



SESSION 6:
THE JOURNEY OF FAITH
THE WILDERNESS STORY

OLAMI MENTORSHIP

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

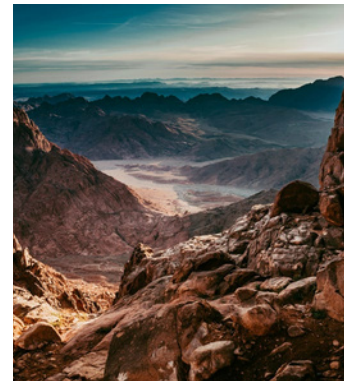
THE JOURNEY OF FAITH: THE WILDERNESS STORY

As the Jewish people journeyed through the harsh Sinai desert, they faced obstacles, miracles, extraordinary signs of God's presence and questions of faith that challenged their resiliency.

THE STORY

After their miraculous exodus from Egypt, the Jewish people embarked on a transformative journey that would shape their destiny and continue to hold significance for generations to come. They found themselves wandering in the harsh wilderness of the Sinai desert, marking a critical phase in Jewish history, filled with challenges, miracles, and lessons that would shape their identity and faith; and ours.

Throughout the span of 40 years, the Israelites witnessed extraordinary signs of God's presence and protection. They had experienced the awe-inspiring plagues in Egypt, the miraculous parting of the Red Sea, and the divine revelation at Mount Sinai. However, despite these profound demonstrations of God's power, the human condition prevailed, and the Israelites found themselves grappling with doubt and complaints.



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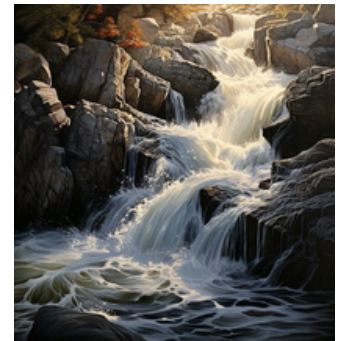
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Almost from the start, the wilderness experience was fraught with unsettling events of challenge. Most troubling was the incident of the Golden Calf, where in Moses' absence as Moses was preparing to deliver The Ten Commandments, the Israelites fashioned an idol to worship. This act of idolatry represented a grave breach of their covenant with God, resulting in divine wrath and a test of Moses' leadership. Through Moses' intercession, God forgave the people, demonstrating His mercy and willingness to offer opportunities for repentance and renewal.

Another pivotal episode of distrust was the incident of the spies (meraglim). Sent to scout the Promised Land, the spies returned with a report that filled the Israelites with fear and doubt. Their lack of faith in God's promise and their reluctance to enter the land led to significant consequences. Because of this episode, the generation that left Egypt was destined to wander in the desert until a new generation arose, prepared to embrace the fulfillment of God's covenant.

Yet, despite the challenges and the Israelites' moments of faltering faith, God responded with compassion and understanding. He provided water from a rock when the people were thirsty, demonstrated His care and concern for their well-being. Each morning, manna, a miraculous bread-like substance, rained down from heaven, nourishing the hungry travelers. Moreover, the Israelites were protected from enemies that threatened them, showcasing God's unwavering love and care.

The era of Yisrael in the desert serves as a testament to the complexity of faith and the human condition. Witnessing miracles does not always guarantee unwavering belief, and doubts can emerge even in the face of divine interventions. Nonetheless, God's continued care and compassion teach valuable lessons about gratitude and the power of acknowledging the miracles and blessings we receive.



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WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF THESE EVENTS TO OUR LIVES?

FAITH AND TRUST IN GOD'S GUIDANCE:

The Israelites' journey in the wilderness demonstrates the importance of having faith and trust in God's guidance, even in challenging times.

GRATITUDE FOR MIRACLES AND BLESSINGS:

Through the manna, water from the rock, and divine protection, the Israelites learned to appreciate and express gratitude for the miracles and blessings they received.

CONSEQUENCES OF ACTIONS:

The Wilderness story teaches us about the impact of doubt, complaints, and impulsive actions, underscoring the significance of being mindful of our choices.

LIVING WITH THE RAMIFICATIONS OF OUR ACTIONS:

The Wilderness story emphasizes living with the consequences of our choices and seeking growth through reflection and repair of flaws that led to negative outcomes.



