.

One day he visited Lod and came across an abandoned three-story building that used to serve as a small motel. In his eyes it seemed to be perfectly suited for a yeshiva so he purchased a heavy lock and installed it on the building, thereby making the acquisition "official." Soon enough a full-fledged yeshiva was underway.

A couple of weeks later, two agency officials visited the building and were shocked to find that the building which they were planning on using as an absorption center for young immigrant couples had somehow turned into a yeshiva.

They were directed to Reb Zushe's office and upon inquiring where he had received authorization to use the building, Reb Zushe calmly replied that permission had been granted by the local military governor. When they requested to see the papers he told them that the documents were kept in another building and if they would follow him, he would gladly show them. He got up and began to walk out of his office, indicating for them to follow but, hearing his confident tone and seeing his readiness to bring the documents, they assumed he was telling the truth and left.

Thus the central "Tomchei T'mimim" yeshiva of Lod was established. Reb Zushe began travelling to raise the necessary funds for the new yeshiva. He would deliver fiery addresses in shuls, urging the people to donate, and, more importantly, to send their children to the yeshiva.

During the first few months, Reb Zushe received many horaos and much encouragement from the Frierdiker Rebbe. In a letter dated Erev Rosh Hashanah, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote to him:

"...I have read with great pleasure of your dedicated work for the yeshiva in Lod and that b'ezras Hashem you are successful..."

Within a few short years the yeshiva grew to include over two hundred talmidim.

RESHET

During the first few years following the Independence war, hundreds of thousands of immigrants poured in to Eretz Yisroel from many





ON THE BATTLEFIELD, REB ZUSHE POSES FOR A PICTURE WITH FELLOW RESERVES.

MILITARY MISSION

In the year 5730, during the War of Attrition, the Rebbe charged Reb Tuvia Peles with a special shlichus. He was to travel with Reb Zushe to all the army bases positioned along the borders (Suez, Golan etc.) and he should say that the Rebbe has personally sent him to visit them and to give over my best wishes and brachos for success. In addition he was to distribute mashke.

The Rebbe also told him that whoever served in the army and wanted a pair of tefillin would receive a pair paid for by the Rebbe and the general costs of the entire mitvza would be covered by the Rebbe as well. He was to go together with a few other Chasidim and if possible, they should be permitted to wear uniform.

The first person Reb Tuvia turned to was Reb Zushe who in turn recruited two other yungerleit. Reb Shimon Bekerman relates:

“Reb Zushe tried convincing me to join and at first I was reluctant. He didn’t give up very easily and at one point I told him that I had received a reserve duty notice for the month of Tishrei and due to the circumstances, it didn’t seem like I would be successful in pushing it off. Jokingly, I said that if he would arrange for it to be pushed off to the next month, I would take part in the mitvza. Surprisingly Reb Zushe agreed and within a short time he returned with a promise that I wouldn’t be drafted until after Tishrei. I knew not to ask questions on Reb Zushe...

“We travelled from base to base, bringing mashke for the soldiers and distributing coins to be given to tzedakah. Many bought a pair of tefillin and Reb Zushe enlivened the soldiers in his special way. The entire project was a tremendous success.

“After Rosh Hashanah I presented myself at the draft office and requested for my reserve duty be delayed until after the month. They told me that it was impossible. Although Reb Zushe had never told me what he had done, I was adamant and insisted that there was a special command not to recruit me. Sure enough after searching through my files they found a telegram from the Southern Command expressly pushing off my recruitment until after the yomim tovim...”

In a report to the Rebbe covering just two days of peulos, Reb Zushe writes that within that time they had managed to sell fifty eight pairs of tefillin!

countries, including tens of thousands of Jews from Yemen. The Yemenites were made to live in specially made transit camps set up by the government, which consisted of tents and broken down shacks. They suffered from cold and hunger but the hardships they were made to endure were far greater. The leftist politicians in the government did all they could to remove any vestige of yiddishkeit from their lives.



REB ZUSHE IN A LIVELY TENTZEL IN THE ZAL OF 770, WHILE SPENDING TISHREI WITH THE REBBE.

Through false promises, threats and sometimes even with force, the immigrants underwent a compulsory assimilation of sorts.

The Jewish world was not silent, nor was Lubavitch. In a letter from Teves, 5710, the Rebbe mentions that a number of meetings were held in the presence of the Friediker Rebbe where the matter was discussed at length.

