

"It is not by bread alone that man can make a life for himself, but that man can live by everything that comes from the mouth of Hashem." (8:3)

This *pasuk* underscores the significance of acknowledging the source of man's sustenance. The word *ojk* actually has a dual meaning. It can mean "bread" or to "wage war". **Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl**, declares that "bread" is the nourishment that man wrests from nature, competing with his fellow man for the "piece of bread." "Bread" represents the joint product of nature and man's intelligence, indicating man's mastery over the mundane world. Consequently, "bread" is the physical manifestation of the intelligence with which man creates his own sustenance as he interacts with his fellow man to "harness" nature.

The tragedy of man begins when he thinks that his ability and creative power are the sole ingredients of his material success. The prime factor in man's sustenance is Hashem's Providence. Every morsel of bread in which we are fortunate to partake is due solely to Hashem's beneficence. To forget or disregard this fact is to fall prey to man's greatest delusion.

Regrettably, in our daily task of providing for ourselves and our families, we sometimes fail to acknowledge the Hand of Hashem directing our material sustenance . We foolishly think that it is our "struggle" to wrest our bread from nature - through any means which we feel is correct. If such an attitude reigns in our minds, then we will no longer care whether in so doing we continue to observe Hashem's laws while earning our daily bread. Do we restrict ourselves within the prescribed limits, or do we obtain our sustenance either by manipulating those around us or by trespassing the *Torah* code? Moreover, when we begin to think that our material sustenance is predicated upon our efforts, our concern for breadwinning becomes a never-ceasing race, leaving us neither time nor vitality for spiritual pursuits.

The forty years of wandering in the wilderness constituted an institution of learning. During that year we were inculcated with the notion that everything comes from Hashem. In the desert we were far removed from all factors that would normally enable man to win his bread through a combination of natural resources and human enterprise. We had no input when Hashem fed us *manna*, the Heavenly bread. This form of nourishment in no way manifested the imprimatur of human achievement. There was no room for error. It was "delivered" to our doors, each person according to his apparent needs, clearly demonstrating Hashem's Divine perception of and sensitivity to each individual's personal needs. Thus, during these forty years we realized that human existence is not contingent solely on "bread" or on the natural and human resources represented by bread. Rather, we acknowledged that man can exist on anything that is apportioned to him by Hashem. Furthermore, even the actual "bread" -- which is apparently produced by his own endeavor -- is in reality a gift from Hashem.