



Many years ago, when the Jews of Spain were suffering from the Inquisition, a famous doctor by the name of Avitar Ibn Karashkash lived in Madrid. To escape the wrath of the Inquisition, he left his beautiful and prestigious job as a skilled surgeon, and exiled himself to a small town. There, he hoped he would be left to live out his life in peace.

Avitar had a young son, Avraham. Avraham was delighted with his new life in the small town where Avitar was able to devote many hours of attention to Avraham and personally supervise his Torah studies. In addition, Avitar carefully instructed Avraham about the special garden he had planted, discussing with Avraham each plant growing there.

One day Avitar called his son into the garden and said, "Today is Tu B'Shevat, the New Year for Trees. On this day it is decided in the Heavenly Courts which trees will bear fruit and which trees will dry up. What is within our power is to plant trees, to care for them and to hope that they will grow and bear fruit. However, this is not dependent on us."

Avraham would never forget that special Tu B'Shevat when his father permitted him, for the first time, to plant saplings. And he would never forget his father's serious words. "Avraham, promise me that you will always try to be a good Jew, to grow upright and faithful to our people."

Twelve saplings Avraham planted that day, according to the years of his life. Then, Avitar took Avraham to a part of the garden where no one else was permitted; Avitar was experimenting with certain plants there. "Avraham," Avitar said quietly to his son, "Remember what I am telling you. If ever you need to leave here and I am not with you, come here first. Take out this sapling and you will find something underneath that will have a tremendous influence on you in the future."

A few months later, in the middle of the night, the hoof-beats of a horse were heard near the Karashkash house. There was a sharp knock on the door.

"What do you want?" asked Avitar.

"Are you Avitar Ibn Karashkash, the man to whom G-d has given the strength to heal the sick?" asked the stranger.

"That is my name," answered Avitar. "But I am no longer permitted to work in my profession."

"I am Duke Francisco Alba. My dear wife, the Duchess, is very sick and needs an operation urgently. You must come and operate on her or else she'll die. You cannot let her die," begged the Duke in a plaintive voice.

"Certainly you have access to great doctors in Madrid, Toledo, Barcelona," said Avitar. "Why me? You surely know that I am forbidden to practice my profession. Doing so could only endanger my life."

"I have been everywhere and have approached everyone. No one will perform the dangerous operation. I beg of you, help me," the Duke cried. "I will make sure no one harms you. I will bring a ship to take you and your family to safety if necessary. My wife is suffering. Please, help."

The Duke broke out in uncontrollable tears. "I will do what you ask of me," said Avitar. "But one thing you must promise. If anything happens to me, you must take my son to safety." The Duke agreed readily.

Avitar hadn't lost his skill as an expert surgeon. The operation went well and the Duchess's life was saved. But when he returned home, he found the officers of the Inquisition awaiting him.

Avraham broke out in a bitter cry as his father was taken away. Soon, though, the Duke's men arrived; they had heard what happened to the faithful doctor and would take Avraham to a safe haven. They promised him that the Duke would do everything in his power to save Avitar.

Avraham didn't want to go with the Duke's men, but he had no choice. He asked them to wait a moment until he got his things together. Avraham quickly made his way to the special part of the garden. He carefully dug up the sapling and uncovered a box. Opening the waterproof box he found a pair of tefilin and a note. "These tefilin will give you strength and encourage you in Judaism so that you not, G-d forbid, fall into despair and

dejection. In addition, carefully take the sapling you have uprooted, and plant it in new earth. Guard it and care for it painstakingly, and it will be the source of great livelihood for you. For this sapling is from a far-off land. It provides food for the special silkworms that produce the valuable silk material purchased from abroad. Remain a good Jew, my dear son, and the good L-rd will bless you and help you like the blessing of your father who loves you - Avitar Ibn Karashkash."

Avraham wiped away his tears and went to join the Duke's men. He wondered if he would ever see his father alive again.

