

OTAMI MENTORSHIP

SEASON 2



**SESSION 5:
ANGER**

DEAR MENTEE AND MENTOR,

Gadi worked for a cement company. As a matter of fact he didn't just work for the company, he actually drove a large cement mixing truck. From early morning until night time he would transport cement from one construction site to another, and then remarkably, he would head home in his truck and park it right in front of his apartment building.

His large oversized truck took up three coveted parking spots. And while the spots did not belong to him, Gadi made it abundantly clear to everyone on his block that those spots were his and that anyone that would dare take "his spots" would suffer the consequences. Consequently, when Gadi would arrive home at the end of the work day his three spots were inevitably waiting for him and his cement roller.

One day after a particularly stressful day at work Gadi pulled up to his building when to his utter consternation a brand new BMW was gaudily parked smack in the middle of HIS three spots! Gadi was furious! What right did the owner of this fancy car have to take his spots? He knew that type of guy! He probably thinks that because he drives a BMW he owns the world!



As Gadi and his truck stood there Gadi got angrier and angrier until he was seeing the world in red! Finally in a fit of rage he pulled ahead of the BMW, angled the cement shoot directly onto the car and impulsively pulled the cement lever. Within minutes the entire car was covered in a massive mound of cement that rapidly began to set.

Feeling better about himself, Gadi drove down the block and parked his cement mixer. He slowly walked back to his building eyeing his “Destruction project” with satisfaction. He had taught the pompous owner of the BMW a lesson that he would never forget!

As Gadi approached his apartment he was surprised to hear many voices from in his apartment. He wondered what was going on. Gingerly, he knocked on the front door which was quickly thrust open to the cries of “surprise” and “happy birthday” from his family and friends. He had totally forgotten that it was his sixtieth birthday!



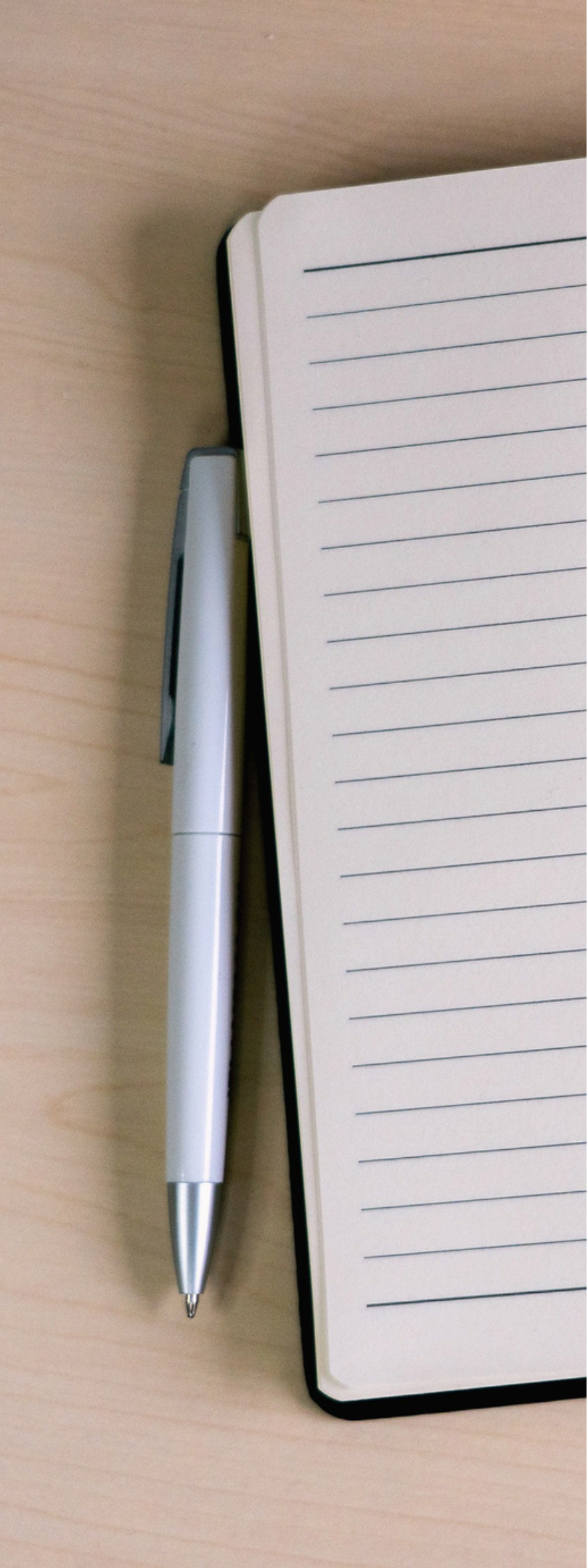
They quickly ushered him into the decorated apartment where he quickly became the center of attention. At some point in the party, his oldest son who had been blessed with abundant wealth asked for quiet and read a cute poem about how much they loved and appreciated their father and grandfather. He then shared that the family had got together to buy their father a once in a lifetime gift. Proudly he led his father out of the apartment followed by the entire crowd of family and friends. They walked down to the front door and out onto the street when his son suddenly shrieked. “Oy, what happened to the brand new BMW that we left here for your gift? All that I see is a pile of wet cement?”

