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## **Breslov in America**

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Breslover Chassidim first arrived upon American shores with the masses of refugees fleeing Russian persecution during the early 1900s. Although the names of many have been forgotten, conspicuous among them was Rabbi Elchonon Farber (d. mid-1950s), a Ukrainian Breslover who had known Reb Avraham b'Reb Nachman (author of "Biur HaLikutim" on Likkutei Moharan) and was an accomplished scholar and dedicated Chassid. Another early Breslover in America was Rabbi Yitzchok Mendel Rottenburg (approx. 1891-1991), a well-known personality on Manhattan's Lower East Side, who lived to witness the rebirth of Breslover Chassidus in this country.

The extremely gifted Reb Yitzchok Mendel was born in Poland and traveled to Uman in his teenage years, where he met Reb Avraham b'Reb Nachman and other major Breslov teachers of the pre-Bolshevik period. Then he continued on to Eretz Yisrael, where (although still a young man) he studied kabbalah with the reknowned Sefardic master, Rabbi Chaim Shaul Dweck. He eventually became close to Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, presiding Rav of Jerusalem's "Old Yishuv," and zealously adopted the ideology of anti-Zionism. In fact, Reb Yitzchok Mendel was so brazenly antagonistic toward Chief Rabbi of pre-state

Israel, Rav Avraham Yitzchok Kook (1865-1935), that eventually he had to flee the country to avoid being arrested. Arriving in New York in the 1920s, he found a tumultuous immigrant community assimilating as fast as possible, and a Chassidic wasteland. He opened a shul called "Linat HaTzedek" on the Lower East Side and soon found himself leading a congregation, performing weddings, and other public functions. He also served the community as a shochet. Ironically, Rabbi Rottenberg wound up becoming something of a religious Zionist in his later years, and was involved in Agudath Israel of America. Although he went through many changes in his long and eventful life, he remained a Breslover throughout.

Among the prominent figures in the New York Breslov community during the post-war years was Rabbi Beirich Rubensohn (Robinson) (1905-1997). Reb Beirich was born in Sosnowicz, Poland, and became a fervent Breslover before he reached the age of bar mitzvah. Tragically, he lost his first family at the hands of the Nazis, but somehow survived five years in the Treblinka and Auschwitz death camps (where at one point he was placed in a gas chamber and miraculously removed at the last second). After the war, Reb Beirich came to America and started a new life. He worked with Vaad Hatzolah of Agudath Israel on behalf of Jewish refugees, and eventually became a successful businessman, who helped build the struggling Breslov kehillah and printed several Breslov seforim. (During his last years he recorded his memoirs, including many interesting traditions, stories, nuschos and songs, which are available on CD format from his sons in Monsey, NY.)

Rabbi Herschel Reichman (d. 1967) was a devoted Breslover from Radomishla, Poland, who similarly helped establish the Breslov kehillah upon his arrival in America and printed the Rebbe's seforim. As a yeshivah bochur, Reb Herschel overcame all obstacles in order to attend the Rosh Hashanah kibbutz in Lublin, once suffering to travel there atop a farmer's wagon full of manure. During the last year of his life he succeeded in going to Uman to recite the Tikun HaKlalli beside the Rebbe's grave. He considered this to be a heavenly reward for the

mesirus nefesh he had demonstrated in his youth by traveling to Lublin under such inglorious circumstances.

