

**Rebbetzin Bayle Edels, a paean to a mother, by her son, Rabbi Yosef Falk,
son of Rabbi Yehoshua Falk, author of the P'risha-D'risha on the Tur.**

Translated by Rabbi Yitzhak Haut

(Source: the final portion of the Introduction by Rabbi Yosef to his fathers' work on the Tur, and is found in the original Hebrew at vol.2 of the Tur, Yoreh De'ah (M.P. Press, Inc, 1970).

And how can I not set down and describe the merits of a wonderful, modest and , righteous woman who was my mother and my teacher, Rabbani Bayle, who was the daughter of the well-known and charitable community leader, Rabbi Yisroel Edels, of blessed memory, may she rest in peace, together with our mothers, Rivka, Rahel, Leah and Sarah, who ever brought all glory to my father z"l, her husband and was for him and for his students a help-mate, that they should learn Torah. Not merely to the members of her family was she gracious, but she bestowed grace on all in her generation. She was beautiful as the moon is clear and to all the daughters of Israel was she a pride. The daughters saw her and praised her acts, which were pleasant and beautiful and she led them in the ways of righteousness. It is therefore appropriate to give her our honor and to set forth a portion of her good deeds so that such may be a remembrance for the generations, and so that they all the daughters of Israel may learn from her and do likewise.

Although she was the only daughter to a father, the community leader and it was possible for her to fulfil all of her desires, whatever she wanted, she, nevertheless, did not. And indeed, her soul despised the pleasures of this world and sought always to find for herself a place in the world to come. Not only that she did not desire the enjoyments of this world, but she also underwent many fasts. In the lifetime of her father and her husband, she was not able to fast that much. Only after the death of my father, she survived approximately seventeen years, during which she underwent fasts from day-to-day. And at night she would not eat anything from an animal and not from fruit, except what was necessary for her physical subsistence. For the Sabbath she made all types of good food, but she enjoyed little of them, providing them instead to the poor people and to the members of her household. All the days of her life, whether in the winter or in the summer, she would rise early, several hours before the light of day and she prayed with great kavana, prayers and tahnunim before G-d.

She had in her hand the key to the ezras nashim, for she was the first to come to the bait kneset. She never left less than an hour or two after the people had left the synagogue, until she

had finished her prayers and her tahnunim.

After her prayers she paid attention to no vain activities, but went from strength to strength, osetet b'Torah, the portion of the week with Rashi and other commentaries. As was known to all students of my father, who were present at his table on Sabbath, as soon as they started talking Torah, she would gird her loins like a man, in the give and take of Torah and, sometimes set forth her own views, with sounds of sweet interpretation, which were sweet like honey. Particularly, in connection with the laws of women and the laws of Niddah, she was knowledgeable and would expound almost like one of the leading decisors.

Look at what she determined was a mistake, insofar as what the women would do in connection with lighting of the candles on the holidays and their mistake was twofold. The first was that their custom was to light candles on holidays, just as they did on the Sabbath, that is to say, they first lit the candles and, thereafter, placed their hands on their eyes before the candles and they would then make the blessings upon the candles. Then they would take away their hands, just as they did on the Sabbath.

And this custom is presented by Rama in Orach Hayim, at sect 263 and so in the Maharil. And the reason for that which they placed their hands before the candles, immediately prior to uttering the prayer, is that such should be deemed as uttering the blessing prior to performing the mitzvah. For it is a matter of dispute among the Rabbis if the acceptance of the Shabbat depends upon the lighting of the candles or not, as it is stated in the Tur, sect. 263 and sect. 679. And, although we conclude that the acceptance of the Sabbath is not with the lighting of the candles, but with the prayers which one prayed in the synagogue and with the commencement of the prayer by the Cantor of Borchu, or even if the community did not say the evening prayers and the individual recited the evening service while it was yet day, then he accepted upon himself the Sabbath and is prohibited from doing any work.

Nevertheless many of the leading decisors, such as the Ha'gaas Maimuni, the Kalbo and the Shibulai Haleket, state that such rule appertains only to the members of the household, but not for the person that lights the candles. That person is prohibited from doing any work once the candles have been lit. This for the reason that since she utters the blessing there is no greater acceptance of the Sabbath than this. Unless she makes a condition upon lighting the candles that she does not accept the Sabbath until the Cantor utters Borchu.

