



The Community

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Boruch Hashem

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Rabbi's Article

Absolute Certainty in the Truth of Torah

Upon the verse's (-Deuteronomy 18:15) commandment, "A prophet... you shall hearken to him," Maimonides (-[Link](#)) writes (-Laws of The Fundamentals of the Torah, Chapter 8, Law 2), "We do not believe in any prophet who arises after Moses, our teacher, because of the wonder [he performs] alone, as if to say: If he performs a wonder we will listen to everything he says. Rather, [we believe him] because it is a mitzvah which we were commanded by Moses in the Torah who said: If he performs a wonder, listen to him." Meaning, that it is not the act of the wonder itself that causes us to believe him, but rather, only because G-d commands us that, "If he performs a wonder, listen to him."

To fully understand, there are different *levels* that we have in receiving the word of G-d. First and foremost, there is the Torah that was given to us at Mount Sinai, and here, upon the first word of the *Ten Commandments* (-[Link](#)), the word *Onoichee* (אנכי), our sages teach us (-Shabbat 105a, according to Ayin Yakov's transcript) the acronym, (אנא נפשי כתיבת יהבית) "I have given Myself in my writings (Torah)," and so too (-Shemot Rabba 33:6), G-d says that through the Torah, "You are taking Me." And with G-d's giving us the Torah, through which G-d gives Himself, just as G-d does not exist for a purpose, G-d forbid, so too, G-d's Torah does not exist for a purpose (of reward, etc.) but is in itself the purpose. And this is why the Torah --unlike prophesies (which are for the purpose of bringing the Jews to keeping the Torah, returning to G-d, etc.) that spoke of timely directives, but not to create new eternal commandments-- is eternal, regardless of place and era, for just as G-d Himself, so too the Torah, is not effected by, nor subject to, any evolutionary changes. However, for this very reason (being eternal and infinite), the Torah is beyond "*ratification*" by the finite human mind. And therefore, for the Torah's truth to receive '*Absolute Certainty*' by the people, we had to have the prophets, and specifically the prophesy of Moses. And hence, there is a virtue within prophesy (in its relationship with the finite human mind), especially that of Moses, which the Torah itself does not have.

Then there is the prophesy of Moses, of which Maimonides (-ibid, Chapter 7, Law 6), explains that unlike all other prophets, "Moses, our teacher, would prophesy while standing awake... Moses, our teacher, [would prophesy] without the medium of an angel... His appreciation of prophesy would not be through metaphor, but through open revelation, appreciating the matter in its fullness." And Maimonides explains our faith in the truth of Moses' prophesy (-ibid, Chapter 8, Law 1): "The Jews did not believe in Moses, our teacher, because of the wonders that he performed... What is the source of our belief in him? The [revelation] at Mount Sinai. Our eyes saw, and not a stranger's. Our ears heard, and not another's... The Voice spoke to him and we heard, 'Moses, Moses, go tell them the following...'" With this Maimonides is not just speaking of our faith in Moses' prophesy, but that through Moses' prophesy we have the absolute certainty in the Torah's truth, being the word of G-d!

--This is why Maimonides rules (-ibid, Chapter 8, Law 3): "If a person will arise... and perform a sign or wonder and say that G-d sent him to add a mitzvah, withdraw a mitzvah... he is a false prophet. He comes to deny the prophesy of Moses," rather than saying that the prophet is denying the Torah. Maimonides is teaching us concerning our faith in the prophesy of Moses that, (i) it needs to be absolute (without, "his heart has shortcomings"), and (ii) it is not because of any miracles Moses performed, but because "Our eyes saw... Our ears heard." And for us to have this absolute faith in Moses' prophesy, we need have a faith so absolute that, (i) "signs and great miracles (of a false prophet) won't shake us, and for this, (ii) the person needs to be clear that any contradictory prophesy to Moses' is denying that which, "Our eyes saw... Our ears heard," beyond just being an ordinary prophesy.--

And why is Moses' prophesy (versus all other prophets) the vehicle for absolute certainty in the Torah? Because, specifically in the prophesy of Moses do we have both completions of: (i) The Divinity of the prophesy ("not be through metaphor, but through open revelation, appreciating the matter in its fullness"), and (ii) the physical acceptance of G-d's words ("while standing awake"). While all other prophets are only: (i) "in a dream or vision," "in metaphoric imagery," and (ii) "are (physically) overawed, terrified, and confounded [by the revelations they experience]."

With this, we will now understand why it is that when Maimonides speaks of a false prophet *adding or distracting one of the 613 Mitzvot of the Torah*, or commands us to do *idolatry*, in which the false prophet is uprooting the entire truth of the entire Torah, which, as explained, the entire truth of the entire Torah is through the prophesy of Moses, hence, here Maimonides states, "He comes to deny the prophesy of Moses." However, in the case of a false prophet coming to say, "G-d commanded me to say that the law is as such (i. e. 'this is pure or impure')," or that a specific law is not, "not from Heaven," in which he is not uprooting the entire truth of the entire Torah, but denying a specific ruling of a law in Torah, here Maimonides does not speak of, "He comes to deny the prophesy of Moses," but of "He comes to deny the Torah."

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2022 * ו' אלול תשפ"ב

Shabbat Candle Lighting: North Miami: 7:21 PM · Mincha: 7:30 PM

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2022 * ז' אלול תשפ"ב

[Shoftim](#) (Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9) · HAFTORAH: [Isaiah](#) 51:12-52:12

Shacharit: 9:30 AM · Mincha: 7:15 PM · Shabbat Ends: North Miami: 8:12 PM

This Week...