



Be Satisfied

We live in complicated times. On the one hand you are dazzled by all the conveniences of modern technology, yet on the other you wonder why you feel so spiritually dry. Modern life has become so dizzying complex and fast-paced, but so have the problems and crises that it has produced. Life seems so hard and overwhelming that frankly you're not able to cope. As you grow more and more apathetic you find yourself too emotionally worn-out to expend energy on faith – besides, in our sophisticated society matters of faith aren't even in vogue.

Nonetheless, it's faith that will always remain the height of fashion, because pop psychology theories like the latest styles – despite their mass appeal – will just come and go. The redemptive message of faith, however, is eternal and one of hope, because it gives meaning to your suffering. Faith informs you that the hurt and pain are not senseless, but rather they are tests from G-d to verify your loyalty to Him. If you lose your job, or your marriage breaks-up; if a loved one becomes ill, or you fail an exam; if you're depressed, bored, or simply lost and confused in life, what do you do, curse your fate, or do you turn to G-d? Faith helps us navigate the troubling waters of life by bringing us to a place called acceptance. It's the gentle voice of reason in our head that, in moments of crises, tells us, "Wait, don't panic! Accept your ordeal calmly and **be satisfied** with your lot, confident that it's all for your ultimate benefit and good." Although this may be a difficult concept to

swallow – like it or not – it’s through suffering that mortal man’s soul becomes refined to a level loftier than the angels. Of course pain hurts, and sometimes it can be so intense and unremitting that you can nearly lose your mind, nevertheless, hold on! Reconcile with your painful predicament and **be satisfied** with what you are undergoing by repeating these verses, “Righteous is G-d in all His ways and magnanimous in all His deeds” (*Tehillim, Chap. 145, V. 17*), or “Righteous is G-d, for I disobeyed His utterances” (*Eichah, Chap 1, V. 18*), or “The Rock! – Perfect is His work, for all His paths are justice; a G-d of faith without iniquity, righteous and fair is He” (*Devarim Chap. 32, V. 4*). Down here your efforts may seem insignificant and unappreciated, but in the upper realms you are a hero whose praises will be sung.

2.

Do you have trouble understanding G-d? We all do. But what we do know is that we all are uniquely challenged to penetrate the mystery of His existence, by finding Him in our suffering – instead of just avoiding or denying the pain. Because in reality, there is no reality except G-d. No stone goes unturned without encountering His concealed presence. Whether you can detect it or not, the spirit of G-d breathes through all matter, plant life, living organism, and man that exists and, behind every circumstance and event that transpires is the marvelous and invisible hand of G-d at work. But, it's pain and suffering that prevents the eyes from seeing and deprives the heart from feeling the anonymous presence of G-d. Crushed by the hurt, we stumble in the darkness of our confused vision of a G-d Whose ways we can't fathom, and so we dare to question the justice of His actions – and

some even surrender to outright rejection and denial. Don't be blind and foolish! If you find yourself floundering in a sea of problems and you sense within, an oncoming wave of confusion, doubt, and despair then just duck. Don't resist and protest to G-d that it's not fair. **Be satisfied** and accept with equanimity all the hardships you face; have faith that all your suffering is ultimately for your own good. Remember, it's the chastened soul that can perceive G-d so profoundly, as it is written, "For the Divine Presence does not reside, except on a heart that is broken and crushed" (*see Zohar Teruma, 158b*). Granted you're hurting all over for so long that you can't even think straight. And of course, even minor hassles seem like overwhelming annoyances, and all you can do is react by uttering: G-d, why? Why? Why? And yes, all you feel is a burning desire to get back at society for their lack of sympathy and understanding for all that you've gone through.

Nonetheless, get hold of yourself and realize that it's useless to knock on anyone else's door for relief or even pity. Escape your torment by taking refuge in G-d! Train yourself to confide only in G-d, by relating to Him in your native language the hardships that you are experiencing – like a child does before his father, or like you would with a close friend. Don't antagonize G-d; rather be gentle and accepting in your approach. You cannot imagine the warm and comforting response your overture elicits from G-d when, in a moment of pain you control yourself and turn to Him with a submissive and contrite heart, demonstrating your willing acceptance of your fate. Emulate the righteous ones – the *Tzaddikim* – who for the most part, achieved greatness and remarkable insight by exercising enormous restraint during the most excruciating trials and ordeals. Take the Patriarchs for example: Abraham, the first one, was challenged

