

PRAAYER

It is good to thank You, O God
To sing praises to Your name,

*To proclaim Your love every morning,
And Your faithfulness every night.*

Your works, O God, bring me gladness;
Of Your deeds, I joyously sing.

*How great are Your deeds, O God;
How profound are Your designs.*

The superficial cannot comprehend,
The foolish cannot grasp this.

*Though the wicked may thrive like grass,
And doers of evil seem to flourish,*

Those who oppose You shall be destroyed;
Workers of evil are sure to be routed.

*I have seen the defeat of my foes,
I have heard the doom of my enemies.*

The just, however, grow strong like the palm tree,
They thrive like the cedar of Lebanon.

*Planted on the temple grounds,
They flourish in the courts of our God.*

They yield fruit even in old age,
They remain vital and vigorous.

*They proclaim "God is just;
My Fortress, having no faults."*

From Psalm 92

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

Today's necessity was yesterday's luxury

Unknown



February 4, 2012

יא' שבט תשע"ב

Parashat B'shalach – Exodus 13:17 – 17:16 (בשלה)

Hertz – p 265

Stone – p 366

Haftarah – Judges 4:4-5:31 (שופטים)

Hertz – p 28

Stone – p 1152

Kiddush Luncheon sponsored by
The Family of Anne Cohn
in honor of her 90th Birthday

Additional cakes provided by

Sol & Michelle Segal

in honor of Sol's 50th birthday

and by

some secret admirers

in honor of Orli Roth's 1st birthday

Talmud Class with Rabbi Gordon – 3:45 PM

Minchah – 5:00 PM

Shabbat Ends – 6:07 PM

On This Week's Torah Portion – בשלח

Know that there is a profound idea concerning the manna, which our Sages hinted at and said in Tractate Yoma: Humans ate abirim bread. "Bread that the ministering angels [from abirim = mighty ones] eat." These are the words of R. Akiva. Said R. Yishmael to him: "You have erred, for do the ministering angels eat bread?! Is it not already stated in the Torah: Bread I did not eat, and water I did not drink [i.e. if Moshe, who was a human being, didn't eat or drink while he was in Heaven receiving the Torah, can we imagine that the angels eat?] Rather abirim bread is bread that is wholly absorbed in the limbs [evarim]."

The meaning of what Rabbi Akiva said is: The sustaining of the ministering angels is through the radiance of the Shechinah, and thus did the Sages expound and say: The verse You give them all life and the legions of Heaven bow to You [Nechemiah 9:6]: You are the sustenance [m'chayeh] of them all.' And about this sustaining radiance it is stated, 'Sweet is the light' [Eccl 11:7] because the angels realize in it a good ("sweet") taste. The manna was a derivative of this supernal light, which assumed material form by the will of its Creator, may He be exalted. Thus it emerges that the people of the manna and the ministering angles were nourished from the same substance. (Ramban to 16:7)

The Israelites complained that they had no bread, having run out of the provisions they took with them out of Egypt. Gd tells Moshe to tell them that He would rain down bread from heaven. When they awoke in the morning they found a layer of dew on the ground, and when the dew evaporated, there was a white, scaly substance that remained. This was the manna, so named because the Israelites asked *man hu* / What is that?!

Our Rabbis have said that only a generation that ate manna was fit to receive the Torah. Whether this means that only a generation that deserved manna would be on a high enough spiritual level to receive Torah, or alternatively, the manna had a purifying and spiritually elevating effect, I don't know – perhaps both.

Torah however doesn't ever really say what manna actually was. Ramban, interpreting the Midrash, fills in this gap. Astoundingly, he posits that the manna is actually the same supernal Divine Radiance that sustains the ministering angels. It is only made slightly more concrete so that human beings can pick it up, measure it out, cook it up and eat it. This actually gives us a whole new definition of the idea of "food." Clearly, angels, which have no material bodies, do not need material input – their substance is purely spiritual, and their sustenance is also purely spiritual. Human beings have both body and soul, and they need both physical and spiritual nourishment. Generally those two are distinct; we can't eat a Beethoven symphony and a tuna casserole warms the body, but not really the soul unless grandma made it specially for you. In the case of the manna however, that boundary line got blurred; the same manna that nourished the body completely, so that there was no waste, also nourished the soul, so that those who ate it were able to sustain the experience of the Divine Revelation at Mt. Sinai (and then just barely).

