

עדת אש קודש Adass Aish Kodesh



BE STRONG

BY Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita

There are singular giants in the history of Polish Chasidic leadership that were defining figures whose every utterance had the potency to change lives. One such master was the Rebbe Reb Simcha Bunim of Pshischa. His impact can be seen strewn throughout many of the seforim from the Polisha Chassidic School and personally for me, the mere mention of this great tzadik sends a quiver thru my soul. His was a fascinating life, filled with many incongruous aspects that helped form his towering personality. It was the sum total of all these aspects that helped shape that which we know as Polisha Chassidus till this day.

The Sochotchover Rebbe the Shem Mishmuel Zt"l mentions several times in his writings that as is well known, at one point in his younger years, the Rebbe Reb Bunim was a business man who would travel to the major commercial markets in Danzig. Once his Rebbe, The Yid Hakodosh Zt"l asked him if he had heard anything new from the merchants he had dealt with there? Answered the Rebbe Reb Bunin, that he had heard a great piece of wisdom, "If one losses money, this is nothing, but if one losses his 'courage', then he has lost everything!" From this the Rebbe learned something vital about our divine service to Hashem. We should never lose our hope and positive outlook when it comes to our relationship with The Eibishter. In the life of every Yied there will be times when we feel we have lost our way, that we keep falling behind and aren't worthy of any further growth. Says the Rebbe, never lose the courage to go forward, If you do, then everything is lost. Despair is worse than any mere loss. As the Rebbe Reb Aaron Karliner Zt"l used to say: "Despair in of

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Adass Aish Kodesh

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itself is not sin, but the evil it can lead one too is worse than that of any sin.”

The Rebbe Reb Bunim is telling us that we will all be challenged, that’s what life is about. However, we must never lose hope; courage will give us the strength to overcome our challenges and bring us a true meaning in life.

This sharp insight is being shared with us by a tzadik who knew a thing or two about difficulties, and shares them with us. The Rebbe Reb Bunim was a child of the Gaon, the Voidislover Magid, and was known as a child for his cleverness and love of mitzvos. Yet, he spoke openly about how as a ten year old he had trouble learning and could not succeed in cheder. He just could not understand his lessons, his cheder Rebbe got exasperated and in fact the child was expelled. (Does this remind us of any of our own challenged kids?) The future Rebbe was broken and tells us he went to the edge of the river, sat down and cried over his situation. After some time the hurt child regained his composure and went back to his town. He went to the local shtieble and sat down to study. In that shtieble was a sweet Yied named Reb Abba, who was a Talmud Chochom that preferred to learn quietly on his own. The young Bunim’le pleaded with him to learn with him, Reb Abba saw how the sweet child needed chizuk and so mentored him and slowly learnt with him Gemora. After some time the child started to understand, and in time became more than competent and travelled to the Yeshiva in Matisdorf, where he became a renowned scholar.

The Rebbe Reb Bunim was not ashamed in sharing his story, he obviously felt it would serve as an example for others. This was the tzadik who would later lead the Chasidic world of Poland with wisdom, understanding and empathy. After his years as a merchant he became a pharmacist in Pshischa. It is said that his ability was such that high ranking military officers would turn to him for the medicinal needs of their troops. How then did he become the greatest Chassidische Rebbe of his time? He had courage, and never found his challenges too daunting. Greatness comes from a strength within that never leaves.

In parshas Bo (10:11) we find Pharo becoming livid with the Yidden and their proposed terms for leaving to serve Hashem. “Not so; let the men go now, and you shall serve Hashem, for that is what you seek!” And he drove them out from Pharo’s presence.”

The Bendiner Rav Zt”l explains “Just as Pharaoh’s anger against the Bnei Yisroel and their head representatives reached an apex shortly before their redemption, so too, in future exiles, especially when we see difficulties mounting, we should realise that salvation is shortly on the way.”

We face challenges beyond measure, but just as they pile up, we must take courage that Hashem will redeem us, at the worst juncture, take heed and Be Strong!



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