

A Chanukah Miracle

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Four months after sneaking into Uman for the first time, American student Gedaliah Fleer returned with an official tour group of Breslovers led by Rabbi Zvi Aryeh Rosenfeld in December 1963. This time, the mayor of Uman himself accompanied them.

The woman who lived in the house adjoining Rebbe Nachman's grave was flustered when she saw a group of tourists, the mayor with his assistant, and several policemen standing outside. Maria, one of the Intourist guides, tried to explain that the tourists had come to pray in her yard. The woman, however, became hysterical and started screaming that there was no grave in her yard.

"Okay," said the mayor. "Perhaps this is not the correct house. Let's look for a grave in someone else's yard."

"This is the correct place," I whispered to Rabbi Zvi Aryeh. "This is the yard, and this is the woman."

Rabbi Zvi Aryeh repeated my words to the mayor. The mayor, his

assistant and the Jewish guide started to argue with us. "What's the big problem? If you can't get in to see the grave, forget about it. We'll take you on a tour of the city. Uman is beautiful."

We appealed to Maria. "You see. We told you this would happen."

Maria became furious. "Open the gate immediately!" she shouted at the woman, and then pushed in the gate without waiting for a reply. "Go inside!" she instructed us. No one asked any questions. We entered the yard and I showed the others the exact location of the grave. The woman who lived there was completely confused. The mayor scratched his head in wonder and we, of course, started to recite the *Tikkun HaKlali*.

It is impossible to describe how we felt standing next to Rebbe Nachman's holy grave. We were privileged to remain there for an hour and a half in prayer and hitbodedut. By the time we returned to the bus, a wondrous warmth flowed through our veins.

In Moscow, our hotel rooms faced the Kremlin. Since it was Chanukah, we lit the Chanukah menorah. Our joy was beyond words. Watching the tiny flames that symbolized pure belief in God, bringing the light of Torah into the darkness of Russia, we realized that we had been given the privilege of spreading the Rebbe's light.

From "Against All Odds"