**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

**ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

***MIDRASH* ON THE *PARASHA***

**Dr. Tziporah Lifshitz**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

In memory of my amazing mother Ocotian bat Candelaria z”l
whose yahrzeit is 12 Sivan

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

***Parashat Beha’alotekha*:**

**The Wonders of the Manna**

Over the course of this *shiur*, we will follow the *derashot* of *Chazal* regarding the manna through the Midrashic literature, from the *Sifrei* to *Midrash Tanchuma*, tracing the conceptual trends that emerge from their words.

***Sifrei***

The Torah offers a lengthy description of the manna in our *parasha*:

We remember the fish, which we were wont to eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic.

But now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all; our eyes gaze upon nothing but this manna.

Now the manna was like coriander seed, and to the eye it appeared like bdellium.

The people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in mortars, and cooked it in pots, and made cakes of it; and its taste was like that of a cake baked with oil.

And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it. (*Bamidbar* 11:5-9)

Unit I

The *Sifrei* expands here upon the issue of the manna in five units of *derashot.*[[1]](#footnote-1) The first unit opens by relating to the tendency of these verses to praise the manna against the background of Israel's complaints:[[2]](#footnote-2)

"There is nothing at all; our eyes gaze upon nothing but this manna.” Do you think that one who said this [complaint] said that [praise in the following verses]? Certainly, whoever said this did not say that!

Rather, Israel said: "Our eyes gaze upon nothing but this manna," and God convinced all who come into the world, by saying to them: Come and see what they complain about to Me: "Now the manna was like coriander seed, and to the eye it appeared like bdellium." This is like what is stated: "And the gold of that land is good; there is bdellium and the onyx stone" (*Bereishit* 2:12). (*Sifrei Beha'alotekha* 89)

Unit II

The *Sifrei* continues with an exposition of the words of the verses, while detailing the virtues of the manna. We will examine the following eight *derashot* which constitute the second unit (1-8):

1. One would go out and gather his provisions and the provisions of his household, and afterwards: "As the sun grew hot, it melted" (*Shemot* 16:21).
2. "And ground it in mills" (*Bamidbar* 11:8).

But surely it never went into a mill! Rather this indicates that it was transformed for them into anything that is ground in a mill.

1. "Or beat it in mortars."

But surely it never went into a mortar! Rather this indicates that it was transformed for them into anything that is beaten in a mortar.

1. You might say that it was only transformed into these things.

From where do you say that all forty years that Israel was in the wilderness, a woman did not need any kind of perfume, but rather she adorned herself with the manna?

Therefore, the verse states: "beat," "or beat."

And it is stated: "These forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing" (*Devarim* 2:7).

This indicates that they lacked nothing.

1. "And cooked it in pots."

But surely it never went into a pot! Rather, this indicates that it was transformed for them into anything that is cooked in a pot.

1. "And made cakes of it.”

But surely it never went into the oven! Rather this indicates that it was transformed for them into anything that is baked in an oven.

1. You might say that it was only transformed into these things.

From where [do you say that it was transformed into] the rest of the things that are gathered in the field?

Therefore the verse states: "gathered," "and gathered."

This may be likened to a man who said: I wish to eat grapes, I wish to eat figs.

1. "And its taste was like that of a cake (*leshad*) baked with oil" (ibid.).

This is an acronym,[[3]](#footnote-3) with one word standing for three: dough (***l****ayish*), oil (***sh****emen*) and honey (***d****evash*) [the initial letters of which form the word *leshad*].

Like a dough molded into cake with oil and smoothed with honey.

This is the way the manna was created, and this is the way the worthy members of Israel would eat it.

(*Sifrei Beha'alotekha* 89)

The first *derasha* relates to the time when the manna would fall and be gathered, that it was before the heat of the day, for the sake of Israel's comfort and convenience; while *derashot* 2-7 relate to the nature of the manna as a versatile food, that include all types of ground, cooked and baked foods and fresh fruits and vegetables.

