

הלכות יסודי התורה • פרק שביעי

Complete Word-for-Word Interlinear • Navy & Gold Edition

CHAPTER PREVIEW

In this chapter, the Rambam introduces us to the sublime reality of nevuah, prophecy, showing us how Hashem communicates His will to mankind. We will learn about the intense spiritual and personal preparation a person must undergo to become fit for the divine spirit to rest upon him, including mastering his yetzer hara, expanding his mind in Torah wisdom, and detaching himself from the vanities of this world.

We will also explore the mechanics of prophecy, including the different levels among the nevi'im, the physical toll that a vision takes on their bodies, and the essential role of simcha in receiving the divine presence. Finally, the Rambam will contrast the prophecy of all other nevi'im with the unique, unparalleled level of Moshe Rabbeinu, the master of all prophets.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

הליא

ההכנה הנדרשת לנבואה והשפעתה על האדם

Halacha 1 • The Necessary Preparation for Prophecy and Its Transformative Effect on Man

מיסודי הדת לידע שהאל מנבא את בני האדם. ואין הנבואה

prophecy and not man children of — prophecies that God is to know the faith From the foundations of

חלה אלא על חכם גדול בחכמה, גבור במדותיו, ולא יהא יצרו

his inclination will be and not in his character traits strong in wisdom great a sage upon except rests

מתגבר עליו בדבר בעולם אלא הוא מתגבר בדעתו על יצרו תמיד.

always his inclination upon with his mind overcomes he rather in the world in anything him overcoming

והוא בעל דעה רחבה נכונה עד מאד. אדם שהוא ממלא בכל

with all filled who is a person very until correct broad intellect possesses and he

המדות האלו שלם בגופו, כשיכנס לפרדס וימשך באותן הענינים

matters into those and is drawn the Pardes when he enters in his body healthy these the character traits

הגדולים הרחוקים, ותהיה לו דעה נכונה להבין ולהשיג והוא

and he and to grasp to understand correct intellect to him and there will be the distant the great

מתקדש והולך ופורש מדרך כלל העם ההולכים במחשכי

in the darkness of who walk the people the generality of from the ways of and separates and goes on sanctifies himself

הזמן, והולך ומזרז עצמו ומלמד נפשו שלא תהיה לו מחשבה כלל

at all thought to him will be that not his soul and teaches himself and urges and goes on the time

באחד מדברים בטלים ולא מהבלי הזמן ותחבולותיו, אלא דעתו

his mind rather and its intrigues the time from the vanities of and not idle of things in one

פְּנוּיָה תָּמִיד לְמַעַלָּה קְשׁוּרָה תַּחַת הַכִּסֵּא לְהִבִּין בְּאוֹתָן הַצּוּרוֹת

forms those to understand the Throne under bound upward always is free

הַקְּדוּשׁוֹת הַטְּהוֹרוֹת, וּמִסְתַּכֵּל בְּחֻכְמָתוֹ שֶׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא כֻּלָּה מְצוּרָה

from form all of it is He blessed the Holy One of at His wisdom and gazes the pure the holy

רִאשׁוֹנָה עַד טְבוּר הָאָרֶץ וַיֻּדַּע מֵהֶן גְּדֻלּוֹ, מִיָּד רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ

holiness the spirit of immediately His greatness from them and knows the earth the navel of until first

שׁוּרָה עָלָיו. וּבֵעֵת שֶׁתָּנוּחַ עָלָיו הָרוּחַ תִּתְעָרֵב נַפְשׁוֹ בְּמַעֲלַת הַמַּלְאָכִים

the angels in the level of his soul intermingles the spirit upon him that rests and at the time upon him rests

הַנִּקְרָאִים אִישִׁים וַיִּהְפֹּךְ לְאִישׁ אֲחֵר וַיִּבִּין בְּדַעְתּוֹ שֶׁאִינוֹ

that he is not with his mind and he understands another into a man and he is transformed Ishim the called

