

Chapter Ten

“And You Should Support Him”

The Greatest *Tzedakah* of All

The Rambam writes, “There are eight virtues in charity, each one higher than the next. The greatest virtue one can aspire to is to support someone who is impoverished, to give him a gift or a loan, or form a partnership with him, or find him work in order to support him so that he should not need to come onto others, and of that it is said, ‘And you should support the convert and the sojourner so that he shall live with you’ (*Vayikra* 25:35), which means to support him until he is no longer needy” (*Hilchos Matnos Aniyim* 10:7).

Reb Shmuel followed the path that the Rambam specified. He wanted to provide a dignified livelihood for his workers who polished diamonds. Even when his own financial situation was very precarious, he continued employing the workers in order to support them with dignity. Aside for that, he directed other Yidden to quality sources of livelihood.

Looking for a Job

The son of Reb Moshe Rotter of Bnei Brak related:

“Do you have an open position in your factory?” I asked Reb Shmuel.

“I don’t have one, but I’ll try to help you,” he replied.

I forgot all about our conversation. In time, I learned that Reb Shmuel had gone from factory to factory to find out if they were looking to hire.

Amazing! Reb Shmuel was a distinguished person, a wealthy businessman, but for the sake of another Jew's *parnassah*, he did not consider networking to find someone a job to be beneath his status.

The Secret of Success

A friend told Reb Shmuel's son-in-law, Reb Moshe Yosef Rosner:

When I came to Eretz Yisrael from Sweden, I had \$6,000 that I'd earned from dealing in diamonds.

I was interested in opening a business so I went to the Vizhnitzer Rebbe and asked him, "What can I do with this money to establish a stable, profitable enterprise?"

"Why don't you buy diamonds and then sell them?" the Rebbe asked. At the time, the diamond industry was very lucrative.

"What can I buy for \$6,000?" I wondered. "I can't even pay for a small packet of diamonds with this money."

The Rebbe was not perturbed by my skeptical tone. "Ask Reb Shmuel Daskal. He will help you."



Reb Shmuel speaking at a gathering on behalf of the Vizhnitz Institutions

I reached out to your father-in-law with a request, "I want to buy diamonds."

"For how much?" he asked.

"I have \$6,000," I replied, somewhat sheepishly.

"What can you do with that amount?" Reb Shmuel wondered. But he immediately recovered and said, "I'll sell you diamonds worth

\$15,000. Sell them in Sweden, and when you profit, you'll pay me back the \$9,000.”

I traveled to Sweden with the diamonds. I offered them for sale, and there was brisk demand, since the merchandise was of excellent quality. I was able to sell some of the diamonds and recoup my investment so that I could repay my debt to Reb Shmuel. I kept the remaining diamonds in the safe.

Two years later, I offered the remaining diamonds for sale, and to my surprise, they were purchased for the huge sum of \$30,000! I realized that Reb Shmuel had given me the packet of diamonds for a third of its value. He had sold me diamonds that were worth \$45,000 for a mere \$15,000.

Even years later, when I was doing well in business, I did not forget the *chesed* that Reb Shmuel had done for me. He succeeded in putting me on my feet, and did so with wisdom, sensitivity, and modesty.

How Great Are His Aspirations...

Reb Avraham Lehman of Bnei Brak related:

My *kollel* stipend was no longer enough to support my family and I wanted to learn a profession. I found an instructor to teach me the craft of diamond splitting, and I paid him a fee of \$2,500, a huge sum in those days. I spent a year studying the profession, but it turned out that the instructor was not a good teacher. After a year, I had acquired virtually no skills or training. I lost the money I'd paid him, but was no closer to knowing the profession. Nevertheless, I decided to try to find a job.

I went to one diamond dealer and asked for work. I got a packet of diamonds and began to work. The dealer immediately discerned that I wasn't adequately trained.

“You don't know what you're doing!”



Reb Shmuel writing a letter in a *sefer Torah*

he cried angrily. "You're not a professional. I'm not a social welfare office!" And with that, he threw me out of his factory.

I went home, feeling bitter and hurt, and my financial future looked bleak.

One day, I heard about Reb Shmuel Daskal, a wealthy and kind-hearted diamond dealer. I contacted him and said, "I studied diamond splitting and I'm looking to earn a living."

"Come with me to the Bourse," he suggested.

When I got there, I was sent to the foreman. He gave me a packet of diamonds to split, but this time as well, it was apparent that I really didn't know how to split them properly. I broke and damaged those diamonds, and I felt my heart break along with them.

That's it. There's no hope for me. I'm a good-for-nothing, I thought, with a sinking heart. I got up from my place and gave the diamonds back to the foreman. He looked at them and said, "I see you're not trained for this work. You broke a few stones. I can't give you any more diamonds."

I picked myself up and ran away as fast as I could. In my heart, I thanked Hashem that at least I wasn't asked to pay for the damages.

I hoped Reb Shmuel would not notice me, but he did see me hurrying to leave, and he caught up with me in the elevator. "So, what's doing?" he asked. "Did you get some more stones to split?"

"No," I replied in a near whisper. "The foreman doesn't want to give me any more stones. I'm not doing the job correctly."

