We are living a miracle. Yes, it is sometimes it is hard to see this as we go through our day to day grind living in the land of Israel, be we are living a miracle. Yes, it is sometimes hard to believe as we hear from all the naysayers around us who tell us that there is nothing special going on here. They are like the Spies in our parsha who denied the hand of God in history. The consequences of such naysayers go beyond causing us to wander in the desert of our meaningless lives. These naysayers cause us to lose our connection with God. Did you know that due to the spies’ report Moshe lost his prophecy!

The Rambam explains that one the critical factors necessary to receive prophecy is to not be depressed. The Rambam explains that the sin of the spies threw Moshe into a state of depression from which he could not come out of until the last of the all the warriors of the generation had died in the desert.
But wait a minute. We have returned to our land and some even call these times “the days of Mashiach” – that is, we are in the messianic process – as R. Tzvi Yehuda said after the Six-Day War:

"אנו מדברים על ימות המשיח ולא על יום אחד של משיח. יש על erbת מדרגות. יהו עלינו עד מדרגה, וממשהلغאתברשלמשיחותמלאתמה."

~Melchamto Shem Himesh Uvod Honeha: Dvir Arorial Berk~

So what about prophecy – are we there yet? Interestingly, I recently attended a seminar on the Theological Implication of the Six Day War. There was at a lecture given by Dr. Uriel Barak of BIU/HU lecturer of Jewish Philosophy, entitled: “The Six-Day War and the Renewal of Prophecy”.

What? Has anyone received prophecy today? Has anyone heard of such a thing? How could there be such a lecture title?

Before you fall off your seats, we need to realize that there are degrees of prophecy. Indeed, the Rambam explains that there are no less than 11 degrees of prophecy – that is, one has a long way to go before he gets to the level of Isaiah et al. The first two levels of prophecy are not even really prophecy but more like entry stages to prophecy (maalot likrat).

Now, regarding the first level of “prophecy”, the Rambam explains that it “consists in the divine assistance which is given to a person and induces and encourages him to do something good and grand.” Wow, I too have felt the drive to do something “good and grand” – maybe I too am a prophet ☺.

Now before we all get carried away here we must better understand the definition of this level initial of prophecy. The Rambam notes two critical features that distinguish a “prophetic” act from simply a good deed.

The first is that the drive to do some moral good is not one attributable solely to personal desire but rather to an irresistible force from beyond the individual. One is driven beyond one’s own abilities and desires and even against one’s own interests. As an example, the Rambam brings Moses, who was moved by the prophetic spirit “to slay the Egyptian, and to prevent evil from the two men that quarreled: it was so strong that, after he had fled from Egypt out of fear, and arrived in Midian, a trembling stranger, he could not restrain himself from interfering when he saw wrong being done; he could not bear it.”

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The second feature of an inspired or “prophetic” act is that it accomplishes something on a grand and far-reaching scale. That is, this is not a very localized act — e.g., in your own home. The Rambam brings the example of Joseph in the house of Pharoah — his success there was “prophetic”/divinely guided as it served to save all the Jewish people.

Based on this, Rabbi David Cohen (famous student of Rav Kook), more affectionately known as HaRav HaNazir, believed that the soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces during the six-day war attained the first level of prophecy. That is, they acted beyond the normal abilities and drives of soldiers and they achieved greatness beyond imagination — they returned the biblical land of Israel to the people of Israel.

That the soldiers were operating with an unworldly drive can be noted in the eyewitness report by David Rubinger (photographer of the iconic picture of the three soldiers at the wall): “I didn’t have any great feeling for Jerusalem. I just wanted to be the first with the photographs. There [was] still some sniping going on…When I got [there], it was very emotional. Everyone around me was crying…”

I don’t recall hearing accounts of American soldiers crying when they planted the flag in Iwo Jima.
Indeed R. Tzvi Yehuda said that God was revealed in the soldiers of Israel. He learned the idea from the Gemara (BM 106a) which discussed David haMelechs plea to Shaul HaMelech to let him fight Goliath. David said, I killed a lion and a bear, surely I can kill this philistine. The Gemara calls David’s ability to kill the lion and the bear “a small miracle” and the Tosfot explain that it was due to the “Spirit of Might and Knowledge to War”. This, explains R. Tzvi Yehuda was what inspired the great acts of the soldiers of the IDF in the six-day war.

But what really drives home the idea of prophecy in the six-day war is eye-witness testimony of Prof Yehuda Leibes. For those who don’t know Prof. Yehuda Leibes – he recently won the Israel Prize for his research in kabbalah. He took the stage and explained that while his expertise is in researching texts and getting into the heads of the authors, today he was not going to do that but rather reveal what was inside his head. Instead, he told us, he would tell us about his experience as a paratrooper (tzanchan) in Sinai during Six-Day War.

“In addition to the Exodus and the stand at Mount Sinai,” declared the professor, “we must add the Six-Day War as an event through which the voice of God was heard. How do I know? Because I heard it with my own ears.”

Here Prof. Liebes denied any claim to being a prophet but rather one who nevertheless heard the voice of God; for in the Six-Day War, he explained, God spoke in the language of events, “in the unambiguous language of facts.”

These are his words (in paraphrase):

And what were those “facts” which all heard the voice of God? The fact that the country anticipated total destruction, whereby friends and families parted from each other as if for the last time. The fact that even without the dark clouds of war hanging overhead, the economy was in a deep recession, the national morale was at a nadir and religious values were seen as archaic remnants of a dying culture. Then, within a blink of the eye, we had not only survived but regained the precious lands of our forefathers including Jerusalem.
It was miraculous. The people of Israel recognized the miracle to the point where one could apply the verse: And the people saw God and they believed in God and in Moshe … Dayan.

וַיִּירְאוּ הָעָם אֶת ה’ וַיַּאֲמִינוּ בַ ה’ וּבְמֹשֶה ... דיין

And this brings us back to Moshe Rabbeinu. We learned that Moshe lost his prophecy due to the sin of the spies, due to the fact that the people didn’t recognize God’s hand in history – the failure to recognize that they were living a miracle. On the other hand, we have merited the first level of prophecy with our miraculous return to Eretz Yisrael Hasheleima – the only thing holding us back from more is our recognition and joy at being in this holy place at this holy time. May we merit to reach all 11 degrees with the coming of the Mashiach, BBY.