The eighth *derasha* relates to the taste of raw manna, as a sweet and oily delicacy (like Turkish baklava), which is hinted at the by the word *leshad*, which is comprised of the initial letters of the words for [kneaded] dough (*layish*), oil (*shemen*) and honey (*devash*). The verse here explicitly states: "And its taste was like that of a cake baked with oil"; the mention of honey is based on the description of the manna in *Shemot* 16:31: "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."

The fourth *derasha* points to another use of the manna as women's perfume, needed to ensure the continuation of marital life throughout Israel's stay in the wilderness. This exposition, which concludes with a verse from the Book of *Devarim*, "These forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing," alludes to the manna as the source of many things that the Jewish people require in the wilderness, but its mechanism is not explicitly laid out.

Unit III

In the third unit (9-12), the *Sifrei* continues with four *derashot* about the manna revolving around the issue of breastfeeding, which are based on an exposition of the word *leshad* in the verse as relating to a woman's breasts (*shadayim*):

1. Another explanation: "And its taste was like that of a cake baked with oil.

Just as a breast is the main thing for an infant, and everything else is secondary to it, so the manna was the main thing for Israel, and everything else was secondary to it.

1. Another explanation: Just as a breast, even if the infant nurses from it all day long, it does not cause him injury, so too the manna, even if Israel would eat from it all day long, it would not cause them injury.
2. Another explanation: Just as a breast is of one kind, and it transforms into many kinds, so the manna would be transformed for Israel into anything that they wanted.

This may be likened to one who says to a woman: Do not eat garlic or onion because of the infant.

1. Another explanation: Just as a breast, the infant is distressed to part from it, so Israel were distressed when they parted from the manna. As it is stated: "And the manna ceased on the morrow" (*Yehoshua* 5:12).

This may be likened to those who say to a person: Why do you eat barley bread? And he says to them: Because I do not have wheat bread. Why do you eat carobs? Because I do not have dried figs.

In the same way, if Israel had kept that handful they collected on the day that Moshe died, from which they had eaten for forty years, they would not have wanted to eat from the produce of Eretz Israel.

The all-encompassing nature of breastfeeding for the infant, nursing standing at the center of its universe; the dimension of time everlasting, which permits no injury; mother's milk as a victual that includes the essences of many foods that the mother eats; the difficulty of weaning — all of these elements contribute to the picture of Israel's eating of the manna as an initial and vital stage in the nation’s development as God's people. The foundations of a nursing infant’s existence and security are laid by way of the manna. God is portrayed as Israel's mother, and the manna as the point of connection between the people and God. The *derasha* removes the manna from the category of food and turns it into a continuous experience that establishes Israel's essence and identity at the deepest level.

The manna accompanies the Israelites from the beginning of their journey in the wilderness (*Shemot* 16). The day will come when this stage will end, and the people of Israel will have to move on to the next stage, to detach themselves from their mother and face reality while standing on their own feet. Thus, the fourth element of this part of the *derasha* relates to their entry into Eretz Israel.

This daring *derasha* has biblical supports, near and far. It echoes Moshe's call, "Did I conceive this people or give birth to them, so that You would tell me to carry them in my bosom like a wet nurse carries a suckling baby to the land that You promised to their forefathers?" (*Bamidbar* 11:12), in reaction to Israel's desires and their rejection of the manna in this very chapter.

The image of nursing appears again in relation to God's governance of His people in Eretz Israel in the Song of *Ha'azinu*: "He made him ride on the high places of the earth, and he did eat the fruitage of the field; and He made him to suck honey out of the crag, and oil out of the flinty rock" (*Devarim* 32:13).

It is found also in the description of David's relationship with God (*Tehillim* 131):

A Song of Ascents; of David. Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in things too great, or in things too wonderful for me.

Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with his mother; my soul is with me like a weaned child.

Israel puts its hope in the Lord, now and forever.

All of these sources express the intimacy, the primacy, and the absolute dependence of the individual or the nation upon God.

Should this *derasha* about the manna be read in connection to the context of the expounded verses — in the very heart of the verses that describe a "civil uprising" against it on the part of the people of Israel? Do these *derashot* temper the severity of their actions, or perhaps just the opposite?