There were others, as well. Rabbi Mordechai Gottlieb (1897-1956), the Sambor Rebbe, led his own congregation but nevertheless was part of the Breslov community and attended the Breslover yahrtzeit seudos and other gatherings during the year. Although he came from a Chassidic lineage that was somewhat opposed to Breslov, during his youth he discovered a copy of Likkutei Tefillos missing the title page, and began to recite the prayers. When he found out that this was one of Reb Noson's works, he dismissed all of the negative things he had heard and became a Breslover Chassid. Rabbi Moshe Leib Heshenov (d. mid-1970s) was a Ukrainian Breslover who had been a youthful talmid of Reb Alter Tepliker and even served as his scribe, having penned the original manuscript version of Reb Alter's "Hishtapkhush HaNefesh" that was submitted to the printer. Since Reb Moshe Leib was not blessed with children, Reb Beirich Rubensohn named one of his son's Aharon Yosef after Reb Moshe Leib's father – an indication of the brotherhood that was legendary among Breslover Chassidim. Rabbi Yaakov Dov (d. 1997) was a talmid of Rabbi Ephraim'l of Pshedbarz (author of "Oneg Shabbos," Breslover insights on the weekly sedra) who arrived in America from his native Eretz Yisrael during the 1950s. Rabbi Dov gave public shiurim and was active in printing Breslover seforim, including the important Breslov anthology "Hilchasa K'Nachamani" and original works of his own. The stirring baal tefilah Rabbi Moshe Groman (d. 1984), also known as "Reb Moshe Likover," arrived in the 1960s. He was a Polish Breslover who had lived in Uman for nine years during his youth, and communicated many mesorahs to the next generation of Breslovers in America. His wife was a niece of Reb Aharon Kiblitchev, a famous Ukrainian Breslover of the late nineteenth century. He, too, was active in printing Breslover seforim. Rabbi Naftoli Reichman (1936-1984) taught in Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim (MTJ) in Manhattan for many years. A co-founder and Gabbai of the Borough Park Shtibel, Reb Naftoli first was introduced to Breslover Chassidus by Reb Beirich Rubensohn, and subsequently became close to Reb Herschel Wasilski. He also enjoyed a long and warm

relationship with the preeminent posek of America, Reb Moshe Feinstein. Another prominent Breslover was Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac Elbaum (1900-1986), a Holocaust survivor from Warsaw and an expert mohel. His son, Rabbi Nachman Elbaum of Ideal Tours, was instrumental in organizing travel arrangements to Uman from the post-Glaznost period until the present time. Rabbi Eliezer Shlomo Schick, who came from a long line of Hungarian rabbonim and discovered Breslov as a teenager, began to publish Breslover seforim during the late 1960s, and started to give public lectures and to disseminate his original writings and kuntresim during in the early 1970s. Eventually Rabbi Schick severed ties with the kehillah to create a separate chaburah with its own beis medrash, "Heichal HaKodesh."

These individuals were joined by a few young people who had become Breslovers via the Breslover seforim. However, if there was any single "moving force" within New York's Breslov community during this period, it was Rabbi Zvi Yosef Wasilski.

### **Rabbi Herschel Wasilski**

Descendent of many distinguished talmidei chachomim, Rabbi Zvi Yosef ("Herschel") Wasilski (1922-1981) was born in Vilna, Lithuania, raised in Oszmiana on the outskirts of the city, and at age thirteen his parents sent him to learn in Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman's famous yeshivah in Baranovitch. He once told one of his students, Rabbi Yacov Horowitz of Monsey, NY, that throughout his childhood he never heard mention of the Baal Shem Tov until he came to Baranovitch – which despite its "Litvishe" auspices was full of Chassidisher bochurim from Poland, including many Breslover bochurim. In fact, many of the top students in the yeshivah were Breslovers.

When his father came to visit the yeshivah, the Mashgiach gave a favorable report about the young boy's progress, but mentioned that he had become interested in Breslover Chassidus. The elder Rabbi Wasilski took his son for a walk, and in the course of conversation he brought up this subject.

“I am told that you have become interested in Chassidus,” he said. Nervously, the youth acknowledged that this was so.

“Tell me the truth, “ his father asked, “do you learn better because of this? Do you daven better because of this?”

“Yes,” Herschel replied to both questions.

“That’s good,” his father remarked -- and never said another word about the subject.

