

THE Chabad WEEKLY ^{Vol. 4, # 16}

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After the miraculous Splitting of the Red Sea, as related 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 that 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. (From: *Living with Moshiach* 5760. www.moshiach.net)

Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness (16:32)
 For forty years, the Children of Israel were sustained by "bread from heaven," instilling in them the recognition that sustenance comes entirely from G-d; that no matter how much one toils to earn his livelihood, he receives no more, and no less, than what has been allotted him from Above.

The challenge is to retain this recognition also after entering the land and making the transition to "bread from the earth." Even when we are nourished by bread which we earn by "the sweat of our brow," we must remember that, in truth, our sustenance comes from G-d, and that we never receive an iota more or an iota less than what is allotted us from Above.

Hence the connection between the manna and the mitzvah of Shabbat. Shabbat, too, carries this lesson, serving as a weekly reminder that our sustenance comes from G-d. On the face of it, it might seem that ceasing work one day a week would lessen one's income; but the Jew knows that his earthly labor is only the channel through which G-d chooses to supply him what is essentially "bread from heaven," and that the best and most efficient conduit is one that conforms to the will of He who supplies sustenance to all His creatures. (The Lubavitcher Rebbe) - chabadonline.com

Chof Beis Shevat

Next Thursday, February 15 is the 13th yartzheit of the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka was born in the Russian village of Babinovitch (a small shtetl near Lubavitch) in 1901; she played an integral role in both her father's and husband's affairs throughout her life. And yet, she deliberately chose to function out of the limelight. Extremely modest, royal in bearing, and, above all, kindly.ooo Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka was the embodiment of Jewish womanhood and an exceptional role model for Jewish women and girls.

On the anniversary of her passing several years ago, the Rebbe spoke about the special mission all Jewish woman have been entrusted with. The function of every Jew--man, woman and child--is to "make a dwelling place for G-d" on earth. But the goal of the Jewish woman is to take this one step further, and adorn G-d's abode on the physical plane so that it is "lovely" and appointed with "fine furnishings."

In particular, the Jewish woman fulfills her role of "spiritual decorator" through the three special mitzvot G-d has given her to implement in her private home: maintaining the kashrut(3) of her kitchen, keeping the laws of Family Purity, and lighting candles for Shabbat and Yom Tov,(4) together with her daughters. (The Rebbe specified that young girls should light first, so that their mothers can assist them if necessary.)

The Rebbe also called on women to renew their commitment to the Jewish education of their children, from the earliest age on. When a Jewish mother sings a lullaby to her baby about how the Torah is "the best, the sweetest, and the most beautiful" thing in the world, it instills a deep love and appreciation for Torah that lasts a lifetime. The main point during these last few moments of exile, the Rebbe stressed, is to recognize the great merit and power Jewish women and girls have to bring about the Final Redemption. May it happen at once!

(From: *Living with Moshiach* 5759. www.moshiach.net)

THERE IS A CUSTOM OF EATING BLACK BUCKWHEAT ON THIS SHABBAT. ON SHABBAT B'SHALACH 5621 (1861) THE TZEMACH TZEDEK SAID THE MAAMAR *R'U KI HASHEM* PRINTED IN LIKUTEI TORAH. SHORTLY AFTERWARD HE SAID TO HIS SON, MY GRANDFATHER: *ON SHABBAT B'SHALACH 5565 (1805) MY GRANDFATHER SAID THIS MAAMAR. AFTERWARDS HE SENT FOR ME AND TOLD ME THAT IN 5529 (1769) WHEN HE WAS IN MEZRITCH THE MAGGID HAD SUMMONED HIM TO HIS ROOM AND HAD SAID:*

ON SHABBAT B'SHALACH 5516 (1756) THE BAAL SHEM TOV SAID A MAAMAR ON VAYASHAV HAYAM...L'EITANO, "THE RED SEA RETURNED TO ITS STRENGTH," QUOTING THE RABBINIC PLAY ON THE LAST WORD, L'EITANO- LITNAO, MEANING TO ITS CONDITION OR AGREEMENT. IN 5521 (1761), A YEAR AFTER THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S PASSING, MY REBBE (THE BAAL SHEM TOV) CAME TO ME, SAID THE MAAMAR, AND ADDED AN EXPLANATION OF THE SUBJECT "DOING HIS WILL" IN CONTRAST TO "DOING HIS WORD." AND TODAY MY REBBE AGAIN CAME TO ME TO REPEAT THE MAAMAR.

THEN THE MAGGID REPEATED THE MAAMAR TO THE ALTER REBBE, ADDING AN INTERPRETATION OF "RIVER GINAI, PART FOR ME," WHICH IS SIMILAR TO K'RIAT YAM SUF, THE SPLITTING OF THE RED SEA.

THE TZEMACH TZEDEK CONCLUDED: TODAY THE BAAL SHEM TOV, THE MAGGID AND THE ALTER REBBE CAME TO ME, EACH REPEATING THE MAAMAR IN HIS OWN STYLE.

SEVERAL HOURS LATER THE TZEMACH TZEDEK CALLED MY GRANDFATHER AGAIN AND TOLD HIM AN INTERPRETATION OF THE MAAMAR. (FROM REBBE'S HAYOM YOM SHVAT 17).

"Father, please don't be angry," said Reb Berel Shammes to his father, "I'm a little late in bringing your breakfast. Don't be angry, father - please forgive me." "You say you're late," said the old (blind) shammes, "But what does the Gemara say, (kesubos 67b) 'This teaches us that the Holy One, blessed be He, gives to each and every one his sustenance in its due time. 'What does it matter if you're late? Even if you weren't late, would it have made a difference? Each person's food arrives at the exact time that the Creator wills it'".

-From A letter written by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn