

הלכות יסודי התורה • פרק תשיעי

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

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, the Rambam teaches us a fundamental principle of our emunah: the absolute eternity of the Torah. We learn that the Torah given through Moshe Rabbeinu is perfect and unchanging, and that no prophet, whether Jew or non-Jew, can ever add a new mitzvah, take one away, or alter the received Mesorah. The Rambam guides us in how to identify a false prophet who seeks to undermine the Torah, and explains the severe punishment such an individual faces.

At the same time, the Rambam clarifies the true role of a kosher prophet, who comes only to urge the people to keep the Torah, not to start a new religion. We will learn about the unique authority of a prophet to issue temporary directives—even to temporarily suspend a mitzvah, as Eliyahu HaNavi did on Har HaCarmel—and the strict boundaries of this authority, which never applies to the worship of avodah zarah.

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

הליא

נצחיות התורה ואסור ההוספה והגרעון

Halacha 1 • The Eternity of the Torah and the Prohibition Against Adding or Diminishing Mitzvos

דָּבָר בְּרוּר וּמִפְּרָשׁ בַּתּוֹרָה שֶׁהִיא מִצְוָה עוֹמֶדֶת לְעוֹלָם וּלְעוֹלָמֵי
and for eternity of forever standing is a mitzvah that it in the Torah and explicit clear A matter
עוֹלָמִים אֵין לָהּ לֹא שְׁנוּי וְלֹא גִרְעוֹן וְלֹא תוֹסֶפֶת שְׁנֵאמַר דְּבָרִים יג א
1 13 Devarim as it is said addition and no diminishment and no change no to it there is eternities
"אֵת כָּל הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצְוֶה אֶתְכֶם אֹתוֹ תִּשְׁמְרוּן לַעֲשׂוֹת לֹא תִּסֶּף
you shall add not to do you shall watch it you command I which the matter all —
עָלָיו וְלֹא תִּגְרַע מִמֶּנּוּ". וְנֵאמַר דְּבָרִים כט כח "וְהִנֵּגְלָת לָנוּ
are for us and the revealed things 28 29 Devarim and it is said from it you shall diminish and not upon it
וּלְבָנֵינוּ עַד עוֹלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֵת כָּל דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת". הָא
behold this the Torah the words of all — to do forever until and for our children
לְמַדָּת שָׁכַל דְּבָרֵי תּוֹרָה מְצוּיִן אָנוּ לַעֲשׂוֹתָן עַד עוֹלָם. וְכֵן הוּא
He and so forever until to do them are we commanded Torah the words of that all you have learned
אוֹמֵר חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם. וְנֵאמַר דְּבָרִים ל יב "לֹא בַשָּׁמַיִם
in heaven not 12 30 Devarim and it is said for your generations forever an eternal statute says
הִיא". הָא לְמַדָּת שְׂאִין נִבְיָא רִשְׁאִי לְחַדֵּשׁ דָּבָר מֵעַתָּה. לְפִיכָךְ אִם
if therefore from now on a matter to innovate is permitted prophet that no you have learned behold is it
יַעֲמֹד אִישׁ בֵּין מִן הָאֲמוֹת בֵּין מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וַיַּעֲשֶׂה אוֹת וּמוֹפֵת
or a wonder a sign and he performs from Israel whether the nations from whether a man there will arise

וַיֹּאמֶר שֶׁה' שָׁלַח לְהוֹסִיף מִצְוָה אוֹ לְגַרֵעַ מִצְוָה אוֹ לְפַרֵשׁ בְּמִצְוָה
 regarding a mitzvah to explain or a mitzvah to diminish or a mitzvah to add sent him that Hashem and says
 מִן הַמִּצְוֹת פָּרוּשׁ שֶׁלֹּא שָׁמַעְנוּ מִמּוֹשֶׁה. אוֹ שֶׁאָמַר שְׂאוֹתֵן הַמִּצְוֹת
 the mitzvos that those who said or from Moshe we heard that not an explanation the mitzvos from
 שֶׁנִּצְטְווּ בָּהֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵינָן לְעוֹלָם וּלְדוֹרֵי דוֹרוֹת אֲלָא מִצְוֹת
 mitzvos rather generations and for generations of forever are not Israel in them that were commanded
 לְפִי זְמַן הָיוּ. הֲרִי זֶה נָבִיא שֶׁקֶר שֶׁהֲרִי בָּא לְהַכְחִישׁ נְבוּאָתוֹ
 the prophecy to deny he comes for behold falsehood is a prophet of this behold they were time according to
 שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה. וּמִיתָתוֹ בְּחֻנֵּק עַל שֶׁהִזִּיד לְדַבֵּר בְּשֵׁם ה' אֲשֶׁר
 which Hashem in the name of to speak that he willfully sinned for is by strangulation and his death Moshe of
 לֹא צִוָּהוּ. שֶׁהוּא פָּרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ צִוָּה לְמֹשֶׁה שֶׁהַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת לָנוּ
 is for us this that the mitzvah to Moshe commanded His name blessed is for He He commanded him not
 וּלְבָנֵינוּ עַד עוֹלָם בְּמַדְבַּר כַּג יט ו' לֹא אִישׁ אֵל וַיִּכְזַּב:
 that He should lie is God a man and not 19 23 Bamidbar forever until and for our children