Now let us take this idea a little bit further. Modern physics has shown that all the particles of which material creation is made are nothing more than the modes of vibration of various abstract fields. Further, the thrust of much of modern physics has been an attempt to describe these various, different fields as simply different aspects of one, underlying field. Thus many believe that physics will be able to show objectively what virtually all spiritual traditions have been saying for millennia – the world we see, the world of material forms and phenomena, is in actuality nothing other than the activity of a purely non-material, infinite, unbounded level of pure being. This pure being in fact permeates all of creation, not as something different from creation, but as the actual substance of everything in creation.

If this is the case, then every bite of food we eat is, just like the manna, simply congealed pure being, the congealed "supernal light" of the Shechinah. What is the difference then between the two? On one level, the objective level, we might say that the manna is somewhat less congealed than grandma's tuna casserole, and definitely a lot less congealed than a Big Mac (even a kosher, Israeli one). Thus, those of us who are less spiritually developed than the generation of the Exodus (all of us!) can sustain ourselves on this grosser fare; the downside is that it keeps us on grosser levels of perception, thought and action.

The ultimate purpose of our life here on earth is to refine all aspects of our personality so that we can see through the surface values of Creation and enjoy the glory of the pure being at its basis. What we eat has an effect on our perception and our thinking (besides our physical health of course), but perhaps more important is what our bodies do with the food we give it, and this depends on how refined a level our bodies can function on. Our tradition gives us numerous techniques to refine our personality – prayer, mitzvot, Torah study, meditation. Gd may not rain down manna from Heaven on us, but He has given us a way, practically speaking, to take our ordinary food and virtually convert it into manna inside ourselves. Every time we say a *b'rachah* before we eat, we bring out the spiritual value of the food – we bring it closer to the level of manna. Every *mitzvah* that we perform enlivens our awareness of the One Who commanded us to perform this *mitzvah*, and refines thereby the rest of our perception. If our eyes are open manna is all around us; we just have to gather in each day's portion and enjoy.

Shabbat shalom, Rafi Rabinoff

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, February 5 **Knosh & Knowledge** featuring Sol Segal. Continuing our series about Jews from around the world, Sol will discuss growing up Jewish in Brazil—family, friends, school, community, society, university and work. Brunch begins at 9:45 AM, the presentation at 10:45.

Wednesday, February 8 **Tu B'Shevat**

Thursday, February 9 **General Board Meeting, 7:30 PM**

Shabbat, February 11 **Kiddush luncheon** sponsored by Mark & Janine Orenstein & Family commemorating the second *yahrzeit* of Mark's brother, Sheldon Orenstein.

Motzei Shabbat, February 11 **Casino Night and Silent Auction, 7:30 PM.** Casino games, food, drinks, live music, karaoke & silent auction. See Newsletter for admission packages. We need your donation of items or services for our Silent Auction—sports tix, theater tix, a case of wine, a service you provide...? Call Jennifer Tobias at 636-532-6621 and let her know what you can contribute, and tell your friends to mark their calendars for Feb. 11.

Shabbat, February 18 **Kiddush luncheon** sponsored by Ilse Altman and Family in honor of Frank's 95th birthday.

Motzei Shabbat, February 25 **Youth Bowling Night, 7:30 pm** at Olivette Lanes (9520 Olive Blvd) for grades 7 and under. Two games of bowling. Sponsored by the Youth Committee so no charge to participate. Parents are welcome to stay and bowl. Need a head count by Thursday 2/23 as we have 4 lanes reserved so please RSVP to 314-576-5230.

Plans are underway for Graduation Shabbat on May 5th. Contact Claire Hack if you have a high school or college grad you'd like to be included (even if they're unable to attend). If your graduate would like to participate in the service or if you can help with the event, please contact Claire at ceh1492@hotmail.com.

Condolences to...Ellis Frohman and Naomi Sanders on the passing of Anne Frohman, wife of Ellis and mother of Naomi.

Refuah Sh'leimah to...Gary Lerner

DAILY SERVICE TIMES

Sunday morning – 9:00 AM **Sunday Evening – 5:00 PM**

Monday-Thursday evenings – 6:30 PM

(Services Sunday through Tuesday morning at the Frohman residence)

Monday-Friday mornings – 7:00 AM

Friday evening – 5:45 PM