Chomer Lidrush

Some ideas to turn your gears heading into Parshas Vayeitzei.

Bread to Eat, Health to Enjoy It

"*V'nasan li lechem le'echol u'veged lilbosh*" (28:20). Why does Yaakov need to say what bread and clothing are for? The *Sifsei Kohen* on the Torah, by Rav Mordechai HaKohen of sixteenth-century Tzfas, answers that Yaakov was also asking for the health to enjoy them, since a sick man has no appetite for bread and his finest clothes stay folded in a box.

This week's derasha, built on a chapter by our chaver R' Reuven (Ruby) Spolter in the memorial volume for R' Steven M. Dworken z"l, sets this beside Ben Zoma in Berachos 58a, who uses the same words, "*pas le'echol*" and "*beged lilbosh*." Adam HaRishon had to plow, plant, harvest, grind and bake before he could eat, and shear, wash, spin and weave before he could dress, while Ben Zoma wakes up to find it all prepared for him. Ben Zoma then contrasts the good guest, who counts every bit of trouble his host took on his behalf, with the bad guest, who decides the host did it all for his own family anyway. Both ate the same meal; the difference is what they recognized.

Yaakov teaches us to appreciate having what we need and the ability to enjoy it, and Ben Zoma teaches us to appreciate everyone whose effort makes it possible. Happiness depends less on how much we have than on how much of it we recognize as a gift.