Months later, while Avraham was living on the island of Majorca, he turned thirteen. Precisely at the moment when he first put on his tefilin he saw a small boat coming closer to the port. As it got closer he couldn't believe what he saw. His father was getting out of the boat!

After an emotional meeting, Avraham found out that the Duke had finally been able to save Avitar from the Inquisition. Avitar explained that he had not come earlier because he had been sick. He did not, however, explain that his "sickness" was due to the terrible torture he had suffered at the hands of the inquisitors.

In due time, Avitar and Avraham gathered around themselves a group of Jews and set up a Jewish settlement on the island. And each year, on Tu B'Shevat, they planted saplings according to Avraham's years.

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L'Chaim

The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person
יום סד תר"י השלושים

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
"May there be peace in your wall, tranquility in your palaces" (Psalm 122:6)



LIVING WITH THE REBBE

from the teachings of the Rebbe on the Torah portion

After the miraculous Splitting of the Red Sea in this week's Torah portion, Beshalach, Moses leads the Jewish men in singing their praises of G-d, and Miriam, the prophetess, leads the women in their song of thanks.

The Torah tells us that the joy experienced by the women was far greater than that of the men. "And all the women went out... with tambourines and dances."

In fact, the Midrash relates that when the heavenly angels wanted to add their voices to the "Song of the Splitting of the Red Sea," G-d told them that they must wait until the women had finished.

The exile in Egypt was much harsher for the Jewish women than for their husbands. Of all Pharaoh's decrees against the Children of Israel, the most pitiless was the one that broke every Jewish mother's heart: "Every son that is born you shall throw into the river." The pain and suffering experienced by the Jewish women was more intense than the hardships the men were forced to endure, and when salvation came, the joy they felt was therefore greater as well.

The stories in the Torah teach us lessons which apply in all generations. Pharaoh's decrees against the Jewish people have appeared again and again, throughout history, in various forms. Their aim, however, has never changed. The Egyptian Pharaoh sought to kill Jewish babies by drowning them in the Nile; later despots sought to destroy Jewish souls in ways equally dangerous, although not always as obvious.

In our days, when most Jews, thank G-d, live in relative safety and security, the decrees of Pharaoh imperil the spiritual existence of the Jewish people. "Pharaoh" rears his head in the guise of popular culture and the winds of arbitrary and capricious conventional wisdom, which threaten to sever the Jewish people from the eternal and timeless values of the Torah. "Pharaoh" seeks to immerse and drown the minds of impressionable Jewish children in the waters of whatever is, at the moment, trendy and fashionable.

The threat is not all that different from the one faced in Egypt, because Jews cannot exist for long without their faith in G-d and the study of Torah. Jewish children need a solid Jewish education to ensure the continuation of our people.

Today, just as in Egypt, the main responsibility—to safeguard our greatest national treasure, our children, from negative influences—lies with the Jewish mother. Jewish women have, throughout the generations, been granted the power to set the proper tone in the home and make it a place where their children will flourish and grow up to be good Jews.

In this way Jewish women will see true satisfaction from their children and merit to sing G-d's praises at the Final Redemption, speedily in our days.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Marking The 36th Yahrzeit of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka

Thursday, February 1, corresponding to the Hebrew date of Chof Beis Shevat, will be the 36th yahrzeit of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson, wife of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The L'Chaim Publication was established in her memory as indicated in the name, L'zichron Chaya I Mushka.

Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka was born on Shabbos, 25 Adar in 1901. She was the second of three daughters of the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok. When she was born, her grandfather, the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom Dovber, the Rebbe Rashab, was traveling abroad, and he telegraphed her father saying, "Mazal tov on the birth of your daughter... if she has not yet been named, she should be called Chaya Mushka." This was the name of the Rebbetzin of the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek.

From her earliest years, the Rebbetzin absorbed the purity and holiness that surrounded her, both in the house of her grandfather and that of her father.

In the autumn of 1915, during World War I, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka and her family left the town of Lubavitch and settled in Rostov.

