

Be-Shallakh: Exodus 16:1-36

Manna from Heaven

Rashi

v.4 *Each day that day's portion* means the portion that they need for that day. But they shall not gather the portion that they need for the next day. *Whether they will follow My instructions* means whether they will keep the commandments concerning the manna: that they not leave any over until morning and that they not go out on the Shabbath to gather it.

v.5 *It shall prove to be double* means for that day and for the next. After they bring it in, *it shall prove to be double* — they will find that it measures twice as much as they are used to gathering on the other days of the week. I think *they gathered double the amount* (v.22) means that what they gathered was found to be double when they brought it back and measured it. *He gives you two day's food on the sixth day* (v.29) in order to put a blessing in your house, to fill the omer twice.

v.6 *By evening you shall know it was the LORD who brought you out from the land of Egypt* seems unnecessary because according to 14:31, they already "had faith" in the LORD. But apparently many of them did not actually know the truth, for they said in v.3 that it was Moses and Aaron who had brought them out of Egypt.

Ramban

Whether they will follow My instructions. Rashi's comment is incorrect. *He subjected you to the hardship of hunger and then gave you manna to eat, which neither you nor your fathers had ever known, in order to teach you that man does not live on bread alone, but that man may live on anything that the LORD decrees* (Deut. 8:3). The test was to see whether they would go into a place where they had no food and no idea how to get any, where they were dependent on something they were totally unfamiliar with, of which they could get no more than a day's worth at a time. As Deut. 8:2 says, *Remember the long way that LORD your God has made you travel in the wilderness these past forty years, that He might test you by hardships to learn what was in your hearts: whether you would keep His commandments or not.* God could have led them by way of the local cities; instead he led them *through the great and terrible wilderness with its seraph serpents and scorpions* (Deut. 8:15) so He could provide them with manna and they would believe in Him forever. I have already explained the concept of testing in my comments to Gen. 22:1.

Maimonides (Guide 3:24) explains *that I may thus test them* to mean *in order that everyone should consider this and should see whether being devoted to His service is useful and sufficient or not sufficient*; but to convey that meaning the text ought to have said, *that they may thus test me*.

Abrabanel

v.4 It only came in daily portions to warn them not to try and turn it into a commodity.

Magid of Mezrich

v.4 The manna was a test of every single one, to see whether or not he really feared God, because not to have any problems of sustenance and still to fear God is a much greater test than to be poor and to believe in God.

S'forno

v.4 This will test them if, when receiving their food without effort they will take care to keep my commandments, seeing that they will not have any excuses not to.

Rashbam

v.4 The trial consisted in the fact that the people had to look to God on a **daily** basis for their immediate food supplies. This experience would lead them to believe in God and walk in His Torah.

Yoma 76a

His disciples asked R. Simeon b. Yohai, "How come the manna did not come down to the Israelites only once a year?"

He said to them, "Let me tell you a parable: to what is the matter to be compared? It is like the case of a mortal king who has one son. He arranged an allowance for him once a year, and the son greeted his father only once a year. The father went and gave him his allowance day by day, and the son greeted the father every day. So too with Israel, he who had four or five children would worry about them and say, 'Maybe manna won't come down tomorrow, and all of them will die of famine. So it turned out that all of them directed their hearts to their father in heaven.

Or perhaps, they would then eat it hot.

Or perhaps, it was because of the trouble of transporting it.