with ten of the most strenuous trials imaginable yet, he emerged triumphant and that much more closer to G-d. Isaac, the second Patriarch, literally stuck out his neck for G-d by nearly being sacrificed on the altar that his father prepared. And if that was not enough, he had to suffer the remainder of his life bearing the disparagement and treachery of a murderous son, such as Esav. Yet, he did not become resentful – on the contrary, he surrendered himself completely to G-d's will, forgoing all the temptations and allure of this world. And who suffered more than Jacob, whose life was a series of one tragic event after another. His own brother, Esav attempted to murder him, his uncle, Lavan, exploited him, and then calamity befell his own family with the successive tragedies of Yoseph, Dina, Shimon, and his wife, Rachel. Yet, he too did not surrender to despair. Instead, during times of peril he sought refuge only in the Almighty, to the extent that his

name became synonymous with G-d's, as it's written, (*Megillah, 18a*) "How do we know that the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He called Jacob [by G-d's name] 'El'? as it is written, (*Bereshis, 33, 20*), "And He [G-d] called him 'El' the G-d of Israel". In fact, the heroism and self-control displayed by our forefathers in the face of relentless persecution and personal tragedy – and even more so, the precedent they set for generations to come, of unswerving commitment and loyalty to G-d as the only source of salvation – rightfully earned them the honor of having their names invoked daily in the prayer liturgy. But it doesn't stop there! Each and every Jew can serve as a Divine channel, so to speak, for the Almighty, and turn their tragic circumstances into triumphs. By modeling self-restraint when times are tough, and **being satisfied** with your lot, your actions demonstrate your acceptance of G-d's authority over the universe, and affirm that His justice is fair and

righteous. So, the next time you're faced with a problem or crises don't get mad and storm out in protest; suppress your urge to react automatically with rage and just be silent. Stop thinking into the matter so much, and don't question G-d's ways. Trust that it's all for your own good and eventually you will see that it was!

3.

Are you feeling needy and wish you had someone to talk to? Do you sense that deep down no one can really understand you except G-d, but you just can't seem to reach out to Him? Truth to tell, you are very upset and distraught over your circumstance, and you haven't made peace with your situation. In fact, you feel that your problems are driving you nearly insane, and you can't understand why G-d is putting you through such a painful ordeal. It makes no sense, so you begin to imagine that G-d is angry with you and is

persecuting you unfairly. Furthermore, convinced that G-d wants to hurt you, you lose hope that He will ever help you. As the pain continues to linger, the impression in your mind that G-d is aloof and distant becomes more reinforced – and so you hesitate to approach Him; you just don't seem to be able to get the words out because you feel so conflicted inside. Nothing can be further from the truth! G-d is our merciful Father, Who is compassionately concerned for your welfare. True, life is tough, nonetheless, you have to **be satisfied** with your lot, and trust that G-d knows what He is doing. Remember, the sting of G-d's lash is never meant to drive you away ; on the contrary, it's His way of igniting the spark in your indifferent soul to burn more passionately for Him. G-d longs for our prayers and supplications. So when the noose of trouble begins to tighten around your neck, and you feel as if you're being choked from the pressure, then find a

secluded spot to conduct a private discussion with G-d, uninhibitedly – as a child before his father, or as one friend to another. Initially it may seem as if no one is listening; be patient, and believe that every word that emanates from your mouth means something to G-d and is never lost; rest assured, that after the storm, the sun will eventually shine for you once again. And, as the bitterness transforms into sweetness, and you come to realize that all along, everything was for the best, you will make friends, so to speak, with G-d again. So gird your loins and brace yourself, when tragedy strikes or crises visits, and **be satisfied** with all that you must endure. It's OK to scream "ouch" and tell G-d it hurts, but don't balk at the pain or turn your back on Him out of righteous indignation. Just accept the smite of the rod willingly, and turn to G-d repeatedly to help you get through the anguish and pain. Eventually it will all make sense and you will realize how the

suffering was vital for your self-development and spiritual growth. The larger the tree grows, the more water it requires, so too, the more your soul needs to develop and spiritually mature, the more it is tested by trial and ordeal. So, don't be intimidated by life's dilemmas, just brace yourself and **be satisfied** that they are for your own good – and trust that the best is yet to come!

4.