Reb Zushe threw himself into the task of saving these immigrants from their plight. Together with a handful of askanim, he snuck into the camps, often digging under the barbed wire fences to gain entrance, and brought hope and encouragement to these Jews. His primary goal was to ensure that the children received a proper Jewish education, and through his efforts, over one thousand Yemenite children were enrolled into religious schools. He even brought some of them back with him to the Lubavitch yeshiva in Lod.

At one point Reb Zushe wanted to establish a network of schools dedicated specifically to the education of these children, of which he wrote to the Rebbe. The Rebbe responded to his suggestion in a letter dated Hei Tammuz, 5711. To begin with, the Rebbe expressed his surprise that Reb Zushe had not planned on making it an official Chabad institution. Then the Rebbe gave his own suggestion (written in third person):



EXUDING TRUE SIMCHA, REB ZUSHE PLAYS A FLUTE DURING SIMCHAS BEIS HASHOEIVA IN CROWN HEIGHTS.

“Being that he seems capable of playing a main role in establishing mosdos, especially of the type which he has mentioned in his letter, it is worthwhile that he interest himself in establishing mosdos similar to the Reshet (network) of educational institutions established in Morocco named after my father-in-law, Oholei Yosef Yitzchak Lubavitch. These mosdos range in level from teaching aleph beis to training school teachers and future rabbonim.”

The Rebbe wrote to various chassidim who were wary of a young man being given such important tasks and positions, and encouraged them to take advantage of Reb Zushe’s talent and initiative. In one letter, the Rebbe writes, “Surely you are aware that I am corresponding with Horav Chaim Zushe Wilmovsky, who appears to be a very energetic individual, and I have already received from him a few proposals regarding the establishment of a Reshet Oholei Yosef Yitzchak Lubavitch.”

Reb Zushe threw himself into the new objective and within a short time, four divisions were established in which the children studied limudei kodesh in the afternoons.

The Rebbe very much wanted that the new mosdos should be recognized by the government and at the same time not to be associated with any political party, something which was a near impossible feat at the time. But Reb Zushe paid a visit to the head of the education department and, with a dose of ingenuity, managed to procure the necessary papers.

At first, Reb Zushe served as the director of the Reshet. Eventually, though, the position was taken over by Reb Dovid Chanzin, while Reb Zushe continued to serve on the board of directors, a position to which he gave himself over, heart and soul. He paid frequent visits to the schools scattered throughout Eretz Yisroel and assisted the teachers in many areas. He would often visit government offices in order to secure funds and buildings for the growing institutions.

Reb Zushe would customarily visit every school before Tishrei and have all the children write letters to the Rebbe. After Tishrei he would return to distribute the lekach the Rebbe had sent for them.

During those first few years, in addition to his work for the Yeshiva and the Reshet, he also established the N’shei Chabad organization of Eretz Yisrael in 5712.



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE

ON THE WAY TO SPEND TISHREI WITH THE REBBE IN THE YEAR 5737, A LIVELY DANCE BROKE OUT ON THE AIRPLANE.

HAFOTZAS HAMAYANOS

From the very beginning of Dor Hashvii the Rebbe placed a large emphasis on the printing and dissemination of sifrei Chassidus in shuls and yeshivos as a great way of strengthening limud HaChassidus and Hafotzas Hamayanos. Somehow, despite the Rebbe's insistent urgings, it took a few years for this project to really take shape in Eretz Yisrael.

In 5713, an opportunity arose that allowed a large container of Kehos publications to be shipped to Eretz Yisrael for very cheap. It was during the cold war and the U.S. government was offering to subsidize the dissemination of books that espoused content adversative to the Communist regime. Lubavitch jumped on the idea and received a large subsidy on seforim sent to Eretz Yisrael, thereby allowing them to be sold very cheaply.

When the seforim finally reached Eretz Yisrael the Rebbe renewed his demand that the chassidim involve themselves in their dissemination, but again, much time passed and the seforim simply sat in storage.

At last in 5715 Reb Zushe heeded the call and took upon himself this immense project.

It proved to be hard work. Reb Zushe would haul around heavy boxes of seforim and travel to various yeshivos by way of public transportation, but it was well worth it and the results were encouraging. Even the roshei yeshiva and mashgichim of the distinctly misnagdishe yeshivos would approach Reb Zushe secretly and request to buy sifrei Chassidus. It even became noticeable that many of the mussar talks delivered in those yeshivos from then on were based on concepts in Chassidus!

He once explained how he had managed to befriend these Roshei Yeshiva.

