

Testing the People with Manna

In this weeks reading, from [Parashat Beshalach](#) (*Shemot / Exodus 13:17-17:16*), Pharaoh finally lets the people go into the wilderness to worship the Lord God of heaven. We are told the Lord led the people by a pillar of cloud during the day and pillar of fire by night. What is interesting about the narrative is that the pillar of cloud/fire appeared relatively quickly as the people left Egypt, this is in the absence of the Tabernacle at this time, and demonstrates the presence of God in the midst of His people at the very beginning of their journey. The Lord hardens Pharaoh's heart ([14:4-9](#)) and his army follows the children of Israel to the Red Sea. The Lord provides a way of salvation for His people and divides the sea so the people could cross on dry land ([14:15-22](#)). The Egyptian army pursued Israel and the Lord destroys the army ([14:23-31](#)). The people sing a song led by Miriam exalting the Name of the Lord ([15:1-22](#)). The people travel to Marah and the Scriptures say Lord tested them there ([15:23-26](#)). The people travel to Elim where there were twelve springs and seventy date palms ([15:27](#)). They then travel to the wilderness of Sin (מִדְבַּר-סִין) and the people grumbled against Moshe and Aaron because there was no food ([16:1-3](#)). The Lord gives the people bread in the morning and meat in the evening to eat ([16:5-16](#)). The command to rest on the Sabbath is given with the instructions on how to gather the Manna during the end of the week ([16:17-30](#)), this was a test of obedience. The people journeyed slowly to the mountain of Sinai, arriving at Rephidim where there was no water to drink ([17:1-3](#)). The people complained again about leaving Egypt ([17:4](#)), the Lord commands Moshe to strike the rock to make water for the people ([17:5-7](#)). Amalek fights against Israel and the Lord declares that He will blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.

Note something about the reading in this week, how the Lord gave the manna for the purpose of testing the people whether they would walk according to His Torah (instruction) or not. In addition, note how Yeshua singles out the manna in the Torah as a reference to himself as coming down from heaven. This suggests obedience is tied to this notion of the manna, of testing the faithfulness of a person, and to Yeshua the Messiah.

ספר שמות פרק טז

א ויסעו מאילם ויבאו כל-עדת בני-ישראל אל-מדבר-סין אשר בין-אילם ובין סיני בחמשה עשר יום לה' השני לצאתם מארץ מצרים: ב וילינו [וילינו] כל-עדת בני-ישראל על-משה ועל-אהרן במדבר: ג ויאמרו אליהם בני ישראל מי-יתן מותנו ביד-יהוה בארץ מצרים בשבתנו על-סיר הבשר באכלנו לחם לשבע כן-הוצאתם אתנו אל-המדבר הזה להמית את-כל-הקהל הזה ברעב: ד ויאמר יהוה אל-משה הנני ממטיר לכם לחם מן-השמים ויצא העם ולקח טו דבר-יום ביומו למען אנסנו הילך בתורתי אם-לא: ה והיה ביום הששי והכינו את אשר-יביאו והיה משנה על אשר-ילקטו יום | יום: ו ויאמר משה ואהרן אל-כל-בני ישראל ערב וידעתם כי יהוה הוציא אתכם מארץ מצרים: ז ובקר וראיתם את-כבוד יהוה בשמעו את-תלנתיכם על-יהוה ונחננו מה כי תלנו [תלינו] עלינו: ח ויאמר משה בתת יהוה לכם בערב בשר לאכל ולחם לבקר לשבע בשמע יהוה את-תלנתיכם אשר-אתם מלינם עליו ונחננו מה לא-עלינו תלנתיכם כי על-יהוה: ט ויאמר משה אל-אהרן אמר אל-כל-עדת בני ישראל קרבו לפני יהוה כי שמע את תלנתיכם: י והיה כדבר אהרן אל-כל-עדת בני-ישראל ויפנו אל-המדבר והנה כבוד יהוה נראה בעיני:

Shemot / Exodus 16:1-10

16:1 Then they set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the sons of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt. 16:2 The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 16:3 The sons of Israel said to them, 'Would that we had died by the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.' 16:4 Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction. 16:5 'On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.' 16:6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the sons of Israel, 'At evening you will know that the Lord has brought you out of the land of Egypt; 16:7 and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, for He hears your grumblings against the Lord; and what are we, that you grumble against us?' 16:8 Moses said, 'This will happen when the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening, and bread to the full in the morning; for the Lord hears your grumblings which you grumble against Him. And what are we? Your grumblings are not against us but against the Lord.' 16:9 Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Say to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, 'Come near before the Lord, for He has heard your grumblings.' 16:10 It came about as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. (NASB)