Her early twenties saw the intensification of the Communist war against the Jewish soul and her father's heroic struggle to sustain Yiddishkeit among Jews in the Soviet Union.

Cognizant of her wisdom and strength, her father involved her in much of his work. In Rostov at that time there was an underground Litvish yeshiva, "Beis Yosef" of Navaradok. It was a time of hunger, and the talmidim of the Navaradok Yeshiva were starving. The Rebbe Rashab and his son, the previous Rebbe, worried about how to supply food for the yeshiva.

The problem was a double one: How to get the food in this time of hunger, something that was achieved with great self sacrifice, and the problem of getting the food over to the Navaradok Yeshiva without attracting government attention. This too required great self sacrifice.

The Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka was chosen for this task. She secretly transported the food to the Navaradok Yeshiva on a

daily basis. The Rebbetzin was given this assignment with the knowledge that, with her discerning judgment, she could be relied upon.

Life became increasingly dangerous for the Jews of Rostov, and in the spring of 1924 the previous Rebbe and his family moved to Leningrad.

The persecution was relentless, and in 1927 the notorious Communist police came to arrest her father, the previous Rebbe, in their Leningrad home. Maintaining her composure, she brilliantly managed to alert the Rebbe (her husband-to-be) who was already standing outside the house, by calling out: "Schneerson, we have guests." Understanding her message, the Rebbe was quickly able to notify others to take necessary precautions and to begin an international campaign for the Rebbe's release.

Following his arrest and imprisonment in Leningrad, the previous Rebbe was exiled to Kostroma. Upon his request, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka was one of only three people who were allowed to join him on the journey. On the 12th of Tammuz, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka was the bearer of good news when she notified her family, by telephone from Kostroma to Leningrad, of her father's release.

Chassidim tell that years later the Rebbetzin very strongly encouraged her husband, the Rebbe, to accept the nesius, leadership, of Chabad so that "the work of my father should not be lost." Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka was selfless. Her life was totally dedicated to the Rebbe and her influence on the Lubavitch movement was enormous, but she deliberately remained outside of the limelight.

Shortly after the Rebbetzin's passing in 1988, while speaking on the theme of "V'Hachai Yitein El Libo" - the living shell take to heart, the Rebbe launched a new initiative, The Birthday Campaign, a call for every Jew to celebrate and observe their birthday by hosting Jewish gatherings and adding in Jewish observance while making resolutions involving an increase in good deeds. The Rebbe added that doing so "will be the greatest Zechus for the Neshama of the Rebbetzin."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

And G-d led them not by the way of the land (Ex. 13:17)

The manner in which G-d led His people through the desert was above the limitations of the laws of nature. The natural way of the world is for rain to fall from the sky and bread to be sown from the earth, but for forty years, the opposite held true for the Jews: their bread fell from the sky, and their drinking water was provided by a well that traveled with them. (Yalkut)

And G-d led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although it was near (Ex. 13:17)

The path taken by the Jews throughout history, whether in the direction of the Land of Israel or toward the Final Redemption, was never smooth. Whenever our ultimate goal appeared at hand, the next second it seems to move further away. Yet when we have nearly despaired of reaching our destination, suddenly we see that it is indeed within reach. (Nidchei Yisrael)

And the Children of Israel went up armed out of the land of Egypt. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him (Ex. 13:18,19)

With what were the Jewish people armed? With the bones of Joseph, in whose merit the Jews were protected from harm. "Tzadikim (the righteous) are even greater after their deaths than during their lives." (Torat Moshe)

And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him (Ex. 13:19)

While the rest of the Children of Israel were busy collecting the spoils of Egypt in preparation for the exodus, Moses was busy doing a mitzva. Moses knew that gold and silver are only temporary acquisitions, but every mitzva a person does accompanies him to the hereafter. (Klai-Yakar)



