



**Partners In Torah**  
**San Diego-Los Angeles**  
**Study Guide**

***Behaalotecha***  
***תשפ"ג***

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***Partners Detroit***

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## *Partners In Torah*

### *Mission Statement:*

**Partners In Torah is a community-wide, independent and inclusive adult education program focusing on understanding Jewish relevancy to our lives by studying text most interesting to each participant.**

**Through one-on-one discussion for 1 hour each week, friendships are forged between mentors and mentees.**

*Partners in Torah has proven to be effective at reclaiming the rich legacy of wisdom, inspiration, and guidance for many who have, until now, lacked access.*

**Welcome.**

**Thank you for coming!**

**Please encourage friends to join you in participating so that we may grow together as a community.**

On the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, Passover night, 3,335 years ago, the Jewish people fulfilled the mitzva of eating matza for the first time at the seder. After eating the afikomen (*dessert* - a piece of the Pascal offering), they were instructed to make another dough for their journey. The very next morning the nascent nation left Egypt in a haste such that this now famous dough had no time to rise and was sunbaked on their backs as they travelled out of Egypt. This portion of matza moreover miraculously lasted them until the 15<sup>th</sup> of Iyar, a full month later. After finishing their last crumb, the Jewish people raised an issue with Moshe and Aharon. The Torah (Exodus 16:2,3) records:

(ב) וַיִּלִּינוּ כָּל עֵדֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל מֹשֶׁה וְעַל אַהֲרֹן בַּמִּדְבָּר  
(ג) וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִי יִתֵּן מוֹתֵנוּ בְּיַד יְדֹד בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּשִׁבְתֵּנוּ עַל  
סִיר הַבָּשָׂר בְּאֶכְלֵנוּ לֶחֶם לְשִׁבְעַת כִּי הוֹצֵאתֶם אֹתָנוּ אֶל הַמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה לְהַמִּית אֶת  
כָּל הַקְּהָל הַזֶּה בְּרָעַב

2) *The entire assembly of the Jewish nation* complained against Moshe and Aharon in the Wilderness. 3) *The Bnai Yisroel* said to them, “If only we had died by the hand of Hashem in the land of Egypt, as we sat by the pot of meat, when we ate bread to satiety, for you have taken us out to this Wilderness to kill this entire congregation by famine.”

This is the Torah’s first use of the term “The entire assembly of the Jewish nation.” The commentaries explain that “the entire assembly” implies that the elders joined with the common man. With the Elders involved leading the congregation (as it should be), things were done in an orderly, respectful way. This “issue” was not inappropriate, and Hashem was not angry at them for expressing it. This was a legitimate concern, and Hashem responded immediately.

(ד) וַיֹּאמֶר יְדֹד אֶל מֹשֶׁה הִנְנִי מִמְטִיר לָכֶם לֶחֶם מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֵּצֵא הָעָם וַלְקִטּוֹ  
דָּבָר יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ לְמַעַן אֲנֹסְנוּ הַיֵּלֶךְ בְּתוֹרַתִי אִם לֹא

*4) Hashem said to Moshe, "Behold! - I shall rain down for you, food from heaven: let the people go out and pick each day's portion on its day, so that I can test them, whether they will follow My teaching or not."*

The referenced "food from heaven" is, of course, the manna (מַן), the food that Hashem gave the Jewish people to eat in the Wilderness as they travelled to Israel. The manna was the single greatest miracle of all of the miracles that Hashem performed for the Jewish people following the exodus from Egypt because it came every day for *forty consecutive years*.

The manna had four distinct advantages over regular food.

1. As a result of Adam's sin, grain, fruits and vegetables now grew with inedible parts - shells and peels that need to be removed before the fruit could be enjoyed, and pits that are discarded. Very often, removal of the fruit's inedible components requires much time and effort. Consider, for example, how many steps wheat kernels need to go through before they become a loaf of bread. The manna was לחם מן השמים - pure bread straight from heaven, edible in its entirety, and needing no work to prepare it. Moreover, their bodies completely absorbed the manna such that there was no need to eliminate waste, as things were before Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge. (This did not apply to food purchased from other nations during their travels.)
2. Our food grows from the ground and is earthy. Manna came from heaven and had a spiritual component to it. It was closer to heaven than to earth.

3. To grow produce, one must plow, plant, water, weed, fertilize, and then harvest - so much work. Not so with the manna; one did not have to work for it at all. It came ready to eat. Relaxing at home, one just had to go out and collect it!
4. Regular grain, fruits, or vegetables depend upon the sun's cycle, are planted once a year, and provide their produce once for the entire year. But the manna, coming from heaven, arrived every day of the week except Shabbat.

