



AN
EXCEPTIONAL
SHLIACH

REB ZUSHE POSNER



BY: RABBI SHOLOM POSNER

It was an ordinary night at 770. A few bochurim had gathered together for an informal farbrengen, seeing off their peer as he embarked on a shlichus to Eretz Yisroel. What happened next defied anyone's wildest imagination: The Rebbe notified through his *mazkir* that everyone should remain seated, and that he would join the gathering in another five minutes!

When the Rebbe arrived, he spoke about the importance of shlichus, and the great *zechus* of the shliach who is traveling—one that should be envied and emulated by others.

The shliach we speak of was Reb Zushe Posner. A Tomim from the yeshiva at 770 whom the Rebbe held on a pedestal as an example for his friends and other Chassidim to emulate.

Below is the story of Reb Zushe, collected from various sources.

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לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע
ולזכות הילדה שייגדל תחי'
לרגל יום הולדתה י"ג תמוז

נתרם ע"י ולזכות הוריה
הרה"ת ר' שלום דוב בער
וזוגתו מרת חיה מושקא
שיחיו
שוחאט

Childhood

Zushe was born on 5 Adar 5696, in the city of Elizabeth, NJ. His father, Rabbi Sholom Posner, had learned in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in the town of Lubavitch. He was one of the first Chassidim to have moved to America at the behest of the Frierdiker Rebbe. He and his wife Chaya, were entirely devoted to the Rebbe, a passion they instilled in their children from an early age.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in New York in 5700, the Posners were living in Chicago and were therefore not present. (The family had greeted the Frierdiker Rebbe upon his visit to America in 5689, but Zushe had not yet been born).

As soon as they could barter some of their meager possessions for a train ticket, Reb Sholom traveled to the Frierdiker Rebbe. During that visit, he told the Rebbe that he was entrusting his children to the Rebbe, along with the responsibility that they belong to Yiddishkeit and Lubavitch.

Soon thereafter, the Rebbe established Tomchei Temimim in New York, followed shortly by a Yeshiva Ketana. Reb Sholom immediately transferred his two older sons, Zalman and Laibel, from Yeshiva Torah Vodaas to 770.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe visited Chicago in Shevat 5702, the Posners were entrusted with preparing the Frierdiker Rebbe's meals throughout his stay. Zushe, together with his older sister Kenny, merited to deliver these meals to the Frierdiker Rebbe's hotel room every day.

In the Rebbe's Holy Presence

At the age of ten, Zushe was also sent to study in Tomchei Tmimim. By then, the Yeshiva and dormitory were housed at the corner of Bedford Ave. and Dean St., a 25-minute walk from 770. It was rare for a *bochur* to make the trek to 770 in those days. The Frierdiker Rebbe's *minyán* and *farbrengens* were not open to the public, and it was difficult for a *bochur* to gain entry. The "main shul" primarily served the *bale-batim* of Crown Heights—a community of nice, frum, upper-class, beardless American Jews. The Chassidim that did live in New



REB ZUSHE AS A YOUNG BOY WITH HIS PARENTS AND SIBLINGS IN PITTSBURGH IN THE LATE 5700'S.
LEFT TO RIGHT: ZUSHE POSNER, ZALMAN POSNER, CHAYA POSNER, BASSIE GARELIK, SARA RIVKA SASONKIN, LAIBEL POSNER, SHOLOM POSNER, AND KENNY DEREN.

York were mostly in Brownsville (about a half hour's walk from 770) and davened in the various *shtiblach* of their neighborhood.

The *bochurim* drew their *chayus* from the fortunate times they could successfully squeeze their way into the Frierdiker Rebbe's presence.

Another highlight of his Yeshiva years was spending time around the older *bochurim*. At that time, refugee *bochurim* from Tomchei Tmimim in Poland began arriving in America via China.

These *bochurim* who had lost their entire families "adopted" the few younger *bochurim* who would hang around 770. Zushe related, "I became their younger brother, replacing one who was killed by the Germans. *Der Aibershter hot mir geholfen* (with Hashem's help) people liked me, and so they adopted me."