Nevertheless, even as to the latter matter there was a dispute among the authorities, as indeed stated in Bais Yosef, and in the Shulhan Aruch at sect. 263 that such condition, although applicable as to members of the household is not applicable as to the individual lighting the

candles. The principle which is derived from this is that since the one who lights the candles is thereby accepting of the Sabbath with the blessing of the candles, it follows that if she would make the blessing beforehand, as it would appear to be appropriate, so that the blessing could be before the act, it would then thereafter be prohibited to light the candles.

From this has the custom flowed from that they initially light the candles, place their hands before the candles, say the blessing and thereafter remove their hands. In this manner it is deemed that the blessing precedes the act.

This, accordingly, applies insofar as lighting the candles on the Sabbath is concerned for after the blessing it is prohibited for them to light the candles. However, insofar as the holidays are concerned, during which it is permissible to light candles it is much better and preferable that the blessing on the candles should be made in the normal manner, prior to lighting them, so that the blessing will be prior to the actual performance of the act and to thereafter light the candles, as with the candles of Hanukkah, where the procedure is first to make the blessing and, thereafter, to light candles one after the other.

The second mistake is that which the women have become accustomed to lighting the candles of the holiday after the men have concluded praying in the synagogue and have returned home, just prior to the meal, except perhaps as to the second night of the holiday in the diaspora, for it is prohibited to prepare on the first day of the holiday for the second day. It is then appropriate so to do. But what followed from that was that the custom was to light the candles, even on the first night of the holiday, after the men came home from the synagogue. This is improper and inappropriate and it is better from the point of view of the law to light candles before the evening prayers and to accept the holiday with their lighting, just as upon the Sabbath, so that everything should be prepared immediately when the men come home from the synagogue to the house, with the table set, the candles lit and the bed made. As it is, in fact, stated in the Perek Kol Kisvei, 109, and in the Tur, Orah Hayim, sect. 262, in connection with the Sabbath. This is particularly so since any work which could be performed before the holiday must not, preliminarily, be performed on the holiday, as it is stated in Tur, Orah Hayim, sect. 495. After the death of my father, I heard that she instructed my wife, Maras Gittel, daughter of the Gaon, Nasan Feitel, of blessed memory, not to delay to light the candles on the holidays, as it is set forth above, and she explained to me her reasoning, since she was aware of the mistakes of the women. Thereafter, I searched among the decisors, and I found that she was correct. I thereafter decided to set this forth in this introduction as a pride to her.

It was always her delight to know the ta'amei Torah. And after she dealt with prayer and

with Torah, she also engaged in good deeds; to visit the sick; to console the mourners and there was no matter of mitzvah in the city that she did not engage in. And if the day was long enough she would not turn her mind to idle thoughts, but she would engage in the weaving of Tzitzit, of threads for the Sifrei Torah and she sewed Talitot. and kittels. And she attended to the household, with teaching her children and grandchildren and also other young people and she would always pay attention to give them good food and to repair their clothing and the cleaning of their hair for the Sabbath. And always she had no arrogance about herself in connection with these matters and her hand was always open with t'zedaka, more than she could afford. And her ways, her thoughts and actions, were always devoted to thinking how to do a d'var mitzvah. And who can detail all of the myriad details of her good deeds and of her hasidut and her p'rishut and that which she avoided even that which was permitted to her, this page would be insufficient to contain, but they are widely known to all.

After the death of my father, she decided to go to Eretz Yisroel, and to Jerusalem, may it speedily be rebuilt. When she got there, she immediately visited the graves of the tzaddikim in each city, who are buried in Eretz Yisroel. Finally she settled in Jerusalem, may it speedily be rebuilt, for approximately eight years and her good reputation grew even greater. But, in my opinion, as the result of the punishment of her body with deprivation of food, and her fasts and because of her distaste for this world and her interest in only pursuing the next, she did not live out her years, but was only fifty-eight years old when she died. After she died, they afforded her much honor and determined to bury her among the worthies of the land, and they buried her in Jerusalem, may it speedily be rebuilt, with much honor, within four amos of the grave of the prophet Zechariah, may he rest in peace.. May her z'cus protect her, us, our children and all of the House of Israel.