



Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka (Moussia) Schneerson was born in Babinovitch, near the Russian city of Lubavitch, on Shabbat, the 25th of Adar, in 1901.

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, Chaya Mushka and her family fled Lubavitch and settled in Rostov. While in Rostov, Rabbi Shalom DovBer became ill, and nineteen-year-old Chaya Mushka affectionately cared for her grandfather, spending nights at his side. Before his passing in 1920, Rabbi Shalom DovBer blessed Chaya Mushka and left several Chasidic classics to her in his last will.

Her early twenties saw the intensification of the Communist war against the Jewish soul and the beginning of her father's heroic struggle. During those dark Soviet nights, her father Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, who had become the sixth Rebbe of Chabad, had his daughter Chaya Mushka at his side.

Life became increasingly dangerous for the Jews of Rostov, and in the spring of 1924 her family moved to Leningrad, where Chaya Mushka's involvement continued.

In a recently discovered document dated December 4, 1924, her father wrote:

I hereby empower citizen Chaya Moussia Yosepovna (daughter of Yosef) Schneersohn, residing at Machovaya Street 12/22, apartment 10, to receive monies on my behalf or documents that are addressed to me, in all forms, from the government bank and all of its branches and offices, and from other banks, government or communal, or from other organizations or private persons or by telegraph. Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka was 23 years old at the time.

The persecution was relentless, and in 1927 the notorious communist police came to arrest her father in their Leningrad home. Maintaining her composure, she brilliantly managed to alert the Rebbe (her husband-to-be) who was in the street, calling out: "Schneerson, guests have come to visit us!" Understanding her message, the Rebbe was quickly able to notify others to take the necessary precaution and begin the international campaign for his release.

Following his arrest and imprisonment in Leningrad, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak was exiled to Kostroma. Upon his request, she was allowed to join him for the journey. On the 12th of Tammuz, she was the bearer of good news when she notified her family in Leningrad of her father's release.

In the autumn of 1927, on the day after Simchat Torah, the Schneersohn family left the Soviet Union and moved to Riga, Latvia.

Before leaving Russia, Chaya Mushka was engaged to marry the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson. The actual marriage was delayed until 1928, when, on the 14th day of Kislev, their marriage was celebrated in Warsaw, Poland.

On the day preceding the wedding, thousands of Jews flocked to the railway station in Warsaw to welcome her father and his family. During the course of the day, a multitude of Chasidim, hailing from all of Poland, Lithuania, and Russia, arrived in the capital.

The next day, the 14th of Kislev, at five in the evening, the "kabbalat panim" began. Ushers were placed at the entrance of the Yeshiva, and only guests with official invitations were allowed to enter. Thousands of people surrounded the building and there simply wasn't enough room for them all.

Hundreds of miles away, in Russia, in Dnepropetrovsk, (Yekaterinoslav), another wedding celebration was taking place. The Rebbe's parents, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana, unable to attend in person, organized a festive meal and farbrengen in their own house, to which hundreds of local Jews flocked.

On the 14th of Kislev, 5714, twenty-five years later, the Rebbe said to his Chasidim: "It was this day that bound me to you, and you to me..."

Following their wedding, the young couple lived in Berlin until 1933. When the Nazi regime took power in the spring of 1933, they fled to Paris.

In May 1940, France was invaded by German forces and the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin, like most Jews, fled to Nice in southern France, choosing to live under Petain's government rather than direct Nazi occupation in Paris and the surrounding areas.

Escaping The Nazi onslaught, in 1941, the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin boarded the Serpa Pinto and set sail (from Marseilles, France, via Lisbon, Portugal) for the United States of America.

On the 28th of Sivan, they arrived safely on the shores of America, and took up residence in New York, where her father had settled in 1940.

In 1950, upon the passing of her father, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, leadership of the worldwide Chabad-Lubavitch movement passed to Chaya Mushka's husband, the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

Despite the Rebbe's initial refusal to accept the mantle, it was his wife, the Rebbetzin, who, notwithstanding the great personal sacrifice this would entail, prevailed upon him to accept the position with all its public and private hardships. She was steadfast: It is simply unthinkable that father's thirty years of total self-sacrifice and accomplishment should, G-d forbid, come to naught...