Every morning, the manna fell outside each tent onto a layer of dew. Artscroll translates the manna's appearance as "*something thin, exposed - thin as frost on the earth.*" The people daily collected an *omer* (about 5 lbs.) of manna, per person in the family. Manna, moreover, could not be "banked" for the next day, as this was considered a lack of trust in Hashem. If they did, it just turned wormy and rotten. And whatever flavor they wanted to taste in the manna, that is the flavor that they tasted. All they had to do was think about it.

Why did Hashem provide it daily and not just once a week, or once a month? Our Sages explain that Hashem wants to have constant contact with us, not like a father who gives his son an unlimited credit card that expires at the end of the year. That father will see his son once a year, when it's time to renew the card. Otherwise, the son has no use for his father, as he can charge anything he needs without contacting his father. Similarly, because Hashem wants to have a personal relationship with each of His people, He wanted them to think about Him every day for their food. The only exception to this was Shabbat when they would receive a double portion on Friday so they would not have to go out and collect the mana on Shabbat.

(What *bracha* - blessing - did the Jewish people make on the manna? **מן השמים** - המוציא לחם - *Blessed are you Hashem Who brought forth bread from heaven.*)

This pure superfood, straight from heaven, refined those who ate it of their earthiness and made them more spiritual beings. The spiritual quality of the manna aided them in their study of Torah and performance of mitzvot, and brought them closer to Hashem.

Right from the beginning, Hashem told the people they would receive a double portion on Friday to provide for the Shabbat. The next verse says:

(ה) וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי וְהָכִינוּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר יָבִיאוּ וְהָיָה מִשְׁנָה עַל אֲשֶׁר יִלְקְטוּ  
יוֹם יוֹם

*5) And it will be that on the sixth day when they prepare what they bring, it will be double what they pick every day.*

The Malbim (d.1879 in Kyiv) finds a deeper meaning in this verse. Since people would observe Friday's double portion, Hashem did not need to tell them about it. Hashem was instead teaching them how to properly understand what happens every week as Shabbat approaches.

Just as in heaven, Hashem prepared for the Shabbat day by sending Shabbat's manna on Friday, so, too, we must prepare for Shabbat on Friday. By so doing we free ourselves from doing any work on Shabbat, endowing the Shabbat day with special holiness, our having set it aside for holy endeavors. Through preparing for Shabbat on Friday, we have also readied ourselves to accept the special dose of holiness that Hashem bestows upon the Shabbat day from His holy place in heaven. On Shabbat, the manna, too, was double in its taste and its composition. It looked different and tasted better on Shabbat.

It would seem from all of the above that the manna was a perfect food and that there could be nothing that anyone could complain about. However, in this week's portion, Behaalotecha, the people complained bitterly against the manna (Numbers 11:4-6):

(ד) וְהָאִסְפָּסֶף אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבּוֹ הִתְאוּוּ תַאֲוָה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ וַיִּבְכוּ גַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
וַיֹּאמְרוּ מִי יֵאָכְלֵנוּ בָּשָׂר

(ה) זָכְרֵנוּ אֶת הַדָּגָה אֲשֶׁר נֹאכַל בְּמִצְרַיִם חֵנָם אֶת הַקִּשְׂאִים וְאֶת הָאֲבֹטְחִים וְאֶת  
הַחֲצִיר וְאֶת הַבְּצָלִים וְאֶת הַשּׁוּמִים

(ו) וְעַתָּה נַפְשֵׁנוּ יִבְשֶׁה אֵין כֹּל בְּלִתִּי אֶל הַמָּן עֵינֵינוּ

*The **rabble** that was among them cultivated a craving, and the Jewish people also wept once more and said, "Who will feed us meat? 5) We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt free of charge; the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. 6) but now our life is parched, there is nothing; we have nothing to anticipate but the manna!"*

This rebellion was started by the **rabble**, the mixed multitude who mixed in with the Jewish people when they left Egypt, and, unfortunately, it caught on, and some Jewish people joined in with the complainers. The Sages point out that from here we see the danger of having bad friends or neighbors. It is easy to become influenced by them.

What was the issue here? What could possibly be wrong with the manna? It was so amazing and could, if they wanted, taste like the most tender rib steak with all the seasonings!

The reality is that while the manna was a fantastic tool for growth to the righteous people who then comprised the majority of the Jewish nation, for the less-than-righteous minority, the manna proved quite problematic. The manna was not "one size fits all," but, rather was suited to each person individually based on how righteous he was.