4:48 Candle Lighting Time

NY Metro Area
16 Shvat / Jan 26
Torah Portion Beshalach
Shabbat ends 5:50 pm

Dedicated to Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson wife of the Rebbe, daughter of the Previous Rebbe on her yartzeit, 22 Shevat

SLICE OF LIFE

Encounters with the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson
Excerpts From a Conversation with Rabbi Shmuel Lew



My first encounter with the Rebbetzin was a week before my wedding. A few days before, we had entered yechidus, and the Rebbe had agreed to my father-in-law, Reb Zalmon Jaffe's request that he officiate at the wedding and be mesader kiddushin. My father-in-law asked the Rebbe if he could invite the Rebbetzin to the wedding as well, and the Rebbe told him that although she would not attend, she would appreciate an invitation. The Rebbe noted that she knew about my father-in-law because they would always "say it with flowers"—he used to send flowers to the Rebbe's home every Yom Tov via Interflora.

Therefore, a week before our wedding, the whole wedding entourage; my future wife and I, along with my in-laws, went to visit the Rebbetzin and invite her to our wedding. The Rebbetzin served punch in crystal glasses with glass straws, and she invited the chosson—me—to fill the glasses. At one point, my hand went over a glass, and I didn't notice the straw. I spilled the whole punch on

the pristine white table cloth; I wanted to bury myself alive. The Rebbetzin immediately got all excited. "It's a siman bracha—it's a sign of blessing," she said. My father-in-law told me afterwards that she looked so delighted that he was tempted to push over another glass. That is how sensitive she was to any person that was with her.

In Tishrei 5748 (the year of the Rebbetzin's passing - histalkus), Simchas Torah was on a Thursday and Friday. As was the seder when Shabbos Bereishis was straight after Simchas Torah, the Rebbe farbrenged two times on Shabbos; first at 1:30 PM like a regular Shabbos Mevorchim and then again for a longer time later in the day, towards the end of Shabbos, as a continuation of the Simchas Torah farbrengen that took place on the evening prior, after which the Rebbe gave out kos shel bracha. In order to have a good place in 770 to be able to hear the Rebbe, I came at six o'clock in the morning, and I remained in my place, practically throughout the entire day—Tehillim, shacharis, two farbrengens and kos shel bracha, besides for a few minutes when my son held the place while I went to make kiddush and grab something to eat. The following day, we went to visit the Rebbetzin in the library. While there, my father-in-law mentioned to the Rebbetzin that I had been sitting in one place for close to twenty hours. Hearing this, the Rebbetzin said: "You could have come here for a coffee." Hearing her offer, which I knew I would never take up, I gave a slight smile. But she said that no, she wasn't joking: "Come here, knock on the door, and I will give you a coffee." The Rebbetzin showed an incredible sensitivity for another individual. We can all learn so much from the way the Rebbetzin cared for and treated others.

I once visited the Rebbetzin together with my children and my in-laws; my sons Yossi and Mendy were then about six years old. As children often are, they were restless,

and began running around the room; they were swinging on doorknobs, and all sorts of other childish things. I began to get very uncomfortable. In addition to everything they were already doing, I had another major fear: On a table in the corner of the room there was a pile of sefarim, and they were full of bookmarks in different places. I had a terrible fear that they would start pulling out the Rebbe's bookmarks, and I began to feel very anxious. While I didn't clearly say what I was worried about, I mentioned to the Rebbetzin that perhaps I should take my children home. What she said was very interesting. She didn't encourage me to keep them there, because in that case I would remain very uncomfortable. Neither did she make me feel unwanted. She told me: "Vi s'iz eich bakvem—however you are more comfortable."