These *bochurim* taught Zushe how to speak Yiddish and showered him with stories of Lubavitch from bygone times. They recounted how unique individuals came to Lubavitch, how Reb Yehuda Eber started the "Seder Niggunim" in Otwock, how the *bochurim* escaped the Nazi advance with Hashem's mercy, and also stories from

Chassidim of previous generations.

Stories would always hold a special place in Zushe's heart; he saw it as a personal responsibility to transmit the history of Lubavitch.

A New Era

One Shabbos—Yud Shevat 5710, Zushe's life, along with the lives of all Chabad Chassidim, changed dramatically. Zushe recounted those events from his unique experience.

There were Shabbosim that I did come to 770, Shabbosim that I didn't come. This Shabbos I came. I come into the Shul, and the Shul is empty, empty. I take a look at the clock, I remember it was 8:17 when I came into 770.

I came with my brother Leibel and he went into the small classroom² and did whatever he did and I'm walking around, a fourteen year old kid walking around to see what's happening. Somebody told me to go upstairs. In those days, you don't go upstairs just like that, the door is locked! But I went up and the door was open.

A guy was standing near the door on the left side (then I found out that it's a bedroom) and I saw the [Friediker] Rebbe laying on the floor, his body covered. Rebbetzin Nechama Dina was sitting by the window with her arm on the windowsill holding her forehead. No one else was there.

I didn't really grasp what was happening. I said some Tehillim for 10–15 minutes, but for how long can a kid say Tehillim? So I started wandering around the apartment.

Sholom Ber Eichorn (a helper in the Friediker Rebbe's house) saw me and said "Zushe, do me a favor, go to Brownsville and tell everyone to come."

I went downstairs to get my winter jacket and was ready

YECHIDUS WITH THE FRIEDIKER REBBE

Zushe merited to be in *yechidus* with the Friediker Rebbe several times, where he witnessed and experienced the Friediker Rebbe's holiness firsthand.

As a young child, while in *yechidus* with his family, Zushe accidentally knocked over the inkwell on the table. His mortified mother was furious with him, but the Friediker Rebbe calmed her down.

Normally, it was difficult to understand the Friediker Rebbe's speech. Reb Sholom would have to repeat the Friediker Rebbe's words to the rest of the family, and when he wasn't present, one of the *mazkirim* would "translate." Nonetheless, Zushe remembered two occasions where the Friediker Rebbe spoke with such force that every word was heard clearly.

The first: Zushe was born with a defect in his arm. The Friediker Rebbe once called him over to place his hand on the desk. Putting his own arm on Zushe's, the Friediker Rebbe said, "*du zulst hobben, un du vest hubben, a gezunten hartz*" (you should have, and you will have, a healthy heart).

The second: Zushe's oldest brother, Zalman, had just returned from a long *shlichus* in Europe. His mother hoped he could return to his studies, despite the financial burden they would endure, but the Friediker Rebbe planned for him to open a branch of Achei Temimim in Springfield, Mass. The Friediker Rebbe replied, "*Di velt zugt, frier lernt men, nach dem geit men arois in velt. Un ich zug, men geit arois in velt, un men lernt!*" (The world says that one first learns and then goes out into the world. I say that one should go out into the world and learn there!)

The Posners last *yechidus* with the Friediker Rebbe took place on 6 Kislev 5710, in honor of two weddings they were making back-to-back.



THE REBBE SEATED WITH THE FRIEDIKER REBBE AT THE DINNER FOR YESHIVAS TOMCHEI TEMIMIM, 7 ADAR II 5703.

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to leave, but my brother Leibel stopped me and asked, “Where are you going?” We had already been in 770 for a half hour and he still didn’t find out what had happened!

I told him Eichorn asked me to go to Brownsville to tell the guys to come. He told me not to go. “Ay, the Rebbe has to say Maftir today (the Rebbe was going to get maftir in honor of the Yahrzeit of his mother and grandmother). Sholom Ber’s too lazy to go to Brownsville, so he’s sending you instead.”