Unit IV

The fourth unit of *derashot* in the *Sifrei* continue with praise for the manna, while focusing on the aesthetic dimension:

"And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it" (***Bamidbar***11:9).

This teaches that the manna would fall upon the thresholds and the doorposts.

Or perhaps say: Since it would fall on the thresholds and the doorposts, did they eat it soiled and dirty?

Therefore the verse states: "Behold upon the face of the wilderness a fine, scale-like thing, fine as the hoar-frost on the ground" (*Shemot* 16:14).

First hoar-frost would fall… and the manna would fall on it.

And from there Israel would gather and eat it.

That is below, but above, perhaps, there were insects and flies lying on it?

Therefore the verse (ibid.) states: "And when the layer of dew was gone up.”

This teaches that it rested as if placed inside a chest.

And they would read the *Shema* and pray,

And a person would leave through the door of his house and gather his provisions and the provisions of his household,

And afterwards: "As the sun grew hot, it melted."

The manna arrives packaged, pure and fresh — just like the food in a modern-day supermarket. The meticulousness described here reflects the respect that the *Sifrei* has for man's aesthetic sensibilities, which reflect the beauty of the human soul and heavenly source of the manna.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Unit V

The fifth unit of the *Sifrei*'s *derashot* about the manna deals with its spiritual influence on Israel's faith and prayers:

Similarly, Rabbi Shimon said:

Why didn't the manna come down for Israel once a year?

So that they would turn their hearts to their Father in Heaven.

To what may this be likened?

To a king who decreed that his son should be granted a stipend once a year, and [the son] would greet his father only when he received his stipend.

One time he decreed that he should receive his stipend every day.

The son said: Even if I greet my father only when I receive my stipend, that is enough for me.

So too Israel.

A person who had five males or five females in his house would sit and wait and say:

Alas, perhaps the manna will not fall tomorrow, and we will die of hunger. May it be Your will that it falls.

And it turned out that they turned their hearts toward Heaven.

Similarly, Rabbi Dostai be-Rabbi Yosei said: Why didn't God create hot springs in Jerusalem like the hot springs in Tiberias?

So that one person not say to his fellow: Let us go up to Jerusalem, for even if we go up for only one bathing, that would be enough for us.

Then it would turn out that the ascent was not for its own sake.

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's *derasha* relates to the image of nursing, which also deals with the relationship between God and His people; but unlike that previous image, the manna appears here not as a foundational element, but as an educational tool. The *Sifrei* moves from the mother-infant relationship to the father who worries about his children and lifts his eyes to God to support them; from the subconscious to the conscious. Perhaps, the *Sifrei* alludes to two processes that take place simultaneously in the formation of the nation's personality.

Another dimension found in this *derasha* is the uncertainty about tomorrow. Will the miracle continue, or will the children die of hunger? Perhaps the image of breastfeeding contains within it a historical perspective in relation to the generation of the wilderness, whereas the words of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai illuminate the day-to-day existential perspective, which entertains doubts and questions.

The *Sifrei* concludes with the statement of Rabbi Dostai be-Rabbi Yosei.[[5]](#footnote-5) His words are an expansion of Rabbi Shimon's *derasha*, but instead of noting the dependency, the need and the prayer for food as creating and fashioning a connection to God in the wilderness, Rabbi Dostai notes the need to distinguish the refinement of the body from the refinement of the spirit. In the reality of life in Eretz Israel, man is open to luxuries (the hot springs of Tiberias), but he must not confuse them with the climactic spiritual experience of the people in Jerusalem, which also departs from the normal routine of life.

The *Sifrei* lists a total of fourteen points of praise for the manna: eight in the second unit, four in the third unit, one in the fourth unit and one in the fifth unit. The praise relates to its timing, taste, variety, availability, and aesthetics; its emotional, spiritual and educational significance; and other matters. From all of them emerges God's great love for the people of Israel.

***Pesikta* *de-Rav Kahana***

The Amoraic *derasha* in *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* expands upon the tendency found in the *Sifrei*, that the manna expresses God's great love for His people:

Another explanation: "I am the Lord, your God" (*Shemot* 20:2)…

Rabbi Yosei be-Rabbi Chanina said: The command would reach each and every person in accordance with his faculties.

