

# עדת אש קודש Adass Aish Kodesh



## Sharing The Contemporary Lessons Of The Aish Kodesh

By Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita

There were many manuscripts of holy works that were sadly lost during Churban Europe. Holy Gedolim had written their inspirational words and many pages of these sacred thoughts were hidden or buried in cities and villages. Most were lost, forever destroyed, ground down in the mud of the blood-drenched killing fields of Eastern Europe. A very few were found, each new find a miracle in itself. One such cache of Torah jewels was discovered in 1950 by workers who were rebuilding from the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto. This treasure trove of kedusha was the manuscripts from the Kodesh, Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, the Peasetzna Rebbe ztl. What was soon to become famous as the *Aish Kodesh* was amongst these remnants, and our world today is illuminated by the message contained therein. I have often wondered about how in fact it was the Rebbe's Torahs that were found, whilst so many others were lost. Perhaps the answer lay in the astounding understanding the Rebbe had of the challenges of the young which were plaguing his generation and even more so now. Amongst his seforim is a journal that is amazing. Named *Tzav V'ziruz* it speaks intimately about the Rebbe's own challenges and how he constantly sought to be connected with Hashem and help Klall Yisroel. In one entry he writes:

*I am exhausted from talking to people about Hashem. I am constantly trying to convey how Hashem is so immanent, right in front of us, even within us, in our thoughts and actions. Hashem fills*

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זוקלה"ה

*our entire outer and inner worlds, our deepest recesses and all our life experiences.*

*But all people see is the earthly world, and they bury their heads in it with their entire beings. "Follow the voice of Hashem in all your physical and spiritual actions, your entire life is in His Presence." But they have blinded themselves with their physical perceptions, and their hearts sense nothing beyond their physical senses."*

Who could hear these words and not feel they are clearly meant for today?

Throughout the Rebbe's writings he strives with his entirety to bring Hashem into the reality of his listeners. In other places the Rebbe endeavours to teach us how to experience Hashem in our daily lives with practical exercises. In *Chovos Hatalmidim*, his magnum opus, he speaks to teenagers about beliefs and how even as children they can live enjoyable lives filled with an awareness of Hashem. On every page of his works we are rewarded with sparkling insights and reason for hope.

We are gifted to have his seforim, words saved from the fire, and yet, we seem at a loss. Given all this holy wisdom we find ourselves at an impasse. We have tried so hard, shared so much, yet so many are slipping away, swallowed up by the emptiness of the secular idols which society worships.

***"So many shuffle along with glazed expressions that only seem to become animated through experiences that taste of the secular world around us."***

I have been writing for over two decades, and when I read some of my earlier work it seems I am writing about the same subjects. Should I now lay down my pen and give up?

I then read further in the Rebbe's Journal entry:

*"My throat is hoarse. Fresh ideas about how to convey these truths are not forthcoming. The sharp insights I've had in the past are dimming. I feel about to fall into depression. Hashem, please help me!"*

For what purpose has the Tzaddik opened up his heart for us? The Rebbe continues:

*"I began to talk to the Universe. I opened my window and saw a world just waiting for someone to acknowledge its beauty."*

The Rebbe goes on to tell us he recited the Shema... He cries out "Hashem is One!"

With this the Rebbe finds strength and courage to carry on. Despair has no place. It is a small whisper that is banished with the acknowledgement of Hashem's Oneness.

We here who are living in the crassness of our times cannot begin to touch upon the level of kedusha the Rebbe nor any of that previous generation reached. We are truly pygmies in comparison. However, we have their words; we have the Rebbe's beseeching, heartfelt cry, his message that we must never give up.

The Rebbe taught Torah throughout the dark days of the Churban. He spoke of Hashem's Oneness as he was facing certain death. Others may not have heard, but the words were there to be embraced.

Ours is a different time; we are faced with new paradoxes. At one level we are witnessing an epoch of plenty where at every level of Yiddishkeit seems to be growing. Yet, where there is a tinge of torpor, the *bren* is not there. So many shuffle along with glazed expressions that only seem to become animated through experiences that taste of the secular world around us.

Should we just shrug our shoulders and sigh, "Well, that's the generation we are in, and I guess things are as good as they can be." No! We must learn from the Aish Kodesh, and hear his *bren* which lives on. His words speak from the ashes of torment, yet give hope and illumination. We may feel dejected, seemingly stuck in an echo chamber of our own making, but if we open up the window of our hearts and see the greatness of Hashem's world, we will become reenergized for the work ahead.

Why, you may ask, am I speaking about such matters here and now? I daven in a shtiebl that carries the Rebbe's name. It is the only one in Europe. I feel we have a responsibility to share and learn his lessons. And yes, I need his chizuk. I just hope I have not burdened anyone with my meanderings. This is my humble journal, and I want to try to be true to its purpose.