I don’t remember exactly what I said, but he was very distraught by what I said and he finally understood what had happened. He sat down and began crying.

I walked the half hour to Brownsville, going from shul to shul, calling all the Chassidim to 770. In one of the shuls that I went into, Rabbi Mentlick had just been given an

aliya, but he didn’t go up to the Torah. He took his coat, walked out, and went to 770.

We came back to 770. It was about ten-thirty, eleven o’clock. It’s Yud Shevat, but you still have to daven. I remember Kriyas HaTorah. Both the Rebbe and Rashag were given aliya.

I remember the contrast: when Rashag got an aliya, his eyes were red and bulgy from crying. On the Rebbe we didn’t see anything externally. You’re not allowed to cry on Shabbos, and the Rebbe is a Shulchan Aruch Yid.

Motzei Shabbos people began coming in; there was much chaos and confusion. I went to my apartment to sleep. In the morning I came back to 770. The building itself was locked, but outside, thousands of people were waiting for the levaya to begin—Eastern Parkway was packed.

On both sides of the walkway from 770 to the sidewalk, there were police standing, telling everyone to stand back and give proper honor for the funeral... As soon as the door opened, it was a rachmanus on the police. The people just jumped over, and that was that.

They got the aron down to the sidewalk and then they were supposed to turn left to Brooklyn Avenue. Two motorcycle policemen were starting the exhaust so that people would move back. There were hundreds of people standing there, so both motorcycles gave up and the people remained there and kept on going.

They brought the aron into a car that would take it to the cemetery, and everyone else got onto buses. As far as I remember, the Rebbe was on the same bus that I was on. He was on the right side, I was on the left side. We stopped by the Yeshiva at Bedford and Dean, and he didn’t get off the bus. I seem to recall that everyone else got off the bus, but the Rebbe did not. We then continued to the cemetery. By a levaya you’re supposed to say Yoshev B’Seser but I didn’t know it by heart, since the Rebbe says everything from a Siddur, I said it together with the Rebbe.

Once we got to the entrance of the cemetery, people began pushing fiercely, so I stayed behind and didn’t see anything. All of a sudden I heard a wild scream. It seems Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, overwhelmed by the burial, gave a heart-wrenching yell. It was terrible to hear that yell.

After sitting shiva at 770, my father and I went to the house of Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky (they were Mechutanim). I was a kid and didn’t even listen to what these two old guys were talking about. I just heard one sentence, “S’iz do a Rebbe”—there is a Rebbe.

For a long time, Chassidim addressed the Rebbe as Rebbe, but he would not openly acknowledge his position.

SEIZING OPPORTUNITY

The privilege of seeing the Frierdiker Rebbe was worth any effort.

Zushe recounted one instance on Rosh Hashanah 5708¹ when a group of seven *bochurim* congregated outside the Frierdiker Rebbe’s room, seeking entry to watch the *seuda*. The Rebbe, known then as Ramash, answered the door and asked the closest *bochur* how many they were. When the *bochur* answered that they were seven, the Rebbe replied, “Gut, vel ich gayn freggen baym Rebbin” (okay, I’ll ask the [Frierdiker] Rebbe).

By the time the Rebbe returned, the crowd had swelled to twenty *bochurim*. As soon as the door opened, they all began pushing their way in. With remarkable strength, the Rebbe held the door in place with one hand while blocking the open space with his other hand and leg, until he managed to shut it completely and reprimanded the *bochurim* for their behavior.

Another time, on Shavuos 5708, all entries to the upstairs apartments were locked. Noticing that a small window in the back of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s office was ajar, Zushe—the smallest of the group—was hoisted through. Ignoring the papers scattered by his fall, he quickly unlocked the door (which in those days led to an outdoor porch), allowing the group to rush upstairs and triumphantly enter the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *seuda*.



