בס"ד אברהם מנינג - 5773

THE 13 IKARIM י'ג עקרי אמונה של הרמב'ם

(11) THE SIXTH IKAR - PROPHECY

סמנר מדרשת רחל וחיה

והיסוד הששי - הנבואה. והוא, לידע שזה המין האנושי ימצאו בו אנשים שיש להם טבעים מְעֻלים מאד ושלמות רבה. ויכונו נפשותיהם עד שיקבלו צורת השכל, ואחר כן ידבק אותו השכל האנושי בשכל הפועל, וישפע עליהם ממנו שפע נכבד. ואלה הם הנביאים, וזו היא הנבואה וזה ענינה. ובאור זה היסוד בשלמות יארך מאוד. ואין כונתנו להביא מופת על כל יסוד מהם, ולבאר אפני השגתו, לפי שזה הוא כלל החכמות כלן. ואמנם נזכרם על דרך ההודעה בלבד. ופסוקי התורה מעידים בנבואת נביאים רבים.

רמב׳ם - הקדמה לפ׳ חלק, משנה סנבדרין

1.

[The sixth principle] is prophecy. This means that one should be aware that amongst human beings there are some with a very developed nature and large degree of perfection. They can focus their souls until they are able to receive a higher intelligence. They are then able to connect this higher human intelligence to the Active Divine Intelligence, which then imparts onto them a Divine downflow. These people are called prophets and this is the concept of prophecy. A full explanation of this principle would be very lengthy and our intention is not to bring proofs for every principle, nor to explain fully how to understand them, since this would entail the totality of all wisdoms. However, we will mention them in passing. The verses of the Torah testify to the prophecy of many prophets

2. The existence of actions of purely incorporeal beings, in every case of change that does not originate in the mere combination of elements, is now firmly established. These actions do not depend on impact, or on a certain distance. They are termed "influence" (or "emanation"), on account of their similarity to a water-spring. The latter sends forth water in all directions, has no peculiar side for receiving or spending its contents: it springs forth on all sides, and continually waters both neighboring and distant places. In a similar manner incorporeal beings, in receiving power and imparting it to others, are not limited to a particular side, distance, or time. They act continually; and whenever an object is sufficiently prepared, it receives the effect of that continuous action, called "influence" (or "emanation").

God being incorporeal, and everything being the work of Him as the efficient cause, we say that the Universe has been created by the Divine influence, and that all changes in the Universe emanate from Him. In the same sense we say that He caused wisdom to emanate from Him and to come upon the prophets. In all such cases we merely wish to express that an incorporeal Being, whose action we call "influence," has produced a certain effect. The term "influence" has been considered applicable to the Creator on account of the similarity between His actions and those of a spring.

There is no better way of describing the action of an incorporeal being than by this analogy; and no term can be found that would accurately describe it. For it is as difficult to form an idea of that action as to form an idea of the incorporeal being itself. As we imagine only bodies or forces residing in bodies, so we only imagine actions possible when the agent is near, at a certain distance, and on a particular side. There are therefore persons who, on learning that God is incorporeal, or that He does not approach the object of His action, believe that He gives commands to angels, and that the latter carry them out by approach or direct contact, as is the case when we produce something. These persons thus imagine also the angels as bodies. Some of them, further, believe that God commands an action in words consisting, like ours, of letters and sound, and that thereby the action is done. All this is the work of the imagination, which is, in fact, identical with "evil inclination." For all our defects in speech or in character are either the direct or the indirect work of imagination.

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נְּנִים הָאֵלֶה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה יוֹרֵשׁ אוֹתָם אֶל מְעֹנְנִים וְאֶל קֹסְמִים יִשְׁמָעוּ וְאַתָּה לֹא כֵן נָתַן לְךָּ ה' אֱלֹקיךְּ: נָבִיא מִקְרְבְּךְּ מֵאַחֶיךְּ כָּמֹנִי יָשְׁמָעוּ ה' אֱלֹקייךְ בְּרוֹב בְּיוֹם הַקָּהָל לֵאמֹר לֹא אֹסֵף לֹשְׁמֹעַ אֶת קוֹל ה' אֱלֹקיי וְאֶת קוֹל ה' אֱלֹקייךְ אֶלֶהי וְאָת קוֹל ה' אֱלֹקירְ בְּרוֹב בְּיוֹם הַקָּהָל לֵאמֹר לֹא אֹסֵף לֹשְׁמֹעַ אֶת קוֹל ה' אֱלֹקייךְ בְּחֹב בְּיוֹם הַקָּהָל לֵאמֹר לֹא אֶקִים לָהָם מִקֶּרֶב אֲחֵיהֶם כָּמוֹךְ וְנָתַתִּי דְבָרִי הָשֶׁע אֶל דְּבָרִי אֲשֶׁר דְּבָּרִי אֲשֶׁר דְּבָּרִי אֲשֶׁר זְדָבָרִי אֲשֶׁר זְדָבָר אֲלֵיהָם אֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר אֲצֵנִּנּיּ וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשְׁמַע אֶל דְּבָרִי אֲשֶׁר יְדַבָּר בְּשְׁמִי אָנֹכִי אֶדְרשׁ מֵעְמוֹּ

