

REB BEREL ASSISTS AS THE REBBE WASHES HIS HANDS FOR CHALLAH AT  
THE SUKKOS RALLY FOR RELEASED TIME CHILDREN, 19 TISHREI 5737.

# Svoy Brat

ONE OF OURS

**REB BEREL JUNIK**

Chossid, Teacher,  
Meshamesh Bakodesh

לזכות  
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר לקאמפוס בקנדה,  
שיצליחו בשליחותם הק'  
מתוך הרחבה בגשמיות וברוחניות  
נדפס ע"י חבריהם השלוחים  
נשיא וועד השלוחים  
הרה"ת ר' **מרדכי**  
וזגתו מרת **נחמה דינה** שיחיו  
**סילבערבערג**  
וחבריו השלוחים במדינת אנטריו





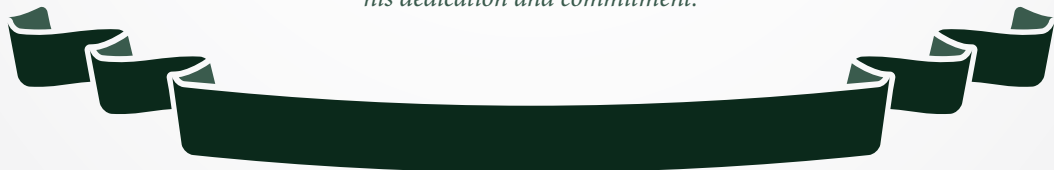
**REB BEREL AS A BOCHUR**  
JUNIK FAMILY ARCHIVES

*Berel Junik joined the masses of Lubavitcher Chassidim converging on the city of Lvov, on the Russian-Polish border. WWII had drawn to a close, and a tiny crack had remained open in the Iron Curtain. Eager to leave the country, a mass operation was set up to procure and distribute old and forged Polish passports which would allow passage over the border.*

*With passports in those days often being issued to entire families as units, the organizers of the escape rearranged families to fit the new aliases. Berel was assigned a passport which listed him as an only son traveling with his “mother.” He wasn’t aware at first, but he soon found out that the “mother” he was accompanying was none other than the Rebbe’s mother, Rebbetzin Chana.*

*For fear of being caught, no conversations were held during the actual journey<sup>1</sup>. But those few hours in Rebbetzin Chana’s presence were the beginning of a long and special relationship between Reb Berel, Rebbetzin Chana, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, and the Rebbe himself.*

*Throughout his life, Reb Berel served as meshamesh bakodesh, fulfilling hundreds of tasks for the Rebbe, Rebbetzin Chana, and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, in the most quiet and humble manner. This month, on 6 Menachem Av, Reb Berel would mark his 90th birthday. Presented in this article are some of the amazing encounters he had with the Rebbe and with beis harav; the outcome of his dedication and commitment.*



## Early Life

Reb Berel Junik was born in 5687 (תרפ"ז), in Pryluky, Ukraine, where his father Reb Naftali served as the local *shochet*. At a young age, his family relocated to Moscow, eventually fleeing east to Samarkand when the Nazis approached. Throughout all these years, Berel studied Torah in the underground *chadarim* and yeshivos of Tomchei Temimim.

After crossing the border to Poland in 5706 with Rebbetzin Chana, they continued on to Poking, Germany, where a Displaced Persons camp had been set up for refugees.

A short time later, Rebbetzin Chana continued on to Paris and eventually the United States. Berel meanwhile, remained in Poking, where he studied as part of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, under the tutelage of Reb Nissan Nemenov. Eventually the yeshiva moved to Brunoy, France.

During his time in Poking, he studied *shechita* as per the directive of the Frierdiker Rebbe. For a short period of time, he traveled to Dublin, Ireland, where he served as *shochet*, and then he returned to the yeshiva in Brunoy. One day, three years later, an opportunity arose for a group of

## Had he postponed the voyage, he wouldn't have merited to see the Frierdiker Rebbe.

*bochurim* from Brunoy to join the yeshiva in 770. Four *bochurim* were part of the group: Shalom Marozov, Yitzchak Pewsner, Berel Junik, and *yblchi"á* Gedalia Korf.

Berel's parents, still living in Poking at the time, were scheduled to arrive in Paris in two weeks time. He thought to postpone his own voyage until their arrival, but Reb Nissan advised him otherwise. "If you have a chance to go to the Rebbe, go right away." In retrospect, that minor decision had a fateful outcome. Ten days after the *bochurim's* arrival, the Frierdiker Rebbe was *nistalek*. Had he postponed the voyage, he wouldn't have merited to see the Frierdiker Rebbe.

