



The Meaning of the Mann

By Rebbetzin Shira Smiles (Shiur E2)

What is the connection between the מן which fell for 40 years and the שבת קודש which is forever?

Hashem Blessed Shabbos with מן

The פסוק teaches:

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ... (בראשית ב: ג)

Rashi cites the Midrash (בראשית רבה יא: יב) which teaches that this Bracha which ה' gave to שבת is a reference to the future מן which ה' blessed the Shabbos of Creation with the מן in that two portions of מן will arrive prior to שבת and ה' sanctified שבת in that no מן will appear on שבת.

How does the מן which will be fed to ישראל for their 40-year sojourn in the desert come to be the blessing which ה' bestows on the שבתות of all time? Let us look at three of the explanations for the linkage.

Everyone received the precise amount

R' Chaim Friedlander זצ"ל teaches that שבת is a continuous reminder of the reality of the מן – that everyone received exactly what was designated for them. אחד המרבה ואחד הממעיט – whether a person tries to accumulate more than his due or a person refrains from taking that which is due him; everyone ends up with what is designated for him. Nobody grabs more and nobody gives some up. The Creator allocates to

every being exactly that which that being needs to accomplish his or her purpose in the world.

The הגזירה אמת¹ puts is very succinctly: – That which ה' decrees is reality and the idea that our efforts bring results is fantasy. There can only be מנוחה שבת when a person relaxes into Hashem's arms. The מן-message is מנוחה.

I shall not lack

Dovid HaMelech spells this out:²

מְזֻמָּר לְדָוִד ה' רָעִי לֹא אֶחָסֵר. בְּנֵאוֹת דָּשָׁא יִרְבִּיעֲנִי
עַל מִי מְנַחֵחַ וְנִגְהָלְנִי.

The essence of מנוחה is contained in the certainty that I have everything that I need – שעשה לי כל צרכי – I am not lacking.

With this certainty and בטחון we can leave the everyday mundane world and its struggles behind us.

The Torah teaches the השבת ביום ממקומו – אל יצא איש ממקומו – the rule not to leave our תחום on שבת is an invitation to focus inward on the ברכות which have been showered on each of us. I have been granted all that I need because ה' knows and addresses my needs perfectly.

¹ רמב"ן בראשית לו: טו ד"ה וימצאהו

² תהלים כג



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טוב להודות לה'

When we focus on the מן-message of Shabbos we can take the time to notice things.

This challenge worked out; that one turned out differently than I had feared. In the end I found the item I was looking for or I discovered that I did not actually need it. Shabbos is an opportunity to acknowledge Hashem's involvement in my life and to encourage those around me to notice Hashem's Loving Hand in their lives, as well. The crucial ingredients are the מן-message, an openness to noticing and a desire to be grateful.

So, the first מן-message which connects to every Shabbos, is Bitachon.

Everything Depends on Your Thoughts

We are taught that the מן tasted like anything you would think of. Rav Shimon Schwab זצ"ל in חפץ חיים recalls being with the השואבה on Shabbos ויקהל-פקודי when the חפץ חיים asked what the מן would taste like if one was not thinking of any food at all?

The answer, said the חפץ חיים, is that the מן was רוחניות – it was spiritual food. And the rule with all matters of רוחניות is that if you do not think, you will have nothing. If a person did not think about the מן then it did not taste like anything.

An example is לימוד התורה. If a person does not give thought to the words that he is learning they are dry and tasteless. The sweetness of Torah is experienced when one thinks about what he is

learning and tries to understand it. Then he feels the מתיקות that we ask for in והערב נא.

That is the second מן-message for all שבתות. The degree of thought, anticipation and expectation of Shabbos determines the Shabbos that you will experience. If you limit your thoughts to rest and good food; that is what you will get from Shabbos. If you think about the eternal connection to the רבש"ע and רוחניות; that is the Shabbos that you will have. It is up to us.

The מן-message of אלוש

A third מן-message for every Shabbos is taught by Rav Gedaliah Shorr זצ"ל in אור גדליהו. He cites the Midrash³ that teaches that the מן was given in אלוש, the first proper encampment in סיני. The Midrash further asserts that the name אלוש hints at the instruction that אברהם אבינו gave to שרה אמנו when he hosted the angels. He said לוישי וְעָשִׂי עֲגוֹת...⁴ Rav Shorr points out that the bread became אורחים, and thereby it provided a resting place for the שכינה הק'.

The מן-message here is that, like אברהם אבינו ע"ה, we each have the capacity to upgrade something גשמי and turn it into something רוחני.

It is not enough to have a physical Shabbos and to leave it on that plane. Every bit and bite of גשמיית on Shabbos can be transformed and elevated to רוחניות. When we keep in mind that we are celebrating Hashem's Creation of everything, we turn the food into רוחניות. When we consider the קדושת ישראל that comes with קדושת שבת then the Challah tastes like רוחניות. We can look at the Challah covered above and

³ שמות רבה כה: ה'

⁴ בראשית יח: ג'



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below and be reminded of the מן, the לחם משנה. In so doing we elevate the Challah from its primitive גשמי state. We are eating משולחנו של מלך, an ultimately spiritual experience.

Everything gets elevated

When one invests attention to elevate one's food, it does not stop with the food. The beauty of

spiritual elevation is that it brings everything else along with it. One's speech and one's mannerisms each begin to reflect the increase in רוחניות. It may start with the taste of the מן in the food, but the מן-message for every Shabbos is our capacity to transcend and infuse every aspect of our lives, no matter how גשמי, with רוחניות.

Takeaway: I will try to consider the מן-messages that turn the שבת of today into the שבת of eternity.