

עדת אש קודש Adass Aish Kodesh



A PLACE OF THEIR OWN

By Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita

It's in the faces, that sparkle in the eyes that wasn't there a few moments before. I have spoken and written about how vital it is for us to offer well trained mentors to learn with struggling youngsters at a young age, before they become embittered and prime targets for that dark place named "off the derech". With a positive mentor, struggling kids can bond with a caring friend who has his interests foremost in mind without any ulterior motive. Just having a listening ear is often enough to keep a holy yiddisha neshomala on the path of positive Torah adherence. In my years of both mentoring and training others in this field, I have been blessed to often witness that special ignition in the eyes of youngsters who have been living previously in the grey world of upset and misunderstanding.

We are now Boruch Hashem witnessing many mentoring programs coming alive, and each one should be blessed with fulsome communal support. One result of this flowering growth is the glaring fact that we have as yet not created purpose built spaces for this mentoring. Often we see shuls being used, or perhaps vacant classrooms. In truth this is not always conducive for a proper mentoring experience. Shuls can become active at the drop of a hat, and the precious time given for a one to one session can evaporate when a minyon starts to form. Disused spaces in schools also come with problems, not least of which is that not every child wants to be judged by their friends as being in need of 'special' help. No, we need a purpose built facility that creates a safe space for our most vulnerable kids, and gives support and validation to the mentors involved.

Since we have been blessed in gaining a home for our shtieble, we have allowed for programs that deal with individual children to have access to our building. I quickly realised this was a stop gap answer to a growing problem and although helpful, it isn't optimum. Whilst brainstorming with

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some of our askonim, we came up with a plan that can create just such a place. With a working title of “The Shed” we plan to build just that, a location devoted to our susceptible children, one with ample space for informal activities, plus a conducive environment for one to one learning. All this will be created mindfully for the safety of all those involved. ‘The Shed’ will be independent yet under the watchful eye of both professionals and Daas Torah. Organisations who are in the mentoring field will be invited to utilise the facilities, and will be able to do so with the knowledge that their young charges will be enjoying a facility totally devoted to the unique needs of mentoring education.

Parshas Shmini lists the many laws concerning the kashrus of creatures both on land, sea and air. One bird in particular is cause of much discussion amongst our Chazal.

The ‘Chasidah’ a bird that seems to be part of the stork family is forbidden to be eaten. Rashi asks why does this bird have a name that literally means ‘kind one’? He explains, “Because it does kindness with its companions by sharing its food.”

This seems at odds with what the Ramban tells us as to why it is forbidden to eat unkosher creatures. It is because in life they show ruthless and violent behaviour and Hashem doesn’t want us to ingest such tendencies into our being. If that is the case, why is this seemingly ‘kind’ bird not kosher?

The Chiddushei Harim Zt”l answers that yes, it does do kindness, but only to its own kind. It has no regard to any other creatures. This says the Rebbe is not kindness born out of altruism, but just a means of survival of its own.

We have so many charities to give to today. Klall Yesroil is B’EH growing and with this growth comes ever more need for projects that deserve support. Often we tend to look only to our own group, our particular school or shul.

‘The Shed’ is for everyone, any child in need will find room within its walls. It will be open as a truly caring facility for the entire community, not merely for one or another kehillah.

I personally appeal to all our readers; please let us unite in sharing in the building of this unique place for all our kids, let us be partners in bringing that special glow back into their eyes, the wondrous spark of love that every Yiddisha neshoma deserves to have.

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