כְּמוֹת שֶׁהָיָה אֲלֵא שֶׁנִּתְעַלָּה עַל מַעֲלַת שְׁאָר בְּנֵי אָדָם הַחֲכָמִים,

the wise man the children of the rest of the level of above that he has risen rather that he was like

כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּשָׂאוֹל שְׁמוּאֵל א י ו "וְהִתְנַבֵּיתָ עִמָּם

with them and you shall prophesy Vav Yud Aleph Shmuel concerning Shaul that is said as

וְנִהְפַכְתָּ לְאִישׁ אֲחֵר:"

another into a man and you shall be transformed

This halacha outlines the intellectual, moral, and spiritual prerequisites a person must achieve before the divine spirit of prophecy can rest upon them.

ה'יב

מַעֲלֹת הַנְּבוּאָה וְהַשְּׁנוּיִם הַגּוֹפְנִיִּים בְּעֵת הַחֲזִיוֹן

Halacha 2 · The Levels of Prophecy and the Physical Effects of Prophetic Vision

הַנְּבִיאִים מַעֲלֹת מַעֲלֹת הֵן. כְּמוֹ שֶׁיֵּשׁ בְּחֻכְמָה חָכָם גָּדוֹל מִחֲבֵרוֹ כֶּף

so than his colleague greater a sage in wisdom that there is just as are levels levels The prophets

בְּנְבוּאָה נָבִיא גָּדוֹל מִנְּבִיא. וְכָל אֵין רוֹאִין מִרְאֵה הַנְּבוּאָה אֲלֵא

except the prophecy the vision of see do not and all of them than a prophet greater a prophet in prophecy

בְּחִלּוֹם בְּחֲזִיוֹן לִיָּלָה. אוּ בַּיּוֹם אַחֵר שֶׁתִּפֹּל עֲלֵיהֶן תִּרְדָּמָה כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר

it is said just as a deep sleep upon them that falls after by day or night in a vision of in a dream

כַּמְדַּבֵּר יב ו "בְּמִרְאֵה אֱלֹיו אֶתְוַדַּע בְּחִלּוֹם אֲדַבֵּר בּו". וְכָל

and all of them with him I speak in a dream I make Myself known to him in a vision 6 12 Numbers

כְּשֶׁמִּתְנַבְּאִים אֵיבְרֵיהֶן מִזְדַּעְזְעִין וְכַח הַגּוּף כָּשֵׁל וְעֲשִׂתוֹנוֹתֵיהֶם

and their thoughts fails the body and the strength of tremble their limbs when they prophesy

מִתְטַרְפוֹת וְתִשְׁאָר הַדַּעַת פְּנוּיָה לְהִבִּין מֶה שֶׁתִּרְאֶה. כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר

it is said just as it sees what to understand free the mind and remains become confounded

בְּאַבְרָהָם בְּרֵאשִׁית טו יב "וְהִנֵּה אֵימָה חֹשֶׁכָה גְּדֹלָה נִפְלְתָ עָלָיו".

upon him falling great darkness a dread and behold 12 15 Genesis concerning Avraham

וְכָמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּדִנְיָאֵל דִּנְיָאֵל י ח "וְהוּדִי נִהְפֹךְ עָלַי לְמִשְׁחִית

to ruin upon me was turned and my appearance 8 10 Daniel concerning Daniel it is said and just as

ולא עצרתי כח:

strength did I retain and not

This halacha explains that prophets exist on different spiritual levels and describes the physical weakness and loss of senses that accompany a prophetic vision.

