

“The Walls Have Ears”

written by breslov.org

November 3, 2016



In the early 1960s R' Gedaliah Fleer attempted the impossible: to visit the tziyun (gravesite) of Rebbe Nachman in Uman. The city was sealed off to foreigners, while the Communist authorities harassed Russian Jews who made the annual Rosh Hashanah pilgrimage. Upon reaching Moscow on a tourist visa, R' Gedaliah contacted the one man who could help him get to Uman: R' Michel Dorfman.

At exactly 2:00, a man with a small beard, wearing a decorated Russian cap, knocked on my door. He was obviously frightened and asked if I was Gedaliah Fleer. When I replied that I was, he walked in, removed a piece of paper from his pocket and wrote in Hebrew, “*The walls have ears.*” Then he turned the

radio up to its highest volume and whispered in my ear, "What are you doing here?"

I explained in Yiddish that I was an American, that I had just arrived from Israel and that I brought him regards from his father-in-law. It took R' Michel a while to understand that I was a Breslover chassid and that I wanted him to take me to the *tziyun*. When he finally understood, he looked at me as though I was crazy.

To find out if I was telling the truth, he asked, "Did you ever study Breslover books?"

"Yes."

"Who was Rebbe Nachman's mother?"

"Feiga, the daughter of Adil, the daughter of the Baal Shem Tov."

He asked me several other simple questions, which I had no difficulty answering. Every time I tried to raise my voice to be heard above the radio, he pointed to the piece of paper with the words "*The walls have ears.*" Finally he said, "It would be best to go for a walk outside."

We walked to a bridge about a block away, and paced back and forth across it as we talked.

"I spent six years and seven months in prison," R' Michel said. "The police keep my friends and me under constant surveillance. To take you to the *tziyun* would be extremely risky, and I don't think that I can endanger myself like that. After all, I still have an unmarried daughter, and what will become of her if I end up in prison again? The only thing that I can do is give you explicit instructions how to find the *tziyun*, so listen well!"

From "Against All Odds"