Gadi just stood there frozen in his tracks. The BMW in his spot was meant to be his sixtieth birthday present!

Yet his anger had destroyed everything...

Yes, anger is such a destructive force. It ruins friendships, marriages, and even complete lives. On the flip side, anger management is such a valuable asset and can help prevent so much damage and heartache. Our Torah is replete with resources about the harm of anger and at the same time the deep value in managing our passions and attitudes.

Let’s take a bit of time to understand more about the beast called anger and a few methods to tame the beast!



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.



PART 1: UNDERSTANDING ANGER

1. To open the session, please have a candid conversation about the role that anger plays in your personal/professional life at home, at work, in the broader world around you!


2. Is anger always a bad thing? Explain..

3. Please see this quote from Orchos Tzadikim about the ramifications of anger. (Paths of the Righteous) Gate 12

People who are angry, and who reinforce their rage, are unaware of what they do, and they do many things in their anger that they would not do when calm. For anger causes one to think irrationally and speak out of anger, thus triggering disputes and quarrels.

בני אדם, כשהם כועסים
ומחזיקים בכעסם, אינם
משימים לבם על מה
שעושים, ועושים הרבה
ענינים בכעסם מה שלא היו
עושים בלא הכעס, כי הכעס
מוציא שכלו של אדם מקרבו
עד שמרבה דברי הכעס,
ונכנס במחלוקת וקנטורים.

4. Can you think of an “anger situation” and try to drill down to the underlying feelings and emotions that give rise to the anger? I.e. road rage



5. Check out this rather strong statement from the Talmud Shabbos 105b

A person who tears his clothes in anger, or breaks his possessions... is considered as though he worships idols ...

המקרע בגדיו בחמתו, והמשבר כליו בחמתו.. יהא בעיניך כעובד עבודה זרה ...

6. How and why would the Talmud compare rage to idol-worship?

7. Anything but Anger by Chayi Hanfling

A fundamental Jewish belief is that everything in our life comes from God and is tailor made to elicit our spiritual growth. Anger is an emotional response when we experience something as unjust, when we perceive the world as being not as it should be. God, however, is the essence of perfection and does not make mistakes. When we experience anger we are in essence demonstrating that we do not truly believe that God is the source of everything that is happening to us. If we feel that what is happening is unjust and chaotic, as opposed to sent from God, then the seeds of idolatry are sown.

PART 2: THE PITFALLS OF ANGER

1. Personal

Talmud Pesachim 66b

Any person who becomes enraged, if he is wise he loses his wisdom..

ריש לקיש אמר כל אדם שכוועס אם חכם הוא חכמתו מסתלקת ממנו.