## Yechidus with the Frierdiker Rebbe

The small group of *bochurim* arrived on Ellis Island in New York on Rosh Chodesh Shevat 5710. Four days

later, they merited to be received by the Frierdiker Rebbe for *yechidus*.<sup>2</sup> As they entered the room, the secretary Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein introduced each one of them to the Frierdiker Rebbe, who looked at them piercingly. The last one to enter was Reb Berel. When Reb Moshe Leib introduced him as "Berel Junik," the Frierdiker Rebbe continued to look at him. Reb Moshe then added "Naftali's son," and the Frierdiker Rebbe nodded, intimating that he knew who he was.

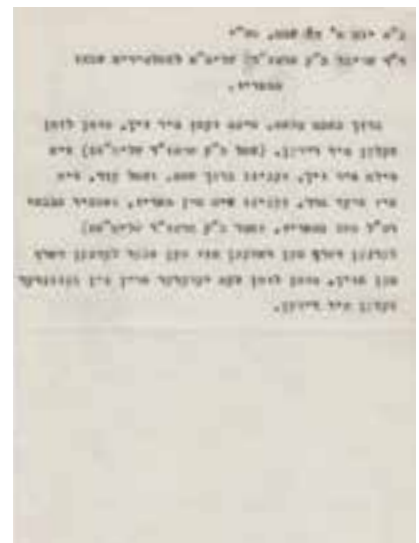
The Frierdiker Rebbe began by welcoming them, saying "*Boruch bo'achem tzleicha*." Although the Frierdiker Rebbe's speech was often hard to comprehend, the *bochurim* were able to decipher these words clearly; but for the duration of the *yechidus*, Reb Moshe Leib repeated the Rebbe's words for them.

The Frierdiker Rebbe told them, "*Heint zehen mir zich, fun zman lizman velen mir reiden*—we see each other today, and we will talk from time to time." He then inquired about their *seder*; when they said that they keep the same *sedarim* as in Brunoy—which had longer *sidrei Chassidus* than in 770—the Frierdiker Rebbe was clearly pleased. Before leaving, the Frierdiker



RASKIN FAMILY ARCHIVES

REB ZALMAN DUCHMAN JOINS A LIGHTEARTED MOMENT WITH THE BOCHURIM IN THE UPSTAIRS ZAL OF 770, CIRCA EARLY 5710S. REB BEREL IS STANDING FAR RIGHT.



JUNIK FAMILY ARCHIVES

TRANSCRIPT OF THE YECHIDUS WITH THE FRIERDIKER REBBE, 4 SHEVAT 5710.





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Rebbe reiterated, “*Mizman lizman vet yederer areingain bazunder, velen mir raiden*—from time to time you will each come in individually, and we will talk...”<sup>3</sup>

Less than a week later, the Friediker Rebbe was *nistalek*. Reb Berel was one of the *bochurim* sent by the Rebbe to the cemetery to prepare for the *levaya*.

Reb Berel would reminisce that during the *shiva* they overheard the Rebbe say that “*ba mir, hecher fun shver*

*iz nito*—for me, there is nothing higher than my father-in-law.” It didn’t take long for them to dedicate themselves to the Rebbe in a similar fashion...

### “From time to time”

On 7 Iyar, a few months after Yud Shevat 5710, Reb Berel knocked on the Rebbe’s door. The Rebbe was leading and guiding Chassidim since Yud Shevat, but he hadn’t taken on the *nesius* and was therefore not accepting people for *yechidus* at that point.

The Rebbe invited him in and asked what he wanted. Reb Berel explained that in their *yechidus* shortly before the *histalkus*, the Friediker Rebbe had told them that “we will speak from time to time.” Now, Reb Berel said, he wanted to talk...

The Rebbe stood up, shut the blinds, sat back down by the desk, and burst into tears.

The Rebbe proceeded to answer his questions (and edited them later in writing).<sup>4</sup>

Later that year when Reb Berel came to the Rebbe for *yechidus* again, he placed his *pan* on the table, but the Rebbe corrected him; “*A pan, besser geb’n in hant*—it is better to give a *pan* by hand.”

During the *yechidus*, the Rebbe told Reb Berel, “*Eich hot der Rebbe genumen oif di pleitzes*—the Rebbe took you on his shoulders.”

In the *hanacha* that Reb Berel submitted of the *yechidus*, the Rebbe added, “*Uber m’darf alein tohn*—one must work on his own as well.”