An erudite and wise woman, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka carried the mantle of her revered and exalted position in a most humble and unpretentious fashion. All her life she fulfilled the ideal of the psalmist, "The entire honor of a king's daughter is within."

The Rebbetzin passed away on Wednesday, the 22nd of Shevat, 1988, after a brief illness. She was interred next to her grandmother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, and near her father, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak.

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

on the weekly Torah portion

The remaining camp which is left may escape (Gen. 32:9)
This episode of Jacob and Esau in the Torah hints to the future wanderings of the Jewish people in exile. "The remaining camp which is left may escape"--G-d will never allow Esau to destroy the entire Jewish nation. When one king issues a harsh decree against the Jews, another king, in a different part of the world, will open his country's doors and allow the Jews refuge. (Ramban)

And Jacob came whole to the city of Shechem (33:18)
Rashi explains this to mean that Jacob was sound in body, his wealth was intact, and his Torah-observance was uncompromised. We learn from Jacob to always strive for excellence in all areas of our lives. Even a person whose primary path in the worship of G-d is through practical mitzvot--charity and good deeds--should also strive to be perfect in study. (Likutei Sichot)

Save me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau (32:12)
Jacob feared two things: The "hand of Esau"--Esau's sword, and "the hand of my brother"--the hand of friendship Esau would extend toward him. Fraternizing with Esau more than necessary worried Jacob even more than the physical threat he posed. Esau's might threatened Jacob's body, but the other put Jacob's soul in danger. (Rabbi Yosef-Ber of Brisk)

4:11 Candle Lighting Time
NY Metro Area
18 Kislev / Dec 1
Torah Portion *Vayishlach*
Shabbat ends **5:14 pm**

Dedicated in honor of a dear friend of the
Lubavitch Youth Organization
Mr. Sam Schwartz

L'Chaim

בס"ד
1800
18 Kislev, 5784
December 1, 2023

The Weekly Publication
for Every Jewish Person
נוסד 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

This week's Torah portion, Vayishlach, describes the encounter between Jacob and his brother Esau, after Esau had sent 400 armed men announcing his arrival. Their meeting, which threatened to be confrontational, actually turned out amiable--"Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him; and they wept."

Why this change of Esau's intentions? Rashi explains: Esau's mercy was aroused when he saw Jacob prostrating himself before him so many times. Rashi continues by quoting Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai: Despite the halacha (rule) that Esau hates Jacob, Esau's compassion was stirred at that time and he kissed him with his whole heart.

Rabbi Shimon used the word "halacha," which means religious law, to emphasize something about the nature of Esau's hatred toward Jacob: it is as immutable and timeless as are the practical laws of Torah. Rabbi Shimon wished to teach us that we should not try to rationalize Esau's hatred of Jacob by ascribing various reasons or motives to it; it is a hatred rooted in Esau's very essence. If and when we find an instance of Esau's positive behavior toward Jacob, we should realize that it is an exception to the rule--"his compassion was stirred at that time."

This saying of Rabbi Shimon also found its expression in his own personal life. Rabbi Shimon lived under the yoke of Rome, and suffered under the harsh decrees issued against the Jewish nation. He, in particular, suffered greatly because of his own staunch opposition to the Romans, and was forced to hide in a cave for 13 years, together with his son. Yet it was precisely this same Rabbi Shimon who traveled to Rome to have the anti-Jewish decrees rescinded, and was successful!

The story of Rabbi Shimon illustrates both sides of the coin: the unchangeable nature of Esau's hatred and persecution of the Jews, and the triumph of one who was particularly renowned for his opposition to Roman rule.

We learn from this a valuable lesson in how to relate to our oppressors during this long and bitter Exile:

On the one hand, a Jew must not rely on the mercy of the nations, because we know that Esau's hatred toward Jacob is a given fact. At the same time, it is within the power of every Jew to command respect from the non-Jews by maintaining his pride and adherence to the Jewish way of life.