Something one always felt in the presence of the Rebbetzin, was a feeling of malchus. The Rebbetzin was physically a small woman; but her presence filled the entire room. She was a giant in that sense. In general, all of the descriptions of the Rebbetzin, and in the stories I just told you, you will always read about her sensitivity and ahavas Yisroel. She dealt with an intellectual in an intellectual way, and teenager in a teenage way, and a child in a child's way. But more importantly is her self-sacrifice. The Rebbetzin literally gave her life away for the Chassidim, and it is possible to say, that everything we have in dor hashvi'i, is really in her merit. The Rebbe would take yechidus (private audience) a few times a week, until the wee hours of the morning. Sometimes these yechidus'n could end as late as 6 or 7 AM. One time, Reb Zalman Gurary suggested to the Rebbetzin, that perhaps the Rebbe should set some sort of limit to yechidus, so that he wouldn't come home so late at night. The Rebbetzin didn't want to think about the idea. She said: "I wouldn't want to take him away from people who need him."

Reprinted from the Derher Magazine

New Chabad Center to Open in the Canadian Rockies



The town of Banff, Alberta, sits in a tight pocket surrounded by the jagged snow-streaked mountains of the Canadian Rockies. It's a dazzling place—the type where every scene seems to belong on a postcard and pictures taken on your phone don't need any filters.

Although the town's residential population is quite small—fewer than 10,000 people—Banff's natural beauty and cozy charm annually attracts 5 million tourists. Banff is one of many small towns that line the Canadian Rockies, getaway destinations to enjoy pure natural beauty and disconnect from an otherwise bustling world. But to Rabbi Dovid and Devorah Pinson, it is something more: a chain of untapped terrain, prime for an infusion of dynamic and authentic Judaism.

"There's absolutely no Jewish infrastructure in the Canadian Rockies," Rabbi Pinson explained. "Yet there's a huge need ... between the full-time residents, part-time residents and tourists, there's a lot of work that needs to be done."

Customs

What are some customs related to giving a baby a Jewish name?

Our sages say that parents have Divine inspiration when giving their child a Jewish name. It is customary to name a child after a close relative or friend, or after a person with outstanding virtues. One's Jewish name can be an indication of one's character, goals and essence. One's Jewish name is closely linked to the spark of G-dliness--the neshama (soul) within every Jew.

The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

THE SHINING COINS

Freely translated from a letter of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to the Lubavitch Women's Organization for their eighth annual convention.

In connection with the 150th yahrtzeit of the Alter Rebbe (Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of the Chabad Chasidic movement) I will relate briefly the well-known story about one of the Alter Rebbe's first chasidim, Reb Gavriel Nosei-Chein and his wife Chana Rivka.

Reb Gavriel was one of the most prominent Jews in Vitebsk. Twenty-five years after their marriage, he and his wife were still childless. Then, by reason of sustained persecution, he became impoverished. He was understandably upset therefore, when an appeal reached him from the Alter Rebbe to participate in a case of redeeming Jewish captives with a substantial contribution, as he was wont to do in former days, but which was now far beyond his means. When his wife learned of her husband's predicament, she sold her jewelry and raised the required amount. Then she scrubbed and polished the coins until they gleamed brightly, and with a prayer in her heart that their mazal brighten up, she wrapped the coins in a bundle which she handed over to her husband to take to the Alter Rebbe.

Coming into the presence of the Alter Rebbe in Liozna, Reb Gavriel placed the bundle of money on the table. The Alter Rebbe told him to open it. At once the coins shone with an extraordinary brilliance.

The Alter Rebbe became engrossed in thought, then said: "Of all the gold, silver and brass which the Jews contributed to the Mishkan (Sanctuary), nothing shone so brightly as the Laver and its Stand (which were made of the brass mirrors contributed by the Jewish women with selflessness and joy).

"Tell me where did you get these coins?"

Reb Gavriel revealed to the Rebbe the state of

his affairs and how his wife, Chana Rivka bas Beila, had raised the money.

The Alter Rebbe placed his head on his hands and for some time was in deep contemplation. Then he lifted his head and bestowed on Reb Gavriel and his wife the blessing of children, long life, riches and extraordinary grace. He told Reb Gavriel to close his business in Vitebsk and to begin to trade in precious gems and diamonds.

