

FOR OUR DEAR GUESTS IN HONOUR OF
THE MARRIAGE OF OUR CHILDREN



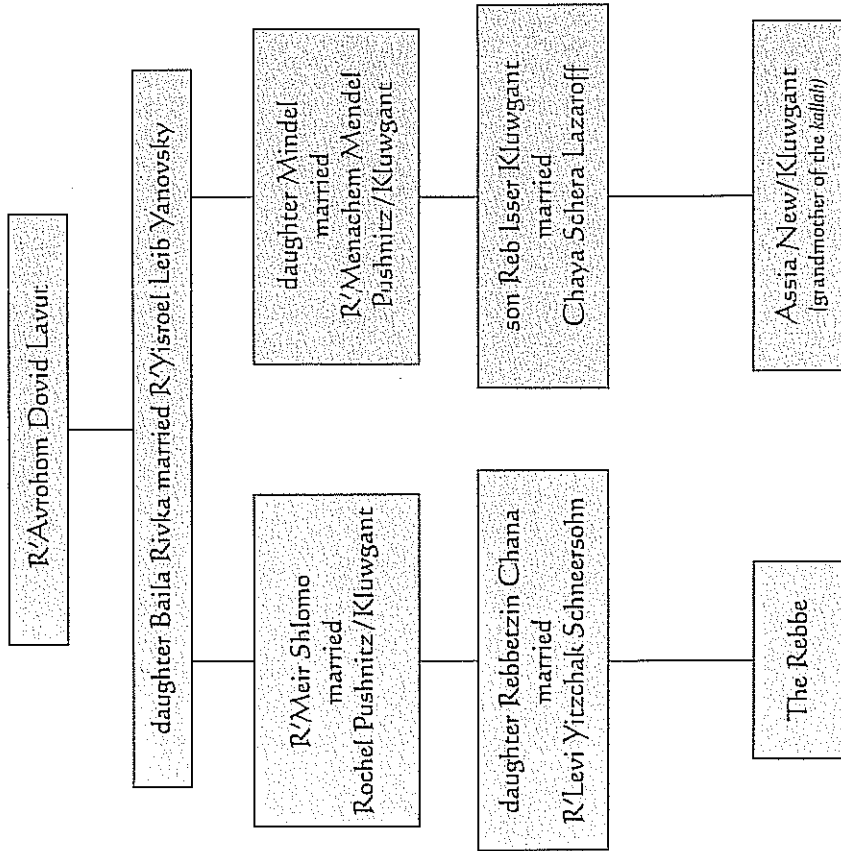
SIVAN 13, 5764 • JUNE 2, 2004
MONTREAL, CANADA

At the wedding of our Rebbe and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, in Warsaw in 1928, the Rebbe's father-in-law, the Previous Rebbe, distributed a special gift to each of the guests—a photocopy of a letter penned by the Alter Rebbe (Rabbi Schneur Zalman), founder of Chabad Lubavitch. Recently amongst Lubavitcher chassidim, it has become commonplace for parents of the bride or groom to share a memento of this kind with their guests.

It is in this spirit that we take great pleasure in presenting two letters, penned—in Hebrew—by Rebbetzin Chana, mother of our Rebbe, after who our daughter Chana is named.

These letters were written to our grandfather, Reb Isser Kluwgant, who was Rebbetzin Chana's first cousin.

The letters are particularly apropos to tonight's wedding, inasmuch as today, Sivan 13, is the anniversary of the marriage (in 1900) of Rebbetzin Chana and Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneersohn.



Rabbi Meir Shlomo (Rabbi of Nikolayev, succeeding his grandfather, Rabbi Avrohom Dovid) and Mindel Yanovsky were brother and sister, and they married a brother and sister—Rabbi Menachem Mendel (Rabbi of Dobrinka) and Rachel Pushnitz/Kluwgant.



Rebbetzin Chana & Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneersohn

The photograph of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak comes from the KGB/NIKVD files, taken upon his arrest, which have recently been made available to the public.

See 'A Brief Biography of Rebbetzin Chana' on page 6 of this booklet.