The Talmud (Yuma 7a) points out a contradiction in how the manna was collected. One verse says,

וּבְרִדָּת הַטַּל עַל הַמַּחֲנֶה לַיְלָה יֵרֵד הַמָּן עָלָיו - *As the dew fell in the camp at night, the manna would fall upon it*, implying that the manna fell in the camp. A second verse says, וַיֵּצֵא הָעָם וּלְקָטוּ - *and the people went out and collected it*, implying they had to go out of the camp to find it. Yet a third verse says, שֵׁשׁ יָסְרוּ וּלְקָטוּ - *They would journey out and collect it*, implying it was far away from them. How could this be? The Talmud answers that the righteous found it in the camp, right outside their doors; the ones in the middle had to go out of the camp to find theirs; and the evil people had to journey far away to find theirs.

This is why the evil people and even the ones in the middle did not particularly like the manna. It exposed them as less than righteous. If a person committed a sin one night by saying something inappropriate to his/her spouse, the next morning his manna was nowhere to be seen. He would have to search the whole camp looking for it. That was embarrassing! When he finally found it, it would be tough and hard, and he would have to grind it up before he could eat it. Once again, everyone knew that something wasn't right.

The Talmud also points out a contradiction in how the Torah describes the manna.

One verse refers to it as לחם - *bread*, while another verse calls it עוגות - *cakes*, which are less filling; and yet a third verse tells us that טחנו ברחים - *they ground it in a grinder*, implying they had to grind it up before they could eat it. The Talmud resolves the matter: "For the righteous it was bread, for the ones in the middle, not completely righteous but not evil, it was like cakes, but for the evil ones, it needed to be ground up before they could eat it."



Most people, being righteous, were unaffected by this. Many others used the threat of exposure as an impetus to do teshuva right away, so that they would not have to face the public consequences of their mistakes. The evil ones, however, instead of using it as a tool to help them improve themselves, attempted to circumvent it. Because to reveal the real reason they were unhappy with the manna would be quite embarrassing, they created the ruse of wanting meat, a regular material food, which, via lacking the manna's special properties, would not expose their evil deeds, at least for as long as they ate the meat.

After giving the Jewish people the laws about the manna, (Exodus 16:32), Moshe told Aharon,

(לג) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל אַהֲרֹן קַח צְנֻצָּנֹת אֶחָת וְתֵן שָׁמָּה מְלֵא הָעֹמֶר מִן הַמָּנָה אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי יְדֹד לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם:

*33) Moshe said to Aharon, "Take one jar and put a full omer (a measure) of manna into it: Place it before Hashem for a safekeeping for your generations."*

Rashi explains the purpose for saving the "small flask of manna" for the future:

לְדוֹרוֹתֵיכֶם - בִּימֵי יִרְמְיָהוּ כִשְׁהִיָּה יִרְמְיָהוּ מוֹכִיחֵם. "לֵמָּה אֵין אַתֶּם עוֹסְקִים בְּתוֹרָה?" וְהֵם אוֹמְרִים, נִיחַ מִלְּאֲכֹתֵנוּ וְנַעֲסוֹק בְּתוֹרָה מֵהֵיכָן נִתְּפָרְנֵס הוֹצִיא לָהֶם צְנֻצָּנֹת הַמָּנָה אֵמַר לָהֶם אַתֶּם רָאוּ דָבָר ה' שִׁמְעוּ לֹא נֹא' אֲלֵא רָאוּ בְּזֵה נִתְּפָרְנֵסוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם הִרְבֵּה שְׁלוּחִין יֵשׁ לּוֹ לְמִקּוֹם לְהַכִּין מִזֹּן לִירְאִיו

*In the days of Jeremiah when he critiqued the people for not learning Torah, they said to him, "What, shall we leave our work and learn Torah? How will we be able to live?" Jerimiah took the jar of manna out and showed it to them and said. "See the word of Hashem!" It doesn't say, **hear** the word of Hashem, rather, see it! "This is what*

*Hashem gave your forefathers to eat, and He has many ways to give those who fear Him food to eat.”*

Hashem’s miraculously providing food for several million people in the wilderness provides a paradigm for how Hashem provides food for us today as well. The lesson of the little jar of manna is as relevant today as it was in the times of Moshe and Aharon, and, later, in the times of Jeremiah.

This system whereby a person, and the Jewish nation as a whole, were shown exactly where they were holding in their relationship with Hashem was present only during the time that the Jewish people left Egypt until they entered the Land of Israel. During the formative growth of the Jewish people into Hashem’s nation, Hashem wanted to establish His presence firmly and lay the foundation upon which the future of the Jewish Nation would rest. Hence, Hashem adopted a “revealed mode” – גלוי פנים --one through which He was clearly visible to the Jewish people.

Today, Hashem is in His “hidden mode,” and although He is thoroughly involved in each of our lives, He masterfully hides Himself from us and makes it look like He is not involved. It is our job to reveal Hashem in our lives and discover how He is involved in every single aspect of our lives. When we sincerely seek to see Hashem in our lives, He allows us to see Him and His handiwork.