THE REBBE’S HAGAHOS ON REB BEREL’S TRANSCRIPT OF A YECHIDUS.

JUNIK FAMILY ARCHIVES

## The Real Yom Huledes

Ten years after his first Yechidus, on 7 Iyar 5720, Reb Berel entered for *yechidus* together with his wife and children and in his *tzetl* he wrote that it was the tenth anniversary since his first *yechidus*.

Before leaving the room, the Rebbe told him with a smile to go to Rabbi Hodakov and reserve the date for the next round—in ten years from then. Needless to say, Rabbi Hodakov was quite baffled when he stated his request. His calendar wasn't scheduled so far ahead.

Ten years later, as instructed, the Junik family went into *yechidus* once more, this time with a larger family. The Rebbe looked at his *tzetl*, and told him that since it is his “birthday,” he should do all of the birthday customs. Although Reb Berel's birthday is in Av, the Rebbe acknowledged the time he first entered *yechidus* as Reb Berel's “date of birth.”<sup>5</sup> Once again, the Rebbe told him to set up an appointment for the next anniversary, to take place in 5740.

During the *yechidus* of the thirtieth anniversary, this time with all their children and some grandchildren, Reb Berel told the Rebbe that he would like to set an appointment for ten years from then—in 5750. The Rebbe answered, “May Hashem fulfill your wishes and my wishes, but by then we will surely be in Eretz Yisrael with Moshiach.”

Ten years later, in 5750, Reb Berel asked the Rebbe if he would be able to enter *yechidus*, but the Rebbe answered that they should come by for dollars because that is the current form of *yechidus* [יחידות דעתה].<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the entire family came by the Rebbe and the Rebbe gave them a special *bracha*.

**You want everything for yourself! Why don't you leave something for others too?...**

## Meshamesh Bakodesh

The beginning of Reb Berel's “career” as a *meshamesh bakodesh* began right away after the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus*. He would set up the Rebbe's place for farbrengens, and other small tasks. Before Pesach 5711, the Rebbe asked Reb Berel if he could help serve during the *seder* in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment.<sup>7</sup> Reb Berel did so faithfully until his marriage in 5714.

During the first *seder*, the Rebbe asked him where his own *ka'arah* was, and he replied that he is relying on the Rebbe's *ka'arah*. Hearing that, the Rebbe told him: “If one relies on me for everything else, they can rely on me for this as well...”

The next year, his responsibilities grew. For the first time, the Rebbe held a farbrengen after the second *seder*, so he asked Reb Berel to find someone to accompany Rebbetzin Chana and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka to their homes. Reb Berel replied that he would do so himself, and the Rebbe commented, “You do everything yourself...” On another occasion, the Rebbe said in a similar vein, “Another Mitzvah you got? You want everything for yourself! Why don't you leave something for others too?...”

Another time Reb Berel would prominently serve the Rebbe was during farbrengens. Reb Berel would go into the Rebbe's room before the farbrengen to bring out the Rebbe's *becher* and the *mashke* that the Rebbe would distribute during the



REB BEREL (RIGHT) AT A FARBRENGEN UPSTAIRS 770. SITTING TO HIS RIGHT IS REB DOVID RASKIN, REB MORDECHAI MENTLIK, AND REB EZRIEL ZELIG SLONIM.

JEM 109341

Farbrenge, and in the later years, the leftover *mashke* from previous farbrenge which the Rebbe used. He would also be the one to bring the Rebbe water to wash for *hamotzi* at the Yom Tov farbrenge, and pour the water for the Rebbe to drink. The watch the Rebbe had on the table in front of him during the farbrenge belonged to Reb Berel as well.<sup>8</sup>

Once, when the Rebbe's regular *sar hamashkim*, Rabbi Mordechai Mentlik,<sup>9</sup> traveled to Eretz Yisrael, he asked Reb Berel to take his place. Because of that, years later, when Rabbi Mentlick felt too weak to continue in the post, Reb Berel did it in his stead. After Rabbi Mentlik passed away, Rabbi Hodakov officially appointed Reb Berel.

These are only a few of the many tasks which he did for the Rebbe. While he didn't hold an official position of *mazkir*, and carried a



REB BEREL EXCHANGES A FEW WORDS WITH THE REBBE DURING KOS SHE'EL BRACHA, MOTZOEI ROSH HASHANAH 5748.

## Meir Junik

Reb Berel's brother Meir Junik was supposed to join the family in their journey over the border, but for various reasons he was held back, and instead planned to join the next train. When he tried to join the next train, he was arrested, and after a series of unfortunate events, he ended up in Siberia with a twenty-five year sentence.

