

Tani Talks Life (TTL), Brought to you by The Tani Talks Podcasts—This is the Shiur Where We Talk A Topic Per Session With Some Practical Lessons

Tonight's Topic: "**Are we comfortable, really?**"

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Shout out to Jake W/Eli N as well as Chaim C. for their amazing hard work!

Liluy Nishmas our esteemed Morah d'aura ALAV HASHAL, Rav Yehuda Ben Dov Ber ZT"l as well as for my wife's grandfather Yaakov ben Yehuda Leib and my wife's great uncle Shimon Leiv Ben Yehuda

For the refuah and yeshuah of anyone who wants or needs

Reachable at rebt@shiurenjoyment.com

Sometimes in life, we are too comfortable, too complacent, and too cushy to get any real work or progress done. We feel too "settled" where we are figuratively, literally, spiritual, and geographically.

It reminds me of the metaphor or example of being sunk in to a really comfortable couch. In fact, our couch in our house, a large sectional with matching fainting couch piece, has such a feeling to it, especially in the corner piece, which wedged down and sank over time. It is actually quite difficult to get up from the big comfy couch in our living room in our house, and takes real effort.

In life, like the couch, we feel too settled, too set in, to get up and make change. To change the status quo, to make a difference in our days and our lives. We get to complacent thinking that our five minutes of learning every day are enough, or that our ten dollars to tzedakah are enough or that we donate clothing once a year is good enough or that we made food that one time a half year ago for some family is just "good enough" and we are "yotze our chiyuv" and we are done with that.

We think it's too hard or difficult to think about living in Israel and to move there...how can I live there?? but I'd have to give up my house and live in an apartment??? No more grass? No more back or front yard?? How can I be without my driveway???? Who can afford a house there, even a semi attached one? How can I live in an apartment there and lose all of this? I can't live in sweltering heat making 20k a year! Will my kids have to go to the army? Will they have good school who about groceries and shopping ...what about x or y or z? Mind you millions of people live there—mostly in apartments and they make do, and are very happy there with their situation.

We get caught up in the details and think about how we can't do more in life. But that's blatantly untrue. We need to do more and we CAN do more.

The question to really ask ourselves is this: **Are we comfortable, really?** Are we actually comfortable — properly comfortable— with our stance in life, with what we are doing now, with where we are living now— Is there more we can do? Is there somewhere better we can live, like in our own home, whatever type or style it may be courtesy of our land of Eretz Yisrael?

I ask myself this question all the time and although I believe my own family of my Wife and kids and I are not there yet personally, how many of us are there and ready but won't admit it or do it? I just heard of a friend in the community moving to Israel—I didn't even know he was so gung ho about Aliyah! He's

leaving behind a five bedroom house, a nice “comfortable” life to go move who knows where and do who knows what, probably have an apartment like a tenth of the size...but gd willing they are doing it.

The question is, again is, **are we comfortable, really?** And what does comfortable really mean and look like? Jews for thousands of years have been “comfortable in different lands and living quarters but was that real comfort of our own land and our true mission in life?

We also tend to gravitate to the mitzvos and Chessed that are familiar, comfortable, or usual. How many mitzvos do we skip over because its not in our regular comfort arena? Do we want to miss out on all the opportunities and mitzvos out there that are little out of our range and out of of comfort?

Wayne Gretzky once famously said “you miss 100 percent of the shots you never take” with the Full quote being: “**You miss one hundred percent of the shots you don't take.** Even though there is only a 1-5% probability of scoring.” Don't miss out on the shots of life, the matzos in our lives, even if we may not score or win in that mitzvah department.

We get too comfortable but the comfort we feel is really a false allure. Are we actually comfortable living in Galus among non jews? Are we actually comfortable staying in a dead end job for 40 years with no growth or potential, just to pay the bills? Are we actually comfortable just doing the daily grind every single day on repeat with no end in site? What do we do all day? How do we spend our time? Can we say we had a productive day doing lots of mitzvos and good for others when we look back at the day? Was it comfortable or was it meaningful? Was it impactful or just wasteful? Did we spend all the time reading blogs or website or did we learn torah and give to others and effect real kiddush hashes in our lives?

When we stay where we are commutable we don't challenge ourselves and we don't rise to the occasion, we don't move out of the comfort zone. We need to rise above the comfort and challenge ourselves and surroundings, and define what real comfort is. We are allowed to be comfortable, but we have to define what it really is and what we really need. You don't need 17 bedrooms or 40 acres to be comfortable. You can be comfortable in a small three bedroom house and you don't need a den and family room and living room and three cars and lots of other meaningless things. Learn to live with less. Learn to need less. Understand needs versus wants, necessity versus extravagance. Learn to define what really is properly comfortable and necessary— not what society tells you that is needed for comfort.

Rav Shalom Rosner explains in his Sefer Shalom Rav on Parshas Vayechi this past shabbat,

Why did Yaakov mention the negative of not wanting to be buried in Mitzrayim rather than the positive to be buried in Israel in Mearat Hamachpelah, with his forefathers? Rashi explains that Yaakov didn't want to be buried in the dirt of Egypt that would one day turn to live during the makkos, Yaakov did not want to have to roll to Israel at the time of the resurrection of the dead, and Yaakov did not want the Egyptians to worship him as a deity.

But these just deep the question of why not ask to be buried in Israel in the positive sense?

Rabbi Eliyahu Shlesinger suggests that at the end of Parshat Vayigash the Torah states that Bnei Yisrael lived in Goshen, and “they took hold of it.” **This implies that Bnei Yisrael were getting a little too comfortable in Egypt. Yaakov already saw the writing on the wall.** He saw what was happening to am Yisrael and realized the tremendous danger his descendants would be in if they felt too comfortable in exile. He saw that his children stood the risk of forgetting about Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, says Rabbi Shelsinger, Yakov emphasized the fact that he didn't want to remain in Egypt, even after his death. He was telling his children that they were getting too comfortable outside of Eretz Yisrael. On a practical level lift would be too hard for the children to leave if he was buried there as well, cementing the presence there. He was instructing them not to call Egypt a permanent abode or to call it home.

