

Keeping the Connection Every Day

written by breslov.org

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After almost three years of being involved with Breslov, I finally considered taking the big step of traveling to Uman for Rosh HaShanah. I was nervous that I would find the people there worshiping Rebbe Nachman, God forbid, rather than the Almighty, and of course, I didn't want to have any part of that.

I made the trip and wasn't disappointed. I didn't find worship of Rebbe Nachman. Instead, I found inspirational prayer and true cleaving to God. I found incredible joy and a great sharing of spiritual and material nourishment.

Uman felt like a huge soup of the Jewish people, a cholent of every possible type of Jew. I never expected to see chassidim with long peyot and shtreimels rubbing shoulders with young men with ponytails and earrings. The mikvah scene was outrageous – all those tattoos!

Despite the differences, a tremendous love existed between the

different groups. I had always thought that most Breslovers have long peyot and wear long coats. In Uman, I met an entire group of clean-shaven, English-speaking, professional Breslover chassidim and saw many people of all types – not religious, Modern Orthodox and traditional Jews – from many different countries.

Tashlikh was unforgettable. Picture it: 25,000 people surrounding a river, doing teshuvah, many of them singing and dancing. There was so much joy!

Before Rosh HaShanah, I took a day trip to Reb Noson's grave in the town of Breslov. I spent time there in hitbodedut; it was an amazing experience. In addition, I went to the Sofievka Park in Uman for hitbodedut three or four times. One of the English-speaking rabbis took us on a special hitbodedut expedition to the forest, where he gave us pointers on how best to communicate with God. It was very down-to-earth, yet uplifting at the same time.

I hope to continue studying the Torah ideas of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov and make them part of my life. I hope to strengthen my commitment to follow the Rebbe's advice to spend time in hitbodedut, to immerse daily in the mikvah, and to follow all the other guidelines he gave us to be able to serve God and increase true, deep joy in our lives.

From "Rebbe Nachman and the Knights of the Rosh HaShanah Table"