

The U.S.-Israel Connection

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Rabbi Zvi Aryeh Rosenfeld, a pioneering Breslov educator who spread Rebbe Nachman's teachings in North America beginning in the 1940s, had a very deep love for the Land of Israel. While he reached out to Jews who were distant from God and taught many adults and children the basics of Torah and *mitzvot*, he would always try to strengthen his connection with the Holy Land. In addition to traveling to Israel over 50 times, he collected charity to support the Breslover chassidim living in Jerusalem, and raised most of the funds for the construction of the Breslov yeshivah in Mea Shearim.

When he began teaching young students in New York City, Rabbi Rosenfeld instilled in them both the love of the Land and the greatness of charity. In the early 1950s, in agreement with

the Breslover chassidim in Jerusalem, he set up a system called *ma'amadot* (literally, "position," "standing" or "rank"). For the going rate of \$1.10 per month, each boy among his students who wanted to join would become a "partner" with a chassid in Jerusalem and have a share in the latter's Torah study and service of God.

In the 1950s, this was a lot of money for a young boy. The boy would give his own 10 cents and then have to raise the remaining dollar for charity! But this connection served to strengthen the ties between Rabbi Rosenfeld and his students, as well as between Rabbi Rosenfeld and the chassidim in Israel, and had a profound impact on the American boys who were subsequently inspired to travel to the Holy Land themselves.