How true and how practical for all of us as well. America is not our true home and not our true goal! Even if you can't end up giving there, try to be buried there! When being buried in America it is sort of solidifying the prescience and connection to the land, and Yaakov already saw this years ago. Don't get too comfortable in the land that is not Israel. Don't get too comfortable in life where you live or in what you do if it is not connected to what you really are meant to do.

Rabbi Baars explains on aish.com

Which would you rather have - a comfortable life or a meaningful one? If you want to think about it a little, go ahead.

In his unscientific study, Rabbi Baars found that nearly everyone answers: "A meaningfully comfortable life."

Ha!

Given the choice of comfort or meaning, just about everyone would choose meaning. But that is never how the choice appears. How it appears is that there are three choices, meaning, comfort or comfortably meaningful.

As an extreme example, the Western world knew that confronting the evil dictator in world war two YMHSHMO was the meaningful and right thing to do. They also knew that the comfortable and wrong thing to do was to leave him alone. Given those two stark choices it wasn't just British Prime Minister Chamberlain who thought they found the perfect answer in signing a peace treaty with him. Most sided with him because being comfortably meaningful is just easier.

It's also fairly easy to see these same types of mistakes being made in the world today. And not just in politics, but in everyday life.

It's like a teenager living at home - it's nice and comfortable. He would like it to be meaningful too, and he wants to make meaningful decisions. But he doesn't want to be held responsible when those decisions go awry, because he doesn't really want meaning, he wants comfort.

Going into the Land of Israel was not comfortable at all for the Jewish people. In the Land of Israel the Jewish people would have to fight evil themselves, cultivate the land, set up a system of government, and take care of each other. That's not comfortable or easy, but it is extremely meaningful.

Learn to live a real meaningful life, not just a comfortable one, and don't try to combine the two with messing up the priorities. Live with what you need and get comfort with that, and make sure the life is really properly meaningful with the life you have.

Rabbi Leff points out on aish.com

At the very least, we should be hoping and anxiously anticipating returning to Israel when the Mashiach (Messiah) comes. We derive this from Maimonides (Laws of Kings 11:1) "Anyone who does not believe that the Messiah will come or who does not await his coming denies Torah." We must be aware that we are lacking something significant in our lives without Mashiach. There is no greater destruction to the Jewish soul than to lose the awareness of the bitterness of exile and the Diaspora.

There's a story told about a rabbi who was building a yeshiva in America, who appreciated this idea. The contractor offered to use Finnish wood that lasts 150 years, instead of regular wood which usually lasts 90 years before it begins to rot. The rabbi said, "Use the regular wood. We don't want to make our stay outside Israel too permanent."

One of the questions that we will be asked after our 120 years in this world is whether we TZIPISA LIYISHUA "did we yearn for the salvation (of God and Israel)" ([Shabbat 31a](#)). What does yearning mean? It's when a patient takes a biopsy exam and needs to wait 3 days for the results to see if the growth is benign or not. How he yearns! Those 3 days last forever! And on the 3rd day, every phone ring is met with anticipation - will this finally be the call he's been waiting for?

Do we yearn for Mashiach? Often we ask ourselves why do we even need Mashiach? What are we missing? This is a symptom of our spiritual malady. We no longer recognize the need to relate to God in the holiest place and in the closest manner, which is what Mashiach will bring to the world.

We utilize our comforts and freedom in exile to serve God better but we must never feel too attached to our culture and land.

We should yearn for the time when we will leave the exile forever and unite with our land, our nation, and God once again. Someday we will all be together in Jerusalem. May it be soon.

We don't even realize what we are missing. We are so enraptured by Galus and our comforts we have lost the feeling of what it means to have no temple and no real sovereignty or peace in the land with the presence of Hashem seen and felt daily.

Keren Gottlieb points out on aish.com a fascinating story about how to really feel the Temple's loss:

Every year when Tisha B'Av came around, people sometimes have a certain dilemma. This is supposed to be a day on which we mourn the destruction of our Temple. It is a day when we do not eat, drink or wear leather shoes and follow varied and unique mourning customs.

Every year people arrive at the synagogue to hear the Book of Lamentations, which bemoans the destruction of Jerusalem. However, every year many would end up daydreaming about totally unrelated things. As the cantor would be reading about the Temple, they would completely disconnect, planning the summer vacation, celebrating the end of my exams, or just hoping that the fast will go well this year.

It's difficult to be truly mournful over something that took place 2000 years ago – something that we've never seen and don't really feel lacking in our daily life.

As part of my army service in the Israeli army where the author was placed, to her delight, in a teachers' unit. She served at the Bat Hatzor caravan site located near Gedera. The site held 700 caravans, which housed thousands of new Ethiopian immigrants. In the mornings she taught immigrants at the Yad Shabtai School in Ashdod. In the afternoon and evening hours she served as a counselor on the site.

This was shortly after Operation Solomon in 1993, during which roughly 14,500 Jews from Ethiopia were airlifted to Israel. It was a special and moving operation, and the entire Israeli population was surprised to see that suddenly there were Jews walking around here who had, in fact, been severed from our nation many generations ago.

They observed Shabbat, were familiar with most of the holidays and kept Jewish tradition in a devout and traditional manner. But it was clear that they didn't know everything; the separation they had undergone throughout all those years had influenced their system of traditions.

They had never heard of Independence Day or Yom Yerushalayim, or even about Purim or Chanukah – none of the latter historical events that took place subsequent to their break-off from the Jewish nation.

The author realized that unless she concentrated on filling these gaps of knowledge, their adjustment in Israel would never be complete. She decided to allot a considerable amount of time each day to teach them about Judaism.

