

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW ROSH CHODESH CYCLE

*A garden locked is my sister, my bride,
A spring locked, a fountain sealed.*

Song of Songs 4:12

Every woman has innate feminine creativity that can be expressed as gifts to her family, her friends, and to the world. As many and varied, and uniquely created as we are, that is as unique and varied our gifts can be. Home-making, decorating, cooking, sewing, and gardening, are all forms of creativity, as are painting, sculpting, writing, dance, and music.

Children naturally are bursting with creativity and curiosity. Inevitably, either by family, teachers, peers, or society in general, as a child grows different forms of creativity are squelched or restricted. Most unfortunately, what is repressed may well be the one particular gift or voice that only that individual child has been given. The world needs to hear that voice.

Now is the time to allow the wind of the Spirit to blow, as it were, on any “locked gardens” in our lives, so that fruit may blossom and the unique and fragrant spices may be released - to the delight of the Beloved; and to help bring beauty and healing to the world.

Let my Beloved come into His garden and eat its choicest fruits.

Song of Songs 4:16



BEING HOLY, BEING WHOLE - *TIKKUN* of Body, Soul and Spirit

Each month we will focus on a particular part of the body and see how the three elements of our being are related to the functioning of that member of the body.

During Nissan we will explore why how and what we speak is important. What prompts us to speak as we do? What effect do our words have on ourselves and others?

NISSAN - Mouth - Speech

NISSAN - the first month of the biblical year and the Rosh Chodesh Cycle. The month is associated with the mouth and words. The first festival of the year is celebrated - *Pesach* / *Passover*. The name *Pesach* is comprised of two Hebrew words...*peh* - mouth and *sach* - speaks or converses. The Israelite tribe connected with Nissan is Yehudah; which means praise. How fitting that a mouth filled with praise describes Nissan - the month of the Exodus and God's mighty deliverance of His people from slavery. As His redeemed, He brought them to Mount Sinai where His mouth would confirm His covenant faithfulness to them and would speak forth the Ten Words that would transform them into a holy nation and would change the world forever.

In connection with the festival of *Pesach* - when the enslaved Israelites were delivered by God and brought into freedom, including the freedom to speak and have a voice, Rabbi Nachman states in *Likutei HaMoharan* that pure speech leads to freedom, while blemished speech corresponds to exile. If we rectify our speech we become free people; an exalted creation. Such is the great value and power of speech.

“With every breath one takes, with every word uttered, one *can* evoke God's honor. Speaking properly, even when speaking of mundane matters - and avoiding blemished speech - brings one continually closer to God. ...These are words through which we merit the Exodus. Through them we become free.”

Likutei Moharan 1, 55:7

And then, with each breath and word, we are able to praise God.

Good vs Evil Speech

One needs wisdom to distinguish between good and evil speech. Evil often can masquerade as good! Apart from the obvious hate-speech, profanity, and slander, today, with the general lapse in morality and integrity, many lies are accepted as truth. Evil speech has a powerful and detrimental effect on the one who speaks them. They also cause damage to the listener and to the one who is being denigrated or slandered. To strengthen good and holy speech we need to consciously reflect on God's Word and express His words in prayer, praise and song. Rabbi Nachman taught, “Through song and joy one can guard and preserve one's memory and [always keep in mind] the World to Come.” (*Likutei Moharan* 1,54:12) Also, “It is good to make a habit of inspiring yourself with a melody. Great concepts are contained in each holy melody and they can arouse your heart and draw it towards God. ...The loftiness of a melody is beyond measure.”

Even Moses had a problem with speaking. It has been proven medically that singing, even by yourself in the shower, and reading poetry, helps to rectify speech problems.

Mashiach - Messiah

Yeshua, as the Word made flesh, is the perfect example of good, holy speech. Rabbi Nachman points out that MaShlaCH relates to "MeSlaCH the mute" - "God causes the mute to speak." In the era of Messiah, when he is ruling as King of kings in Jerusalem, everyone will be dedicated to the pursuit of peace and holiness and all will be able to speak freely without causing pain to another. At that time, when God's Kingdom of Love, Unity, and Shalom is established on earth, then all speech will be holy, as proclaimed by the prophet Zephaniah,

"For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the Lord and serve him with one accord." (3:9)

PSALMS - HEALING HARPS

On a harp of ten strings You have made me rejoice Adonai in Your works!