Reb Shmuel gripped my hand and said, "Come with me to the office."

I followed him, my head lowered. At the office he said to me, "The foreman is not the boss. I'll take care of it."

"Give him some more diamonds," he instructed the foreman. To me he said, "When you finish, don't bring the diamonds back to the foreman; bring them to me."

I got another packet, and destroyed those diamonds as well. I went to Reb Shmuel with the broken stones. Reb Shmuel examined them and said, "You're making progress, *baruch Hashem!* You'll get another packet. Don't feel discouraged and don't be afraid of losses you might be causing. Just continue until you'll *b'ezras Hashem* succeed."

I continued trying. Progress was very slow. It seemed that I just wasn't talented in this profession. What can I do? I thought. On the one hand, I can't pay for another instructor. On the other hand, it was so difficult to work without seeing success! Reb Shmuel continued to encourage me, and promised me that with Hashem's help, it would all work out.

One day an unfamiliar person knocked at the door of my house and began to speak excitedly. “Listen, I promised Reb Shmuel that I wouldn't tell you that he sent me. He forbade me to give over this information, but I feel obligated to reveal it to you, because you don't know me and I have to explain to you why I came. Please promise me that you'll never tell Reb Shmuel or anyone else that it was him who sent me!”

My heart pounded — what could this man want? Why had Reb Shmuel sent him to me?

“Reb Shmuel asked me to teach you the craft of diamond splitting,” the man declared. I was awestruck by Reb Shmuel's kindheartedness, as well as his willingness to take the initiative to help me reach my goal.

My tutelage began, and of course, Reb Shmuel paid for it in full. The man was a masterful instructor, thorough and professional. He taught me the secrets of the trade until I became an expert diamond splitter. Needless to say, throughout the process, Reb Shmuel continued to encourage me and praise my progress.

At the point when my expertise was already solid, Reb Shmuel summoned me and said, “I see that you are very capable at this craft, *baruch Hashem*. I want to tell you that if you find a better job, where they pay more than we do, you are free to go and work wherever you want, without feeling guilty.”



Reb Shmuel serving as *sandak*

How Will You Earn a Living?

A friend related to Reb Avraham Aber of Bnei Brak:

I was a young *bachur*, all alone, without anyone to help or support me. I didn't have the financial means to establish my own home, and was at a loss as to what my next step should be.

And then I heard about Reb Shmuel Daskal. I was told that he was very generous to anyone in need. I poured my heart out to him, hoping he would help me.

"I'm an older *bachur*. I don't have a penny to my name, so I can't get married. Is there anything you can do for me?" I asked him, dejectedly. I expected him to give me a bit of money so I could get married — I didn't even dream of anything more, so I was shocked when Reb Shmuel began to question me.

"What are you planning to do for a living?" he inquired.

"After I get married, I'll look for a job," I replied.

"What do you like to do?" he asked. He wasn't letting up so fast.

"I like baking," I replied.

"So why don't you open a business and earn a dignified living?"

"I don't have a penny to get married — how can I think of opening a business?" I replied, anguished.

But Reb Shmuel did not desist.

"Okay. I'll give you money for a wedding and I'll add a lump sum that will help you start a business. *B'ezras Hashem*, you will succeed!"

I can't begin to describe what I felt like when Reb Shmuel took out a huge sum and gave it to me — someone he didn't even know! I left his house the happiest man on earth — I had money in my pocket. I could get married and even start a business!

Today, thirty years later, I own a successful chain of bakeries. If not for Reb Shmuel — and a good amount of *siyata diShmaya* — I would still be penniless today.

A Loan to Establish a Business

Reb Dovid Tzvi Neuman of Vienna told Reb Shmuel's son-in-law, Reb Bentzion Feuerstein:

I was a young man when I began working in the diamond industry.

I knew the profession well, but I did not have any capital to be able to start dealing in diamonds.

Then, I happened to meet Reb Shmuel. Even though I hadn't previously known him, I asked him to help me. With his sharp eye, he discerned that I was an honest person. I figured that maybe he'd lend me a few thousand dollars to give me a starting boost.

To my surprise, he trusted me so much that he gave me a packet of diamonds worth \$40,000 — with no guarantors or even a security! That gesture really put me on my feet.

Bourse Members

A family friend related:

I worked as a financial advisor for a living, and I earned a few thousand shekels a month.

I was surprised when Reb Shmuel asked me one day, “Why don't you work as a financial advisor at the Bourse?”

“Who would help me become a member of the Bourse?” I retorted. Few receive this privileged status. Membership allows one to have access to all the sales floors of the Bourse, and provides a certain status among the businesspeople.

“I'll take care of it for you,” he replied.

As a member of the board of directors at the Bourse, Reb Shmuel went beyond the call of duty, and advocated for me until I was accepted as a member. Since then, *baruch Hashem*, I earn a generous livelihood.

The financial advisor was not the only one Reb Shmuel helped in this manner. Several friends became members of the Bourse due to his influence, and that made it possible for them to become agents and dealers. He never asked for any remuneration for his efforts. That's how he put dozens — if not hundreds — of people on firm financial footing. Very few of the personal stories are known, and many will probably never become known.