The month of Nissan had arrived and she started teaching about the holiday of Passover. The class consisted of 20 students, grades 3-6. (They were placed according to their reading level rather than chronological age.) These children had come to Israel only a few months beforehand and more than anything else, they loved to hear stories, mainly because they didn't have to read or write in Hebrew which was still quite a difficult task for some of them.

The plan was to first connect Passover to the other holidays by very briefly reviewing the three major festivals during the year when the Jewish nation would ascend to Jerusalem.

"Today is the first day of Nissan and Passover is celebrated on this month," She began. "Passover is one of the three festivals when the entire Jewish people used to go to Jerusalem to the Temple."

At this point, a student jumped up, cutting me off in mid-sentence. "Teacher, have you ever been to the Temple?"

She smiled at him, realizing that he was somewhat confused. "No, of course not. That was a very long time ago!"

The student was insistent, and a few more pairs of eyes joined him. "Fine, it was a long time ago. But were you there? Were you at the Temple a long time ago?"

She smiled again, this time slightly confused herself. "*Doesn't he understand? Perhaps the Hebrew is too difficult for him,*" She thought.

"No, of course not. That was a *very* long time ago!"

Now the rest of the students joined him in an uproar. "You've never been there?" "Teacher, what's it like being in the Temple?" "What does the Temple look like?"

"Quiet!" She tried calming everyone down. "Listen everyone – there is no Temple! There used to be a Temple many years ago but today we don't have a Temple. It was destroyed, burned down. I have never been to it, my father's never been to it, and my grandfather has never been to it! We haven't had a Temple for 2000 years!"

She said these words over and over, having a very hard time believing that this was so strange for them to hear. What's the big deal? This is the reality with which we've all grown up. Why are they so bothered by it?

The tumult in the class was steadily increasing. They began talking amongst themselves in Amharic, arguing, translating, explaining, shouting, as she lost total control over the class. When the bell rang, they collected their things and ran home. She left the school exhausted and utterly confused.

The next morning She was hardly bothered by the previous day's events. In fact, she had nearly forgotten all about the incident. That day she had planned to just teach math, geometry and other secular subjects.

She got off the bus and leisurely made her way toward the school. As she neared the gate the guard approached her, seeming a bit alarmed. "Tell me," he said, "do you have any idea what's going on here today?"

She tried recalling a special activity that was supposed to be going on, or some ceremony that she had forgotten about, but nothing exceptional came to mind.

"Why do you ask?" She asked him. "What happened?"

He didn't answer. He only pointed towards the entrance to the school.

She raised my head and saw a sizeable gathering of Ethiopian adult immigrants – apparently, the students' parents. *What are they doing here? And what are they yelling about?*

She went over to them, attempting to understand what was the matter from the little Amharic that she knew.

As she came closer, everyone quieted down. One of the adults who's Hebrew was on a higher level, asked her, "Are you our children's teacher?"

"Yes," she answered. "What is the matter, sir?"

"Our children came home yesterday and told us that their teacher taught them that the Temple in Jerusalem no longer exists. Who would tell them such a thing?" He looked at her in anger.

She said, "I told them that. We were discussing the Temple and I felt that they were a bit confused. So I explained to them that the Temple had been burned down thousands of years ago and that today, we no longer have a Temple. That's all. What's all the fuss about?"

He was incredulous. "What? What are you talking about?"

She was more confused than ever. She said, "I don't understand. What are you all so angry about? I simply reminded them of the fact that the Temple was destroyed and that it no longer exists today."

Another uproar – this one even louder than before.

The representative quieted the others down, and again turned to me. "Are you sure?"

She said, "Am I sure that the Temple was destroyed? Of course I'm sure!" She couldn't hide her smile. What a strange scene.

The man turned to his friends and in a dramatic tone translated what I had told him. At this point, things seemed to be finally sinking in.

Now, however, a different scene commenced: one woman fell to the ground, a second broke down in tears. A man standing by them just stared at her in disbelief. A group of men began quietly talking amongst themselves, very fast, in confusion and disbelief. The children stood on the side, looking on in great puzzlement. Another woman suddenly broke into a heart-rending cry. Her husband came over to her to hug her.

The teacher stood there in utter shock.

She felt as if she had just brought them the worst news possible. It was as if she had just told them about the death of a loved one. She stood there across from a group of Jews who were *genuinely mourning the destruction of the Temple*.

A few months later it was Tisha B'Av. The teacher had already been discharged from the army, on the way to college, and the military service seemed as if it had been such a very long time ago.

As she did every year, she went to synagogue. Everyone was already seated on the floor (as is customary for mourners), and she was waiting to hear the Book of Lamentations. She had expected, as in previous years, for this to be a time for some daydreaming and hoped she wouldn't get too hungry.

The *megillah* reading began, and she started reading the first two verses.

"Alas, she sits in solitude...like a widow...She weeps bitterly in the night and her tear is on her cheek. She has no comforter from all her paramours; all her friends have betrayed her, they have become her enemies."

Suddenly that first day of Nissan began replaying in her mind. The angry looks of those children. The parents' screams. The mothers' crying. The men's pitiful silence. The shock they were overcome with as they received the terrible news as if she had just told them about the death of a loved one.

At that moment, she understood.

She understood that this was exactly how we are supposed to mourn the Temple on Tisha B'Av. We are supposed to cry over the loss of the unity and peace throughout the entire world. We are supposed to lament the disappearance of the Divine Presence and holiness from our lives in Israel. We are supposed to be pained by the destruction of our spiritual center, which served to unify the entire Jewish nation.

We're supposed to feel as if something very precious has been taken away from us forever. We are meant to cry, to be shocked and angry, to break down. We are supposed to mourn over the destruction of the Temple, to cry over a magnificent era that has been uprooted from the face of the earth. The incredible closeness that we had with God – that feeling that He is truly within us – has evaporated and disappeared into thin air.