On Acharon Shel Pesach 5712, in the midst of the farbrenge, the Rebbe was handing out matzah to various individuals and giving them *brachos*, and Reb Berel came over to the Rebbe and asked for a piece of matzah for his brother Meir. The Rebbe gave him a piece for his father and brother-in-law, and then he gave him another piece, saying, "*Dem bruder ibershiken*—send this to your brother."

After the farbrenge, he went back to the Rebbe to ask how he was supposed to send it to him, and the Rebbe told him, "Send it to him when he comes here. Not necessarily to the US; when he arrives in a country outside of Russia."

The Rebbe's words gave hope to Reb Berel and his entire family. Now they were sure that Meir would survive his exile and manage to leave some day...

A few years later, Reb Berel was in *yechidus*. He asked the Rebbe—in his father's name—for a clear promise, not simply a *bracha*, that his brother would manage to leave.

The Rebbe's answer shocked him. "Why do you have to pull my tongue? My father-in-law managed with bigger things; he will surely manage with this as well..."

With that, the Rebbe began to cry.

A short time later, they were notified that Meir had been released from prison—after serving for only eight years. Yet he was still stranded behind the Iron Curtain.

Years passed. Meir married, started a family, and built a *chassidische* home in the Soviet Union. In 5731, Meir and his family received the much awaited exit visas. The Rebbe told him to move to North America.

On Chol Hamoed Pesach of that year, Berel traveled to Canada to meet his newly arrived brother. Full of emotion, he brought him the matzah that had been waiting for nineteen years.





LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 12882

regular full-time job, nevertheless, his entire life revolved around the Rebbe.

### Very Close Attention

The Rebbe paid close attention to every detail of Reb Berel's life and took care of him in all sorts of ways. Being that his parents weren't around in New York to physically care for him, the Rebbe especially looked out for him, and as he was often in the Rebbe's room for all sorts of tasks, he had a constant opportunity to speak to the Rebbe.

Before Shavuot 5712, the Rebbe asked him if he had bought a new suit in honor of Yom Tov. When he replied that he had not, the Rebbe took out a hundred dollars, and gave it to him to buy one, and to spend on his other needs.

The next time he was in the Rebbe's room, the Rebbe asked him if he was wearing the new suit. He said yes, so the Rebbe asked him to turn around

# Rebbetzin Chana

A short time after arriving in the United States, the Rebbe told Reb Berel that Rebbetzin Chana would like to see him. From that first visit, Reb Berel became a regular at her home, usually visiting every Friday night, and it often occurred that the Rebbe would send him there on various missions.

Rebbetzin Chana paid special attention to everything that went on in his life. Once, she asked the Rebbe, "*Vos macht dein yunger bruder*—how is your younger brother doing?" referring to Berel, who had left Russia as her "son," thus being the Rebbe's "younger brother." In fact, the Rebbe also once called him "*svoy brat*," a Russian expression which means "one of us," but in literal terms, it means "a brother."

On Rosh Hashanah 5725, shortly before her passing, Rebbetzin Chana made a major effort to come hear *tekios* from the Rebbe on the first day of Yom Tov. Later that day, she told Reb Berel, that although it was very hard to go to shul, it was worth it, just to hear the Rebbe's *tekios*.

Then she told him, "*Ir veist nit vos ir farmugt*—you have no idea what you possess," referring to the Rebbe. She continued, "I am not saying this as a mother; I'm saying it because it's the truth."

Reb Berel noted that the Rebbetzin, then in her elderly years, often didn't feel in the best of health. Nevertheless, she always attempted to hide her situation from the Rebbe. She would tell Reb Berel not to breath a word about it to the Rebbe, saying that he should be told *only besuros tovot*, good news.

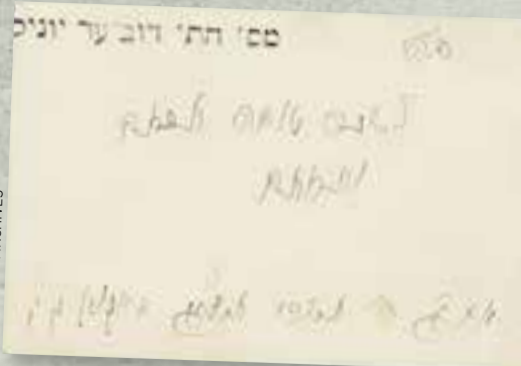
When Reb Berel became engaged to his wife, Fruma Pewsner, Rebbetzin Chana told him that she knew the *kallah*. Later he found out, that his wife had acted as the representative of Beis Rivkah in France, and had spoken before Rebbetzin Chana and the Rebbe during their stay there in 5707.<sup>11</sup>

The Rebbe's mother attended their *tenaim* and their wedding. At the wedding, she asked the photographer to take a picture of her with the *kallah*, and then told him to take a picture of her alone. That picture is the famous image of Rebbetzin Chana (printed above).

