



BUILDING ON THE FIRE

Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita

It happened, and on Rosh Chodesh Adar Bais 'Nuch'! The long-awaited extension to our building was finally approved in full by the local council and work can begin. This has been a difficult time for the younger set who have thrown themselves into this project, never being certain if our dreams of more space would be feasible or not. We are a small shtetle, but one with enormous capacity to reach out to others with needs. We have become involved with programs supporting youth with their individual challenges, and primary to our plans for the future was always going to entail a designated space for them. I know most shtetle's don't include to such projects, but we are called Aish Kodesh after the Kodoish, the Peasetzna Rebbe Ztl author of the Chovos Hatalmidim. The Rebbe was renowned for his outreach to the young and it is only right that we try in our small way to emulate The Tzadik's holy work.

So, the plans are drawn, the Oilom awaits in anticipation, with all eyes turned to the Rav. Problem for me is that in this case that's me, and I don't know where to start. We need building funds and struggle just paying our present mortgage.

Perhaps a bit of background about our Chevra is in order. When I moved to Prestwich North Manchester, my dear son in law Rabbi Itzik Dov Schriebhand was kind enough to create a place in his home for us to Daven with a minyan on Shabbos. It wasn't meant to become anything more than a small group of Yidden who felt at home in an intimate setting. This was all meant to be my retirement phase of life, having just graduated to a pension after twenty-five years of serving as Rov in South Manchester. However, the Eibishter had a different path for me and the Rebbetzin A'H and no sooner than we started than we outgrew my daughters living room. One thing led to another until now we build an extension for more room and facilities for the community's youngsters.

Obviously, there is more involved than just one semi-retired Rabbi craving a last chance at the pulpit. Behind it all is a small group of amazing askonim who have become part of our family (that's how we do things in Aish Kodesh, everyone becomes family) The fire that is our growth comes from within these dedicated souls, and they have kept us alight from the very beginning. I won't list names, nor extol individual personages who are there constantly for the Klall, I just feel

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הרב קלונימוס קלמן שפירא
זצוקלה"ה



לזכר ולעילוי נשמת
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it incumbent of me to mention that they are known and thanked as I write this newest chapter in what is "A Rabbis Journal". All too often such acts of chesed and support are mentioned when the protagonists are shuffling off the stage of dynamic leadership, but I want it known now, as we leap forward towards our future that their ardent dedication is noted and cherished.

As this article meanders towards the five hundred words mark my readers must be wondering where all this is going. Why this opening of the heart of the workings of some small shtieble in Prestwich, there are greater matters at hand, things like wars and the battle to keep Yiddishkiet vibrant for the next generation. However, that is just the point, it is the small flickers of fire that burn bright with the promise of continuity. The intimate warmth that is fostered with close friends and fellow mispallelim are the stuff that seeds the growth of dedicated Torah life. I mentioned the sums needed to make our plans leap from the paper to reality, and again it is the small quiet dedication of a caring few that are creating a vehicle to facilitate this miracle.

Like almost everyone else, we are making a charity drive that has set its goals and hope to reach them over a few intense days. All will be manning their telephones as adverts wing their way into the homes of thousands. I know, we all get these missives on a daily basis, they seem to flood our inboxes whilst we sleep. This one's different, (I would say that wouldn't I) it's different because it speaks to an Aish Kodesh first ignited by that Tzadik who wanted nothing more than to be a Yied. We are trying to somehow keep that essence alive in the Tzadik's shadow, and need help in doing so. The campaign is in the memory of the Rebbetzin Chaiky A'H, simply because like so much more to those who knew her, without her insistence and sparkle, this shtieble would have never become a reality. She was a mother figure to many, and none more so than to those in our Chevra, it was her dedication and focus that never faulted, and her encouragement that insisted that Rabbinical couples never cease giving.

So, for the first time in the 27 years I have been writing this column I turn to those reading these lines and ask for your help. If by chance you receive one of our letters, please don't dismiss them with a calm delete click, and if you don't receive one, well it's not personal, our Chevra are trying their best, but please contact me and help me make this project a reality.

May we all be blessed to witness the rebuilding of the ultimate place for our tefillos, the Bais Hamikdosh soon, and in the immediate here and now, may all our shtieble's and bottai midrashim find growth both physically and spiritually.

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