Now when Tisha B'Av rolls around, she goes back to that incident with her students and their parents and try to reconnect to the meaningful lesson that they taught her – what it truly means to mourn for the loss of our holy Temple.

We have gotten too comfortable and too distanced from what we lost in the temple and from what really matters in life. We should not focus on our materialism and our homes or cars but on what really matters, and what we can take with us after 120 years. As pirkei Avon teaches us, who is really happy? He who is content with his lot. Also, we are taught in pirkei Avot, this world is for real work and the next world for reaping the rewards and this world is like an antechamber and the next world is the real chamber. Do the work here. Don't get too comfortable. Remember what is missing, yearn for the spiritual and the temple. Work for what's important.

Debbie Gutfreund points out on aish.com

“Bottom line if you want success of any kind: you have to be comfortable being uncomfortable.

“Every minute, every hour, every day that you sit around trying to figure out what to do, someone else is already doing it. Make a choice, or a choice will be made for you.”

Don't sit around too long overthinking what to do. Ultimately, we are judged by what we do. Don't wait until you are ready. None of us ever is.

“Anyone can start something. Few can finish. Priorities change if you don't constantly protect and defend them.”

If we don't consistently work to make our values the most important elements in our lives, we will lose our grasp on what is essential for us. Guard your values.

“The greatest battles you will ever fight are with yourself, and you must always be your toughest opponent. Always demand more of yourself than others demand of you. Life can be complicated. The truth is not.”

Don't ever feel too complacent or comfortable in life. At that point, you will no longer challenge yourself or work on yourself. You will not try to push yourself forward or harder to do more. At that point, all is almost lost. Make sure to ask yourself, “Are you comfortable, REALLY?” And why are you comfortable? What can you do outside your comfort? How can you work on yourself to do more, give more, make more a difference, change the world for the better and realize what's really important and what comforts are really necessary. Start with little things, little changes. Then the true comfort will come and true change can happen.

Listen to this story from Nesanel Safran on aish.com

The year was 1872. The door to Tom's ramshackle beach hut suddenly burst open, flooding the small room with rays from the morning sun. The boy squinted as he propped himself up from his thin straw mattress. He groaned as he recognized the silhouette of his uncle, Bluebeard the Pirate, with his sword dangling jauntily off his hip.

Tom gulped as he noticed the crinkled envelope his uncle was waving before him. It was the letter to England that Tom had planned to send out with a messenger the next day.

Tom had always gotten along well with his uncle, who had raised him since he had been orphaned as a young child. But now the large man's usually jolly face was contorted into an angry snarl.

"Tom Cooke, what is the meaning of this letter!?" he growled. "What do you mean you don't want to be a pirate anymore?!"

Tom caught his breath. Standing up by now with his night-shirt brushing against his knees, he swallowed and said, "Surely you've read my letter uncle. As I've written, I plan to sail to England as soon as I can where I hope to find an honest job and..."

The pirate threw back his head in laughter, his big silvery-blue beard shaking as he laughed. "Surely you jest, boy!" he exclaimed. "Why, your father was a pirate, and his father before him. You might say it's our family business!"

Although Tom felt frightened, he stood his ground. "I've been giving it some thought and I have come to the conclusion that being a pirate is wrong. What kind of a life is it? Sinking ships, robbing and hurting innocent people ... I can't do it, and I won't!"

Seeing that his nephew was serious, the pirate softened his look and tried to appeal to the boy's emotions. "Listen son, your whole life is here on Pirate Island. Why, you don't even know a soul in England. Why give up a good, comfortable life?"

Only the squawk of Tom's parrot cut through the silence in the small room as man and boy stared each other down. Tom felt himself shaking. His uncle was right, he thought. It would be difficult to leave the people and the life he had known. Yet he knew deep down that their lifestyle was wrong and that he couldn't stay. Finally the boy spoke up. "I love you, Uncle Bluebeard. But I'll be sailing for England with the next merchant ship. Somehow I'll make it. I have to live according to my principles and I refuse to live a life that's wrong. A pirate's life is not for me!"

Sometimes, even when something feels familiar, feels safe, it is still not the right choice. Are we comfortable, really? Is our life meant for something greater, something more meaningful, something of more value? Even if all you ever knew was one way of life, step out of that comfort and familiarity and rise above to see what greatness lies in store.

Listen to this other story from Nesanel Safran on aish.com

Ruthie Emanuel was sitting on her bed reading when her sister Jackie burst in.

"Get ready!" she said. "Mom and Dad are taking us to the zoo!"

Ruthie got very excited. For months she had wanted to go to the beautiful new zoo that had opened up outside of the city. All her friends had raved about it, especially the giant elephant that was supposed to be the biggest in the country! But her parents had been really busy at work, and they weren't able to find the time -- until now.

Ruthie quickly got dressed, grabbed her crutches that she had been using since she had badly sprained her ankle skiing last month, and hopped down the stairs. Even though the doctor had told her she really didn't have to use the crutches anymore, Ruthie had become very dependent on them, and in her opinion she definitely still needed them.

Downstairs she found her family already gathered, with picnic lunch and all, ready to go. They packed into their minivan and set off for the zoo. It wasn't a short trip but the kids didn't mind since they were so excited to be going. Finally they saw a sign with an elephant on it that looked as big as a house, and they knew they had arrived.

The Emanuel kids packed out of the van. Ruthie, who was sitting in the back seat, turned to Jackie and asked, "Could you please get me my crutches from the back of the van so I can get out too?"

"Sure," Jackie said with a smile. Ruthie waited and waited, but her sister didn't reappear.

After a few minutes Jackie came up to the car door with a serious look on her face. The rest of the family was gathered behind her. "Ruthie, I'm so sorry. Your crutches aren't anywhere. I guess in the excitement nobody remembered to pack them."

