

SEASON 2

OLAMI MENTORSHIP

SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION

DEAR MENTEE AND MENTOR,

When we set out to create content for season one, it was with much trepidation and prayers on our lips. This initiative was novel and in all honesty, we were unsure as to the appropriate format, subject and general approach.

It is with tremendous gratitude to the Almighty that we can now look back on season one and feel the incredible guidance from above of these sessions. Remarkably, over one thousand participants have used these resources to add depth and meaning to their weekly conversations, and the sessions have been translated into Hebrew, Russian, French and Spanish.

Our thanks goes out to you for your time and effort that you have so selflessly shared with us.

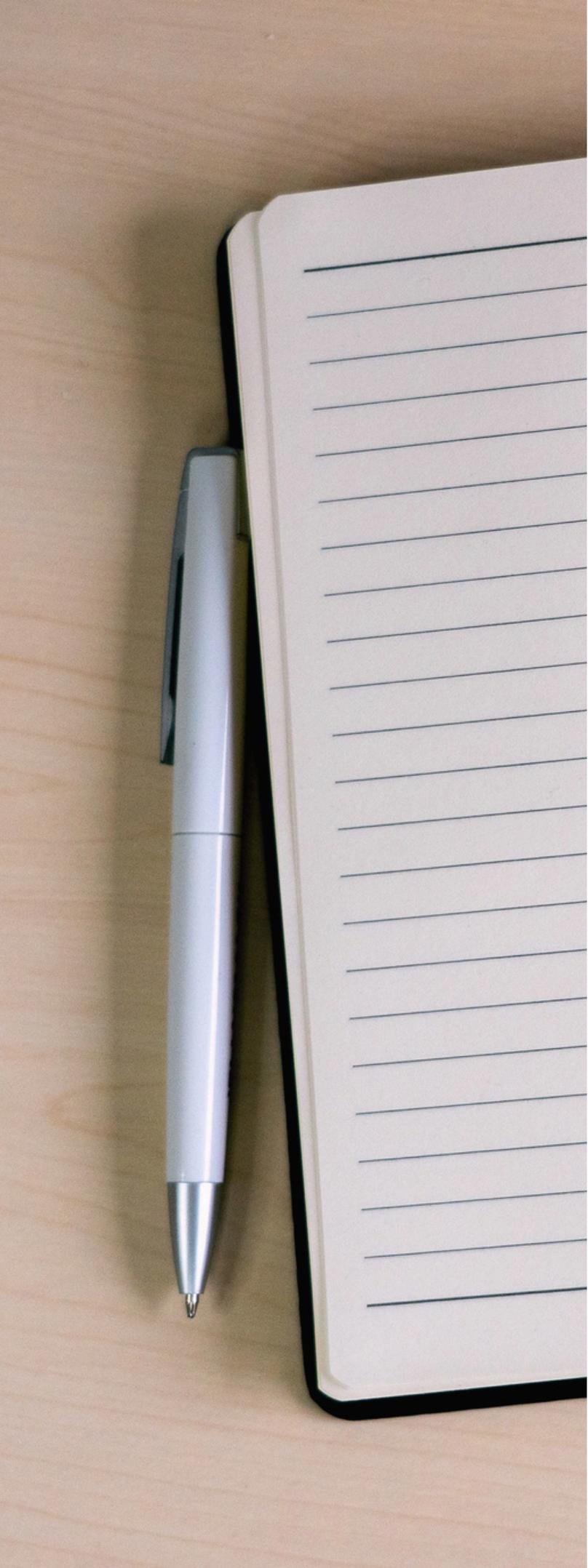
We are excited to present season 2 of mentorship which will focus on character development. I vividly remember lecturing to a fairly large group of college students from America's top universities and asking them if they can recall a single time in their 14-15 years of education that an educator even referenced the topic of working on one's character. The overwhelming majority of students could not recall a single moment in their entire educational life that this was ever mentioned.

It is worthwhile to contrast this with the Mishna Berura (a book of Jewish Law) writes: A person is required to learn mussar (ethics) and focus on character refinement each and every day.

We are excited to share sources, ideas and exercises to share the journey of character refinement with your mentor/mentee with the hope that the two of you will be enriched in the process.

