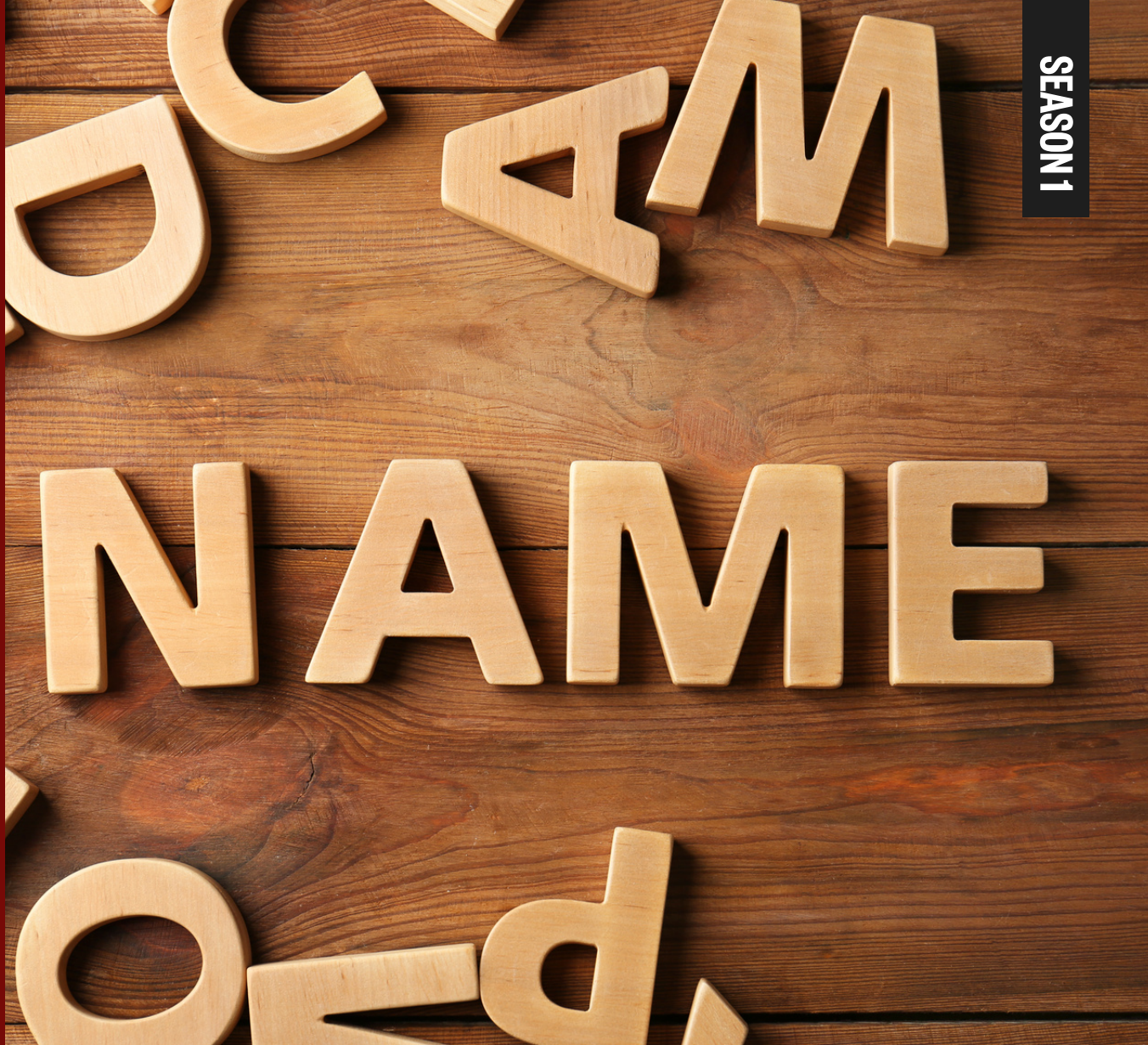


SEASON 1



OLAMI MENTORSHIP

SESSION 9: WHAT'S IN A NAME

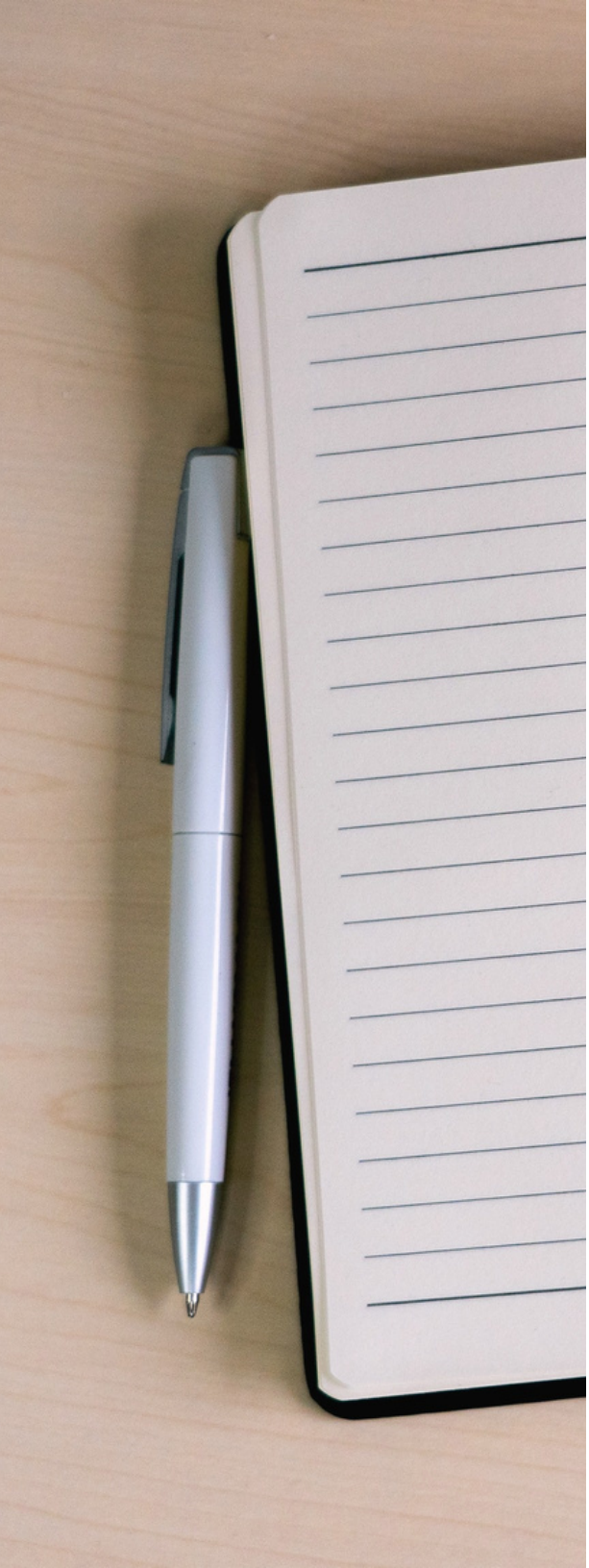


DEAR MENTEE AND MENTOR,

An important part of an individual's journey is understanding one's name; it is also an integral part of a person's personal identity. The importance of a name can vary across cultures and contexts. In many cultures, a name carries significant meaning and symbolism. It serves as an identifier and can reflect a person's identity, heritage, or even their aspirations. Names can hold cultural, religious, or familial significance, and they often play a role in shaping one's sense of self and belonging.

In Jewish tradition, we believe one's Jewish name holds the essence of the individual. Not only names of people but places as well carry messages. In Hebrew, understanding the name of a simple object can be used to understand its significance and essence.

Today, you will delve into a level of self discovery through reflecting on your Jewish names, analyzing their origin and meaning; which are yet another leg on one's life's journey of the past, present, and future.



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

Step 1: Your name

Begin your discussion by discussing your names - what does your name mean? What is its origin? Do you know why you were given this name? Are you named after a particular individual?

Step 2: Arizal Shaar Hagilgulim Hakdamah 23

For when a person is born, and his parents call him by the name that enters their minds, It is not random and by chance, rather it is the Almighty placing in their mouths the name that is necessary for that particular soul.

