

# A FULL LIFE

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***Fortunate?! Its' a good life when one eats bread with salt?! You've got to be kidding!***

There is much for a man to do in life. In order to ensure survival, he has to prepare himself with a means for acquiring food, clothing and shelter. After he marries, he has to provide these necessities for his wife and family. Later, he has to secure the future of his children, until, and sometimes even after, they have married. Rebbe Nachman knew all this, yet he said, "What does a person have to do in this world, but pray, and study Torah, and pray?! (Rebbe Nachman's Wisdom #287).

We can better understand this after we study the following Talmudic teaching: Eat bread with salt, drink but a measure of water, sleep on the floor and live a life of suffering. If you

do this, then how fortunate you are, how good it will be for you. Fortunate: in this world. Good for you: in the World to Come. (Avot 6:4). *Fortunate?! Its' a good life when one eats bread with salt?! You've got to be kidding!*

*How hard he would have to work, how many long hours he would have to spend, just to have enough money to pay for all these things!*

Reb Noson explains this Mishnah with total simplicity. If a person has as his goal a mansion to live in, choice cuisine at every meal, the finest clothing, and so on, his life would be very bitter indeed. How hard he would have to work, how many long hours he would have to spend, just to have enough money to pay for all these things. The vast majority of people work most of their lives for nothing more than the bare necessities. Imagine then what kind of workload is required in order to provide oneself with the "good life." And even when a person does devote – "sell" – himself to achieve these goals, will he ever get there? The odds are, he won't.

What's more, when a person does give himself over to such a goal, what time is left for Torah and prayer? How can he ever concentrate on praying in the morning when he has to get to work? How can he ever enjoy a life of Torah when all he has time to think about is money and livelihood?



*True pleasure is only felt by the one who is satisfied with his position!*

It's totally different when a person dedicates his life to Torah and prayer. Then he always has time to live, be happy and find comfort. The person whose goal is to live a life of Torah will utilize his time, as best and as much as he can, for developing the spiritual. He limits his needs and is satisfied with his lot (with whatever he does and his achievements in life) and is content to spend any free time on Torah and prayer. By making his goal "bread and salt," he doesn't have to mortgage his life away for greed and lust. *He is indeed fortunate! He does have it good!* (Rebbe Nachman's Wisdom #308).

In another review of the above Mishnah, Reb Noson explains that the highest levels to which one can rise in spirituality are achieved by desire – the desire to attain the true goal. Of what use is all the money that a person can earn and save, if he doesn't have a decent relationship with his wife and children; something which unfortunately is only too often the case. Look what sacrifices such a person makes to "attain" his possessions! His desire for wealth leads him nowhere and he is

left with strife, worry and depression. There is no pleasure in this world for the one who lusts for it. True pleasure is only felt by the one who is satisfied with his position. His life is considered life. His desires can be fulfilled (*Likutey Halakhot, Netilat Yadayim Li'Seudah* 6:64).

(taken from the book: [Crossing the Narrow Bridge: A Practical Guide to Rebbe Nachman's Teachings](#), chapter 6 – Torah and Prayer, pp. 91-92)