This halacha establishes that the Torah is eternal and unchangeable, and that anyone claiming to add, subtract, or alter its mitzvos is a false prophet.

ה"ב

תפקיד הנביא והחויב לשמע לדבריו הרשות

Halacha 2 · The Role of a Prophet and the Obligation to Obey His Secular Directives

אם כן למה נאמר בתורה דברים יח יח "נביא אקים להם מקרב
 from among for them I will raise up "A prophet 18 18 Devarim in the Torah is it said why so If
 אחיהם כמוך". לא לעשות דת הוא בא אלא לצוות על דברי
 the words of upon to command but comes he a religion to establish not like you" their brethren
 התורה ולהזהיר העם שלא יעברו עליה. כמו שאמר האחרון שבהן
 among them the last that said as against it they transgress that not the people and to warn the Torah
 מלאכי ג כב "זכרו תורת משה עבדי". וכן אם צונו בדברי
 in matters of he commanded us if and so My servant" Moshe the Torah of "Remember 22 3 Malachi
 הרשות כגון לכו למקום פלוני או אל תלכו. עשו מלחמה היום או
 or today war make go do not or such and such to a place go for example permission
 אל תעשו. בנו חומה זו או אל תבנוה. מצוה לשמע לו.
 to him to listen it is a mitzvah build it do not or this a wall build make do not
 והעובר על דבריו חייב מיתה בידי שמים שנאמר דברים יח
 18 Devarim as it is said Heaven by the hands of death is liable for his words against and the one who transgresses
 יט "והיה האיש אשר לא ישמע אל דברי אשר ידבר בשמי אנכי
 I in My name he shall speak which My words to will listen not who the man "And it shall be 19
 אדרש מעמו":
 from him" will require

