

Additional Resources for *Changing the World from the Inside Out* by Rabbi David Jaffe

Learn the Sources - Savlanut/Patience

Numbers 12:3

א וַתְּדַבֵּר מִרְיָם וְאַהֲרֹן בְּמִשְׁחָה, עַל-אֲדֹת הָאִשָּׁה הַכַּשִּׁית אֲשֶׁר לְקַח: כִּי-אִשָּׁה כַּשִּׁית, לְקַח. 1 And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married; for he had married a Cushite woman.

ב וַיֹּאמְרוּ, הֲרַק אֶת-בְּמִשְׁחָה דְבַר יְהוָה--הֲלֹא, גַם-בָּנוּ דִבַּר; וַיִּשְׁמַע, יְהוָה. 2 And they said: 'Has the LORD indeed spoken only with Moses? Has He not spoken also with us?' And the LORD heard it.--

ג וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה, עָנָו מְאֹד--מִכָּל, הָאָדָם, אֲשֶׁר, עַל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה. {ס} 3 Now the man Moses was very humble – more so than all the people that were upon the face of the earth.-- {S}

Rashi 12:3	רש"י על במדבר פרק יב פסוק ג
Humble – Low and a Savlan	ענו - שפל וסבלן:

Does Moshe really seem like a Savlan? What about killing the Egyptian, the broken tablets, striking the rock?

Exodus 2:11 – 15

יא וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָהֵם, וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל-אֶחָיו, וַיִּרְא, בְּסִבְלָתָם; וַיִּרְא אִישׁ מִצְרִי, מִכֶּה אִישׁ-עִבְרִי מֵאֶחָיו. 11 And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown up, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren.

Rashi 2:11	
AND HE SAW THEIR SUFFERING – He set his eyes and his heart to feel their pain.	וירא בסבלותם - (ב"ר) נתן עיניו ולבו להיות מיצר עליהם:

What kind of Savlanut do you see in this source, especially in the Rashi (quoted from the Midrash)?

Exodus 32:9-14

- ט וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה, אֶל-מֹשֶׁה: רְאִיתִי אֶת-הָעַם הַזֶּה, וְהִנֵּה עַם-קָשָׁה-עֲרֹף הוּא. 9 And the LORD said unto Moses: 'I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people.
- י וְעַתָּה הִנֵּיחָה לִּי, וַיִּחַר-אַפִּי בָהֶם וְאָכַלְתִּים; וְאֶעֱשֶׂה אוֹתְךָ, לְגוֹי גָדוֹל. 10 Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may blaze forth against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of you a great nation.'
- יא וַיִּחַל מֹשֶׁה, אֶת-פְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו; וַיֹּאמֶר, לַמָּה יְהוָה יִחַרָה אַפְּךָ בְּעַמֶּךָ, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, בְּכַח גָּדוֹל וּבְיָד חֲזָקָה. 11 And Moses implored the LORD his God, and said: 'LORD, let not your anger blaze forth against your people, that You brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?
- יב לֹמָה יֹאמְרוּ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר, בְּרָעָה הוֹצִיאֵם לְהַרְגֵם אֶתֶם בְּהָרִים, וּלְכַלְתֵּם, מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה; שׁוּב מִחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ, וְהִנַּחֵם עַל-הַרְעָה לְעַמֶּךָ. 12 Let not the Egyptians say: It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Your blazing anger and renounce the plan to punish your people.
- יג יִזְכֹּר לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדֶּיךָ, אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לָהֶם בְּךָ, וַתְּדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים, אַרְבָּה אֶת-זַרְעֲכֶם כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם; וְכָל-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי, אֶתֶן לְזַרְעֲכֶם, וְנָחְלוּ, לְעֹלָם. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, how You swore to them by Your Self and said to them: I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and I will give to your offspring this whole land of which I spoke, to possess forever."
- יד וַיִּנָּחֵם, יְהוָה, עַל-הַרְעָה, אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר לַעֲשׂוֹת לְעַמּוֹ. {פ} 14 And the LORD renounced the punishment he planned to bring upon His people. {P}

How is Moshe encouraging God's Savlanut?

Below is a mystical explanation of Savlanut:

“Who is like you, God...’ – this teaches us the reality of Hashem as a derided king who suffers insult beyond belief. There is nothing hidden from Hashem’s watch. There is not a moment in which a human being is not sustained from the flow of divine abundance. There is not a wrongdoing that a person does, in which, at that same moment, the divine abundance isn’t sustaining him...While the human is committing this wrongdoing with this very power from Hashem, Hashem suffers the insult. Don’t think that Hashem doesn’t have the power to stop the human from the wrongdoing by cutting off the flow of divine abundance... This is why Micah the prophet calls to Hashem, ‘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 tsuva. Behold, this is a mida that people need to acquire – patience. To be able to withstand insult and still not withhold your goodness from the other”

