



Is Reciting Parashat HaMan This Week an Authentic Tradition?

Why Should we Trust this Segulah (Spiritual Remedy)?

We are sending you our Parasha Magazine early this week, because there is a widespread custom to recite **Parashat HaMan**, from this week's Torah reading. It describes the way Hashem provided manna for the Jews in the desert, on the Tuesday prior to the Shabbat of *Parashat Beshalach*. Many people recite this chapter daily, as a special prayer for parnassa (livelihood). Reciting *Parashat HaMan* (the verses about the manna), is considered a 'segulah' – a special merit – for sustenance in the year ahead. A segulah is a prayer or action that we can take, which, according to Jewish tradition, can be helpful in attaining Divine blessings. While some Jews hold that today (Tuesday, February 4 (2020)) is a special day, that could change our destiny, others are skeptical, saying, "segulot don't work. Getting a paying job does..." Some go as far as to say, "many segulot come from pagan and other non-Jewish sources, and they are worthless at best." I believe that the main problem with segulot is ascribing power to spiritual remedies, as opposed to believing with our full heart that there is no source of blessing besides Hashem. We must fully believe that Hashem alone is the One Who has the power from beginning to end. Neither astrology, cloud gazers nor seances have independent power. Therefore, we are commanded, "*You shall be pure with Hashem your G-d*" (*Devarim* 18:13). Segulot can be helpful as long as we remember that, ultimately, everything is in Hashem's hand. Moreover, we must differentiate between the segulot. There are segulot based on real Torah sources. Yet, there are also modern segulot, without a Torah tradition, that look suspiciously like *darchei emori* (the ways of the Emorite). In many places in the Talmud, we find practices forbidden because they are *darchei Emori*. According to the Mishna, carrying a grasshopper egg as a remedy is an example of the ways of the Emorite. However, we rule in accordance with Abaye and Rabba, that "anything that promotes healing is not included in the ways of the Emorite" (*Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat* 67a, *Shulchan Aruch, Orech Chaim* 301:27). Our Sages teach us that certain times are *Et Ratzon* – a time where certain types of tefilot are more powerful- for example, [the well-known Tefilat HaShelah on behalf of our children, to be said Erev Rosh Chodesh Sivan](#). The best segulot are always Torah and tefilah. Torah learning is a positive mitzvah that outweighs all other mitzvot (*Mishna Peah* 1:1). Therefore, we can never go wrong with any segulah based on actual Torah learning, like reading *Parashat HaMan*, which installs and strengthens within us emunah in Hashem as the ultimate source of our parnassa. Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Rimanov recommended reciting the verses of *Parashat HaMan* (*Shemot* 16:4-36) on the Tuesday preceding *Shabbat B'Shalach*, by reading the original Hebrew twice, and the Aramaic translation once. I believe that for those who aren't fluent in Hebrew it is preferable to read the English instead of the Aramaic translation. Click here for the full text of *Parashat HaMan* in Hebrew and English.

Why Recite *Parashat HaMan*?

When our ancestors were in the wilderness, a month after the Exodus from Egypt, they faced a tomorrow with no food. Understandably, they asked Moshe if he had taken them into the desert to starve to death. Hashem responded that, in the morning they would see that He had not forsaken them. *Parashat HaMan* tells the story of the manna that G-d brought down from heaven to feed the Israelites in the wilderness. The manna had spiritual qualities and it satisfied every person's taste. The Israelites received the manna directly from heaven, every day until they reached the borders of the promised land. When people lose their jobs or their savings (G-d forbid), they need a reminder that Hashem never forsakes us. Reciting *Parashat HaMan* helps us strengthen our *bitachon* (trust)

that G-d runs the world and that nothing can be taken for granted. By reading the account of how Klal Yisrael was sustained by Hashem in the desert for 40 years, we ingrain in ourselves that our livelihood comes only because Hashem wills it. ...It's not a magic incantation but an affirmation of Hashem being the "Hand that feeds us." By reading *Parashat HaMan* with prayerful intention, we express our invocation to Hashem that we, together with all of Israel, should be able to provide for our families. By reciting these verses – especially during the *et ratzon* (recommended time) – we appeal to Hashem that He choose to bless us with abundance. We thereby acknowledge that all things come from G-d. He will decide whether to answer our prayers or not. The week of *Shabbat B'Shalach* is a special and powerful time, connected to Hashem's power that controls physicality. Reciting *Parashat HaMan* then makes a powerful connection for sustenance.

Torah Sources for Reciting the *Parashat HaMan*

The power of reciting *Parashat HaMan* daily is noted in many halachic sources. It is mentioned in the *Yerushalmi Brachot*, in the *Arba Turim*, *Orech Chaim* 303; and in *Shulchan Aruch*.

שו"ע אורח חיים - סימן א (ה) טוב לומר פ' העקדה (בראשית כב, א יט) ופ' המן ועשרת הדברות ופ' עולה (ויקרא א, א ז) ומנחה (ויקרא ב, א יג) ושלמים (ויקרא ג, א יז) וחטאת (ויקרא ד, א)

It is good to recite the passage of the Akeida, the passage of the manna, the Ten Commandments, and the passages of the burnt-offering, tribute-offering, peace-offering, sin-offering, and guilt-offering (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 1:5).