After the wedding, the couple continued visiting Rebbetzin Chana often, later accompanied by their young children. The Rebbetzin would always be very welcoming to them, and on Chanukah she would give them Chanukah *gelt*.



REBBETZIN CHANA AT REB BEREL'S CHASUNA, 9 SIVAN 5714. JEM 112724



REBBETZIN CHANA'S HANDWRITTEN WISHES TO REB BEREL OF *לשנה טובה ותחתם תכתב* DATED "TUESDAY, 4 TISHREI 5713, BROOKLYN, NY."

JUNIK FAMILY ARCHIVES



## I don't mean to force you; you should be doing this on your own..."



YOSSI MELAMED via JEM 132283

REB BEREL RECEIVES LEKACH FROM THE REBBE, EREV YOM KIPPUR 5748.

and remarked, "I think it is a little bit too small..."

When Reb Berel once got involved in sensitive issues in *beis harav* that should not have been of his concern, the Rebbe lovingly reprimanded him. In his diary, Reb Berel writes what the Rebbe told him:

"...Reb Ber, come closer to the desk..."

"Why must you listen to *lashon hara*? The Gemara says that it harms the speaker, the listener and the person being discussed.

"You came to the yeshiva to learn; the [Friediker] Rebbe brought you here to learn *nigleh* and Chassidus, to grow in your *avodas hatefillah* and *ahavas Yisrael*, yet you pushed all that aside to deal with something that has nothing to do with you..."

The Rebbe then proceeded to give Reb Berel a *tikkun* as well as advice on how to distance himself from all the 'happenings.'

When he asked the Rebbe how to remain *mekushar* for the future, the Rebbe told him as follows:

"It depends on you; when you maintain yourself on these *daled amos*, you are located within a *keren orah*, and when you hold onto the *ilana d'chaya*, then you are *mekushar*.

"You need to eat normally, two or three times a day...sleep as much as you need to, and be joyful. When you will do all of these things, I will be joyful as well.

"Be joyful that you merited to be here, in the *keren orah*, and I want to see the joy on you tomorrow as well..."

On Acharon Shel Pesach 5712, the Rebbe told Reb Berel:

"My *shlichus* in this world, as I see it, is to accomplish the task *b'chesed uv'rachamim*, with kindness and compassion. I took it upon myself, and I asked that it be with *chesed* and *rachamim*.

"It is my function to ensure that you should be *b'simcha*, happy, and to make you into a Chassid. Your task is to daven, learn during the *sedarim*, and to increase in them as well. Now, go dance and channel your joy for the entire year."

### Such *yungerleit* will bring Moshiach!

Shabbos Parshas Shemini 5712 was a historic Shabbos [people referred to it as Shabbos Hagadol]. During the *farbrenge*, the Rebbe said *l'chaim* many times, and the *farbrenge* was held in *Simchas Torah* style. Towards the end of the *farbrenge*, the Rebbe asked for a Gemara to quote a specific piece from inside.

While the crowd waited around, Reb Berel ran to bring a Gemara. When he returned, the Rebbe held onto his beard, and said, "*Azelche yungerleit velen breingen Moshiach'n*—such young men are going to bring Moshiach."

The Rebbe continued to speak for some time, all the while holding onto Reb Berel's beard.

At that *farbrenge*, the Rebbe exhorted him to reach beyond his *hagbalos*, his limitations, to fully invest himself in being a *tomim*, and to do things *b'kabbalas ol*.

"When will we get Reb Junik to go out of his limitations? He needs to understand everything!

"...He needs to stop thinking about himself; when you think about yourself, even in *kedusha*, that is the biggest *yeshus* that could be..."

### Marriage

When Reb Berel arrived in New York, he was already of marriageable

age. The Rebbe would speak to him and encourage him about *shidduchim*. In his diary, the first mention of it was early on in 5711; the Rebbe mentioned to him that his parents had written to the Rebbe, asking him to encourage him to begin looking for a *shidduch*.

Ultimately, it took another few years before he actually agreed to move forward, and then too, it was only with the Rebbe's urging.

