

2. Maimonides, *Hilchot De'ot* / **Laws of Human Disposition 1:4** (Spain/Egypt/Israel, 12th C.)

The way of integrity is [to adopt] the intermediate characteristic of each and every temperament that people have. This is the characteristic that is equidistant from the two extremes... How is this done? One should not be of an angry disposition and be easily angered, nor should one be like a dead person who does not feel, but one should be in the middle – one should not get angry except over a big matter about which it is fitting to get angry, so that one will not act similarly again.

3. Gloria Steinem, *My Life on the Road* (United States, 2015)

I myself cried when I got angry, then became unable to explain why I was angry in the first place. Later I would discover this was endemic among female human beings. Anger is supposed to be “unfeminine” so we suppress it – until it overflows. I could see that not speaking up made my mother feel worse. This was my first hint of the truism that depression is anger turned inward; thus women are twice as likely to be depressed. My mother paid a high price for caring so much, yet being able to do so little about it. In this sway, she led me toward an activist place where she herself could never go.

***Chevruta* Discussion**

- How do you understand the connection between anger and impatience/patience?
- Does Maimonides' warning not to be like a “dead person” speak to Steinem's description of how women are encouraged to suppress anger, or are these different phenomena? How do these two texts speak to each other?
- What is your comfort level with expressing anger? How have you used anger in the way Steinem describes?

4. Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, *Tomer Devorah / The Palm Tree of Devorah* (Israel, ca. 16th C)

Who is like you, God?...

This teaches us an attribute of the Holy Blessed One as a tolerant King who bears insult in a manner (beyond human understanding). There is nothing hidden from God's watch. There is not a moment in which a human being is not nourished and sustained from the flow of divine abundance.

Thus, there is not a wrongdoing that a person does, in which, at that same moment, divine abundance isn't sustaining them... Even when a person uses their agency to transgress, God bears the insult...

This is why (the prophet Micah asks): "Who is like you, God?" You are a God of kindness, doing good. You have the power to take vengeance, but you are patient and wait for people to return in *teshuvah*.

This, then, is a virtue people should emulate – *savlanut*.

5. Alan Morinis, *Everyday Holiness* (Canada, 2007)

No matter how you may conceive of God or the creative force that stands behind the universe, there is no doubt that this ultimate source of life is endowed with patience, especially when compared to us.

Think of the pace of earthly eras, creeping along as slowly as glaciers advancing and retreating in an ice age. Stars and galaxies are born, mature, and pass away.

And as for us, what the *Mussar* (ethical) tradition offers as evidence for God's patience is the fact that our lives are sustained, even when we do wrong. **It's not hard to imagine a universe where there is absolutely no margin for error, where punishment is instantaneous and total, but that isn't the world we live in.** God is patient and preserves our lives even when our actions happen to hit way off the mark, to give us time to come to deeper realizations, make amends, and return to a straighter way.

Chevruta Discussion

- What situations tend to try your patience?
- Are there parts of your life where you find you leave less room for error – in others? In Yourself? Or where you create *too much* room?
- How do you know when you are impatient? Be aware of your patterns.
- How do you balance between (a) your impatience with others/the state of the world, particularly when it's not going the way you want it, and (b) the limits of what you yourself can change?

6. *Bamidbar / Numbers 12:1-3*

Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses... They said, "Has the Eternal spoken only through Moses? Has God not spoken through us as well?" The Eternal heard it.

Now Moses was a very humble man, more so than any other man on earth.

וַתִּדְבַר מִרְיָם וְאַהֲרֹן בְּמִלְשָׁה עַל־אֲדֹת הָאֱלֹהִים הַכֹּשִׁית אֲשֶׁר לָקַח לָקַח כֹּשִׁית לָקַח: וַיֹּאמְרוּ הֲרַק אֶת־בְּמִלְשָׁה דְבַר יְהוָה הֲלֹא גַם־בָּנוּ דְבַר וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה: וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עֲנִיו מְאֹד מִכָּל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה:

7. Rashi on *Bamidbar / Numbers 12:3* (France, ca. 11th-12th C)

“עָנָו *Anav*” means humble and patient.

- What is the connection between humility and patience?