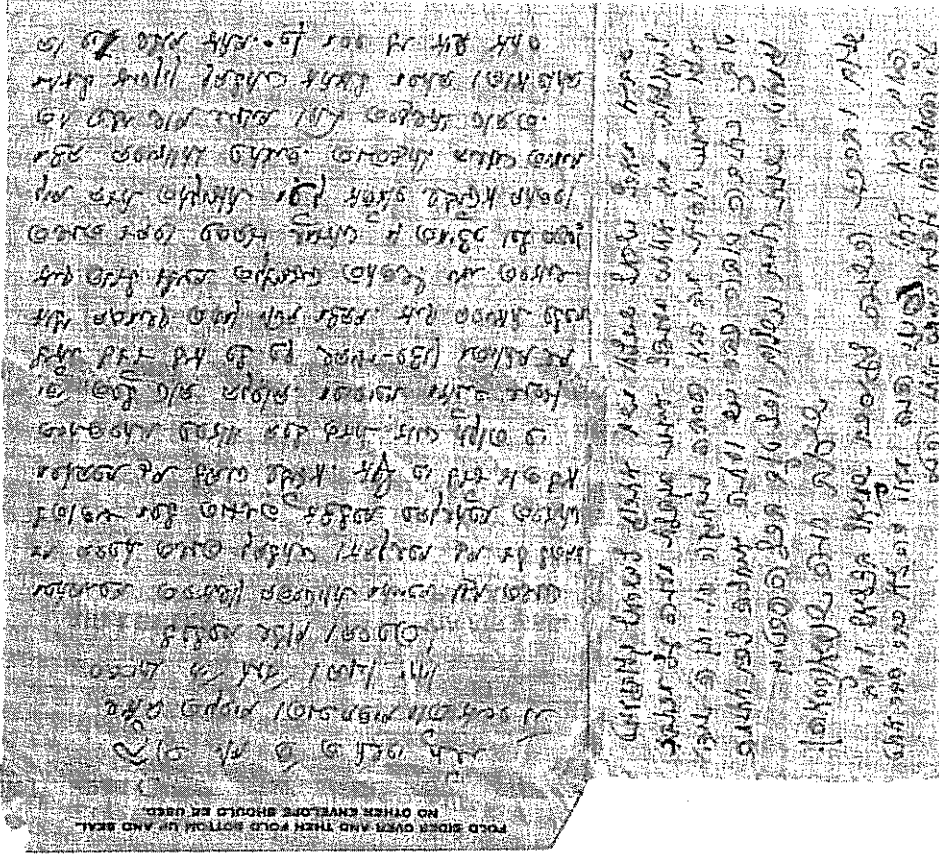


Special thanks to our uncle, Rabbi Sholom Menachem Mendel Klugwant, for graciously providing us with Rebbetzin Chana's letters. Our thanks and appreciation to our long-time family friend, Rabbi Yosef Minkowitz, for helping decipher the texts.



To our dear guests – thank you so much for celebrating in our simcha. Our *mehutanim*, Rabbi Shmuel and Rochel Kaplan join us in expressing our heartfelt wishes that Hashem bless us all with nachas from our children, good health and prosperity and that we all merit the ultimate simcha with the coming of Moshiach, now.

Moishe and Nechama New



translation/adaptation of letter I

Baruch Hashem, Wednesday, Tishrei 5, [between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur] 5710 [September 1949]

To my esteemed and honoured relatives, Rabbi Isser may his 'light shine', his wife Chaya may she be well, and his children may they be well,

To all of you, Shalom and Brocha!

I duly received your first letter with the details concerning your life, and the second letter with the New Year blessings, and I request that you continue to

keep me abreast of all that transpires in your lives. As you requested of me, I showed your letter to my son *shlita* (may he live long, good years). Although you have presently not yet fully settled down (in Australia), nonetheless I hope that all will be well soon.

Your acquaintances, fellow chassidim, who went to Israel to settle, are currently not entirely satisfied with their lot there. Perhaps, with the passage of time, their situation will improve.

How is all your health? How is the new climate affecting you?

The days of Rosh Hashana went by well. I heard (the verse) *Min hameitzar* ("Out of the depths...") and all the verses (customarily read before the blowing of the shofar) as they were recited by the Rebbe *shlita* (may he live long, good years)*. This (the prayer service) took place in his office. His health situation is as always. His conduct over the two days of Rosh Hashana were as usual and, thank G-d, he feels well.

I received a letter yesterday from Yoel Itkin. He writes that all is well with them.

I was informed by someone who came from Israel that an esrog was sent from Israel to Yisroel Klugant in Nikolayev. From my nephew**, Mendel, I have not received a reply to my letter to him. I do not know the reason for this silence. May G-d grant that all be well.

The 'inscription' in the 'Book of Life' has already been done – and now I wish you to be 'sealed', *gemar chasimah tova*. May this year be a year of life and peace and all that is good on all levels.

Your relative,

Chana Schneersohn

Please convey my greetings and blessings for the New Year to your brother-in-law, Shmuel Betzalel and his family (Althaus). His brother, Pinye, arrived today from Israel. I just spoke to him over the telephone. I have not yet seen him. C5



*Rebbetzin Chana is referring to the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak. (The Previous Rebbe was her 'mechtutan' – her son (our Rebbe) married Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, daughter of the Previous Rebbe.) The Previous Rebbe passed away in January 1950. Our Rebbe formally assumed the leadership the following year.

