

הלכות יסודי התורה • פרק עשירי

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

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, the Rambam teaches us how we are to identify and verify a true prophet of Hashem. We learn that a prophet does not need to perform supernatural wonders that alter the laws of nature, such as splitting the sea or reviving the dead, to prove his authenticity. Instead, his primary test lies in his ability to accurately predict future events with absolute precision.

We will also explore the fundamental differences between a true prophet of Hashem and common diviners or sorcerers. While the predictions of stargazers and dreamers are like chaff mixed with a little grain, the word of Hashem spoken through a prophet is pure grain, completely free of falsehood, serving to guide Klal Yisrael in all their needs.

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

הליא

הבחינה לנביא אמת על ידי הגדת עתידות

Halacha 1 • Testing a Prophet by the Fulfillment of Future Predictions

כָּל נָבִיא שִׁיעָמַד לָנוּ וַיֹּאמֶר 'שֶׁה' שְׁלָחוּ אֵינּוּ צָרִיךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹת כְּאֶחָד
like one a sign to perform required is not sent him that Hashem and says for us who arises prophet Any

מֵאוֹתוֹת מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ אוֹ כְּאוֹתוֹת אֱלִיָּהוּ וְאַלְיָשָׁע שִׁישׁ בָּהֶם שְׁנוּי
a change in them which have and Elisha Elijah like the signs of or our teacher Moshe of the signs of

מִנְהֵגוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם. אֶלָּא הָאוֹת שֶׁלּוֹ שִׁיאֵמַר דְּבָרִים הָעֲתִידִים לֵהְיוֹת
to be destined things is that he will say of his the sign rather the world of of the custom

בְּעוֹלָם וַיֵּאֱמָנוּ דְּבָרָיו שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים יח כֹּא "וְכִי תֹאמַר בְּלִבְכֶּךָ אֵיכָה
how in your heart you say And if 21 18 Devarim as it is said his words and will be verified in the world

נִדַּע אֶת הַדָּבָר" וְגו'. לְפִיכֶךָ כְּשִׁבּוֹא אָדָם הָרְאוּי לְנִבּוּאָה בְּמִלְאָכוֹת
in the service of of prophecy who is worthy a man when comes Therefore etc. the word — will we know

הַשֵּׁם וְלֹא יָבוֹא לְהוֹסִיף וְלֹא לְגַרֵעַ אֶלָּא לְעַבֵּד אֶת ה' בְּמִצְוֹת
with the mitzvos of Hashem — to serve rather to diminish and not to add he comes and not the Name

הַתּוֹרָה אֵין אוֹמְרִין לוֹ קָרַע לָנוּ הַיָּם אוֹ הַחַיָּה מֵת וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָּאֵלוֹ
of these and the like the dead revive or the sea for us split to him say we do not the Torah

וְאַחֵר כֶּךָ נֶאֱמִין כֶּךָ. אֶלָּא אוֹמְרִים לוֹ אִם נָבִיא אַתָּה אָמַר דְּבָרִים
things say you are a prophet if to him we say rather in you we will believe that and after

הָעֲתִידִים לֵהְיוֹת וְהוּא אוֹמֵר וְאָנוּ מְחַפִּים לְרֹאוֹת הִיבּוֹאוּ דְּבָרָיו אִם לֹא
not or his words whether will come to see wait and we says and he to be destined

יָבוֹאוּ. וְאַפְלוּ נָפַל דָּבָר קָטָן בְּיָדוֹעַ שֶׁהוּא נָבִיא שֶׁקֶר. וְאִם בָּאוּ
came and if falsehood a prophet of that he is it is known small a matter fell and even if will they come

דְּבָרָיו כָּלָן יִהְיֶה בְּעֵינֵינוּ נֶאֱמָן:

trustworthy in our eyes he shall be all of them his words

This halacha establishes that a prophet is verified not by performing supernatural miracles, but by the accurate prediction of future events.