הלי ג

דָּרָךְ הַמָּשָׁל וְהַחִידָה בְּנִבְיאוֹת הַנְּבִיאִים

Halacha 3 - The Metaphoric and Allegorical Nature of Prophetic Visions

הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁמוֹדִיעִים לְנָבִיא בְּמַרְאֵה הַנְּבִאוֹה דָּרָךְ מָשָׁל מוֹדִיעִין לוֹ

him they inform metaphor by way of the prophecy in a vision of the prophet that they inform The matters

וּמִידַע יִחְקַק בְּלִבּוֹ פִּתְרוֹן הַמָּשָׁל בְּמַרְאֵה הַנְּבִאוֹה וְיָדַע

and he knows the prophecy in the vision of the metaphor the interpretation of in his heart it is engraved and immediately

מָה הוּא. כְּמוֹ הַסֵּלֶם שָׁרָאָה יַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ וּמַלְאָכִים עוֹלִים וְיוֹרְדִים

ascending and angels our father Yaakov that saw the ladder like is it what

בּוֹ וְהוּא הָיָה מָשָׁל לְמַלְכוּת וְשַׁעֲבוּדָן. וְכְמוֹ הַחַיּוֹת שָׁרָאָה

the creatures and like and their subjugation for the kingdoms a metaphor was and it on it and descending

יְחִזְקָאל וְהַסִּיר נְפוֹת וּמִקֵּל שָׁקַד שָׁרָאָה יִרְמְיָהּ וְהַמְגִלָּה שָׁרָאָה

and the scroll Yirmeyah that saw almond and the staff of boiling and the pot Yechezkel that saw

יְחִזְקָאל וְהָאִיפָה שָׁרָאָה זְכַרְיָהּ. וְכֵן שְׁאֵר הַנְּבִיאִים. מֵהֶם אוֹמְרִים

some of them the prophets the rest of and so Zecharyah that saw and the measure Yechezkel that saw

הַמָּשָׁל וּפִתְרוֹנוֹ כְּמוֹ אֵלֹהִים וְיֵשׁ שֶׁהֵן אוֹמְרִים הַפִּתְרוֹן בְּלִבָּד.

the interpretation say who they and there are these like and its interpretation the metaphor say

וּפְעֻמִּים אוֹמְרִים הַמָּשָׁל בְּלִבָּד בְּלֹא פִתְרוֹן כְּמִקְצַת דְּבָרֵי יְחִזְקָאל

the words of like some of interpretation without alone the metaphor they say and sometimes alone

וְזְכַרְיָהּ וְכָל בְּמָשָׁל וְדָרָךְ חִידָה הֵם מִתְנַבְּאִים:

they riddle and by way of in metaphor and all of them and Zecharyah Yechezkel

This halacha explains that prophetic visions are communicated through metaphors and allegories, the meanings of which are immediately understood by the prophet.

הלי ד

הַהֲכָנָה הַנִּדְרָשֶׁת לְקַבֵּל הַנְּבִאוֹה מִתּוֹךְ שִׂמְחָה

Halacha 4 - The Preparation Required for Prophecy Through Joy

כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים אֵין מִתְנַבְּאִין כָּכָל עֵת שִׂירְצוֹ אֶלָּא מְכוּוֹנִים דַּעְתָּם

their mind they direct rather that they desire time at every prophesy do not the prophets All

וְיוֹשְׁבִים שְׂמִיחִים וְטוֹבֵי לֵב וּמִתְבּוֹדְדִים. שְׂאִין הַנְּבִאוֹה שׁוֹרָה לֹא מִתּוֹךְ

from not rests prophecy for not and secluding heart and good of happy and sit themselves

עֲצָבוֹת וְלֹא מִתּוֹךְ עֲצָלוּת אֶלָּא מִתּוֹךְ שִׂמְחָה. לְפִיכָךְ בְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים

the prophets the disciples of therefore joy from rather laziness from and not sadness

לפניהם נבל ותף וקליל וכנור והם מבקשים הנבואה. וזהו שנאמר
as it is said and this is prophecy seek and they and a lyre and a flute and a drum a harp before them
שמואל א י ה "והמה מתנבאים" כלומר מהלכין בדרך הנבואה עד
until prophecy in the path of walking meaning to say prophesying and they 5 10 I Shmuel
שינבאו כמו שאתה אומר פלוגי מתגדל:
is growing great so and so say that you just as they actually prophesy

This halacha explains that prophecy does not occur at will, but requires mental preparation, seclusion, and a state of joy.