"I would attend the general shiurim and I had a dilemma: on one hand, if I would sit quietly everyone would say that in Lubavitch they do not know how to learn. On the other hand, to interject and bring up difficulties in the rosh yeshiva's words would be deemed improper and counter-productive to my objective. So instead I took a different approach—every time I was able to find a supporting proof to his points, I made sure to bring it up, thus showing that in Lubavitch they know very well how to learn and at the same time, making the rosh yeshiva quite pleased that he had an ardent supporter in the crowd. It worked like a charm."

In addition, Reb Zushe took advantage of the fact that he was previously a

REB ZUSHE OVERSEES THE SEDER OF THE GUESTS WHO WERE SPENDING TISHREI WITH THE REBBE IN THE YEAR 5738.

talmid of Reb Elchanan Dov Wasserman. He would tell of his days in the Baranovich yeshiva and talk with the roshei yeshiva in learning.

KFAR CHABAD

Over the years, the Rebbe regarded the expansion and development of Kfar Chabad as a very important objective.

The first time Reb Zushe came to the Rebbe, in Tishrei of 5721 (on the famous first Charter flight from Eretz Yisroel to New York), he asked the Rebbe in yechidus how he should best continue his many activities. The Rebbe advised him to focus mainly on two things, the first of which was the Reshet and the second was to serve as the secretary of the Committee of Kfar Chabad. Upon his return to Eretz Yisrael, the Rebbe's instruction was duly fulfilled.

Reb Zushe used his new position to improve the welfare of the village and worked tirelessly for its mosdos and residents. He only had to hear that an individual was in need of help, be it a housing problem or a medical issue, and he was always there to offer his assistance.

Reb Zushe accomplished much in terms of the development of Kfar Chabad. For many years the

REB ZUSHE PROMPTLY SAT DOWN IN A CORNER OF THE ROOM AND WROTE A REPORT TO THE REBBE OF THE ENTIRE EPISODE...

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE



dirt roads made transportation very hard within the village and Reb Zushe had them all paved. He even personally went to choose which type of streetlights to install on the main road. When the small, two-room clinic proved insufficient for the growing population, Reb Zushe expended tremendous efforts for the building of a new and large, state-of-the-art clinic.

He greatly expanded the size of the village and over the years, as more and more families left Russia and settled in Kfar Chabad, Reb Zushe became very involved in building new housing complexes for them. The Rebbe gave him specific and detailed instructions including the size of the houses and how many units should be built.

He cultivated large donors and he was often seen leading dignitaries and philanthropists around Kfar Chabad.

MEVAKER

Beginning in 5711 the Rebbe urged Reb Zushe to send detailed du”chos on all that transpired in the Chabad Mosdos.

In 5737 Reb Zushe was appointed as the official Mevaker—an inspector of sorts—of all the Chabad Mosdos and communities throughout Eretz Yisrael, and his written reports to the Rebbe became ever more frequent and detailed. He would arrive in a place and stay for any given time, sometimes up to a few days, encouraging, assisting and pushing into action those who he felt needed it.

Often, he would hang around as one who was just looking to pass the time, with the intent of picking up all the information necessary to report to the Rebbe. Most didn’t even know why he had shown up; those who



REB ZUSHE DELIVERS POWERFUL WORDS TO A GROUP OF CHILDREN.

needed to know were privy to his task. In his spare time he could be seen writing furiously on large sheets of paper and upon being asked what he was writing, he would always reply “military secret.”

There were those who referred to him as the Rebbe’s personal “spy” and the du”chos he wrote so frequently were likened to military intelligence reports.

One year on Yud Gimmel Nissan Reb Zushe showed up to the Tzemach Tzedek shul located in the old city of Yerushalayim. He made his way upstairs and found the door to the shul locked. He came down and entering the small gift shop on the bottom floor he began to berate the yungerman standing behind the counter: “How could it possibly be that on the Yartzeit of the Tzedek Tzedek the shul is locked? There should have been a large farbrengen taking place here.” That said, he withdrew from his pocket the ever present bottle of mashke and invited the young man to join him for a short farbrengen. They said lechaim and Reb Zushe proposed that they learn a few lines of Tanya together, for the Tzemach Tzedek had written hagahos on Tanya. After they had finished, Reb Zushe promptly sat down in a corner of the room and wrote a report to the Rebbe of the entire episode...

Reb Zushe displayed a profound care for the Shluchim. Whenever a shliach accomplished something, big or small, Reb Zushe made sure

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE



REB ZUSHE AT HIS POST DURING THE REBBE’S FARBRENGEN, ENCOURAGING THE SINGING WITH EVERY FIBER OF HIS BEING.