The Torah tells us in *Shemot / Exodus 16*, that the children of Israel traveled from place to place, and then grumbled because of their bellies. In response to this the Lord says to Moshe, וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה הֲנִנִי מִמָּטִיר לָכֶם לֶחֶם מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֵּצֵא הָעָם וַלְקָטוּ דָבָר-יּוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ לְמַעַן אֲנֹסְנוּ הַיֵּלֶף: *16:4 Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction. (NASB)* The Lord is giving them bread (לֶחֶם) from heaven (מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם), but notice how the manna is not given for to satisfy the people’s hunger. The Lord says לְמַעַן אֲנֹסְנוּ הַיֵּלֶף בְּתוֹרָתִי אִם-לֹא: *“I am testing them walk in my Torah or not.”* The translation states to walk in God’s *“instruction.”* The Lord is seeking and searching for those who are willing to walk in His instruction. For those who ask the question *“How can I know God’s will for my life,”* this is the answer to the question. According to the Torah, it is important to know the Lord’s will. Yeshua said those who have a true relationship with the Lord God in heaven are those who know and do the Father’s will. (*Mark 3:35 “Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother”*). Another example is found in the parable of the two sons, Yeshua rebukes the chief priests and elders for failing to do the will of the Father; specifically, they *“did not repent and believe” (Matthew 21:32)*. The significance of this statement is that belief (faith) is necessary for Teshuvah. This is the most basic of biblical concepts, the will of God is for us to repent of our sin and trust in Him and in His Messiah Yeshua. The commentary Akeidat Yitzchak has the following to say concerning these Scriptures.

Akeidat Yitzchak 19:57

When G’d gave the Israelites the man, heavenly bread, the Torah writes “in order to test them if they will walk in My teachings or not.” (Exodus 16:4) We observe in that instance that some people failed the test. Similarly, the case of the false prophet, the appearance of which is described by the Torah as a test of the people’s true faith. (Deut. 13:4) We know that numerous people failed such test when confronted by false prophets at various times in our history. Here too, the arrival of these strangers at Lot’s house is

made the final test of the population's attitude. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

The rabbinic commentary reiterates the purpose of the Lord providing the manna, to test whether the people would walk in God's teachings. Reading the biblical narrative shows that some people failed the test. A parallel is drawn between this test, walking in God's instruction, to the test of a false prophet. The test of a false prophet is also given as a test of the people's faith. Again, the biblical narrative, in the Neviim and Ketuvim reveal that some people failed the test. This again is paralleled to Sodom and Gomorrah, the angels who visited the city and Lot were testing of the people's attitude. Note how this is true even of today, the Torah and obedience to God's mitzvot reveals the attitude of a persons heart. One either has a direct backlash against the mitzvot as not applying to us today, or considers the mitzvot as having value, truth, and life as the Scriptures say. Rashi draws some interesting parallels in his commentary saying the following:

Rashi on Genesis 19:24, Part 5

מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם FROM HEAVEN — *The text (Job 36:31) refers to this: "For by them (the heavens; see the preceding verses) He judges the peoples etc." When God is about to punish mankind He brings upon them fire from heaven, just as He did to Sodom (cf. 5:32 of the same chapter); and when he caused the Manna to fall it was also from heaven (cf. the second half of 5:31) as it is said, (Exodus 16:4) "Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you" (cf. Sanhedrin 104b).*

What is interesting is how Rashi draws a parallel to the fire that rained down from heaven over Sodom, and the Manna the Lord is raining down from heaven for the people. What is Rashi trying to say here concerning these two events? It is interesting how the reference to fire and manna draw to memory Yeshua the Messiah, his use of the manna in referring to himself as the bread from heaven, and the fire reference to John's words in *Matthew 3:11*, *Mark 1:7*, and *Luke 3:16* saying, "*As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the*

Holy Spirit and fire.” Rashi is obviously drawing the parallel in reference to what the Lord says to Moshe, וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה הֲנִי מִמְטִיר לָכֶם לֶחֶם, 16:4 מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְיֵצֵא הָעָם וְלָקְטוּ דִבְרַי-יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ לְמַעַן אֲנֹסְנוּ הַיֵּלֶךְ בְּתוֹרַתִי אִם-לֹא: *Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction. (NASB)* Testing the people through fire by the way of the command to rest upon the Shabbat.

In addition, notice what is written in the *Mishnah Pirkei Avot 5:6* that relates to the passage we are looking at regarding the Lord testing the people:

Mishnah Pirkei Avot 5:6:

