



Rich and Happy

"Hello Abba, I'm home."
 "Hello Avi. Great to see you. Why are you so out of breath?"
 "Because I have been running, Abba."
 "That's good exercise, Avi."
 "I know, Abba. But I was running away from someone."
 "Oy vey, what happened?"
 "Do you know Mr. Kane, the man who lives on the next block?"
 "Do you mean the man with the big, beautiful home?"
 "Yes, that's him. Well, Chaim and I were walking in front of his house, and we waved hello to him. He began screaming at us. He said that he was going to call the police. So we ran home before the police came."
 "I see."
 "Abba, this is not the first time something like this has happened. Why is Mr. Kane such a grouch?"
 "You should know, Avi, that Mr. Kane needs a lot of *rachmonus* (pity). One time we were talking, and he opened his heart to me."
 "What did he say?"
 "Mr. Kane told me that he is a very wealthy man. However, in spite of all his riches, he is miserable. He is always looking with jealousy at what other people have. He always wants what he doesn't have."
 "Oy va voy."
 "It's worse than that. Even if someone does him a favor, he is still miserable, because he thinks that person will try to hurt him in the end."
 "Poor Mr. Kane."
 "Yes. Rabbeinu Yona zt"l speaks about *lo sachmode* (do not desire [other people's possessions]), the last of the *Eseres Ha'dibros* in this week's parasha. He describes exactly the misery that Mr. Kane is going through."
 "How did Mr. Kane get to this point?"
 "Rabbeinu Yona relates that jealousy begins when a person is drawn after the pleasures of this world. He begins to think that they are the whole purpose of life. He thinks that a person's success is measured by how many possessions he acquires."
 "People use that expression all of the time, Abba. They say a rich person is successful."
 "I know, Avi. Imagine that you were walking down a country road, and you saw something strange in the distance. It looked like a man and a donkey."
 "Was the man riding the donkey?"
 "That was the strange part. The donkey was riding on the back of the man."
 "How could the man let that happen?"
 "Rabbeinu Yona explains that a jealous person lets his animal instincts rule over his *seichel* (common sense)."
 "Just like the donkey was ruling over the

man."
 "Exactly. Then terrible things begin to happen. He forgets *Yiras Shomayim* (Fear of Heaven), and this causes serious *aveyros* (sins)."
 "But Abba, how can a person possibly control himself? When you see a nice thing, you are naturally drawn towards wanting it."
 "Avi, Rabbeinu Yona speaks about that also. Did you ever want to sprout wings like a bird?"
 "No, of course not. I'm not a bird."
 "You are not jealous of a bird's wings because you know that they have no relevance to you. So too, a wise person is not jealous of another's possessions, because they have no relevance to him."
 "I see. We have to trust Hashem that He gives us everything that we need. If we do not have something, then we do not need it. Therefore, how can we possibly be jealous."
 "You're right, Avi. Keep thinking like that, and lifelong happiness and satisfaction will be yours."
 "Amen, Abba."



Kinderlach . . .
 The world defines success by how many possessions you have acquired. The more you have, the richer you are. We have a different definition. Who is a rich person? One who is satisfied with his portion. (Pirkei Avos 4:1). How can you be satisfied? Don't make possessions your goal in life. And don't look at what other people have. It's not for you. Hashem knows exactly what you need, and He gives it to you. Lo sachmode. Be satisfied. Be rich. Be happy.

Like Any Other Mitzvah

"Yoni, I must tell you something very important."
 "Sure, Imma. What is it?"
 "I see that you have been playing in the street lately."
 "Sure, Imma. The boys like to play out there. We have more room to run around."
 "It is important to have room to run

around Yoni, but I must tell you that the street is very dangerous. Buses, taxis, and cars speed down the streets."
 "I know Imma, but we are careful. We watch out for cars."
 "Yoni, I know that you are careful. However, no matter how careful you are, an accident can still happen. There have been many traffic accidents in our neighborhood. I am sure that all of those children who were in accidents thought that it would never happen to them because they were careful."
 "But Imma, everybody plays in the street. All of my friends do it. Do you want me to give up my friends?"
 "Of course not, Yoni. Maybe you can convince them not to play in the street."
 "Imma, I just cannot do it."
 "Hmmm. I didn't expect you to say that. Let me ask you something Yoni."
 "Sure Imma."
 "Would you ever think of eating meat and milk together?"
 "Of course not, Imma. It's not kosher."
 "Would you ever think of not sitting in the Sukkah on Succos? Or not eating matzah on Pesach?"
 "Of course not, Imma. They are mitzvos written in the Torah."

"Yoni, listening to your parents is also a mitzvah written in the very same Torah. It is in this week's parsha. 'Honor your father and mother' (Shemos 20:12). If you would not think about violating the laws of kashrus or Pesach or Sukkos, because they are written in the Torah, then you must also listen to your parents because it is written in the Torah."
 "I never thought about it that way, Imma."
 "Yoni, you are such a good boy, and I know that you want to do every mitzvah that you can. Why do you sometimes not listen to Abba and me?"
 "Because I don't see it as a mitzvah."
 "Exactly."

Kinderlach . . .
 Sometimes we do not feel like listening to Abba and Imma. It's too hard. We're tired. We're busy. Nobody's doing it. We feel that we can say no if we want. We think that listening to them is like listening to our friend. It is not. The next time that you feel like contradicting them, stop a second and think. "This is a mitzvah in the Torah. I have to take it as seriously as I do other mitzvos. No fooling around here." "Here I come, Imma. Right away. I have a mitzvah to do!"

- Parasha Questions
- What were the requirements to be a judge? (18:21)
 - What will the Bnei Yisrael be if they listen to Hashem's voice? (19:5,6)
 - Where was the nation standing relative to the mountain (19:17)
 - How did Hashem say the Aseres Ha'dibros? (Rashi 20:1)