Reb Herschel learned in Baranovitch for more than five years and became a talmid muvhak of Reb Elchonon Wasserman. After World War II broke out, Reb Herschel and the rest of the Baranovitch Yeshivah relocated to Vilna, where the elder Rabbi Wasilski was involved in the Vaad HaYeshivos with Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzensky. Despite social upheaval and fear, the bochurim continued to learn Torah for another year. However, when the Nazis approached the city he bid farewell to his father and mother and joined the fleeing refugees, never to see his parents again.

Captured by the Russian army, Reb Herschel spent the war years in Siberia, and toward the end in Samarkand. There he got to know Reb Levi Yitzchok Bender, a talmid of Reb Avraham b'Reb Nachman recently arrived from Tashkent, and a few other Breslover Chassidim who had managed to escape the inferno of Europe. For the last two years of the war, he would spend at least an hour every night learning and discussing Breslover Chassidus with Reb Levi Yitzchok, until the armistice was declared. Then Reb Levi Yitzchok went to a DP camp and eventually made his way to Eretz Yisrael, where during the ensuing years he emerged as the central figure in the Jerusalem kehillah, while Reb Herschel emigrated to America. Yet their emotional bond remained strong, and they renewed their relationship in better times.

Soon after his arrival in New York on Dec. 7, 1946, Reb Herschel, now all of twenty-four, joined the Kollel of Yeshivah Torah Vodaath, and soon became menahel of the evening classes program, a position he maintained from 1959-

1967; then he served as a maggid shiur in the mesivta under Rabbi Reuven Grozovsky from 1952-1954. He subsequently worked as melamed in Yeshivah Torah Vodaath, a job he held until his death.

Reb Herschel was known as a tremendous lamdan, whom many roshei yeshivos and talmidei chakhomim sought out. Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum, the Satmar Rov, also took a liking to Reb Herschel, who shared the Chassidic leader's anti-Zionist political views. He used to call him affectionately "the Breslover Yid, the Litvak," showed him great kindness, contributed generously to his charities, and encouraged Satmar bochurim to get to know him.

Although he was "me-urav im ha-beriyos," a man who could get along with people from all sorts of backgrounds and points of view, Reb Herschel was a Breslover Chassid through and through, whose profound emunah in the Rebbe made an indelible impression on his family members and talmidim, and who worked tirelessly to strengthen and disseminate Breslover Chassidus in every way possible. He raised substantial amounts of tzedakah for the Breslov Yeshivah in Jerusalem and poor families; intervened in shalom bayis problems (and saved a number of marriages); filled his home with travelers from Eretz Yisrael and other guests in need; and his ahavas Yisrael was boundless.

Rabbi Wasilski once observed, "What is called mesiras nefesh? Losing your sleep in order to help someone? That's merely giving away your gashmiyus, your physicality, for another person. Mesiras nefesh is when you also give away your ruchniyus, your spirituality, for another person – your davening and learning!"

His son Rabbi Avraham Moshe Wasilski recalled that their father never spoke about himself or his accomplishments, even to his children. Many amazing things about Reb Herschel only came to light after his passing, during the shiva.

Rabbi Wasilski maintained close ties with Rabbi Shmuel Horowitz (with whom he corresponded for years), Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Bender, Rabbi Elyah Chaim

Rosen, Rabbi Shmuel Shapiro, Rabbi Velvel Cheshin (who stayed in the Wasilski home during his visits to America), as well as other zekenim (elders) in Jerusalem. Reb Elyah Chaim stayed with him when he visited America to raise funds for his yeshiva during the 1950s, and Reb Herschel stayed with Reb Elyah Chaim when he visited Eretz Yisrael a few years later. Subsequently the entire Wasilski family stayed with Reb Elyah Chaim, who maintained a separate section of his home for guests. Reb Herschel also was the official representative of the Breslov Yeshiva in America, and he raised not less than one third of the total building costs – a substantial sum.