Tomer Devorah/The Date Palm of Devorah, R. Moshe Cordevero

המדה הזאת מורה על היות הקב"ה מלך נעלב, סובל עלבון, מה שלא יכילהו רעיון. הרי אין דבר נסתר מהשגחתו בלי ספק, ועוד אין רגע שלא יהיה האדם נזון ומתקיים מכח עליון השופע בו עליו; והרי תמצא שמעולם לא חטא אדם

נגדו שלא יהיה הוא באותו הרגע ממש שופע שפע קיומו ותנועת אבריו, ועם היות שהאדם חוטא בכח ההוא לא מנעו ממנו כלל, אלא סובל הקב"ה עלבון כזה להיות משפיע בו כח תנועות אבריו, והוא מוציא אותו כח באותו רגע בחטא ועון ומכעיס והקב"ה סובל. ולא תאמר שאינו יכול למנוע ממנו הטוב ההוא, ח"ו, שהרי בכחו ברגע כמימריה ליבש ידיו ורגליו, כעין שעשה לירבעם (מלכים א' י"ג, ד'). ועם כל זה, שהכח בידו להחזיר הכח הנשפע ההוא, והיה לו לומר כיון שאתה חוטא נגדי תחטא בשלך ולא בשלי, לא מפני זה מנע טוב מן האדם ולא סבל עלבון, והשפיע הכח והטיב לאדם טובו. הרי זה עלבון וסבלנות מה שלא יסופר. ועל זה קוראים מלאכי השרת להקב"ה מלך עלוב (פרקי היכלות פכ"ה). והיינו אומרו "מי אל כמוך", אתה אל בעל חסד המטיב, אל בעל כח לינקם ולאסוף את שלך, ועם כל זה אתה סובל ונעלב עד ישוב בתשובה:

הרי זו מדה שצריך האדם להתנהג בה, רצוני, הסבלנות, וכן היותו נעלב:
אפילו למדרגה זו, ועם כל זה לא יאסוף טובתו מן המקבל:

Questions to consider

What are the types of situations or interactions that are hardest for you to maintain Savlanut?

How might using this method of "staying connected" make a difference?

When have you been able to channel anger and make an appropriate response to something upsetting?

What is a "load" you feel like you are carrying? What would it be like to get help?

For Further Study

Savlanut/Forebearance, Patience

Source 1: The Path of the Just, Chapter 11, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto (d. Italy, Amsterdam, Israel)

[Our Talmudic sages] say about an angry person that he completely denies the existence of God. How is this? He becomes angry whenever anything happens that is not the way he wanted it to be. He fills with such anger until he is not connected to his mind anymore. A person in such a state is capable of destroying the entire world if he had the ability because his mind is not in control at all....

הַיֵּשׁ הַרְגֵזוֹן שֶׁאִמְרוּ עָלָיו, "כָּל הַכּוֹעֵס כְּאִלוֹ עוֹבֵד עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה", וְהוּא הַנִּכְעָס עַל כָּל דְּבָר שֶׁיַּעֲשֶׂה נֶגְדַּ רְצוֹנוֹ וּמִתְמַלֵּא חֲמָה, עַד שֶׁקֹּבֵר לְבוֹ בַּל עִמּוֹ וְעֵצָתוֹ נִבְעָרָה, וְהֵנָּה אִישׁ כְּזֶה קָדָאִי לְהַחְרִיב עוֹלָם מְלֵא אִם יְהִיָּה יְכַלֵּת בְּיָדוֹ, כִּי אֵין הַשְּׂכָל שֶׁלֹּט בּוֹ קָלֵל, וְהוּא סָר טַעַם מִמֶּשׁ כְּכֹל הַחַיּוֹת הַטּוֹרְפוֹת

Questions:

When things don't go the way you want, is anger the primary emotion your experience? What other emotions are present?

What kinds of situations make you "lose your mind?"

Based on your own understanding of God, how do you think anger is a "denial of the existence of God?"

How might you use moments of anger to actually get closer to God?

Source 2: The Guide to Right Living, Maimonides (d. 1204, Spain, Egypt)¹

Chapter 1:4) The way of the upright 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 of the temperament of which it is a characteristic, and is not closer to either of the 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.

הַדֶּרֶךְ הַיֵּשֶׁרָה הִיא מִדָּה בִּינוֹנִית שֶׁבְּכָל דְּעָה וְדְעָה מְכַל הַדְּעוֹת שִׁישׁ לוֹ לְאָדָם וְהִיא הַדְּעָה שֶׁהִיא רַחוּקָה מִשְׁתֵּי הַקְּצוּוֹת רִיחוּקָה שׁוֹהַ וְאִינָה קְרוּבָה לָא לְזוֹ וְלָא לְזוֹ לְפִיכֶךְ צוּוֹ חֲכָמִים הַרְאִשׁוֹנִים שִׁיֵּהָ אָדָם שֶׁם דְּעוֹתָיו תְּמִיד וּמִשְׁעֵר אוֹתָם וּמְכוּיִן אוֹתָם בַּדֶּרֶךְ הָאֲמֻצְעִית כְּדִי שִׁיֵּהָ שְׁלֵם בְּגוֹפוֹ כִּיצַד לָא יֵהָא בְּעַל חֲמָה נוֹחַ לְכַעוֹס וְלָא כְּמַת שְׁאִינוֹ מְרַגֵּשׁ אֲלָא בִּינוֹנִי לָא יְכַעוֹס אֲלָא עַל דְּבָר גְּדוֹל שְׂרָאוּי לְכַעוֹס עָלָיו כְּדִי שְׁלָא יַעֲשֶׂה כִּיּוּצָא בּוֹ פַּעַם אַחֲרַת ...