דברים יח:יד-יכ

The Torah defines the future role of the Navi to as guide the Jewish people and instructs the people to listen to the Navi

ַנְמְצֵאתָ אוֹמֵר, שֶׁכָּל נָבִיא שֶׁיַצְמֹד אַחַר מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ, אֵין אָנוּ מַאֲמִינִין בּוֹ מִפְּנֵי הָאוֹת לְבַדּוֹ, כְּדֵי שֶׁנֹאמַר אִם יַצְשֶׂה אוֹת נִשְׁמַע לוֹ לֶכָל מַה שֶׁיֹּאמֵר; אֵלָא מִפְּנֵי הַמִּצְוָה שֶׁצִּוָנוּ מֹשֶׁה בַּתּוֹרָה, וְאָמֵר אִם נָתַן אוֹת, "אֵלָיו, תִּשְׁמַעוּן" (דברים יח,טו): כְּמוֹ שֶׁצִּוָנוּ לַחְתּנֹדְ הַבְּרִים, שְׁצִּוָנוּ לַשְׁמִע מָיָה הַנָּבִיא, אִם הָאוֹת אֱמֶת אוֹ הַדָּבָר עַל פִּי שְׁנֵי עֵדִים, וְאַף עַל פִּי שְׁאֵין אָנוּ יוֹדְעִין אִם אֱמֶת הֵעִידוּ אִם שֶׁקֶר; כָּדְּ מִצְוָה לִשְׁמֹעַ מִיֶּה הַנָּבִיא, אִם הָאוֹת אֱמֶת אוֹ בְּכִשׁוּף וְלָאט.

רמב"ם הלכות יסודי התורה ח:ב

All prophets derive their authority from the fact the Moshe Rabbeinu told us to listen to them (if they can prove their prophecy by a sign or prediction). Thus if they try to contradict the Torah of Moshe, we do NOT listen to them.

