

## The Hebrew Corner

Food is an important topic discussed in the bible, not only in the Tanach but also in the B'rit Hadesha (also known as the New Testament). A city of Israel was named after food: Bethlehem, or in Hebrew, Beit-Lechem (בֵּית לֶחֶם, BAYT LEH-chehm), which means house of bread, and since the Hebrew word lechem is often used to refer to food in general, this city may also be referred to as the house of food. In this month's discussion, let us focus on one specific aspect of food, the difference between physical food and spiritual food.

As described in Exodus 16:31-35, the Israelites, while they were in the wilderness, were given a food to eat called manna (מָן, MAHN), meaning, what is it?

“And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.”

The Israelites complained bitterly about having nothing but manna

to eat, as described in Numbers 11:4-9:

“And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes. And the manna was as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium. And the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil. And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it.”

So why did God continually give them only this one food, manna, to eat, instead of a variety of meat, herbs, fruit, and other fare? The answer may be found in this passage, Deuteronomy 8:2-3:

“And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.”

The word “word” in the previous passage was supplied by the translators for understanding but does not appear in the Hebrew. The Hebrew word that is translated as “that proceedeth out” is the

word motsah (מוצא, moh-TSAH), which can mean act of going forth, or source. So the passage may be also understood as everything whose source is the mouth of God, or whose source is God. The physical food, manna, kept the bodies of the people of Israel alive, but the more important food is the spiritual food, that food whose source is God that leads to life everlasting, as stated in the following words of Jesus, our Yeshua, in John 6:47-58:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die, I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.’ The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.”

So we see that the Word, whose source is God, providing the spiritual food that leads to life everlasting, is Jesus, the ever-present Word introduced in John 1:1:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Shalom and blessings to you as you seek out the spiritual nourishment that only Jesus, our Yeshua, provides.