



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

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## THE MYSTERIOUS AROMA OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN

**Rebbetzin Shterna-Sarah**, wife of the fifth Lubavicher Rebbe, R. Shalom-DovBer Schneersohn (the *Rashab*) and the mother of the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, R. Yosef-Yitzchak Schneersohn (the *Rayatz*), was a very humble and holy person in her own right. One of her pleasures in life was to see holy Jews (*tzadikim*). One such tzadik was **Rabbi Tzvi-Hersh Shapira**, known as **the Munkatcher Rav**. Besides knowing all the books of the Torah and Kabbalah, this man was totally devoted to G-d every moment of his life.

She was aware that her son knew this Rabbi very well, and she made it known to her son that, should the opportunity present itself, she would like at least to see him. Sure enough, that day came. The Holy Munkacher Rav was to meet with her son to discuss important matters, and their meeting place would be the local park, where they would stroll and talk for several hours.

The Rebbe told his mother the exact path they would be taking and advised her to stand behind one of the trees on the route where she could get a good view of this great man. The next day, the Rebbe and Munkacher Rav began their "walking" discussion in the park as planned, but, in the middle of the stroll, the Munkacher Rav suddenly stopped, raised his face upward and began smelling the air.

"Is something wrong?" the Rebbe asked. "Do you feel all right?"

"Yes, certainly I feel all right," the Rav replied. "But do you smell that? I mean, do you smell anything unusual?"

"What do you mean?" the Rebbe asked, "What smell are you talking about?"

"Why," the Rav replied in disbelief, "I smell the aroma of *Gan Eden* (Heaven)!"

"Ach!" replied the Rebbe. "My mother is probably standing nearby. What you smell is my mother!"

Thus, we see that the Rebbetzin Shterna-Sarah in her own right 'downloaded' the smell of heaven to earth!

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*Source:* Compiled and supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from reports by Rabbis Y. Y. Jacobson and Tuvia Bolton.

*Why this week:* **TEVET 15** (2025: Wednesday, Jan. 15) is the birth date of the Rebbetzin Shterna-Sarah [and of my wife, Shulamit bat Aryeh-Leib HaKohen].

*Biographic notes* (in order of appearance):

**Rebbetzin Shterna-Sarah Schneersohn** [15 Tevet 5620 - 13 Shvat 5702 (Dec. 1860 – Jan. 1942)] was the daughter of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Avritch, a son of the Tzemach Tzedek. At fifteen she became the wife of the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom DovBer Schneerson, and five years later the mother of the sixth Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, her only child, named after her father.

**Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn** [12 Tammuz 5640 - 10 Shvat 5710 (Jan. 1880-June 1950 C.E.)], known as the **Rebbe Rayatz**, was the sixth **Lubavitcher** Rebbe, from 1920 to 1950. He established a network of Jewish educational institutions and Chassidim that was the single most significant factor for the preservation of Judaism during the dread reign of the communist Soviets. In 1940 he moved to the USA, established Chabad world-wide headquarters in Brooklyn and launched the global campaign to renew and spread Judaism in all languages and in every corner of the world, the campaign continued and expanded so remarkably successfully by his son-in-law and successor, *Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson*.

**Rabbi Tzvi-Hersh Shapira** [11 Tammuz 5610 (1850) - 16 Tishrei 5674 (1913)] was a great-grandson of the Bnei Yissachar, and named for Rav Zvi-Hersh of Ziditchov on whose *yahrzeit* he was born. In 1893, upon the death of his father Rabbi Shlomo, he became **the second Munkatcher Rav & Rebbe**. He wrote significant works on Jewish Law (Darkei Teshuva) and Kabbalah (B'er L'chai Roi on the Tikkunei Zohar) which was his primary area of study. He arranged the opening of a *Kollel* in Jerusalem and raised funds to support the *kollel* and community. After his passing on the second day of Sukkos, 1913, he was succeeded by his only son, Rabbi Chaim-Elazar Shapira, “the *Minchas Elazar*,” as Rav and Rebbe of Munkatch. [*based on Jewish Press.com*]