

Parasha Meditation

Tazria/Metzorah

Vayikra 12:1-15:33

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

Time-out for Self-reflection and Meditation

Introduction:

In *Parashat Tazria* we learn that a person must spend time in physical seclusion, truly alone during specific periods of his or her life. When we get out of sync, we need this aloneness in order to return physically and spiritually to a balanced state of being, before being ready to return to the community. *Parashat Tazria* opens with eight verses describing the seclusion and purification period that women were required to go through after giving birth. Although a new mother needs support from her family and community, she also needs time alone to integrate her life-changing experience, and re-emerge into the family and community as a new person.

The Ritual Impurity of Spiritual Disorder and Confusion

The remainder of the *parasha* describes the period of isolation of the person afflicted with *tzara'at* – a disease usually translated as leprosy, yet is more accurately translated as psoriasis.¹ This skin disease was only the outward physical symptom of a spiritual disorder or confusion. Rather than going to the doctor, people with symptoms of *tzara'at* had to turn to the Kohen – the spiritual healer. Only he was able to make the diagnosis of *tzara'at*, for which the prescribed treatment was immediate isolation. “All the days, during which the plague shall be in him, he shall be *טָמֵא* – *tamé* – ritually impure, he is *טָמֵא* – *tamé*. He shall dwell alone; outside the camp shall his habitation be.”²

A Time for Silence

Today, even if we don't experience the physical symptoms of *tzara'at*, we certainly don't lack spiritual disorder and confusion. In our day-to-day, social media-infused lives, we interact continually, and often, in auto-pilot mode. When we feel confused, conflicted or in a state of imbalance, then seclusion, silence and time alone can provide an essential part of healing ourselves and our *neshamah* (soul). It may be helpful to turn to friends and family when we need support; yet, at some point, it will be time to turn inwards for answers. We need to take the time to sit again, to do the inner work that only we can do for ourselves.

¹ Cheyne and Black, *Encyclopedia Biblica*, Shai A, Vardy D, Zvulunov A (2002). [Psoriasis, biblical afflictions and patients' dignity] (in Hebrew). *Harefuah* 141 (5): 479-82, 496. PMID 12073533.

² *Vayikra* 13:46.

Realigning Ourselves with Ourselves

In the Torah, those afflicted with physical *tzara'at* were required to be physically secluded, in order to heal themselves; today, those affected with spiritual *tzara'at* – confusion, worry and lack of *emunah* – may benefit from the spiritual seclusion of meditation. Keep in mind that spiritual negativity is contagious. Whenever possible, we would do our community well by taking time out rather than burdening them with our complaints. When we are about to meditate, or during a meditation session, we may reflect over why we have chosen the silence and internal seclusion of meditation at that moment. How does meditation heal and rebalance you?

Meditation:

Meditation takes time. It can be hard to take this time out from all of our responsibilities. Yet, this time can be an offering for inner healing, and can bring more balance to our daily interactions with others, with whom our life is intertwined. Let us take some moments to rebalance ourselves with ourselves, return to our breath and see what arises.

1. Sit comfortably on a chair or cushion, and allow your breath to raise and lower your chest rhythmically. Notice how you are feeling at this moment, paying close attention to the places within you which could be more comfortable.
2. Breathe into your places of pain or discomfort and feel how the tension dissolves. Imagine your breath like a flashlight illuminating the dark parts of your soul. Breathe light into your confused, darkened spirit and experience how the darkness gradually flickers and turns into light.
3. Imagine walking alone through a dark tunnel, grabbing hold of the slippery walls and reaching the light at the end. A tall mountain meets your eye as you emerge from the tunnel. You start climbing the mountain. At first the earth is soft and sandy, and then gradually it turns more rocky and stony. You pass rows of trees with lush green leaves and exquisite spring flowers blooming close to the ground. Notice all their various colors and shapes.
4. Keep climbing up the mountain, while breathing rhythmically. Feel your heart beating as you continue climbing.
5. It seems like you have reached the peak, but each time you think you have reached the top of the mountain, there's more distance to go. Finally, you see the rocky end of the trail. You reach the top and turn slowly to take in the entire, incredible view.
6. You are alone – **בדד** – *badad* and at one with G*d's creation. Being alone...being alive...feeling the greatest joys.
7. Inhale while visualizing going inward to the sound of **בָּ** – *ba*, exhale while visualizing the letters and the sound of **דָּד** – *dad*. Repeat nine more times, and sit for a minute in silence, experiencing the Oneness of Hashem. Then walk down the mountain and return to yourself.