הציות לנביא לעבר על מצות התורה לפי שעה

Halacha 3 · Obeying a Prophet to Transgress Torah Commandments Temporarily

וְכֵן נָבִיא שֶׁעָבַר עַל דְּבָרֵי עֲצָמוֹ וְהַכּוֹבֵשׁ נְבוֹאָתוֹ חַיֵּב
is liable for his prophecy and one who suppresses himself the words of against who transgressed a prophet And so
מִיָּתָה בְּיַדִּי שָׁמַיִם וּבִשְׁלֹשָׁתָן נֹאמַר דְּבָרִים יח יט "אֲנֹכִי אֶדְרֹשׁ
will seek I 19 18 Devarim it is said and regarding the three Heaven by the hand of death
of them
מַעֲמֹו". וְכֵן אִם יֹאמֶר לָנוּ הַנָּבִיא שְׂנוּדַע לָנוּ שֶׁהוּא נָבִיא לְעֵבֵר עַל
against to transgress a prophet that he is to us who is known the prophet to us he says if And so from him
אֶחָת מִכָּל מִצְוֹת הָאֲמֻרוֹת בַּתּוֹרָה אוֹ עַל מִצְוֹת הָרַבָּה בֵּין קִלּוֹת בֵּין
whether light whether many mitzvos against or in the Torah stated the mitzvos of all one
חֲמוּרוֹת לְפִי שָׁעָה מִצְוָה לְשִׁמְעַע לוֹ. וְכֵן לְמַדְנוּ מִחֻכְמִים
from the Sages we learned And so to him to listen it is a mitzvah the hour according to severe
רֵאשׁוֹנִים מִפִּי הַשְּׁמוּעָה בְּכָל אִם יֹאמֶר לְךָ הַנָּבִיא עָבַר עַל
against transgress the prophet to you he says if in all the tradition from the mouth of of the early generations
דְּבָרֵי תּוֹרָה כְּאֵלֶיהוּ בְּהַר הַכַּרְמֶל שָׁמַע לוֹ חוּץ מִעֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים.
stars for the worship of except to him listen Carmel on Mount like Eliyahu the Torah the words of
וְהוּא שִׁיחֶיהָ הַדָּבָר לְפִי שָׁעָה. כְּגוֹן אֵלֶיהוּ בְּהַר הַכַּרְמֶל שֶׁהִקְרִיב
who offered Carmel on Mount Eliyahu for example the hour according to the matter is that it must be And this
עוֹלָה בַּחוּץ וִירוּשָׁלַיִם נִבְחָרָת לְכָךְ וְהַמִּקְרִיב בַּחוּץ חַיֵּב כָּרֵת.
karet is liable for outside and one who offers for this was chosen and Yerushalayim outside a burnt offering
וּמִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא נָבִיא מִצְוָה לְשִׁמְעַע לוֹ וְגַם בְּזָה נֹאמַר דְּבָרִים יח
18 Devarim it is said regarding this and also to him to listen it is a mitzvah a prophet that he is and because
טו "אֵלֶיךָ תִשְׁמָעוּן". וְאֵלֶיךָ שָׁאֲלוּ אֶת אֵלֶיהוּ וְאָמְרוּ לוֹ הֵיאָךְ נִעְקָר
can we uproot how to him and said Eliyahu — they had asked And if you shall listen to him 15
מָה שֶׁכָּתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה דְּבָרִים יב יג "פֶּן תֵּעָלָה עֲלֵתֶיךָ בְּכָל מָקוֹם".
place in every your burnt offerings you offer lest 13 12 Devarim in the Torah is written what
הָיָה אוֹמֵר לֹא נֹאמַר אֶלָּא הַמִּקְרִיב בַּחוּץ לְעוֹלָם חַיֵּב כָּרֵת כְּמוֹ
just as karet is liable for forever outside one who offers except was it said not said he would have
שִׁצְוָה מֹשֶׁה. אֲבָל אֲנִי אֶקְרִיב הַיּוֹם בַּחוּץ בְּדָבָר ה' כִּדִּי לְהַכְחִישׁ
to disprove in order Hashem by the word of outside today will offer I but Moshe commanded
נְבִיאֵי הַבַּעַל. וְעַל הַדֶּרֶךְ הַזֹּאת אִם צִוּוּ כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים לְעֵבֵר
to transgress the prophets all they commanded if this the way And in the Baal the prophets of
לְפִי שָׁעָה מִצְוָה לְשִׁמְעַע לָהֶם. וְאִם אָמְרוּ שֶׁהַדָּבָר נִעְקָר לְעוֹלָם
forever is uprooted that the matter they said And if to them to listen it is a mitzvah the hour according to

מִיתָתוֹ בְּחֶנֶק שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה אָמְרָה דְּבָרִים כֵּט כֹּחַ "לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ עַד
until and for our children for us 28 29 Devarim said for the Torah is by strangulation his death
עוֹלָם":
eternity

This halacha explains that while a prophet can temporarily suspend a Torah commandment as a one-time ruling, any claim to permanently abrogate a mitzvah is a capital offense.

ה'ל' ד

נְבִיא שֶׁקָרַח הַמִּכְחִישׁ אֶת הַתּוֹרָה אוֹ הַמְסוֹרֶת

Halacha 4 · A False Prophet Who Denies the Torah or Oral Tradition

וְכֵן אִם עָקַר דְּבַר מִדְּבָרִים שֶׁלֹּמְדָנוּ מִפִּי הַשְּׁמוּעָה אוֹ שֶׁאָמַר
that he said or the tradition from the mouth of that we learned from the matters a matter he nullified if And so
בְּדִין מִדִּינֵי תוֹרָה שֶׁה' צִוָּה לוֹ שֶׁהַדִּין כָּךְ הוּא וְהַלָּכָה
and the halacha is so that the law him commanded that Hashem the Torah from the laws of regarding a law
בְּדָבָרֵי פְלוֹנֵי הָרִי זֶה נְבִיא הַשֶּׁקֶר וַיִּחָנֵק. אַף עַל פִּי
though · even and he is strangled the falsehood is a prophet of this behold so-and-so is like the words of
שֶׁעָשָׂה אוֹת. שֶׁהָרִי בָּא לְהַכְחִישׁ הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁאָמְרָה דְּבָרִים לִיב "לֹא
not 12 30 Devarim which said the Torah to deny he comes for behold a sign that he performed
בְּשָׁמַיִם הִיא". אֲבָל לְפִי שְׁעָה שׁוֹמְעִין לוֹ בְּכָל:
in everything to him we listen the hour for but is it in heaven

This halacha establishes that a prophet who attempts to permanently alter the Torah or decide halachic disputes through prophecy is a false prophet.

