

Manna From Heaven

by

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Illustration by Gustave Doré



There are a great many people who would never consider the use of visionary plants to be a spiritual experience. These people believe that spiritual experiences must come directly from God and that the use of visionary plants goes against the teachings of the Bible. Contrary to this notion, the Bible never explicitly prohibits the use of visionary plants or potions. What you will find however, is many curious references to a spiritual food sent down from heaven by God, called manna.

The Bible never tells us exactly what manna was and where it came from, but there are many Old Testament passages which describe its physical qualities and conditions associated with its appearance. The Bible's first reference to manna is in the Book of Exodus as the children of Israel are fleeing from Egypt and following Moses into the wilderness. After six weeks of wandering, they began complaining to Moses that they are tired and hungry. What happens next is truly extraordinary:

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 no (16:4).

And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground (16:14). And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.

When I read this passage, I was struck by the fact that manna easily fits the description of psilocybe

mushrooms. For one thing magic mushrooms are small and round, and since they sprout so rapidly they would seem to appear overnight, as if out of the sky. Also, anyone harvesting them would immediately notice that they turn blue where torn and had no roots, giving more reason to believe that the mushrooms were of celestial origin. Note that manna does not just fall from heaven, but instead it is described as coming with the frost and dew, during the wet seasons. These are the precise weather conditions for mushrooms to thrive. And finally, manna is described as a bread.

Although translations have obscured the intent of this passage, it seems to be a description of how to find and identify manna and distinguish it from other non-psychoactive (or possibly lethal) mushrooms. Look for the small round things which are like bread, come with the rain, and seem to have heavenly (bluish) coloring. Psilocybe mushrooms also sprout in tiny pin heads which branch out in all directions and bear a resemblance to hoar frost.

It is also interesting to note that Moses tells the children of Israel that manna comes directly from Heaven to test them on whether or not they will walk in God's law. Here is evidence that manna was endowed with unusual spiritual powers, like those of magic mushrooms. However, manna does not automatically confer spiritual power. Instead, it serves as a test. Magic mushrooms would provide visionary experiences that would certainly test all who ingested them. Moses also said that the manna is literally the "bread of the lord" which is remarkably similar to the literal Aztec name for psilocybe mushrooms, "flesh of the gods."

But how and why did the manna suddenly appear? Again referring to the Bible, it is clear that the children of Israel had journeyed to a land where there was dew in the morning. As a large, nomadic tribe, the Israelites brought a lot of cattle and sheep together in the area. That meant a great deal of manure. The change of climate from the arid lands of Egypt to the dewy climate of the wilderness created ideal conditions for the propagation and spread of psilocybe mushrooms in livestock dung.

In Exodus 12:19-20, we find more references to manna.

Anyone familiar with wild mushrooms knows that they go bad very quickly and shrivel up under the heat of the sun, exactly like manna.

It seems curious that Moses recognized the manna instantly when the children of Israel showed it to him. He knew that the manna would spoil if it was not picked and eaten in the morning. But how did Moses know about manna? Perhaps Moses knew about manna because he had already encountered the mushroom at the time he saw the burning bush. Referring to an earlier period of his life, we find that Moses:

...kept a flock of Jethro, his father in-law the priest of Midiam: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb (3:1). And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed (3:2).

Had Moses eaten the sacred mushroom while camped at the mountain? Here again we can only speculate that manure from his flock and a change in climate had created the proper environment for the mushrooms to fruit. Perhaps Moses ingested the mushrooms purely by accident, or perhaps his father in law, who we know was also a priest, had introduced Moses to the mushroom. Archaeological evidence of psychedelic mushroom use in Biblical times is well documented by Terence McKenna, so it is reasonable to conclude that Moses could have had some experience with visionary mushrooms.¹

Later, in Numbers 11:6-9, manna is again described in terms that are remarkably similar to magic mushrooms:

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.

Here we find manna described as before our eyes, having a neutral taste like fresh oil, and once again, the Bible mentions that manna appearing in the morning when the dew fell. The Old Testament even tells us what

manna looks like, the manna was as coriander seed, and the colour thereof. When psilocybe mushrooms are dried, their range of colors is virtually identical to dried coriander seed. In both cases, with mushrooms and coriander seeds, we see great similarities in the texture, color, tones, contrasts and general visual appearance. The Children of Israel must have given great thought about how to transmit the appearance of manna so as to aid future generations who might encounter it. However, mushrooms were a mystery to the Hebrews and they were unable to predict where manna could be found. Little did they realize that the manure from their cattle was providing a means for the mushroom to find its way into their mountain campsites.

Notice that the manna was ground in mills or beat it in a mortar. That is odd because earlier we are told that manna was quite delicate and, then the sun wax hot, it melted. However, if manna was the psilocybe mushroom, then it was probably dried and then ground in order to be used for baking. In fact, dried magic mushrooms are quite hard. Grinding or crushing the dried mushroom and then baking with the powder would insure that the delicate psychoactive molecules retained their highest potency.

