

הלכות יסודי התורה • פרק שביעי

Learned like the daf, the literal words in bold, flowing with the elucidation

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.

הלכה א

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

מיסודי הדת לידע שהאל מנבא את בני האדם.

From the foundations of the faith is to know that God prophesies to the children of man.

ואין הנבואה חלה אלא על חכם גדול בחקמה, גבור במדותיו,

And prophecy does not rest except upon a sage who is great in wisdom, strong in his character traits,

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

and his inclination will not be overcoming him in anything in the world, rather he overcomes with his mind upon his inclination always.

והוא בעל דעה רחבה נכונה עד מאד.

And he possesses intellect broad and correct until very much so.

אדם שהוא מלא בכל המדות האלו שלם בגופו,

A person who is filled with all these character traits, healthy in his body,

כשיכנס לפרדס וימשך באותן הענינים הגדולים הרחוקים,

when he enters the Pardes and is drawn into those matters, the great and the distant,

ותהיה לו דעה נכונה להבין ולהשיג

and there will be to him correct intellect to understand and to grasp them,

והוא מתקדש והולך ופורש מדרכי כלל העם ההולכים במחשבי הזמן,

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

והולך ומזרז עצמו ומלמד נפשו שלא תהיה לו מחשבה כלל באחד מדברים בטלים

and goes on and urges himself and teaches his soul that there will not be to him thought at all in one of idle things,

ולא מהבלי הזמן ותחבולותיו,

and not from the vanities of the time and its intrigues,

אלא דעתו פנויה תמיד למעלה קשורה תחת הכסא

rather his mind is free always, upward bound under the Throne of Glory,

להבין באותן הצורות הקדושות הטהורות,

to understand those forms, the holy and the pure,

ומסתכל בחכמתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא כלה מצורה ראשונה עד טבור הארץ

and gazes at His wisdom of the Holy One, blessed is He, all of it, from the first form until the navel of the earth,

ויודע מהו גדלו, מיד רוח הקדש שורה עליו.

and knows from them His greatness, immediately the spirit of holiness rests upon him.

ובעת שתנוח עליו הרוח תתערב נפשו במעלת המלאכים הנקראים אישים

And at the time that the spirit rests upon him, his soul intermingles in the level of the angels called Ishim,

ויהפך לאיש אחר ויבין בדעתו שאינו כמות שהיה

and he is transformed into another man, and he understands with his mind that he is not like he was,

אלא שנתעלה על מעלת שאר בני אדם החכמים,

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

כמו שנאמר בשאול שמואל א י ו "והתנבית עמם ונהפכת לאיש אחר":

as it is said concerning Shaul in Shmuel Aleph 10:6, "and you shall prophesy with them and you shall be transformed into another man."

הלכה ב

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

הנביאים מעלות מעלות הן.

The prophets are divided into levels upon levels of spiritual stature.

כְּמוֹ שֶׁיֵּשׁ בַּחֲכָמָה חָכָם גָּדוֹל מִחֲבֵירוֹ

Just as there is in wisdom a sage who is greater than his colleague,

כִּי בִנְבוּאָה נָבִיא גָדוֹל מִנְּבִיא.

so in prophecy there is a prophet who is greater than another prophet.

וְכָל־אֵין רוֹאִין מִרְאֵה הַנְּבוּאָה אֶלָּא בַּחֲלוֹם בַּחֲזִיוֹן לַיְלָה.

And all of them do not see the vision of the prophecy except in a dream, in a vision of the night,

אוּ בַּיּוֹם אַחֵר שֶׁתִּפֹּל עֲלֵיהֶן תַּרְדֵּמָה

or by day, after there falls upon them a deep sleep,

כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "בְּמִרְאָה אֵלָיו אֶתְנַדַּע בַּחֲלוֹם אֲדַבֵּר בּוֹ".

just as it is said in the Torah: "In a vision to him I make Myself known, in a dream I speak with him."

וְכָל־כַּשְׁמֵת־נִבְּאִים אֵיבְרֵיהֶן מִזְדַּעְזְעִין

And all of them, when they prophesy, their limbs tremble,

וְכַח הַגּוּף כָּשֵׁל וְעֲשִׂתוֹנוֹתֵיהֶם מִתְטַרְפוֹת

and the strength of the body fails, and their thoughts become confounded,

וְתִשָּׂאֵר הַדַּעַת פְּנוּיָה לְהִכִּין מֶה שֶׁתִּרְאֶה.

and only the mind remains free to understand what it sees.

כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּאַבְרָהָם "וְהִנֵּה אֵימָה חֲשֹׁכָה גְדֹלָה נֹפֶלֶת עָלָיו".

This is just as it is said concerning Avraham: "And behold, a dread, a great darkness, falling upon him."

וְכְמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בְּדַנְיֵאל "וְהוּדִי נִהְפָּה עָלַי לְמִשְׁחִית וְלֹא עֲצָרְתִּי כֹחַ":

And just as it is said concerning Daniel: "And my appearance was turned upon me to ruin, and I did not retain strength."

הִלָּכָה ג

Halacha 3 - The Metaphoric and Allegorical Nature of Prophetic Visions

הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁמוֹדִיעִים לְנָבִיא בְּמִרְאֵה הַנְּבוּאָה

The matters that they inform the prophet in a vision of the prophecy,

דֶּרֶךְ מָשָׁל מוֹדִיעִין לוֹ

by way of metaphor they inform him,

וּמִיָּד יִחַקֵּק בְּלִבּוֹ פִּתְרוֹן הַמָּשָׁל בְּמַרְאֵה הַנְּבוּאָה

and immediately it is engraved in his heart, during that very vision of the prophecy, the interpretation of the metaphor,

וַיֵּדַע מָה הוּא.

and he knows what it is meant to represent.

כְּמוֹ הַסֵּלָם שָׁרָאָה יַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ

This is like the ladder that saw Yaakov our father,

וּמַלְאָכִים עוֹלִים וְיוֹרְדִים בּוֹ

and angels ascending and descending on it,

וְהוּא הָיָה מָשָׁל לְמַלְכוּת וְשַׁעֲבוּדָן.

and it was a metaphor for the kingdoms and their subjugation of the Jewish people.

וּכְמוֹ הַחַיּוֹת שָׁרָאָה יְחִזְקֵאל

And like the creatures that saw Yechezkel,

וְהַסִּיר נְפוֹת וּמַקֵּל שֶׁקֵּד שָׁרָאָה יִרְמְיָה

and the boiling pot and the staff of almond that saw Yirmeyah,

וְהַמְּגִלָּה שָׁרָאָה יְחִזְקֵאל

and the scroll that saw Yechezkel,

וְהָאִיפָה שָׁרָאָה זְכַרְיָה.

and the measure that saw Zecharyah.

וְכֵן שָׁאֵר הַנְּבוֹיָאִים.

And so the rest of the prophets received their prophecies.

מֵהֶם אוֹמְרִים הַמָּשָׁל וּפִתְרוֹנוֹ כְּמוֹ אֵלּוּ.

Some of them say the metaphor and its interpretation, like these examples.

וַיֵּשׁ שֶׁהֵן אוֹמְרִים הַפִּתְרוֹן בְּלִבְדּוֹ.

And there are who they say the interpretation alone, without mentioning the metaphor.

וּפְעָמִים אוֹמְרִים הַמָּשָׁל בְּלִבְדּוֹ בְּלֹא פִתְרוֹן

And sometimes they say the metaphor alone without interpretation,

בְּמַקְצֵת דְּבָרֵי יְחִזְקֵאל וְזְכַרְיָה

like some of the words of Yechezkel and Zecharyah.

וְכָלֹן בְּמִשָּׁל וְדֶרֶךְ חֵידָה הֵם מִתְנַבְּאִים:

And all of them, in metaphor and by way of riddle they prophesy.

הלכה ד

Halacha 4 · The Preparation Required for Prophecy Through Joy

כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים אֵין מִתְנַבְּאִין בְּכָל עֵת שֶׁיִּרְצוּ

All the prophets do not prophesy at every time that they desire,

אֶלָּא מְכוּנִים דַּעְתָּם וְיוֹשְׁבִים שְׂמֵחִים וְטוֹבֵי לֵב וּמִתְבּוֹדִידִים.

rather they direct their mind and sit happy and good of heart and secluding themselves.

שֶׁאֵין הַנְּבוּאָה שׁוֹרָה לֹא מִתּוֹךְ עֲצָבוֹת וְלֹא מִתּוֹךְ עֲצָלוֹת אֶלָּא מִתּוֹךְ שְׂמֵחָה.