SOMETIMES, WHEN THE REBBE NOTICED HE WASN'T BY THE FARBRENGEN HE WOULD ASK, "WHERE IS MY 'PARTIZAN'?"

to applaud his efforts and encourage him to continue in his avodas hakodesh, often making a point of paying the shliach a personal visit.

There was a point in time when the Rebbe requested that it be arranged for Lubavitch rabbonim to be appointed as official rabbonim of entire cities. Reb Zushe together with Reb Shlomo Maidanchik travelled to various cities to meet with local askanim and city mayors to ensure that the Rebbe's wish would be fulfilled. In addition, Reb Zushe had a close relationship with Rabbi Shlomo Goren, the chief rabbi of Israel at the time. It was often through him that Reb Zushe succeeded in accomplishing in a very short time what usually entailed a process of a few years.

רב פעלים

The accomplishments and initiatives that can be attributed to Reb Zushe are numerous. He played a crucial role in scores of Lubavitch peulos, which included the large Bar Mitzvah celebrations for the children of fallen soldiers, the development of the Beit Sefer L'melacha – the Chabad vocational school in Kfar Chabad and organized Mivtzoim activities on army bases all over Eretz Yisrael. In addition, he executed the yearly distribution of Matzos throughout Eretz Yisrael as part of the Rebbe's Mivtza Matza; he was from the principal organizers of the renowned, annual Yud Tes Kislev farbrengen in Kfar Chabad, which attracted

thousands of yidden from all over, directed the peulos in Miron each year on Lag Baomer, and the list goes on. Moreover, he was also a gifted orator who possessed a knack for inspiring the crowd with his fiery speeches. Few events took place without Reb Zushe delivering an address.

Above all, what really set Reb Zushe apart from the others was his total mesiras nefesh with which he conducted himself. His passion and energy made him virtually unstoppable once he swung into action. He kept his eyes fixed on his goal with a fierce and single-minded determination, never once stopping to reflect on the obstacles that could have appeared in his path, had he paused to consider them. It was precisely this trait that helped him overcome any hurdle, big or small. Reb Zushe was truly the ultimate personification of the well known adage "Lechatchila Ariber."



REB ZUSHE HANDS AN AWARD TO STUDENTS WHO STUDIED IN THE SCHOOLS UNDER THE RESHET.

THE REBBE'S "PARTIZAN"

Reb Zushe consistently travelled to the Rebbe each year for Tishrei and eventually he became somewhat of a fixture in the goings-on of Tishrei in 770. He used to always say that the first hachlata a chossid must make when travelling to the Rebbe is that he will return soon thereafter.

The idea of singing as the Rebbe entered and exited the shul was initiated early on by him, and by Farbrengens he would stand high up on his perch behind the Rebbe and conduct the singing with his hands, a job which he inherited from Reb Hendl Lieberman A"H.

FOCUSED ENERGIES

Greetings and blessings!

In reply to your letter from Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av, together with the enclosed pa"n which will be read by the ohel of my father-in-law, in which he describes the numerous activities he is involved in and the fact that as of now the results of his work are not to his satisfaction:

The answer lies in his own words, that "he has become involved in many things", and therefore it's understandable that he has not been fully involved in any of them....

...It's clear that in the turbulent period of Ikv'sa D'meshicha one must not suffice with dealing in only one area, material or spiritual, but at the same time one must be focused on one objective at a time. As for the rest of his work, he should deal with them minimally [meaning that he should encourage others to get involved in these projects and from time to time, to demand and encourage them to increase their efforts, but he himself should not forget about his main work]. If he will organize himself in the above-said manner he will definitely begin to see increasing

success, not only in his primary tasks but also in those things in which he serves merely as the initiator.

With blessings for good news,

P.S. It's understood that because the situation until now has been that he has initiated many projects and is therefore heavily relied upon, he shouldn't desert everything besides for one or two things all at once. That would cause these projects to collapse for it has become the norm by now for him to carry the burden entirely. Rather he should recruit one or two people suitable for each area and explain to them that he is giving over the responsibility to them because his main work is lacking due to his involvement in each of these other things. One can hope that with time he will be able to find dedicated people suitable for many of these projects who will continue the work in the same manner with which he has been active until now.



INTENSE EMOTION TAKES AHOLD OF REB ZUSHE AS HE STANDS MOMENTS BEFORE ENTERING YECHIDUS.



THE LAST TIME REB ZUSHE MERITED TO RECEIVE PART OF HIS DALED MINIM FROM THE REBBE, DURING TISHREI 5747.

