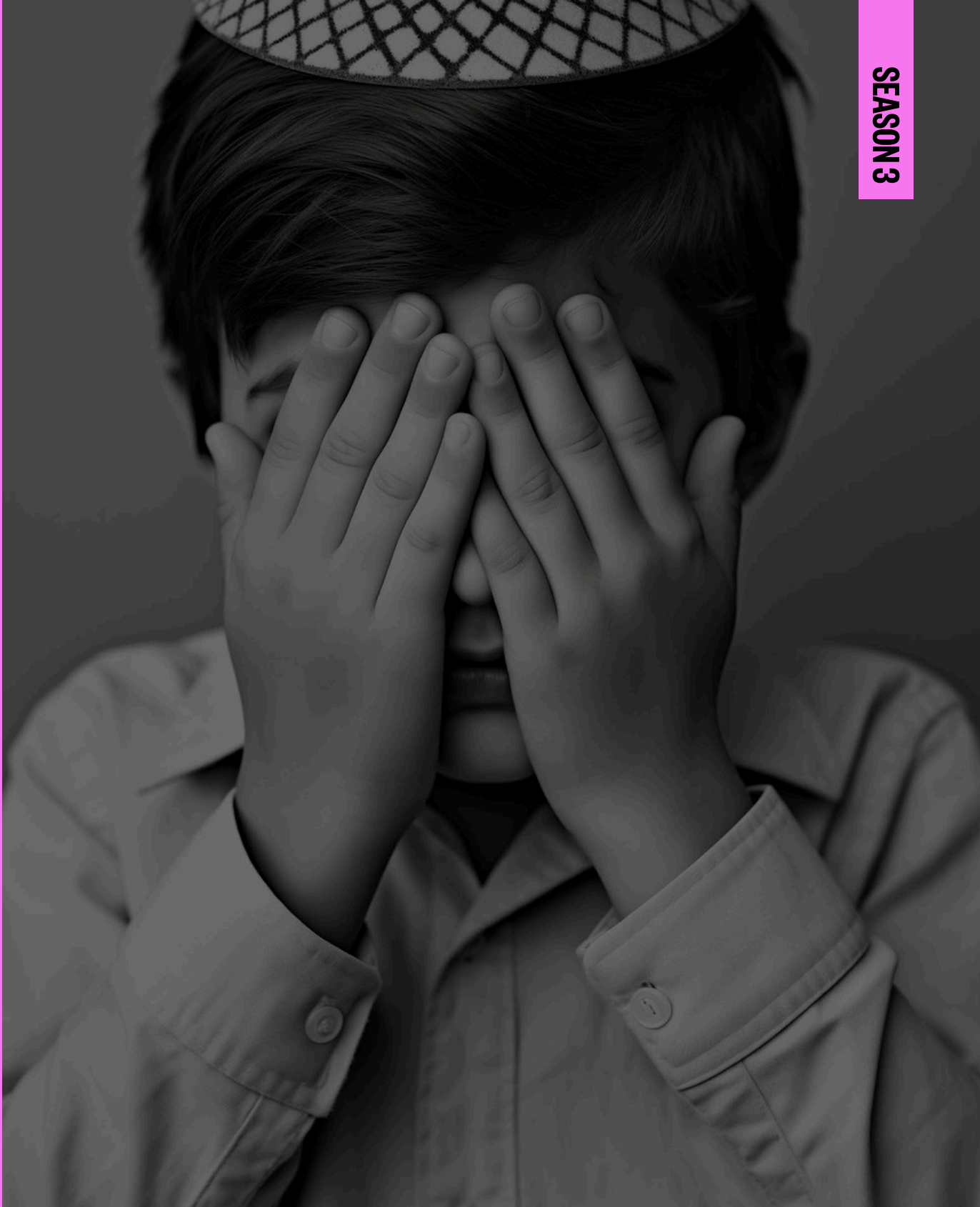


SEASON 3



OLAMI MENTORSHIP

SESSION 7: SHEMA

THE PILLAR FOR MODERN LIVING

Dear Mentor and Mentee,

Congratulations on starting season three of mentorship!