מּיְּסוֹדֵי הַדָּת, לֵידַע שֶׁהָאֵל מְנַבֵּא אֶת בְּנֵי הָאָדָם; וְאֵין הַנְּבוּאָה חָלָה אֵלָא עַל חָכָם נְּדוֹל בְּּחָכְמָה, גָּבּוֹר בְּמִדּוֹתָיו, וְלֹא יִהְיֶה יִצְרוֹ מִמְידֵּ בְּעַל הַּמָּדוֹתָיו, וְלֹא יִהְיֶה יִצְרוֹ תַּמִיד, בַּעַל דֵּעָה רְחָבָה נְכוֹנָה עַד מְאוֹד.
אָדָם שְׁהוּא מְמֻלֶּא בְּכָל הַמִּדּוֹת הָאֵלוּ, שָׁלֵם בְּגוּפּוֹ, כְּשִׁיּכָּנֵס לְפַּרְדֵּס וְיִמְשׁׁךְּ בְּאוֹתָן הָעְנְיָנוֹת הַגְּדוֹלִים הָרְחוֹקִים, וְתִּהְיֶה לוֹ דַּעַת נְבּעֹל הָבָין וּלְהַשִּׁיג, וְהוּא מִתְקַדֵּשׁ וְהוֹלֵךְ פּוֹרֵשׁ מִדְּרְכֵי כְּלֵל הָעֶם הַהוֹלְכִים בְּמַחְשַׁכֵּי הַזְּמָן, וְהוֹלֵךְ מְצָרוֹ וּמְקַבָּה לִּנְשְׁרָה מְתְקַדֵּשׁ וְהוֹלֵךְ פּוֹרִשׁ מִדְּרְכֵי בְּלֵל הָעֶם הַהוֹלְכִים בְּמַחְשַׁכֵּי הַזְּמָן, וְהוֹלֵךְ מְצָּיִה לְמַעְלָה, קְשׁוּרָה שָׁלֹא תִהְיָה לוֹ מַחְשָׁבָה כְּלֶל בְּאָחָד מִדְּבָרִים בְּטִלִים, וְלֹא מֵהַבְּלֵי וְתַחְבּוּלוֹתְיו, אֵלֶא דַּעְתוֹ תָּמִיד בְּנִלְיה, לְמִעְלָה, קְשׁוּרָה תַּחְלֹבְיה לוֹ מֵחְשָׁבָה בְּלֶל בְּאָחָד מִדְּבָרִים בְּטִלִים, וְלֹא פָּחְבְּלִית הַמְּחָבְיּלְ בְּאוֹלְיָה רְאשׁוֹרָה תְּמְבִילְ בְּאוֹלְיָה רְאשׁוֹרָה תְּמְבְילִיה בְּחָבְמְתוֹ שֶׁלְּבְיּ בְּרוּךְ הִוּא שַׁרָרה רְאשׁרָר, וְיוֹדֵע מֵהֶם נְּּדְלוֹ מִיָּד רוּחַ הַּמְלֶלֶת שַׁאָלְת הַמְּלְלַת הַמְּלְלָת הַמָּלְלָת הַמְּלְלָת הַמְּלְבִים הַנְּלְבִא מִינִה בְּשְׁאוּל, וְהָתְנַבְּיִת עְמָם; וְנָבְין בְּאוֹל מֵעְלַת שְׁאַלְת שְׁאַלְת הְשָׁאַר בְּנִיא אֲדָם הַחֲכַכְמִים: בְּשִׁאוּל, וְהַתְנַבְיתַ עְמָם; וְנָבְלְת עַלְה עַל מַעֵּלֶת שְׁאָלְ הָשְׁ הַחְבָּמִים: בְּשִׁאוּל, וְהְתִנְבְית עִּמְם; וְנָבְיל בְּעוֹל מִילָּת שְׁשָּבְת שְׁמִלְת שְׁאַלְת שְׁאַלְת שְׁאַלְרָת הָמָבְים: בְּמִיל שְּבָּבּים בְּמִילְת בָּשִׁלְת בְּבִיל בְּמִל בְּתְ הָבְיּוֹל בְּיִי אָדְם הַחֲכָּתְים בְּנִילְים בְּבְיּבוּת בְּיִבּים בְּמִלְים בְּיוֹל בְּישׁר בְּיוֹ בְּישׁבְיתְ בְּלְישׁ בְּבְיוֹב בְּישׁר בְּים בְּיוֹב בְּמְבְיל בְּיִבּין בְּבּעוֹת הָּבְלְים בְּנִילְים בְּבְּבְיּבְים בְּעִלְים בְּבְיּבְים בְּבְיּבְיוֹם בְּבְיבְים בְּבְּבְּבְיוֹת בְּבְיּבְים בְּבְּבְיתוֹים בְּיוֹבְיע בְּבְיתְּבְיבְּים בְּבְיּבְיתְ בְּבְיּבְיתְים בְּבְיבְים בְּבְיּבְים

רמב"ם הלכות יסודי התורה זיא

Prophecy requires that the prophet elevates himself or herself to the highest level of human intelligence, ethics and self-control in order that the Divine Spirit rest on them

הַנְּבִיאִים, מֵעֲלוֹת מֵעֲלוֹת הָן: כְּמוֹ שָׁיֵשׁ בְּחָכְמָה חָכָם נְּדוֹל מֵחֲבֵרוֹ, כָּךְ בַּנְבוּאָה נָבִיא נָדוֹל מִנָּבִיא. וְכַלַּן אֵין רוֹאִין מַרְאֵה הַנְּבִיאִים, מֵעֲלוֹת הַןּ בְּחָלְוֹם הָּנִישׁ בְּחָכְמָה חָכָם נְּדוֹל מֵחֲבֵרוֹ, כָּךְ בַּנְבוּאָה אֵלָיוֹ הַלְּיִלוֹם בְּחָזְיוֹן הַלַּיְלָה, אוֹ בַּיוֹם אַחַר שֶׁתִּבּיל עֲלֵיהָן תַּרְדֵּמָה: כְּמוֹ שֻׁנֶּאֱמָר בְּמַּרְאָה אֵלְיוֹ הָבּוֹלוֹם אֲדַבְּר-בּוֹ וֹבּמדבּר יבּיוֹ. וְכֻלּן, כְּשָׁמְתְנַבְּאִין, אֵבְרַהָם, וְהַנֵּה אֵימָה חֲשׁׁכָּה נְדֹלָה, נֹבְּלֶת עְלָיוֹ (בראשית טוּיבּ); וּכְמוֹ שְׁנָאֱמֶר בְּדְנָאֵל, וְהוֹדִי, נֶהְפַּדְּ עָלִי שִׁרְאָהי. כְּמוֹ שְׁנָאֱמֶר בְּדָנְאֵל, וְהוֹדִי, נֶהְפַּדְּ עָלִי (בראשית טוּיבּ); וּכְמוֹ שְׁנָאֱמֶר בְּדָנְאֵל, וְהוֹדִי, נֶהְפַּדְּ עָלִי לְמַשְׁחִית, וְלֹא עַצַרְתִּי, כֹּחַ וִדְּנִיאל יִחִ)