Hashem continues to provide sustenance for all of His creations. The basic concept is epitomized in the following statement:

מאן דיהיב חיי יהיב מזוני – *The One who gives life (Hashem) provides sustenance to maintain that life.* Hashem did not create us to die; He created us to live! So, because Hashem wants us to live, He must provide us with what we need to live.

We see this in action in the billions of Hashem's creatures in the world, each one equipped with the physical attributes and skills necessary to survive in its habitat. This includes how it protects itself from predators and how it procures its food. It is astounding to watch a spider create its web, so perfect and functional every time. It is astounding to watch a cheetah chasing a deer at 70 mph, and to watch the deer fleeing at 71 mph, just fast enough (usually; after all, cheetahs have to eat, too) to outrun him. The astounding eagle, flying at an altitude of 15,000 feet, can spot prey as small as a mole from a mile away and swoop down at a speed of 200 mph to grab it with its extremely powerful talons. The list goes on, as every single creature in creation is a marvel of design and function!

John Ciardi (1916-1986), an American poet, wrote:

**Who could believe an ant in theory?  
A giraffe in blueprint?  
Ten thousand doctors of what's possible  
Could reason half the jungle out of being.**

Hashem has also created a system where one creature is a predator to a smaller one, while it itself is a delightful meal for some other creature. Among the billions of creatures on planet Earth, there is an endless cycle of predator/prey, which maintains the balance of all the creatures in nature.

The same is true of creatures that feed on fruits, berries, seeds or nuts. Hashem has provided them with the tools they need to extract the seeds or nuts from their hard shells, or to harvest the fruits from where they grow. Every creature has what it needs to live.

מאן דיהיב חיי יהיב מזוני – The One who gave life to every creature in creation, Hashem, has also provided it with what it needs to stay alive.

If Hashem provides the billions of creatures who were put here to serve the human being with what they need to live, Hashem would surely provide us, *the purpose for creation*, with what we need to fulfill our purpose in life. This is the lesson of the manna. Hashem takes responsibility for providing us with our sustenance so that we may live.

The *צנצנת המן* - *small flask of manna* - preserved in the Mishkan, was there to teach us several lessons.

1. The key to our livelihood is exclusively in Hashem's hands.
2. Our food comes from heaven. Even though it is physical, it as well contains a spiritual component. The physical component nourishes our physical element, while the spiritual component nourishes our spiritual element, our soul.
3. A person need not put forth Herculean efforts and travel to the far parts of the world to procure his food. Although he must put forth some effort (as the Jews in the Wilderness did have to go out and collect it), his food is still right outside his door and is easy to access, like the manna.
4. If a person has what to eat today, he should not worry about what he will eat tomorrow. Hashem provided the manna anew each day to train the Jewish people to trust in Him that He will provide food tomorrow also. We need to have confidence - *בטחון*, in Hashem that He will provide us with our needs every day.

That they did not receive manna on Shabbat also carries some very important lessons about the relationship between Shabbat and one's livelihood.

1. We must prepare for the Shabbat beforehand to set it aside as a special day. Holiness requires preparation.
2. Because Shabbat is a holy and spiritual day, *it* is the day appropriate for Hashem in His spiritual places to miraculously allocate sustenance to the people for the coming week. This is why Shabbat is מקור הברכה - *the source of blessing*, and the source of one's livelihood for the next six days. On Shabbat, Hashem decrees the allocation, but He doesn't dole it out until the following six weekdays.

It's like a king who has officers in charge of paying the workers their wages for their daily work at the end of each day's work. Every seventh day of the week, the officers must travel to the palace to receive the money to pay next week's wages. Because the officers need to travel to the palace and will not be able to pay the workers, the workers are given the day off. The workers understand that if they see the officers on the seventh day, they will not be paid next week because the officers will not have the funds to pay them their wages.

This is why the manna did not fall on Shabbat. Hashem decreed its deposit into the holy places from which it would eventually come to the Jewish people during the next week.

3. Shabbat expenses do not constitute a part of a person's yearly allocation. Even though Hashem decides between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur how much revenue a person will receive for the next year, Shabbat and Yom Tov expenses do not count in that sum; they are "on the house."

The Talmud tells us that the "small flask of manna" was hidden away. That means that it still exists in its hiding place, and its message is still relevant. Although it is much harder to see Hashem's involvement in our sustenance when He is in His "hidden mode," if we look carefully enough, we will surely see how all the bounty and goodness that we enjoy comes from His kindness to us. It is reassuring to know that Hashem is in control of our livelihood, and that it is to Him that we can always pray for our needs.