ה"ה

התקנה לנבואה וכני הנביאים

Halacha 5 · Preparation for Prophecy and the Disciples of the Prophets

אלו שהם מבקשין להתנבא הם הנקראים בני הנביאים. ואף על
and even the prophets disciples of are the ones called they to prophesy seek who These
פי שמכונים דעתם אפשר שתשרה שכינה עליהן ואפשר שלא
that not and it is possible upon them the Divine Presence that will rest it is possible their mind they direct though
תשרה:
it will rest

This halacha explains that those who prepare themselves for prophecy are called disciples of the prophets, though the resting of the Shechinah upon them is never guaranteed.

ה"ו

הפרש בין נבואת משה רבנו לשאר הנביאים

Halacha 6 · The Differences Between the Prophecy of Moshe Our Teacher and Other Prophets

כל הדברים שאמרנו הם דרך נבואה לכל הנביאים הראשונים
the first the prophets for all prophecy are the way of they that we said the matters All
והאחרונים חוץ ממשה רבנו רבן של כל הנביאים. ומה הפרש יש
is there difference And what the prophets all of the master our teacher from Moshe except and the last
בין נבואת משה לשאר כל הנביאים. שכל הנביאים בחלום או
or in a dream the prophets For all the prophets all to the rest of Moshe the prophecy of between
במראה ומשה רבנו מתנבא והוא ער ועומד שנאמר במדבר ז פט
89 7 Bamidbar as it is said and standing is awake and he prophesies our teacher and Moshe in a vision
"ובבא משה אל אהל מועד לדבר אתו וישמע את הקול מדבר
speaking the Voice — and he heard with Him to speak Meeting the Tent of to Moshe And when came
אליו". כל הנביאים על ידי מלאך. לפיכך רואים מה שהם רואים
see that they what they see therefore an angel the hands of by the prophets All to him
במשל וחידה. משה רבנו לא על ידי מלאך שנאמר במדבר יב ח
8 12 Bamidbar as it is said an angel the hands of by not our teacher Moshe and a riddle in a metaphor
"פה אל פה אדבר בו". ונאמר שמות לג יא "ודבר ה' אל משה פנים
face Moshe to Hashem And spoke 11 33 Shemos and it is said with him I speak mouth to Mouth

