

## REBBETZIN CHAYA MUSHKA STORIES REFERRED TO IN SHVAT 2021 N'SHEI CHABAD NEWSLETTER

### **She, Too, Can Give Blessings**

Once, the Lubavitch Women's Organization sent her a bouquet of flowers, together with a list of individuals for whom blessings were requested. Setting aside the flowers for the Rebbetzin, the secretary passed on the letter to the Rebbe who, observing that it was addressed to his wife, asked his secretary to give it to her, saying, "She too is capable of giving blessings."

[https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/article\\_cdo/aid/110745/jewish/A-Brief-Biography-of-the-Rebbetzin.htm](https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/article_cdo/aid/110745/jewish/A-Brief-Biography-of-the-Rebbetzin.htm)

### **The Spilled Drink**

Just as she preferred to focus the spotlight away from herself, the Rebbetzin was ever sensitive to those around her, as evidenced by the recollection of Rabbi Shmuel Lew. Now the director of the Lubavitch House School in London, the flustered Rabbi Lew visited the Rebbetzin with his fiancé and family before he got married.

"There was a beautiful white tablecloth, and she served punch in long crystal glasses with glass straws," he related. "At one point, when my hand was going over the glass, I didn't notice the straw, and my hand pushed against the straw. The straw pushed against the glass, and the whole punch spilled on the table."

Without missing a beat, "the Rebbetzin got all excited," he continued, as if this was the best thing that could have happened in her home. "She said it's a sign of blessing."

Rabbi Lew's father-in-law, [Mr. Zalmon Jaffe](#), joked afterward that the Rebbetzin seemed "so delighted, that he was tempted to spill over another glass."

[https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/article\\_cdo/aid/630087/jewish/The-Life-and-Times-of-the-Rebbetzin.htm](https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/article_cdo/aid/630087/jewish/The-Life-and-Times-of-the-Rebbetzin.htm)

### **The Detour**

*Note: Chessed Halberstam worked in the employ of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson, wife of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, for eighteen years—from 1970 until the Rebbetzin's passing in 1988—performing household tasks and serving as the Rebbetzin's driver.*

The Rebbe requested that I try to see to it that the Rebbetzin gets out of the house every day for fresh air. Usually, we would drive out to a park in Long

Island. In the years that my son, Ari (may G-d avenge his blood), was a young child, we would often drive by his school on Ocean Parkway to take him along; the Rebbetzin enjoyed playing with him, pushing him on the swings in the park playground, etc.

One day, as we neared the park, we found our regular route closed off due to road work, and were forced to proceed instead on a parallel street. As we drove along that street, we heard the sound of a woman screaming in Russian. When I stopped at the next traffic light, the Rebbetzin turned to me and said: "I heard a woman screaming. Can you go back and see what that was about?"

We drove back to the beginning of the street. There we saw a woman standing on the curb and weeping, while near her, workers were carrying furniture and household items from a house and loading them on to a truck belonging to the county marshal. At the Rebbetzin's request, I parked behind the marshal's truck and went to learn the details of what was going on. The marshal explained that the woman had not paid her rent for many months, and was now being evicted from her home.

When I reported back to the Rebbetzin, she asked me to go back and inquire from the marshal how much the woman owed, and if he would accept a personal check; she also asked that I should not say anything to the family being evicted. At this point, I still did not realize where all this was leading, but I fulfilled the Rebbetzin's request. The sum that the family owed was approximately \$6,700. The marshal said that he had no problem accepting a personal check, as long as he confirms with the bank that the check is covered; he also said that if he received the payment, his men would carry everything back into the house. When I informed the Rebbetzin of the details, she took out her checkbook and, to my amazement, wrote out a check for the full amount, and asked me to give it to the marshal.

The marshal made a phone call to the bank, and then instructed his workers to take everything back into the house. The Rebbetzin immediately urged me to quickly drive away, before the woman realized what had transpired.

I was completely amazed at what I had seen. Later, when we were in the park, I could not contain myself, and asked the Rebbetzin what had prompted her to give such a large sum to a total stranger.