In the next passage, the Bible describes manna as having light tan color and texture like a wafer, certainly an accurate description of the color and texture of a dried psilocybe mushroom. We also learn that the taste of manna is no longer that of fresh oil but rather that of honey. According to McKenna's research, honey has long been used in Mexico as a preserve medium for psilocybin containing mushrooms. Perhaps the children of Israel had begun to mix honey with the manna to preserve its potency. We find that Moses announced that manna must be kept for future generations:

And the house of Israel called the name there of manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey (16:31). 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 where with I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt (16:32).

Again we are told to fill an omer with manna. But how much is a omer? Isaac Asimov, in his book on the Bible, concludes that an omer is about four liters, while the King James version of the Bible estimates an omer to be six pints. Psilocybe mushrooms are 92% water and only 8% remains when they are dried. Also, fresh mushroom take up a lot of space, due to their shape. So four liters of fresh magic mushrooms would yield less than a tenth of a liter, or about 1/4 cup of dried, powdered manna This corresponds closely with the amount of magic mushrooms required for a moderately strong dose when used for baking. This is important because it clearly shows that not only does manna have similar qualities to magic mushrooms, it also shows that it was also used in the same quantity as mushrooms. So manna matches psilocybe mushroom on both a qualitative and quantitative analysis providing a compelling argument that psilocybe mushrooms are in actuality "manna from Heaven."

Of course there are those who will remain eternally skeptical, but keep in mind that the description of manna given in the old testament bears an exact resemblance to mushrooms. Even if psilocybe mushrooms are not manna the similarities have indicated mushrooms as a possible candidate, and they certainly fit the bill for a "spiritual food". Unfortunately, when the Children of Israel finally reach the arid land of Canaan, the mysterious manna no longer appeared.

And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land: neither had the children of Israel manna any more (Joshua 5:12).

The children of Israel must have been deeply disappointed when they ran out of their sacred manna. We can see that they went to great lengths to preserve their knowledge about identifying and using manna The Old Testament contains detailed information about the color, texture, appearance, and relationship to dew, and the Old Testament even explains how manna is to be ground and then used in baking cakes. If the Israelites thought that manna was a magical event caused by God would they have bothered to note all the details about the identification of manna? What about the manna that Moses said must be put away for future generations? Turning to [Hebrews 9:3-4](#) we find:

And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all: Which had the golden censer and the Ark of the Covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot

that had manna.

Here we learn that manna was to be kept in the Holiest of all, the Ark of the Covenant. Clearly, the manna was something of great spiritual power since the Hebrews treated it with such reverence and even went to such great lengths to see that manna be given to future generations. We must also consider the covenant that the Jewish people held with God which was celebrated through the act of circumcision. Why was this covenant with God associated with the removal of foreskin from infant males. Why not a tattoo, scar, article of clothing or jewelry? Perhaps the answer is that the circumcised penis bears a remarkable resemblance to psilocybe mushroom just before the partial veil has broken away from the mushroom caps and they are at their greatest potency. If the Ark of the Covenant was specifically built to store manna it is logical was also tied to manna through the ritual act of circumcision, which gave each Jewish male his own mushroom-like penis.

The discovery that manna was (and is) psilocybe mushrooms is not simply an issue of theological or academic debate. So great was the power conferred by manna, that this small band of wandering slaves were able to defeat all enemies who crossed their path even when confronted by armies that were bigger and better equipped. Jews, Christians and Moslems can all trace their roots to the children of Israel who ate manna for forty years and saw themselves as God's chosen people. Again, we are reminded of McKenna's thesis that those who ate psilocybe mushrooms had a survival advantage due to better visual acuity, heightened senses, better hunting skills, and for the children of Israel, better warrior skills. Manna gave the Hebrews their own covenant with God one that is even recognized today by Christians who believe that the Jews have already earned a special place as the Chosen People. Bible scholar Grant Jeffrey explains:

"The covenant which God made with Abraham and the kingdom promises to David, Solomon and all the prophets will be finally realized in the Millennial Kingdom... the Lord promised a new covenant with Ismel in which He would give them a new heart, forgiveness of sin, and the infilling of the Spirit to the renewed nation. This promised kingdom will provide the fulfillment of all the hopes and dreams of the Chosen People forever."³

What is the new covenant? It is the rediscovery of manna. Across the gulf of thousands of years the Bible transmits and accurate and detailed description of manna waiting for the time when the message can be decoded and manna can again fulfill its role as a celestial messenger. Manna was the basis of the Jewish covenant with God. Indeed, it is this covenant and the use of manna which has set the Jews apart as the Chosen People. The Bible is not the message, it only points the way. Manna is the holy sacrament that provides the means for God to "prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no."

If manna is indeed the psilocybin mushroom, then this means that the Koran, Bible, and Torah were all inspired by psychedelically induced visions. The very foundations upon which these religions rest were derived from the mushroom experience. Moses and the children of Israel used the mushrooms as true sacraments to communicate with a Higher Power, also known as Allah, God and Yahweh. The discovery that manna is real and is available to us today means that like children of Israel we too can use manna to experience the joy, wisdom and spiritual renewal of the Chosen People.

1. Terence McKenna, *Food of the Gods*, (New York, Harper Collins) p. 84.
2. Terence McKenna, *Food of the Gods*, (New York, Harper Collins), p. 127.
3. Grant R. Jeffrey, *Heaven the last Frontier*, (New York; Bantam), p. 132.