אֶל פָּנִים". וַנֹּאמֶר בַּמִּדְבָּר יֵב ה' וְתִמְנַת ה' כְּלוֹמַר שְׂאִין
that there is not meaning to say he gazes Hashem and the image of 8 12 Bamidbar and it is said face to
שָׁם מָשָׁל אֶלָּא רוּאָה הַדָּבָר עַל בְּרִיו בְּלֹא חִידָה וּבְלֹא מָשָׁל. הוּא
it a metaphor and without a riddle without its clarity upon the matter he sees rather a metaphor there
שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה מְעִידָה עָלָיו בַּמִּדְבָּר יֵב ה' בְּמִרְאָה וְלֹא בְּחִידוֹת" שְׂאִינוּ
that he does not in riddles and not in a vision 8 12 Bamidbar concerning him testifies is that the Torah
מִתְנַבֵּא בְּחִידָה אֶלָּא בְּמִרְאָה שְׂרוּאָה הַדָּבָר עַל בְּרִיו. כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים יִרְאִים
are afraid the prophets All its clarity upon the matter that he sees in a vision rather in a riddle prophesy
וְנִבְהָלִים וּמִתְמוּגְגִין וּמֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ אֵינוֹ כֵּן הוּא, שֶׁהַכָּתוּב אוֹמֵר שְׁמוֹת לֵג
33 Shemos says is that the verse it so is not our teacher and Moshe and melt and terrified
יֵא "כַּאֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹּר אִישׁ אֶל רֵעֵהוּ", כְּלוֹמַר כְּמוֹ שְׂאִין אָדָם נִבְהָל לְשִׁמְעַ
to hear is terrified a man that not just as meaning to say his friend to a man speaks As 11
דְּבָרֵי חֲבֵרוֹ כֹּה הָיָה כַח בְּדַעְתּוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ לְהַבִּין דְּבָרֵי
the words of to understand our teacher Moshe of in the mind strength was so his fellow the words of
הַנְּבוּאָה וְהוּא עוֹמֵד עַל עֲמָדוֹ שָׁלֵם. כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים אֵין מִתְנַבֵּאִים בְּכָל עֵת
time at every prophesy do not the prophets All whole his standing upon stands and he the prophecy
שִׁירְצוֹ. מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ אֵינוֹ כֵּן אֶלָּא כָּל זְמַן שִׁיחַפֵּץ רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ לּוֹבְשָׁתוֹ
envelops him Spirit the Holy that he desires time all rather so is not our teacher Moshe that they desire
וְנִבּוּאָה שׁוֹרָה עָלָיו וְאֵינוֹ צָרִיךְ לְכוּן דַּעְתּוֹ וּלְהַזְדַּמֵּן לָהּ שֶׁהָרִי הוּא
he for behold for it and to prepare his mind to direct need and he does not upon him rests and prophecy
מְכוּן וּמְזֻמָּן וְעוֹמֵד כְּמַלְאַכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת. לְפִיכָּה מִתְנַבֵּא בְּכָל עֵת שֶׁנֹּאמֶר
as it is said time at every he prophesies therefore service like the angels of and standing and prepared is directed
בַּמִּדְבָּר ט ח "עֲמָדוֹ וְאַשְׁמְעָה מֶה יֵצִוָה ה' לָכֶם". וּבִזְזָה הַבְּטִיחוֹ
promised him And in this for you Hashem will command what and let me hear Stand 8 9 Bamidbar
הָאֵל שֶׁנֹּאמֶר גִּמְרָא יִבְמוֹת סִב א "לֵךְ אָמַר לָהֶם שׁוּבוּ לָכֶם
for yourselves Return to them say Go a 62 Yevamos Gemara as it is said the Almighty
לְאַהֲלֵיכֶם וְאַתָּה פֹּה עֹמֵד עֲמָדִי". הָא לְמַדָּת שְׁכָל הַנְּבִיאִים
the prophets that all you have learned Behold with Me stand here and you to your tents
כְּשֶׁהַנְּבוּאָה מְסַתְּלֶקֶת מֵהֶם חוֹזְרִים לְאַהֲלָם שֶׁהוּא צָרִיכִי הַגּוֹף כָּלָם
all of them the body the needs of which is to their tent they return from them departs when the prophecy
כְּשֶׁאֵר הָעָם. לְפִיכָּה אֵין פּוֹרְשִׁין מִנְּשׁוֹתֵיהֶם. וּמֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ לֹא חָזַר
return did not our teacher and Moshe from their wives separate they do not therefore the people like the rest of
לְאַהֲלוֹ הָרֵאשׁוֹן לְפִיכָּה פִּרְשׁ מִן הָאִשָּׁה לְעוֹלָם וּמִן הַדּוּמָה לוֹ
to it the similar and from forever the woman from he separated therefore the first to his tent
וְנִקְשְׁרָה דַּעְתּוֹ לְצוּר הָעוֹלָמִים וְלֹא נִסְתַּלַּק מֵעָלָיו הַהוּד לְעוֹלָם
forever the glory from upon him depart and did not the worlds to the Rock of his mind and was bound

וְקָרָן עוֹר פָּנָיו וְנִתְקַדֵּשׁ כְּמַלְאָכִים:

like the angels and he became holy his face the skin of and shone

This halacha contrasts the unique, direct, and constant nature of Moshe Rabbeinu's prophecy with that of all other prophets.