רמב"ם הלכות יסודי התורה זיב

Prophets come on different levels, but (other than Moshe) they all see in a dream-like trance which leaves them debilitated. After this experience, they can process the image they saw and explain it to others

הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁמּוֹדִיעִין לַנָּבִיא בְּמַרְאֵה הַנְּבּוּאָה דֶּרֶדְּ מָשָׁל מוֹדִיעִין לוֹ, וּמָיָד יֵחָקֵק בְּלְבּוֹ פִּתְרוֹן הַפְּשָׁל בְּמַרְאֵה הַנְּבוּאָה, וְיֵדַע מַה הוּא: כְּמוֹ הַשָּׁלָם שֶׁרָאָה יַצְקוֹב אָבִינוּ, וּמֵלְאָכִים עוֹלִים וְיוֹרְדִים בּוֹ, וְהוּא הָיָה מְשָׁל לְמַלְכִיּוֹת, וְשִׁעְבּוּדָן; וּּכְמוֹ הַחַיּּוֹת שֶׁרָאָה יְחָקְּאֵה יְרָאָה יְחָקְאַה יְרָבְיִה שְׁרָאָה יְרָאָה יְרָאָה יְרָאָה יְחָקְאַה יְרָאָה יְחָקְאַה יְרָמְיָה, וְהַפְּגִלְה שֶׁרָאָה יְחָקְאַאל, וְהָאֵיפָה שֶׁרָאָה וְכַךְיָה. וְכַלְּטָה הַּבְּרִיאִה הָבְרִין הַפְּעָבִים אוֹמְרִין הַפְּשָׁל בִּלְבָד בְּלֹא פִּתְרוֹן, כְּמִקְצַת דִּבְרִי אוֹמְרִין הַפְּשָׁל וְּבָרְדְ בְּלֹא פִּתְרוֹן, כְּמִקְצַת דִּבְרִי יְחָיְאָל וּצְרֶדְ חִידָה הֶם מִתְנַבְּאִים.

רמב"ם הלכות יסודי התורה זיג

Prophecy always comes as an image eg Jacob's ladder, which the prophet then interprets

8. כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים אֵין מִתְנַבְּאִין בְּכָל עֵת שֶׁיִּרְצוּ, אֵלָא מְכַוְנִין דַּעְתָּן וְיוֹשְׁבִין שְׂמֵחִים וְטוֹבֵי לֵב וּמִתְבּוֹדְדִין: שְׁאֵין הַנְּבוּאָה שׁוֹרָה לֹא מִתּוֹךְ עַצְלוּת, אֵלָא מִתּוֹךְ שִׁמְחָה. לְפִיכָּךְ בְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים, לְפְנֵיהֶם נֵבֶל וְתֹיף וְחָלִיל וְכִנּוֹר, וְהֶם מְבַקְּשִׁים מִתּוֹךְ עַצְלוּת, אֵלָא מִתּוֹךְ שִׁמְחָה. לְפִיכָּךְ בְּנֵי הַנְּבוּאָה, עַד שֻׁיִּנָבְאוּ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁאַתָּה אוֹמֵר פְּלוֹנִי הַנְבוּאָה; וְזֶה הוּא שֶׁנָאֱמֶר וְהַפְּחֹה מִתְנַבְּאִים ושמואל א' יּה) כְּלוֹמֵר מְהַלְכִין בְּדֶרְךְ הַנְּבוּאָה עַד שֻׁיִּנָבְאוּ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁאַתָּה אוֹמֵר פְּלוֹנִי מְתְנַבְּּאַר.
מִתְנַדֵּל

