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“Mushrooms were so flavoursome for the Pharaoh of Egypt that they decreed mushrooms could only be eaten by royalty and that no commons could even touch them. Thus giving the royal family the entire available supply... Mushrooms can be easily conserved and they have provided additional nutrition for winter.”(46)

It means they used truffles in the winter season when sweet gum was not available as it was seasonal for the summer time.

As Pharaoh of Egypt had specified mushrooms for royalty, the provision to Israelites which were the citizens of second standard was a great mann (Ihsan) for them.

Nevertheless, one point may arise in our minds that if manna was not a single thing, why Israelites got bored. The answer may be that man is instinctively inclined to eat wheat, rice and other vegetables of agriculture. So, by their human instinct they asked for such things.

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shows that they have medicinal importance as well. The plant's habitat is moist soil, if these plants are source of the Qur'anic manna, then the cloud which overshadowed the Israelites should also have showered rain at intervals so that the plants might grow and prosper well. Moreover, a continuous cloud creates a close or sultry weather. If the cloud is there and wind is blowing, it is a source of pleasure for man in the rainy season. If the wind used to blow, the concept of Moldenke that lichen was used as manna seems to be correct.

3. Cloud is a blessing in the summer season but an affliction in winter. It did not overshadow in winter.
4. They used Quails to eat (Qur'an & Bible). If it so, to eat with the bread of lichen is not an astonishing event.
5. Israelites remained in the wilderness for forty years. They needed such type of things, which provided them food, cure from diseases and the food for their animals also. This could be possible if all the above mentioned plants be considered as a source of manna
6. Here the saying of the prophet Muhammad "Truffles are a part of manna." helps us to establish the concept that manna was not a single thing
7. Though biologically, we may claim that manna was a natural plant product but even then, we cannot deny its miraculous nature.
 - a. It did not appear on the day of Sabbath.
 - b. It appeared enough for two days on Fridays
 - c. The manna collected for more than one day expired in four days and manna collected on Fridays did not expire for two days.(Bible Exodus 16:18-27) They did not have to do any struggle for that. The production of so much manna and for so long time is also a miracle. The flying of lichen and its fall on that specific area of Israelites is also a miracle.
8. If they used the truffles as a part of their manna, it was real mann (Ihsan) for Israelites. Consider the reference

made bread from it. Obviously bread can't be made out of any sweet gum and therefore, the mann of 'Numbers' must have been some lichen which, when dried, is very light and can be blown to long distances and can settle down at a certain place. Moldenke has cited the example of great famine of Iran in 1854, when tonnes of the lichen, named *lecanura affinis* rained over the famine area and the people collected, powdered and ate its bread for several days. Some scientists have surveyed the area adjoining the Sahara of Africa and found that this particular lichen occurs there also in abundance and the local tribal people eat its bread whenever there is famine or failure of agricultural crops. He considers it the alga of genus *Nonstoc* which is a gelatinous substance and grows very rapidly during the cool nights but disappears when heated by the morning sun. He states that most probably the Israelites were eating Quails alongwith the manna of above three types. Dr Iqtadar Farooqi comments if Moldenke had read the Qur'an he would have reached this conclusion very easily.(44)

In addition to turanjabin (Alhagi Manna) and Gazangbin (Tamarisk manna) yielding plants, there are still other plant species which yield sweet gum and all of them are termed in English as Manna. For example, the famous plant of south Europe, *Fraxinus ormus* linn. (Family Oleaceae) is a source of commercial manna. Its main producing area in sicily is called gibleman which is a corruption of the Arab name Jabal mann meaning the Hills of manna.(45)

Scientific view also manifests that the manna exists in many forms.

Conclusion:

If we have a clear consideration of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness, the following becomes quite clear.

1. The Israelites were along with their families and animals in the Sinai desert.
2. They needed food to eat, medicine to cure, perfect diet to get energy and also the food for their animals.

Keeping the above facts in mind, we may conclude the plants (Alhagi Manniferra and Tamarisk Manniferra) in spite of providing eatables are a favorite food for the camels. Their description also

Medicinal uses.

Diaphoretic, Diuretic, Expectorant, Laxative

The whole plant is diaphoretic, diuretic, expectorant and laxative. An oil from the leaves is used in the treatment of rheumatism. The flowers are used in the treatment of piles.

ii. **Tamarix Mannifra**

This plant is a member of xerophytes. The plants of this group are the desert plants, differ in the ways they adopt themselves to arid places. Some plants are called xerophytes which means they are able to withstand long dry period of high temperature by conserving the little water that is available. It means the plant is of desert origin. Its actual name is tamarix gallia and due to its mann producing property is called manniferra. Now we may quote here the reference from the article manna from the catholic Encyclopedia.