Psalm 92:4-5

It has long been understood that the Psalms carry a special anointing and blessing of healing. I call them "harps of God," the strings of which produce music that severs the bonds that the world and the enemy of our souls attempt to lay upon us.

As an aid in assisting us towards wholeness - be it mental, physical, or spiritual, we will be focussing on the ten Psalms identified by Rabbi Nathan of Breslov as *Tikkun Klali* - Complete Healing or Repair. ¹

The Concept of Tikkun

The word *tikkun* means healing or repair in the context of the perfecting of the individual, the Jewish people and the nations, and the universe in general. The phrase *Tikkun Olam* means the repair of the world. The ultimate goal, working together with God, and with His help, is to bring the world to wholeness and perfection as far as it is in our ability to do so. Every tiny, individual act of healing and reconstruction of brokenness contributes to the repair.

The Word of God is the Rock we stand on in this work.

To quote *Midrash Tanchuma - Yitro 8*:

Said the Holy One blessed be He:
"There is no affliction
for which there does not exist a cure;
the therapy and medicament for every affliction is discernible.
If you seek that misfortune befall not your body,
engage in the study of Torah,
for it is therapy for the entire body.

¹ Editor - Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraud, *Healing of Soul, Healing of Body* - A project of the National Center for Jewish Healing.

The ultimate purpose of Creation is to reveal and establish God's Kingdom in the world. Every person created in His image has this purpose and can only find meaning and fulfilment to the extent that he/she discovers and releases their innate godliness and creative gifts. We can only do our part, in whatever situation our Father places us, remembering the wisdom of *Pirkei Avot 2:16*,

“You are not required to finish the task,
but neither are you allowed to desist from it.”

Often we can feel intimidated and question our own worth and ability. The world can be like a mighty, churning, often threatening ocean. Rabbi Nachman points out: “[One's] life is like a very narrow bridge, and the essential thing is not to fear at all!”

Even if one falls into the waves there is no room for despair, for, as he explains, there are “rafts” to cling to for safety, such as:

Faith, encouragement, melody, dance, appropriate self-criticism and introspection, learning from others, and the yearning for a deeper relationship with the Creator.

We also have the assurance that our Messiah, Yeshua, is there to raise us from the troubled sea and he can speak the words to still the storm! (Mark 4:39).

How to Apply the Psalms

Each month we aim to identify individually with the content of the Psalm in a deep and meaningful way and attempt to apply it to oneself - to find one's self in the psalm. How?

1. Find a word or phrase or passage that resonates with you. Consider expressing it through writing your thoughts or composing a verse or poem; doing a sketch, painting, collage, or illustration in your journal; sing it, express it in movement or dance. Make it yours in whatever way you can.
2. In place of ‘Lord’ or ‘God’ the Hebrew word *Adonai* can be used to shed a fresh perspective on the verses. We also will seek a more personal, descriptive name for the Almighty in each Psalm.
3. Understanding that this “holy work,” and in order to sanctify it as a sacred, set apart time, we suggest you do a special washing of your hands at the start. (i) First get your Journal, material, Bible and notes ready. (ii) Then do a traditional *netilat yadaiim* - pouring cool water from a cup [use a traditional two-handled one if you have one] first over the right hand and then the left. (iii) Before drying them, say, e.g., “*Blessed are You O Lord our God, I dedicate the work of my hands to Your glory and I ask for Your inspiration and anointing upon it. Amen*”

NISSAN - PSALM 16

In verses 1-4, David is feeling vulnerable, unworthy, and guilty. Maybe he believes he is suffering because he deserves it? Reassurance comes in verse 5 with the knowledge that Adonai is his “portion.” When we reach out to take hold of His right hand, it is always there and He, in His great care for us, leads us toward the destiny He has planned for us.

Our loving Father does not want us to wallow in our troubles and sorrow. When we, as verse 8 tells us, keep Adonai continually before us - when we keep our eyes upon Him, we see His power at work and we can gratefully appreciate that we are beloved and beautiful in His sight. We need to understand that we each are equally and completely worthy of being here in this life. We are essential to God's unfolding plan of Redemption, of which we, individually, play a tiny but important part. As Madyson Tigler says, "Seeing ourselves as part of something larger, as beings called to serve, is the ultimate cure for feelings of unworthiness."²

Because of God-Who-Is-My-Right-Hand, we can stand strong and press forward with perseverance. Our whole being can be joyful and we can rest secure and sing, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; let all that is within me bless His Holy Name."

