

PROPHET-ISM

by Rabbi Dovid Green

True Truth

"When a prophet or a dreamer of dreams will arise among you, and he'll give you a sign or wonder...and the sign or wonder will come true saying (proving) 'go and serve other gods that you don't know'. Don't listen to that prophet or dreamer because G-d is testing you to know if you really love G-d with all of your heart and all of your soul" (Deuteronomy 13,2-4).

Rashi, the medieval French commentator, writes that even though the sign or wonder did come true, we still ignore the words of this prophet. Why, you may ask, is G-d giving the prophet the power to perform these signs and wonders? It is because G-d is testing you.

The Chofetz Chaim (d. 1933) writes that we see from here that when G-d wishes to test his faithful ones, he even gives power and success to those who rebel against Him to the extent that they can even influence the heavens, not to mention experiencing success in material matters. Through this He tests His servants to see the quality of their faithfulness in seeing all of the success the evildoers are attaining.

It is idiomatic to our faith that miracles don't prove anything. Even if this prophet has already demonstrated his prophecy in positive ways, and is known by his people to be a true prophet, he destroys his credibility by telling the Jews to go serve idols. Indeed, he is only able to temporarily suspend the observance of a commandment in the Torah. His credibility is void just by attempting to do away with a commandment permanently.

This is an important point in our times when so many "ism's" exist. The "dreamers" and "prophets" abound, and they exhort us to go after their "ism's" with all of our hearts and souls. They say the commandments no longer apply. They offer proofs. The Torah says "don't listen to them, for G-d is testing you..." They tell us of miracles. We don't get excited by miracles. They take out huge ads. They're very well-backed financially. They offer us friendship, well-being, and truth. They offer us the "correct interpretation" of the words of our true prophets. Our Torah was referring to them. "...because he has spoken falsely about Hashem your G-d, Who took you out from the land of Egypt...(and his words are) to cause you to stray from the way G-d commanded you to go on.

The student of Torah takes it as a given that the various "ism's" the world has to offer are "the god's of others". S/he knows and accepts the words from the liturgy: "because they (the words of Torah)

are our lives and the length of our days (blessings preceding Shema). May we all merit to discern the truth and follow it with our hearts and souls.

Good Shabbos!

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