

# TO FILL THAT VOID

by Rabbi Label Lam

If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments and perform them; then I will provide your rains in their time and the land will give its produce and the tree of the field will give its fruit. Your threshing will last until the vintage and the vintage will last until the sowing; you will eat your bread to satiety and you will dwell securely in the land. (Vayikra 26:3-5)

"A righteous person eats to satisfy his soul, but the belly of the wicked shall feel want." (Mishlei 13:25)

In this idyllic portrait of how harmonious life might be when the entire Jewish Nation is in concert with the Mitzvos of HASHEM a shower of material bounty is assured. What does it mean, "You will eat your bread to satiety"? Is it a pledge of plenty, or alternately, is it a sensation of satisfaction- of having enough? How can that be guaranteed?

Rashi takes a position that by eating even a little, the bread in the stomach will carry the blessing of being satisfying. The Sifse' Chachamim explains the necessity of Rashi's approach. Since the verse immediately preceding this already promised an abundance of produce, what then is the novelty of stating that "you will eat your bread to satiety"?

King Solomon boldly states, "A lover of money will never be satisfied with money..." (Koheles 5:9) The Midrash counters the concept that a "lover of money will not be satisfied with money" with the odd claim, "one who loves Torah will not be satisfied with Torah" and "the lover of Mitzvos will not be satisfied with Mitzvos". What does that mean?

I heard a beautiful explanation of the intent of the Midrash. Our sages wish to convey that because man is essentially a G-dly creature with a Divine spark buried within he has an endless capacity; a bottomless pit seeking to be filled by something. Whatever that something is it can never effectively fill that that void. If it's money and cars and food or whatever in the material spectrum it can never sufficiently scratch that deep and infinite itch. Even if the pursuit, the goal is for Torah and for Mitzvos the appetite grows with the consumption. This is a positive rather than a negative form of frustration. The struggle though is unavoidable.

Psychologist Carl Jung had stated, *"During the past thirty years, people from all the civilized countries have consulted me. I have treated many hundreds of patients. Among all my patients in the second half of life- that is to say over thirty-five- there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that everyone of them fell ill because he had*

*lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook."*

As with the wind pipe and the food pipe - whenever one opens the other closes, so too when one's sole ambition is to learn Torah, fulfill Mitzvos, and move ever closer to G-d, the lures of this world lose their luster and satisfaction can more easily be achieved. When the spirit is deprived then the endless appetite for swallowing things is turned on and then no plate can be big or full enough **to fill that void**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](http://Torah.org).