רמב"ם הלכות יסודי התורה זיד

אֵלוּ שְׁהֶם מְבַקְשִׁים לְהִתְנַבֵּא, הֶם הַנִּקְרָאִים בְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים. וְאַף עַל פִּי שֶׁמְכַוְנִין דַּעְתָּן, אִפְשָׁר שֶׁתִּשְׁרֶה שְׁכִינָה עֲלֵיהֶן, וְאִפְשֶׁר שׁלֹא תשרה

רמב"ם הלכות יסודי התורה זיה

9.

Prophecy is NOT automatic. Some seeks and train to reach it - Bnei Nevi'im - but do not achieve it

Moreh Nevuchim - 2:32

THERE are as many different opinions concerning Prophecy as concerning the Eternity or Non-Eternity of the Universe. For we have shown that those who assume the existence of God as proved may be divided into three classes, according to the view they take of the question, whether the Universe is eternal or not. Similarly there are three different opinions on Prophecy.

- 1. Among those who believe in Prophecy, and even among our coreligionists, there are some ignorant people who think as follows: God selects any person He pleases, inspires him with the spirit of Prophecy, and entrusts him with a mission. It makes no difference whether that person be wise or stupid, old or young; provided he be, to some extent, morally good. For these people have not yet gone so far as to maintain that God might also inspire a wicked person with His spirit. They admit that this is impossible, unless God has previously caused him to improve his ways.
- 2. The philosophers hold that prophecy is a certain faculty of man in a state of perfection, which can only be obtained by study. Although the faculty is common to the whole race, yet it is not fully developed in each individual, either on account of the individual's defective constitution, or on account of some other external cause. This is the case with every faculty common to a class. It is only brought to a state of perfection in some individuals, and not in all; but it is impossible that it should not be perfect in some individual of the class; and if the perfection is of such a nature that it can only be produced by an agent, such an agent must exist. Accordingly, it is impossible that an ignorant person should be a prophet; or that a person being no prophet in the evening, should, unexpectedly on the following morning, find himself a prophet, as if prophecy were a thing that could be found unintentionally.

But if a person, perfect in his intellectual and moral faculties, and also perfect, as far as possible, in his imaginative faculty, prepares himself in the manner which will be described, he must become a prophet; for prophecy is a natural faculty of man. It is impossible that a man who has the capacity for prophecy should prepare himself for it without attaining it, just as it is impossible that a person with a healthy constitution should be fed well, and yet not properly assimilate his food; and the like.

3. The third view is that which is taught in Scripture, and which forms one of the principles of our religion. It coincides with the opinion of the philosophers in all points except one. For we believe that, even if one has the capacity for prophecy, and has duly prepared himself, it may yet happen that he does not actually prophesy. It is in that case the will of God [that withholds from him the use of the faculty]. According to my opinion, this fact is as exceptional as any other miracle, and acts in the same way. For the laws of Nature demand that every one should be a prophet, who has a proper physical constitution, and has been duly prepared as regards education and training. If such a person is not a prophet, he is in the same position as a person who, like Jeroboam (1 Kings xiii.), is deprived of the use of his hand, or of his eyes, as was the case with the army of Syria, in the history of Elisha (2 Kings vi. 18).

As for the principle which I laid down, that preparation and perfection of moral and rational faculties are the sine qua non, our Sages say exactly the same: "The spirit of prophecy only rests upon persons who are wise, strong, and rich." We have explained these words in our Commentary on the Mishnah, and in our large work. We stated there that the Sons of the Prophets were constantly engaged in preparation. That those who have prepared themselves may still be prevented from being prophets, may be inferred from the history of Baruch, the son of Nerijah; for he followed Jeremiah, who prepared and instructed him; and yet he hoped in vain for prophecy

As to the revelation on Mount Sinai, all saw the great fire, and heard the fearful thunderings, that caused such an extraordinary terror; but only those of them who were duly qualified were prophetically inspired, each one according to his capacities. Therefore it is said, "Come up unto the Lord, thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu." Moses rose to the highest degree of prophecy, according to the words, "And Moses alone shall come near the Lord." Aaron was below him, Nadab and Abihu below Aaron, and the seventy elders below Nadab and Abihu, and the rest below the latter, each one according to his degree of perfection. Similarly our Sages wrote: Moses had his own place and Aaron his own.