

THE JOURNEY OF LIFE! Part 4

(Scripture: Exodus 16:1-7)

Introduction:

The Israelites came to Elim and rested a while. Sometimes God brings us to a point in life where we cannot do anything but rest. When that happens JUST rest. After that brief rest you may need lot of strength to go on a long journey without much rest. Israelites had come to a real dream vacation spot in the desert. But they could not stay there forever. They had to move forward.

Exodus 16:1. 1Then they set out from Exodus, and all the congregation of the sons of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt.

As our map expert Jeyan explained, it is hard to trace the exact spot. Wilderness of Sin (actually pronounced as Seen) was located between Elim and Sinai. They arrived this spot exactly a month after they left Egypt. They must have stayed in Elim for at least two weeks. It is indeed amazing how two million Israelites managed without much fresh food for one month. They brought the dry unleavened bread of Passover, they brought the cattle for sacrifice as well as food. They must have managed with that. But now the food supply was running out rapidly.

Exodus 16:2, 3. 2The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 3The sons of Israel said to them, "Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

Israelites were happy in Elim, but now they were very unhappy. They started grumbling and complaining against Moses and Aaron as they started scrounging for food. They wished that they were dead in Egypt. They charged Moses of bringing them out to wilderness to kill the whole assembly. This is the kind of charge that would hurt any leader! When I do group tours, I am always afraid of some unknown problem making our sightseeing tour miserable. The last thing anyone wants is being stranded somewhere. If something like that happens, all the blames fall squarely on the leader! Here Moses and Aaron hear ear full of grievances!

Exodus 16:4-7. 4Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction. 5"On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily." 6So Moses and Aaron said to all the sons of Israel, "At evening you will know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt; 7and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, for He hears your grumblings against the LORD; and what are we, that you grumble against us?"

God promised Moses that He would rain their bread from heaven! No need to even cook this bread, even though the Israelites baked it! Our God feeds even the sparrows. How will He let His own people starve! They were supposed to gather just a day's worth, not more not less. On the sixth day they could gather for two days portion. God wanted them to rest completely on the seventh day!

Moses went and relayed the message that in the morning they will see the glory of the Lord! The very falling of Manna from heaven must have declared the majesty and the glory of the Lord! Don't we see His awesome glory when the big snowflakes start falling? Don't we see the glory when everything becomes picture perfect white. The bread from heaven falling must have been an awesome sight! We ought to wake up in the morning to see the sun rise, the colors of the sky, hear the birds chirping.

Exodus 16:8. 8Moses said, "This will happen when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and bread to the full in the morning; for the LORD hears your grumbings which you grumble against Him. And what are we? Your grumbings are not against us but against the LORD."

Here's the diet for Israelites in the wilderness! They can eat bread in the morning, and meat in the evening. Technically only 2 meals a day! Those who are very picky about carb diet and protein diet, take a good look again. God provided sugary carb in the morning and protein diet in the evening, and that too for 40 years! Biblically speaking, we have Adam's diet, Daniel's diet, Ezekiel's diet, John the Baptist diet and of course the Leviticus diet! Now here in this passage we have wilderness diet also! How about that? More than Wall mart or Wegman's variety! Which diet do you want to follow? I like to follow the New Testament diet what the Bible recommends! Peter's diet! Eat anything! But keep it just to two meals, under 1200 calories, if you are 50 and above! Just a suggestion! Don't blame me if you gain weight! 😊😊😊

Exodus 16: 9-12. 9Then Moses said to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your grumbings.'" 10It came about as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. 11And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12"I have heard the grumbings of the sons of Israel; speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"

Moses assembled all the sons of Israelites (it could be all Israelites also) to come before the Lord to hear what the Lord had to say.

Now the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud, probably in the pillar of cloud itself! The Lord said that He had heard the grumbings, After seeing so many miracles in Egypt, big one on the way, the Red Sea parting, yet they could not believe. They also experienced that the Lord can do anything to provide! He even changed bitter water into sweet water. Yet they had to grumble now. When the faith in God disappears, we become resentful and bitter in our faith walk. The Lord promised meal for them. Check the meal schedule and menu! In the morning they shall be filled with bread, and in the twilight time, they will have meat! Note the twilight time is the dinner time. God knows the best! It is not good to have late night dinner. It may not all digest fast enough. Follow the Lord's method. Note also that protein is given at the night time, and high carb with sugar in the morning! It will be ok to eat Idli/pancakes in the morning! 😊

Exodus 16: 13, 14. 13So it came about at evening that the quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. 14When the layer of dew evaporated, behold, on the surface of the wilderness there was a fine flake-like thing, fine as the frost on the ground.

- How is our Lord going to do it! Feeding 2 million people?
- How is He going to give bread in the wilderness? Where is He going to get meat for 2 million people? No birds or animals come deep into wilderness?
- How is He going to fulfill His promise? God does not tell us much about how He is going to do His miracles, but it'll be done if He promises something!

He promised to feed them two meals, and in the same evening, the quails came up and covered the camp. Quails are very delicious birds. Tastes much better than chicken. They can run very fast, and they fly low also. Gypsies trap them and sell it in India. They usually dwell in places where there is water shortage. God drove them toward Israelites, and they were too tired to run or fly anymore, and they just fell down from the sky right where the Israelites were, here God brought one of the most delicate meat for the Israelites which was much superior to any meat they ate in Egypt.

In the morning, there was a layer of dew on the ground, which is normal anywhere on north. But when the dew evaporated, a frost like flake appeared, and the people gathered it for breakfast!