In his diary, Reb Berel records the Rebbe's words to him on one occasion:

"Let's talk undiplomatically:

"...How do you think it is going to happen? ...Do you want the *Aibershter* to bring you a *kallah*, and you will close your eyes and say '*harei at mekudeshes?*'"

"...I feel a responsibility for the *bochurim*...I don't mean to force you; you should be doing this on your own..."

A few months later, the Rebbe nudged him once more on this topic:

"*Nu*, what excuse do you have today?"

When, close to a year later, Reb Berel finally became engaged, the Rebbe was intimately involved in all of the details of the meetings, the celebrations, and the wedding itself.

When the Rebbe noticed that he didn't receive an *aliyah* on the Shabbos morning after the engagement, he instructed at *mincha* that the Kohanim leave the room so that Reb Berel and his father Reb Naftali could both receive *aliyos*.

Even after his marriage, the Rebbe paid close attention to Reb Berel's life. At one point during an economically challenging time, Reb Berel experienced hardship in earning a livelihood. He already had three children and he had to leave his job. He asked the Rebbe how he should look for a new job, and the Rebbe directed him to seek advice from Reb Dovid Deitch of New Haven. During the conversation, the Rebbe asked

When Mrs. Junik gave birth to a son, they decided to name him Meir Shlomo after Rebbetzin Chana's father. Reb Berel called the Rebbetzin and asked for her permission. She said that she was very happy about the idea, but she asked him to wait before she gave them a final answer. It seems that she first wanted to consult with the Rebbe, and only then gave them the final go-ahead.

When Mrs. Junik visited with the young Meir Shlomo, Rebbetzin Chana played with him for quite a while, and showed extra care for his well-being.<sup>12</sup>

### *Passing of the Rebbe's brother*

On Yud-Gimmel Iyar 5712, the Rebbe's brother, Reb Yisrael Aryeh Leib, passed away.<sup>13</sup> The Rebbe went to great lengths to ensure that Rebbetzin Chana would not learn about the tragedy. The news was kept secret, and only a select few knew that the Rebbe was sitting *shiva*. To hide the fact from Rebbetzin Chana, Reb Berel painted the white soles of the Rebbe's sneakers black, so that the Rebbetzin wouldn't notice that anything was amiss when the Rebbe visited her (as he did on a daily basis).

To make sure that the Rebbe wouldn't spend too much time in her home, to lessen the possibility of her realizing, the Rebbe planned the following ploy with Reb Berel:

A few short moments after the Rebbe entered her home, Reb Berel went to a pay phone and called her. The Rebbe picked up the phone, told Rebbetzin Chana that he didn't want to disturb her phone call, said "a good day," and left. When he returned to 770, the Rebbe told Reb Berel that she hadn't noticed the sneakers.

Each day, the Rebbe did a similar trick to leave Rebbetzin Chana's home quickly, before she would be able to pick up that something was out of the ordinary.

The Rebbe also told Reb Berel to copy her mail key—which he did by hand—and to bring her mail to the Rebbe for "censorship," to remove all condolence letters, before they reached her.

### *Her Histalkus*<sup>14</sup>

On Shabbos, Vov Tishrei 5725, Rebbetzin Chana was *nistalek*.

Throughout the entire day leading up to her passing, Reb Berel was intimately involved in everything; arranging doctors' visits, updating the Rebbe, and so on.

After the funeral, the Rebbe sat *shiva* (until Yom Kippur) in the Rebbetzin's home. With many people passing through the home within a short period of time, the Rebbe wanted to ensure that no items would be removed from the house, and Reb Berel took responsibility to make sure it would happen.

After the *shiva* concluded, the Rebbe gave Reb Berel an object that belonged to his mother. "Why shouldn't a Yid use it, especially somebody who merited to serve my mother. She will certainly have *nachas ruach* if you will use it," the Rebbe said, and began to cry.



him how long he hadn't been working for, and how much he usually earned. The Rebbe reached into his pocket, provided him with the money to cover the three weeks he hadn't been paid for, and told him to get more from Rabbi Hodakov if there was a need.

He did so, and later, when his finances were stabilized, he repaid what he had received.

### *Discreet and Faithful*

In his diary,<sup>10</sup> Reb Berel notes a fascinating anecdote that the Rebbe shared with him.

“The Rebbe Rashab had an attendant called Reb Mendel. Whenever he would leave the Rebbe's room, that Chassidim would ask him, ‘What is the Rebbe doing?’ but he would always reply ‘I don't know.’”

The Rebbe continued:

“When someone asks you [about your work], you should answer ‘I don't know,’ or something similar. If you could forget altogether, that would be even better.”