כי כאשר נולד האדם, וקוראים לו אביו ואמו שם אחד העולה בדעתם, אינו באקראי ובהזדמן, כי אם הקב"ה משים בפיו השם ההוא המוכרח אל הנשמה ההיא.

Step 3: Rabbi Akiva Tatz, Worldmask (p194)

A name is an expression of essence. The root of the word "name" in Hebrew, *shem* שֵׁם, is also sham שָׁם, "there", because "there" is the final stage of any movement or process, its ultimate purpose. While there is movement towards the goal, it is always "there", the focus and target of that movement.



PATH 1

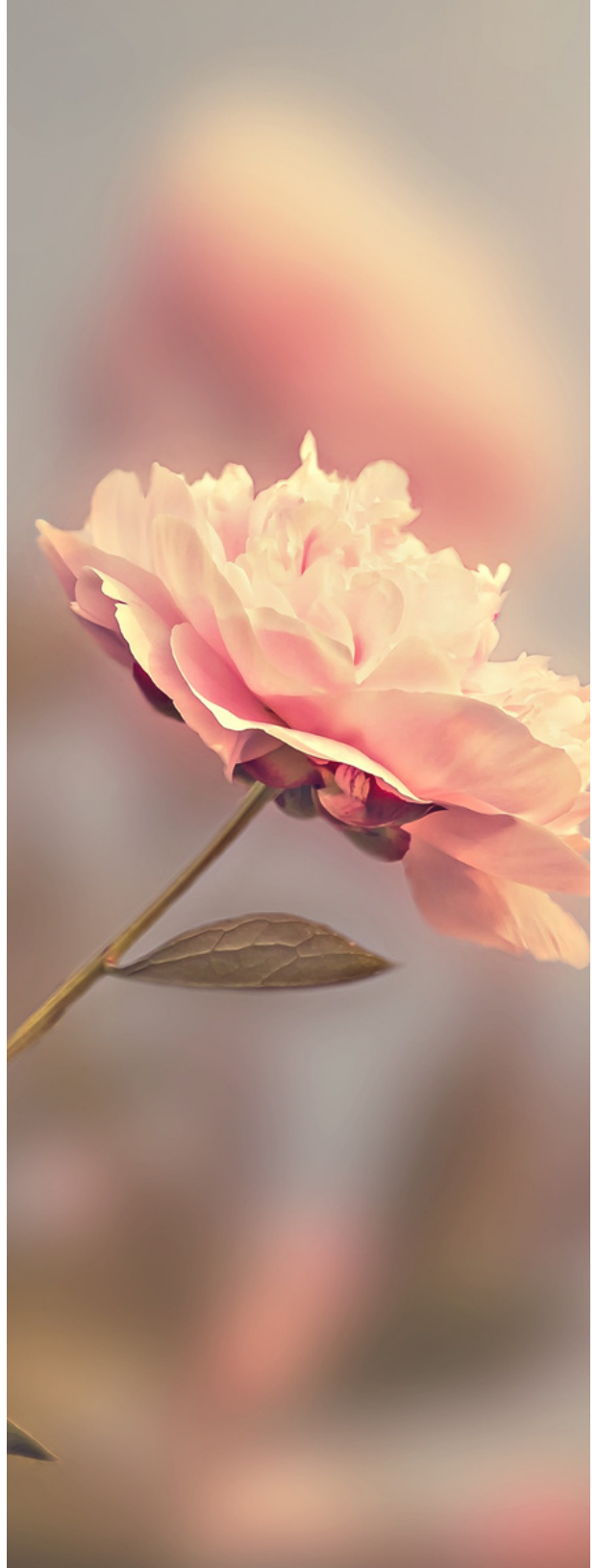
Step 4:

With these ideas in mind, circle back to your own name and try to see if it does indeed describe your essence, your destiny, and your purpose in life.

Step 5:

Contrast Judaism's view on a name to that of William Shakespeare in *Romeo & Juliet*:

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose;
By any other name it would smell as sweet."



PATH 2:

YOUR NAME IS YOUR ESSENCE

Step 1: Do you know why Adam is the name of the first living human being?