Gratitude for Miracles and Blessings: Through the manna, water from the rock, and divine protection, the Israelites learned to appreciate and express gratitude for the miracles and blessings they received.

SEEDS OF TRAGEDY:

The story of the meraglim serves as a cautionary tale about the seeds of tragedies that can emerge from doubt and distrust in the divine plan. The needless crying and distrust of the spies on that night sowed the seeds of future calamities, most apparent being the destruction of the First and Second Temples occurring on that exact date years later during Tisha B'Av.

The Tisha B'Av connection serves as a solemn reminder of the far-reaching impact of our actions and the potential consequences of doubt and mistrust in our relationship with the divine. It prompts us to reflect on the tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people throughout history and the responsibility we have in fostering abiding faith and collective growth.

Seeds of Tragedy: The story of the Meraglim serves as a cautionary tale about the seeds of tragedies that can emerge from doubt and distrust in the divine plan.

LESSONS LEARNED:

THE DANGERS OF IMPULSIVE ACTIONS:

The incident of the Golden Calf reminds us of the dangers of acting impulsively and the importance of adhering to God's commandments.

TRUST IN GOD'S PROVISION:

The episode of water from the rock emphasizes the significance of trusting in God's provision and guidance during challenging times.

GRATITUDE FOR DIVINE SUSTENANCE:

The story of the manna (bread from heaven) teaches us gratitude for God's sustenance and the understanding that He provides for our individual needs.

CONTENTMENT AND MODERATION:

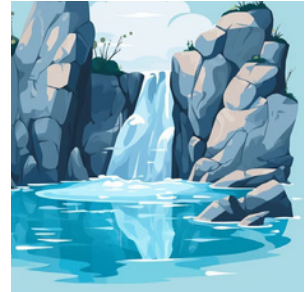
The quail episode warns against excessive desires and encourages finding contentment with what is provided.

GOD'S CONSTANT CARE AND GUIDANCE:

The Cloud of Glory symbolizes God's constant care and guidance, even during the challenges of the wilderness journey.

CONSEQUENCES OF DOUBT AND NEGATIVE SPEECH:

The episode of the spies (meraglim) reminds us of the consequences of doubt, fear, and negative speech, and the importance of faith and trust in God's promises.



Trust in God's Provision: The episode of water from the rock emphasizes the significance of trusting in God's provision and guidance during challenging times.

POINTS TO PONDER:

THE DANGERS OF IMPULSIVE ACTIONS:

HOW CAN WE CULTIVATE

greater mindfulness and reflection before making important decisions?

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES

of acting impulsively in our personal and communal lives?

TRUST IN GOD'S CONSTANT CARE AND GUIDANCE:

HOW CAN WE STRENGTHEN

our trust in God during challenging times, knowing that He guides and provides for us?

WHAT STEPS CAN WE TAKE

to maintain faith and trust in the face of uncertainty?

HOW DO WE RECOGNIZE

and appreciate the moments when God's care and protection are evident in our lives?

GRATITUDE FOR DIVINE SUSTENANCE:

HOW CAN WE CULTIVATE

a sense of gratitude for the blessings and provisions we receive daily?

IN WHAT WAYS CAN WE ACKNOWLEDGE

and appreciate the unique ways God sustains and supports us individually?



How can we cultivate a sense of gratitude for the blessings and provisions we receive daily?

CONTENTMENT AND MODERATION:

HOW CAN WE FIND CONTENTMENT

with what we have rather than constantly seeking more?

WHAT PRACTICES

can help us strike a balance between ambition and contentment in our pursuits?

CONSEQUENCES OF DOUBT AND NEGATIVE SPEECH:

HOW CAN WE FOSTER

an environment of trust and positivity in our communities and relationships?

WHAT STRATEGIES

can we employ to avoid speaking negatively or spreading fear and doubt?



How can we find contentment with what we have rather than constantly seeking more?

SINAI 50

50 VITAL JEWISH TEXTS THAT EVERY JEW SHOULD KNOW

This Sinai50 volume is dedicated in loving memory of

JERRY AND MARTHA HOROWITZ

שמואל יהודה בן זלמן יוסף הלוי ז"ל
מרים בת אברהם הכהן ע"ה

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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