When a Jew is unbending in his commitment to Torah and mitzvot, it positively influences the nations, so that "Esau's compassion was stirred and he kissed him with his whole heart." Not only does this command respect, but it brings about Esau's cooperation and even assistance in helping the Jew to keep his Torah.

Adapted from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

1800 Times To Life

As you know, the word L'chaim means to life. This week, we celebrate the 1800th issue of the L'chaim publication. Indeed, over the years this publication has brought true "life" and inspiration to countless Jews and non-jews around the world.

This week's L'chaim celebrates the incredible Chabad Yeshiva students who lovingly visit thousands of people each week distributing the L'chaim publication, encouraging people to perform a Mitzvah, add in acts of goodness and kindness, bringing more light to the world. This issue also celebrates the many Chabad Centers and Jewish institutions who distribute and share its beautiful content to our many readers from around the world, from all walks of life.

This issue is a monumental milestone for the L'chaim publication, for it has been and will continue to be a true source of "life", guidance and weekly inspiration to countless people from across the globe who have and will benefit from its invaluable content which provides practical implications for one's daily life.

Furthermore, for the Jewish people, the word L'chaim - to life - takes on a far deeper and additional meaning than the aforementioned. The Torah itself is called Toras Chaim, a Torah of life. Which is highlighted in the blessing we say when called up to the Torah, "For eternal life You have invested in us."

Our sages teach us that true life by its very definition is eternal life, and since only G-d is eternal, it is only through connecting to Him that we too become eternal. While physical

life is temporary, the soul being a part of G-d is eternal. We accomplish this through the study of Torah and the performance of Mitzvot. It is our calling and mandate to always grow in all matters related to the soul and life's purpose, creating the perfect harmony between the physical and spiritual.

Even in challenging times or perhaps mostly in these times, the light of Torah has always been our hope and strength, this is true throughout our history. Within the Torah itself, the inner and deeper part has the greatest light which behooves us to seek out its meaning and what lies beneath the surface.

This, dear reader, is what the L'chaim publication has done for over three decades. Through the teachings of the Rebbe, it's spiritual and mystical insights, as well as through the Slice of Life covering human interest stories, Jewish perspectives on current and relevant topics, in addition to the Rebbe's letters which have provided illumination and guidance to so many, the L'chaim continues to be a beacon of "life", joy, and inspiration for Jews and beyond everywhere.

In conclusion, the Baal Shem Tov famously wrote that his soul elevated and entered the chamber of Moshiach whom he asked, "When will the master come?"

He responded, "When your wellsprings shall spread outwardly [the world over]." The L'chaim continues to bring this special light to the world, and we look forward to saying the ultimate L'chaim - to life - with the coming of Moshiach may it be now.

SLICE OF LIFE

Through the Wisdom and Inspiration of the Weekly L'Chaim Publication

By William Z. Shulman



Some 35 years or so ago, I found myself reading the weekly L'Chaim, and as it stated on its masthead, it was "the weekly publication for every Jewish person". How it came into my hands remains a mystery to me, and when I think back all I remember is that it somehow found me, it just appeared. I guess I was just that "every Jewish person" that was destined to receive it. What I do remember is how I was taken by it.

It was at that time in my life that I was observing the eleven months after my father's passing and while I never was a stranger to Judaism, I was going daily to synagogue to say Kaddish nevertheless, I was still a distance from being a Sabbath observer, even though I kept a kosher apartment.

Before this time, when the L'Chaim came into my life, after being at synagogue on Shabbat morning, I would return home and instead of reading law (believe me it was a time consuming endeavor) I would read the weekly Torah portion. I would have an Artscroll Chumash with a varied compendium summary of commentaries. While intellectually interesting and thought provoking, it only took me so far, and did not significantly bring me real growth in Judaism.

