

bs'D **From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles** <[editor@ascentofsafed.com](mailto:editor@ascentofsafed.com)>

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## ***THE NICEST GIFT IMAGINABLE***

Before Chaim-Baruch Halberstam was married, he was a house assistant for the Rebbetzin, and her personal driver.

On Purim Day of 1970, Chaim-Baruch was on duty, standing by the door in order to receive the *m'shalach manos* (gift for the Purim festive meal of two or more edible items). The whole neighborhood, and many, many people from further away, would bring shalach manos to **the Lubavitcher Rebbe** and his **Rebbetzin, Chaya-Musia ("Mushka")**. Chaim Baruch would take all the shalach manos and put them on the dining room table. The Rebbetzin would pass by from time to time and take all the little greeting cards that accompanied the gift.

At a certain part of the day--late in the afternoon, I think--a *bachur* (yeshiva student) came to the door and gave Chaim Baruch a *m'shalach manos* for the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin. He put it on the crowded table with the others. It consisted of a brown paper bag with an orange and a cookie inside, which was in sharp contrast to all the generous and lavish ones that the 'well to do' householders had sent. These ranged from a full holiday meal to fancy cakes, rare, expensive alcoholic drinks and so on. All these beautiful items were later sent to the yeshiva students in 770.

"When the Rebbetzin passed by the table again later on in the day and saw this brown bag, she asked Chaim Baruch who brought it. He told her it was from a *bachur*. She was visibly moved and said it was the nicest *m'shalach manos* imaginable, and that this one she would show to her husband.

When the others were sent to 770, only this one remained on the Rebbe's table!

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*Source:* From a recording of the wife of Reb Chayim-Baruch Halberstam, **Mrs Mindy Halberstam** (who comments, "This story shows the greatness and sensitivity of the Rebbetzin). Subsequently transcribed and edited by Yaakov Cass for "*Living Jewish*" (Bo 5781) and further adapted and supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles for AscentOfSafed.com. **Rabbi Yaakov Cass** is a Lubavitcher chossid living in Jerusalem. Until recently he was a senior official in the Israel Ministry of Health.

*Biographical note:*

**Rebbetzin Chaya Moussia Schneerson** (of blessed memory: 25 Adar 5661- **22 Shvat** 5748 / March 1901 - Feb. 1988) was the daughter of the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef-Yitzchak Schneerson. On 14 Kislev 5689 (Dec. 1928), she married the future Rebbe, her distant cousin, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, in Warsaw, in a wedding attended by many Chasidic rebbes and leading Torah scholars of the generation. She devoted herself totally to supporting her husband in his role as a leader of world Jewry, and was known in her own right for her modesty, erudition, piety and good deeds.