"Oh no!" cried Ruthie. "What am I going to do?!"

Ruthie's father determined that there wasn't enough time to go home to get the crutches and get back to the zoo. In the end the family realized there really was no choice -- Ruthie would have to stay behind in the van, with her dad to keep her company. Even though Mr. Emanuel did his best to cheer his daughter up, the girl was crushed at having to miss the zoo.

A few minutes later her dad turned to her and said, "You know, there is an alternative."

"What do you mean?" asked Ruthie.

Her dad smiled softly and said, "You remember what the doctor said last time? He said that you're ready to walk without your crutches."

Ruthie got upset. "But dad!" she sobbed, "you don't understand. I still need my crutches! I simply can't walk without them!"

"Okay. It's your decision. In the meantime, I'm going to get some drinks."

While her father went to the nearby refreshment stand, Ruthie sat, feeling very sorry for herself. She thought about what her father had said. She *did* want to walk, and she certainly didn't want to miss out on the zoo. But how would she ever manage without her crutches?

Suddenly, as on impulse, Ruthie leaned out of the van and put one foot on the pavement. She slowly lowered the other foot and stood up for the first time in a long time without her crutches. It felt a little funny, but it really didn't hurt. Ruthie whispered a short prayer and took a step. Then another! She felt as though she had been let out of a prison.

Her dad headed back with the drinks and was pleasantly surprised to see his daughter walking toward him! "Hey look at you! Come on -- let's go to the zoo!"

They left a note on the van and walked into the zoo, heading straight to the elephant exhibit. Ruthie gaped in awe at the mammoth beast and said, "Look at what giant steps he takes!" Her father took her hand and with a smile said, "True. But they are not anywhere as big as the ones you took today."

Sometimes sitting in the "van" seems like the more logical, more comfortable choice. But if we would just leave the van, take that step, try out our legs in life there's so much we could do. Are we comfortable, really? We need to determine that for ourselves.

Dr Morinis points out on aish.com

The Kotzker Rebbe said, "There is nothing so whole as the broken heart." Once you recognize that the world is not meant to be nice, or comfortable, or certain, or easy, but that it is set up to be the ideal training ground for the heart, you can trust in God because the world is working just as it should be.

The suffering or difficulty in our lives almost never makes sense in the moment, and only reveals its logic in time. Have you ever looked back over a section of your life, or your whole life itself, and only been able to see the storyline in retrospect? How many people have you heard say something like "losing that job turned out to be the best thing that ever happened to me" though at the time it seemed like a blow to the solar plexus? Maybe you've already had an experience like that yourself...

But we can also find more measured voices telling us that while our destiny is surely in the hands of God, we are still obliged to make our own efforts. To rely exclusively on God implies that we have absolutely nothing in hand to bring about change, when that is seldom if ever the case. Everyone has some powers that are gifted to them, like the ability to think, to speak, to write, to lift objects, to move about, to care -- and even if you are lacking one or more of these capacities, you should put what capabilities you do have to work to bring about the outcomes you see to be the best, rather than rely totally on God. God is the source of these capacities, so wouldn't it dishonor those gifts and especially their Giver not to put them to use?

We have to put our best foot forward and move along in life, past the comfort, into the "uncomfortable" zone. Hashem gives us gifts and talents and we must use them.

Think about the following example that I made up.

Yankel Zimmers of Oceanpoint had been working at Amishpoint bank for over twenty years. However, he always had a small nagging feeling at the back of his brain that this is not what he was meant to do. Ever since he could remember, he loved playing with trains. He took the train every chance he could including going and coming from work. He would marvel at the craftsmanship of the trains, and even peeked to the driver section at one time or another, thinking how awesome it would be to actually get his hands dirty fixing and working on trains. He had always collected model train as a hobby but that's all it was, he thought— a hobby. Why leave such a comfortable job? His job at Amishpoint was 9-4, with an hour lunch

break and an hour for breaks throughout the day, with a cushiony salary, comfortable office, and heating and cooling year round—plus the commute wasn't even 45 minutes. However, Even though it was a comfortable life working as a bank teller sitting and doing interactions from the air conditioned office for Yankel, oneway he finally got to thinking—was that really his calling? His real passion was in fixing trains. Why does he work in the bank? Where did that come from, how did it come about? He couldn't even remember, aside from his dad, the ever-practical Moishe Zimmers telling him that this was a good job for a good Jewish boy with a head on his shoulders. But this is not what he really wanted to do in life. No, it definitely wasn't. Yes it is more uncomfortable to be out in the hot sun working on the train, but that is where his skills lie and his skills and real talents are not where it is comfortable in the bank office! Yankel realized it was finally time for a change. He then put in two calls on his phone. The first was to his wife. The second was to the Train division of the nearby transportation authority.

—We need to wake up before it's too late to get out of our comfort zone. Don't be like Yankel! Don't wait twenty years to realize what you are really meant to do! Don't stay in a dead end or boring unfulfilling job just because it is "comfortable!" Get out of your comfort and follow what really is meaningful and passion filled with using your talents for you in your own life.

Rabbi Moskowitz explains on aish.com

The key is to change an activity from a chore to a gift. In her book, "No Sweat: How the Simple Science of Motivation Can Bring You a Lifetime of Fitness," Michelle Segar argues that by simply changing one word in your vocabulary and reframing the task at hand you can dramatically increase your chances of success.

Instead of saying to myself, "I have to run." I say to myself, "I get to run." Why does changing that one word from "have" to "get" make such a difference? Research shows that we are much more likely to continue an activity if we view the activity as a gift or an opportunity rather than an obligation. Saying "I have to do something" robs me of my autonomy and forces the activity upon me. It represents something that I'm doing unenthusiastically — or worse, something I'm doing against my will.