Although he was a “kanoi,” an ideological opponent of Zionism, Rabbi Wasilski’s love for Eretz Yisrael and concern for the well-being of all Jews who lived there was immeasurable. “I’m more of a ‘Zionist’ than the Zionists,” he once quipped. “My thoughts are always on Eretz Yisrael!”

Rabbi Wasilski passed away on 29 Tammuz 5741 / 1981, at the relatively young age of 59. However, he left behind a spiritual legacy that lives on to this day.

### **Breslover Shuls in America**

One of Rabbi Wasilski’s special gifts was the ability to get things done. Within a year of his arrival in America, he established the Breslov minyan on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. First located on Hester Street, then on Montgomery Street, and finally on Henry Street, this was where the 30-40 Breslover Chassidim in New York davened for many years on Rosh Hashanah, beginning in 1947. The Lower East Side Breslov shtibel functioned on Shabbos and Yom Tov, and in its heyday there were regular weekday minyanim, as well. Reb Yitzchok Mendel Rottenberg’s Linas HaTzedek shul eventually merged with the Montgomery Street shul.

The Williamsburg shtibel on Lee Ave. was established in 1970 by Rabbi Wasilski and his talmidim, and continues to operate under the leadership of his son, Rabbi Avraham Moshe Wasilski. His son-in-law, Rabbi Yitzchok Friedman, gives

regular shiurim there and, more recently, once a week in Borough Park, as well. Rabbi Nachman Wasilski is Gabbai of the shul, and also has followed in his father's footsteps by selling Breslover seforim directly and by mail order. Rabbi Meir Wasilski lives in Borough Park, where he carries on the family legacy as Gabbai of the Breslov shtibel there. Rabbi Noson Wasilski is also a strong Breslover and a gifted baal tefillah.

Due to the growth of the Breslover kehillah in Williamsburg, a second shtibel recently was founded called "Hisachdus HaAvreichim D'Chassidei Breslov" on Hewes St. The two shuls take turns sponsoring Rosh Chodesh gatherings, and some mispallelim are members of both.

Founded in 1964, the Borough Park Breslov shtibel owes its existence primarily to Rabbi Meyer Kalmanowitz, who became a Breslover during his teenage years through his high school rebbi at Mesivta Torah Vodaath, Rabbi Wasilski. Although he subsequently joined Rabbi Zvi Aryeh Rosenfeld's group (see Part II), he maintained close ties with Rabbi Wasilski until the latter's death. Rabbi Wasilski was also actively involved in the establishment of the Borough Park shul.

The first building purchased was on Sixteenth Ave. at the the corner of 52<sup>nd</sup> St. Due to demographic shifts, there was also a need to move the Breslover Rosh Hashanah kibbutz (gathering) from the Lower East Side of Manhattan to Brooklyn. The first Rosh Hashanah kibbutz in Brooklyn took place in the new Borough Park shtibel in 1965. Then in 1967 the shtibel moved to its present quarters a few blocks down Sixteenth Avenue, near the corner of 55<sup>th</sup> St. The "activists" for the purchase and renovation of this building included Rabbi Herschel Reichman; Rabbi Yaakov Dov; Rabbi Naftoli Reichman; and Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Rosen, the youngest of this group, who later moved to Monsey. (Rabbi Rosen also helped found the Breslover shtibel there and created Sifrey Breslov, a mail-order bookstore.) Rabbi Leibel Berger, a devoted talmid of Rabbi Rosenfeld, soon lent his energetic and generous support to the Borough Park Shtibel, and was joined by the late Rabbi Yaakov Ehrman, proprietor of the 13<sup>th</sup>

Avenue landmark Kova Hats and a mekurov of Rabbi Yaakov Dov; plus a few other dedicated souls. For several decades, Rabbi Shmuel Breines, a well-known melamed at Yeshiva D'Brooklyn, has served the Borough Park kehillah as a mashpiya and given regular public shiurim.

