

Our *Parashah* opens with instructions regarding the lighting of the *Menorah* in the *Mishkan* / *Bet Hamikdash*--the third time the Torah mentions this *Mitzvah*. R' Raphael Moshe Luria z"l (*Rosh Yeshiva* in several *Chassidic yeshivot* in Israel; died 2009) explains this repetition:

R' Moshe ben Maimon z"l (*Rambam*; 1135-1204; Spain and Egypt) implies that the *Bet Hamikdash* serves three purposes: (1) it is a place for the *Shechinah* to rest, as we read (*Shmot* 25:8), "They shall make a Sanctuary for Me, so I will dwell among them"; (2) it is the place to offer sacrifices; and (3) it is the pilgrimage destination where we go to draw inspiration. (*Hil. Bet Ha'bechirah* 1:1)

R' Luria continues: The three times that lighting the *Menorah* is mentioned in the Torah parallel these three purposes. In *Parashat Tetzaveh*, lighting the *Menorah* is mentioned in connection with the command (in the previous *Parashah*) to build the *Mishkan*. There is no mention there of what will be done in the *Mishkan*, only that *Hashem* will dwell among us as a result of our efforts.

In *Parashat Emor*, the *Mitzvah* to light the *Menorah* follows the list of festivals. This alludes to a connection between the *Menorah* and the *Bet Hamikdash's* role as a pilgrimage destination on the festivals.

Finally, in our *Parashah*, the *Mitzvah* to light the *Menorah* follows the offerings that were brought at the dedication of the *Mishkan*. This alludes to a connection between lighting the *Menorah* and the sacrificial offerings. (*Bet Genazi*)

## Shabbat

**"When the dew descended upon the camp at night, the *Mahn* would descend upon it." (*Bemidbar* 11:9--in our *Parashah*)**

R' Moshe Isserles z"l ("*Rema*"; 1530-1572; rabbi of Cracow, Poland, and author of the glosses on *Shulchan Aruch* that adapt that work for *Ashkenazim*) records that some have a custom on *Shabbat* evening to eat a filled dish called "*Pashtida*"--apparently a type of pie or quiche--to recall the *Mahn*. R' Yisrael Meir Kagan z"l (the *Chafetz Chaim*; died 1933) writes that such was the custom where he lived, and he explains that just as the *Mahn* was protected by one layer of dew below it, between it and the ground (see verse quoted above), and a second layer of dew above it (see *Shmot* 16:12-14), so *Pashtida* has meat between two layers of dough.

However, the *Chafetz Chaim* wonders, why is there a custom to recall the *Mahn* on *Shabbat*--the one day of the week when *Mahn* did not fall? Moreover, why is there not a custom to eat *Pashtida* on *Yom Tov*, when *Mahn* also did not fall?

The *Chafetz Chaim* answers, citing the work *Torat Chaim* (R' Avraham Chaim Schor z"l--Poland; 1550-1632): Our sages call *Shabbat* "*Me'ein Olam Ha'ba*" / "a little bit of the World-to-Come," and they call the World-to-Come: "A day which is entirely *Shabbat*." Therefore, we observe several customs on *Shabbat* that allude to the World-to-Come. For example, we eat fish and meat on *Shabbat* as an allusion to the "Feasts of Leviathan and *Shor Ha'bar*" (some type of large ox)--metaphors our Sages use to refer to the reward that awaits *Tzaddikim* in the World-to-Come. Likewise, we drink wine on *Shabbat* as an allusion to another such metaphor: "Wine stored in its grapes since the time of Creation." [What these metaphors might mean is beyond the scope of this article.]

For the same reason, we eat foods on *Shabbat* that remind us of the *Mahn*, as *Mahn* is also the food of *Olam Ha'ba* (see *Chagigah* 12b).

(*Mishnah Berurah* and *Be'ur Halachah* 242)

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**“The rabble that was among them cultivated a craving, and *Bnei Yisrael* also wept once more, and said, ‘Who will feed us meat?’” (11:4)**

*Rashi z”l* writes: Did they not have meat? Does not the Torah (*Shmot* 12:38) record that they left Egypt with flocks and herds?! Do not say that they had already eaten those animals, for we read later, at the end of the 40 years (*Bemidbar* 32:1), “The children of Reuven had cattle in a very great multitude”! But the truth is that they were only seeking a pretext. [Until here from *Rashi*. The Torah continues:]

**“We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt *Chinam* / for free, and the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic’.” (11:5)**

*Rashi* writes: They could not have meant that the Egyptians gave them fish for nothing, without payment, for the Torah records (*Shmot* 5:18), “No straw will be given you!” If they did not give them straw, would they have given them fish for nothing? What then is the meaning of ‘*Chinam*’? It means free from--*i.e.*, not burdened with--Heavenly commands. [Until here from *Rashi*. The Torah relates:]