Saying "I get to do something" means that it's my choice and I get to do it because I want to. Changing that one word reframes your mindset from "I am forced to do this thing..." to "aren't I lucky to be able to..."

But that alone may sometimes leave us unmotivated and uninspired. If that is the case, our response must be to reframe it. Every time you sit down to study our sacred Torah, don't just do it because you have to, but tell yourself proudly, "I get to!" Learning Torah and living my life according to its values is the greatest privilege and opportunity a person can dream of. The ability to open up God's roadmap for this world and elevate our lives is the greatest honor.

Whether it's going for a run or opening up a sefer to learn, finding motivation will always be a challenge. Just make sure to remind yourself, you don't just have to do it, you get to do it! Leaving the comfort behind because you want to do something is a great step.

*Think I get to versus I have to, especially to fight against the comfortable in life. "I GET to use my talents for good" is a great motivator to fine tune what to do in life. For me personally, in college I used my voice for a college radio show weekly for *norishkeit*, for *meaningless*. A few years ago, when Hashem put the ideas in me to make podcasts, I said to myself I want to and have to to do this, but I have to use it for good. If I GET to do this, I must get it done with the right outlook, for helpful and torah-like ways, and hence the shows came about. We need to think what to do and that We get the privilege to do so, thus how can we waste our years in comfortable jobs that don't match our talent and real abilities? How can we waste time just to accumulate wealth or a big house or cars that don't stay with us after 120?*

As an example against comfort, especially materialistic, Think about Sukkot.

As Rabbi Kahn explains on aish.com,

Sukkot is a time when we leave the comfort of home to go reside in a temporary shack – a dwelling known as a sukkah. In the words of the Talmud ([Sukkah 26a](#)), we “dwell” in this shack as if it were our home. Thus it is Jewish practice to have one's meals in the sukkah. Those who are particularly fastidious also read, study, entertain and even sleep in the sukkah.

The joy of Sukkot is to some extent a celebration of that love. We may leave our "permanent" homes, but when we enter the sukkah we enter an abode that is protected by God directly, and all the illusions of our man-made edifices, which bring so many of us comfort – or angst when they are threatened – are placed aside and put into perspective. We focus on that which really brings stability in our lives: God.

Nonetheless there is a high degree of comfort in a home – any home – even one when you are being held back spiritually. Even in such a home people often feel comfort and find it preferential to the unknown.

Use your inner power to see beyond creature comforts and materialistic comforts and seek comfort in the spiritual and the divine.

Think about Sukkot when we think about if we are really comfortable. Think about so many mitzvot that ask us to go out of our comfort zone. For many, one mitzvah they find excruciatingly difficult is a shiva call visit, though we should never know from such things. People feel incredibly embarrassed, uncomfortable and unnerved to make a shiva call, especially if it was a person they knew well, in the past. What is a mitzvah that makes you uncomfortable? What is a mitzvah that takes you out of your “comfort zone”? What can be done about it to make it a little more “comfortable”?

The existence in this world is so short, just a measly 120 years. Why work to be beyond comfortable if we don't take anything with us? Why work to have a mansion and three cars when it doesn't travel along with us?

There's a famous story of the Chofetz Chaim, explained on torchweb.org:

A wealthy American businessman who was passing through the Polish town of Radin paid a visit to the home of the leader of his generation, the saintly Rabbi Yisroel Meir HaKohen ZTL, known to all as the Chofetz Chaim. Upon entering the home, he was struck by how sparsely it was furnished. Where is all your furniture!?, the businessman asked. And where is yours?, replied the Chofetz Chaim. Somewhat startled by the response, the businessman said, Oh, I am only passing through. To which the Chofetz Chaim replied, I, too, am only passing through.

What the Chofetz Chaim taught the businessman that we are all just passing through this world on our way to the Next World - echoes a 2000-year-old teaching of our Sages who wrote in Ethics of our Fathers (4:21): Rabbi Yaakov said: This world is like a lobby before the World to Come; prepare yourself in the lobby so that you may enter the banquet hall.

[In the Talmud (in Avodah Zarah 3a) there is a similar saying: This world is like the eve of Sabbath, and the World to Come is like Sabbath. He who prepares on the eve of Sabbath will have food to eat on Sabbath.]

The Sages here are telling us what is probably the most important teaching in all of Judaism - that this physical world that we live in is not our final destination, but rather a place to prepare ourselves for our ultimate home in the next world, like a lobby leading into a banquet hall.

If we occupy ourselves with Torah study, mitzvah observance and character refinement while we are still in the lobby of this world, we will be able to enjoy the great reward that we will receive in the banquet hall that is the World to Come. But if we forget that we are only passing through this world, and we preoccupy ourselves for most of our lives with all our furniture and other mundane pursuits, neglecting our spiritual side, then what will have to enjoy for all eternity in the World to Come?

How tragic and even painful will it be if after we die we find ourselves in the Next World with nothing to show from our time spent in this world save some furniture that we bought for our home?

Dont live to work. Work to live. Don't work to be uber comfortable. Work to provide for your family, work to provide a modest roof over your head with a car or two. Thats enough for those who live in countries where they don't even have houses so why shouldn't it be enough for us? My friend grew up in a Two bedroom apartment with eight kids...somehow he grew up well and with great middos...why do people think they need five bedrooms and acres of land? Comfort is defined in vastly extravagant terms but really think about what is truly necessary for regular comfort-but define what comfort really means.

Elisheva Greenbaum points out on chabad.org

One of the viral videos that people were sending a few years ago was an Israeli advertisement for GPS. The ad was set in the Sinai Desert with thousands of ragtag Jews following Moses and whining about the time they'd spent wandering around in circles on their lonely, 40-year march from Egypt. Suddenly, a miracle! Moses stretches forth his staff, and a GPS device appears in the sky to lead them directly to Israel.

