

הלכות יסודי התורה • פרק שמיני

Complete Word-for-Word Interlinear • Navy & Gold Edition

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, the Rambam brings us to the very foundation of our emunah, explaining how we know with absolute certainty that Moshe Rabbeinu's prophecy is true. We learn that the miracles Moshe performed in Mitzrayim and the midbar were not meant to prove his prophecy, but were simply done for the practical needs of the moment. Rather, our eternal emunah rests solely on Ma'amad Har Sinai, where the entire nation saw the fire and heard the Voice of Hashem with their own eyes and ears.

We will also learn how this foundation guides our approach to any prophet who arises after Moshe Rabbeinu. The Rambam explains that we only listen to a later prophet because of the mitzvah Moshe commanded us to do so, and we are warned never to listen to anyone who uses signs or wonders to contradict the Torah of Moshe.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

הליא

האמונה במשה רבנו על פי מעמד הר סיני ולא על פי האותות

Halacha 1 • Belief in Moshe Based on the Revelation at Sinai and Not on Wonders

מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ לֹא הֵאֱמִינוּ בּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִפְּנֵי הָאוֹתוֹת שֶׁעָשָׂה. שֶׁהֵאֱמִינוּ

for the believer that he performed the wonders because of Yisrael in him believed not our teacher Moshe

עַל פִּי הָאוֹתוֹת יֵשׁ בְּלִבּוֹ דְּפִי שֶׁאִפְשָׁר שִׁיעֲשֶׂה הָאוֹת בְּלֹט

through magic the wonder that he perform for it is possible doubt in his heart there is the wonders way of by

וְכִשּׁוּף. אֲלָא כָּל הָאוֹתוֹת שֶׁעָשָׂה מֹשֶׁה בְּמִדְבָּר לְפִי הַצֶּרֶךְ

the need according to in the desert Moshe that he performed the wonders all rather and sorcery

עָשָׂאָם. לֹא לְהַבִּיא רְאִיָּה עַל הַנְּבוּאָה. הָיָה צָרִיךְ לְהַשְׁקִיעַ אֶת הַמִּצְרִיִּים

the Egyptians — to drown needed he was the prophecy for proof to bring not he performed them

קָרַע אֶת הַיָּם וְהַצְלִילָן בְּתוֹכוֹ. צָרְכֵנוּ לְמִזּוֹן הוֹרִיד לָנוּ אֶת הַמָּן.

the manna — for us he brought down food we needed in it and sank them the sea — he split

צָמְאוּ בָּקָע לָהֶן אֶת הָאֶבֶן. כָּפְרוּ בּוֹ עֲדַת קֹרַח בִּלְעָה אוֹתָן הָאָרֶץ.

the earth them swallowed Korach the assembly of him they denied the rock — for them he split they thirsted

וְכֵן שָׂאָר כָּל הָאוֹתוֹת. וּבְמָה הֵאֱמִינוּ בּוֹ. בְּמַעְמַד הַר סִינִי

Sinai Mount at the standing of in him did they believe and through what the wonders all the rest of and so

שֶׁעֵינֵינוּ רְאוּ וְלֹא זָר וְאִזְנֵינוּ שָׁמְעוּ וְלֹא אֲחֵר הָאֵשׁ וְהַקּוֹלוֹת

and the sounds the fire another and not heard and our ears a stranger and not saw for our eyes

וְהַלְפִידִים וְהוּא נִגַּשׁ אֶל הָעֶרְפֶּל וְהַקּוֹל מִדְּבַר אֱלֹהֵינוּ שׁוֹמְעִים

heard and we to him spoke and the Voice the thick cloud to approached and he and the torches

מֹשֶׁה מֹשֶׁה לָּהּ אָמַר לָהֶן כֹּךְ וְכֹךְ. וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר דְּבָרִים ה' ד' פָּנִים

face 4 5 Devarim says He and so and thus thus to them say go Moshe Moshe

בְּפָנִים דְּכָר ה' עִמָּכֶם". וְנֹאמַר דְּבָרִים ה' ג' "לֹא אֶת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ כָּרַת ה'

Hashem made our fathers — not 3 5 Devarim and it is said with you Hashem spoke to face

אֶת הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת". וּמִנֵּין שְׁמַעְמַד הָר סִינַי לְבָדּוֹ הִיא הָרָאִיָּה

the proof it is alone Sinai Mount that the standing of and from where this the covenant —