"Many scholars have identified the Biblical manna with the juice exuded by a variety of tamarix gallia (Tamarix manniferra) when it is pricked by an insect (Coccus manniferra) , and known to the Arabs as "Mann-es-sama" "gift of heaven" or "heavenly manna". Besides being almost pure suger, it could hardly form the chief nourishment of a people for forty years

Moreover the tamarisk manna exudes only at a certain season whereas the Biblical manna did not fall on the Sabbath. Most of these objections also apply to the juice exuded by the camel's thorn (Alhagi Camelorum) which is sometimes considered identical with Biblical manna. Others think they have found the tree manna.

Other think they have found the tree manna in a lichen, lemora esculenta (also known as spharothallia), met within western Asia and North Africa. It easily scales off and being carried away by the wind, sometimes falls in the form of a rain. In times of famine, it is ground and mixed with other substances to make a bread. But this lichen is dry and insipid and processes a little nutritive value.(43)

This discussion shows that besides these two plants another plant (Lenura esculenta) was also used as mann by the Israelites. It is a lichen . This has also been narrated by Moldenke in his book '**Plants of the Bible**'. He says that in Bible it is stated therein that 'Manna' rained from heaven and people collected it and

1. The researchers have mentioned that manna exists in many forms.
2. There are more than one plants responsible for the production of manna.
3. Among other plants two plants have been distinctively identified by the experts.
 - a. Alhagi Maurorum.
 - b. Tamarix Manniferra.

Now it will be tried to find the fact whether these plants exist in desert area and if they exist they would be responsible for the production of manna for the Israelites

1. **Alhagi maurorum.**

“The plant belongs to the family leguminosae having genus Alhagi and species maurorum

- a. **Range:-** W.Asia Caucasus to the Himalayas

- b. **Habitat:-** Edges of ditches, waste land often saline places etc. In turkey. Grows in dry barren areas. The plant prefers light (Sandy) and medium (loamy) soils, requires wet drained soil. It requires dry or moist soil. The details about this plant show that it is not that plant which might be responsible for the production of manna in Sinai desert as its habitat is not the area of Sinai desert. Though the plant is important for its edible parts it may be included in the manna trees but not that one providing sweet gum to the Israelites. It is a good food for camels. Rather, another species of this plant Alhagi manniferra may be called the real manna producing tree as its details also confirm.

2. **Alhogi mannifera (Manna tree)**

- a. **Range:** N. Africa, Egypt to Turkey

- b. **Habitat:** Waste places, dunes of sand. It requires dry or moist soil. It cannot grow in shade. The plant prefers light and medium soil and requires well-drained soil. The plant prefers acid, neutral and basic soils.

Edible uses:

Edible parts: Manna, Root

A sweet-tasting manna is exuded from the twigs at flowering time. It is exuded during hot weather according to one report whilst another says that twigs themselves are chewed, roots cooked. A famine food, it is only used in times of need.

branched shrubs less than 1 m (3 feet) tall and are native to turkey. An edible white honey like substance known as *manna* forms drops on the stem of a tamarisk tree, *tamarix mannifera*. A scale insect either punctures the stem, triggering the exudation, or secretes the manna itself.

The flowering ash or manna ash (*Fraxinus Ormus*), is the source of sugar alcohol, mannitol, which has been used medicinally. The substance is obtained for commercial exploitations by slashing the branches of the tree and collecting the juice that extrudes and hardens. This sweetish material is sold in the form of flakes (flake manna), Fragments (Common manna) and thick dropets (Fat manna).(38)

Manna, a term used to describe

1. various plant exudates and
2. certain Biblical food plants.

One of the better known forms of manna is the exudates of the flowering or manna ash, *Fraxinus ormus*, a tree native to Southern Europe and the Near East. When slits are made in the bark, a sweetish substance oozes. One of its chemical constituents is the higher alcohol, mannitol, which is used medicinally as a mild laxative, in the treatment of certain types of high blood pressure and as a demulcent and expectorant. Two other forms of manna, the gummy exudates from the leaves of the camel's thorn or prickly Alhagi (*Alhagi maurorum*), from the Near East, and the honey like secretion of the manna tamarisk (*Tamarix mannifera*) of the same region, appearing when the tender stems are punctured by a small scale insect.

Two distinct types of manna are referred in the Bible. The manna, which rained down from heaven and served as food for israelites is believed to have been composed of several species of lichen gums *lecanura*. The type of manna in the quotation, "When the sun waxed hot, it melted". (Exodus 16:21) is thought to have been a species of blue green algae *Nostoc*, which rapidly forms large jelly like masses on moist ground".(39)

After studying the scientific investigations, we may conclude that:

But maulana Ameen Ahsan Islahi does not agree to it by saying that it was one of the pleasantries of the of Jews.(36)

Biological View point.