¹ These passages are taken from Maimonides' magnum opus, the Mishnah Torah, from a section called Hilchot De'ot, which literally translates as "Laws of Character traits". Because it deals with character development and healthy living, we translated it here as The Guide to Right Living.

Chapter 2: 3) There are some intermediate temperaments which one is forbidden to have, but one should adopt one of the extremities of such temperaments. ...It is the same with anger, which is an extremely bad temperament and from which it is fitting for one to distance oneself as far as its opposite extreme. One should teach oneself not to get angry, even over something about which it would be normal to get angry. If one wanted to instill fear in one's sons or members of one's household, or in the community if one was their leader, and one wants to be angry at them in order that they will return to the good [ways], then one should show them that one is being angry at them just to correct them, and, when displaying such anger, one should bear in mind that one is like a man who is similar to being angry, and that one is not really angry.

(ג) ויש דעות שאסור לו לאדם לנהוג בהן בבינונית אלא יתרחק מן הקצה האחד עד הקצה האחר והוא גובה לב שאין דרך הטובה שיהיה אדם עניו בלבד...וכן הכעס מדה רעה היא עד למאד וראוי לאדם שיתרחק ממנה עד הקצה האחר וילמד עצמו שלא יכעוס ואפילו על דבר שראוי לכעוס עליו ואם רצה להטיל אימה על בניו ובני ביתו או על הציבור אם היה פרנס ורצה לכעוס עליהן כדי שיחזרו למוטב יראה עצמו בפניהם שהוא כועס כדי לייסרם ותהיה דעתו מיושבת בינו לבין עצמו כאדם שהוא מדמה כועס בשעת כעסו והוא אינו כועס

Questions:

In Chapter 1 Maimonides brings anger as an example of a middah about which it is important to find a middle path. However, in Chapter 2 he says that one should always avoid getting angry. How might you resolve this apparent contradiction?

In both passages Maimonides refers to the uses of anger. In what ways do you consciously use anger as opposed to anger being something that just happens to you?

Source 3 [Aley Shur](#), v. 2, p. 217 Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe

Rav Wolbe writes about the importance of having Savlanut for ourselves:

When a person begins in a path of spiritual growth he thinks he will progress quickly. If only he could be stronger he could focus on all his prayers and transform his soul traits one at a time and do all the practices – What frustration he feels when he finds that he can't be successful in all of this! The person who wants to grow needs to learn well the following teaching of our rabbis:

Elihu said: "The Almighty, we cannot find Him, excellent in power." (Job 37:23) He that hears this verse may exclaim: 'Perhaps, Heaven forbid, this is blasphemy!' [Because if you eliminate the comma after the word 'Him' the verse implies that God's is NOT excellent in power.] But this is what Elihu meant: We will never find God's strength fully displayed toward any of His creatures, for He does not visit His creatures with burdensome laws, but comes to each one according to his strength. For, if God had come upon Israel with the full might of His strength when He gave them the Torah, they would not have been able to withstand it, as it says, "If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die" (Deuteronomy 5:22). God, however came upon them according to their individual strength, for it says, "The voice of the Lord is with power" (Psalms 29:4). It does not say 'with His power' but 'with power', that is, according to the power of each individual. – Exodus Rabbah 29:1

In other words, the midrash asserts that God aligns what is asked of each person according to that person's resources.

“According to the power of each individual” – this is a general principle in spiritual service. Our resources are limited. Any growth we try to do needs to be built on this foundation – we have no choice but to go slowly and not overburden or overextend ourselves. [There is a rabbinic principle]- “One who grabs a lot grabs nothing, but one who grabs a little grabs something.” (Talmud Bavli Kiddushin 17a). Also, in that little bit that we do try, we may fail often and despite that there is no need to despair. Rather, we need to stubbornly begin again until God helps us succeed.

We need to be very patient with ourselves...“Seven times the righteous man falls and gets up” (Proverbs 24:16). Even if we fail many times in our practice – in the end we will succeed, with God's help.

Rabbi Eliyahu, The Vilna Gaon (c. 1780s) writes, “...Everyone needs to go according to his own level and not skip ahead. This way each person will progress on his way with a sense of security and will get Divine assistance.

R. Wolbe seems to be saying that we need to know our own resources and take small steps that will push us at the edge of our comfort zone, but no further.

Questions

What is a way that you overburden or overextend yourself? How could you re-align this commitment so that is in keeping with your resources?

What is the discomfort you would need to bear to accept that you actually have limited resources?

Three times R. Wolbe and other authors mention that one will get “God's help” in their spiritual growth. How do you understand this idea? What does it mean for you to get “God's help?”