

Chapter Forty

Eishes Chayil Mi Yimtza**A Great Man Has a Great Wife**

Reb Shmuel's children related:

"I have no doubt that your mother was a great woman," Harav Aryeh Tobias, a member of the Badatz Kiryat Vizhnitz, told us. "It is impossible to reach the heights that Reb Shmuel achieved without a great woman standing beside him!"

Indeed, our mother, Geulah, *a"b*, was an integral part of our father's greatness. She was the embodiment of the words, "*Mei'Hashem ishah maskeles*, an intelligent wife is from Hashem" (*Mishlei* 19:14), and the *passuk*, "*Ishah yiras Hashem hi tis'hallal*, a G-d-fearing woman is to be praised" (*ibid* 31:30).

A good woman is the support of Torah, says Rabbeinu Bechayei. The good wife is the axis that encourages the support of Torah, the fulfillment of its *mitzvos* and the adherence to its path. It was in his wife's merit that Reb Shmuel rose to such heights of *chessed* and philanthropy, overcoming obstacles to reach exceptional levels.

The Mainstay of the Home

The *akeres habayis* is the *ikar*, the primary component, of the home. Shlomo Hamelech praises the *eishes chayil*, saying "*Chochmas nashim bonsah beisah*, the wisdom of a woman builds her home." If you see a

beautiful Jewish home, know that a woman's wisdom is a key factor of its beauty.

Shlomo Hamelech used the word "*chochmah*," wisdom, because the special wisdom, the *binah yeseirah*, with which women were blessed, is what builds the Jewish home.

Our mother was gifted with that wisdom, and excelled in knowledge and insight. At the same time, she displayed sterling *middos* and was a wellspring of *emunas chachamim*, which underscored her pure *yiras Shamayim*.

She delighted in her husband's acts of *chessed* and gave him her full backing to distribute *tzedakah* as his heart desired. She was also a partner in helping him conceal his many deeds, and did not seek to publicize his accomplishments. As he wished, the awards and certificates he received were hidden in a drawer, and she did not try to convince him otherwise. It was all sincere and pure, *l'shem Shamayim*. She completely disassociated herself from honor and acclaim.

The Torah institutions that were established through our father's support, and continued to operate thanks to his *tzedakah*; chassidic courts that grew; the financial support of so many families in Klal Yisrael — all these are to her credit as well.

She Pursued *Tzedakah* and *Chessed*

Our mother was not blinded by their immense wealth. She did not become boastful; on the contrary, she keenly felt the pain of others. She would especially feel the anguish of *kallaks* with no means to pay for wedding expenses. She did not seek any personal benefit from her giving. She did it with sincerity, and indeed, knew how to give secretly.

Mrs. Bretler, a former neighbor from Neve Achiezer, told our sister, Mrs. Rochel Stern:

"A young new mother in the neighborhood has nothing to her name — not even a blanket for the baby," I told Mrs. Daskal.

"I'd be glad to help her," she said with a smile, and added, "But it should never become known that I'm the one who gave; she'll feel awkward. I'll give you a blanket for her, and you'll give it to the Reb-

betzin of the neighborhood Rav, Harav Avraham Tzvi Weiss, and she'll give it to the new mother. This way, she won't be uncomfortable when she sees me."

While a blanket was not a very big expense for Mrs. Daskal, it reflects on how she put herself in the position of the new mother, and ensured that she would not be ashamed at not having a blanket for her baby.

This incident launched the channel of clandestine giving through Rebbetzin Weiss. No one ever found out who was behind the many blankets distributed to new mothers, clothing for *kallahs*, shoes for children before the Yamim Tovim — because it was all done secretly. Penniless new mothers received envelopes that brought light into their homes — and no one knew where they came from.

There was no one happier than our mother when she was able to give with dignity. Even we, her children, never heard from her about her tremendous charitable acts. It was only after her passing, when other people related stories, that we found out about part of what she'd accomplished.

The lofty level of giving described throughout this book was her way as well: our parents lived with the same goals and aspirations.

Wedding Gown *Gemach*

Reb Yitzchak Beirach related:

When my mother married off her daughters, she preferred to buy each of them a wedding dress instead of renting, so that she could then lend the dresses to needy *kallahs* for free. She also allowed the borrowers to make alterations to the gown as they pleased.

My sister, Mrs. Faiga Feuerstein, related:

Once, my mother lent a gown to a *kallah*. The *kallah* returned the gown torn and somewhat ruined.

My mother didn't say a word to the *kallah* about the state of the dress. On the contrary, she greeted her kindly and warmly gave her *brachos* on the occasion of the wedding.

After the *kallah* left, she said to me, "Maybe it's not her fault? May-

be an unprofessional seamstress ruined the dress, and the *kallah* was very upset about it? Should I get her even more upset? Certainly not!”