Please note that as we indicated during season one, these resources are available for you if you elect to use them. If you and your mentee have discussed and agreed upon alternative topics or resources, we encourage you to embrace your personal decision and wish you much hatzlacha.

Thank you so much for being part of this global movement that is connecting individuals dedicated to growth in an unprecedented way.



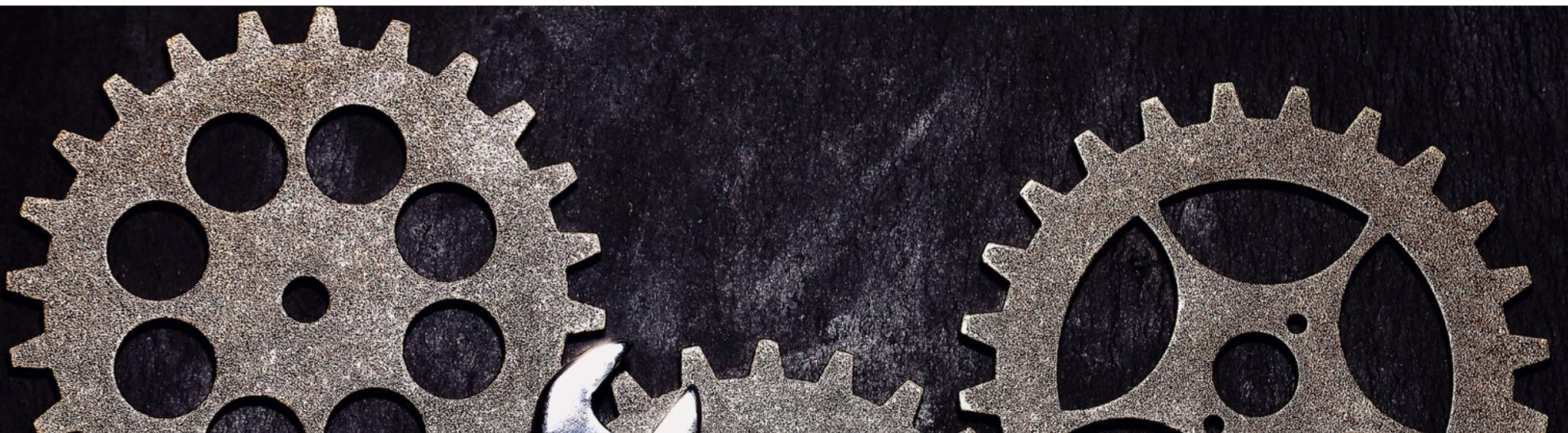
REMINDERS:

- Check-in: How was your week?
- Journaling: The journal is a space to track progress and growth throughout this journey.
- Set a time for your next meeting.

Intro

Welcome to the world of tikkun hamiddos/character development and repair. It is fascinating to note that each of us is born with an absolutely unique inner-composition. Some anger easily and at the same time calm quickly. Others are slow to anger, yet on the rare occasion that they are enraged it takes forever to regain equilibrium. Some people are industrious and hard-working by nature, while others, if given the choice, would spend endless days and weeks curled up on a comfortable sofa. It seems like certain individuals are born with a healthy dose of self-confidence that often borders on hubris, while others constantly struggle with self-confidence and assertiveness.

Yet, unlike so much of the world around us, Judaism is not ok with statements like “well that's just who I am” or “you are who you are”. On the contrary Judaism mandates every individual to take a hard look at “who I am” and then spend a lifetime correcting and fine-tuning their character until they have attained character equilibrium.





The task of perfecting one's character is called "Tikkun Hamidos" and learning about character development is referred to as "Mussar". King Solomon writes in Proverbs; "Hold fast to character refinement; do not let go;

Keep it; it is your life." The Vilna Gaon explains that the entire purpose of our existence is to overcome our negative character traits. Imagine for a moment, the upside of ironing out the kinks in our personality traits. Imagine being so real and honest with ourselves that arrogance is not even a thing. Imagine regaining self-control and reigning in anger. Imagine a life of generosity, and the feeling of fulfillment that follows. Imagine being content with who we are and what we have and living a jealous-free life!

Working on one's character immeasurably improves every area of our lives.

We are hopeful that taking time each week to reflect and discuss character development alongside your mentee/mentor will be an investment of time that will enhance your personal life in a real way!