In times of crisis it's only natural for you to panic and want to flee. Out of sheer nerves and anxiety, a person feels that he needs to do something. If he's heading towards financial collapse, he will frantically search for a second job, a loan or handouts; if illness strikes he will consult with every doctor or specialist he can find and try any and every potion or remedy available; if the problem is of a personal nature he will turn to any listed

therapist or psychic that holds out the promise of deliverance. Logic dictates that he just can't sit still and do nothing; he must take some form of action. Slow down! Think for a moment! After all is said and done what have you to show for all the hysterics and frantic efforts at seeking relief? Now, consider the words of the wise, "Patience is the [best] strategy for he that doesn't have a strategy". Although when a person is in pain, logic flies out the window, nonetheless remember, don't forget from where that pain emanates. As difficult as it is to fathom, all human pain and suffering has a higher purpose. Bearing this in mind, **be satisfied** with your difficult circumstance, and accept it willingly. Considering that G-d got you into this difficult situation, He is the only one that can pull you out. So, the only effective response to pain and suffering is to turn to G-d and to beg Him for relief. Praying to G-d regularly will open your eyes to the awareness of His absolute

control over your fate, transforming your dread about the future into optimism. You will calmly fold your arms and **be satisfied** with the way G-d is running the show – painful as it may be – because you’re confident that ultimately everything will change for the better. Sounds easy, but in reality, there are times in life that our situation is so intolerably painful and extremely desperate that the only escape that crosses the mind is suicide. Get hold of yourself and be rational! What guarantee do you have that you will be any better off in the aftermath? Aren’t we taught that, “He who commits suicide intentionally has no portion in the World-to-Come” (*see Semachos, 2, 1*). So what do you accomplish? You have neither this world nor the next! Naturally, because you’re distraught you’re not ready to hear the truth; and it’s only because of your confused state of mind that you feel the urge to behave recklessly and commit self-destructive acts. But, in times of crisis, if

a person doesn't lose perspective and hangs onto to his spirituality, then he can transcend the limitations of his suffering, in anticipation of all the good and pleasantness that awaits him in the World-to-Come. You have so much to look forward to in the future. Don't give-up! Bite your lip and just bear the pain. Accept your burden and just **be satisfied**, because ultimately it will all turn out for the good.

5.

No generation is left orphaned yet, why is it that today as never before, do we feel hopelessly forsaken and abandoned? Politically, socially and individually we find ourselves in such deep crises, that we are too startled and stunned to react. Up to our heads in deep water, with the catastrophic tide steadily rising, who will rescue us? Who will care about us? Yet, just as we know that beyond the dark and

ominous clouds, the sun continuously shines, so too behind the hard knocks in life, is G-d's undying affection rapping on the door of our souls. But, we don't respond – why? Today, there are so many avenues of support and agencies offering assistance to the myriad of problems cropping up in our communities. Resources abound and more importantly, the righteous ones – the *Tzaddikim* – are continuously producing literature and Torah novella to satisfy the thirsting souls of the people searching for meaning and direction in their troubled lives. A Jew from any walk of life, no matter how unaffiliated, can find himself in their words and by virtue of their inspiring message can hoist himself out of the mire and return to G-d. Oddly enough though, many of us have switched channels and not enough of us are tuned-in – why? The answer is that the generation has sunken so low in their own eyes that they cannot fathom that the promise of hope is meant

for them too. Yes, leafing through page after page of their works, you are struck by the authors' uncanny ability to relate to the depth of your anguish and to empathize with your pain; and admittedly, sentence after sentence is replete with words of encouragement and support to hold on and never surrender, because, as they assure you, G-d's door is always open awaiting your return. The convincingly moving message can stare you in the face, and you can sense it pulling at your heartstrings, yet at once you dismiss it and turn your back on hope – why? Could it be that flashes of disturbing memories of shameful deeds and embarrassing episodes recalled crush your spirit and knock you down, until feeling so guilty you exempt yourself from those worthy of salvation? But, the *Tzaddikim* stated literally that their words of support and encouragement are meant for even the worst person. “Never mind”, you say, waving a dismissing hand as you