Do not be amazed by this, for the manna would fall for Israel, [and] each and every person would taste it in accordance with his faculties: the infants in accordance with their faculties, the youths in accordance with their faculties, the adults in accordance with their faculties.

The infants in accordance with their faculties; just as this infant would suckle at his mother's breasts, so he would taste it; as it is stated: "And its taste was like that of a cake (*leshad*)baked with oil.”

And the youths in accordance with their faculties, as it is stated: "My bread also which I gave you, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed you" (*Yechezkel* 16:19).

And the adults in accordance with their faculties, as it is stated: "And the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.”

Just as the manna, each person tasted it in accordance with his faculties, so the commandment, each person heard it in accordance with his faculties.

(*Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* 12, 25)

Rabbi Chanina, a first-generation Amora from Eretz Israel, learns from the manna about the nature of God's revelation to the people at Mount Sinai. God's closeness is not harsh or threatening, but rather immersed in lovingkindness. This finds expression in the satisfaction that is precisely tailored to each individual's needs and abilities. The parallel between the manna and the Ten Commandments strengthens the spiritual meaning of the manna as an instrument for establishing a solid relationship between the entire nation and God.

Nursing appears in this *derasha* only in relation to infants, and not as a general characteristic relevant to the entire people.

**The Babylonian Talmud**

The Babylonian Talmud contains additional statements in praise of the manna, most of which are attributed to Amoraim of Eretz Israel:

"The cucumbers and the melons."

Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Assi [disagreed]:

One said: They found in the manna the taste of every kind of food, but not the taste of these five [foods mentioned in the verse: cucumbers, melons, et cetera].

The other said: Of all kinds of food they felt both taste and substance, but of these the taste only without the substance.

"Now the manna was like *gad* (coriander) seed."

Rabbi Assi said: [It was] round like a seed [of coriander] and white like a pearl.

Our Rabbis taught: "*Gad*" — the manna resembled the seed of flax in its capsules.

Others say: "*Gad*" — it was like a tale (*haggada*), which draws the heart of man, even like water.

Another [*baraita*] taught: "*Gad*" — because it revealed (*maggid*) to Israel whether the child was one of nine months’ pregnancy from the first husband, or of seven months’ [pregnancy] from the second.[[6]](#footnote-6)

"White" — because it whitened the sins of Israel.

It was taught: Rabbi Yosei said: Even as the prophet would tell Israel what is to be found in clefts or holes so would the manna reveal to Israel what is to be found in clefts or holes.

How so? If two men came before Moshe with a lawsuit, one saying: You stole my servant, the other saying: You sold him to me, Moshe would say to them: Tomorrow judgment will be pronounced. Tomorrow, then: If [the slave's] *omer* [measure of manna] was found in the house of his first master, it was evidence that the other one had stolen him; if it was found in the house of his second master, that was proof that the former had sold him to the latter.

Similarly, if a man and a woman came before Moshe with a lawsuit, he saying: She acted offensively against me, and she asserting: He acted offensively against me, Moshe would say to them: Tomorrow judgment will be pronounced. On the morrow: If her *omer* was found in her husband's house, that was proof that she had acted offensively, but if it was found in her father's house, that was evidence that he had acted offensively towards her.

It is written: "And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it," and it is also written: "And the people shall go out and gather," and it is written too: "The people went about and gathered it."

How could all of that be true?

To the righteous it fell in front of their homes; the average folk went out and gathered; whereas the wicked ones had to go about to gather it.

It is written: "bread," and it is written, "[dough of] cakes," and it is written, "they ground it."

How so?

The righteous received it as bread, the average Israelites as [dough of] cakes, and the wicked ones had to grind it in the hand mill.

"Or beat it in mortars." Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav, or as some say, Rabbi Chama be-Rabbi Chanina said: That teaches that there came down to Israel with the manna the cosmetics for women, i.e., a thing that is ground in a mortar.

"And cooked it in pots." Rabbi Chama said: This intimates that with the manna there came down to Israel the ingredients for pudding [= spices].