PART 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

1. Please take a moment to read the words of the Rambam (Maimonides) Laws of Teshuva 7:3

Do not say that one only needs to repent and repair sins that involve action ie. immorality, theft.. Rather in the same way that one must reflect and then repair their misdeeds, one must reflect on the bad character traits in one's life ie. anger, hate, jealousy, mockery, the obsession with money, status, fine food... These character flaws are worse than active sins as when one is steeped in these traits, it is exceedingly difficult to extricate oneself from them.

אל תאמר שאין תשובה
אלא מעבירות שיש בהן
מעשה, כגון זנות גזל
וגניבה. אלא, כשם
שצריך אדם לשוב
מאלו, כך הוא צריך
לחפש בדעות רעות
שיש לו, לשוב מן הכעס
ומן האיבה ומן הקנאה
ומן החתול מרדיפת
הממון והכבוד רדיפת
המאכלות וכיוצא בהן -
מן הכל צריך לחזור
בתשובה. ואלו העונות
קשים מאותן שיש בהן
מעשה, שבזמן שאדם
נשקע באלו קשה הוא
לפרוש מהם.

2. Rambam writes that bad character traits are even worse than sinful acts. Isn't it fascinating that most people would have no issues identifying sinful actions, yet how many people can even identify and define bad character traits.
3. Why do you think this is the reality? Can the two of you brainstorm and think of 10 character traits either positive or negative.
4. Now that you have done so, feel free to see the next page for a more comprehensive list.
5. It is quite a lengthy list! Try to take a few moments to peruse the list and think about how you are doing in your own life in relation to these character traits.

PART 2: CHARACTER TRAITS; THEY ARE YOUR LIFE!

1. What follows is a list of character traits (the bulk are taken from the book Orchos Tzadikim or Pathways of the Righteous).

