
Chapter Two

The Blessing of Wealth

On the Rise

Reb Shmuel's tribulations during his childhood (which will be expounded upon in the coming chapters) never eroded his desire to give and help others. However, many years passed before he was able to *chessed* on a larger scale, as he wanted to, and to satisfy his deep inner need to give and give.

Money — that physical object that has the power to fill a person's heart with arrogance and selfishness, and a never-ending desire for more control, honor, and power — spoke to him in a completely different language. For him, money was a source of pleasure and satisfaction solely because it was the conduit to help him realize his deepest desire — to help others.

When he entered the business world and was blessed with success, the heady scent of money and the feel of rubbing shoulders with high society and tycoons did not change his approach one iota. He always remembered what he was striving for and he followed what his heart truly desired. All those compelling, yet artificial, waves were unable to sweep him into undesirable territory.

In the Agriculture Business

Upon arriving in Eretz Yisrael in 5708/1947 at the age of sixteen,

Reb Shmuel was captivated by its breathtaking scenery. The land drew him and he felt the desire to cultivate the earth, to plow, to sow. At the time, his older brother, Asher Anshel Daskal, was already engaged in the diamond industry, which he'd established in Eretz Yisrael twenty years earlier.

However, the idea of working with diamonds didn't appeal to Reb Shmuel. He felt much more drawn to working the land.

The damp, loamy soil emitted the aroma of freshness and filled his heart with a magical feeling. He chose to invest his energies in working in the orchards and he dedicated himself completely to his tasks. Even while fasting on Shivah Asar B'Tammuz, he sat on his tractor until the fast was over, working and plowing the ground under the scorching sun.



Asher Anshel Daskal with his father, Reb Chaim Moshe

Someone Needs Help!

Reb Shmuel related an incident that occurred while he was a *bachur*:

It was evening. A cool breeze blew across the expansive fields. I was sitting on my tractor as usual, plowing vigorously, when suddenly I noticed a most unusual scene out of the corner of my eye: a car was sinking in the mud right near the orchard.

Immediately, I drove over to see how I could help. I was able to tie the sinking car to the tractor, and with great effort, succeeded in hauling it out of the mud. The driver was extremely grateful and even wanted to pay me for my efforts, but I refused. "I don't want to be paid for a mitzvah," I told him.

I probably would have forgotten the whole incident, if not for a turn of Hashgachah pratis that took place about a year later. I had finished working, and I found myself standing right in the spot where I'd pulled

the car out of the mud just the year before. Rain was pouring down and my clothes were soaked and splattered with mud. How am I going to get home through this storm? I wondered.

I plodded to the road and stood there, waiting for a yeshuah.

Suddenly, a luxurious car pulled over and the driver called out to me, “Hey, you! Do you want a ride?”

I hesitated. How could I get into his gleaming car with my wet and muddy clothing? The seats would become filthy! “I feel bad about making your car all dirty with mud...” I answered somewhat abashedly.

“Just get in! Don’t worry about it!” the driver replied cheerfully. I was taken aback, and my surprise grew when the man asked, “Where do you need to go? Just tell me! I’ll take you to wherever you want!”

And then he explained, “A year ago, you rescued me from the mud here — I’m the man whose car you dragged out with your tractor. Now it’s my turn to repay the favor!”

***Parnassah* in the Wife’s Merit**

Although Reb Shmuel was very successful in his agricultural endeavors (and at one point was the chairman of the Tractor Drivers’ Association in Israel), he quickly realized that he would never become rich in this business. So despite his love for the land, he began to work in the family business, diamonds, where his older brothers — Asher Anshel, who’d established the industry in Israel, and Yisrael — had already been working for many years.

It was at this point in time that Reb Shmuel got married. It wasn’t incidental that as soon as he began working in this new field, which put him on the road to financial success, he also married and established his own home. “*Parnassah* is in the merit of the wife,” he would often say. Undoubtedly, if not for the greatness of his wife, and her devoted assistance throughout, he would not have succeeded the way he did.

Reb Shmuel’s wife supported and encouraged him with utmost devotion throughout the years of their marriage. With her insight and wisdom, she was able to manage their large home, which was an address well known to the needy and downtrodden. She was also a

willing partner in all his acts of *chessed* without seeking any recognition for it. Reb Shmuel would often say, “Without her, I would never have been able to handle everything I’ve had to deal with in my life.”

There is a chapter dedicated to Reb Shumel’s wife towards the end of the book, entitled “*Eishes Chayil Mi Yimtza*.” However, it is impossible to encapsulate who she was in such a short amount of space.