My [Keren's] response:

God-Who-Is-My-Right Hand
is my refuge in times of trouble,
When I am weak, He is strong.

I am not over, finished with; rather
I am starting anew!
In His strength and compassion
I am revived; myself.
Ready!

POEM to Ponder for Nissan

Water Without a Tongue by Malka Heifetz Tussman / original in Yiddish

The sea
ripped a rib
out of its side and said Go,
lie there,
be for me a sign that I am great,
mighty am I.
Go,
be for me a sign.

The canal lies at my window
Mute.

What could be sadder
than water
without a tongue?

² *Healing of Soul, Healing of Body*

As a 16 year old, in 1912 Malka immigrated to America from the Ukraine. Having to learn the language and suffering the limitations that entails, she described it as the experience of becoming inconsequential. You lose your voice and cannot communicate or contribute to society.

The sea can be heard. Its waves sometimes resound with mighty crashes - a canal, however, lies motionless, the water constrained and uncommunicative.

The description of a canal being ripped as a rib from the side of the sea clearly is a reference to Genesis 2:21-22, making Eve a kind of “tributary derivation from Adam, as Andrew Vogel Ettin describes in his book *Speaking Silences*. While useful and practical, Ettin continues to describe, “...a canal is quiet and subsidiary, sadly lacking a tongue and language for wider discourses; mere water without substance, effect, or majesty.” How many women, mistakenly, feel that they fit this description?

Author Tillie Olsen, in her book *Silences*, notes the significant fact of “...women’s silence of centuries. Not until several centuries ago do women writers appear.” She encourages those “...who begin to emerge into more flowered and rewarded use ourselves,” and says, “...by our achievements [we are] bearing witness to what was [and still is] being lost, silenced.”

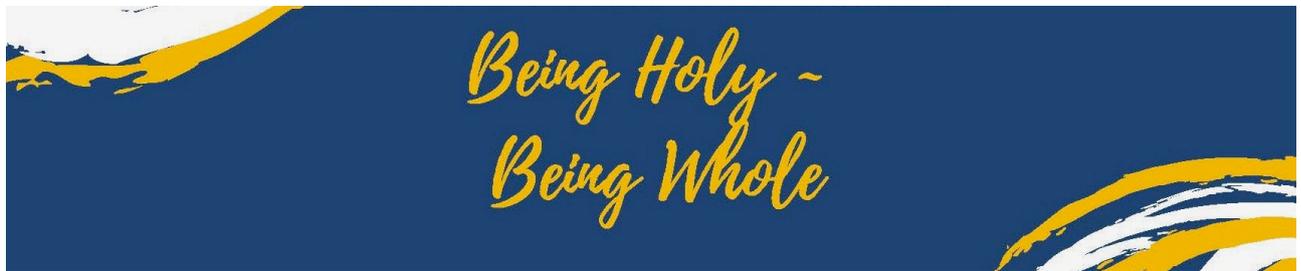
Dear women of God, as we do our part in *Tikkun Olam*, let us discover and exercise the different “voices” the God-Who-Is-Our-Right-Hand has gifted us with and begin to sing them forth for His greater glory.

JOURNALING - CHIDUSHIM

From the same root as *chodesh* (month) and *chadash* (new), the Hebrew word *chidushim* means new insight and thoughts; fresh inspiration. During this year's monthly cycle - *Being Holy Being Whole* - we are encouraging each one to keep a journal and to express one's thoughts, ideas, sketches, pictures, doodles - whatever, in order to give expression to the *chidushim* in our hearts and minds.

See the *Being Holy Being Whole* Journal page for prompts and ideas!

Each month we are aiming to share a video of a woman who is finding a way to creatively express the physical focus of the month. This month HIS-ISRAEL friend SUSAN MAXON shares how she finds creative expression with her words.



NISSAN

THEME: WORDS

QUOTE: 'In the art of communication, creativity and sincerity are fundamental; and with those elements there really are no limits.' ~ Keren Hannah

POEM: *Water Without a Tongue* by Malka Heifetz Tussman. Write it in your journal and jot down any thoughts.

PSALM 16: God-Who-Is-My-Right-Hand

Write out the verses that deeply touch you and express your responses to the Psalm.

CREATIVE EXPRESSION: Find pictures; draw your own; sketch; write down any other Scripture verses and/or quotes that will illustrate and express the theme and what you are learning and experiencing this month.