Today the Borough Park shtibel has become more active during the week, with new shiurim and daily minyanim for “Vasikin,” Minchah, and Maariv. Rabbi Yosef Cheshin has also initiated a project to renovate all floors of the building, expanding the women’s gallery, and utilizing the third floor to house a multi-media Torah center. It is intended that this space will be used for special shiurim and to present guest lecturers from Eretz Yisrael.

The Breslover shul in Monsey was first established on rented premises during the mid-1970s, until the present building was purchased and renovated in 1984. The founders of the kehillah were Rabbi Beirich Rubensohn and his sons; Rabbi Daniel Bergstein; Rabbi Leibel Landesman; Rabbi Yehudah Lichter; Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Rosen; and Rabbi Yaakov Dovid Rosenberg. An extension was subsequently added to the building, and today the Monsey Breslov shtibel is a vibrant center of Torah and tefillah. A little farther north, the Breslover Chassidim in Kiryas Yoel-Monroe acquired their own shul in the early 1990s. For a number of years Rabbi Noson Liebermentch of Emmanuel, Israel, was the main mashpiya for the Monsey kehillah, traveling to America to give shiurim several times a year (although recently he has been coming less frequently); while Rav Shamshon Schwartz is a key figure in the Monroe Breslov kehillah. Rabbi Yitzchok Mermelstein leads a separate Breslov chaburah in Monroe, which has adherents in other communities, as well.

### **Rabbi Zvi Aryeh Rosenfeld**

A pioneer of Breslov kiruv (outreach) in America was Rabbi Zvi Aryeh Ben Zion Rosenfeld (1922-1978). Born in Gydinia, Poland, Reb Zvi Aryeh traced his ancestry back to Reb Aharon (d. 1845), who was the Rav of Breslov and a member of Rebbe Nachman’s inner circle. During the Russian Revolution, his father Reb

Yisrael Abba Rosenfeld (1882-1947) saw part of his family murdered by the Bolsheviks. He escaped to Poland, where Zvi Aryeh was born, and emigrated to America with his family in 1924, settling in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn. As a child, Zvi Aryeh attended Rabbenu Chaim Berlin elementary school. After finishing high school at Yeshivah Torah Vodaath, he attended the Beis Yosef-Novhardok Yeshivah, where he learned under the legendary Rav Avraham Yaffen and received semichah at age twenty-three, after completing the study of Shas for the second time.

Two years later, his father passed away, and Reb Zvi Aryeh assumed responsibility for some of his father's charitable obligations. He also began to correspond with the preeminent Breslover elder in Eretz Yisrael, Rabbi Avraham Sternhartz (who was already over eighty years old); and in 1949 he made the first of approximately fifty trips to the Holy Land in order to visit his revered mentor. Reb Avraham instilled in the young American Chassid the passionate drive to disseminate Rabbi Nachman's teachings in America.

For most of his life Rabbi Rosenfeld worked as a melamed, spending fifteen years teaching in Rabbi Yechezkel Kahana's Shaarei Tefilah synagogue and talmud torah, where he brought countless students from non-observant or minimally observant families to Yiddishkeit. A group of youthful Breslovers soon began to form around him, most of whom (although not all) were baalei teshuvah or from the "Modern Orthodox" world. Some parents were encouraging to their children and grateful to Rabbi Rosenfeld; others were hostile to their children's new-found religiosity. More than one student endured beatings from an irate father for refusing to eat non-kosher food with the rest of the family, and even Rabbi Rosenfeld was physically threatened on several occasions, but refused to be intimidated.

Rabbi Rosenfeld trained both of Rabbi Yechezkel Kahana's sons for semichah: Rabbi Meir Kahana (1932-1990), HY"D, who later founded the Jewish Defence League (JDL), and (yibadel bein chaim l'chaim) Rabbi Nachman Kahana of

Jerusalem, a prominent Torah educator in Eretz Yisrael and author of “Mei Menuchos” on Tosefos. He also was friendly with the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994), and it is said that for a time the two rabbis studied together b’chavrusa. (This is a point which needs further investigation; however, if true, they must have learned together before the Lubavitcher Rebbe was appointed to that position.)