Ten things were created on the eve of the [first] Sabbath at twilight, And these are they: [1] The mouth of the earth [that swallowed Korach in Numbers 16:32], [2] The mouth of the well [that accompanied the Israelites in the Wilderness in Numbers 21:17], [3] The mouth of the donkey [that spoke to Balaam in Numbers 22:28–30], [4] The rainbow [that served as a covenant after the Flood in Genesis 9:13], [5] The manna [that God provided the Israelites in the Wilderness in Exodus 16:4–21], [6] The rod [of Moses], [7] The Shamir [worm that helped build the Temple without metal tools], [8] The letters, [9] The writing, and [10] The tablets [of the Ten Commandments]. And some say: Also the destructive spirits, And the burial place of Moses, our teacher; And the ram of Abraham, our father. And some say: Also the [first human-made] tongs, made with [Divine] tongs. (עֲשָׂרָה דְבָרִים נִבְרָאוּ בְעֶרְב שַׁבָּת) בֵּין הַשְּׁמַשׁוֹת, וְאֵלוֹ הֵן, פִּי הָאָרֶז, וּפִי הַבָּאָר, וּפִי הָאֶתוֹן, וְהַקְּשֻׁת, וְהַמָּן, וְהַמָּטָה, וְהַשְּׁמִיר, וְהַפְּתָב, וְהַמְּכַתֵּב, וְהַלּוּחֹת. וַיֵּשׁ אוֹמְרִים, אַף הַמְזִיקִין, וְקִבְרֹתוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה, וְאֵילוֹ שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ. וַיֵּשׁ אוֹמְרִים) אַף צָבָת בְּצָבָת עֲשׂוּיָה:

The ten things that were created on the eve of the first Shabbat, notice how each of these is related to the obedience to the word of the Lord and

faith. This is drawn out by the rabbis use of the word *וְהַשְׁמִיר* (*Shamir*) from the root *שמר* meaning “to guard or to keep.” Lastly, we look at the commentary *Me’or Einayim 15:4, Part 1*.

Me’or Einayim 15:4, Part 1

Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, [and the people shall go out] and gather a day’s portion every day (Ex. 16:4). Now, the Torah is eternal since “Torah and the Holy Blessed One are one” (Zohar 1:24), and it needs to be limitless in past, present, and future; but how is this relevant to every person and every time?

The commentary states that the Lord rained bread from heaven and the instruction on how to gather the manna during the week. This is paralleled to the Torah being eternal because the Torah and the Lord God in heaven are one. This is interesting, because of what Yeshua said in *John 10:30* “*I and the Father are one.*” (NASB) Yeshua obeyed God’s Word, and by doing so he is one in agreement with the Father. Note how the Lord gave the manna for the purpose of testing the people whether they would walk in the Torah (instruction) of God or not. Note also how Yeshua singles out the manna in the Torah as a reference to himself as coming down from heaven. Obedience is consequentially tied to this notion of the manna and the testing of the faithfulness of the people in the Messiah. We also read throughout the Torah and the Neviim and Ketuvim, how when the Lord would send his *mashiach*, he would lead the people back to the Lord God our Father in heaven and to His ways.

The idea is when we place our faith in the Messiah, we are made God’s children (*John 1:12*), and the Lord desires to lead us in His way (*Tehillim / Psalm 143:10*) by the power of the Spirit. The Lord is not trying to hide His will from us; He wants to reveal it and His will is found in the Scriptures. He has already given us many instructions in His Word. We are told in the Apostolic Writings to “*give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you*” (*1 Thessalonians 5:18*); to do *maasim tovim* (good works, *1 Peter 2:15*); and “*it is God’s will that you should be sanctified, that you should avoid sexual immorality*” (*1 Thessalonians 4:3*). Paul wrote in *Romans 12:2* saying, “*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.” Paul speaks of the believer who chooses not to be conformed to the world and instead allows himself to be transformed by the Spirit. His mind is renewed according to the Word of God, and in this process, learns to know the will of God by living in righteousness, holiness, and truth.

As we seek God's will, we should make sure what we are considering is not something the Bible forbids. This is achieved by studying the Torah, and all of Scripture. For example, the Scriptures forbid stealing, the Lord has clearly spoken on this issue, therefore we know it is not His will for us to steal from others. In addition, we are to seek whether our lives glorify God and what does a life that glorifies God look like? This is related to our relationship with the Lord, as we walk with the Lord, obeying His Word and relying on His Spirit, we find that we are given a new mind and a new heart (*1 Corinthians 2:16*). Remaining in the word, we get to know our Father in heaven, just as Solomon wrote in *Mishley / Proverbs 11:5* “*The righteousness of the blameless makes their paths straight, but the wicked are brought down by their own wickedness*” Walking closely with the Lord and truly desiring His will for our lives, is the goal, and the key is wanting God's will, not our own as the Psalmist says in *Tehillim / Psalms 37:4* “*Delight yourself in the LORD and He will give you the desires of your heart*” (*NASB*)

The point of this week's Torah portion is in regard to the Lord providing the manna for the purpose of testing the people whether they would walk according to His Torah (instruction) or not. Yeshua singles out the manna in the Torah as a reference to himself as coming down from heaven. In a similar manner, the Lord gave us His Messiah also for the purpose of testing us, whether we would believe and do as He says. This shows us that obedience is tied to our faith in the Messiah. The faithfulness of a person in the Messiah, is demonstrated in his repentant attitude and desire to live for the Lord because of his love for Him.

