



# Just In Time

## VENTURE ON CONDITION

There once was a kind, pious individual living in Pollonye, who did many favors for the Baal Shem Tov. He would supply him with cheese, grains and flour.

When he felt his time in this world was coming to an end, he asked the Baal Shem Tov to personally watch over his only son Mordechai, commonly known as Reb Mottel.

Reb Mottel's financial situation was quite a phenomenon because it was constantly fluctuating; at times he did well and at others he had next to nothing.

During one of his particularly low periods, he had nothing left to his name besides the house he lived in.

The Baal Shem Tov, who, as mentioned, had

taken responsibility for him, gave him the following instructions:

"If you will be presented with the opportunity to rent the city's inn, do not accept the offer, unless you are provided with a wagon to get there. It doesn't matter how many times you are asked, don't do it until a wagon is sent to fetch you!"

Sure enough, requests started coming in, yet he resisted each time explaining that he wasn't well and could not walk. One of the inquiries came from the local baroness and she was somewhat shocked that her requests were being turned away.

Finally she sent a carriage.

Meeting the baroness, Reb Mottel explained that he had no grains with which to make vodka and could not produce drinks for the patrons who would come visit.

Determined to make the deal, she said, "I will give you hundreds of bushels of grain if you rent the inn."

To her great delight, Reb Mottel finally agreed.

For Reb Mottel it was an important turning point as he walked away from the venture with 1200 coins.

## LISTEN!

On a different occasion the Baal Shem Tov cautioned Reb Mottel not to get involved with any business dealings connected with buying and selling oxen. He chose, however, to ignore the advice and ended up losing everything.

## OVERNIGHT SUCCESS

During a particularly low and desperate time, he owed his landlord close to 1300 gold coins but had not a penny to pay it back.

The man he owed the money to was not interested in hearing anything. "If you don't pay me back," the landlord threatened, "I will kill you!"

A terrified Reb Mottel ran to the Baal Shem Tov for help and he stayed there for the duration of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. "Rebbe!" cried Reb Mottel. "I have no money!"

One morning, a few days after Yom Kippur, the Baal Shem Tov said to him, "Come with me to the mikvah."

After doing so, the Baal Shem Tov instructed him to return home.

"But what will be when I get home?" asked the terrified Reb Mottel.

The Baal Shem Tov replied, "Do not be afraid! Go home and celebrate *Yom Tov* with joy."

Sukkos passed and the rainy season set in but with it did not come any solace

## TO HIS SURPRISE HE SAW A LARGE GROUP OF UKRAINIAN SHEPHERDS WALKING AROUND WITH SIGNS OF GROWING FRUSTRATION APPEARING ON THEIR FACES.

for the dire situation in which Reb Mottel found himself.

Completely distraught, he opened up a window and began smoking his pipe. To his surprise he saw a large group of Ukrainian shepherds walking around with signs of growing frustration appearing on their faces.

The group had come to the town, as they had done every year, to rest up and get ready to move on.

However, for some strange reason that very night they could not find a place to lodge.

Reb Mottel realized this was his moment and that he had the opportunity to care for them. He invited them in and wined and dined them; he even bought the specific alcohol they liked.

He sold them supplies, food, honey and other items they enjoyed. With the money he earned he bought more and more supplies for

them, selling it in turn to his guests for profit, until he had made a considerable sum, enough to pay back his debt.

In due time, the creditor came riding up to Reb Mottel's home and ordered that he come outside to talk to him. Without mincing words, he demanded the payment, although in his mind he was convinced that he wouldn't get a penny of it.

To his great surprise, Reb Mottel jumped with excitement and let him know that he had the money.

They went inside the house whereupon he counted out every last bit of money that he was owed.

With shock, the creditor exclaimed, "Rumor has it that you were penniless... I see it was all a lie. Please take back the money and pay me on a different occasion when it is convenient for you."

"No! No!" insisted Reb Mottel. "Take the money now. Miracles don't happen every day..."

Some time later, the Baal Shem Tov commented on this incident, "How lucky that man was; having threatened your life, he may have died himself if you didn't have the money for him!" **T**

*(Mishivchei HaBaal Shem Tov)*