Reb Berel fulfilled this command to the utmost. Naturally a reserved person, Reb Berel went about his tasks quietly and faithfully, and no one knew what he was doing and how close he was with the Rebbe.

Although some tasks seemed minor and insignificant at times, he nevertheless valued them and held them precious; he insisted on doing it on his own, even at the price of losing out on other things.

### *Pure Dedication*

Reb Berel is also remembered for his *shechita* classes. One time in the early years, the Rebbe expressed his desire for Reb Berel to teach the *shechita* classes for the *bochurim* in 770. For decades afterwards, three months a year, after a grueling day at work cutting diamonds in Manhattan, Reb Berel would stand and teach a two

# Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka

Once, while visiting Rebbetzin Chana, Reb Berel met Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka. From then on, Reb Berel became a regular at the Rebbe's house as well.

During the summer of 5713, most of the *bochurim* traveled on Merkos Shlichus, and only a few people were left in yeshiva. Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka suggested that Berel come for meals to the Rebbe's house; almost every day, he would come to the Rebbe's house and eat a hot meal. One day, as he arrived in the house, he realized that the Rebbe was present as well. He overheard the Rebbe tell the Rebbetzin, “I will go into my room while you feed him; if he knows I'm here, he won't want to eat...”

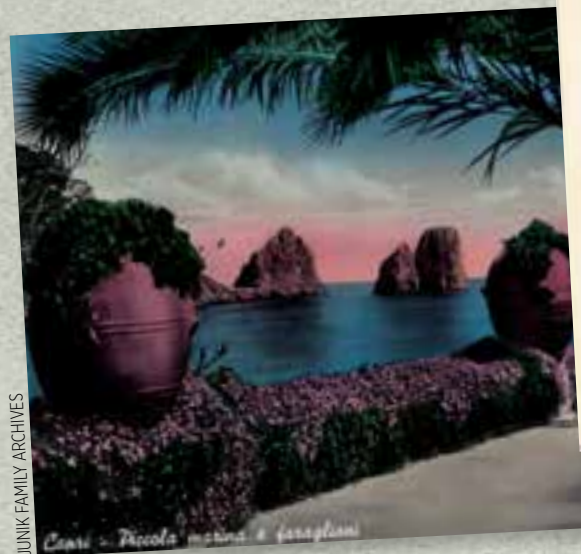
Some years after his wedding, Reb Berel presented a beautiful picture of the Rebbe at his *chupah* and brought it to the Rebbetzin as a gift for her fiftieth wedding anniversary. The Rebbetzin appreciated it very much, and placed it in the Rebbe's home library on the second floor. This—aside for two pictures of the Frierdiker Rebbe—was the only picture displayed in the Rebbe's home.

In the years after his wedding, Reb Berel would often visit the Rebbetzin on Shabbos with his children, and he would call during the week as well. Whenever he spoke with her, she displayed real interest in everything that was going on in his life; his *parnassa*, children, and so on.

On one opportunity, the Rebbetzin told Reb Berel that the Rebbe remarked “If Berel Junik says something, he can be relied on.”

Once, the Rebbetzin described to him a *farbrengen* of her grandfather, the Rebbe Rashab. She said that the vision is so engraved in her memory, that with the proper thought, she could even tell him what the Rebbe Rashab had spoken about.

On a different occasion, she told him about the happenings on the night of the Frierdiker Rebbe's arrest. She described how the Rebbe had been accompanying her home when they noticed that strangely the entire house was



POSTCARD FROM REBBETZIN CHAYA MUSHKA TO REB BEREL, 5712.



lit up. She went inside to check out the situation, and when she saw what was going on, she surreptitiously told the Rebbe through a window that “Guests have come to visit.” The Rebbe immediately ran to notify the other Chassidim.

Within a few minutes of the arrest, the Rebbetzin related, Chassidim were standing on all the nearby street corners to see which route the car would take.

### Two Nights before

Reb Berel did all he can to help the Rebbe and Rebbetzin in every way possible. When the Rebbe and Rebbetzin began staying in the library each Shabbos, the Junik children would help prepare the library apartment beforehand,<sup>15</sup> and Reb Berel was instrumental in its expansion, improving the accommodations. He was also the one responsible for building the Rebbe’s sukkah at the downstairs entrance of 770, making it possible for the Rebbe to go in and out of the sukkah without exiting 770. The children would also assist with the Pesach cleaning, and many other things.