The Alter Rebbe's blessing was fulfilled. Reb Gavriel Nosei-Chein became wealthy. He and his wife were also blessed with sons and daughters. He lived to the age of 110 years, and his wife survived him by two years.

When my father-in-law of saintly memory [the previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn] related this story, he completed it with the teaching of the Alter Rebbe in connection with Sefira (the period of preparation for Shavuot--to receive the Torah):

It is written, "You should count--u'safartem lachem--unto yourselves." These words also mean "You shall illumine yourselves" (as in the Hebrew word sapir--sapphire, known for its purity and brilliance).

The message of this story, in addition to the other profound teachings which it contains, is: Although the coins for tzedaka--charity--are of a fixed quality and value, nevertheless, the very same coins, when they are given with selflessness and joy, assume an extraordinary value and brilliance, bringing life, and joy in life, even in this world, and certainly in the world which is all "light."

The same is true, of course, with spiritual tzedaka. Every effort and activity to spread the Torah and mitzvot, as illuminated with the light and warmth of Chasidic philosophy, and therefore inspired with selflessness and joy, are not only more successful in themselves, but also have a much greater effect and a much greater merit.

May G-d grant that each one of you, amongst our people, should experience "U'safartem lachem," as interpreted by the Alter Rebbe, and that everyone should illumine and purify himself, as well as the home and the environment, with the light of the Torah and mitzvot and Chasidic conduct in daily life. This will bring pure light into every aspect of life, the material as well as the spiritual.

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

This Shabbat is called Shabbat Shira, when we read the Torah portion about the song--shira--of praise the Jews sang after crossing the Red Sea. Our Sages taught that the "Song of the Sea" hints at the Redemption. For it says, "Then Moses will sing with the Children of Israel..." From this verse our Sages derive the principle of the Resurrection of the Dead in the Messianic Era, when Moses and all the Jewish people will arise and sing G-d's praise.

However, the song we will sing will differ from the Song of the Sea as related in the fol-lowing Midrash: "It will be said on that day: 'Behold, this is our G-d in whom we put our hope... this is the L-rd for whom we hoped...'"

We say "this" when something is standing before our very eyes, when it is revealed. When the Jews said, "This is my G-d," after the Splitting of the Sea, it was because they actually saw G-d, as it were. They were able to see with their eyes and point to Him and say, "This is my G-d." But in the future, there will be an additional revelation, therefore we will sing "this" twice.

At the Red Sea, there was a revelation of G-d's miracles--of G-d's unlimited power--and a supernatural event took place. But this type of revelation has a deficiency; the world could not contain it. It was possible only because G-d created a situation at that instant in which His unlimited power could be revealed. Thus, when the revelation and the miracle passed, the world had not changed at all.

But there is a second type of revelation, when the world's essence is revealed for what it truly is--G-d's energy. G-d reveals that the laws of nature themselves, and even the entire material world--are pure G-dliness.

The advantage of this kind of revelation is that it is within the limitations of the world, it is the truth of the world itself. When this truth is revealed, it is like solving a mystery. For, as soon as the mystery is solved, it is no longer a mystery. Similarly, once the G-dliness intrinsically within the world is revealed, then it can no longer be hidden and everyone sees that G-d directs and fills the whole world.

This type of revelation, the uncovering of all that is hidden, will take place in the future redemption. Then, the world will become a vessel for the revelation of the truth that everything is only G-dliness. This will come together with the first revelation--the revelation of the highest levels of G-dliness.

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA לזכרון חיה י מושקה

The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (obm), wife of the Rebbe.



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MOSHIACH MATTERS

Rabbi Abba said "There is no greater manifestation of the final redemption than this. As it is said: 'And you, mountains of

Israel, you shall give forth your branches, and you shall bear your fruit for My people Israel, because they have come near' (Ezekiel 36). When the Land of Israel will give forth its fruit bountifully, then the Redemption will draw near, and there is no greater manifestation of the Redemption than this."