It is both humbling and thrilling at the same time, that the two of you have found value in getting to know one another, and that you continue to benefit from your regular meetings. In conjunction with Sinai50, we are pleased to present you with amazing resources for season three.

We are grateful to Rabbi Raphael Butler; the mastermind of Sinai50; an initiative that is ensuring that Jews around the world have an opportunity to reclaim Torah wisdom and knowledge, and make it their own. The great news is that these resources are but a small component of the 50 sessions that Rabbi Butler and Sinai50 have curated. We would be thrilled to provide additional resources when you have completed these initial sessions.

You know, when you purchase a new car, typically there is an owner's manual in the glove compartment. If you are a savvy and responsible automobile owner, you will take the time to familiarize yourself with the content of the manual to ensure maximum output and productivity for your new vehicle.

And while an owner's manual for a new car is imperative in getting to understand the complexities of your ride, isn't life not infinitely more complex than a four-wheeled machine? If so, shouldn't life come with an owner's manual for life?!

The good news is that it 'does'. The manual is called the Torah, and through its retelling of our history, its many directives for moral living, and our studying and following the Torah, we can ensure optimal performance and elevated living.

In this season, through Sinai50, we endeavor to provide you with a "top 10" list of the Torah's wisdom for living, in an effort to share the beauty and richness of the Torah's narratives and experiences.

You will have an opportunity to examine the age-old issue of anti-Semitism from the conflict of Jacob and Esau, analyze dealing with trials - and then triumph - from Abraham, understand our unique mission as Jews, and so much more!

Mentorship that includes Torah wisdom and inspiration is taking mentorship to a whole new level, as studying and analyzing Torah together connects the soul of two Jews.

It is our hope that through this journey of practical Torah wisdom, the two of you will continue to thrive alongside one another and further enhance the special relationship that you have begun.

We are honored to provide personal guidance or assistance if necessary. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us directly. To reach the Director of Community Mentorship, Rabbi Shlomo Landau, please call 908.770.0056 or email slandau@olami.org. To reach the Associate Director of Community Mentorship, Jordana Baruchov, please call 973.370.0414 or email jbaruchov@olami.org.

Wishing you the best of luck on this journey! The OLM Team

SHEMA

CONNECTING OUR WORLDS

The first paragraph of the Shema is from Deuteronomy 6:4-9. It reads as follows:

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

THE MESSAGE

The Shema is a foundational text in Jewish tradition, encapsulating the essence of Jewish monotheism and the imperative to love God with our entire being. This profound text is not merely a declaration of faith but serves as a pillar that upholds our relationship with the Divine, as beautifully described by the Sefer HaChinuch. This monumental work explains that the root of the commandment to recite the Shema is to embed the principles of faith in God and His unity in our hearts, shaping our every action and thought.



The Shema is a foundational text in Jewish tradition, encapsulating the essence of Jewish monotheism and the imperative to love God with our entire being.

The commandment of the Shema, therefore, acts as a pillar that supports our daily actions, thoughts, and approach to life, continually reminding us to deepen our connection with God and pass on this rich heritage to future generations. In essence, the Shema is a comprehensive guide for living a life that is in harmony with Jewish values, serving as a vital pillar that sustains our faith and identity as Jews.

In the Shema, we are commanded to love God “with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might,” a directive that encompasses every aspect of our being. Loving God with our heart means to nurture a passionate and heartfelt connection to the Divine, fully investing our emotions in our religious practices. Loving God with our soul calls for a deep spiritual connection, engaging in prayer, study, and other spiritual practices that strengthen our bond with God. Finally, loving God with our might requires us to utilize our physical and material resources in the service of God, dedicating our time, energy, and abilities to uphold His commandments.

The text further instructs us to diligently teach these principles to our children, ensuring that these values are woven into the fabric of our family and community life. The commandment of the Shema, therefore, acts as a pillar that supports our daily actions, thoughts, and approach to life, continually reminding us to deepen our connection with God and pass on this rich heritage to future generations. In essence, the Shema is a comprehensive guide for living a life that is in harmony with Jewish values, serving as a vital pillar that sustains our faith and identity as Jews.