rationalize away their advice as a mere patronizing ploy to prevent you from straying even further. In the back of their minds, you're certain, they are well aware of how low you've sunk and how beyond repair your situation is. Chronically depressed and prone to pessimism you are easily persuaded by the negative voice inside your head that convinces you that you're too far gone from G-d and that all hope is lost. On the other hand, those that sincerely desire to be helped and realize the danger of capitulating to skepticism and despair rally around the righteous leader – the *Tzaddik*, for support. They accept on face value and with simple faith, the penetrating insights of the *Tzaddik* into the far-reaching depths of G-d's compassion for us, that is beyond human comprehension so much that, G-d arranges wondrous ways, "That no one be banished from Him" (*Shmuel 2, Chap 14, V. 14*) – even one who has strayed completely. From generation to generation

the inspiring and arousing words of the *Tzaddikim* have iterated the reassuring message that G-d is with us, here and now, because the whole world is filled with His glory. Far be it from them to invent these ideas; they are simply echoing G-d's comforting promise that He will always remain with us and never abandon us, until, "He establishes and places Jerusalem a source of praise in the Land" (*Yeshayahu, Chap 62, V. 7*) and in the future we will merit that literally our eyes will see this, as is written (*Ibid. Chap. 40, V. 5*) "The glory of G-d will be revealed and you will see etc... that the mouth of G-d has spoken". How heartening! My friend, these words are as relevant today as they were long ago, so stop feeling so forgotten. Open yourself up to their redeeming message because they were meant for you as well. In an era of pernicious defeatism, its time for you to stand up and be a winner, by not writing yourself off as a loser. Then you will be free to accomplish

what you were meant to, and triumph in the game of life.

6.

We all bargain with G-d. We promise Him that we won't do it again, and assure Him that this time we really mean it – we'll be good. And then it happens; we relapse and fall back into old habits and indulge in sinful behaviors. After a while the guilt begins to break us and we lose hope of ever improving. Don't give up! Remember, G-d is found not only in our shining moments, but in the dark ones as well. Although your frustration with your lack of self-control and broken resolutions are justified, G-d is compassionate and understands your uphill battle with temptation. So, don't be overly concerned with your failures; just **be satisfied** and accept this ordeal as your lot in life; for who knows from where your soul evolved and what destined role it must play-out.

How many inspiring stories have been told of monumental sinners who committed every sin imaginable, and yet after experiencing a breakthrough, returned to G-d and were transformed into saints? Take Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Dordaya for instance, (*Avoda Zarah, 17a*) about whom it was said that there was not a harlot with whom he did not consort. Once he heard that there was a certain harlot located on an island that took a handsome sum for her services. He prepared the money and he crossed seven lakes to her destination. During the act, wind was passed – and she exclaimed, just as the wind was released never to return – so to, Eliezer the son of Dordaya’s repentance will never be accepted. Her words hit a chord of remorse in his heart and he went and sat between two mountains and said, “Mountain and hills beg mercy for me”, and they replied, “If we’re going to make a request already, it will be for ourselves!” etc... And he said, “Heaven and earth, beg

mercy for me”, and they replied likewise etc... Then he said, “Sun and moon beg mercy for me” and they responded likewise, and finally he said, “Stars and constellations beg mercy for me” and they also responded similarly. Until he said, “The matter depends solely on me”. He then placed his head between his knees and burst out crying, until his soul departed. A heavenly voice called out, “**‘Rabbi’** Eliezer the son of Dordaya is designated for the World-to-Come.” Rebbi, the illustrious author of the Mishna, upon hearing this cried and exclaimed, “There are those that acquire their portion in the World-to-Come [over the course of] many years, and there are those that acquire it in just one hour”. Furthermore he commented, “It’s not enough that penitents are accepted, but they are [also assigned the title] **‘Rabbi’**”. Given that the body of Jewish lore and literature is replete with stories throughout the ages of sinners turned saints, the question

emerges that, if the principle of “One sin leads to the other”, (*Avos, Chap. 4, V. 2*) is operative, how is it that a sinner who is so deeply trapped in a web of sin is able to extricate himself from its tenacious grasp, and ultimately repent? The answer is that every Jewish soul is precious and uniquely equipped by G-d with the power to withstand his particular urges – for if not, G-d would not provoke him with those urges, based on the principle that G-d does not unduly challenge His creatures, (*Avoda Zarah, 3a*). Therefore, no matter how compelling are our desires, we have the inner power to overcome temptation. So why is it that mankind continues to be easily swayed by the folly of sexual desire and fantasy? The Sages explain (*See Zohar Vayikra, 15b*), that because a person is deceived into thinking that he cannot resist this powerful desire, he foolishly believes that he lacks the inner strength to vanquish it, so he becomes hopelessly discouraged. He forgets the principle that