Exodus 16:15, 16. 15When the sons of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. 16" This is what the LORD has commanded, 'Gather of it every man as much as he should eat; you shall take an omer apiece according to the number of persons each of you has in his tent.'

There is a serious translation problem here. The Hebrew word "Man" is translated here as what is it. To translate "what is this?" gives good sense, but is against grammar, since the Hebrew for "what" is not **man** but **mah**. Some translate "man" as this is a gift. There is no good translation for the Hebrew word Man! Moses simply calls it the bread! But then there seems to be little contradiction. The Lord seems to tell them first to gather as much as a man could eat, and then He seems to restrict them to gather only one Omer per person. So if you have three persons in a house, you will gather only one Omer per person, a total of three. Why should anyone restrict the amount that is on the ground abundantly? Let us follow this interesting phenomena in the following passages.

Exodus 16:17-21. 17The sons of Israel did so, and some gathered much and some little. 18When they measured it with an omer, he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack; every man gathered as much as he should eat. 19Moses said to them, "Let no man leave any of it until morning." 20But they did not listen to Moses, and some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul; and Moses was angry with them. 21They gathered it morning by morning, every man as much as he should eat; but when the sun grew hot, it would melt.

Here people gathered as much as they wanted to. But when they measured it, it came to just one Omer. Like cotton candy, it just shrank! Also, this man(na) had to be finished in one day. Moses told them not to keep it the next day. But curious Georges did not listen. They kept it overnight, and it bred worms and became spoilt. The Israelites learned their lessons. We can see the beginning of Israel's disobedience! They started picking manna up every morning. Once the day becomes warm the manna melted away.

Exodus 16:22-26. 22Now on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one. When all the leaders of the congregation came and told Moses, 23then he said to them, "This is what the LORD meant: Tomorrow is a Sabbath observance, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is left over put aside to be kept until morning." 24so they put it aside until morning, as Moses had ordered, and it did not become foul nor was there any worm in it.

25 Moses said, "Eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field.
26 "Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none."

The Lord rained Manna for 6 days, but on the seventh day there was none. Israelites had to pick up double portion of manna on 6th day, and when they kept one portion of it for Sabbath day, the Manna did not become spoilt!

*Exodus 16: 27-30. **27**It came about on the seventh day that some of the people went out to gather, but they found none. **28**Then the LORD said to Moses, "How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My instructions? **29**"See, the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you bread for two days on the sixth day. Remain every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day."
30So the people rested on the seventh day.*

But still some of the Israelites did not listen to Moses. They went out to gather manna on 7th day also. But they did not see any. The Lord was angry. He asked them, how long do you refuse to keep my commandments? We know the answer. This rebellion was just a beginning. The Israelites kept on disobeying till the end, Note the instruction about the Lord's rest here, No man to go out of his place the whole day. He was supposed to spend time with his family alone. Sabbath day is not only a rest day for all, it is a joyful day together with your immediate family alone! I am not sure if the Lord commanded to assemble on Sabbath day. But they did that when the temple came, and they had to offer morning, noon, and evening sacrifices. Jesus went to synagogue on Sabbath, but did this tradition come from the Word of the Lord or man's tradition? Now I am really eager to know the whole Torah to get the right answers!

*Exodus 16:31-36. **31**The house of Israel named it manna, and it was like coriander seed, white, and its taste was like wafers with honey. **32**Then Moses said, "This is what the LORD has commanded, 'Let an omerful of it be kept throughout your generations, that they may see the bread that I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.'" **33**Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar and put an omerful of manna in it, and place it before the LORD to be kept throughout your generations."
34As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the Testimony, to be kept. **35**The sons of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate the manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. **36**(Now an omer is a tenth of an ephah.)*

They called this bread from heaven as man(na addition). The manna was like the size of a coriander seed, white in color, tasted like wafers with honey. Num. 11:8 says that it tastes like cake baked in oil. Also in Exodus it is pictured as a soft wafer filled with honey like stuff. But in Numbers it says it is a hard stuff that needs to be ground with mill stone and then baked. Verse 33 to 36 is written by someone who came after Moses who knew about manna that stopped after they entered Israel. God had told Moses to preserve an Omer of Man(na) before His testimony, and later on it was to be kept in the Ark of the Covenant.

Summary:

There are some valuable lessons we can learn from this story of bread from Heaven!

1. Murmuring is no good. It is only due to lack of faith!
2. Our Lord is indeed Jehovah Jireh. He can indeed provide anything, anytime, anywhere! Just trust Him for your needs.
3. These Israelites ate the bread from heaven, and yet died. But Jesus Christ our Lord, came from heaven as bread of eternal life for us, and He that eateth shall never die!

4. Does not matter what quantity they gathered, it all ended up as one Omer per person. No matter how much we try to gather in our life, it is all reduced to our daily bread and daily need. Everything else will melt away.
5. Hoarding is no good. Only moth and rust will eat away our wealth. Wholesalers cannot gather everything and then sell it to others. Oil price is up because big companies are hoarding the oil in big ships! God believes in regulation. One Omer per person!
6. It is ok to gather for our own need but we are not entitled to selfishly enrich ourselves.
7. The food came as a free gift from God. People did not work for it. Be a giver to needy as God is! Don't sneer at the welfare for the needy people.
8. Our earthly toiling is for 6 days only. Rest on 7th day with your family, rejoicing in the Lord!
9. All the Manna is to be eaten up. Don't waste it!
10. We must take effort to go out and gather manna. Likewise, in order to feed on Christ we must meditate on the Word and search the Scriptures and pray daily!

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