“Do you really want to know?” asked the Rebbetzin.

“Yes, I do,” I replied.

“Then I’ll tell you,” she said. “Once, when I was a young girl, my father took me for a walk in the park. He sat me down on a bench, and started to tell me about the idea of *hashgachah peratit* (specific divine providence). Every time—said Father—when something causes us to deviate from our normal routine, there is a divinely ordained reason for this; every time we see something unusual, there is a purpose in why we’ve been shown this sight.

“Today,” continued the Rebbetzin, “when I saw the ‘Detour’ sign instructing us to deviate from our regular route, I remembered my father’s words, and immediately thought to myself: Every day we drive by this street; suddenly the street’s closed off, and we’re sent to a different street. What is the purpose of this? How is this connected to me? Then I heard the sound of a woman crying and screaming. I realized that we had been sent along this route for a purpose.”

[https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/156251/jewish/Road-Work.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/156251/jewish/Road-Work.htm)

### **Especially Chocolate**

A yeshiva student once saw Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson, the wife of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, carrying bags and took them for her into her home. When the student brought them in, the Rebbetzin tried to give him a chocolate bar. He said, "I was raised in a Chasidic home and I was taught to do a mitzva (commandment) in a complete manner and not to take a reward."

The Rebbetzin replied: "I was also raised in a Chasidic home and I was taught that when given something one should take it, especially chocolate!"

<http://www.lchaimweekly.org/lchaim/5768/1005>

## The Rebbetzin Turned Over the Bottle

Another example of the Rebbetzin's ultimate Hiskashrus is an episode that happened during the night of Simchas Torah 5746. During the Farbrengen the Rebbe instructed that everyone should turn their cups upside-down. The Rebbe explained that the cups on the branches of the Menorah in the Bais Hamikdash were placed upside down symbolizing that the energy goes forth from the Bais Hamikdash to the entire world. Similarly, our Shlichus is not to worry about ourselves, but to give energy of Yiddishkeit to the entire world. Saying this, the Rebbe finished the contents of his own Becher and turned it upside-down while the Chassidim began to sing. After the Farbrengen, a few of the Shamoshim in the Rebbe's house went in to visit the Rebbetzin and told her what had happened by the Farbrengen. When they came to telling about the Rebbe turning over his cup, the Rebbetzin asked in wonderment, "Un der man hot take azoi geton? – And my husband actually did so?" Saying this, she immediately took a tiny bottle of Mashke that was sitting on the table and turned it over.

<https://collive.com/our-rebbetzin-a-spiritual-giant/>

## The Chassidim Are My Children

The Rebbetzin had no children of her own, yet when a child visiting her at home asked her, "where are your children?" she answered that the Chasidim were her children.

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## You Will Speak Yiddish to Your Children

Sorah Shemtov

...I then had a chance to tell the Rebbetzin about my impending engagement. Of course, I addressed her in the third person. I said: "I came to speak to the Rebbetzin when I was looking for a husband, and now, thank G-d, I have found somebody, and we are about to write to the Rebbe to ask for his blessing to become engaged. So I wanted to share that news with the Rebbetzin."

"What is the name of the boy?" she asked.

"His name is Levi Yitzchak Shemtov."

"Is that Bentzion Shemtov's grandson?"

“Yes,” I answered.

At that the Rebbetzin’s face lit up. “Now I’m very happy, because now I know you’ll speak to your children in Yiddish.”

I guess the reason why she said that was because my family is very American on both sides, and the Rebbetzin always conversed with me, my sister and my father in English. But Levi Yitzchak and his family spoke Yiddish, and the Rebbetzin understood that Yiddish would be a part of our lives. Apparently, this was something very important to her.

There is a sequel to this:

After we got married, we didn’t have children for many, many years. But as hard as that was to bear, we always knew that if the Rebbetzin said that we would speak Yiddish to our children, then children would come. There wouldn’t only be just one child, there would certainly be more than one, because she said children.

And, thank G-d, today we do speak Yiddish to our children.

<https://collive.com/youll-speak-yiddish-to-your-kids/>