

“And our soul is disgusted with the insubstantial food.” (21:5)

We do not find the Jews complaining much about the *manna* during their forty-year trek in the Wilderness. Suddenly, at the end of their trip, as they stood geared to enter the Promised Land, they issued their complaints concerning the Heavenly bread. Could they have found no other time to register their discontent concerning the *manna*? Why now? The *Chiddushei Ha'Rim* offers a practical explanation. Satisfaction is often determined by the character of the individual and his concomitant comfort level. Yes, for forty years the Jews ate the *manna* and it was delicious and satisfying. However, these were different Jews. They were not the same Jews who had participated in the exodus from Egypt and the Giving of the Torah.

Manna was spiritual food. Only a spiritual person, an individual who is greatly steeped in *emunah* and *bitachon*, faith and trust in Hashem, can subsist on spiritual bread. The nation which received the Torah and was content living in the *midbar*, wilderness, was entirely satisfied with spiritual food. Indeed, *Chazal* say that the Torah was given to the *ochlei manna*, those who ate the *manna*, because these individuals exemplified spiritual integrity at its zenith.

Their children, however, members of the generation which was to enter the Holy Land, were a pragmatic people. They were leaving the barren desert to enter a land where work and toil were necessary to produce their food. The lifestyle which they were going to lead was, by its very nature, much less spiritual than that of their parents. For them, a meal consisted of real food, not “virtual” food. Thus, they asked for what they needed -- food from the earth, not from the Heavens. The bottom line is, a person’s spiritual background and lifestyle determine his core values. Someone who lives a lifestyle which is barren of luxury, in which the spirit takes precedence over the physical, learns to rely completely on the Source of all sustenance: Hashem. On the other hand, if one finds it difficult to maintain such a way of life because he has distanced himself from the core objectives of a Jew, he will obviously “think” that he needs more, because he does not realize that, at the end of the day, Hashem has given him everything that he has.