In the final verses of the Shema’s first paragraph, we are introduced to the mitzvot (commandments) of mezuzah and tefillin. The mezuzah is a parchment scroll inscribed with the Shema’s first two paragraphs, which is placed in a protective case and affixed to the doorposts of Jewish homes. This serves as a constant reminder of God’s presence and our duty to uphold His commandments.

Similarly, tefillin are black leather boxes containing parchment scrolls with verses from the Torah, including the Shema. These are bound to the arm and forehead during weekday morning prayers, serving as a tangible reminder to keep the commandments at the forefront of our thoughts and actions.

Both the mezuzah and tefillin are physical expressions of our commitment to God, helping to integrate the teachings of the Shema into our daily lives.



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RELEVANCE TO OUR LIVES

BALANCING HEART, SOUL, AND MIGHT:

The command to love God with our heart, soul, and might provides a framework for living a balanced and harmonious life, where our emotions, spirituality, and actions are all aligned with our values.



PRESERVING CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS HERITAGE:

The instruction to teach these principles to our children highlights the importance of education and the role of each generation in preserving and perpetuating our cultural and religious heritage.

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NAVIGATING MODERN DISTRACTIONS:

In a time where distractions are plentiful, the Shema acts as a daily reminder to focus on what truly matters – our relationship with God and our commitment to living a life that is in accordance with our values.

REINFORCING CENTRALITY OF GOD'S GUIDANCE:

The twice-daily recitation of the Shema serves as a powerful reinforcement of the centrality of God's guidance and principles in our lives, ensuring that these messages remain at the forefront of our minds as we navigate the complexities of our daily existence.

LESSONS LEARNED:

INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF OUR BEING:

The interconnectedness of our emotional, spiritual, and physical lives and the need to nurture each aspect in our pursuit of a meaningful relationship with God.

Importance of Daily Reflection:
The need for daily reflection and contemplation to keep our faith and values at the forefront of our minds, guiding our actions and decisions.

ROLE OF EDUCATION IN SUSTAINING FAITH:

The vital role of education in sustaining our faith and values, with a responsibility to pass this knowledge on to future generations.

IMPORTANCE OF DAILY REFLECTION:

The need for daily reflection and contemplation to keep our faith and values at the forefront of our minds, guiding our actions and decisions.

DEMONSTRATING COMMITMENT THROUGH ACTION:

The importance of demonstrating our commitment to God and the principles outlined in the Shema through tangible actions, such as the affixing of the mezuzah to the doorposts of our homes and the wearing of tefillin during weekday morning prayers. These physical expressions serve as constant reminders of our duty to uphold God's commandments in all aspects of our lives.

POINTS TO PONDER:

ALIGNING HEART, SOUL, AND MIGHT:

In what ways can we actively work to align our heart, soul, and might in our daily lives to truly live out the commandment to love God with our entire being?

DEEPENING SPIRITUAL CONNECTION:

How can we strengthen our spiritual connection to God and ensure that our actions are in harmony with our values and faith?

PASSING ON TEACHINGS TO THE NEXT GENERATION:

What steps can we take to pass on the teachings and values of our faith to the next generation, ensuring that they are preserved and perpetuated?

LIVING THE VALUES THROUGH ACTION:

How do the tangible actions of affixing a mezuzah and wearing tefillin embody and reinforce our commitment to living by the teachings and values of our faith?



Living the Values Through Action:

How do the tangible actions of affixing a mezuzah and wearing tefillin embody and reinforce our commitment to living by the teachings and values of our faith?

SINAI 50

50 VITAL JEWISH TEXTS THAT EVERY JEW SHOULD KNOW

This Sinai50 volume is dedicated in loving memory of

ERIC AND EDITH HANAU

אברהם בן צבי ז"ל

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SINAI50

The Sinai50 Project comprises a collection of 50 vital Jewish texts that every Jew should know and that are of immense significance for our daily lives. These texts have been carefully selected to provide clarity and understanding to all those who read them. With the texts being made accessible both online and offline, this project ensures that these invaluable resources are readily available to Jews worldwide, fostering a deeper connection to their heritage and offering relevant insights for navigating everyday challenges.

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111 John Street, Suite 1720 New York, NY 10038
info@afikimfoundation.org

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