

## These are the journeys of Bnei Yisrael. (33:1)

The adage, "Life is a trip," has greater meaning than one might think. Each of us travels on the journey called life, and, as occurs in many instances, not all travelers have the same experience. One can travel to a wonderful, beautiful vacation spot and still have a miserable experience. The other can go to a stark, cold, uninviting place and still have a great time. Different people have varied experiences as they go through life. For some, the trip is long and quite enjoyable; for others, it might be too short, and not much to write home about.

Once, the *Rosh Yeshivah* of Yeshivat Porat Yosef, **Horav Yehudah Tzedakah, zl**, was asked to console the bereaved parents of a young *yeshivah* student who had lived too short of a life. He was warned that the family was beyond grief, having taken this tragedy especially hard. The *Rosh Yeshivah* came to the modest home where the family was sitting *shivah*, observing the traditional seven-day mourning period. He entered the room, and everyone looked up. It was not a usual occurrence that the venerable *Rosh Yeshivah* went anywhere. Obviously, this was an unusual situation.

"Let me share a story with you," Rav Tzedakah began. "One day, a man who had lived his entire life in the wilderness visited the big city. This person had never been exposed to modern technology, having lived primitively with whatever he could scrounge together in the wilderness. Upon visiting the city he chanced upon a large 'moving box,' on wheels, or, at least, this is what he thought the bus was. He asked the people who were waiting in line to take their place on the bus, 'What is this?' 'It's a bus. One alights the bus, pays the fare, and takes a seat. The fare allows him to ride the bus to the end of the line, which is twenty stops.'

"It seemed like an incredible idea. Imagine buying a ticket that would allow him to travel for miles, throughout the city. It was absolutely incredible. Since he had no money, one of the kindhearted passengers gave him the necessary change. He paid for his ticket and proceeded to the nearest available seat. After only two stops, one of the passengers got off the bus. The man was surprised, 'Why would a person pay for twenty stops and get off after two?' he wondered to himself.

"Three stops later, four people left the bus. This increased the man's incredulity. Finally, he no longer could keep it to himself. He began to scream at the passengers who were leaving the bus, 'Where are you going? You paid for twenty stops. Why are you leaving prematurely?' The people were very patient with their responses, since they were well aware that he had never before seen a bus. 'These people live near the stop. If they were to ride the bus to the end of the line, they would have to go back and do the trip over again.'

"The *nimshal*, lesson, to be derived from here is very simple. Every person is sent down to this world for a purpose. Once he fulfills that purpose, he has reached his 'stop,' and it is now time to return to his original source in Heaven. Each and every one of us has his unique *tafkid*, goal and purpose, in life. The duration of our stay in this world is dependent upon our individual purpose.

Your son had fulfilled his *tafkid*. He was then called 'home.'”