

Core Values

SESSION 7: VALUES

DEAR MENTEE AND MENTOR,

While all humans intrinsically have core values and beliefs that motivate them to act one way or another, Torah observant Jews have a very unique and defined set of values that are formulated by the Torah. Even so, it would be interesting to note how many of us have ever sat down for some personal reflective time and crafted a list of our lives' core values based on the Torah.

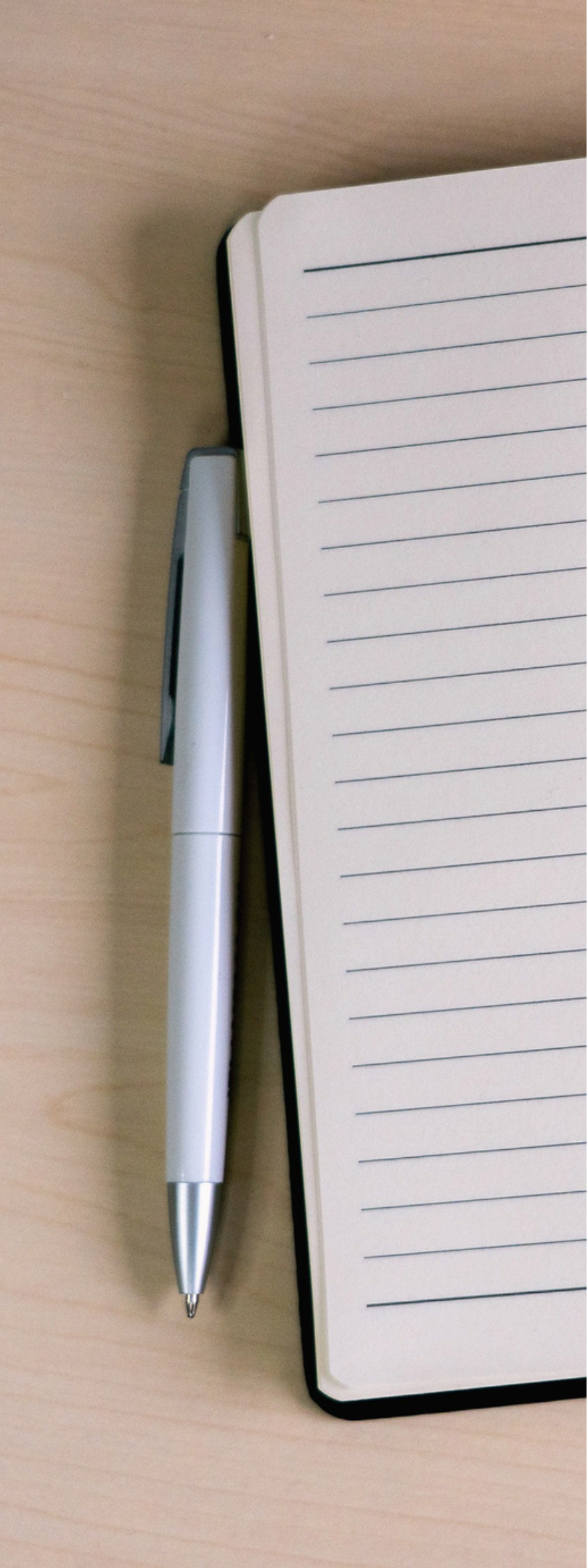
What would be even more intriguing would be to analyze how our Torah driven set of values line up with modern western society's basic values.

Here is an example. Using a simple online search, here are a few basic American values that keep resurfacing: Altruism, dependability, integrity, generosity, gratitude, sustainability, family, self-respect, uniqueness, assertiveness, open mindedness, flexibility, self-reliance...

Based on a Torah guided life, how many of these values do you think would make it to the top-ten list? Probably very few!

Yet, if values are ultimately the drivers of our choices, priorities and focus, it certainly behooves us to invest time into this important topic.

Today's session will afford you and your mentee the opportunity to analyze and reflect on life's values, priorities and their origins. It is our hope that this meaningful conversation sparks reflection, reevaluation and most importantly an understanding of the importance of using our values when making choices.



REMINDERS:

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

PATH 1: THE PERSONAL/ PROFESSIONAL VALUE EXERCISE

Here are a few practical exercises for you and your mentee to collaborate on.

Step 1: Professional Values

Over the last few decades many corporations have begun to prioritize company climate and culture. In doing so, they were forced to take a hard look at the values that they purport to espouse and more importantly the values that they aspire to foster.