ה'י ב

בְּדִיקַת הַנָּבִיא וְאֹמְרוֹ

Halacha 2· Testing a Prophet and Establishing His Authenticity

וּבֹדְקִין אוֹתוֹ פְּעָמִים הַרְבֵּה. אִם נִמְצְאוּ דְּבָרָיו נֶאֱמָנִים כָּלָן הָרִי זֶה

this one behold all of them trustworthy his words are found if many times him And we test

נָבִיא אֱמֶת. כִּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּשִׁמוּאֵל שִׁמוּאֵל א ג כ "וַיֵּדַע כָּל

all of And knew Chaf Gimmel Aleph Shmuel concerning Shmuel it is said as truth is a prophet of

יִשְׂרָאֵל מִדָּן וְעַד בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע כִּי נֶאֱמַן שִׁמוּאֵל לְנָבִיא לֵה"י:

to Hashem as a prophet Shmuel established was that Sheva Beer and until from Dan Yisrael

This halacha outlines the requirement to repeatedly test a self-proclaimed prophet's predictions before establishing him as a true prophet of Hashem.

ה'י ג

הַהֲבִדֵּל בֵּין נְבוּאָת אֱמֶת לְקוֹסְמִים וּמַעֲוֹנִים

Halacha 3· The Distinction Between True Prophecy and the Predictions of Sorcerers and Diviners

וְהִלֵּא הַמַּעֲוֹנִים וְהַקּוֹסְמִים אוֹמְרִים מָה שֶׁעֲתִיד לִהְיוֹת. וּמָה הַפֶּרֶשׁ יֵשׁ

is there difference and what to be is destined what say and the sorcerers the diviners And behold

בֵּין הַנָּבִיא וּבֵינָם. אֵלֹא שֶׁהַמַּעֲוֹנִים וְהַקּוֹסְמִים וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶן מִקְצֵת

some of of them and the like and the sorcerers that the diviners but and between them the prophet between

דְּבָרֵיהֶם מִתְקַיֵּמִין וּמִקְצֵתוֹ אֵין מִתְקַיֵּמִין. כַּעֲנָן שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יִשְׁעִיה מִזֵּי יג

13 47 Yeshayahu that is said as the matter fulfilled are not and some of them are fulfilled their words

"יַעֲמְדוּ נָא וַיּוֹשִׁיעֶךָ הַכֹּהֵן שָׁמַיִם הַחֲזִים בְּכּוֹכְבִּים מוֹדְעִים לְחֻדָּשִׁים

for the months who make known by the stars the stargazers of heaven the astrologers and save you now Let stand

מֵאֲשֶׁר יָבֹאוּ עָלֶיךָ. מֵאֲשֶׁר וְלֹא כָּל אֲשֶׁר. וְאֲפֹשֶׁר שֶׁלֹּא יִתְקִים

will be fulfilled that not and it is possible that all and not from what upon you will come from what

מִדְּבָרֵיהֶם כָּלוּם אֵלֹא יִטְעוּ בְּכֹל כַּעֲנָן שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יִשְׁעִיה מִדִּכָּה

25 44 Yeshayahu that is said as the matter in everything they will err but anything from their words

"מִפֶּר אֹתוֹת בָּדִים וְקוֹסְמִים יְהוֹלֵל". אֲבָל הַנָּבִיא כָּל דְּבָרָיו קִיֵּמִין

are established his words all the prophet but He drives mad and diviners imposters the omens of He frustrates

שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר מַלְכִּים ב י י "כִּי לֹא יִפֹּל מִדְּבַר ה' אֶרְצָה". וְכֵן הוּא

he and so to the earth Hashem from the word of will fall not for 10 10 II Melachim as it is said

אוֹמֵר יִרְמְיָה כִּג כח "הַנָּבִיא אֲשֶׁר אֵתוֹ חֲלוֹם יִסְפֹּר חֲלוֹם וְאֲשֶׁר דְּבָרִי

My word and he who a dream let him tell a dream is with him who The prophet 28 23 Yirmeyahu says

אֵתוֹ יִדְבֹּר דְּבָרִי אֱמֶת מָה לְתַבֵּן אֶת הַכֹּר נָאִם ה'". כָּלוּמֵר

meaning to say Hashem says the grain — is to the chaff what truth words of let him speak is with him