"And they brought yet to him freewill-offerings every morning" (*Shemot* 36:3). What does "every morning" mean? Rabbi Shemuel bar Nachmani said in the name of Rabbi Yonatan: Of those things which came down every morning. This teaches that, together with the manna, there came down to Israel precious stones and pearls.

As it is stated: "And *ha-nesi'im* brought the onyx stones" (ibid. 35:27). And it was taught: Literal *nesi'im* [i.e. clouds], and so it is stated (*Mishlei* 25:14): "As clouds [*nesi'im*] and winds, without rain."

"And its taste was like that of a cake baked with oil." Rabbi Abbahu said: Just as the infant finds very many flavors in the breast, so also did Israel find many a taste in the manna as long as they were eating it. There are some who say: Literal *leshad* [i.e., a demon]. Just as the demon (*sheid*) changes into many colors, so did the manna change into many tastes.

(BT *Yoma* 75a-b)

This aggadic discussion is comprised of three parts. The *derashot* brought in the first part relate to the taste and form of the manna; the third part relates to other things that come down with the manna: perfume, spices, precious stones and pearls. In both of these parts, Tannaitic traditions are combined with other traditions or reported by Amoraim. The second part is different from all that we have seen in the aggadic literature of Eretz Israel — the manna would reveal people's hidden secrets. Rabbi Yosei's *derasha* veers from the prevailing conception running though Rabbinic literature that the manna's virtues express God's love for Israel.

***Midrash Tanchuma***

The last and latest source that we will bring here is *Midrash Tanchuma* (Buber), which preserves the aforementioned conceptual tendency — that the main point of the manna is the wellbeing of Israel, expanding the descriptions to fantastic proportions:

Zavdi ben Levi said:

The manna would fall to a height of two thousand cubits every day.

And it would stay for four hours.

When the sun would shine upon it, it would melt, and turn into rivers that would flow and go down.

For whom was it prepared now? For the righteous in the World to Come.

Whoever believed merited to eat of it.

And whoever did not believe, "He shall not look upon the rivers, [the flowing streams of honey and curd]" (*Iyov* 20:17).

When it would go down into the rivers, the nations of the world would come to drink from it,

and it turned in their mouths to coriander and wormwood.

As it is stated: "Now the manna was like coriander seed" (*Bamidbar* 11:7).

But for Israel it would turn in their mouths into honey.

As it is stated: "And the taste of it was like wafers made with honey" (*Shemot* 16:31).

Rabbi Yehuda Ha-Levi bar Shalom said:
The manna would fall for Israel every day in the amount of food for two thousand years, and it was sixty cubits high.

Regarding the flood, [it is stated]: "On the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up" (*Bereishit* 7:11).

And it is written in connection with the manna: "And He commanded the skies above, and opened the doors of heaven" (*Tehillim* 78:23).

The door has four windows.

And it is written: "Keeping mercy [to the thousandth generation]" (*Shemot* 34:7).

And it is written (ibid.): "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers [upon the children and upon the children's children, to the third and to the fourth generation]."

From here [we learn] that the measure of goodness is five hundred times greater than the measure of punishment.

Through the two windows that opened during the flood all that rain fell for twelve months.

And here it is written: "And He opened the doors of heaven."

From here [we learn] that the manna would fall every day in the amount of food for two thousand years.

The nations of the world could not taste it,

as it was in their mouths like bitter sinews.

What did they do?

They would hunt a deer that would drink of it,

and taste through it the taste of manna.

And they would say: Happy is that nation that is in such a situation!

Rabbi Yosei bar Chanina said:

Not as an adult would taste it did an infant taste it.

How so?

The infants would taste it as having the taste of milk.

As it is stated: "And its taste was like that of a cake [*leshad*] baked with oil.”

And the youths would taste it as honey.

As it is stated: "And the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.”

And the adults would taste it as bread.

As it is stated: "Behold, I will cause to rain bread from heaven for you.”

And a sick person would taste it as flour mixed with oil and honey, like barley that is made for a sick person. As it is stated: "And cooked it in pots.”