Midreshet
B'erot Bat Ayin

Holistic Torah Study for Women

(011-972-2) 995-4945

info@berotbatayin.org

www.berotbatayin.org

Notes:

The Hebrew word for alone – בָּדָד – *badad*, from our Torah verse הוּא בָּדָד יֹשֵׁב – “...He shall dwell alone...”³ has the numerical value of ten. Ten is the number that indicates the oneness within the multiplicity. Hashem Who is One manifests himself through the Ten *Sefirot*. Everything within this three-dimensional world has a beginning, an end and a middle. By its widths everything is also divided into three: right, left and middle. Similarly in its depth, it consists of inner, outer and middle. Together the lengths, widths and depth each have three dimensions which makes nine. The tenth dimension gives a space for these nine manifestations to exist.⁴ Thus by sitting alone – בָּדָד – *badad*, we can experience our aloneness as part of the manifestation of Hashem’s oneness expressed through the ten dimensions of בָּדָד – *badad*.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Rabbi Moshe Shatz, *Ma'ayan Moshe*, page 22.



Midreshet
B'erot Bat Ayin

Holistic Torah Study for Women

(011-972-2) 995-4945

info@berotbatayin.org

www.berotbatayin.org

About Us



Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum, a native of Denmark, is Founder and Director of Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin. She holds a Bachelor of Education in Bible and Jewish Philosophy from Michlala Jerusalem College for Women, and a Masters of Art in Jewish History from Touro College. Chana Bracha also began her practice as a spiritual healer through Emuna, tefila and energy work.

For more than two decades Chana Bracha has taught Bible studies with special emphasis on women's issues in Israel and the United States. She creates curricula emphasizing women's spiritual empowerment through traditional Torah values. Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin located in the Judean Hills of Israel offers a unique program to women of all ages and backgrounds to learn in a holistic Torah study environment that nurtures the mind, body and soul. Intensive textual study of Tanach, Halacha and Chassidut are woven together with creative spiritual expression, and connection with the land of Israel through organic gardening, herbology, Jewish sources of healing and sustainable living. Classes in Jewish mysticism, Chassidism and Jewish meditation are directed at the spiritual thirst so prominent in our times.

*In 2010 Rebbetzin Chana Bracha published her first book, *Women at the Crossroads: A Woman's Perspective on the Weekly Torah Portion*.*

Chana Bracha has a married son and several granddaughters. She lives with her husband and younger son on the land of the Judean hills, Israel.

If you are interested in:

Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin contact info@berotbatayin.org or in Spiritual Healing with Rebbetzin Chana Bracha, please contact her at director@berotbatayin.org

or visit her blog: <http://rebbetzinchanabracha.blogspot.com/2010/11/emunah-healing-for-women.html>

Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin – Holistic Torah Study for Women on the Land of Israel

At Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin, we weave together Torah studies with creative spiritual expression, connecting with the Land of Israel, and healthy, organic lifestyles. In the heart of the Judean Hills, with its serene beauty, our students experience an approach to Judaism that bridges mind, body and soul. Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin is designed as a micro-community within the Village of Bat Ayin where women of all ages and backgrounds engage in intense Torah learning as part of an integrated, participatory approach to Torah living.

Come Learn With Us!

Beginner and advanced levels are offered for women of all ages and religious backgrounds. Whether your interest in Judaism has recently been ignited, or you are seeking a wider perspective, Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin offers the opportunity to improve your learning skills while strengthening your commitment to Judaism within the parameters of Halachah – all while engaging your inner creative spirituality, working the Land, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Support Our School!

You have the unique opportunity to help us continue to build and amplify the light of Torah on the Land of Israel. With your help we can increase our ability to provide women an extraordinary Torah environment where they can build a solid Jewish foundation which will have an impact for generations to come.