Pride/Arrogance - גאווה

Humility - ענוה

Shame/consciousness - בושה

Brazenness - עזות

Love - אהבה

Hate - שנאה

Mercy/Compassion - רחמים

Cruelty - אכזריות

Happiness - שמחה

Worry / Anxiety - דאגה

Regret - חרטה

Anger - כעס

Will / Desire - רצון

Jealousy - קנאה

Zealousness - זריזות

Laziness - עצלות

Generosity - נדיבות

Stinginess - ציקנות

Memory - זכירה

Forgetfulness - שכחה

Quietness/listening - שתיקה

Lying / Falsehood - שקר

Truthfulness - אמת

Flattery - חניפות

Desire - תאוה

Pursuit of Honor - כבוד

Scoffer - לצנות

Greed for money / food - רדיפת הממון \ רדיפת המאכלות

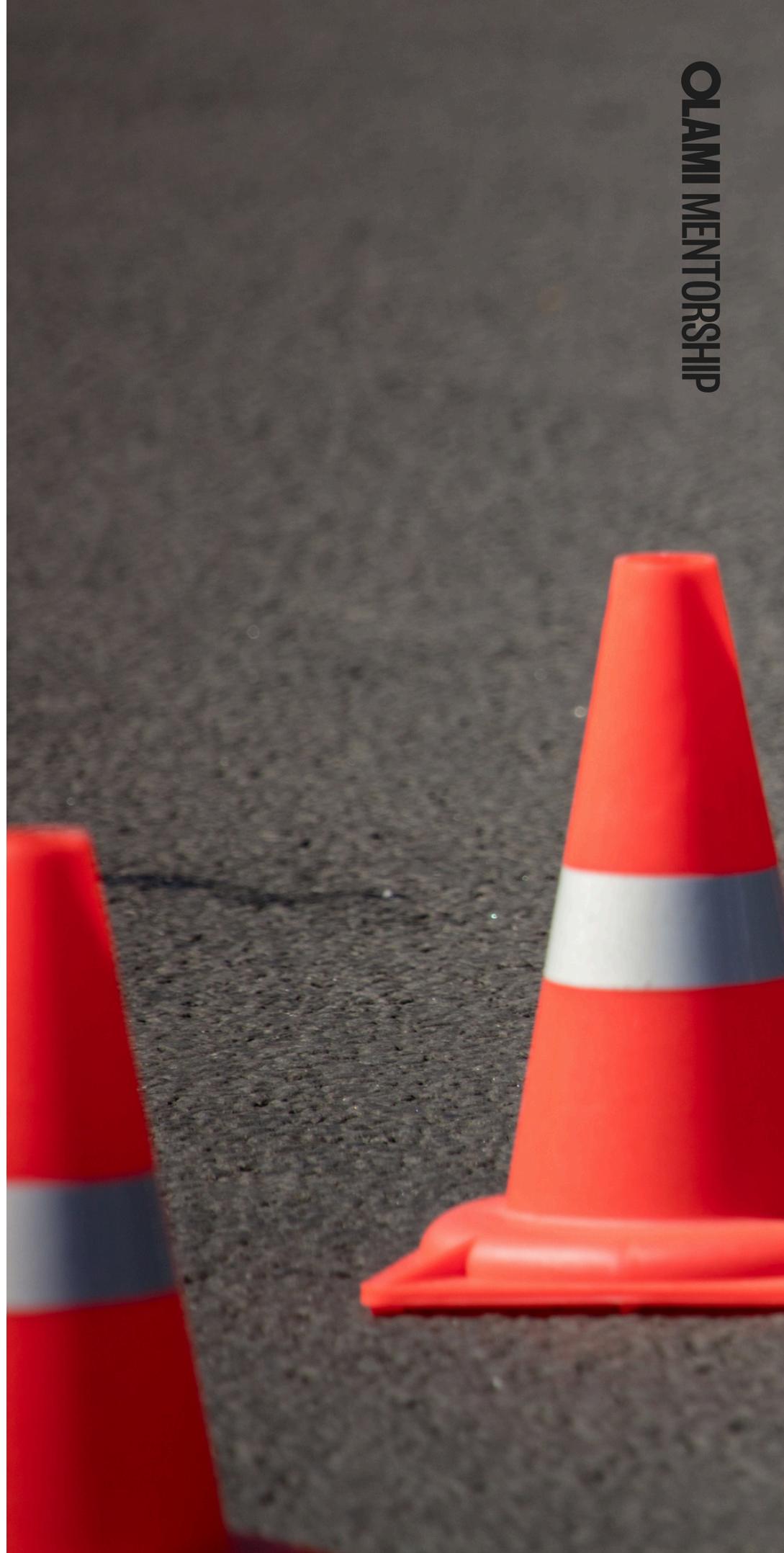
Wickedness - רשעות

Slowness to anger/self control - ארך אפים

Might - גבורה



2. If you are comfortable, please take a few minutes to discuss with one another the areas of your character that you feel need the most repair vs. the areas that you feel that you have under control?
3. Can you identify areas in your personal and professional life where these character flaws are affecting you?
4. Can you pinpoint one area of character development that you want to work on this coming week? Articulating your goals helps to make them more tangible and you will be more likely to accomplish them. Set your goal(s) with your mentor/mentee today and revisit them next week.



