

The people would roam and gather it, and grind it in a mill... or make it into cakes and it tasted like the taste of dough kneaded with oil. (11:8)

Chazal (*Yoma 75a*) teach that the *manna* had within it a multiplicity of tastes, allowing the individual to experience any taste he wanted. It had no name until the first *Shabbos* it descended upon the camp. They called it *Manna* among themselves, a name which implies *hachanah*, preparation, for all foods; any taste could be experienced by eating it. When on the sixth day/*Erev Shabbos*, however, a double portion fell, they called it *Manna/man*, because the *mem* and *nun*, two letters which comprise the word *manna*, are spelled out in double letters: *mem = mem, mem: nun, nun (Kli Yakar)*.

The *Talmud* asks about the inconsistent wording of this *pasuk*. The *pasuk* originally implied that the *manna* descended throughout the camp, then said *v'yatzu*, "And they went out," later adding, "They would roam and gather it." *Chazal* explain that *Bnei Yisrael* had three ways in which to retrieve the *manna*, which coincided with the spiritual affiliation of the individual Jew. In other words, the righteous Jews opened the door of their tent, and the *manna* was before them. The middle of the road, average Jew was compelled to go out and expend some effort to obtain his food. Finally, the wicked Jew, who was deficient in his spiritual commitment, had to walk all over the camp in search of *manna*. For the righteous, the *manna* came in the form of bread, prepared and ready to eat. The average Jew made cakes, which indicates that it required baking. The wicked Jew had to grind, prepare flour and form his food. He received unprocessed *manna* and was compelled to prepare it according to the *Talmud*. It seems that the righteous received their food in the most convenient manner, ready to eat, waiting for them by their door, while the average Jew exerted himself slightly for his food, leaving the wicked, spiritually uncommitted Jew with the option of obtaining his sustenance through much effort and exertion. (Indeed, this accords with *Rashi's* commentary.)

Horav Mordechai Eliyahu Rabinowitz, zl, author of *Responsa Ner La'Maor* (quoted by *Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita*, in *Nifleosecha Asichah*), offers an alternative understanding of the Manna delivery system and how it affected these three groups of Jews. The manna descended all over the camp and its environs, stretching out far outside of the camp. The righteous, faithful Jew knew that Hashem would provide for his needs. Thus, he took what was available and necessary – no more. The average Jew, whose level of faith had to overcome his self-imposed challenges, was not satisfied with just what he found at his doorstep. He wanted more, so he searched through the camp, gathering whatever more that he could. The *rasha*, wicked Jew, roamed all over – in the camp – outside of the camp – wherever there was *manna*, to load up their vessels. In other words, it was the individual's spiritual posture that created a differential among Jews, which resulted in distinct attitudes concerning how much effort one needed to apply towards attaining his livelihood.

When they all returned home, it became as clear as day that they all had an equal amount of

manna. They learned that one does not earn his sustenance either by force or exertion, but by Hashem's decree. Thus, when *Chazal* say that the righteous found their *manna* at their doorstep, they mean that what they found at their door was sufficient for them. It would enable them to get through the day. The *beinoni*, average Jew, was not satisfied with a nominal amount. He went searching throughout the camp area, because he wanted more/better. The *rasha* outdid everyone, because the *rasha* never has enough to satisfy him; regardless of how much he has amassed, he wants more.

We should, however, address one additional issue. The Torah instructed everyone to take an *omer*, one portion – no more – no less. If so, the one who took the little amount that was at his door, who did not want to waste his time looking for more, sinned no less than the one who sought more to satisfy his desires. Why should the *mamiit*, one who took less, be rewarded? *Horav Eliezer ben David, Shlita*, derives from here that taking less than Hashem instructs us to take is not an *aveirah*, sin. Indeed, the righteous Jew who took his Manna, found it to be *lechem*, plain bread. He neither required cakes, nor did he want to waste time starting from scratch. Plain, unadulterated, unspiced bread in its most simple pristine form was all that he required. That is what he received.