שְׂדֵבְרֵי הַקּוֹסְמִים וְהַחֲלוּמוֹת כְּתָבָן שֶׁנִּתְעָרַב בּוֹ מֵעֵט בָּר וּדְבַר
 and the word of grain a little in it that was mixed are like chaff and the dreams the sorcerers that the words of
 ה' כָּבֵר שָׂאִין בּוֹ תָּבָן כָּלֵל. וּבִדְבָר הַזֶּה הִכְתוּב הַבְּטִיחַ וְאָמַר
 that those and said promised the verse and in this matter at all chaff in it that there is not is like grain Hashem
 שְׂאוֹתָן הַדְּבָרִים שְׂמוּדִיעִין הַמְעוֹנְנִים וְהַקּוֹסְמִים לְאֲמוֹת וּמְכַזְּבִין
 the prophet and they lie to the nations and the sorcerers the diviners that make known the things
 הַנָּבִיא יוֹדִיעַ לָכֶם דְּבָרֵי אֱמֶת וְאִין אַתֶּם צְרִיכִין לְמַעֲוִנָן וְקוֹסִם וְכִיּוֹצֵא
 of him and the like or a sorcerer a diviner need you and not truth words of to you will make known
 בּוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים יח י "לֹא יִמָּצֵא בְךָ מַעֲבִיר
 his son one who passes among you be found There shall not 10 18 Devarim as it is said
 בְּנוֹ וּבִתּוֹ בְּאֵשׁ" וְגו' דְּבָרִים יח יד "כִּי הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה"
 etc. these these nations For 14 18 Devarim etc. through the fire and his daughter
 וְגו'. וְאָמַר דְּבָרִים יח טו "נָבִיא מִקִּרְבְּךָ מֵאַחֶיךָ" וְגו'.
 behold etc. from your brothers from your midst A prophet 15 18 Devarim and it says
 הָא לְמַדָּת שְׂאִין הַנָּבִיא עוֹמֵד לָנוּ אֲלָא לְהוֹדִיעֵנוּ
 things to make known to us except for us stands the prophet that not you have learned
 דְּבָרִים הָעֲתִידִים לְהִיּוֹת בְּעוֹלָם מִשְׁכָּע וְרָעַב מְלַחְמָה וְשָׁלוֹם וְכִיּוֹצֵא
 of them and the like and peace war and famine of plenty in the world to be that are destined
 בָּהֶן. וְאֶפְלוּ צְרִיכֵי יַחֲיד מוֹדִיעַ לוֹ. כְּשֶׁאֻל שְׂאֲבָדָה לוֹ
 a lost item to him when was lost like Shaul to him he makes known an individual the needs of and even
 אֲבָדָה וְהִלָּךְ לְנָבִיא לְהוֹדִיעוֹ מְקוֹמָה. וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָּאֵלֹהֵי הַדְּבָרִים
 it is the things of these and the like its place to make known to him to the prophet and he went
 הוּא שִׂיאֵמַר הַנָּבִיא לֹא שִׁיעֲשֶׂה דָת אַחֶרֶת אוֹ יוֹסִיף מִצְוָה
 or a mitzvah will add or another a religion that he will make not the prophet that will say
 אוֹ יִגְרַע:
 — will subtract

הליד

בחינת הנביא בנבואת טובה ולא בנבואת רעה

Halacha 4 • Testing a Prophet on Positive Prophecies and Not on Prophecies of Retribution

דְּבָרֵי הַפְּרָעָנוֹת שֶׁהַנָּבִיא אוֹמֵר כְּגוֹן שִׂיאֵמַר פְּלוֹנִי יָמוּת אוֹ שָׁנָה
 a year or will die so and so that he says for example says that the prophet the retribution The words of
 פְּלוֹנִית רָעַב אוֹ מְלַחְמָה וְכִיּוֹצֵא בְּדְבָרִים אֵלֶּה אִם לֹא עָמְדוּ דְּבָרָיו אִין
 there is not his words stood not if these with words and the like war or famine such and such
 בְּזֶה הַכְּחָשָׁה לְנְבוּאָתוֹ. וְאִין אוֹמְרִים הִנֵּה דִּבֵּר וְלֹא בָּא. שֶׁהַקְדוּשׁ
 for the Holy One it came and not he spoke behold say and we do not to his prophecy refutation in this

בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶרְךָ אַפִּים וְרַב חֶסֶד וְנָחַם עַל הָרָעָה וְאִפְשָׁר שְׁעָשׂוּ
 that they did and it is possible the evil on and relents kindness and abundant in to anger slow is He Blessed
 תְּשׁוּבָה וְנִסְלַח לָהֶם כְּאַנְשֵׁי נִינְוָה. או שֶׁתִּלָּה לָהֶם כְּחִזְקִיָּה.
 like Chizkiyah for them that He suspended or Nineveh like the people of to them and it was forgiven repentance
 אֲבָל אִם הִבְטִיחַ עַל טוֹבָה וְאָמַר שִׁיְהִיָּה כֵּךְ וְכֵךְ וְלֹא בָּאָה הַטּוֹבָה
 the good came and not and so so that there will be and said good on he promised if but
 שְׁאָמַר בִּידוּעַ שֶׁהוּא נִבְיָא שֶׁקֶר. שְׁכָל דְּבַר טוֹבָה שֶׁיִּגְזֹר הָאֵל אֶפְלוּ
 even God that decrees good matter of for every falsehood a prophet of that he is it is known that he said
 עַל תְּנָאי אֵינּוּ חוּזֵר. וְלֹא מְצִינוּ שֶׁחֲזָר בְּדִבְרֵי טוֹבָה אֶלָּא
 except good a matter of that He retracted we have found and not retracted is not condition on
 בְּחֶרְבֵּן רִאשׁוֹן כְּשֶׁהִבְטִיחַ לַצְדִּיקִים שֶׁלֹּא יָמוּתוּ עִם הָרָשָׁעִים
 the wicked with they would die that not the righteous when He promised the first during the destruction of

וְחֲזָר בְּדִבְרָיו. וְזֶה מְפָרֵשׁ בְּמַסְכֵּת שַׁבָּת. הָא לְמַדָּת
 you have learned behold Shabbos in the tractate of is explained and this His words and He retracted
 שֶׁבְּדִבְרֵי הַטּוֹבָה בְּלִבְד יִבְחֵן הַנְּבִיָּא. הוּא שֶׁיִּרְמְיָהוּ אָמַר בְּתִשְׁבּוּבָתוֹ
 in his reply said that Yirmeyahu it is the prophet will be tested alone the good that in the words of
 לְחַנְנְיָה בֶּן עֲזוּרָה כְּשֶׁהָיָה יִרְמְיָה מְתַנַּבֵּא לְרָעָה וְחַנְנְיָה לְטוֹבָה. אָמַר לוֹ
 to him he said for good and Chananyah for evil prophesying Yirmeyah when was Azzur son of to Chananyah
 לְחַנְנְיָה אִם לֹא יַעֲמְדוּ דְּבָרָי אֵין בְּזֶה רְאָיָה שֶׁאֲנִי נִבְיָא שֶׁקֶר אֲבָל
 but falsehood a prophet of that I am proof in this there is not my words will stand not if to Chananyah
 אִם לֹא יַעֲמְדוּ דְּבָרָיָה יוֹדַע שֶׁאֲתָה נִבְיָא שֶׁקֶר. שְׁנֵאמַר יִרְמְיָה
 Yirmeyah as it is said falsehood a prophet of that you are it will be known your words will stand not if
 כַּח ז' "אֶךְ שָׁמַע נָא אֶת הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה" וְגו' הַנְּבִיָּא אֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹּר
 will prophesy who the prophet etc. this the word — please hear but seven twenty-eight
 שְׁלוֹם בָּבֶל דְּבַר הַנְּבִיָּא יוֹדַע הַנְּבִיָּא אֲשֶׁר שָׁלְחוּ ה' בְּאַמְתּוֹ:
 in truth Hashem sent him whom the prophet it will be known the prophet the word of when comes peace

This halacha explains that a prophet is only tested on his positive predictions, because God may retract a decree of punishment if the people repent.

ה"ה

הַאֲמֵנָה נִבְיָא עַל פִּי נִבְיָא אַחֵר וְאִסּוּר נִסְיוֹן יִתֵּר

Halacha 5 · Believing a Prophet Based on Another Prophet and the Prohibition of Excessive Testing

נִבְיָא שֶׁהָעִיד לוֹ נִבְיָא אַחֵר שֶׁהוּא נִבְיָא הָרִי הוּא בְּחֻזְקָת נִבְיָא וְאֵין
 and not a prophet in the status of he is behold a prophet that he is another a prophet for him who testified A prophet
 זֶה הַשָּׁנִי צָרִיךְ תְּקִירָה. שֶׁהָרִי מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ הָעִיד לַיהוֹשֻׁעַ וְהָאֲמִינוּ בּוֹ
 in him and believed for Yehoshua testified our teacher Moshe for behold investigation needs second one this

כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל קִדְּםָּ שְׂעֵשָׂה אוֹת. וְכֵן לְדוֹרוֹת. נָבִיא שְׂנוֹדָעָה נְבוּאָתוֹ
 his prophecy whose was known a prophet for generations and so a sign he performed before Yisrael all of
 וְהֶאֱמִינוּ בְּדִבְרָיו פַּעַם אַחֵר פַּעַם אוֹ שֶׁהָעִיד לוֹ נָבִיא וְהָיָה הוֹלֵךְ
 going and he was a prophet for him who testified or time after time in his words and they believed
 בְּדַרְכֵי הַנְּבוּאָה אָסוּר לְחַשֵּׁב אַחֲרָיו וּלְהִרְהוֹר בְּנְבוּאָתוֹ שָׁמָּה אֵינָהּ
 it is not lest his prophecy and to question after him to suspect it is forbidden the prophecy in the ways of
 אֱמֶת. וְאָסוּר לְנִסּוֹתוֹ יוֹתֵר מִדָּאִי וְלֹא נִהְיָה הוֹלְכִים וּמִנְסִים
 and testing going shall we be and not than enough more to test him and it is forbidden truth
 לְעוֹלָם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים ו' טז "לֹא תִנְסוּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר נִסִּיתֶם
 you tested as your God Hashem — test Do not 16 6 Devarim as it is said forever
 בַּמָּסָה" שֶׁאָמְרוּ שְׁמוֹת יוֹז "הֲיֵשׁ ה' בְּקִרְבָּנוּ אִם אֵין". אֲלָא מֵאַחֵר
 since rather not or in our midst Hashem Is there 7 17 Shemos when they said in Massah
 שְׂנוֹדָע שָׂהָ נָבִיא יֶאֱמִינוּ וְיָדְעוּ כִּי ה' בְּקִרְבָּם וְלֹא
 and they shall not is in their midst Hashem that and they shall know they shall believe a prophet that this is it is known
 יִהְיֶה רֹהֵרוֹ וְלֹא יִחְשְׁבוּ אַחֲרָיו. כְּעֶנְיָן שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יְחֻזְקָא ל ב ה
 5 2 Yechezkel as it is said like the matter after him suspect and they shall not question
 "וְיָדְעוּ כִּי נָבִיא הָיָה בְּתוֹכָם":
 in their midst was a prophet that And they shall know

This halacha teaches that once a prophet is established by another prophet or by repeated true predictions, we must believe him without further testing.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter establishes that a candidate for prophecy must be tested multiple times solely on the basis of his positive predictions, as any good decreed by Hashem is never nullified, whereas prophecies of retribution may not materialize if the people do teshuvah. While diviners and sorcerers only get some predictions right and often err completely, a true prophet's words must all come to fruition down to the smallest detail. Finally, the Rambam rules that if an established prophet attests to the authenticity of another individual, we accept the new prophet immediately without requiring any further testing or wonders, and it is strictly forbidden to doubt him.

The Rambam teaches us a profound difference between the word of Hashem and the predictions of sorcerers and dreamers. The predictions of the world are like chaff mixed with a little grain, mostly empty, with a tiny bit of truth by chance. But the word of Hashem is pure grain, completely free of chaff. Every single word of goodness that Hashem decrees is absolute truth and will never fall to the ground.

This is not just a rule for identifying a prophet; it is a fundamental guide for our own emunah and how we speak to others. In our daily lives, we are often surrounded by the 'chaff' of worldly predictions, worries, and negative voices telling us what the future holds. But a Yid must anchor his mind only in the 'pure grain', the eternal, unchanging promises of Hashem's goodness, His Torah, and His love for us.

Furthermore, we see that while a decree of retribution can be overturned through teshuvah and Hashem's mercy, a promise of good is never nullified. Hashem's default desire is always to bestow goodness upon us. When we speak to our children, our spouses, or our friends, we must emulate this divine middah. Our words of encouragement, belief, and goodness should be solid, reliable, and absolute, while any words of rebuke should be soft, conditional, and quick to be forgiven.

Today, choose to tune out the 'chaff' of worldly anxieties and focus on the 'pure grain' of Hashem's goodness. When speaking to someone close to you, make a conscious effort to offer a word of pure, unconditional encouragement or praise, giving them a solid foundation of goodness to stand on.