THE REBBE IN CONVERSATION AT THE KABBALAS PONIM OF REB LEIBEL POSNER, 30 SHEVAT 5711, SHORTLY AFTER ASSUMING THE NESIUS ON YUD SHEVAT. REB ZUSHE IS THE YOUNG BOCHUR WITH THE GRAY HAT STANDING ON THE RIGHT.

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He continued to sit in his regular place in shul for davening and farbrengens—at the wall directly opposite the *aron kodesh*. For the Yud Shevat farbrengen, everyone assumed that's where the Rebbe would sit and set up his chair accordingly.

That night, Jews from all communities packed into 770, expecting something momentous to occur. Zushe didn't want to be in the center of the room with all the pushing, so he positioned himself by the door between the shul and the *ezras nashim*.³

While waiting for the farbrengen to begin, Zushe felt someone pushing from behind. Zushe returned with a push of his own and turned around to discover it was the Rebbe! Nobody there knew who the Rebbe was, and he needed to push his way through.

Before anybody could react, the Rebbe strode to the end of the table, at the south wall. After a brief commotion, a chair was brought over for the Rebbe, and the historic farbrengen began.

A Friend

In those first years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, the crowd was small, and a very intimate atmosphere presided. Zushe felt that the Rebbe's own attitude inspired that feeling. In those days you didn't see "Rebbe," you saw a friend.

Sometime between 5714 and 5718, something changed—the Rebbe didn't stop being a friend—but it wasn't as personal. There was a sense of "*hisromemus*," "*hisnasus*," and "*malchus*" (elevation and royalty).

Over the course of the first Tishrei—5712, Zushe experienced this relationship in a very personal way:

Throughout Erev Yom Kippur, several groups of *anash* and *bochurim* entered the Rebbe's room to receive a *bracha* for a *Gmar Chasima Tova*. The Rebbe relayed a message through Reb Yoel Kahn, that the *bochurim* should come to receive a *bracha* before Kol Nidrei (even those who had already received one earlier in the day).

When they arrived, the Rebbe was dressed in his tallis and Kittel. A yungerman attempted to come in as well, but the Rebbe turned to him and said "*Du bist a yungerman, gei arois*" (you're a married man, go out).

After gazing intently at each *bochur*, the Rebbe spoke in a trembling voice, "*Ir lernt duch in Rebbin's yeshiva, zayt ir duch dem Rebbin's kinder. Erev yom kippur iz duch birchas habanim...*" (since you all learn in the Rebbe's yeshiva, you are the Rebbe's children, and on Erev Yom Kippur, fathers bless their children).

Throwing his tallis over his face and the table before him, the Rebbe gave the traditional *brachos* followed by *brachos* for success in learning, *yiras shamayim*, and fulfilling the Rebbe's *kavana*.⁴

AT THE
KABBALAS PONIM
OF REB ZALMAN
POSNER, 6 KISLEV
5710. REB ZUSHE
IS THE YOUNG
BOY STANDING
NEAR THE REBBE.



One Simchas Torah,⁵ Zushe suddenly broke down crying in the middle of *Hakafos*. The Rebbe noticed and advised him to step outside for some fresh air.

A few days later, when his mother, Mrs. Chaya Posner, was in *yechidus*, the Rebbe inquired, “*Vos macht zushe? Er hut eppes gefilt nisht gut Simchas Torah*” (How is Zushe? It seemed like he wasn’t feeling well on Simchas Torah).

Such was the feeling of connection in those years.

The Prank

Zushe was not always the most studious boy, and at times could even be mischievous. One day in Adar 5714, he and a few friends were in a hyper mood. Together, they decided to play a practical joke in the Yeshiva’s English library. The next person to enter the library was

WITH REBBETZIN CHANA

When Rebbetzin Chana, the Rebbe’s mother, came to America, she became a familiar face at 770. *Bochurim* would often wait at the door of the shul following Davening on Shabbos or Yom Tov, where she would greet each one with a “Gut Shabbos” or “Gut Yom Tov.” Her smile and greeting were worth everything in the world.

Every Friday night, the Rebbe would walk with his mother, back and forth along Eastern Parkway. Zushe and his friends would often hide behind cars to watch, and saw that they wished a Gut Shabbos to everyone

sitting on the benches.