For the spirit of prophecy rests not from a state of sadness and not from a state of laziness, rather only from a state of joy.

לְפִיכָךְ בְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים לִפְנֵיהֶם נָכַל וְתֵר וְחֹלִיל וְכִנּוֹר וְהֵם מְבַקְּשִׁים הַנְּבוּאָה.

Therefore, the disciples of the prophets would have before them a harp and a drum and a flute and a lyre, and they would play music to bring themselves to joy as they seek prophecy.

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "וְהֵמָּה מִתְנַבְּאִים"

And this is the meaning of that which is said in the verse, "and they prophesying,"

כְּלוּמַר מִהֲלָכִין בְּדֶרֶךְ הַנְּבוּאָה עַד שֶׁיִּנְבְּאוּ

meaning to say that they were walking in the path of prophecy until they actually prophesy,

כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַר אוֹמֵר פְּלוֹנִי מִתְגַּדֵּל:

just as that you say, "so-and-so is growing great" even before he has reached his full greatness.

הלכה ה

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

אֵלּוּ שֶׁהֵם מְבַקְּשִׁין לְהִתְנַבֵּא

These who are seeking to prophesy

הֵם הַנִּקְרָאִים בְּנֵי הַנְּבִיאִים.

they are the ones called disciples of the prophets.

וְאַף עַל פִּי שֶׁמְכוּנִים דַּעְתָּם

And even though they direct their mind to prepare themselves,

אפשר שתשרה שכינה עליהן

it is possible that the Divine Presence will rest upon them,

ואפשר שלא תשרה:

and it is possible that it will not rest.

הלכה ו

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

כל הדברים שאמרנו הם דרך נבואה לכל הנביאים הראשונים והאחרונים

All the matters that we said regarding the preparation and the way prophecy is received, they are the way of prophecy for all the prophets, the first and the last,

חוץ ממשה רבנו רבן של כל הנביאים.

except from Moshe our teacher, the master of all the prophets.

ומה הפרש יש בין נבואת משה לשאר כל הנביאים.

And what difference is there between the prophecy of Moshe to the rest of all the prophets?

שכל הנביאים בחלום או במראה

For all the prophets receive prophecy only in a dream or in a vision,

ומשה רבנו מתנבא והוא ער ועומד

and Moshe our teacher prophesies and he is awake and standing,

שנאמר במדבר ז פט "ובבא משה אל אהל מועד לדבר אתו וישמע את הקול מדבר אליו".

as it is said, 'And when came Moshe to the Tent of Meeting to speak with Him, and he heard the Voice speaking to him.'

כל הנביאים על ידי מלאך.

All the prophets receive their prophecy by the hands of an angel;

לפיכך רואים מה שהם רואים במשל וחיידה.

therefore, they see what they see in a metaphor and a riddle.

משה רבנו לא על ידי מלאך

Moshe our teacher received it not by the hands of an angel,

שנאמר במדבר יב ח "פה אל פה אדבר בו".

as it is said, 'Mouth to mouth I speak with him,'

וַנֹּאמֶר שְׁמוֹת לֵג יָא "וַדְּבַר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה פָּנִים אֶל פָּנִים".

and it is said, 'And spoke Hashem to Moshe face to face,'

וַנֹּאמֶר בַּמַּדְבָּר יב ח "וּתְמִנַּת ה' יִבִּיט"

and it is said, 'and the image of Hashem he gazes,'

כְּלוֹמַר שֶׁאֵין שָׁם מָשָׁל אֶלָּא רוֹאֶה הַדְּבָר עַל בְּרִיּוֹ בְּלֹא חֵידָה וּבְלֹא מָשָׁל.

meaning to say that there is not there a metaphor, rather he sees the matter upon its clarity, without a riddle and without a metaphor.

הוא שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה מְעִידָה עָלָיו בַּמַּדְבָּר יב ח "בְּמִרְאָה וְלֹא בְּחִידוֹת"

It is that the Torah testifies concerning him, 'in a vision and not in riddles,'

שֶׁאֵינוֹ מְתַנַּבֵּא בְּחֵידָה אֶלָּא בְּמִרְאָה שְׂרוּאָה הַדְּבָר עַל בְּרִיּוֹ.

that he does not prophesy in a riddle, rather in a vision that he sees the matter upon its clarity.

כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים יִרְאִים וְנִבְהָלִים וּמִתְמוּגְגִין

All the prophets are afraid and terrified and melt from the physical intensity of the vision,

וּמֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ אֵינוֹ כֵּן

and Moshe our teacher is not so;

הוא, שֶׁהַכָּתוּב אוֹמֵר שְׁמוֹת לֵג יָא "כַּאֲשֶׁר יְדַבֵּר אִישׁ אֶל רֵעֵהוּ",

it is that the verse says, 'As speaks a man to his friend,'

כְּלוֹמַר כְּמוֹ שֶׁאֵין אָדָם נִבְהָל לְשִׁמְעַת דְּבָרֵי חֲבֵרוֹ

meaning to say, just as that not a man is terrified to hear the words of his fellow,

כִּי הָיָה כֹחַ בְּדַעְתּוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ לְהַכִּין דְּבָרֵי הַנְּבוּאָה וְהוא עוֹמֵד עַל עַמּוּדוֹ שָׁלֵם.

so was strength in the mind of Moshe our teacher to understand the words of the prophecy, and he stands upon his standing whole.

כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים אֵין מְתַנַּבֵּאִים בְּכָל עֵת שֶׁיִּרְצוּ.

All the prophets do not prophesy at every time that they desire.

מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ אֵינוֹ כֵּן

Moshe our teacher is not so;

אֶלָּא כָּל זְמַן שֶׁיִּחַפֵּץ רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ לִוְכָשֶׁתוֹ וְנִבְּוָה שׁוֹרָה עָלָיו

rather, all time that he desires, the Holy Spirit envelops him and prophecy rests upon him,

וְאֵינוֹ צָרִיךְ לְכוּן דַּעְתּוֹ וּלְהַזְדַּמֵּן לָהּ

and he does not need to direct his mind and to prepare for it,

שֶׁהֵרִי הוּא מְכוּן וּמוֹזְמָן וְעוֹמֵד כְּמַלְאכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת.

for behold, he is directed and prepared and standing like the angels of service;

לְפִיכָהּ מִתְנַבֵּא בְּכָל יֵת שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בַּמִּדְבָּר ט ח "עֲמִדוּ וְאֶשְׁמָעָה מֶה יִצְוֶה ה' לָכֶם".

therefore, he prophesies at every time, as it is said, 'Stand and let me hear what will command Hashem for you.'

וּבְזֶה הַבְּטִיחוֹ הָאֵל שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר גִּמְרָא יִבְמוֹת סָב א "לֵךְ אָמַר לָהֶם שׁוּבוּ לָכֶם לְאֶהָלֵיכֶם וְאַתָּה פֹּה עֹמֵד עַמְדִּי".

And in this promised him the Almighty, as it is said, 'Go say to them: Return for yourselves to your tents, and you here stand with Me.'

הָא לְמִדַּת שְׂכָל הַנְּבִיאִים כְּשֶׁהִנְבִּיאָה מִסֵּת לָקַת מֵהֶם חוֹזְרִים לְאֶהָלָם

Behold, you have learned that all the prophets, when the prophecy departs from them, they return to their tent,

שֶׁהוּא צָרִיךְ הַגּוֹר כָּלָם כְּשֶׁאֵר הָעָם.

which is the needs of the body, all of them like the rest of the people;

לְפִיכָהּ אֵין פּוֹרְשִׁין מִנְּשׂוֹתֵיהֶם.

therefore, they do not separate from their wives.

וּמֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ לֹא חָזַר לְאֶהָלוֹ הָרִאשׁוֹן

And Moshe our teacher did not return to his tent the first;

לְפִיכָהּ פִּרְשׁ מִן הָאִשָּׁה לְעוֹלָם וּמִן הַדּוּמָה לוֹ

therefore, he separated from the woman forever, and from the similar to it of physical involvements,

וְנִקְשְׁרָה דַּעְתּוֹ לְצוּר הָעוֹלָמִים

and was bound his mind to the Rock of the worlds,

וְלֹא נִסְתַּלַּק מֵעָלָיו הַהוֹד לְעוֹלָם וְקָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו וְנִתְקַדֵּשׁ כְּמַלְאכִים:

and did not depart from upon him the glory forever, and shone the skin of his face, and he became holy like the angels.

