



RABBI SHALOM

ROSNER

Rav Kehilla, Nofei HaShemesh
Maggid Shiur, Daf Yomi, OU.org
Senior Ra"m, Kerem B'Yavneh

Manna- Appreciating our Lot

וַיַּעַן יִרְעֵבְךָ וַיֹּאכְלֶךָ אֶת־הַמָּן אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדַעְתָּ וְלֹא יָדְעוּ
אֲבוֹתֶיךָ

*And He afflicted you and let you go hungry,
and then fed you with manna, which you did
not know, nor did your forefathers know...
(Devarim 8:3)*

When Moshe Rabbeinu recalls what transpired in the *midbar* throughout the nation's 40 year journey from Mitzrayim to Eretz Yisrael, one of the main items highlighted is the manna God provided to nourish and satiate the people. In the pasuk cited above, however, there is a statement included that relates to the fact that we and our forefathers were not previously familiar with the manna. Why is this statement necessary? We were not introduced to the manna until the generation that wandered in the desert. Why would we have hypothesized that it previously existed?

Notwithstanding that the nation was provided with this miraculous substance that

tasted like any delicacy one desired and whose content was fully absorbed in one's body thereby creating no waste, the people still complained that they were hungry and desired the "delicacies" they ate in Egypt. How could they be so unappreciative of this food that literally fell from heaven?

The Ketav Sofer suggests that the clue to their dissatisfaction appears in the pasuk we cited above. They thought to themselves: if the manna is something so special and so beneficial why did our Avot not merit it? When Avraham, Yitzhak and Yaakov experienced a famine, they descended to Egypt to seek food. Why did God not provide them with manna? In addition, the fact that the manna got absorbed in the body and created no waste may have led them to consider it potentially dangerous. What God intended to serve as a benefit they perceived as detrimental.

What the nation failed to recognize is that God prefers to act within the natural realm (טבע). God did not deem it necessary to create a supernatural miracle to assist our Avot. He provided for them within a natural realm. However, in order to instill in the nation that were just slaves, a sense of trust and belief in Hashem, they required supernatural miracles. Starting with the 10 plagues, splitting of the red sea and the various miracles that transpired in the desert, including the daily allotment of the manna. The people were short sighted

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and looked to the past and suspected that had the manna been beneficial surely our forefathers would have been worthy of receiving it.

We are to derive an important lesson from their behavior. One is not to judge happiness or wealth in comparison to others. That generation was granted a great gift but neglected to appreciate it because their predecessors were not offered the same. Today we cannot rely on miracles and should appreciate all blessings God bestows upon us, without comparing anything to our neighbors. We should be happy with our lot.

This is a message that is derived from the last of the *asseret hadibrot* as well. When we are told not to covet, the Torah lists that one should not covet a neighbor's house, wife, housekeeper, animals, etc. It then concludes with an all-encompassing phrase: "and all of your friend's possessions." Why, then, did the Torah need to specify particular items? The all-encompassing phrase of "all of his possessions" would suffice to include the prohibition of coveting in its totality.

The Torah here is teaching us that when we look at someone else, we can't just pay attention to the one item we desire. We have to realize that that item is part of a package deal. Perhaps that individual has a nice house or car, but he is ill or has a complicated relationship with his wife or children.

We should look inward and appreciate our "package", even if we feel we may be lacking in one area. Each family in the desert received the portion they needed to flourish. May we be able to recognize and be grateful for all Hashem has provided to us, including the "dough" allotted to us. ■

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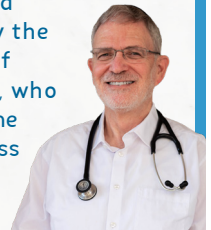
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