One Purim, while delivering Mishloach Manos for Reb Sholom Ber Goldschmidt, Zushe went to Rebbetzin Chana’s apartment. Accepting the gift with a warm smile, she told him good-naturedly, “*Du vest sei vee gornit nemmen fun mir, vell ich dir gornisht gebben*” (you won’t take anything from me anyway, so I won’t give you anything). “In fact,” Zushe later remarked, “she did give me something—that precious smile!”



THE YESHIVA BUILDING ON THE CORNER OF BEDFORD AND DEAN.

greeted by a chaotic scene. A pile of tables and chairs was set up to block the door, and all of the books were in complete disarray.

The *Hanhala* was furious and linked the incident with recent locker thefts. Looking to clear things up, Zushe confessed to Rabbi Mentlick that they were guilty of the prank, but had nothing to do with theft. Trusting their close relationship, Zushe expected him to keep the matter a secret.

Later that month at the Purim farbrengen, Zushe stood behind the Rebbe and asked for a *bracha* for his mother, who was not well. The Rebbe responded that he should not do “such things” again.

Zushe assumed the Rebbe was referring to his general laxity in keeping *sedarim*. Only when the Rebbe instructed him to tell his friends to say *l’chaim*, did he realize what the Rebbe really meant.

One of the *bochurim* involved was Immanuel Schochet, who was a talented writer. He penned a passionate defense, filled with complaints about the *Hanhala* in general and how they had handled this situation in particular. In response, the Rebbe instructed the boys to do *teshuva*, giving them a detailed regimen.⁶

The Rebbe’s instructions were to fast half a day during the weeks of BeHa”B⁷ after the following Pesach, to memorize the first eleven *Perakim* of *Derech Chaim* (a *sefer* of the Mittlerer Rebbe dealing with *teshuva*), and to learn *Maseches Taanis*—and if possible, all the boys should

study together.

That Friday night, as they sat in the *zal* learning Taanis late into the night, the Rebbe walked in close to 3am: “Don’t you have a place to sleep? Did you get *chapp’t* with *hasmada*? (A sudden urge to study diligently.) *Sheina b’shabbos taanug?!?*” (Sleeping is considered a Shabbos pleasure). Obviously, they remained silent, and the Rebbe left.

That year, Zushe spent Pesach with the Rebbe for the first time. After watching the Rebbe conduct his *seder*, the *bochurim* followed the Rebbe downstairs to his room. The Rebbe turned around in the open doorway and began speaking in a very elevated mood.⁸

In the *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke about Zushe and his friends, focusing on their responsibility to experience their own *Yetzias Mitzrayim* through their Seder Teshuva. To Zushe, the Rebbe said (in a question and answer tune), “*Ay Zushe hut getun a shtus?! Getun a shtus.*” (Zushe did something silly?! Okay, he did something silly.) As if to dismiss the issue.

The Rebbe concluded by instructing Rabbi Mentlick to lead all of the *bochurim* in a joyous dance. The Rebbe himself pulled Immanuel Schochet into the circle, dancing like it was Simchas Torah.

Throughout the entire story, the Rebbe acted with strict attentiveness, yet with such sensitive care.

Shlichus

In regard to his lack of fulfillment in Yeshiva, Zushe once expressed to the Rebbe his desire to learn in Eretz Yisroel, feeling that he would be better off there. The Rebbe didn’t entirely negate the idea, but advised him, “*Az m’fort ergetz vu, der Yetzer Hara fort mit.*” (Wherever one travels, the Yetzer Hara comes along. In other words, he shouldn’t think that by relocating to another place, all his problems would automatically be solved.)

Nonetheless, towards the end of 5714, Zushe transferred to Tomchei Tmimim in Montreal, where he remained for two years. There he flourished and developed a close relationship with the *mashpia*, Reb Volf Greenglass.