Aside from giving shiurim to his talmidim in all areas of Torah, Rabbi Rosenfeld collected substantial funds for the Breslov Yeshivah on Rechov Meah Shearim in Jerusalem, and sponsored the publication of Rabbi Nachman’s works in Hebrew. He also initiated the translation of the Rebbe’s seforim to English, beginning in the early 1970s with Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan’s translation of Sichos HaRan, “Rabbi Nachman’s Wisdom,” which he edited. In addition, he raised charity for poor families in the Holy Land, while living a meager existence with only a melamed’s salary to support his family.

During the 1960s and 1970s he led some of the first trips to the Rebbe’s grave site in Uman since the Stalinist destruction of Jewish religious life there, and planted in the hearts of his talmidim a profound sense of connection to the Rebbe’s Tziyun. One of his talmidim, Mr. Stan Kopel, sponsored a major part of the rebuilding of the Rebbe’s Tziyun in Rabbi Rosenfeld’s memory.

### **Talmidim**

In addition to his sons Rabbi Yisrael Abba and Reb Shmuel Eliyau (may he have a speedy refu’ah sheleimah), who are both Breslover Chassidim, Rabbi Rosenfeld's talmidim include his sons-in-law: Rabbi Chaim Kramer, prolific author and director of the Breslov Research Institute, and Rabbi Nasan Maimon, director of the Jerusalem-based Breslov World Center (more on both organizations below). Other talmidim include Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Gottlieb of Ramat Beit Shemesh, known for his highly original in-depth shiurim in Likkutei Moharan, who now teaches in a Breslov Kollel in Beitar Illit, Israel; Rabbi Gedaliah Fleer, whose tells the story of his pioneering youthful trips to Uman during the 1960s in "Against

All Odds"; Rabbi Leibel Berger, a pillar of the Borough Park Breslov community and now a travel agent for pilgrimages to Uman; the late Reb Shlomo Fried, founder of Nesia Travel (now managed by his wife, Mrs. Miriam Fried, who specializes in arranging trips to kivrei tzaddikim); and Rabbi Shlomo Goldman, one of the outstanding teachers of Likkutei Moharan in America and Rosh Kollel of the newly-formed Breslov Kollel in Lakewood, NJ.

Some of these individuals went on to learn from other teachers in Eretz Yisrael. For example, Rabbi Chaim Kramer also studied with Rabbi Elyah Chaim Rosen (1899-1984); Rabbi Nasan Maimon was close with Rabbi Michel Dorfman (1911-2006); and Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Gottlieb and Reb Shlomo Fried studied with Rabbi Gedaliah Kenig (1921-1980).

Rabbi Rosenfeld also reached out to Sefardim, and due to his efforts there are quite a few Sefardic-American Breslovers in Deal, NJ, and in Flatbush (plus more recently in Montreal and Toronto, Canada, although not through any connection to Rabbi Rosenfeld). There are various Sefardic leaders in America, Canada, and Eretz Yisrael, who have succeeded in combining the Rebbe's teachings and different aspects of Sefardic culture, much as Polish and Hungarian Chassidim succeeded in doing the same from their points of view.

During his early years, Rabbi Rosenfeld studied with Rabbi Avraham Sternhartz on his visits to Eretz Yisrael, and after the latter's death on 20 Elul 5715 / 1955, with Rabbi Elyah Chaim Rosen, head of the Breslov Yeshivah in Jerusalem.

When he was diagnosed as terminally ill during the summer of 5738 / 1978, Rabbi Rosenfeld settled his affairs and moved to Jerusalem. A father figure to his students, he was visited by many of them during his final months. Often they would sit at his bedside and read the Gemara, Zohar, or Likkutei Moharan, while he would interject various insights from time to time. Rabbi Rosenfeld passed away at age 56 on 11 Kislev 5739 / 1978.