if there is a will there is a way! When the will is strong a person can overcome any urge in the world. Witness the feats of the eminently righteous *Tzaddikim* whom withstood enormously difficult tests, by virtue of their keen wit and mental powers, which characterizes the strength of a Jew, as is written, (*Koheles, Chap 7, V. 19*), “Wisdom strengthens the wise etc...” Therefore, have faith in yourself that you possess the complete power and mental acuity to ward off all the urges, even the sexual desire. Remember, your self-perception is a product of your mind, which is a mirror of your soul – and the soul of even the most lowly Jew, can withstand all the temptations of this world. So why do you put yourself down and insist that in comparison to the *Tzaddikim*, you’re a nothing? Indulging in false modesty is a cop-out and a poor excuse to give-up the fight and give-in to all your passions. Where is your pride and self-respect? Tell yourself that it is

beneath the dignity of your eminent soul to indulge your appetites and commit such appalling acts, as is expressed in the verse, “His heart was elevated in the ways of G-d” (*Divrei Hayomim 2, Chap 17, V. 6*) – meaning that a person has to walk with some measure of self-importance in serving G-d, recognizing that sin is alien to the essential Jewish character, and that like every Jew, he possesses the innate potential to subdue all his desires. Granted, however, that the struggle with your inclination is a fierce and constant battle as your urges lie in perpetual wait, to ambush you until you stumble. And every time you give-in, your resistance only weakens, so that you’re more easily persuaded to commit immoral acts far more serious than before. With each relapse, the addiction only grows stronger and the corruption deeper, pushing you nearly to the point of no return. But oddly enough, that’s where it stops – because the Jewish soul, by nature, is essentially

incorruptible. When push comes to shove and evil threatens to pierce through the inner core of a Jew – causing him to hit rock bottom – that is when he recovers and fights back with a vengeance. This explains why sometimes we find a Jew who, having strayed so far and committed the severest transgressions, will suddenly experience an awakening and return wholeheartedly to the faith. Ironically, from the lowest depths of depravity the Jewish soul can recover, and rise to the heights of holiness! Don't take this, however, as an invitation to flirt with sin, because you're playing with fire, as we are warned, (*Yoma, 88b*) "He who says, "I will sin and then repent", will not be granted the opportunity for repentance". Sometimes, a person can pass the point of no return and be lost completely, as was the case of some renowned notoriously wicked figures that surrendered to evil and failed to reform. This remains, however, in the mysterious realm of free

choice, so don't risk it; avoid and escape any and all opportunity to commit a sin. Admittedly, it's a struggle and we all carry shame from the past. The battle with desire is continuous and you will fall a thousand times a day yet, don't get broken. Even the commission of the most serious kinds of transgressions should not drive the hope of recovery from your soul. As long as there's life there's hope, but the main thing is not to lose faith. For inspiration, guidance and support associate yourself with a true *Tzaddik* – and if you don't know where to look, beg G-d to lead you to one. The *Tzaddik* will school you in the art of faith which leads to the mastery and self-control necessary to subdue your passions and desires. There simply isn't a more effective method to tackle your natural inclinations than faith, which is the underlying teaching that comprises the entire Torah itself (see *Makkos, 24a*). Because after all is said and done, we really know nothing; in our

seemingly hapless and helpless battle with ourselves, all we can simply rely on is faith. Therefore, carry no expectations or demands; in your lifelong struggle to approach G-d be prepared to rise and fall a thousand times a day. Fluctuations are typical, so don't pay too much attention if you succeed at first, and then fail; just **be satisfied** with all you must endure, continue yearning to be close to G-d, and pour out your heart in complete submission to Him, relating the anguish of your toil and struggle in a simple, unaffected manner. Beg Him to have compassion on you and to pull you out of your confused and confounded state. Be courageous and bold, and don't let your service flag even partially. Remember, always **be satisfied** with your lot, and turn only to Him. Confide in G-d your innermost fears, problems and insecurities and approach Him stubbornly with request for help and deliverance. Never abandon G-d and He will never forsake

you. Keep at it, and trust me, there will come a time that you will emerge from the darkness of your confused existence and become intimately close to G-d. Then you will have a taste of Heaven, while yet in this world.