When Reb Berel’s youngest son, Dovid, went to learn in yeshiva in London, the Rebbetzin was worried about the shy, *eidele* boy being so far from home, so she asked acquaintances in England, the Hager family, to look after him. The Rebbetzin also asked Reb Berel numerous times about his son’s well being.

One Sunday night while in England, Dovid called the Rebbetzin’s house. He usually called at a time he knew the Rebbe wasn’t home, and the Rebbetzin would pick up the phone herself. This time however, someone else picked up the phone and said that the Rebbetzin wasn’t available to speak at the moment.

He said, “Okay, please tell the Rebbetzin that Dovid Junik called.”

The Rebbetzin then picked up and had an entire conversation with him, about his learning, *mitzvoim* and everything else that was new in his life. Dovid asked for a *bracha* for continued success in everything he did, and the Rebbetzin *benched* him that he should be even more successful in his learning than he was until then, and ended off “*m’vet zich zeh’n*, we will see each other.”

Two nights later, on Chof-Beis Shevat, the Rebbetzin was *nistalek*. A mere twenty four hours earlier, when she was in a very unpleasant physical state, she found it important to speak to a young boy who was far from home and to make him feel good.



THE PHOTOGRAPH OF THE REBBE AT REB BEREL’S CHASUNA WHICH HE GIFTED THE REBBETZIN, SINCE ON DISPLAY IN THE REBBE AND REBBETZIN’S HOME.



ELUL 5740, LEVI FREIDIN v/a JEM 193315



ELUL 5740, LEVI FREIDIN v/a JEM 193310

REB BEREL TEACHES SHECHITA.

hour class on *shechita*, finally arriving home after ten o'clock at night.

He would also—as per the request of Rabbi Hodakov—organize a *shiur* for working *bochurim* who couldn't handle a full day of rigorous yeshiva learning. He would call, cajole, and encourage them all to participate, and even if they were initially resistant, they would ultimately be swayed by Reb Berel's kind, non-judgmental personality.

In everything he did, he expressed simple *yir'as Shamayim*, *eidelkeit* and dedication. He preferred to travel to work by subway rather than in a private car, for it would be easier for him to utilize the time for learning; these examples go on and on.



Reb Berel passed away on 9 Iyar 5765, thus concluding a life of dedication and love for *beis chayenu*. **T**

1. See Derher Iyar 5776, "Early Steps," for Rabbi Avrohom Korf's description of the trip with Rebbetzin Chana. Rabbi Shimon Lazaroff was present on that train as well; see Derher Iyar 5777 "A Desert Blooms."
2. Dovid Raskin had arrived a week earlier, and also joined the group for the *yechidus*.
3. For a full description of their *yechidus*, see Yemei Bereishis page 56.
4. For more about this *yechidus*, see Yemei Bereishis page 147-8.
5. See Hayom Yom 30 Shevat, about keeping



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REB BEREL RECEIVES A MATZAH FROM THE REBBE, EREV PESACH 5751.

the anniversary of one's first *yechidus* as a birthday.

6. See Derher Tammuz 5775 "Yechidus" page 22.
7. For detailed descriptions of the Rebbe's *sefer*, see Derher Nissan 5772, "A Yiddish'n Seder", and Derher Nissan 5776 "The Rebbe's Seder."
8. In many videos, you can notice that the Rebbe waits for Reb Berel to take his watch back before leaving the *farbrengen*, so that it wouldn't be lost in the ensuing chaos.
9. Read more about Rabbi Mentlik, see Derher Teves 5775, "Mein Motele."
10. Excerpts of Reb Berel's diary were published in the *Techayenu Magazine*, Shevat 5777.
11. See Derher Shevat 5776, "Total Transformation" pg. 51 for a description of the Rebbe's visit to France in 5707.

12. For more about Meir Shlomo's relationship with Rebbetzin Chana, as well as the Rebbe's comments about his name, see Derher Supplement, Vov Tishrei 5775 pg. 14, and Derher Elul 5776 pg. 24.

13. For a short biography about the Rebbe's brother, and a detailed *yuman* of the events with the Rebbe following his *histalkus*, see Derher Iyar 5774, "The Rebbe's Brother."

An interesting story that occurred at the time is recorded in Rabbi Itche Meir Gurary's interview with the Derher, Iyar 5775 pg. 60.

For the Rebbe's *sicha* explaining the deeper meaning of his name, see Derher Iyar 5775, "Two Names Are One".

14. For a comprehensive *yuman* of those few days, see Derher Supplement, Vov Tishrei 5775, "Yoman Vov Tishrei."

15. This was described at length in Rabbi Menachem Junik's interview, Derher Shevat 5777 pg. 51.