What I found lacking was a deeper connection

both to Judaism in general and to Shabbos in particular. And when I received L'Chaim and started to read it I found that it was opening for me a new vista and taking me beyond what I was previously experiencing. It was starting to nourish my neshama-soul.

It became part and parcel of my weekly connection to the Torah portion and to Shabbos itself. The excerpt of the Rebbe on the weekly Torah portion and the personal story in the Slice of Life, the Talmudic and/or Midrashic story or the miraculous narrative of the Baal Shem Tov or other Chassidic rebbes made the Torah portion come alive as never before. To read the excerpt from the letters of the "Rebbe Writes" created a personal bond and made me feel more than an insignificant number, and invisible. It took Judaism which than felt lifeless, both in words and ideas, and breathed life into it.

When I started to think about what the word L'Chaim meant, I associated the "chai" with the Hebrew letter and connected it to the necklace boys and girls would wear around their necks after receiving it as a bar or bat mitzvah present. For many in those days, it was the Jewish identification badge. I also associated it with family gatherings or when two Jews would get together and toast each other and wish each other "l'Chaim", or when I would think of the music and lyrics from Fiddler on the Roof and hear the refrain "l'Chaim, l'Chaim to life..." But then I thought how sad it is, if that is the only association we have when we think of l'Chaim, But that was not the L'Chaim that just happened to me back after 1988. It was a different l'Chaim and I was beginning to realize it was so much more. It was a word now associated with Torah and Judaism. And so, I began to look forward to receiving each weekly edition, and when I would read and study the weekly portion, it was so much more meaningful and alive.

As I received each weekly L'Chaim I would keep them in folders for each Torah portion and as time went on the folders expanded and I could re-read each and realize that the Torah and the insights from each portion are just limitless. As they accumulated, since we have an Eruv, I would take with me to synagogue on Shabbat the l'Chaim for that week and share it with those who sat next to me, and before

I realized it, people in the Shul would come around and ask to look.

By this time, I too was growing in my Judaism and began to appreciate more and more the depth and breadth of all the contents of L'Chaim. And as can be seen from the picture above, now after many years travelling from 1988 I have a trove collection.

At our Shabbos table, when my wife and I are just by ourselves, or when we have company, we share the story printed in L'Chaim "It happened once" and find that whenever I ask would the company prefer something from the portion of the week or a story, they often choose the story; which reminds me of what I once read when the third Lubavitcher Rebbe had a farbrengen and he made the same offer, he too got the same response. And where would I have the know-how to even know that these stories exist were it not for L'Chaim and reading these stories which really go to the heart and soul of who we are as Jews.

Up until three years ago when I retired from the active practice of law, I carried with me daily in my suit pocket a host of L'Chaims which I would read when there was a down time and while in court waiting for the Judge to come out on the bench or for my case or matter to be called. And I remember other counsel and the time the Judge himself would often see me reading a L'Chaim and their curiosity would get the best of them and they would ask for me to share with them an insight of what I was reading. And even when not in court, I often took a pause in my work, and took out a L'Chaim which would give me an added motivation and application to whatever else I was doing.

I am sure it was one of the many sparks that the Rebbe set in motion that reached me those 35 years ago when it so happened that the L'Chaim would come into my way. A seed was planted and what nourished from that planting has grown from there and continues. When the time comes when I am escorted to the heavenly tribunal and I am asked whether I set aside fixed times for Torah study and did I wait in hope for the Messianic salvation, and did I appreciate the Torah wisdom I can point out to what started me on the path and what helped me gain the focus.



The Rebbe Writes

from correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

"THE BASIS OF EVERY HUMAN SOCIETY"

By the Grace of G-d
12 Teves 5744
Dec. 18, 1983
Brooklyn, NY

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of Dec. 5th. Since we have no facilities at our office to write in German, our reply comes in English.

In your letter you write about a young acquaintance, D.A., a Jew from Darmstadt, who is at present undergoing withdrawal treatment in Frankfurt. You ask how you can be of help to him after his completing the treatment.

Needless to say, first of all, you ought to communicate with the Jewish community in that city, since this would be within the sphere of its functions and activities.