It was reasonably clever and mildly funny, but no more so than any of the hundreds of other must-see YouTube clips.

The truth is that the Jews did not spend all those years traipsing aimlessly around the desert.

Throughout the whole 40 years they only made 42 journeys. Eleven of those were during the first year out of Egypt, with a further flurry of 11 journeys over the last year before entering Israel. That leaves a grand total of 19 trips over the intervening 38 years, hardly anyone's idea of a peripatetic existence. In fact, at one location they spent 19 years straight, enough time for an entire generation to be born, marry, and even have their own kids, all without ever needing to leave home.

A guess is that stability depends less on how often one is forced to uproot oneself than on one's sense of self-determination – the feeling that one has personal control over one's future. The Jews of the desert may have remained relatively undisturbed for years at a stretch, but they had no way of knowing, from one day to the next, how long they could expect to stay where they were.

At any time, with almost no warning, the Clouds of Glory that accompanied them on their travels could rise into the sky, signifying that they were about to leave. Every single day of their sojourn they would have found themselves staring up into the heavens above, watching and wondering what the morrow would bring.

And that's precisely the lesson that our time in the desert was meant to teach us: There are no guarantees in life, and nothing is forever. No one ever guaranteed you permanent residence, and past performance is no indication of future returns. The only one constant is that wherever we travel in life, we are led by G-d. He is directing our footsteps.

Wherever we go, it's at G-d's say so. How long I stay here depends entirely on Him. The choice left to me is how I utilize the time that I have been allotted, and what inspiration and memories I leave behind me when I'm gone. Life is truly a journey, and it is my responsibility to make sure that my efforts help others enjoy the trip.

We have to realize that life is a journey and we should never get too comfortable. We have to push ourselves to so many things and many mitzvos that don't come naturally. There are many mitzvot that ask us to go beyond our comfort zone, such as having to go to a minyan for a shy, introverted individual or holding the arba minim for someone that finds its sensory aversive. Someone with bad organizational skills might find keeping two sets of dishes and cookware very difficult as an observant Jew, especially in the kitchen. All in all, we have to move away from the comfort and really follow our heart and abilities to do what we are meant to do in the world, not losing track of the end goal and not stopping off at a rest stop called comfort and indulging in that rest stop for all of life, turning it into a bed and breakfast or hotel. If we can really focus on what comfort means and not be extravagant and go out of our comfort zone to do good in this world, the whole world will be better off.

Let's look at some other sources.

Devarim 8:11

...When you have eaten and are satisfied, and build comfortable homes in which you will dwell,

...you might become haughty and forget the Eternal your Almighty Who brought you forth from the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery...Be careful not to say to yourselves: 'My strength and the might of my own hand gathered for me all this wealth.' Remember the Eternal your Almighty...

Duties of the Heart, Eighth Treatise on Examining the Soul 3:238

...To be prepared for the journey and for moving on, and to not become comfortable and settled in, as written: "The land shall not be sold permanently: for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners

Mishnah Makkot 2:7

The more comfortable their lives in the city of refuge, the less urgency they would feel to leave, and the less likely it would be that they would pray for the death of the High Priests.

PTC. Don't get too comfortable in life. Don't forget where everything came from and who gave it to you. Serve Hashem properly, don't rely too much on yourself and don't step off the path to indulge in creature comforts.

Pesachim 114a:2

eat inexpensive food while sitting in a comfortable place, but do not eat expensive geese and chickens, as your heart will pursue you, i.e., you will develop a taste for luxuries.

Guide for the Perplexed, Part 3 43:6

We join to the Feast of Tabernacles the Feast of the Eighth Day, in order to complete our rejoicings, which cannot be perfect in booths, but in comfortable and well-built houses.

Gittin 17a:3

...this interpretation of Rabbi Hiyya refers to the period before the Persians reached Babylonia, when life there was very comfortable.

Or HaChaim on Exodus 13:21:1

The Torah chooses the word לנחותם to indicate that G'd made the journey comfortable. When it was hot G'd made the cloud spread over them to protect them against the sun.

PTC. Hashem gives us things to be comfortable, but it has to be to a certain degree-it can't be the end all and be all and it can't be extravagant.

Chizkuni, Leviticus 25:29:1

Most people do not feel comfortable when living in rented homes as they are always worried that the owner would not renew their rental contract at a price they could afford.

Redeeming Relevance; Genesis 2:53

It is for this reason that we have to learn from the Avot and Imahot that we live in the real world, where choices are not comfortable and easy.

Rabbeinu Bahya, Shemot 16:4:11

The verse teaches that anyone who has ample food supplies, a comfortable lifestyle, is obligated to devote his time to Torah-study.

PTC. Sometimes choices are not easy or comfortable. However, If Hashem blesses you with comfort make sure to use it wisely to do good and learn torah and do mitzvot and Chessed.

Rabbeinu Bahya, Vayikra 26:32:1

The desolation will be experienced by your enemies who will never feel comfortable in your land. This verse is good news for the Jewish people.

Redeeming Relevance; Numbers, CHAPTER 7 Shimon and Levi; The Brothers Divided 60

But even if we are comfortable with our national character, we must also learn to be just as comfortable with all parts of our given identity.

PTC. The land flourishes under our hand, when we live there. Why do we feel comfortable in gales? ITs not our land its not our home. We should yearn and pine for the holy land and feel a real loss like the children and families of Ethiopia when thinking about not living there and what we lost there in the holy land.

Tur HaArokh, Leviticus 23:43:1

Building huts at the time of autumn, approaching winter, and leaving more comfortable quarters in favour of a flimsy shelter...

Ein Yaakov (Glick Edition), Taanit 1:44

...distress shall not live to see the relief of the community.' " In another Baraita we are taught that when the community is in distress one must not say: 'I will go to my house, eat, drink and make myself comfortable...