ה'ל"ז

מִצְוַת שְׁמִיעָה לְנָבִיא וְהַנְהֲגַת הַנְּסִינּוֹת

Halacha 7: The Mitzvah to Listen to a Prophet and the Criteria for Accepting Signs

הַנָּבִיא אֲפָשָׁר שְׁתִּהְיֶה נְבוּאָתוֹ לְעַצְמוֹ בְּלִבְדּוֹ לְהִרְחִיב לְבוֹ וּלְהוֹסִיף

and to increase his heart to expand alone for himself his prophecy that will be it is possible The prophet

דַּעְתּוֹ עַד שִׂידַע מַה שֶּׁלֹּא הָיָה יוֹדֵעַ מֵאוֹתָן הַדְּבָרִים הַגְּדוֹלִים. וְאֲפָשָׁר

and it is possible the great the matters from those knowing he was not what he knows until his knowledge

שִׁישְׁלַח לְעַם מִעַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ אוֹ לְאַנְשֵׁי עִיר אוֹ מִמְּלָכָה לְכוֹנֵן

to prepare a kingdom or a city to the people of or the earth of the nations of to a nation that he will be sent

אוֹתָם וּלְהוֹדִיעֵם מַה יַּעֲשׂוּ אוֹ לְמַנְעֵם מִמַּעֲשֵׁים הָרָעִים שְׁפִידֵיהֶם.

that are in their hands the evil from deeds to prevent them or they should do what and to inform them them

וּכְשֶׁשְׁמֵשְׁלָחִים אוֹתוֹ נּוֹתֵנִין לוֹ אוֹת וּמוֹפֶת כְּדִי שִׂידַעוּ הָעָם

the people that they will know in order and a wonder a sign to him they give him and when they send

שֶׁהָאֵל שְׁלָחוֹ בְּאֵמֶת. וְלֹא כָּל הָעוֹשֶׂה אוֹת וּמוֹפֶת מֵאַמִּינִים לוֹ שֶׁהוּא

that he is him do we believe and a wonder a sign who performs everyone and not in truth sent him that God

נָבִיא. אֵלָּא אָדָם שֶׁהָיִינוּ יוֹדְעִים בּוֹ מִתְחִלָּתוֹ שֶׁהוּא רָאוּי לְנְבוּאָה

for prophecy fit that he is from his beginning knowing whom we were a person rather a prophet

בְּחֻמָּתוֹ וּבְמַעֲשָׂיו שֶׁנִּתְעַלָּה בָּהֶן עַל כָּל בְּנֵי גִילוּ וְהָיָה

and he was his generation the people of all above in them that he was elevated and in his deeds in his wisdom

מִהֲלֹךְ בְּדַרְכֵי הַנְּבוּאָה בְּקִדְשָׁתָהּ וּבִפְרִישׁוֹתָהּ וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן בָּא וַעֲשָׂה

and performed he came so and after and in its separation in its holiness the prophecy in the paths of walking

אוֹת וּמוֹפֶת וְאָמַר שֶׁהָאֵל שְׁלָחוֹ מִצְוָה לְשָׁמַע מִמֶּנּוּ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר דְּבָרִים יח

18 Devarim as it is said to him to listen it is a mitzvah sent him that God and said and a wonder a sign

טו "יֹאמְרוּ תִשְׁמָעוּן". וְאֲפָשָׁר שִׁיעֲשֶׂה אוֹת וּמוֹפֶת וְאִינוּ נָבִיא.

a prophet and he is not and a wonder a sign that he will perform and it is possible you shall listen to him 15

וְזֶה הָאוֹת יֵשׁ לוֹ דְּבָרִים בָּגוּ. וְאֵף עַל פִּי כֵן מִצְוָה לְשָׁמוֹעַ לוֹ

to him to listen it is a mitzvah though and even inside things to it there is the sign and this