**“Moshe said, ‘Six hundred thousand are the people in whose midst I am, yet You say, ‘I will give them meat, and they will eat for a month!’ Can sheep and cattle be slaughtered and suffice for them? If all the fish in the sea are gathered, would it suffice for them?’” (11:21:22)**

Surely Moshe did not doubt *Hashem’s* ability to provide meat for any number of people! R’ Yehuda Gruenwald z”l (1845-1920; rabbi of Szatmar, Hungary) explains: As long as *Bnei Yisrael* were in the desert, they were not permitted to eat meat whenever they wished; rather, they had to slaughter it and offer it in the Tabernacle as a sacrifice, specifically a *Korban Shelamim*, from which they then ate. (This *Halachah* applied only during those 40 years.) When some of *Bnei Yisrael* complained, “We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt unencumbered by *Mitzvot*,” it was this restriction they were complaining about. They wanted to eat meat without restrictions. This is why their entire complaint is referred to as a pretext--they did not lack meat at all; they only lacked meat that was free of *Mitzvot*, just as cucumbers and melons, which they mentioned also, are eaten essentially free of *Mitzvot*.

When Moshe wondered how *Hashem* could satisfy their demand, he was not doubting *Hashem’s* ability to provide meat. He was saying, “No matter how much meat You give them, even if millions of sheep and cows wander into *Bnei Yisrael’s* camp out of nowhere, You cannot satisfy them because they still will need to bring those animals as *Shelamim* offerings!” “Can sheep and cattle be slaughtered and suffice for them?” No! Because they can only be slaughtered encumbered by *Mitzvot*! “If all the fish in the sea are gathered, would it suffice for them?” True, fish do not require *Shechitah* or being offered as a sacrifice, but, for that very reason, it will not give them what they really want: meat that has had its restrictions lifted!

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**“When you go to wage war in your Land against an enemy who oppresses you, you shall sound short blasts of the trumpets, and you shall be recalled before *Hashem*, your *Elokim*, and you shall be saved from your foes.” (10:9)**

R’ Aharon Eliezer Paskez z”l (rabbi of Galanta, Hungary; died 1884) writes: A person must fight two wars--one with his external enemies and one with the enemy with him, the *Yetzer Ha’ra*. And, as Rabbeinu Bachya ibn Pekudah z”l (Spain; early 11<sup>th</sup> century) writes in *Chovot Ha’levavot*, the latter of these, the war against the *Yetzer Ha’ra*, is the harder battle.

R’ Paskez continues: We read (*Mishlei* 16:7), “When *Hashem* approves of a man’s ways, even his foes will make peace with him.” This means that if we have external foes, it is an indication that we are not adequately fighting our internal foe, the *Yetzer Ha’ra*. Thus, says our verse, “When you go to wage war in your Land,” be aware that the true battle is “against an enemy who oppresses you,” the *Yetzer Ha’ra*. Therefore, “You shall sound short blasts of the trumpets” so that “you shall be recalled before *Hashem*, your *Elokim*,” and He will save you “from your foes”--both of them.

(*Mishmeret Eliezer*)

**“The people took to seeking complaints . . .” (11:1)**

R’ Shlomo Heiman z”l (1892-1945; *Rosh Yeshiva* in several prominent Lithuanian *Yeshivot*; finally, *Rosh Yeshiva* of Mesivta Torah Vodaath in New York) observes: *Bnei Yisrael* complained about *Hashem’s* actions and inactions a great deal during their 40 years in the desert--much more than Jews today complain about what *Hashem* does or does not do. This is a testament to the high degree of *Emunah* that the Generation of the Desert possessed; their complaining shows that they felt *Hashem’s* presence in their lives and that they knew they had a Father in Heaven to whom they could turn with their complaints. In contrast, our *Emunah* is much weaker, so we complain less. (*Chiddushei R’ Shlomo: Imrot Ketzarot* p.3)

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*Hashem* responded (verse 23), “Is the hand of *Hashem* limited?” Certainly *Hashem* can give them what they want. And He did, as we read (verse 31), “A wind went forth from *Hashem*, *Va’yagoz* (literally, ‘and blew’) quail from the sea.” The word “*Va’yagoz*” appears only one other time in *Tanach*--in *Iyov* (1:20), where we read “*Va’yagoz rosho*” / “And he tore [the hair] off his head.” This suggests, writes R’ Gruenwald, that the quail blew in with their heads already cut, *i.e.*, already slaughtered and ready to eat. Thus, *Hashem* satisfied *Bnei Yisrael’s* desire.

(*She’erit Yehuda*)