

Ekev 5785  
Manna From Heaven

Deuteronomy 8:3-5

1) **Shemot 16:14-35**

2) **Ramban on Devarim 8:3**

And He fed with you *manna* which neither you nor your father knew:. The meaning is that you did not know about the *manna* that you could live by it for many years, nor did such a tradition reach you from your fathers.

Deuteronomy 8:15-16

3) Pirke Avot 5:6

Ten things were created on the eve of the Sabbath at twilight, and these are they: [1] the mouth of the earth, [2] the mouth of the well, [3] the mouth of the donkey, [4] the rainbow, [5] the manna, [6] the staff [of Moses], [7] the shamir, [8] the letters, [9] the writing, [10] and the tablets. And some say: also the demons, the grave of Moses, and the ram of Abraham, our father. And some say: and also tongs, made with tongs.

4) Berakhot 57b:13

The Gemara elaborates: Our fire is one-sixtieth of the fire of Gehenna; honey is one-sixtieth of **manna**; Shabbat is one-sixtieth of the World-to-Come; sleep is one-sixtieth of death; and a dream is one-sixtieth of prophecy

5) BT Yoma 74b: § Apropos the verse: “And he afflicted you and caused you to hunger, and fed you with manna” (Deuteronomy 8:3), the Gemara expounds related verses. The Torah states: “**Who feeds you manna in the desert** which your fathers did not know, **in order to afflict you**” (Deuteronomy 8:16). What affliction was there in eating the manna? **Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi** disagreed on the matter. **One said: There is no comparison between one who has bread in his basket and one who does not have bread in his basket.** The affliction in eating

the manna lay in there being no leftover food for the next day. Each day the people worried that they might not have any food to eat the next day.

**And one said: There is no comparison between one who sees the food and eats it and one who does not see the food and eats it.** Though the manna could taste like anything, it always looked the same and did not look as it tasted. Being unable to see the food that they tasted was an affliction.

6) Yoma 75a

- a) The Gemara returns to the same verse: It states: “We remember...**the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic**” (Numbers 11:5). **Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi** debate the verse’s meaning. **One said: They tasted the flavor of all types of food in the manna,** but they cried because **they could not taste the tastes of these five foods** that they mentioned. **And one said: They tasted the flavor of all types of food,** as well as **their textures.** The sensation was so strong that it seemed to them like they were eating those very foods. However, with the foods they listed, the people tasted only **their flavor but not their texture.**
- b) The manna was called **white because it whitened Israel’s sins.** The people feared that if they sinned the manna would not continue to fall. Consequently, they devoted themselves to introspection and repentance.
- c) Similarly, **it was taught** in a *baraita*: **Rabbi Yosei says: Just like the prophet would tell the Jewish people what was in the holes and what was in the cracks of their souls, highlighting the sins of the people, so too, the manna clarified for Israel what was in the holes and what was in the cracks. How so? If two people came before Moses for a judgment, one saying: You stole my slave, and the other one saying: I did not steal him, rather you sold him to me, Moses would say to them: In the morning there will be a judgment.** How was the matter resolved? **If on the following day the slave found his omer of manna in his first master’s house, it would be clear that he was stolen,** because the manna still came to the first owner. **And if on the following day he found his omer of manna in his second master’s house, it would be clear that he had been sold.**
- d) Similarly, if **a man and a woman came to Moses for a judgment, he saying: She sinned against me, and therefore I may divorce her and am not obligated to pay her divorce settlement, and she saying: He sinned against me and therefore I am entitled to the full settlement from the marriage contract, Moses**

would say to them: **In the morning there will be a judgment. The following day, if her *omer* of manna was found in her husband's house, it would be clear that she sinned against him.** The fact that her nourishment was given to his household signifies the fact that he has respected her appropriately and is worthy of nourishing her. **If her *omer* of manna was found in her father's house, it would be clear that he sinned against her.** Her nourishment has not been given to his household, signifying that he has been disrespectful to her and is not worthy of nourishing her.

e) The Gemara continues to discuss the manna: **It is written: “And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it”** (Numbers 11:9). **And it is written: “And the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day”** (Exodus 16:4). **And it is written: “The people went about and gathered it”** (Numbers 11:8). **How can these texts be reconciled?** For the **righteous**, the manna **fell at the opening of their homes**. They expended no effort at all. The **average people went out of the camp and gathered** what fell there. **The wicked had to go about farther to gather.**

f) **It was also said with regard to the manna: “And its taste was as the taste of a cake [*shad*] baked with oil [*hashamen*]”** (Numbers 11:8). **Rabbi Abbahu said: *Shad* means breast. Just as a baby tastes different flavors from the breast, since the taste of the milk changes somewhat depending on what foods his mother eats, so too with the manna, every time that the Jewish people ate the manna, they found in it many different flavors, based on their preferences. There are those who say that the word is written as *shed* and means literally a demon. How so? Just as a demon changes into different forms and colors, so too, the manna changed into different flavors.**

#### 7) Talmud Bavli Yoma 76a

R. Shimon bar Yohai's students asked him: Why didn't the mana come down to Israel one time each year? [R. Shimon bar Yohai] responded: I will share with you a parable. To what is this analogous? To a king of flesh and blood, who has one son. He distributed his [son's] food once a year, and his son only saw his father's face just one time per year. So he goes and distributes his [son's] food every day, and the son sees his father's face each day. So too with Israel: one who has a family of four or five children would worry and say, “Maybe the mana will not

come down tomorrow and all of us will die from hunger!” In that way it turned out that everyone would direct their hearts to their Father in Heaven.

8) Talmud Bavli Ta’anit 24a

Rav went to a certain place; he declared a fast, but rain did not come. The prayer leader began to pray in [Rav’s] presence and said, “Who causes the wind to blow,” and the wind blew; “Who causes the rain to fall,” and the rain came. [Rav] said to him: What do you do? [The prayer leader] said to [Rav]: I am a teacher of young children, and I teach the children of the poor like the children of the rich, and I do not take anything from whoever is unable [to pay]. I have a pond of fish, and I bribe anyone who misbehaves with [the fish], and I arrange things in a way that appeases [the student] until they come and read.

9) Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael 16:4

A day’s worth for each day (Shemot 16:4). R. Elazar HaModa’i says: In order that a person not collect today for tomorrow the way that one does on Friday for Shabbat, as it says, A day’s worth for each day—the One who created the day, created the day’s sustenance. From here, R. Elazar HaModa’i would say: Anyone who has what to eat today and says, “What will I eat tomorrow?” is lacking in faith, as it says, in order to probe if he will follow My instructions or not.

10) When Rav Nahman of Horodenka<sup>1</sup> was living in the land of Israel, he had a dream which contained this teaching: “There are doctors who heal through a bitter elixir, but the doctors who heal with a sweet elixir are much better.”

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<sup>1</sup> R. Nahman of Horodenka was a contemporary and close associate of the Ba’al Shem Tov. Like the Ba’al Shem Tov, he did not write any books, but many of his teachings live on through the writings of other Hassidic leaders. Rebbe Nahman of Breslov, his grandson, is named after him. He was born around 1700 in the Ukraine and died in Israel in 1772. This teaching of his can be found in the teachings of the Toldot Ya’akov Yosef: Hayyei Sarah, section 2.