הוּאֵיל וְאָדָם גָּדוֹל וְחָכָם וְרָאוּי לְנְבוּאָה הוּא מְעִמִּידִים אוֹתוֹ עַל

him we establish he is for prophecy and fit and wise great a man since

חֲזָקָתוֹ. שֶׁבְּכָךְ נִצְטָוִינוּ כְּמוֹ שֶׁנִּצְטָוִינוּ לְחַתֹּךְ אֶת הַדִּין

— to decide we were commanded just as we were commanded for in this his presumption upon

עַל פִּי שְׁנֵי עֲדִים כְּשֶׁרִים וְאֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁאֲפָשָׁר שֶׁהָעִידוֹ

that it is possible though and even kosher witnesses two the mouth of upon the judgment

בְּשֶׁקֶר הוֹאִיל וּכְשָׁרִים הֵם אֶצְלָנוּ מִעֲמִידֵין אוֹתָן עַל כְּשָׁרוֹתָן.

upon them we establish to us they are and kosher since falsely that they testified

וּבְדִבְרֵיהֶם הָאֵלוּ וְכִיּוֹצֵא בָהֶן נֶאֱמַר דְּבָרִים כֵּט כח "הַנִּסְתָּרֹת

28 29 Devarim it is said of them and the like these and regarding matters their kosher status

לָהּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַנִּגְלֹת לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ". וְנֶאֱמַר שְׂמוּאֵל

and it is said and for our children are for us and the revealed things our God are for Hashem the hidden things

א טז ז "כִּי הָאָדָם יִרְאֶה לְעֵינָיו וְה' יִרְאֶה לְלֵבָב":

sees and Hashem to the eyes sees the man for 7 16 I Shmuel

This halacha explains that a prophet may receive prophecy for personal growth or to guide others, and details the criteria of personal righteousness required before we accept their signs.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Rambam begins by defining the prerequisites for nevuah, explaining that it only rests upon a wise, strong-willed sage who has conquered his physical desires and constantly directs his mind to the spiritual realms. When the divine spirit rests upon him, he is transformed into a different person. The Rambam explains that all prophets, except Moshe Rabbeinu, receive their visions in dreams or trances, accompanied by physical trembling, and their messages are delivered through angels in the form of metaphors that must be interpreted. To receive prophecy, they must prepare themselves with joy and seclusion, often using musical instruments. Finally, the Rambam highlights the unique status of Moshe Rabbeinu, who prophesied while fully awake, without the medium of an angel, without metaphors, and without any physical dread, speaking to Hashem as a man speaks to his friend.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

My dear talmid, when we learn about the lofty levels of the nevi'im, it is easy to look at their greatness and feel completely disconnected. We read about how they would separate themselves from the vanities of the world, direct their minds upward, and prepare themselves to receive the word of Hashem. But the Rambam reveals a fundamental secret of our avodah that applies to every single one of us, right here and now: "Prophecy cannot rest upon a person when he is sad or languid, but only when he is happy."

Think about this deeply. Even a person who was a great sage, who had mastered his physical desires and possessed a vast intellect, could not receive the Shechinah if he was in a state of sadness or spiritual laziness. To draw close to Hashem, to feel His presence in our lives, we must cultivate a heart that is "sameach v'tov lev", happy and good-hearted. Joy is not a luxury or a side-benefit of a Torah life; it is the very vessel through which we connect to Hashem.

We may not be prophets, but we all seek to feel Hashem's presence in our daily lives, in our tefillah, our learning, and our homes. If we allow ourselves to be dragged down by the heaviness of the world, by worry, or by spiritual sluggishness, we close the doors of our hearts. But when we serve Hashem with joy, we break through those barriers and make ourselves a dwelling place for His holiness.

Today, before you begin to daven, learn, or do a mitzvah, take thirty seconds to pause, put a smile on your face, and consciously think of one blessing Hashem has given you, entering into the avodah with genuine joy.