As for the question what you, personally, could do for him, being a non-Jew, etc., I trust you know that every human being is orally obligated to order his everyday life and conduct in accordance with the Will of the Creator. For Jews, this means adherence to the teachings of the Torah with all its precepts. For gentiles it means adherence to the so-called Seven Noahide Moral

Precepts, with all their ramifications, which were ordained by the Creator, and which must be the basis of every human society, if it is to be human.

To be kind and helpful to others is, thus, one of the most basic rules of all mankind. As for financial assistance, such help is necessarily limited by one's financial means; but spiritually there is no limitation. Hence, you could be very helpful to the young man by strengthening his trust in G-d, whose benevolent Providence extends to each and everyone individually. And since G-d is the Essence of Goodness, and "it is in the nature of the Good to do good," it follows that G-d is always willing and able to do good to each and every person. However, it is up to the individual to provide the "channels and vessels" to receive G-d's blessings. These "vessels" are, as mentioned, ordering one's everyday life and conduct to be in fullest accord with the will of G-d.

In tangible terms, what the young man probably needs most at this time is a suitable job, to keep him busy as well as self-supporting. Here, perhaps, you may be helpful to him through your connections as a Rechtsanwalt [attorney] and prominent citizen.

In conclusion, I wish to express my sincere gratification as seeing your very kind interest to help a fellow human being, to the extent of taking the trouble to write in his behalf to someone overseas. May there be many like you.

With all good wishes, and
With esteem and blessing,

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

This Shabbos is the 19th of Kislev, the anniversary of the liberation of Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidism. He was imprisoned in Czarist Russia on false charges of spreading anti-government sentiments.

Each year since Rabbi Shneur Zalman's release in 1798, the 19th of Kislev has been celebrated as a special occasion by Jews the world over. Why celebrate an event that took place nearly 200 years ago to an individual in far-away Russia?

What is behind the custom of observing the anniversary of an important event in a person's life or in the history of the Jewish people?

According to Jewish teachings, the same spiritual forces functioning at the time of the original event--whether a birth, wedding, yahrtzeit, or victorious incident--reassert themselves at the time of the anniversary. Therefore, it is an opportune time to benefit from those powers.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman was one of the chief proponents of the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chasidic movement. His vindication, therefore, was the vindication of the entire fledgling movement. Through his release from prison, the teachings of Chasidic philosophy--the inner and mystical aspect of Torah--could be freely taught.

The spiritual forces operative on the original 19th of Kislev and the 19th of Kislev in each subsequent year are intimately tied up with the dissemination and study of Chasidic philosophy.

May we all use this special time and the unique spiritual forces it brings with it for the advancement of the study of Chasidic teachings, especially as elucidated by Rabbi Shneur Zalman and his successors.

Shmuel Butman

L'ZICHRON CHAYA I MUSHKA
לזכרון חיה'י מושקא

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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A Letter for Every Jew in the Unity Torah Scroll



The Torah scroll is a tangible embodiment of our connection to G-d, our most precious treasure and our guide to life. "And now," Moses says, "write for yourselves this song" (Deuteronomy 31:19). Meaning that every Jew should write a Torah scroll

The Lubavitcher Rebbe taught that the Jewish nation is like one Torah scroll and every individual—big or small, scholar or unlearned—is one letter. We are all one, interdependent and equally vital. The Rebbe initiated a campaign to unite all Jews. Explaining that by purchasing a letter in a "collective" Torah scroll, we are expressing our inherent unity. One nation, one Torah, one G-d.

Moreover, a letter in the Torah places its owner in "G-d's book." "At that time," the prophet Daniel says, "your people will be delivered, everyone who is found inscribed in the book..." To purchase a letter in the Jewish Unity Torah please visit: unityletter.com

Customs

What is Birkat HaGomel?

A person who has safely returned from a hazardous voyage, recovered from a serious illness, or been released from unjust imprisonment, must offer thanks to G-d in the form of a benediction recited when the Torah is read publicly. This benediction is called Birkat HaGomel.

