

Baal ShemTov

Livelihood, a tool for livelihood:

As the story is told about the Baal Shem Tov: He once said to someone that he needed a certain sum of money, and immediately after saying so, he left. The person followed after him, asking, "If I had waited a little while, would you have given me the money right on the spot?" The Baal Shem Tov answered him: "The Almighty has commanded 'in all that you do' (Deuteronomy 15:10)." He had said that he needed the sum of money, but waiting for it — he was busy with better things.

[A] story based on the above parable:

Once upon a time, in a quiet village nestled between rolling hills, lived a kind-hearted merchant named David. He was known for his generosity and strong faith, always helping those in need. But like everyone else, David had his own challenges. Lately, his business had been struggling, and the weight of supporting his family weighed heavily on his shoulders. Day after day, he prayed for a breakthrough, asking G-d to provide the means to sustain his livelihood.

One chilly autumn morning, David heard that the great Baal Shem Tov, a revered and mystical rabbi, was passing through the village. Eager for advice and comfort, David hurried to meet the Baal Shem Tov, hoping for guidance on how to restore his business. As David approached the rabbi, he bowed respectfully and shared his worries, humbly explaining his need for a certain sum of money to keep his business afloat.

The Baal Shem Tov listened carefully, his eyes filled with warmth and wisdom. After a moment of thought, the rabbi gently placed his hand on David's shoulder and said, "You need this sum of money, do you?" David nodded anxiously.

"Well then," the Baal Shem Tov said with a smile, "may G-d provide it for you. Trust that it will come."

With that, the Baal Shem Tov turned and began walking away, his long robes flowing behind him. David stood there in disbelief. *Was that it?* he wondered. He had expected a longer conversation, some kind of ritual or prayer to summon the help he desperately needed. Confused and a little frustrated, he quickly followed after the Baal Shem Tov.

"Rabbi, wait!" David called out as he caught up. "Forgive me, but if I had stayed a moment longer, would you have handed me the money right then and there?"

The Baal Shem Tov paused and looked at David with a smile that radiated both compassion and a deeper understanding. "David," he said softly, "when the Almighty decrees that you will be blessed with sustenance, it is not up to me or you to decide the

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exact moment or means by which it arrives. Our task, my dear friend, is to trust in the Almighty’s timing.”

“But,” David stammered, “I don’t understand. Should I just wait and do nothing?”

The Baal Shem Tov’s eyes twinkled as he shook his head. “No, no. G-d has said, ‘In all that you do, you shall be blessed.’ This means that you must make an effort—work, plan, and be diligent—but never lose sight of the greater truth: that your ultimate success comes from above. I could stay and speak with you for hours, but the moment has passed, and I am busy with other matters. You too must continue with your life, your work, and your prayers. The blessing will come in due time. Your worry, David, only takes you away from better things—like faith, trust, and good deeds.”

David stood still, pondering the rabbi’s words. His mind raced with the thought that perhaps his anxiety about the money had been holding him back from seeing the true blessings already present in his life. He realized that while it was important to make efforts in his business, worrying constantly about the outcome would only cloud his heart and distract him from the joys and duties of life.

The Baal Shem Tov nodded kindly, as if sensing David’s shift in understanding. “Go now, my friend,” he said, “and continue with your work. The money will come as it is meant to, in G-d’s perfect time.”

With a lighter heart, David returned to his business, no longer consumed by doubt. He worked diligently, but with a new sense of peace, knowing that his efforts were part of a bigger picture—one guided by a Higher Power. Days passed, and as David focused on his work and faith, something remarkable happened. An old acquaintance visited his shop, and after hearing about his situation, offered to lend him the exact sum of money he needed to recover his business.

David’s heart filled with gratitude. He realized that the Baal Shem Tov was right all along. The blessing had come not when David was anxiously chasing it, but when he trusted that G-d would provide in the right time.

From that day on, David lived with a renewed sense of faith, always working hard, but with a calm heart, knowing that his livelihood was in the hands of G-d. And whenever he faced difficulties, he would remember the wise words of the Baal Shem Tov: “Do your part, but never lose sight of the One who holds all blessings.”]