Peninei Halakhah, Days of Awe 1:6:6

In such cases, the judgment of Rosh Ha-shana can determine whether someone destined to have money will be comfortable, rich, or fabulously wealthy, or whether someone destined to be needy will be needy...

PTC. Hashem set out for us how the year will be, and others might not be fortunate. Think about how to help others and let Sukkos and other times and mitzvos remind us that we can't get too comfortable and help out those who aren't comfortable at all.

Tur HaArokh, Exodus 20:9:1

On the other hand, the words: ועשית כל מלאכתך, refer to activities which are needed to maintain the body in healthy condition, and activities designed to make life more comfortable and enjoyable.

Legends of the Jews 3:1:126

As, furthermore, he was unable to stand all that time, he seated himself on a stone, disdaining a soft and comfortable seat, saying, "So long as Israel is in distress, I shall share it with them." (Moshe by the war with amalek)

Legends of the Jews 4:7:69

They invited the strangers into their house, set before them food and drink of the best they had, and made up a comfortable couch for them for the night.

Menachot 69a:12

Any item that one would not feel comfortable bringing to a governor or local ruler may certainly not be brought to the Temple.

PTC. We should take care of ourselves and others to have a basic level of comfort, but if others are fighting or in pain or in difficulty we need to lessen our comfort and feel their plight.

Daf Shevui to Ketubot 71b:18

Once a bride is in her father-in-law's home, she is comfortable with her husband, no longer shy around him. So too will Israel someday be comfortable in God's house.

Redeeming Relevance; Exodus, CHAPTER 1 The Cradle and the Crucible; The Meaning of Egypt 62

...instability can be very productive religiously, we should not be so quick to make our lives so comfortable.

Between Yesterday and Tomorrow, Conclusion; Common Responsibility 26:29

There is no happiness, no peace, no comfort in this world because everyone thought only of himself, of his own happiness, of his own peaceful and comfortable life...

PTC. When we get caught up in the vanity and materialism of selfishness and of galus, we lose sight of where we really need to be and of what we really need to do in life. Don't be selfish, don't think galus is the end all and be all, and don't make yourself uber comfortable especially outside of the holy land. Feel that your home in galus is temporary and not the final destination.

Sefer HaYashar 18:21

But as for the righteous man, when he goes forth from trouble to a comfortable state, he gives thanks to God, and he says in his heart, “Why should I believe that other troubles will not come upon me?”

Daf Shevui to Ketubot 112b:2

R’ Assi would make sure that they are always comfortable by being either in the shade or sun, depending on what they wanted at that moment. Nowadays, we turn on the air conditioner.

The Jewish Spiritual Heroes, Volume III; The Amoraim of Babylon and the Babylonian Talmud, Rav; Abba Arecha 142

As we said Rav believed in a comfortable and quiet life and he used to say of certain people that “their life was not worth living” as, for instance, of “tent-dwellers and those who wander in the desert...”

In the Narrow Places; Daily Inspiration for the Three Weeks, [Day Five] 21 Tammuz; Growth through Discomfort 2

When we are comfortable, there’s no reason to change.

Redeeming Relevance; Exodus, CHAPTER 1 The Cradle and the Crucible; The Meaning of Egypt 35

Since it is God Who has given us the potential and even the directive to do so, it is perfectly legitimate for man to try to earn a stable and comfortable livelihood.

PTC. The basic level of comfort is understandable and proper, but realize anything can change at any time. It is all in Hashem’s control. Don’t look for comfort look to make a difference.

PTC.

PTC. Don’t get too comfortable in life. Don’t forget where everything came from and who gave it to you. Serve hashem properly, don’t rely too much on yourself and don’t step off the path to indulge in creature comforts.

PTC. Hashem gives us things to be comfortable, but it has to be to a certain degree-it can’t be the end all and be all and it can’t be extravagant.

PTC. Sometimes choices are not easy or comfortable. However, If Hashem blesses you with comfort make sure to use it wisely to do good and learn torah and do mitzvot and Chessed.

PTC. The land flourishes under our hand, when we live there. Why do we feel comfortable in gales? It’s not our land it’s not our home. We should yearn and pine for the holy land and feel a real loss like the children and families of Ethiopia when thinking about not living there and what we lost there in the holy land.

PTC. Hashem set out for us how the year will be, and others might not be fortunate. Think about how to help others and let Sukkos and other times and mitzvot remind us that we can’t get too comfortable and help out those who aren’t comfortable at all.

PTC. We should take care of ourselves and others to have a basic level of comfort, but if others are fighting or in pain or in difficulty we need to lessen our comfort and feel their plight.

PTC. When we get caught up in the vanity and materialism of selfishness and of galus, we lose sight of where we really need to be and of what we really need to do in life. Don’t be selfish, don’t think galus is

the end all and be all, and don't make yourself uber comfortable especially outside of the holy land. Feel that your home in galus is temporary and not the final destination.

PTC, The basic level of comfort is understandable and proper, but realize anything can change at any time. It is all in Hashem's control. Don't look for comfort look to make a difference.

WRAP UP.

Comfort on a basic level makes sense and is good, but don't put too much effort into comfort and materialism. The question is Are we comfortable, really? Hopefully we are in basic comfort but not feeling too settled in galus and not staying in only comfort areas of mitzvos and not staying in comfortable jobs that are not what we are supposed to be doing in life. We need to push ourselves outside of comfortability, outside of just trying to make money and have a huge house and many cars because that's not important and doesn't come with us after 120. We have to realize we can't be in lands outside of Israel permanently, its not where we are supposed to live. We have to realize we can't only do the mitzvos that are "comfortable" but we must do all of them and much Chessed, especially ones that are uncomfortable. We must make are not to stay in jobs or works that don't make sense for us just because they are comfortable jobs. Get out of the comfort, focus on doing the good in the world and the whole world will be so much brighter so much sooner, hopefully starting today.