All Beginnings Are Difficult

Reb Shmuel related:

When I began to work in the diamond industry, I started off in a low position, as a diamond polisher. However, I had no intention of staying there — I always aspired to progress and develop.

Already then, I had all kinds of ideas and initiatives. For example, I wanted to open a school for the study of diamonds in Jerusalem, in conjunction with the Labor Ministry, and I would have served as the head of school. It was a good idea, because it would allow talented and skilled workers to advance and thereby expand the industry, but I had to shelve the plan because of a lack of cooperation by the Labor Ministry.

*Years of efficient and dedicated work passed until I decided to go out on my own. I shared my thoughts with friends, but regretfully, did not get much encouragement from them. This was a real disappointment to me, since a person usually needs a solid support system to be able to realize his dreams, but that was not forthcoming. Still, with much *siyata diShmaya*, I succeeded, even without a supportive environment. Deep down, I’d felt that I could be successful, and that the path I’d chosen was the right one. Therefore, I did not allow myself to be deterred by such obstacles. Above all, I had my strong faith in the Creator, and that was enough to infuse me with the courage I needed to start out on my own.*

As a first step, I borrowed a large sum of money from my friend Reb Shmuel Zanvil Wieder of Vizhnitz. I will never forget this favor. I used the money to buy a package of raw diamonds and polished them. When I was done, I offered the diamonds for sale, but then found out, to my dismay, that I’d erred in my calculations. There were a few other obstacles that cropped up, and to make a long story short, I lost the money. It was a bitter and searing loss.

Did I see that as a sign of negligence, lack of professionalism, or just plain bad luck?

Absolutely not! Despite the failure, it was clear to me that I should continue, and I would b'ezras Hashem succeed.

The *Brachah* of the Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz

The *meshamesh* of the Rebbe the Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz, Rav Zalman Leib Weiss, related the following story:

At a certain point in time, the Vizhnitzer institutions were in dire financial straits.

I turned to the Rebbe and asked him to bestow the blessing of *parnassah* on a few *chassidim* so that the burden of the institutions would be eased. I'd seen greater *mofsim* that the Rebbe had performed, so it would seem that bestowing the blessing of wealth would be something minor for the Rebbe to do.

"I have already tried that method," the Rebbe replied, to my surprise. "Three times, I have bestowed the blessing of *parnassah* on my *chassidim*. Although they merited great wealth, they forgot their obligation to give *tzedakah* and did not use their money wisely."

Some time passed and Reb Shmuel asked me to mention him for a *brachah* by the Rebbe while he was at a meeting of the Syndicate in London — one of the few companies in the world that owned diamond mines. At the meeting, it would be decided if he would be approved for a "site," the

ability to purchase diamonds from them at the wholesale price. The potential for tremendous wealth hinged on this decision.

I acceded to his request, but my heart wasn't in it. Hadn't the Rebbe just said that he wasn't interested in bestowing wealth upon the *chassidim*?



The Rebbe, the Imrei Chaim of
Vizhnitz



As such, I was stunned when the Rebbe replied, “I want to bless Reb Shmuel with an abundance of *parnassah*. If he will merit wealth, he will surely understand how to use his money wisely.” The Rebbe davened for him, and the Syndicate approved the coveted request.

And the passage of time surely proved that Reb Shmuel was indeed worthy and deserving of the *brachah*, as the following story indicates.

In the Merit of *Tzedakah* with *Mesirus Nefesh*

The wife of Harav Shlomo Berman (one of the *roshei yeshivah* of Ponevezh), the daughter of the Steipler Gaon, related the following story to her son, Harav Yitzchak Berman, as conveyed by a reliable source:

It was Erev Shabbos. Everyone was busy getting ready to greet the Shabbos Queen, whose arrival was imminent. It was a sweltering day; the oppressive sun baked down. Reb Shmuel was on the way to buy a block of ice for Shabbos — for the refrigerator, to store the Shabbos food, and for cold water, a vital necessity in the hot summer days.

Suddenly he stopped. A poor passerby approached him, his face downcast. For some reason, he chose to pour his heart out to Reb Shmuel: “I don’t have a penny with which to buy food for Shabbos — not challahs, wine, fish, or chicken...”

Reb Shmuel’s heart was overcome with compassion when he heard this. He took all the pennies he had out of his pocket and gave it to the poor man. Despite the heat, he would do without cold water for Shabbos, but the poor man and his family would have what to eat.

Shortly after this incident, his wealth began to accumulate rapidly, Rebbetzin Berman concluded.

A Global Expert in Quartz

If we were to pinpoint the material vessel for Reb Shmuel’s astounding success, it would be his special ability to examine raw diamonds. These diamonds have a thick outer covering that makes it hard to examine their quality from the outside. Reb Shmuel had the unique ability to look at a stone and intuit what it was like inside.