In addition, he was in charge of organizing shiurim for the large crowds of orchim, a responsibility he took very seriously. Beginning in 5741, when the Rebbe initiated simchas beis hashoeiva dancing in the streets of Crown Heights, Reb Zushe would stand on a barrel holding a flute and enliven the dancers for hours on end.

Reb Zushe once wrote to the Rebbe that the month infused him with strength for the entire year to come.

The first time he came to the Rebbe was for the month of Tishrei, 5721. It was also the first time a large and organized group of orchim had come from Eretz Yisrael and Reb Zushe was one of the organizers. A certain litvishe rosh yeshiva with whom he was acquainted challenged the idea by arguing that with the travel fare for seventy people, many yeshivos could be built. Reb Zushe countered “With the strength they draw from their trip, seventy yeshivos could be established...”

During the Farbrengen on the Shabbos prior to Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe said in a sicha:

“Present here is a Yid named Zushe Wilmovsky and he is a partisan. A partisan never takes any issue into account, big or small, but is entirely focused on carrying out the will of the monarchy. Being that there are still a few things that are required before Moshiach’s arrival, the work must be done in the manner of a partisan. Although it may not be the most

orderly way of doing things, it is nevertheless the kavanah.”

Throughout that Farbrengen the Rebbe spoke about the importance of limud hatorah in general and specifically with regard to the orchim that had come for Tishrei. The Rebbe called over Reb Zushe and asked if he would be willing to take on the task of organizing daily shiurim for the orchim, to which Reb Zushe replied in the affirmative. The Rebbe handed him his becher and Reb Zushe drank the wine and returned it to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe then handed him the entire tray of cake and immediately chassidim began to grab pieces off the tray. Reb Zushe was unsure of what to do and he looked helplessly at the Rebbe. The Rebbe proceeded to turn to all sides and in a few short moments the cake was returned to the platter and Reb Zushe began to make his way back to his place. He was trying to squeeze through the benches when the Rebbe suddenly called out to him: “Go straight. I am watching over you.”



This episode was the first time the Rebbe had referred to Reb Zushe with the title “Partizan.” From then on the Rebbe began to use the term more often, at times referring to Reb Zushe as “Mein Partizan.” Sometimes, when the Rebbe noticed he wasn’t by the Farbrengen he would ask, “Where is my ‘Partizan?’” Naturally chassidim began to use the term as well until Reb Zushe became known simply as “The Partizan.”

אבד חסיד

Each year on Erev Chag haSukkos a select group of eltere chassidim, rabbonim and askanim would gather near the Rebbe’s room and merit to receive the Dalem Minim from the Rebbe. Some received a Lulav and others received hadassim and aravos as well.

The Rebbe would prepare a special reshima of what each person would be privileged to receive. After each had received what he was given, they would pass before the Rebbe who stood in the doorway of his holy room. As they passed, the Rebbe would say to each person the following words: “ממשיך זיין אלע המשכות על כל השנה כולה.” Reb Zushe was customarily among this fortunate group.

Erev Chag haSukkos, 5747. That year, when Reb Zushe passed, the Rebbe didn’t recite the customary brachah as he did to the people before and after Reb Zushe. In addition, Reb Zushe only received a lulav, as opposed to other years when he merited hadassim as well. Needless to say, Reb Zushe was heartbroken.

During the first night of Simchas Beis Hashoeiva, Reb Zushe showed up to the dancing unusually late and left uncharacteristically early. He made his way back to 770 and after some time went out to the large sukka in the courtyard. Suddenly he began to feel ill. Those who were present removed his hat and kapote and helped him lie down on a bench, but Reb Zushe immediately got up and, after straightening his clothing, donned his hat and kapote and lay back down. A few moments later it was clear that his soul had left his body.

Although it was in the early hours of the morning, the news spread quickly. No one could believe that the man, who just a few moments before had been energetically encouraging the dancing, was no longer among the living.

Some recalled that two years prior, when Reb Shmaryahu Gurary had passed away in the large shul of 770 on the night of kol nidrei, just a few feet away from the Rebbe, Reb Zushe had commented: “I’m not so particular; for me the king’s courtyard is good enough...”

The levaya left from 770 on the first day of Chol Hamoed Sukkos with thousands of chassidim in attendance. Thus came to a close sixty four years of the devoted chossid, the Rebbe’s “Partizan.”

In the days following Reb Zushe’s passing, after every tefilla, the Rebbe would first turn towards the usual spot where Reb Zushe had always occupied, with a swing of his holy hand, the Rebbe would begin to encourage the singing — exactly as it had been when the ‘Partizan’ was still there. D