

## **“The people would spread out/stroll and gather it (the manna).” (11:8)**

Pursuit of a livelihood is often an endeavor that consumes a person. One dedicates his energies to chasing that pot of gold which is nothing more than a dream turned nightmare for many. While one should be *mishtadel*, endeavor, and take the necessary steps to see to it that his material needs are provided for, he must realize and believe unequivocally that Hashem is the Provider Who will supply him with whatever he really needs. We derive this concept from the *manna* of which the Torah in *Sefer Shemos* 16:17-18 writes, “*Bnei Yisrael* gathered (the *manna*), those who took more and those who took less. And they measured it in an *omer* and found that those who took more had nothing extra, and those who took less were not lacking; each person had gathered according to his eating needs.”

In his commentary on our *parsha*, the *Zohar HaKadosh* focuses on the word *shatu*, spread out, which can also be derived from the word *shoteh*, fool. The *Zohar* says, “Those people of whom it says *shatu*, were truly *shatia*, fools – for sufficient *manna* was supplied to each person, without the need to stroll around and search for it – which was in any event a futile endeavor. Hashem had provided what was needed for each.

*Horav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, z.l.*, would decry those who would devote their lives and energies towards earning a livelihood. He would often cite a *mashal*, parable, of the *Chafetz Chaim* in this regard: A customer in a wine maker’s shop once offered this “powerful” suggestion to the shopkeeper: “Why do you not put two spigots on each barrel instead of one? That way you could make twice as much money!” While we understand the foolishness of this idea, there are still people who do not realize that no matter how hard a person tries, the total amount of sustenance he is destined to receive does not increase one iota as a result of his efforts.

Nonetheless, one must not sit back and relax, relying on the reality that Hashem will provide for him anyway, so he need not bother. *Rav Yosef Chaim* applies the *pasuk* in *Devarim* 15:18, “for your G-d will bless you in all that you do.” It is only when a person does something that he opens up the possibility for Hashem to bless his work and provide for him. There are individuals whose trust in the Almighty is so intense and true that what they must do is truly very little. It is only because they possess such spiritual integrity that they are so blessed. When one toils for a living – whether through commerce, Torah education, *Kollel* or any endeavor in which Hashem finds a *kli machazik berachah*, vessel to accept and hold blessing – he develops a relationship with Hashem as the Provider. Through this relationship he becomes acutely aware that success or failure is dependent totally upon His grace.