לְנִבּוֹאָתוֹ שֶׁהִיא אֱמֶת שְׂאִין בּוֹ דְּפִי שְׁנֹאמַר שְׁמוֹת יֵט ט "הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי בָּא

come I behold 9 19 Shemos as it is said doubt in it that there is not truth that it is to his prophecy

אֵלַיךְ בָּעֵב בָּעֵנָן בְּעֵבוֹר יִשְׁמַע הָעָם בְּדִבְרֵי עֲמֹךְ וְגַם כֹּךְ

in you and also with you in My speaking the people will hear so that the cloud in the thickness of to you

יֵאֱמִינוּ לְעוֹלָם". מְכַלֵּל שְׁקָדָם דְּכָר זֶה לֹא הֶאֱמִינוּ בּוֹ נֶאֱמָנוֹת

a belief in him they believed not this matter that before from the implication forever they will believe

שֶׁהִיא עוֹמֶדֶת לְעוֹלָם אֲלֵא נֶאֱמָנוֹת שִׁישׁ אַחֲרֶיהָ הִרְהוֹר וּמַחְשָׁבָה:

and thought suspicion after it that there is a belief rather forever stands that it

The Rambam explains that the ultimate proof of Moshe's prophecy was the national revelation at Mount Sinai, rather than the miracles he performed out of necessity in the desert.

ה' ב

אֱמוּנַת מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ בְּמַעֲמַד הָר סִינַי וְהִיחָס לְאוֹתוֹת הַנִּבִּיאִים

Halacha 2 · Belief in Moshe at Mount Sinai and the Status of Later Prophets' Signs

נִמְצְאוּ אֵלּוּ שְׁשׁוּלָח לָהֶן הֵם הָעֵדִים עַל נִבּוֹאָתוֹ שֶׁהִיא אֱמֶת וְאִינוּ

and he is not is truth that it his prophecy on the witnesses they to them to whom these It

צָרִיךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת לָהֶן אוֹת אַחֵר. שֶׁהֵם וְהוּא עֵדִים בְּדִבְרֵי פְּשָׁנֵי עֵדִים

witnesses like two in the matter are witnesses and he for they another a sign for them to perform needed

שָׂרָאוּ דְּכָר אֶחָד בִּיחָד שְׁכָל אֶחָד מֵהֶן עֵד לַחֲבֵרוֹ שֶׁהוּא אוֹמֵר אֱמֶת

truth says that he to his colleague is a witness of them one that each together one a matter who saw

וְאִין אֶחָד מֵהֶן צָרִיךְ לְהַבִּיא רָאִיָּה לַחֲבֵרוֹ. כֹּךְ מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל

Yisrael all our teacher Moshe so to his colleague proof to bring is needed of them one and not

עֵדִים לוֹ אַחֵר מַעֲמַד הָר סִינַי וְאִינוּ צָרִיךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת לָהֶם אוֹת.

a sign for them to perform needed and he is not Sinai Mount the standing of after to him were witnesses

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁאֵמַר לוֹ לְהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּתַחֲלִית נִבּוֹאָתוֹ בְּעֵת שְׁנָתוֹ

that He gave at the time his prophecy at the beginning of is He blessed the Holy One to him what and this is

לוֹ הָאוֹתוֹת לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאָמַר לוֹ שְׁמוֹת ג' יח "וְשִׁמְעוּ

and they will listen 18 3 Shemos to him and He said in Mitzrayim to perform them the signs to him

לְקִלָּה". יָדַע מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ שֶׁהֶאֱמִין עַל פִּי הָאוֹתוֹת יֵשׁ בְּלִבּוֹ דְּפִי

apprehension in his heart has the signs · by that the believer our teacher Moshe knew to your voice