And from where [do we know] that it had the taste of flour and honey?

As it is stated: "My bread also which I gave you, fine flour, and oil, and honey.”

Everybody would taste it in accordance with his faculties.

As it is stated: "And the people shall go out and gather."

And the average people would go out to the door of their tents and gather [manna].

And the lazy would lie down, and open their hands, and the manna would fall into their hands.

As it is stated: "And when the layer of dew was gone up" (*Shemot* 16:14).

"A fine, scale-like thing (*mechuspas*)" (ibid.).

Bar Kappara asked: What is *mechuspas*?

Bread that was stored in two hundred and forty eight parts of the human body, the numerical value of the letters in the word *mechuspas*.

*Mem* is forty, *chet* is eight, *samekh* is sixty, *peh* is eighty, *samekh* is sixty — together, two hundred and forty-eight.

This corresponds to the two hundred and forty-eight parts of the human body.

As it is stated: "[Man did eat] the bread of the mighty" (*Tehillim* 78:25). Read not: the bread of the mighty (*abirim*), but rather: the bread of the body parts (*eivarim*).

The ministering angels would grind the manna,

and it would go down to Israel and they would eat it.

And nobody would have to move their bowels,

as it was stored in their body parts.

This is "the bread of the mighty" — the bread of the body parts.

(*Midrash Tanchuma* [Buber], *Beshalach* 21)

Rav Saadia Gaon, in the introduction to *Emunot Ve-deiot*, points to the falling of manna as the greatest miracle of all, owing to its constancy over forty years. The Sages point out that the significance of the manna goes way beyond Israel's physical needs in the wilderness. The central meaning of the manna is the fact that God takes care of us and loves us.

The simplest things in our lives are also the most significant. Let us look to them and appreciate all the good that we have been privileged to receive.

(Translated by David Strauss)

1. These *derashot* are found also in their entirety in *Sifrei Zuta* 11, 6-9. The main difference between them is the additional short *derashot* that appear at the end of the fifth unit, between the *derasha* of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and the *derasha* of Rabbi Dostai (which is reported in *Sifra Zuta* in the name of Rabbi Yosei ben Yehuda): "Another explanation: So that one eat it fresh. Another explanation: Because it would be burdensome while traveling." These *derashot* are additional answers to Rabbi Shimon's question: "Why didn't the manna come down for Israel once a year?" See our comments below about the fifth unit in the *Sifrei.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The *derasha* contrasts the evil eye of Israel — "Our eyes (*eineinu*) gaze upon nothing but this manna" — with the manna, which "to the eye it appeared like (*eino ke-ein*) bdellium." [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See ed. Horowitz, p. 89, note 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This perception is typical of the Tannaim. For an expanded discussion, see Tziporah Lifshitz, "Beauty as a Value in Rabbinic Literature," Ph.D. dissertation, Bar-Ilan University (2015), pp. 105-112. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Four Tannaim bear this name: Rabbi Dostai bar Mattun, Rabbi Dostai of Bei Yesheivav, Rabbi Dostai bar Yehuda, and Rabbi Dostai bar Yannai. The last three are members of the fifth generation. In MS London and Yalkut Shimoni, the reading is: "Rabbi Dostai bar Yannai"; see ed. Horowitz, p. 90. Unless specified otherwise, Rabbi Yosei is Rabbi Yosei ben Chalafta, a Tanna of the fourth generation, a disciple of Rabbi Akiva. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Maharsha, in his *Chiddushei Aggadot*, ad loc., writes:

“It revealed to Israel whether the child was one of nine months’ pregnancy” — according to this, the words “*ke-zera gad”* mean that it reveals (*maggid*) of whose seed (*zera*) is this child, whether of a nine months' pregnancy, et cetera. According to this, “‘White’ — because it whitened the sins of Israel” means that when there is a doubt whether a child was one of nine months’ pregnancy from the first husband, or of seven months’ [pregnancy] from the second, it is likely that they will come to sin… For this reason they enacted a three-month waiting period for all women, lest the child marry his paternal sister, and the manna whitens this sin from Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)