Shalom Bayis

A friend related to Reb Shmuel’s son, Reb Yosef Avraham, in a personal conversation:

After my marriage, your mother spoke to my wife, and understood from her that we were struggling with *shalom bayis*. With her wisdom, she was able to intuit the root of the problem, a lack of *parnassah*.

A short time later, your father began to support us in a dignified way, telling me that it was not *tzedakah*, *chalilah*, but rather a month-long loan until circumstances would improve.

Thanks to this support, which made for a calmer atmosphere in the house and thereby increased our *shalom bayis*, we were able to build a beautiful home in which we raised children and grandchildren to Torah and *mitzvos* — all because of your mother’s wisdom and your father’s generosity.

She Never Knew

Reb Shmuel’s daughter, Mrs. Bella Zuckerman, related:

I saw a note in school, “Poor *kallah* needs assistance.” I told my mother about it, and as I was just a little girl, I expected her to give a small donation.

But Ima became very thoughtful. Suddenly, her eyes lit up. “You know what?” she said. “Take a package of envelopes, write ‘for a needy *kallah*’ on each one, and give it to the girls in your class. Let them take home the envelopes and ask their parents to donate. The envelopes will come back sealed, without identifying names, and no one will know how much each one gave. Whoever can afford to give will give. I want to share this mitzvah with everyone,” she concluded.

The idea of becoming a *gabbai’s tzedakah* was a virtuous one. I didn’t believe that it would succeed. Two days later I brought all the closed envelopes back, and there was plenty of money inside. We used the funds to purchase a trousseau for the *kallah*. At her own initiative,

with her huge and sensitive heart, she took care of the *kallah's* needs in a *bakovadige* manner, and the girl never found out that my mother was behind it all.

An Identical Trousseau!

“I want to go to Kolbo Shalom (an upscale store) to buy a trousseau for our daughter,” Reb Shmuel’s wife told him.

Surprisingly enough, she took along a girl who worked as a babysitter in their home. “Come with us. At the right time, you’ll also be getting married, *b’ezras Hashem*, so I’ll take you shopping as well,” she said.

“But I’m not even engaged!” the girl protested.

“So what?” she replied. “*B’ezras Hashem*, you’ll get engaged soon, and I’ll save myself the hassle of going again.”

The babysitter was thus surprised when right when they began shopping, Mrs. Daskal told her, “Whatever I buy for my daughter, I’ll buy for you as well.” This was not an exaggeration — she actually bought the girl the identical trousseau that she bought for her own daughter!

Love of Torah

Reb Yitzchak Beirach Daskal related:

My mother once told us about a young man whose parents forced him to leave learning after his marriage and study secular subjects. The man made great strides in his field and became an eminent scientist.

With a deep sigh, she said to us, “Isn’t that a waste of all that talent? Am Yisrael needs *gedolei Torah*; how did his mother lose the treasure she had been gifted with?”

She imbued that same love of Torah into her offspring, and she had the insight and wisdom to encourage my father’s countless acts of *chessed* in support of Torah and scholars in unfathomable proportions. Throughout it all, she felt a deep sense of privilege at being able to do so.



Gratitude

One of Mrs. Daskal's unique *middos* was her *hakaras hatov*, as she never missed an opportunity to express her gratitude. She always sincerely appreciated anyone who did something good to her or for her, and she never forgot someone who had done a *chessed* for her. The workers who cared for her at the end of her life felt very close to her because she treated them so warmly. She never took advantage of them. On the contrary, she always asked about them and their families, and treated them gently and with kindness.

Special Treatment

"Are you Mrs. Daskal's daughter?" a man asked Mrs. Nechama Rosner, and shared his story:

I worked as a mailman for many years. I would bring telegrams from your father when he was abroad. The first time I knocked at the door of the villa on Rechov Saadya Gaon, I was quite anxious. I was keenly cognizant of the gap in our socioeconomic status, and usually, the wealthy make sure to keep a healthy distance from us simple folk.

"Come in, please," your mother invited warmly. "Have something to drink."

I tried to refuse. "I'm in a hurry to continue my route."

That didn't deter your mother. I was invited into the Daskal home, and she didn't let me leave before I had a drink and ate some cake. And to top it all off, I'd get a few coins as a tip for my work. She did this each time I brought registered mail that needed a signature. Believe me, I never encountered such treatment anywhere else.

Not only the mailman who brought the telegrams was treated so well by Mrs. Daskal. She made sure to tip anyone who delivered anything to the house, in gratitude for his work.

She Never Saw Bad

A Daskal son, Reb Chaim Moshe, related:

We never heard our mother speak badly of another person. She always looked for a person's merits. She didn't speak *lashon hara* — not

because she had pledged not to do so, but because she simply didn't see bad in other people!