Maimonidies, Laws of Conduct 2:3

Those who frequently become angry have no quality of life; therefore, [the Sages] instructed us to distance ourselves from anger

ובעלי כעס אין חייהם חיים לפיכך צוו להתרחק מן הכעס

Mark Twain

“Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.”



2. Interpersonal

Orchos Tzadikim (Paths of the Righteous) Gate 12

An angry person does not find favor in the eyes of people, and he is hated by them. Because of this, his deeds will not be accepted by people ... An angry person is a burden on his family, who must constantly hear his anger and his complaints.

הכעסן אין לו חן בעיני
הבריות והוא שנוא
בעיניהם, ומתוך כך אין
מעשיו מקובלים בעיני
הבריות. ... הכעסן הוא
כובד על בני ביתו
השומעים תמיד כעסו
ותלונתו.

3. Spiritual

Orchos Tzadikim (Paths of the Righteous) Gate 12

An angry person cannot learn or accept constructive criticism, because nobody will be willing to reveal his failings out of fear of his fury. Even if someone will rebuke him, he will not accept the rebuke, out of his anger

הכעסן מונע מעצמו מוסרים
ותוכחות, כי אין אדם רשאי
לגלות לו טעויותיו ודרכיו
המכוערות, כי כל אדם יפחד
ממנו להגיד לו עניניו, כי הוא
ירגז עליו. ואפילו אם יוכיח אותו
שום אדם, לא יקבל ממנו מתוך
הכעס:



Sefer Hameshalim #76

To what is anger comparable?
To an unlocked doorway
before a thief... if he is angry,
the Evil Inclination finds a point
of entry and entices him to do
other transgressions. For anger
is the cause of all quarrels,
fights, and murders, and the
abandonment of faith.

למה הכעס דומה לפני
יצר הרע - לפרצה לפני
הגנב:
ואם הוא כועס הרי מצא
יצר הרע פרצה להכנס
לפתותו לעשות עבירות,
שהרי הכעס הוא סיבת
המריבות והמכות
והרציחות ויציאה מן הדת.

PART 3: TOOLS FOR AVOIDING ANGER

1. Give yourself time-out

Try to figure out a way to remove yourself from the situation, count to 10, breathe deeply, wash your face, walk away, cool off and get a grip.

2. Develop Perspective

As you feel anger or resentment beginning to well up, ask yourself the following question: How will I look at this in a week from now? In a year from now? In ten years from now? How important is this in the greater scheme of my life?

3. Identify the emotions triggering your anger

Take a moment and think about what emotions might be lurking beneath your anger. Anger often serves as a protective mask to help you avoid feeling more painful emotions, like sadness, disappointment and embarrassment. Getting angry might make you feel better in the moment because it keeps your embarrassment away, but acknowledging underlying emotions can help you get to the root of the problem. Your response may very well be quite different.



4. Focus on the irreparable damage that uncontrolled anger can bring

Once hurtful words leave your mouth they are irretrievable and can often take huge amounts of time and energy to repair. Additionally, the fear and anxiety that an angry person can cause others is extremely damaging.

5. Ask the Almighty for assistance in dealing with your anger

When you feel that you are about to lose it, stop and ask the Almighty for assistance in staying under control. Know and understand that the Almighty is right there with you in that moment and that place. This release of control will do more than just soothe your feelings; it will actually assist you in getting closer to the Almighty.



Ending on a humorous note

Esther is having a chat with her friend. "Becky," she says, "did you know that your husband David is always bragging about you? He says that you never get angry with him, you never raise your voice to him, and you never ever complain about him. So tell me already. How do you manage to do that? I certainly couldn't do that with my Daniel."

"It's easier than you think," replies Becky. "Here's what I do. Whenever I'm angry with David, I just go upstairs and clean the toilet. And my anger instantly ceases."

"So how on earth does cleaning the toilet help you?" asks Esther.

"I use his toothbrush, that's how."

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