Imagine that you the mentor are the CEO and that your mentee is the Vice President of a mid-size company and you are sitting down for a deep-dive into analyzing and crafting your company's set of values.

1. How would you approach this initiative?
2. Can the two of you come up with 5-10 core values that your company would stand by?
3. Can you prioritize your values?
4. Bonus: As a young professional what values would you appreciate in your current place of work?



PATH 1: THE PERSONAL/ PROFESSIONAL VALUE EXERCISE

Step 2: Personal Values

Imagine that you have been seriously dating someone. The conversation shifts to family and the home that you aspire to build. Suddenly, your date turns to you and challenges you to come up with 5-10 core values that would drive your potential home and family.

1. Can you come up with these core values?
2. Can you prioritize your values?

Step 3: Please take a few minutes to juxtapose your professional and personal values

1. Are they congruent?
2. How do your professional and personal priorities line up?

Step 4: Please analyze this Mishna

Maybe it is alluding to the fact that one's personal Torah driven way of life must be congruent with their professional life.

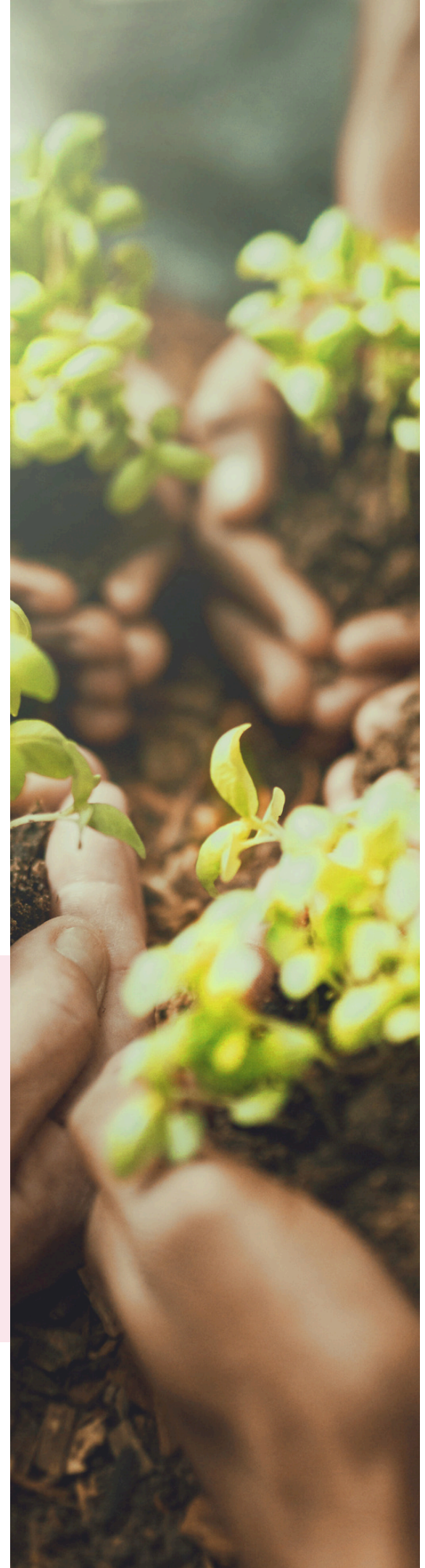
Pirkei Avot 2:2 Ethics of Our Fathers (a tractate of the Mishna compiled 200 CE)

Raban Gamliel the son of Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi said, excellent is the study of Torah combined with one's profession as the combination of the two keeps sin from one's mind.

רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל בֶּנוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הַנָּשִׂיא אָמַר, יִפָּה תִּלְמוּד תּוֹרָה עִם
דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ, שִׁיגִיעַת שְׁנֵיהֶם מְשַׁכַּחַת עֹון

THOUGHT QUESTION:

DO YOU THINK THAT MOST PEOPLE'S PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL VALUES ARE CONSISTENT? WHY DO YOU THINK THAT THERE IS DISPARITY IN THESE AREAS?



PATH 2: VALUE PRIORITIES

We have compiled a sizable list of Jewish values for you and your mentee to review, select and then prioritize. Please note: It may be interesting for you and your mentee to do this exercise independently and then to compare your top 10...

Step 1:
Please prioritize these ten values from least important to most important.