It is also brought down by the *Mishnah Berurah*, quoting the Talmud Yerushalmi, that anyone who recites *Parashat HaMan* will not lack sustenance. He furthermore quotes the Taz (*siman* 256) that reading it alone isn't sufficient. We must understand from the reading that our livelihood comes about through Divine intervention:

משנה ברורה סימן א (כז)

ויכול לומר פרשת העקידה ופרשת המן אפילו בשבת. ואין די באמירה (כח) אלא שיתבונן מה שהוא אומר ויכיר נפלאות ד' וכן מה שאמר בגמרא כל האומר תהלה לדוד ג' פעמים בכל יום מובטח שהוא בן עוה"ב ג"כ באופן זה. וטעם לאמירת כ"ז (כט) כי פרשת עקידה כדי לזכור זכות אבות בכל יום וגם כדי להכניע יצרו כמו שמסר יצחק נפשו ופרשת המן כדי שיאמין שכל מזונותיו באין בהשגחה פרטית וכדכתיב המרבה לא עדיף והממעט לא החסיר להורות שאין ריבוי ההשתדלות מועיל מאומה ואיתא בירושלמי ברכות כל האומר פרשת המן מובטח לו שלא יתמעטו מזונותיו:

He can recite both the *Parasha* of the Akeida and the *Man* even on Shabbat. (Based on *Be'r Heitev* 1:9). However, reading it alone is not enough. Rather, we must contemplate what we are saying and recognize Hashem's wonders... The reason for saying... *Parashat HaMan* is in order to ingrain the emunah that all our sustenance come about through individual providence, as it states, "whoever gathered much did not have more, and whoever gathered little did not have less." This teaches us that excessive *histadlut* (effort) doesn't help a bit. It states in the *Yerushalmi Berachot*, "Anyone who recites *Parashat HaMan* every day is guaranteed that he will never lack sustenance (*Mishnah Berurah* 1:27-29)

The benefit of reciting *Parashat HaMan* is furthermore cited in *Aruch Hashulchan* 1:22 and *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 1:9). *Shevet Mussar* by R. Elijah ha-Kohen ha-Itamari, (Jerusalem 1863) brings down that the segulah of *Parashat HaMan* is to read it twice daily, together with the Targum (translation). *Siddur Segulat Yisrael* says to recite it with the cantillation (tropp or the musical Torah notes). The source for the custom to read *Parashat HaMan* on Tuesday preceding *Shabbat B'Shalach* is Reb Menachem Mendel of Riminov, one of the four primary disciples of the Noam Elimelech. During the 22 years that Rav Mendel was Rebbe in Riminov, not one family living in that town lacked parnassa. The *Tur* put it simply when he wrote (*Orach Chaim* 1): "It's good to recite *Parashat HaMan*!"

Spiritual Lessons to Integrate from *Parashat HaMan*

Parashat HaMan ingrains within us the lesson that our sustenance is determined by Hashem alone. Whether gathering a lot or a little manna, everyone received exactly the same (*Shemot* 16:18). No matter how many hours of hard work we put in, we get the amount of money we are supposed to receive. At times it can be hard to believe that what we earn has nothing to do with our own efforts. Not 50%, not 5%, and not even .01%. 100% of our livelihood is from the help of Heaven. Therefore, we must believe that we won't lack if we work less in order to learn more Torah and perform mitzvot. "In the days of Yiremeyahu, he rebuked them, [saying] "Why do you not engage in the Torah?" They would say, "Shall we leave our work and engage in the Torah? From what will we support ourselves?" He brought out to them the jug of manna. He said to them, "You see the word of Hashem?" (*Yirmeyahu* 2:31). It does not say 'hear' but 'see.' With this, your ancestors supported themselves. The Omnipresent has many agents to prepare food for those who fear Him" (Rashi, *Shemot* 16:32). We need *lechem mishna* (two breads) on Shabbat to remind us of the manna. On Shabbat, when we don't work, the double bread reminds us that we can take off because Hashem provides.

The manna furthermore teaches us, that food and money are necessary tools for serving Hashem, however, only to be used as needed. Hashem offered two solid meals a day, bread in the morning and meat in the evening. Extra snacks were not included (*Shemot* 16:12). This allotment was to help us stay in good physical condition for the sake of knowing Hashem (*ibid.*). Too much luxury only makes us forget G-d (*Devarim* 32:15).

Regarding the manna it states, "Let no one leave over [any] of it until morning." This teaches us to abstain from trying to accumulate enough wealth for generations. When we trust that Hashem will take care of tomorrow, we can go easy on the saving plans. During the 40 years in the desert, no one had any money put away for a rainy day. In the wilderness, there wasn't a crumb to be had at the end of the day. Nothing was saved away for the future. Many of us might recite *Parashat HaMan* with the intention of gathering wealth for the future, rather than concentrating on Hashem Who is providing our sustenance right now. Let's not forget that the manna was a test of trust: how much bitachon the Israelites had in Hashem's power to provide. This is stated in the first verse of *Parashat HaMan*: "I am going to rain down for you bread from heavens, and the people shall go out and gather what is needed for the day, so that I can test them, whether or not they will follow My teaching" (*Shemot* 16:4). Let us recite this section in the Torah while ingrain its eternal messages, by strengthening our trust in Hashem as our sole provider!

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