Efforts to recognise manna and its origin have been made. Dr Iqtadar Hussain Farooqi, an Indian botanist has compiled the research in his book "Plants of the Quran" regarding manna.

He says that first of all Abu Rehan Muhammad Albairuni (973 AD-1050AD) presented his research that manna was a natural product of the plant 'Alhaj' in Arabic. He reported that there exist some insects upon the stem of this plant which puncture its stem and a resin oozes out, which is the manna. He also says 'Turanjabin' is the Arabinized version of a persian word 'Tar-Angbin' (Tar means fresh and Angbin means honey). After Al Bairuni in 1822 J.L.Burckhard in his book "Travels through Syria and the holy land" repeated the same informations and confirmed that such plants were found in the land of Palestine and Syria. After the publication of his book two well-known botanists of that time, Ehrenberg and Hemprick, published a report of their survey in 1829 and identified the mann producing insect as coccus manniparus. They had observed that the production of manna by these insects on Sinai trees which they identified as tamarix. Thus by the middle of 19th century it had been proven authentically. Later on it was reported that the tribes living around the Sinai desert used the plant exudates as the source of sweetness.(37)

On the basis of scientific investigations, Dr. Iqtadar Farooqi has concluded that two plants are responsible for the production of manna.

1. Alhagi mauroram
2. Tamarix Manniferra

Almost the sane information has been presented by the writers of the manna articles in the Encylopaedia Britanica and Encylopaedia Americana.

"Manna, in botany, any of a variety of plants and plant products. Manna is the common name of certain lichens of the genus lecanura, native of Turkey, especially L. esculenta. In the middle East lichen bread and manna jelly are made from lecanura. Manna also refers to resins produced by two plants called camel's thorns. (Alhagi maurorum and A. Pseudoalhagi). Both are spiny

“Said bin Zaid narrated: Allah’s apostle (blessing and peace of Allah be upon him) said, “The Kam’a (Truffles i.e. a kind of edible fungus) is the part of manna and its water is a cure for eye troubles”.(28)

While writing the explanatory note on this Hadith, Ibn-e-Hajar accounts, “manna” of Israelites was of many kinds. Among them, one was “truffles”. He strongly condemns the view that manna was only one kind of thing. He says that manna was called mann as it reached Israelites without any effort. He says that truffles were the alternative of bread, quails as meat and sweet gum which was produced on the trees made a complete diet for them”.(29)

Manna and the Holy Bible:

In Bible, manna has been quoted eleven times.

“Then said the lord unto Moses. Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them whether they will walk in my law or not”.(30)

“And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground”.(31)

From the above quoted excerpts, we may conclude that our commentary writers have relied upon the statements of the early people of Islam. Most of the writers have clearly mentioned that it was a natural product that hardened on the plants in the morning time. Manna was not a single thing but it had variety as the Apostle’s saying that the truffles are one part of the manna. Mostly scholars have called it turanjabine and it was sweet in taste. Ibn-e-Hajar emphatically has negated the view that it was a single thing. He clarifies the question created by the Quranic verse:

وَأَذَلْنَا مِمْسِي مِمْسِي لَنْ نَصِيرَ عَلِي طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ (33)

He says that it does not mean that manna was a single thing but it means that they got bored by eating the food (Though having more than one item but) of the same kind for a long time. (34)

The traditional consideration that manna descended from the heaven and it was only one and single thing is not true. It was named mann due to its novelty. As Israelites did not know what it was, so they called it ‘mann’ which in Arabic and Hebrew means ‘What’ or ‘Who’ The Biblical version also proves this view point.(35)

As-Suyuti is of the view that it was like the dew drops and Israelites used to collect it for first five days of the week and on Friday they collected for two days as it had not to be dropped on Saturday.(15)

Suyuti also quotes here Siddi, that it was hardened on the trees of turanjabin.(16)

Allama Ismail Haqqi says, "It was white like the snow and sweet like the honey and it was called mann as Israelites got it without the use of any vigour." (17)

Allama Abi al Abbas Ahmed Ibn Muhammad also calls it a honey like substance, which descended upon the trees. (18)

Ahmed Mustafa al Maraghi is of the view that it was descended upon them from late night to the dawn. He has not mentioned any tree on which it was descended.(19)

Imam Razi has called it turanjabin.(20)

Allama Sana Ullah Panipatti mentions: Most of the writers of Qur'anic commentary have called it turanjabin. Some have called it a thin bread. He quotes Mujahid that manna was like the gum that descended upon the trees and its taste was like the honey.(21)

Ibn-e-Kathir clearly mentions that manna descended for Israelites was descended on the trees. They collected from there and ate it. He also quotes Rabi Ibn Ans that it was a honey like substance which they mixed with water and used to drink. (22)