ה'ל' ה

אִסּוּר שְׁמִיעָה לְנְבִיא הַמְסִית לַעֲבוֹדָה זָרָה

Halacha 5 · The Prohibition of Listening to a Prophet Who Entices to Idol Worship

בְּמָה דְּבָרִים אֲמוּרִים בְּשָׂאָר מִצּוֹת. אֲבָל בְּעֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים אֵין
we do not stars regarding worship of but mitzvot regarding other are said words In what
שׁוֹמְעִין לוֹ וְאִפְלוּ לְפִי שְׁעָה. וְאִפְלוּ עָשָׂה אוֹתוֹת וּמוֹפְתִים גְּדוֹלִים
great and wonders signs if he performed and even an hour for and even to him listen
וְאָמַר שֶׁה' צִוָּהוּ שֶׁתַּעֲבֹד עֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים הַיּוֹם בְּלִבְד אוֹ
or alone today stars worship of that there be worshipped commanded him that Hashem and said
בְּשְׁעָה זֹו בְּלִבְד הָרִי זֶה דְּבַר סָרָה עַל ה'. וְעַל זֶה צִוָּה
commanded this and concerning Hashem against perversion has spoken this one behold alone this in hour
הַפְּתוּב וְאָמַר דְּבָרִים יג ג "וּבָא הָאוֹת וְהַמוֹפֶת" דְּבָרִים יג ד "לֹא תִשְׁמַע
listen do not 4 13 Devarim and the wonder the sign and comes 3 13 Devarim and said the verse
אֶל דְּבָרֵי הַנְּבִיא הַהוּא" דְּבָרִים יג ו "כִּי דְּבַר סָרָה עַל ה'
Hashem against perversion he spoke for 6 13 Devarim that the prophet the words of to
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם". שֶׁהָרִי בָּא לְהַכְחִישׁ נְבוּאָתוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה. וְלִפְיֶכָּךְ נִדְעָ בְּוַדָּאִי
with certainty we know and therefore Moshe of the prophecy to deny he comes for behold your God

וְיִהְיֶה נֶבִיא שֶׁקָרָא וְכָל מִה שֶׁעָשָׂה בְלֹט וְכִשּׁוּף עֲשָׂה וְיִהְיֶה:

and he is strangled he did and sorcery with secret arts he did that and all falsehood a prophet of that he is

This halacha teaches that any prophet who commands even temporary idol worship is immediately exposed as a fraud and must be executed.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter begins by establishing that the Torah is an everlasting statute that can never be changed, meaning anyone who claims Hashem sent him to permanently alter a mitzvah is a false prophet liable to strangulation. The Rambam explains that while a prophet cannot change the Torah, we must obey his personal instructions or his temporary commands to suspend a mitzvah for a short duration, just as Bnei Yisrael obeyed Eliyahu HaNavi on Har HaCarmel. However, if a prophet claims that a law has been permanently nullified, or if he tries to use prophecy to decide a halachic dispute, he is a false prophet. Finally, the Rambam rules that we must never listen to a prophet who tells us to worship avodah zarah, even for a single hour, and anyone who makes such a claim is executed as a false prophet whose signs were merely sorcery.

לְמַעַן שֶׁ תִּשְׂמַח WHAT TO TAKE HOME

The central foundation of our entire emunah is that the Torah is eternal. It is not a relic of history, nor is it subject to the changing winds of time. The Rambam teaches us that even if a prophet performs the most breathtaking miracles, if he claims that a mitzvah has been permanently changed or nullified, we pay him no attention. The Torah is "not in heaven" anymore; it was given to us as an everlasting inheritance. This means that the Torah we have today is the exact same blueprint for life that Moshe Rabbeinu received at Sinai, and it remains fully alive and binding in our modern world.

Sometimes, the yetzer hara whispers that the Torah needs to be "updated" to fit the times, or that certain mitzvos are too old-fashioned for our current lifestyle. This sugya reminds us that Hashem's wisdom is infinite and transcends all generations. When we perform a mitzvah, we are not just practicing an ancient ritual; we are connecting to an eternal, unchanging reality. Our commitment to Halacha cannot be shaken by the trends of society or the pressure to conform.

Today, when you perform a mitzvah, whether it is saying a brachah with kavana, putting on tefillin, or speaking gently to a family member, stop for five seconds beforehand. Remind yourself: "I am doing an act that is eternal. This mitzvah has never changed, and by doing it, I am binding my soul to the eternal Torah of Moshe Rabbeinu."