וּמַהֲרָהּ וּמַחֲשֵׁב וְהָיָה נִשְׁמָט מִלֵּילָהּ וְאָמַר שְׁמוֹת דָּא "וְהֵן לֹא
 not and behold 1 4 Shemos and he said from going withdrawing and he was and suspects and doubts
 יֵאֱמִינוּ לִי". עַד שֶׁהוֹדִיעוּ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא שֶׁאֵלּוּ הָאוֹתוֹת אֵינָן אֶלָּא
 except are not signs that these is He blessed the Holy One that informed him until me they will believe
 עַד שֶׁיֵּצְאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם וְאַחֵר שֶׁיֵּצְאוּ וַיַּעֲמְדוּ עַל הָהָר הַזֶּה יִסְתַּלַּק
 will be removed this the mountain on and they stand that they leave and after from Mitzrayim that they leave until
 הַרְהוֹר שֶׁמֶהֲרָה־רִין אַחֲרֶיהָ שֶׁאֲנִי נֹתֵן לָהּ כָּאֵן אוֹת שֶׁיִּדְעוּ שֶׁאֲנִי
 that I that they will know a sign here to you give for I after you that they doubt doubt
 שְׁלַח־תִּיהָ בְּאֵמֶת מִתְחִלָּה וְלֹא יֵשָׁאֵר בְּלִבָּם הַרְהוֹר. וְהוּא שֶׁהִכְתוּב
 what the verse and that is doubt in their heart will remain and not from the beginning in truth sent you
 אוֹמֵר שְׁמוֹת ג' יב "וְזֶה לָּהּ הָאוֹת כִּי אֲנֹכִי שְׁלַח־תִּיהָ בְּהוֹצִיאָהּ אֶת
 — when you take out sent you I that is the sign for you and this 12 3 Shemos says
 הָעָם מִמִּצְרַיִם תַּעֲבֹדוּן אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים עַל הָהָר הַזֶּה". נִמְצְאָה אוֹמֵר
 you say Consequently this the mountain on God — you shall serve from Mitzrayim the people
 שֶׁכָּל נָבִיא שֶׁיַּעֲמֵד אַחֵר מִשֶּׁה רַבֵּנוּ אֵין אָנוּ מֵאֱמִינִים בּוֹ מִפְּנֵי הָאוֹת
 the sign because of in him believe we not our teacher Moshe after who arises prophet that every
 לְבַדּוֹ כִּדֵּי שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אִם יַעֲשֶׂה אוֹת נִשְׁמָע לוֹ לְכָל מֶה שִׁיאֱמַר. אֶלָּא
 rather that he says what to all to him we will listen a sign he performs if that we say so alone
 מִפְּנֵי הַמִּצְוָה שֶׁצִּוָּה מֹשֶׁה בְּתוֹרָה וְאָמַר אִם נָתַן אוֹת דְּבָרִים יח טו
 15 18 Devarim a sign he gave if and said in the Torah Moshe that commanded the mitzvah because of
 "אֱלֹיו תִּשְׁמָעוּן". כִּמּוֹ שֶׁצִּוָּנוּ לְחַתֹּךְ הַדָּבָר עַל פִּי שְׁנַיִם עֵדִים וְאִף
 and even witnesses two by the matter to decide as He commanded us just you shall listen to him
 עַל פִּי שֶׁאֵין אָנוּ יוֹדְעִין אִם הֵעִידוּ אֵמֶת אִם שֶׁקֶר. כִּךָּ מִצְוָה לְשִׁמְעַ
 to listen it is a mitzvah so falsehood or truth they testified if know we that not though
 מִזֶּה הַנִּבִּיא אִף עַל פִּי שֶׁאֵין אָנוּ יוֹדְעִים אִם הָאוֹת אֵמֶת אוֹ בִּכְשׁוּף
 by magic or is truth the sign if know we that not though even prophet to this
 וְלִט:

and sorcery

This halacha explains that the Jewish nation's belief in Moshe Rabbeinu is based on the national revelation at Mount Sinai rather than miracles, and that we only listen to subsequent prophets because of Moshe's Torah command.

ח"י ג

אֵין מֵאֱמִינִים לְנָבִיא הַכֹּהֵן לְהַכְחִישׁ אֶת נְבוּאָת מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ

Halacha 3 · We Do Not Listen to a Prophet Who Denies the Prophecy of Moshe

לְפִיכָּה אִם עֹמֵד הַנִּבִּיא וְעָשָׂה אוֹתוֹת וּמוֹפְתִים גְּדוֹלִים וּבִקֵּשׁ לְהַכְחִישׁ

to deny and seeks great and wonders signs and performs the prophet arises if Therefore

נְבוֹאָתוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ אֵין שׁוֹמְעִין לוֹ וְאִנּוּ יוֹדְעִין בְּבֹאֹר שְׂאוֹתָן
 that those with clarity know and we to him listen we do not our teacher Moshe of the prophecy
 הָאוֹתוֹת בְּלֹט וְכִשּׁוּף הֵן. לְפִי שְׁנִבּוֹאֹת מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ אֵינָה עַל פִּי
 way of by is not our teacher Moshe the prophecy of because they are and sorcery through magic signs
 הָאוֹתוֹת כְּדִי שְׁנַעֲרֹךְ אוֹתוֹת זֶה לְאוֹתוֹת זֶה. אֲלֹא בְּעֵינֵינוּ רְאִינוּהָ
 we saw it with our eyes rather this one to signs of this one signs of that we compare so the signs
 וּבְאֲזֵינוּ שָׁמַעְנוּהָ כְּמוֹ שִׁשְׁמַע הוּא. הֵא לָמָּה הַדָּבָר דּוּמָה לְעֵדִים
 to witnesses is comparable the matter to what this he heard just as we heard it and with our ears
 שֶׁהָעִידוֹ לְאָדָם עַל דָּבָר שֶׁרָאָה בְּעֵינָיו שְׂאִינוּ כְּמוֹ שֶׁרָאָה שְׂאִינוּ
 that he does not what he saw like which is not with his eyes that he saw a matter about to a man who testified
 שׁוֹמַע לָהֶן אֲלֹא יוֹדַע בְּוַדָּאי שֶׁהֵן עֵדֵי שֶׁקֶר. לְפִיכָךְ אָמְרָה תּוֹרָה
 the Torah stated Therefore falsehood witnesses of that they are with certainty knows rather to them listen
 שָׂאֵם בָּא הָאוֹת וְהַמוֹפֵת דְּבָרִים יֵג ד "לֹא תִשְׁמַע אֶל דְּבָרֵי הַנָּבִיא
 the prophet the words of to listen do not 4 13 Devarim and the wonder the sign comes that if
 הַהוּא". שֶׁהָרִי זֶה בָּא אֵלֶיךָ בָּאוֹת וּמוֹפֵת לְהַכְחִישׁ מָה שֶׁרָאִיתָ
 you saw what to deny and a wonder with a sign to you comes this one for behold that
 בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְהוֹאִיל וְאֵין אֲנִי מֵאֲמִינִים בְּמוֹפֵת אֲלֹא מִפְּנֵי הַמִּצְוֹת
 the commandment because of except in a wonder believe we do not . and since with your eyes
 שֶׁצִּוְּנוּ מֹשֶׁה הֵימָּךְ נִקְבַּל מֵאוֹת זֶה שֶׁבָּא לְהַכְחִישׁ נְבוֹאָתוֹ
 the prophecy to deny who comes this one from the sign of can we accept how Moshe that commanded us
 שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה שֶׁרָאִינוּ וְשִׁשְׁמַעְנוּ:
 and which we heard which we saw Moshe of

This halacha explains that because the entire nation witnessed the revelation at Sinai, no subsequent prophet can use miracles to contradict the Torah of Moshe.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter establishes that the Jewish people's belief in Moshe Rabbeinu was not based on wonders, which can be faked through sorcery, but on the revelation at Mount Sinai where everyone witnessed his appointment firsthand. Because of this, any later prophet who performs wonders is only believed because of Moshe's command to do so, similar to how a court relies on two witnesses. Consequently, if a prophet arises and performs wonders to dispute the Torah of Moshe, we disregard him completely, knowing his signs are false, since a wonder can never override what we saw and heard with our own eyes at Sinai.

The Rambam is teaching us a fundamental truth about the human soul: miracles, wonders, and external excitement do not build lasting emunah. A faith built on 'signs' is fragile; it leaves room for doubts and second-guessing. True, unbreakable connection only comes from direct, personal experience, the 'face to face' encounter of Ma'amad Har Sinai, where we saw and heard the truth for ourselves.

In our daily avodah, we often find ourselves waiting for 'signs' or waiting for inspiration to strike from the outside. We think, 'If only I had a great spiritual breakthrough, or if my prayers were answered with an obvious miracle, then I would be a different person.' But Hashem is telling us that real, enduring connection is not built on spectacular, fleeting moments. It is built on the quiet, steady reality of Torah and mitzvos that we live with every single day.

Stop looking for external wonders to jumpstart your yiras Shamayim. Instead, look at the Torah you learn and the mitzvos you perform as your own personal Har Sinai. When you sit down to learn or stand up to daven, you are not relying on hearsay or looking for magic; you are stepping directly into the reality of Hashem's presence.

Today, choose one mitzvah or one halacha and perform it not because you feel a sudden burst of inspiration, but simply because you stand before Hashem. Do it with the quiet, absolute certainty of someone who knows the truth in their very bones.