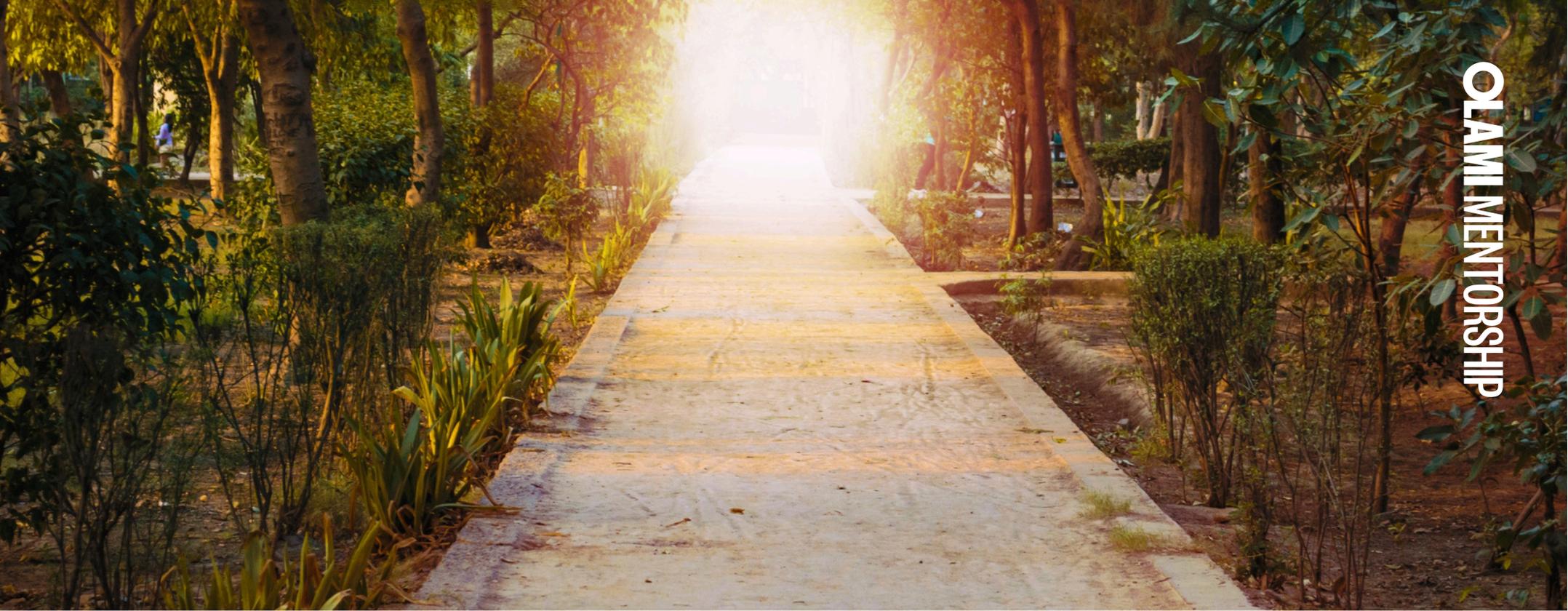
PART 3: THE GOLDEN PATH

1. Maimonides (Rambam) Laws of Human Disposition 1:3

Each character trait has two extremities. It is not a good path nor appropriate to go according to these extremes (ie. violent temper vs. one who never angers). If you find that your nature is leaning towards one of them, or that you are 'prepared' for one of them, or you have learned and become accustomed to one of them - he should return himself to the 'good path' and go in the good way which is the straight path.

ג) שְׁתֵּי קִצּוֹת
הַרְחֹקוֹת זֶה מִזֶּה
שֶׁבְּכָל דְּעָה
וְדָעָה אֵינֶן דֶּרֶךְ
טוֹבָה וְאֵין רָאִי
לֹא לְאָדָם לִלְכֹת
בָּהֶן וְלֹא לְלַמֵּד
לְעַצְמוֹ. וְאִם
מֵצֵא טִבְעוֹ נוֹטֶה
לְאַחַת מֵהֶן אֹ
מוֹכֵן לְאַחַת מֵהֶן
אוֹ שֶׁכָּבַר לְלַמֵּד
אַחַת מֵהֶן וְנִהְגָה
בָּהּ יַחְזִיר עַצְמוֹ
לְמוֹטֵב וְיִלְךְ
בְּדֶרֶךְ הַטּוֹבִים
וְהִיא הַדֶּרֶךְ
הַיְשָׁרָה:

2. Can you think of two character traits and their opposite extremes?



3. See Maimonides (Rambam); Shemoneh Perakim (Eight Chapters) 4:2 who eloquently describes the healthy medium or “Golden Path”

Likewise, healthy generosity is the mean between stinginess and extravagance; courage, between recklessness and cowardice; dignity, between haughtiness and loutishness; humility, between arrogance and self-abasement; contentedness, between greediness and apathy & indifference...
Patience between anger and insensibility to shame and disgrace; and modesty, between impudence and shamefacedness.

כן הנדיבות ממוצע בין הכליות והפזור, והגבורה ממוצעת בין מסירה לסכנות ובין רך הלבב, הסלסול ממוצע בין ההתנשאות ובין הנבלה, והענווה ממוצעת בין גאווה ושפלות הרוח, והסתפקות ממוצע בין אהבת הממון והצלה, וטוב לב ממוצע בין הנבלה ויתרון טוב הלבב, והסבלנות ממוצע בין הכעס העדר הרגשת חרפה ובוז, ובושת פנים ממוצע בין העזות והביישנות

4. Take a few moments to personalize Rambam’s concept of recalibrating one’s character traits and easing on to the “Golden Path”. Can you apply this to your own life?

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