**Her sister's son. (Apparently, the sister referred to here is Miriam Gitel, married to Rebbetzin Chana's husband's brother, Rabbi Shmuel Schneersohn, Rabbi of Nikolayev.)

translation/adaptation of letter II

Baruch Hashem,
Monday, Nisan 7, 5716 (April,
1956) Brooklyn, New York

To my esteemed and honored relative, Rabbi Isser may his 'light shine', his esteemed wife may she be well, together with his entire household may they be well,

Shalom and Brochal

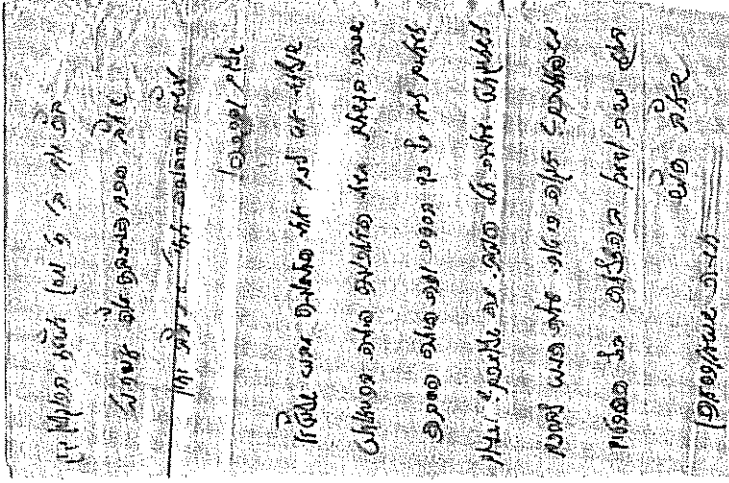
I herewith send to you the picture of my son *shlita* (may he live long, good years) which you requested (some time ago). Of late, my health has, on occasion, not been quite up to par and this has been the reason for my delayed reply. At present, thank G-d, (my health) has improved. How are you? And how is your family? I trust that all is well. Now I hereby bless you for a kosher and happy Yom Tov (Pesach) and for success on all levels.

Your relative who seeks your welfare,

Chana Schneersohn



The photograph of her son, our Rebbe, which the Rebbetzin sent to Reb Isser Klugant in response to his request. This photograph was a favorite of the Rebbetzin. It was taken in September, 1954 as the Rebbe was walking back to his office after having conducted a wedding (*chuppah*) ceremony in the courtyard of '770' – Lubavitch World Headquarters.



A Brief Biography of Rebbetzin Chana

Compassionate, Strong, Scholarly, Humble, Aristocratic, Simple, Charming, Self-effacing, Regal, Endearing.

These are some of the unique qualities that describe Rebbetzin Chana, mother of our Rebbe of righteous memory.

She was born in Nikolayev, Russia in 1879 into a renowned rabbinical family whose roots trace back to the very beginnings of the Chabad Lubavitch movement.

In the summer of 1900, Rebbetzin Chana married Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneersohn, an outstanding Talmudic scholar and Kabbalist and a direct descendant of Rabbi Schneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Lubavitch. In 1909 Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was appointed chief Rabbi of Yekaterinislav, the largest city in the Ukraine.

With the advent of communism, the Jews of Russia faced an onslaught of relentless attempts to purge the Jewish people of their faith in G-d and in Torah.

Teaching Torah to children was forbidden. Yeshivas were closed. Mikvahs were filled with cement and mortar. Circumcision, Jewish weddings and ritual slaughter of meat were declared illegal. Observance of Shabbat and Yom Tov were deemed a crime against the State. Religious Jewish organizations were outlawed, only token synagogues remained, controlled by the government. The communist regime was determined to extinguish the spark of Judaism forever.

Jewish leadership capitulated. With one exception. Lubavitch.

Rebbetzin Chana and her husband defied the new laws at the risk of their lives. They became leaders in the Lubavitch underground resistance, headed by the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak. Rebbetzin Chana had a particular rapport with young people, upon whom she had a profound influence, inspiring them to remain faithful to their Jewish identity.

In 1939 Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was arrested by the NKVD, the Soviet Secret Police, his whereabouts unknown. After many months Rebbetzin Chana learned that her husband had been banished to Kazakhstan. Overcoming immense obstacles, she reunited with him.

They lived under appallingly primitive conditions. In 1944 Rabbi Levi Yitzchak passed away, succumbing to years of torment and deprivation.

After the war, using forged Polish passports, Rebbetzin Chana together with other Lubavitcher families, escaped Russia.

Crossing the border, she jeopardized her life smuggling her husband's copious handwritten manuscripts.

Rebbetzin Chana had creatively fashioned ink and quill from wild plants, enabling Rabbi Levi Yitzchak to continue to write his valuable Torah commentaries, even whilst in exile. These profound volumes continue to provide illumination and guidance to all who delve into their riches.

In 1947 Rebbetzin Chana arrived in New York. She had the great *nachas* of seeing her eldest son assume the mantle of leadership of Chabad Lubavitch. In 1964, in the afternoon of the Shabbat between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, she passed away.

Many were they who sought her counsel and blessing. Thousands grieved at her passing. In cities throughout the world, newly established educational facilities were named in her honor.

But the greatest tribute to her extraordinary life are the schools, summer camps and children's programs that bear her name throughout the former Soviet Union.

Rebbetzin Chana contributed vitally to the heroic efforts of Lubavitch to keep the ember of Judaism alive during Russian Jewry's darkest hour. Today that ember has burst into glorious flame, shedding its light and warmth ever brighter and stronger.

