

**RABBI YISROEL
BAAL-SHEM-TOV**

RABBI YISROEL BAAL-SHEM-TOV

by Moshe Prager

To Father Louis
(Thomas Merton)
From Paula Eliazoph
8/20/63 - N.Y. City

TORAH UMESORAH PUBLICATIONS
5 Beekman Street New York 38, N. Y.

to the mountains for robbery and murder. But a holy man like you, what do you need it for?"

The *Baal-Shem-Tov* answered. "I will give you a parable. Once there was a good and wise king. The good King took upon himself to do everything that would be asked of him. One day, two men came to him with the same request — they both wanted to be allowed to go into the King's palace. One said that he desired the valuable objects in the palace. The other said that he loved the King very much and he wanted to be near him.

"Now this is the moral: The Almighty, His glory fills the entire world. The whole world is His palace, and His most glorious palace is in the high mountains, as they are called in *T'bilim*, the 'mountains of G-d'. In these mountains one sees the wonders of the Creator and the mountains remain in their beauty as they were in the times of Creation . . .

"And now you yourself will understand the meaning of my words. You and I are here in the palace of the King, the King of the Universe. But I have one desire and you have another, completely different . . ."

In the wink of an eye the *Baal-Shem-Tov* disappeared from before Dobosh the murderer — disappeared and was gone!

"Surely, the holy man will punish me," Dobosh was frightened, "he will surely punish me for my evil deeds . . ."

For the first time in his life, Dobosh the murderer was frightened because of his murderous deeds. For the first time he raised his eyes to the mountains all around him, and for the first time he realized how much he had profaned and soiled this wonderful beauty!

"The holy man was right — here in the mountains is the King's most glorious palace. How much innocent blood have I shed in this palace! Each corner, each spot of beauty in the mountains, I have soiled with blood . . .

"Ho, ho, ho, even I, Dobosh, have become afraid! Ho, ho, ho, I, the leader of the robbers, am afraid of punishment, am frightened by the words of this holy man . . . ho, ho, ho . . ."

does the well have so much water, without limits or bounds?' I grew up and I learned that this is a blessing from the Almighty, which is hidden in the well of fresh water — and there is no bounds or end to the blessing of the Almighty . . . I also learned the opposite from this well, that the more one draws water from it, the more waters rise up from the deep.

"The *tsaddik* of a generation is also like a well of fresh water," the *Baal-Shem-Tov* continued pleasantly, "and it is in the power of the *tsaddik* to spread throughout the world the light of faith, as it is written, 'And a *tsaddik* lives by his faith.' As the well, so is the *tsaddik*. The more pupils a *tsaddik* has, who come to him to draw forth Torah and fear of G-d, the valuation of wisdom and the secret of joy, the stronger and the higher becomes the source of faith in the *tsaddik* himself . . ."

The *Baal-Shem-Tov* stopped speaking and began to sing, with great fervor, "A Song of David, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."


The guest jumped up from his place and called out, "I have been privileged to discover this holy light! I will go and bring this great news to my master and teacher, the rabbi of Brodi!"

And so the time had come for the *Baal-Shem-Tov* to be revealed.

The pupil hurried to bring the news of the revelation to the brother-in-law of the *Baal-Shem-Tov*, Rabbi Gershon Kitover, the rabbi of Brodi.

According to the degree of suffering, so is the degree of the reward. Rabbi Gershon of Brodi constantly suffered over his brother-in-law, a "wagon-driver," an "unsuccessful man" — and now he was to receive the reward. The *Baal-Shem-Tov* sent his brother-in-law a letter of friendship, and in the letter he told him, "I will reveal to you that you should go home quickly, for in another few days the time will come for me to be revealed."

This letter was written on Lag B'Omer in the year 5493 (1733). The *Baal-Shem-Tov* signed the letter: "Your brother-in-law who is truly scorned, Yisroel the son of Rabbi Eliezer of Okop." This is the high degree of humility and modesty to which the *Baal-Shem-Tov*



*This book was originally written in Hebrew, and
is available to those who would like to read it in
the original.*

(Price: 75¢)

TORAH UMESORAH PUBLICATIONS
5 Beekman Street New York 38, N. Y.