

[8] You should only eat *bread* to satiety: Allegorically, bread signifies the *exoteric* dimension of the Torah, its laws and lessons for life; meat signifies the *esoteric* dimension of the Torah, its teachings regarding the inner workings of the universe and the spiritual life of the soul. Quail meat is especially fatty, and oil/fat is another metaphor for the esoteric dimension of the Torah; quail meat thus represents the most spiritual secrets of the Torah. As a form of *meat*, quail meat signifies these sublime secrets becoming "digestible," i.e., taking on a form in which they can be understood, applied, and appreciated.

True, manna also descended from heaven, and therefore also signifies the inner dimension of the Torah, but since it is a form of *bread*, it more precisely signifies how the inner dimension of the Torah is felt within the study of the exoteric dimension of the Torah. The quails allude to the inner dimension of the Torah itself.

This explains why everyone received equal portions of manna, just as the laws and lessons of the Torah apply to all equally. The quails, however, "covered the camp"—there was no specific quantity per person, for each of us plumbs the depths of the inner dimension of the Torah differently—quantitatively and qualitatively—in accordance with our spiritual disposition.

For this reason, too, the manna did not fall on the Sabbath, for on the Sabbath we are intended to devote ourselves almost exclusively to the spiritual life, whereas the quails *began* to descend for the first time not only on the Sabbath but at apex of the Sabbath, its most sublime moment, Sabbath afternoon.

The Jews had plenty of cattle, so when they asked for meat and God rebuked them for asking for what they already had, it is clear that they were asking for *red* meat. Allegorically, this means that they sought to understand the inner dimension of the Torah with even their "animal" minds,

the intellect of the animal-part of their personalities, which is normally occupied with devising ways to satisfy material needs (or perceived needs). This may be praiseworthy, but it is also problematic. Trying to translate the sublime insights of the esoteric dimension of the Torah directly into terms intelligible to the mundane animal intellect runs the risk of oversimplifying and de-spiritualizing the message.

God therefore gave the people quail meat—a more refined type of meat than red meat—indicating that they should first assimilate the Torah's inner dimension into the intellect of the *Divine* aspect of their personalities.

God also chastised the Jews for asking for meat because it is possible to live without meat altogether. The lesson here is that, indeed, that generation—who witnessed the great miracles of the Exodus and the giving of the Torah and were taught by Moses himself—could get along without "meat," i.e., without delving into the inner dimension of the Torah. But, with the passage of time, the memory of the revelations which that generation experienced recedes into history and it becomes increasingly imperative to bolster the weak spiritual health of the people with "fatty meat," the successively more explicit revelations of the inner dimension of the Torah tailored to the needs of each generation.⁸⁶