

## And Avraham expired and died in a good old age, mature and content. (25:8)

The *Ramban* remarks on Avraham *Avinu's* lofty character. He was *sameiach b'chelko*, satisfied with his lot in life. He was not one to yearn for luxuries. Those who desire luxuries will never be happy with what they attain. If they have a hundred, they desire two hundred; if they have two hundred, they desire four hundred. We are puzzled by the *Ramban's* statement. Avraham really did not have a reason to complain. Hashem blessed him with extraordinary wealth and prestige. He miraculously saved his life when he was thrown into the fiery furnace. He was blessed with a son in his old age to perpetuate his legacy. He was selected as the Father of *Am Yisrael*. Now, was it really that difficult for Avraham to be satisfied with his allotted portion in life? Things could certainly have been worse.

**Horav A.Z. Leibowitz, Shlita**, asserts that we have no idea of the compelling effect that human desire for wealth and luxuries has over us. How often do we hear the statement from people who are supposedly "happy." "If I had a million dollars, I would give it to *tzeddakah* and be satisfied with my own financial situation"? People just do not seem to be happy with what they have. If Avraham had not been born with unique character traits, even he, who was blessed with so much, would not have been happy. So what should we say? No one is above the desire for luxuries, regardless of his present financial state of affairs.

There is also an alternative approach to this concept. One who has financial means should - by all means - enjoy it. This does not mean that he should act like a glutton and overindulge. It is just in the natural order of things that he who is blessed by Hashem with material wealth should enjoy and be happy with his gift. Only he who enjoys what he has is able to share his blessings with others. An anecdotal story is told about a *Chassidic rebbe* who visited one of his wealthy constituents and found him eating black bread and radishes for dinner. The *Rebbe* told the man, "My dear friend, you should be eating chicken one day, turkey the next, duck the third day, and then have a good steak. This is no way to live." When they left, the students who had accompanied him questioned their *Rebbe's* interest in the diet of this affluent man. The *Rebbe* replied, "If he eats chicken, he may then be expected to give a poor man herring. If he himself eats radishes, however, what do you think he will end up giving the poor man?" Let the rich enjoy, so that he may be favorably disposed to sharing his wealth with others. To paraphrase **Reb Yitzchak Bunim, zl**, "There is only one thing in life that is multiplied by division. Divide and share your happiness, and you increase it."