In Tammuz 5716, Zushe wished to travel to the Rebbe for Yud-Beis Tammuz, but Rabbi Greenglass was upset with him at the time and would not give him permission to go. Without a letter of permission from *hanhala*, a *bochur* would not be allowed into the Rebbe’s presence, so going without permission was not an option.



BOCHURIM SENT BY THE REBBE ON THE SHLICHUS TO ERETZ YISROEL IN 5716, VISIT THE CHEDER IN LOD. REB ZUSHE IS ON THE LEFT, SEEN HANDING A TANYA SENT BY THE REBBE TO A CHILD.

When another *bochur*, who had received permission, could not get a visa and had to cancel his plane ticket, Zushe seized the opportunity to try once more. “Look,” he said, “there’s an empty space on the plane. Either I can go to the Rebbe or a non-Jew will take the spot.” Rabbi Greenglass finally gave his consent on condition that Zushe memorize the *hemshech* “*Zeh Hayom 5695*” from the Frieddiker Rebbe and be back on Sunday.

Zushe already knew seven out of ten *maamarim* of that *hemshech* and had no problem returning to Yeshiva after Shabbos. His only issue was that he had no money for a plane ticket! Rabbi Greenglass paid for the ticket himself and sent Zushe off with a kiss. Zushe never again stepped foot in Montreal.¹⁰

About a month prior, the Rebbe had announced that a special delegation of *bochurim* would be sent on shlichus to Eretz Yisroel. Their purpose was to strengthen the community of Kfar Chabad, left devastated by a brutal terror attack. They were also to visit locations in Europe and the rest of Eretz Yisroel, inspiring *rabbanim*, politicians, children, and farmers with the Rebbe’s Torah and *niggunim*.¹¹

At that point, a group of shluchim had already been chosen, but upon the request of his father, the Rebbe added Zushe to the group (so long as a doctor approved him to be fit for travel). Within two days, Zushe had a passport ready and boarded the first available flight to Europe, meeting the rest of the group in France.

After two weeks in Europe and another three in Eretz Yisroel, the Shluchim were set to return to America.

However, on their last day in Eretz Yisroel, Zushe received an unexpected telegram from the Rebbe instructing him to remain in Yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel.

Zushe became the dorm counselor in the Yeshiva in Lod, thus beginning his life-long career in the field of chinuch. His initial position as a mere dorm counselor was no hindrance to teaching and giving guidance.

Every night after lights out, he would visit another room, sharing *Chassidische maasos* until the boys drifted off to sleep. He also led informal *farbrengens* where he essentially “introduced” the Israeli *bochurim* to the Rebbe. As Rabbi Leibel Alevsky once related, “We Israeli *bochurim* felt close with Reb Zushe. He played an important role in inspiring us to come learn in 770 near the Rebbe.”¹²

Indeed, throughout his life, Zushe was never particular about his official position. Whether teaching in a classroom or bookkeeping in the offices, he was happy to be doing the Rebbe’s work.

An Honorable Farewell

In honor of his sister Basya’s marriage to Gershon Mendel Garelik, which took place 4 Tammuz 5718, the Rebbe permitted Zushe to come to America as long as he returned to Eretz Yisroel by mid-Elul.

By the end of Av, Zushe was ready to go back to his post. Every day he wrote a *tzetel* to the Rebbe, asking when he should travel, but received no response. On 5 Elul, he

finally received instructions to fly back the following Monday.

On Sunday night, Reb Dovid Raskin, on behalf of Tzach, arranged a farewell farbrengen in honor of the outgoing shliach. A handful of *bochurim* gathered in the *zal* with a humble spread of *farbeisen*, and Rabbi Mentlick spoke.

About a half hour into the farbrengen, Rabbi Hodakov began poking his head into *zal* every few minutes. At 10:55, he announced that if everyone stays in their seats, the Rebbe would come join them for five minutes.

Whoever could be reached in the interim was hastily phoned and everyone took up their “positions.” The *bochurim* standing against the eastern wall, and Zushe standing by the opposite wall—no *bochur* would dream of **sitting** in the Rebbe’s presence.