1. Genesis 2:7:

The name Adam comes from the word adamah or earth. The earth is a realm in which we can plant and yield fruits, giving rise to new life which was not there beforehand.

And the Almighty formed the Man from earth and he breathed into his nostrils a soul of life

וַיִּצְרֵהוּ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם
עֹפֶרֶת מִן-הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפִּיו
נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים

2. Isaiah 14:14

Adam as in the word “adameh” - I will emulate.
Man’s mandate is to become G-d like.

I will become similar
to the Most High

אֲדַמֶּה
לְעֶלְיוֹן

WHAT DOES ONE HAVE TO DO TO
BECOME MORE G-D-LIKE?

3. Adam is also an acronym to show that a human’s existence is comprised of the physical and spiritual.

Adam = Alef or the Supreme One
(spiritual) + Dam; the Hebrew word
for blood (physical).

=אדם
+ 'א
דם

DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU
HAVE FOUND A GOOD
PHYSICAL/SPIRITUAL
BALANCE IN YOUR LIFE?
HOW DOES ONE DEVELOP
THIS BALANCE?

Step 2:

Do you know where Moses or Moshe got his name?

1. Exodus 2:10

And the child grew older
and he was brought to the
daughter of the Pharaoh
and was as a child to her.
She called his name
Moshe and she said, for I
drew him out of the water.

וַיִּגְדַּל הַיֶּלֶד
וַתְּבִאֶהוּ לְבֵת-
פַּרְעֹה וַיְהִי לָהּ לְבֶן
וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מֹשֶׁה
וַתֹּאמֶר כִּי מִן-
הַמַּיִם מָשִׁיתִהוּ:

2. If the name Moshe means to draw out, perhaps this was foreshadowing Moshe's role in drawing the Jewish nation out of Egypt and then subsequently leading them out of their bondage in Egypt through the waters of the Red Sea.

3. R. Chaim Shmuelevitz 1902–1979

The name Moshe, in particular, teaches us that from a young age Moses was instilled with the concept of giving up one's life to do kindness to others, just as his foster-mother Basya had risked her life by taking in a Jewish child simply in order to help the baby survive.

4. Can you think of anyone in your personal life whose name is just such a perfect description of their essence and life purpose?

PATH 3:

YOUR NAME IS YOUR LEGACY

Step 1:

Did you know that many Jews have the custom of naming a child after a relative who has passed away? This keeps the name and memory alive, and in a metaphysical way forms a bond between the soul of the baby and the deceased relative. This is a great honor to the deceased, because its soul can achieve an elevation based on the good deeds of the namesake. The child, meanwhile, can be inspired by the good qualities of the deceased – and make a deep connection to the past.

Step 2:

Magid Meysharim Parshas Shemos (R. Yosef Karo published in 1656)

Here, R. Yosef Karo explains how using a traditional Biblical name imbues a child with the character traits of their ancestors:

One who is named Avraham will have inborn tendencies for kindness to others. One who is named Yosef, will either have inner-strength in the face of immoral challenges or will provide sustenance for others just like Yosef who supported his father and brothers.

מאן דאיקרי אברהם
נוטה לצד עשיית החסד.
ומאן דאיתקרי יוסף, או
הוא גבור בעריות או הוא
זן ומפרנס לאחרים כמו
יוסף שזן וכלכל את אביו
ואת אחיו.

Step 3:

Can you find any similarities between your life and the life of the person that you are named after? Or of the biblical or historical figure whose name you carry?



PATH 3: YOUR NAME IS YOUR LEGACY

Step 4:

Focus on the names in your immediate family, do you know if your family members are named after deceased family members?

Step 5:

Do you know who those deceased family members were named after?

Step 6:

Think about this short story... A fellow came to the great Torah leader; R. Elazar M. Shach to seek advice about an important decision that he needed to make. It was a complex situation and he was very torn about what he should do. R. Shach thought for a moment and then advised: "Think for a moment, after you pass away, and your children and descendants are discussing your life and your legacy, which of the two options would you want to be included in their memories? That should be your decision!"

Step 7:

If you had to choose a name for your child based on someone in your past, what name would you choose? Why?

Step 8:

What will your legacy be to future generations who may carry your name?

**For educational questions or support,
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