8. Alan Morinis, *Everyday Holiness* (Canada, 2007)

We only burn with that particular fire when the focus in the situation is on me. You are delaying me, misleading me, berating me. You are interfering with my plan or standing in the way of my needs. Sometimes the only inner voice I can hear is my ego, loudly promoting all its important needs and plans and drowning out any other voice that might whisper within.

We all tend to see ourselves as the prime actor in a drama that swirls around us. Some of us believe that all that heavy action is playing out according to a script we ourselves have written. Others see it the opposite way, playing the victim to the forces that press in on their own little stronghold. Despite the obvious differences, both these attitudes see the whole of life as pivoting around a separate identity that stands at the center of a very personal universe.

But the truth is different. We are neither so central nor independent as all that. We are actually wired into all kinds of larger circuits and systems... and **we don't control many of the factors that have a role in shaping our lives**. Least of all can we expect to rule the timetable according to which life takes place...

Why should everything go our way, considering how small we are and how many other agendas and needs are always involved? When we do hold in sight how integrated we are within the grand schemes that make up and sustain the world, we see ourselves situated amid the large wheels turning and rivers flowing, moved by hands that are not our own. Whatever pleasure or pain we may experience, our lives are taking place within great cycles of time, space, and material, even though we often have our eyes focused so directly in front of our noses that we don't perceive the truth of that largest picture...

- How do you sort out what is actually within your power, and what is not?
- Do you have a different kind of patience with the things that are within your control, vs. those that aren't? Is one easier?

9. Menahem Mendel Levin, *Cheshbon HaNefesh / Moral Accounting* (Podolia, 1809)

When something bad happens to you and you did not have the power to avoid it, do not aggravate the situation even more through wasted grief.

Chevruta Discussion

- How might grief aggravate a situation?
- Is there a grief that is not wasted?
- What does this have to do with patience?

10. David Kessler, *That Discomfort You're Feeling Is Grief*, HBR (23 March 2020)

We know this is temporary, but it doesn't feel that way, and we realize things will be different... The loss of normalcy; the fear of economic toll; the loss of connection. This is hitting us and we're grieving. Collectively. We are not used to this kind of collective grief in the air...

We're also feeling anticipatory grief. Anticipatory grief is that feeling we get about what the future holds when we're uncertain. Usually it centers on death... [and] is also more broadly imagined futures. There is a storm coming. There's something bad out there. With a virus, this kind of grief is so confusing for people. Our primitive mind knows something bad is happening, but you can't see it. This breaks our sense of safety. We're feeling that loss of safety.

What can individuals do to manage all this grief?

Acceptance, as you might imagine, is where the power lies. We find control in acceptance. *I can wash my hands. I can keep a safe distance. I can learn how to work virtually...* The goal is to **find balance in the things you're thinking...**

Anticipatory grief is the mind going to the future and imagining the worst. To calm yourself, you want to **come into the present**. This will be familiar advice to anyone who has meditated or practiced mindfulness but people are always surprised at how prosaic this can be. You can name five things in the room. There's a computer, a chair, a picture of the dog, an old rug, and a coffee mug. It's that simple. Breathe. Realize that in the present moment, nothing you've anticipated has happened.

You can also think about how to **let go of what you can't control**. What your neighbor is doing is out of your control. What is in your control is staying six feet away from them and washing your hands. Focus on that.

11. Rabbi Yitzhak Miller (United States)

Savlanut might be best translated as “presume you don’t yet have all the information, and leave open the possibility of something different happening than you expect... perhaps something even better than you thought possible.”

12. *Pirkei Avot* / Ethics of the Rabbis 1:1 (Israel, ca. 200 BCE-200 CE)

Moses received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the Men of the Great Assembly. They said three things: **Be patient in [the administration of] justice**, raise many disciples and make a fence round the Torah.

מֹשֶׁה קִבֵּל תּוֹרָה מִסִּינַי, וּמִסִּינַי לִיהוֹשֻׁעַ, וִיהוֹשֻׁעַ לְזִקְנִים, וְזִקְנִים לְנָבִיאִים, וְנָבִיאִים מִסֵּרִיהָ לְאַנְשֵׁי כְנֶסֶת הַגְּדוּלָה. הֵם אָמְרוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים, הָיוּ מְתוּנִים בְּדִין, וְהִעֲמִידוּ תַלְמִידִים הַרְבֵּה, וַעֲשׂוּ סָגֵג לַתּוֹרָה