Sha'abi says," your this honey is 1/70th part of that manna".(23)

If eaten it was an eatable. If mixed with water, it was a drink and if mixed with other things, it became some thing else. However manna mentioned here is not the popular manna known to the people.(24)

Allama Shabbir Ahmed Usmani is of the view that it was like turanjabine in the form of coriander which was showered upon them at night and they used to collect it in the morning.(25)

Mufti Muhammad Shafi says, "It was turanjabin and it was enormously produced on the trees and its enormous production was a grace for Israelites."(26)

Maulana Maudodi declares that it was a natural thing. It was like the seeds of corriander that fell like the dew and hardened on the earth.(27)

Besides Qur'an manna has also been narrated in Hadith.

Ibn-e- Manzoor has narrated,

مَنْ يَمَنَّ مَنَّا: اعتقد عليه مَنَّا وحسبه و قوله عز وجل:

وَأَنَّ لَكَ لَا جُرْأَ غَيْرَ مَمْنُونٍ، جاء في التفسير "غير محسوب" (6)

Therefore, this word has the meaning of countless or innumerable.

مَنْ عَلَيْهِ يَمَنَّ مَنَّا: احسن وانعم والاسم المنّة (7)

Which means that its meaning is reward, grace or favour for some one.

المن كما لظن نجيب... ابن سيده: المن ظل ينزل من السماء وقيل هو طيبه العسل كان ينزل على بني اسرائيل (8)

It means manna was something like "turanjabine" which was sent down for Israelites from the heaven and it was just like honey.

Imam Reghib giving the reference of Qur'anic verse says:

"Al manna means honey dew, it hardened on the leaves of the plants at night." (9)

G.P. Badger has explained:

Manna: The exudation from the حجاج, a thorny tree.(10)

In Al Munjid, it is stated:

من بني اسرائيل: هو الذي انزله الله باعجوبة بالبرية ليقتاتوا به. المن (كل ما ينعم به) عاتية تنعقد على بعض الاشجار

عسلا وتجف حفاف الصمغ (11)

Which means it was a honey-like substance that hardens on certain trees.

Now we see the viewpoint of different scholars regarding manna:

Religious View Point.

To get informed about religious view we may consult Qur'anic commentaries.

Ibn-e-Abbas says manna was sent down upon them on the trees (at night) and the next day they used to collect it and eat as they wished. Mujahid says it was a sweet gum. Ikrama calls it a honey like substance.(12)

Qurtabi says, "it has been named manna as it was provided to them without any struggle. It was sent down upon them from late night to the dawn like the dew."(13)

Aaloosi has also narrated it manna, a thing procured without any effort.(14)

Qur'anic Manna, its sources and their Identification

M.Abid Nadeem*

Introduction.

God has bestowed many blessings upon human beings. He is the Master of the universe. (1) He says, "Is not he who answereth the wronged one when he calls up on Him and removeth the evil, and hath made you viceroys of the earth. Is there any God beside Allah? Little do they reflect. (2) God is the curator of man through thick and thin. In every difficulty, he helps the man out. That is why we say, so help me God. One of the God's blessings upon the Israelites in the wilderness is the dropping of manna. What is manna and what is its identification? Is it a heavenly thing or an earthly one? In this article, it will be tried to reach an exact vision.

Manna in Qur'an.

At three different places, Qur'an has mentioned manna.

1. **و ظللنا عليكم الغمام و انزلنا عليكم المن والسلوى**
 "And we Caused the cloud to over shadow you and sent down on you the manna and the quails" (3)

2. **ولطعمهم اثني عشر سنة اسبانا انما و اوحينا الي موسى اذا استسقى قومك ان اضرب بعضاك الحجر فانفجرت منه اثنا عشر عينا قد علم كل ناس مشربهم وظللنا عليهم الغمام و انزلنا عليهم المن والسلوى كلوا من طيبات ما رزقناكم و ما ظلمونا**

ولكن كانوا انفسهم يظلمون

"And we divided them into twelve tribes, nations. And we inspired Moses, when his people asked him for water, saying: Smite with thy staff the rock!. And there gushed forth therefrom twelve springs, so that each tribe knew their drinking place. And we caused the clouds to overshadow them and sent down for them the manna and the quails (saying): Eat of the good things wherewith we have provided you, they wronged us not, but they were wont to wrong themselves."(4)

3. **يبنى اسرائيل قد اخرجناكم من عدوكم و وعظمتكم جانب الطور الايمن و نزلنا عليكم المن والسلوى**
 "O children of Israel. We delivered you from your enemy, and we made a covenant with you on the right side of the (mount) Toor and we sent down on you the manna and the quails". (5)

For its identification, we first look for its lexical meanings.

English Section

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