He was able to recognize the potential concealed in every diamond, and based on that, he was able to decide if it was worth purchasing the diamond and at what price.

In those years, lacking the sophisticated equipment that is available today, this talent was invaluable and in very high demand, and it propelled him at a dizzying pace onto the path of success and fabulous wealth.



Raw diamonds

An Export Office in Hong Kong

Reb Shmuel related:

During the 1960s and 1970s, the profits of selling diamonds internationally were very high, and therefore, I opened an office in Hong Kong from which I sold diamonds.

In 1965, the first time I traveled for business, I had no connections. No one helped me and no one paved the way for me. I didn't even speak any English!

I took a quick three-week course to learn the rudiments of the English language, and I embarked on a trip that lasted seven weeks. I was young, just thirty-four years old, equipped with not much more than my broken English. I had no other resources except for my great faith in the Creator.

Despite all these liabilities, I quickly found favor in the eyes of those I came in contact with. Over the course of those seven weeks,



Reb Shmuel arriving abroad

I built an expansive network of connections, which ultimately became the basic framework upon which all my years in the business were based.

Among the other things I accomplished, I opened a diamond export office in Hong Kong, in partnership with Mr. Fleischman, and I began exporting diamonds that very year.

Outstanding Exporter Award 1967

Mr. Yosef Perlmutter, the Diamond Controller for the Israeli Industry and Trade Ministry in the 1970s, related:

Beginning in 1965, Israel awarded a prize called the Outstanding Exporter Award in the diamond industry. The recipient of the prize the first year was Mr. Moshe Schnitzer, who was later elected president of the Diamond Bourse. In 1966, the prize was awarded to Mr. Simchah Lustig.

Mr. Daskal aspired to be chosen for the award in 1967. The prize was an excellent springboard to forge new contacts and to facilitate advancement in other ways.

This was a reasonable aspiration, since at the time, Mr. Daskal was exporting in the range of one million dollars' worth of diamonds a year. Although other people's sales were in the same range, Mr. Daskal had a warm spot in my heart.

I deeply admired him and had an interest in him being chosen, primarily because of the diamond factory that he built on Moshav Komemiyus (expounded upon in Chapter 17). I wanted to encourage him in his initiative. I understood that this young man was a new star in the industry; he was extremely talented and had tremendous potential to succeed.

Other candidates vied for the award, but I worked



Reb Shmuel with Mr. Yosef Perlmutter

vigorously on his behalf. I even threatened, “If Mr. Daskal doesn’t get the prize, no one will.”

And indeed, Mr. Daskal was awarded the prize!

It was a tremendous accomplishment that two years after he began exporting diamonds, he was chosen for such a prestigious prize. A thirty-six-year-old man, who had started off with nearly nothing, had leaped to the top of the mountain in a few bounds, and was able to reach the summit. *Bechasdei Hashem*, he had achieved the unbelievable.

For the rest of his life, Mr. Daskal never missed an opportunity to express his appreciation for this, concluded Mr. Perlmutter.

A Special Kind of Rich Man

Years passed, bringing with them much success and blessing. In 1977 and 1978, diamonds were being traded on the Bourse for very high prices. The gap between the cost of the merchandise that Reb Shmuel had purchased at his site and the price on the Bourse was rising.

Each month, he earned huge sums of money. As the years passed, he opened a sales office in Manhattan, managed by Rabbi Pinchas Neiman of New York and Rabbi Chaim Welcher from Kiryat Vizhnitz, Bnei Brak. In addition, he opened factories around Israel in which he employed hundreds of people.

The astronomical profits delighted him, because he could use them to fulfill his lifelong dream — to give! His pockets were bottomless sources of *tzedakah* money that brought joy to thousands of broken hearts, saved families from collapse, and spared many Yidden from falling into a financial abyss.

With the perspective of hindsight, one can only marvel at the greatness of Reb Shmuel’s spirit. Money did not blind him, nor did it make him haughty or boastful. Despite being extremely wealthy, he maintained his modesty and humility. When meeting with him, one would never realize that they were speaking to someone with such tremendous assets. He possessed no arrogance whatsoever, he never looked down at anyone, and did not have any outward trappings of

wealth. Reb Shmuel acted like a regular person, and he understood the needs of those around him — disproving the well-known assumption that a satisfied person cannot possibly feel hunger.

The Rebbe Loved One Wealthy Man

The Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz was repulsed by the *middah* of *ga'avah*, pride and arrogance, which is exhibited by many wealthy people. He also deeply disliked stinginess.

