

# HAPPINESS

*by Rabbi Raymond Beyda*

Becoming a happy person is easier said than done. Even one who understands that he or she has so much more than others is struck with dissatisfaction as soon as another appears with a new possession that the observer lacks. "Sure, I do have a lot -- but I am also missing a lot of the things that make people happy," is the thought that immediately crosses the hungry mind. In *Hobot Halebabot*, Rabenu Bahye says: "One should always keep one's eye on those who have fewer benefits in life, and not on those who have more."

The Gemara tells of the poverty of Rabbi Akiba and his new wife Rahel. When they got married her millionaire father disowned her because he was unhappy with her choice of Rabbi Akiba as a spouse. The couple accepted their lot. They lived in a barn where they covered themselves with straw to keep warm for lack of anything else to provide warmth. One day Eliyahu Hanabi came disguised as a pauper and begged them for some straw with which to cover his poverty stricken wife and newborn infant. Rahel gladly gave from her limited supply of worldly comfort and said to Rabbi Akiba, "See, here is one who does not even have the straw with which we are blessed."

Life is a matter of relatively. There will always be people who have more than you do -- and there will always be others who have less than you. It's all a matter of how you look at things.

Today when the pangs of dissatisfaction strike -- stop. It only takes a minute to change your sights from looking at one who is wealthier than you to one who has less. The ups and downs -- the laws of relativity -- will determine your happiness quotient.

## **DID YOU KNOW THAT**

If one ate an ounce of mezonot [cake], which requires a blessing of "Al Hamihyah" and also ate some fruit of the kinds that would require a blessing of "Al Ha-es" -- but less than an ounce of that fruit-- the rule is that the cutoff point is 20 grams. If the person ate 20 grams of the fruit one adds "al haperot" to his or her blessing but if one ate less than that -- one does not add "al haperot" to his or her blessing. [Source: Yehave Daat, volume 6, responsa 14]

## **CONSIDER THIS FOR A MINUTE**

How great is the trait of humility. The root of humility is that one should distance oneself from honor like Moshe Rabenu who said "But what are we?" [v'nahnu mah?]. What is said about Moshe is greater than what is said about the humility of Abraham. Abraham said: "But I am but dust and ashes" Dust

can be made into mud and then bricks with which to build -- ashes are the remains of something that once was -- however Moshe said "I am nothing!!" *[Source: Sefer Haroke-ah, page 2]*

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