The Rebbe entered and sat down at his farbrengen spot, remarking to Zushe, “*Zetz zich avek, nita kein bank?*” (Sit down, is there no bench?) Only after Zushe leaned his foot on the bench did the Rebbe begin.

The Rebbe began by explaining that the leading cause for this farbrengen is in honor of a shliach who is traveling to Eretz Yisroel to work in *Chinuch Al Taharas Hakodesh*—particularly in institutions which bear the name of the Frierdiker Rebbe (Reshet Oholei Yosef Yitzchak).

The *sicha* took a sharp turn. People should be volunteering for such a merit, the Rebbe said, yet there was a lack of interest in shlichus. “People are sending their parents and in-laws (to the Rebbe on their behalf) to be excused from going on shlichus.”

Zushe was petrified that his parents had asked the Rebbe for their “baby” to remain in America, but his fears were quickly allayed, “*Nit veggen di haintiger shliach redt men*” (we’re not speaking about the current shliach), the Rebbe clarified.

The Rebbe went on to elaborate on the greatness of the mission being undertaken. The *sicha* was later edited by the Rebbe and released by *Mazkirus* in a special *kuntres*.¹³

Zushe later reflected, “Many of my peers were extremely jealous. There were some other very good *bochurim*, and I wasn’t the most..., but the Rebbe sent me!”

ZICHRONOS

Reb Zushe was witness to some extraordinary moments with the Rebbe. Here are some of the unique recollections he shared:

- After Maariv on Yom Kippur, the custom is to recite the entire Tehillim as a *minyan*. In 5712, it seemed to the Chassidim that the Rebbe wasn’t feeling well, and nobody wanted to go up to the *amud*, as it would prolong the Rebbe’s time in shul. Seeing that nobody was stepping up, the Rebbe himself began leading the Tehillim. The Rebbe completed the entire Tehillim in only 45 minutes—but Reb Zushe, who stood close by, heard every word clearly!
- In those days, few people owned their own Lulav and Esrog. Early Sukkos morning, anyone without one—primarily *bochurim*—had to find someone willing to lend theirs.

Once, (before the Rebbe’s *nesius*), Zushe and some friends asked the Rebbe if they could use his while he was learning in 770’s communal sukkah. One *bochur*, apparently wishing to show off, pointed out an alleged *psul* in the Lulav. Unfazed, the Rebbe replied that if there’s a problem, you don’t need to *bentch* on it.

After the Rebbe accepted the *nesius*, no one had the nerve to ask for the Rebbe’s own Lulav and Esrog. Only after one person asked did everyone around line up to use it as well.

The entire process took about half an hour. All the while, the Rebbe looked on from the corner of the sukkah, repeating to each person, “*Matana al menas lehachzir*.” This practice of Chassidim making the *bracha* on the Rebbe’s Lulav and Esrog continued throughout the years.

- 5714 was the only year that Reb Zushe remained by the Rebbe for Pesach instead of being with his parents. After completing his *seder* at the home of his hosts, he hurried to 770, arriving just as the soup was being cleared. The waiter offered him “*shirayim*” from the Rebbe’s leftover soup, and without thinking twice, Zushe accepted.

One of the most powerful moments was in the middle of Hallel. The Rebbe had broken out in tears and could not utter a single word. When the *Makri*, Reb Yankel Katz, reached *Nishmas*, he hesitated, unsure if he should continue. The Rebbe instructed him to read on, catching up towards the end of the Haggadah.



REB ZUSHE STANDS BEHIND THE KALLAH, HIS SISTER BASYA, AS THE REBBE WARMLY WISHES THE FAMILY MAZAL TOV.



FIRST PAGE OF THE REBBE'S EDITS ON THE SICHA DELIVERED AT THE FAREWELL FARBRENGEN FOR REB ZUSHE, 9 ELUL 5718.

Marriage

Shortly after his return, Zushe received a letter from the Rebbe with instructions to actively pursue *shidduchim*, noting that many have made *shidduchim* with *acheinu Bnei Yisroel hasefardim*, and were very successful.

