

Our parasha tells us that the heavenly food, the *mahn*, was G-d's way of testing our people. "Vayomer HaShem El Moshe, behold, I will rain down on you bread from heaven and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, so that I may test them [16:4]. What kind of test did the *mahn* involve. Rashi states that it would be to see if we will follow G-d's instructions of not gathering more than our daily needs and if we would refrain from gathering food on Shabbat.

Ramban writes that it was a trial for them not to have food they were used to. Although the *mahn* provided daily food to satisfy the needs of the Jewish people, it involved an element of emotional trauma. Despite the fact that the Jews had never seen this kind of food before, they were expected to depend only upon the *mahn* for sustenance. *****
The Rav saw this differently; it had nothing to do with psychological trauma. Since the Jews would effortlessly obtain their food, they were left with little challenge to sustain their families. The test that the Torah speaks of is how would they choose to use their leisure time--would it be wasted or used wisely?

Often we believe that life's tests involve suffering- and to overcome difficult challenges. But we learn from here about another type of life's tests. At times we are tested precisely when things do go well. When we are healthy and succeed, will we properly acknowledge it as a gift from G-d? When we have time on our hands, will we try to intensify our commitments to G-d by studying more Torah and doing more chesed? When we have money, will it be for noble purposes?

Thus, the *mahn* was a test. Not necessarily a test of suffering, but because it made life-easier. In our times, when we are living in "relative" prosperity, will we remember that it's precisely now, with *mahn* falling from heaven, that we face a most challenging test? How many of us are learning more Torah than before? How much more chesed are we doing now than before? Enjoying longevity, relatively good health, and parnasah is not only a blessing, but also a demand to do more. I do hope we pass our spiritual tests with high grades.

Shabbat Shalom From Florida,

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