A Yid's *Parnassah* Does Not Disturb Me

Reb Yona Fuchs, a former neighbor in Neve Achiezer, related:

The noise coming from the neighbor's house in Neve Achiezer was deafening and disturbing. They had an industrial machine that made plastic bags, and it was positioned against a wall in their home. When it was on, the noisy clattering could clearly be heard through the wall, into the dining room. But Mrs. Daskal didn't say a word to the neighbors. It was their *parnassah*!

One day, the neighbors themselves came and said, "We realize the machine makes noise and is very disturbing, so we're going to move it out of the house."

"Absolutely not!" she objected vehemently. "A Jew's *parnassah* does not disturb me!"

The House Becomes a Diamond Polishing Factory

Reb Chaim Schechter of Kiryat Vizhnitz related:

It once happened that due to a general worker's strike in the whole country, we were not permitted to work. The news struck the workers like thunder on a clear day. We were not pleased with this unexpected vacation. A day without work meant a day without income.

In Reb Shmuel's home, there was a diamond polishing machine that was not in use. "Come to my house," Reb Shmuel suggested, "and you can work here."

"In your house?" we exclaimed. "The noise of the polishing machine is intolerable. Not to mention the dirt that it generates! Your wife is home — how is she going to handle it?"

"She agrees," Reb Shmuel said nonchalantly.

We came to the house and entered the small room. The machine began working — and its ear-shattering din, the dirt, and the discomfort to the family were terrible.

None of it bothered Mrs. Daskal. She took it all with equanimity. “Another Yid’s *parnassah* doesn’t bother me,” she said.

We worked this way for almost a week!

Isbah Yiras Hashem Hi Tis’ballal

Mrs. Daskal was ingrained with sincere *yiras Shamayim*, which was evident in her every deed. She would welcome Shabbos with the joy and honor that is accorded to a queen. At *chatzos* on Friday, there was already an atmosphere of Shabbos in the house. The food was ready and the table was set; she did this until her final day. At the time of *hadlakas neiros*, and even during the Shabbos *zemiros*, she would shed copious tears of emotion and of *tefillah*.

She davened each day from a *siddur*; she wept with emotion as she recited her *tefillos* with genuine purity of heart.

She also said a lot of *Tehillim*, completing *Sefer Tehillim* each week.

Yiras Shamayim

One Erev Yom Kippur, when it was hard for her to walk, Mrs. Daskal planned to *tzind lecht*, light the candles, and then walk over to the big *beis medrash* in Kiryat Vizhnitz.

The family could not bear to see her exerting herself so much. “Make a *t’nai*, a condition, when you light candles, that you have not yet accepted upon yourself the Yom Tov of Yom Kippur, and go with Abba in the car to the *beis medrash*,” they pleaded with her.

She refused firmly. Despite the difficulty and the distance, she insisted on walking.

Tefillos for Good Children

“I shed a lot of tears to merit children who are *gebentshed* by Hashem,” Mrs. Daskal once remarked to one of her daughters, Mrs. Zahava Zeideh. She added, “At the *bris milah* of each of my sons, I fasted until after the *bris*.” It’s not easy for a new mother to fast for several hours, but she felt that the day that she was bringing her son under

the wings of the Shechinah was a time to fast and daven for her children's success. It was not for naught that she merited children and grandchildren who follow her path of Torah and *mitzvos*.

“*Vatis'chak Leyom Acharon*”

In her final years, Mrs. Daskal suffered from a number of ailments, yet she accepted her suffering with love.

On 5 Shevat 5767/2007, she returned her soul to its Maker, clean and purified, to the World of Truth, with all her sons, daughters, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law present.

Her *mittah* was carried from the *beis medrash* in Kiryat Vizhnitz to her resting place beside her husband, in the Shomrei Shabbos cemetery in Zichron Meir, in close proximity to the *ohel* of the Vizhnitzer Rebbes.

Tehei Nishmasah Tzerurah Bitzror Hachaim.

Endnote

Reb Yitzchak Beirach Daskal:

I sincerely hope that our parents' wondrous acts of *tzedakah* and *chessed*, done purely for the sake of giving, will prove to be an inspiration to all who read this. The *mitzvos* engendered by this book should be a *zechus* and an *aliyas neshamah* for them.

It is my sincere hope and prayer to Hashem that these words will arouse hearts to return to the natural yearning to love one another and to seek to do good to HaKadosh Baruch Hu's creations.

May their lofty actions — forge pathways of *chessed* and philanthropy.

May they be a wondrous light — to warm other hearts to *ahavas Yisrael*.

May their *chassadim* illuminate — like a diamond in the crown of Am Yisrael and hasten the arrival of Mashiach Tzidkeinu, speedily in our days. Amen.