Values:
(in no particular order)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> RELAXATION | <input type="checkbox"/> INTROSPECTION | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSISTENCY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DILIGENCE | <input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPTANCE | <input type="checkbox"/> PUNCTUALITY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PRAYER | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING IN SHAPE | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HONESTY | <input type="checkbox"/> PERSEVERANCE | <input type="checkbox"/> HUMOR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AMBITION | <input type="checkbox"/> MOTIVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY-MINDED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FREEDOM | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIDE | <input type="checkbox"/> FOCUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PATIENCE | <input type="checkbox"/> CLEAR-MINDEDNESS | <input type="checkbox"/> HEALTH |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BALANCE | <input type="checkbox"/> FRIENDSHIP | <input type="checkbox"/> SELF-CONFIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HAPPINESS | <input type="checkbox"/> ACCOUNTABILITY | <input type="checkbox"/> SELF-AWARENESS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HUMILITY | <input type="checkbox"/> HOSPITALITY | <input type="checkbox"/> GOAL-ORIENTED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIDE | <input type="checkbox"/> MONEY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BEING WELL-LIKED | <input type="checkbox"/> A LIFE OF LEARNING | <input type="checkbox"/> RESPECT FOR ELDERS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RESPECTING AUTHORITY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRAVEL | <input type="checkbox"/> CHARACTER |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SELF-CONTROL | <input type="checkbox"/> SILENCE | <input type="checkbox"/> DEVELOPMENT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RESPONSIBILITY | <input type="checkbox"/> DIGNITY | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GROWTH-MINDSET | <input type="checkbox"/> GENEROSITY | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> THOUGHTFULNESS | <input type="checkbox"/> OPTIMISM | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FORGIVENESS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDEPENDENCE | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SIMPLICITY | <input type="checkbox"/> DISCRETION | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EFFORT | <input type="checkbox"/> TRADITION | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EMPATHY | <input type="checkbox"/> GRATITUDE | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> MODESTY | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> UNIQUENESS | <input type="checkbox"/> TRUST IN G-D | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PATH 2: PRIORITIES

Step 2:

Which values did your parents prioritize and inculcate in you?

Step 3:

See King Solomon's directive to pay attention to our parent's values.

Mishlei/Proverbs 1:8

My son, heed the direction
of your father,
And do not forsake
the instruction of your mother.

שמע בני
מוסר אביך
ואל תטש
תורת אמך

Step 4:

Ralbag's (Gersonides) 1288 – 1344 ibid

The very first directive in a person's life comes from their father and mother, for they direct and guide a person in their youth. Afterwards, one can use the Torah to provide them with direction and guidance.

שמע בני. הנה המוסר
הראשון שיקח הוא מוסר
האב והאם כי הם ייסרו
אותו וינהיגוהו בקטנותו
ואח"כ יתשר ללקיחת
המוסר מדברי התורה

Step 6:

Which of your parents' values will you make yours?
Are there any that you would downgrade or discard?
How would you arrive at this decision?



PATH 3:

THE MOST IMPORTANT VALUE

Step 1:

What do you think is the single most important value based on a Jewish value system?

Step 2:

Please read this incredible disagreement as to the most important principle/verse in the Torah.



Toras Kohanim: A Talmudic compilation authored by R. Chiya about 3rd Century
(as per Maharal 'נתיבות עולם, נתיב אהבת ריע א')

1. R. Akiva- "Love your friend as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18) is the [most important] Torah principle."

2. Ben Azai says there is an even more important principle: "This is the book that chronicles man, on the day that the Almighty created man. He made him in His image. (Genesis 5:1)"

3. Ben Zoma says there is an even more important principle: "Shema Yisrael... Hear Jewish people the Almighty is our G-d and He is One (Deuteronomy 6:4)."

4. Shimon Ben Pazi says we find an even more important principle: "The first sacrifice shall be offered in the morning and the second in the evening (Exodus 29:39)"

1. ובת"כ (ויקרא י"ט) ואהבת לרעך כמוך
ר"ע אומר זה כלל גדול בתורה.

2. בן עזאי אומר זה ספר תולדות אדם
הוא כלל יותר מזה.

3. בן זומא אומר מצינו פסוק כולל יותר
והוא שמע ישראל וגו'.

4. שמעון בן פזי אומר מצינו פסוק כולל
יותר והוא את הכבש האחד תעשה
בבוקר וגו'.

PATH 2: THE MOST IMPORTANT VALUE

Step 3:

Please take a moment to pinpoint the principle/value in each opinion.