Not long thereafter, a *shidduch* was suggested for him with Yehudis Kibudi, an immigrant from Turkey then living in Kfar Chabad. After meeting a few times, they wrote the Rebbe, asking for his *haskama* and *bracha* for their marriage. Ten days later, they each received a letter with the Rebbe's *bracha*.

Although she had studied in Lubavitch schools in Eretz Yisroel, Mrs. Posner was not yet ready for everything that comes with marrying a *Tomim*. In matters deemed more trivial, Zushe acquiesced and therefore came to their *chasuna* sporting a short jacket.

For her part, she unwaveringly supported his dedication to the Rebbe's *shlichus*, joining his educational efforts in even the most remote and challenging cities. Within a year, he was wearing a *kapote* as well. It is therefore not surprising that the Rebbe praised her, saying, "*Du host doch an isha keshayra, zee iz osah retzon baalah*" (you have a good wife, who follows the will of her husband).

Unconventional Education

Throughout his six decades of *Shlichus*, Reb Zushe was primarily involved in *chinuch*, and truly connected to his



mission. By no means was he conventional. However, the Rebbe himself initiated Reb Zushe's *chinuch* career and encouraged him to continue in light of his past success.

In fact, Reb Zushe's unconventional methods often had a deep and lasting impact in ways that few other educators did. Reb Meir Shlomo Kaplan, today the Rosh Yeshiva of Oholei Torah, recalls his first interaction with Reb Zushe as a young boy in the Mesivta in Lod:

"At that time, Reb Zushe was one of the supervisors, helping *bochurim* learn Gemara and answering their questions during *seder Gemara L'girs*a. I went over to ask a question, but before I knew it, he went off on a monologue, decrying how everyone thinks only about themselves and not about what the Rebbe wants.

"I didn't understand what he wanted from me; I just wanted him to explain the Gemara! Ultimately, though, his discussion such as these ingrained within me deep, foundational concepts."

Specifically because his speeches were not boxed in by the typical structure, he was able to convey deeper feelings and ideas. The authenticity of his listeners was provoked.

Perhaps referring to his unique approach, the Rebbe gave him a bottle of *mashke* at *kos shel bracha* for "*deine inyonim*" (your matters).

What Reb Zushe sought most to give over to his students was a deep and personal connection with the Rebbe. These formed the fabric of every thought he shared. But, arguably most of all, he transmitted yearning for the Rebbe. "When was the last time you lost sleep because of Gimmel Tammuz?" he cried.

Shortly before Reb Zushe passed away on 12 Shevat

5782, his health was deteriorating as he battled a devastating illness.

Taking a questionnaire with a nurse while undergoing treatment, he was asked how long he had been suffering. His immediate response was "26 years and several months." The nurse may have been confused, but his message rings true in our ears. Let us take his admonishment to heart—we must not be complacent with the status quo, we must be stirred to action and do all that is within our power to bring Moshiach. Then, we will see the Rebbe once more. **1**

1. In an interview, Reb Zushe was unsure if this story occurred in 5708 or 5709.
2. The room that would later become *Mazkirus* office.
3. Today—the *Cheder Sheini*.
4. For further reading, see *Toras Menachem* vol. 4, pp. 18–19.
5. In an interview, Reb Zushe was unsure if this story occurred in 5712 or 5713.
6. The Rebbe's letters regarding this affair are printed in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 8, letters from 25 Adar, 2 and 4 Nissan.
7. A series of fast-days following *Yomim Tovim*. See *Orach Chaim siman* 492.
8. For further reading, see *Toras Menachem* vol. 11, pp. 184–186.
9. *Sefer Hamaamarim Kuntreisim* vol. 2, pp. 635–696.
10. The full interview can be viewed at: chabad.org/3800716.
11. For more on this Shlichus, see "Transforming Tragedy," *Derher Sivan* 5774.
12. *Derher*, Cheshvan 5784.
13. The sicha was later printed in *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 2, p. 632—*Hosafos to Parshas Teitzei*.