“There was one special wealthy man that the Rebbe loved,” one of the Rebbe’s confidants told Rabbi Aryeh Hager of Kiryat Vizhnitz. “He loved him with all his heart. That was Reb Shmuel Daskal, who was the embodiment of a wealthy man who was completely free of any these distasteful character traits.”

“It’s Not Reb Shmuel”

The Imrei Chaim’s affection for Reb Shmuel was especially apparent that at the *tish*, when they sang “*Oib nisht kein emunah tzuzamen miten gelt, vohet arbetsdu oif di velt*, if there isn’t *emunah* along with money, then what are you toiling for in this world?” The Rebbe would then say to his attendant Reb Shmuel Stern, “*S’iz nisht Shmuel Daskal*,” this is not referring to him.



The Yeshuos Moshe of Vizhnitz

A Great Rebbe in *Tzedakah* and *Chessed*

The Yeshuos Moshe also expressed remarkable appreciation for Reb Shmuel’s noble deeds.

“I was once speaking with the Rebbe in Switzerland about Reb Shmuel’s acts of *tzedakah*,” related Reb Benzion Weiler, the manag-



The Vizhnitz-Monsey Rebbe

er of Reb Shmuel's business in the Bourse. "I was gratified to hear of his singular appreciation of my employer. 'Benzion, there are Rebbes in Torah and *chassidus*; Reb Shmuel is a great Rebbe in *tzedakah* and *chessed*!'"

The Vizhnitz-Monsey Rebbe

Reb Eizik Adler of Kiryat Vizhnitz told Reb Shmuel's children, "I transferred a lot of money from your father to the Vizhnitz-Monsey Rebbe for large *tzedakah* endeavors."

Reb Shmuel's son-in-law Rabbi Yitzchak Zeideh, executive director of Vizhnitz Institutions in Bnei Brak, related, "When I came into the Vizhnitz-Monsey Rebbe and I told

him that I was the son-in-law of Reb Shmuel Daskal, the Rebbe said, "The *amud hachessed*, the pillar of *chessed*!"

Rabbi Baruch Shimon Hager, a son of the Vizhnitz-Monsey Rebbe, said that it was with good reason that his father would honor Reb Shmuel at all his children's weddings by being an *eid*, a witness, for the *kesubah*.

Baruch Hashem, We Have Shmuel Daskal

A few months before the passing of the Imrei Chaim on Zos Chanukah of 5732, the *hanachas even hapinah* was held for a housing project offering low-cost apartments for young couples. The Rebbe's health was failing, so the atmosphere was tense and there was a sense of foreboding in the air. When the Rebbe appeared, there was a collective sigh of relief. We will never forget his emotional words, which in retrospect, were his parting words to his *kehillah*.



The Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz. To his right is the Yeshuos Moshe of Vizhnitz. Standing and speaking at left is Rabbi Yaakov Dovid Vizhnitzer, the executive director of Vizhnitz Institutions.

The Rebbe thanked Hashem for the past, and weeping, davened for the future. Among his words of gratitude for the past, the Rebbe declared, “*Baruch Hashem* we have *avreichim* who work on behalf of the *tzibbur*, people who stand up and take action.”

And to those around him he added, “*Baruch Hashem*, we have Shmuel Daskal!”

The Chochmas Eliezer of Seret Vizhnitz

Reb Shmuel had a wonderful relationship with the Seret Vizhnitz Rebbe. Before each *simchah*, he would go to the Rebbe to receive a *brachah*. Once, he was not able to get to the Rebbe until a day before his son’s wedding, but despite the myriad things he needed to do, he traveled from Bnei Brak to Haifa with *mesirus nefesh* to be able to receive a *brachah*.

He also had a special friendship with the Rosh Yeshivah of Seret



The Imrei Chaim laying the cornerstone



Reb Shmuel at the Seret Vizhnitz wedding. From left to right: The Yeshuos Moshe of Vizhnitz; the *chassan*, Harav Naftali Reuven Kornreich, the Rav of Tel Zion; the Chochmas Eliezer of Seret Vizhnitz; the Rosh Yeshivah Harav Moshe Hager.



The Chochmas Eliezer
of Seret Vizhnitz

Vizhnitz, Harav Moshe Hager. In 5734/1974, he traveled with his sons to participate in the Shabbos *sheva brachos* in honor of the marriage of the Rosh Yeshivah's daughter to Harav Meir Katz, which the Rebbe had joined. Years later, he was still emotional about the Rebbe's *dveikus* at the *tish* that Shabbos.

Like water reflects back what is put before it, so, too, is the heart of a person — the Rebbe displayed great love and appreciation for Reb Shmuel. When his children went to the Rebbe, he would marvel at the tremendous *middah* of *chessed* that their father displayed.