Here is what it boils down to:

- Rabbi Akiva- Loving-kindness
- Ben Azai- We were created in the image of G-d/potential for greatness
- Ben Zoma- Belief in the Almighty

Step 4:

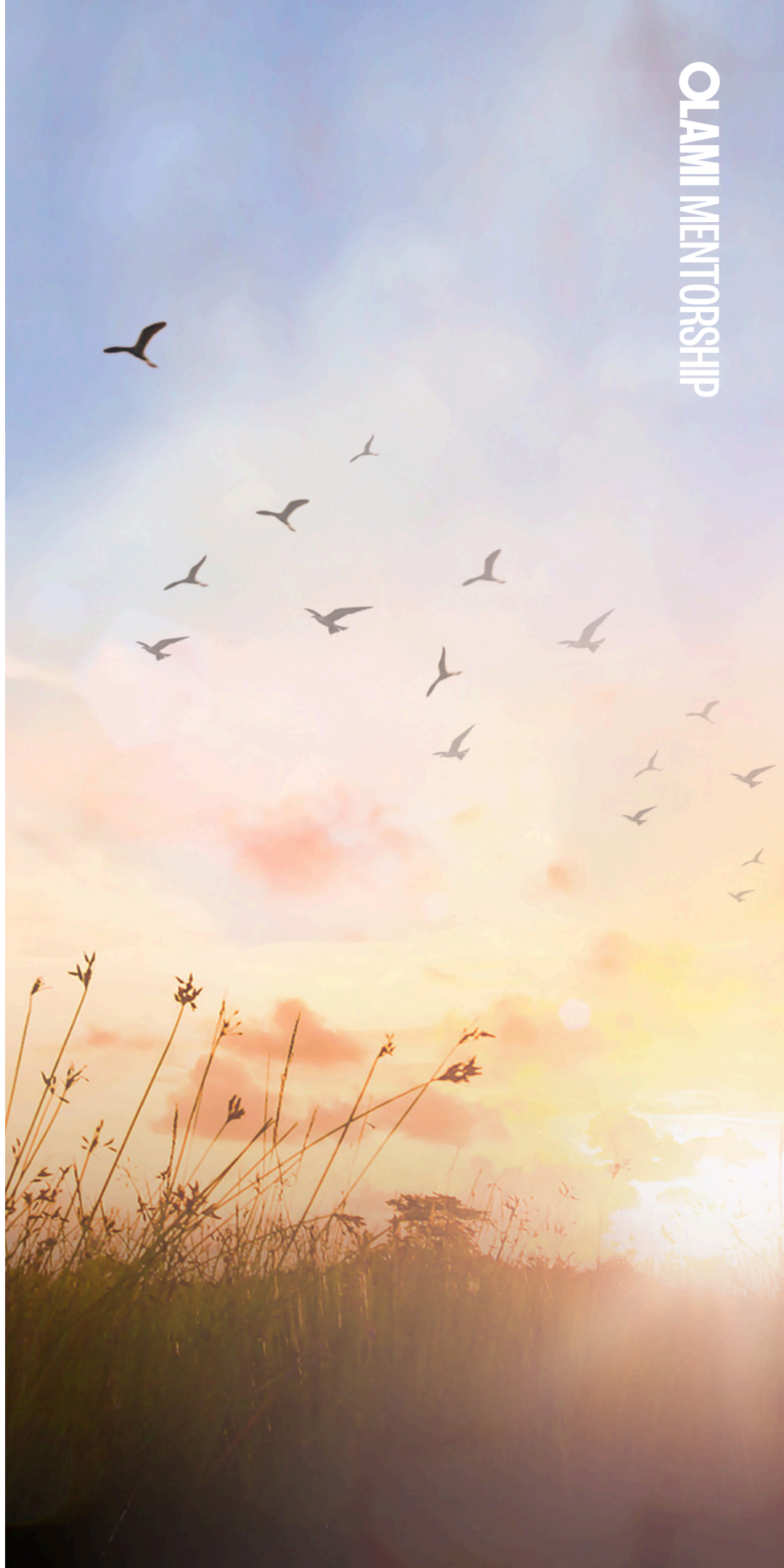
What is certainly unclear is what R. Shimon ben Pazi is intimating. Why is the daily morning and evening sacrifice the most important principle or Torah value?

Step 5: Consider this:

Perhaps by continuing to bring the same offering, twice every single day, one expresses commitment with conviction. Shimon ben Pazi is suggesting that dedication, consistency and continuity are the most fundamental values in Torah life.

Step 6:

Which of the above values (if any) do you think would make it to your personal top 3 list?



**For educational questions or support,
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