

## Prophecy and Prophets

### Deuteronomy 18:20

"אך הנביא אשר יזיד לדבר דבר בשמי את אשר לא צויתיו לדבר ואשר ידבר בשם  
אלהים אחרים ומת הנביא ההוא"

*"But the prophet who shall purposely speak a word in My name which I have  
not commanded him to speak"*

### Deuteronomy 18:15

"נביא מקרבך מאחריך כמני יקים לך יהוה אלהיך אליו תשמעו"

*"You shall listen to him"*

### Maimonides: Negative Commandment #27

The 27th prohibition is that we are forbidden from prophesizing falsely, either by prophesizing in G-d's Name even though G-d has not spoken, or by prophesizing words which G-d (exalted be He) has spoken to someone other than himself, and he attributes it to himself, saying that G-d has spoken to him, when in reality, He has not.

The source of this commandment is G-d's statement, "If a prophet intentionally makes a declaration in My name when I have not commanded him to speak."

One who transgresses this commandment is also executed by strangulation — when listing those who are punished by strangulation, our Sages included a false prophet. There they stated, "Three are executed by man: one who 'intentionally makes a declaration in My name,' i.e. when he has not heard; one who speaks 'when I have not commanded him to speak,' but I have commanded someone else to speak, i.e. one who prophesizes when he himself has not been spoken to; and one who 'speaks in the name of other gods,' i.e. in the name of an idol." Regarding all of them it is written, "That prophet shall die," and when the type of execution is not specified, it refers to strangulation.

The details of this mitzvah have been explained in the eleventh chapter of Sanhedrin.

### **Maimonides: Positive Commandment #172**

The 172nd mitzvah is that we are commanded to obey each of the Prophets, may they rest in peace, and to fulfill all their instructions. Even if his instructions contradict one or many of these commandments, [we are commanded to obey him] as long as his instructions are temporary. This does not apply, however, if he permanently adds or subtracts [from the commandments], as we explained in the Introduction to our Commentary on the Mishneh.

The source of this commandment is G-d's statement (exalted be He), "To him you must listen." In the words of the Sifri: "The verse, 'To him you must listen,' means that even if he tells you to temporarily transgress one of the commandments of the Torah, you must listen to him."

One who transgresses this mitzvah is punished by mita bidei shamayim, as it says in G-d's statement (exalted be He) "If any person does not listen to My word that he declares in My name, I will punish him." It has been explained in tractate Sanhedrin that three are punished by mita bidei shamayim: one who disobeys the prophet, a prophet who disobeys his own prophecy, and a prophet who conceals his prophecy. All of them are derived from the phrase, "If any person does not listen." Our Sages said, "The phrase, lo yishma ['does not listen'] can also be read, lo yishamei ['does not listen to himself'] and lo yashmia['does not make others listen']."

The details of this mitzvah have been explained in the end of tractate Sanhedrin.