

## Morning Mindfulness & Gratitude: Practicing

R' Jesse Paikin • rabbijesse@sixthandi.org

In seeking wisdom,  
the first step is silence,  
the second listening,  
the third remembering,  
the fourth practicing,  
the fifth teaching others.

Rabbi Shlomo ibn Gabirol (ca. 11<sup>th</sup> C, Cordoba)

\* \* \*

### **Babylonian Talmud *Kiddushin* 40b**

Rabbi Tarfon and the Elders were reclining in the loft of the house of Nit'za in Lod, when this question was asked of them: "Is study greater or is action greater?"

Rabbi Tarfon answered and said: Action is greater. Rabbi Akiva answered and said: Study is greater.

Everyone answered and said: Study is greater, as study leads to action.

\* \* \*

### **Pirkei Avot 6:5**

Do not seek greatness for yourself, and do not covet honor. Practice more than you learn.

\* \* \*

### **Pirkei Avot 1:17**

Shimon, his son, used to say: all my days I grew up among the sages, and I have found nothing better for a person than silence. Study is not the most important thing, but actions; whoever indulges in too many words brings about sin.

\* \* \*

### **Babylonian Talmud *Avodah Zarah* 17b**

Rav Huna says: Anyone who occupies themselves with Torah study alone is considered like one who does not have a God.

**Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition***

Otherness, it is true, is an important aspect of plurality, the reason why all our definitions are distinctions, why we are unable to say what anything is without distinguishing it from something else.

Otherness in its most abstract form is found only in the sheer multiplication of inorganic objects, whereas all organic life already shows variations and distinctions, even between specimens of the same species. But only man can express this distinction and distinguish himself, and only he can communicate himself and not merely something—thirst or hunger, affection or hostility or fear. In man, otherness, which he shares with everything that is, and distinctness, which he shares with everything alive, become uniqueness, and human plurality is the paradoxical plurality of unique beings.

Speech and action reveal this unique distinctness. Through them, men distinguish themselves instead of being merely distinct; they are the modes in which human beings appear to each other, not indeed as physical objects, but *qua* men. This appearance, as distinguished from mere bodily existence, rests on initiative, but it is an initiative from which no human being can refrain and still be human.

\* \* \*

O God,  
grant me clarity  
and assurance  
in whatever I do.

Teach me to trust in wise teachers –  
to learn from their insightful words.

Teach me to trust in true friends –  
to treasure their care and concern.

Teach me to trust in myself –  
to judge my own course

correctly,  
and so to live  
with conviction  
and hope.