Regarding the prophet, it is possible that his prophecy will be for himself alone,

לְהַרְחִיב לְבֹו וּלְהוֹסִיף דַּעְתּוֹ

merely to expand his heart and to increase his knowledge,

עַד שֶׁיֵּדַע מַה שֶׁלֹּא הָיָה יוֹדֵעַ מֵאוֹתָן הַדְּבָרִים הַגְּדוֹלִים.

until he knows what he was not knowing of those great matters of the creation and the Chariot.

וְאַפְשָׁר שֶׁיִּשְׁלַח לְעַם מֵעַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ

And it is possible that he will be sent to a nation of the nations of the earth,

אוּ לְאַנְשֵׁי עִיר אוּ מַמְלָכָה

or to the people of a city or a kingdom,

לְכוּנֵן אוֹתָם וּלְהוֹדִיעָם מַה יַּעֲשׂוּ

to prepare them and to inform them what they should do,

אוּ לְמִנְעָם מִמַּעֲשֵׂים הָרָעִים שֶׁבְּיָדֵיהֶם.

or to prevent them from the evil deeds that are in their hands.

וּכְשֶׁמִּשְׁלָחִים אוֹתוֹ נוֹתְנִין לוֹ אוֹת וּמוֹפֶת

And when they send him from Heaven, they give to him a sign and a wonder,

כְּדִי שֶׁיֵּדְעוּ הָעָם שֶׁהָאֵל שָׁלְחוֹ בְּאֱמֶת.

in order that the people will know that God sent him in truth.

וְלֹא כָּל הָעוֹשֶׂה אוֹת וּמוֹפֶת מֵאַמִּינִים לוֹ שֶׁהוּא נָבִיא.

And not everyone who performs a sign and a wonder do we believe him that he is a prophet.

אֶלָּא אָדָם שֶׁהָיָינוּ יוֹדְעִים בּוֹ מִתְחִלָּתוֹ שֶׁהוּא רָאוּי לְנְבוּאָה

Rather, only a person whom we were knowing from his beginning that he is fit for prophecy,

בְּחֻכְמָתוֹ וּבְמַעֲשָׂיו שֶׁנִּתְעַלָּה בָּהֶן עַל כָּל בְּנֵי גִילוֹ

in his wisdom and in his deeds, in which he was elevated above all the people of his generation,

וְהָיָה מְהֵלָּה בְּדַרְכֵי הַנְּבוּאָה בְּקִדְשָׁתָהּ וּבִכְפָּרִישׁוּתָהּ

and he was walking in the paths of prophecy in its holiness and in its separation,

וְאַחֵר כִּךָּ בָּא וַעֲשֶׂה אוֹת וּמוֹפֶת וְאָמַר שֶׁהָאֵל שָׁלְחוֹ

and after so he came and performed a sign and a wonder, and said that God sent him,

מצוה לשמוע ממנו

it is a mitzvah to listen to him,

שנאמר "אליו תשמעו".

as it is said, 'To him you shall listen.'

ואפשר שיעשה אות ומופת ואינו נביא

And it is possible that he will perform a sign and a wonder and he is not a prophet,

וזה האות יש לו דברים בגו.

and this sign, there is to it things inside, meaning it was done through sorcery or trickery.

ואף על פי כן מצוה לשמוע לו

And even though it is so, it is a mitzvah to listen to him;

הואיל ואדם גדול וחכם וראוי לנבואה הוא

since a great and wise man, and fit for prophecy, he is,

מעמידים אותו על חזקתו.

we establish him upon his presumption of being a true prophet.

שפקד נצטוינו

For in this we were commanded by the Torah,

כמו שנצטוינו לחתך את הדין על פי שני עדים כשרים

just as we were commanded to decide the judgment upon the mouth of two kosher witnesses,

ואף על פי שאפשר שהעידו בשקר

and even though that it is possible that they testified falsely,

הואיל וכשרים הם אצלנו מעמידים אותם על כשרותם.

since they are kosher to us, we establish them upon their kosher status.

ובדברים האלו וכיוצא בהן נאמר

And regarding these matters and the like of them, it is said,

"הנסתרת לה' אלהינו והנגלת לנו ולבנינו".

'The hidden things are for Hashem our God, and the revealed things are for us and for our children.'

ונאמר "פי האדם יראה לעינים וה' יראה ללבב":

And it is said, 'For the man sees to the eyes, and Hashem sees to the heart.'

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.

למעשה 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.