## **Breslov Research Institute**

Guided by the outreach vision of Rabbi Rosenfeld, the Breslov Research Institute ([www.breslov.org](http://www.breslov.org)) (BRI) of Jerusalem is directed by his older son-in-law, Rabbi Chaim Kramer. Since its inception in 1979, BRI has been the main publishing-house for translations of classic and contemporary Breslov books. More than 100 titles are currently in print, in English, Hebrew, Russian, Spanish, French, and even Korean. BRI is a diverse group of individual scholars united by common goals. Staff includes Spanish translator Guillermo Beillinson of Argentina, Trevor Bell of England, R. Ozer Bergman, R. Symcha Bergman, R. Moshe Breines, R. Yaakov Gabel, Hebrew author Dovid Hillel, R. Moshe Mykoff, R. Moshe Schorr, R. Dovid Shapiro, Diaspora Yeshiva Band co-founder and music producer Ben Zion Solomon, R. Yehoshua Starrett, and others. I, too, have worked for BRI since the early 1990s (although I first met Rabbi Kramer as a relatively new Breslover in 1985). English-born Rabbi Avraham Greenbaum had his start with BRI and left to form his own Azamra Institute ([www.azamra.org](http://www.azamra.org)), which is a learning center and publisher of Rabbi Greenbaum's works.

In addition to overseeing BRI and raising funds for sponsorship of new publications, Rabbi Kramer is the author of "Crossing the Narrow Bridge" (a practical guide to Rabbi Nachman's path), "Through Fire and Water" (a biography of Reb Noson), and the ongoing annotated English edition of Likkutei Moharan, among many other books. He is a sought-after lecturer on Breslover Chassidus by English-speaking congregations around the world. During the late 1990s he and a group of associates bought a property in Uman not far from the Rebbe's grave site. (The original rented house was nicknamed the "Uman Waldorf-Astoria," while today's permanent location is called "The Ritz.") Geared to Americans, Rabbi Kramer's compound provides accommodations to members on a time-sharing basis, as well as Yom Tov meals accompanied by spirited singing and discussion to numerous guests.

### **Breslov World Center**

After the passing of his father-in-law in 1978, Rabbi Nasan Maimon, still in his twenties, became the leader of the small but close-knit Brighton Beach Breslover chaburah. In these years, he also became extremely close to the late Rabbi Michel Dorfman, last of the old Russian Breslovers, who had emigrated to Jerusalem in 1970. Rabbi Maimon moved to Eretz Yisrael with his family in the late 1980s, where he continued to teach Americans. He has also orally translated the entire *Likkutei Moharan* and copious amounts of *Likkutei Halakhos* to English, which are available on audio format. These audio files as well as numerous original shiurim are available through Rabbi Maimon's website ([www.breslovworldcenter.com](http://www.breslovworldcenter.com)).

Reb Michel Dorfman married Reb Avraham Sternhartz's grand-daughter, Maryasha, and was an important Breslov leader in his own right, both behind the "Iron Curtain" and in Eretz Yisrael. By his appointment, Rabbi Maimon now administrates the Breslover institutions in Uman, and is trying to complete the building of the Kloyz (synagogue) which houses the main minyan on Rosh Hashanah. The umbrella-organization for these efforts is the Jerusalem-based Breslov World Center. Rabbi Maimon usually travels to America every year to raise funds for the Kloyz, and gives shiurim in various communities.

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Just a brief note on Breslov and politics. Breslover Chassidus is a spiritual movement, not a political one. There are Breslover Chassidim who subscribe to a wide range of views from left to right of the political spectrum, and who may be found in various political parties in Eretz Yisrael. We do not have any mesorahs about this from Rebbe Nachman. We have his advice in avodas Hashem: to shun machlokes and pursue shalom, to study and follow the Shulchan Arukh, to practice hisbodedus every day, to learn the Rebbe's seforim, to perform acts of tzedakah and chesed, etc. That's what Breslover Chassidus is all about.