

Haftorat Parashat Ki Tavo

Yesha'yahu 60:1-22

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

The Connection Between the Haftorah and the Torah Reading

Haftorat Ki Tavo is like a bridge between the mourning of *Tisha B'Av* and the renewal of Rosh Hashanah. The *haftarah*, emphasizing Israel's dazzling future, is an appropriate antidote for the drawn out curses, included in *Parashat Ki Tavo*. After having read about the devastating curses, resulting from the withdrawal of the *Shechinah*, because we blocked her light through immorality, the soaring glory that Yesha'yahu describes is especially touching and hopeful. It heralds the coming of renewed radiance and light shining from the Messianic glow. Although, today may be dark, tomorrow, G-d's light will shine on His people!

The Light of the Shechina will Shine Forth

The images of light in our *haftorah* paint a stunning painting with soft luminous strokes. Our *haftorah* opens: "Arise, shine, for your light has dawned; the Presence of Hashem has shone upon you!" (*Yesha'yahu* 60:1). We sing an adaption of this verse in the *Lecha Dodi* song, Friday night, when we welcome the Shabbat Queen. At the end of the *haftorah*, Yesha'yahu returns to the light and dark imagery, and promises us that even the rules of nature will be suspended in our apocalyptic future. There will be no need for the sun or moon, because the everlasting light and glory of Hashem will shine directly upon Israel.

No Greater Good than Being Side By Side

"Lift up your eyes all around and see, they all have gathered, they have come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be raised (תִּזְעַלְנָה) on [their] side" (*Yesha'yahu* 60:4). Originally, Chava was created from Adam's side, as I explain in my book, "*Women at the Crossroads: A Woman's Perspective on the Weekly Torah Portion*," page 4. The common understanding is that G-d created Chava from one of Adam's ribs. However, a more accurate translation of the word "*tzela*" reveals that she was actually created from his side. Since Chava initiated the eating from the Tree of Knowledge, an imbalance was caused in the original equality of man and woman. She became dependant on him, and he ruled over her. (*Bereishit* 3:16). At the unfolding of the redemption, this imbalance will be repaired, as "your daughters shall be raised on the side [of your sons]." The numerical value of the Hebrew word for "side" צד is 94. This equals the value of "*mazal tov!*" which literally means a good flow. It also equals *hatov v'hametiv* – "good and does good" (*Benayahu ben Yehoyada, on Pessachim 50a*). When woman's light was reduced; it

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created a certain loneliness in man, in the part of himself which he was no longer able to share with her. Being alone for a man is called “*lo tov* – not good” in the Torah (*Bereishit* 2:18). The greatest good, therefore, is for man and woman to return to being side by side in the fullest sense so that the light of the *Shechinah* flows down without any blockages. This light is the crown, which the sun and moon will once again equally share during the upcoming redemption.

Raising the Woman to Believe in Herself

The Hebrew word translated “raised” in (*Yesha’yahu* 60:4) is תִּאֶמְנָה (*teamana*), related to *emunah* (faith). This word carries the meaning of raising someone else, like in the sense of raising children. In *Megillat Esther* 2:7 the same root “אֶמְנָה” (*omen*) is used to describe that “Mordechai raised/nurtured Esther.” We can learn from here that Esther grew to her greatness, because Mordechai taught her to have faith in herself. As part of the *geula* (redemption) process, women need to evolve from low self-esteem, and learn to believe in themselves and the power of their hidden light. Just as Mordechai raised Esther, it is man’s role to elevate woman.

Enabling the Woman to Receive her Spiritual Lights Directly

Kabbalistically, woman had collapsed from a full stature of ten *sefirot* into the lowest *sefira* of *malchut* (Kingdom) as Sarah Yehudit Schneider explains in her *Kabbalistic Writings on the Nature of the Masculine and the Feminine*. Man, then, became in charge of the resources of woman’s “building fund.” He was entrusted with a special energy fund earmarked and designated for woman’s growth. It now became his responsibility to raise the woman to the point where she no longer relies on him to transmit her spiritual sustenance. Rather than being dependant on him for her spiritual lights, he enables her to receive them directly from their original source.

Facilitating Woman’s Spirituality Increases the Light of the Shechinah

On a practical level, this means that husband must facilitate his wife’s spiritual growth, by, for example teaching her Torah, or offering to do the dishes, so that she can learn or teach Torah. Helping his wife in this way would not be considered *bitul* Torah, (nullifying his responsibility to learn Torah). Therefore, we, women, do not need to feel guilty about accepting our husbands’ help, in order that we too get involved in Torah. On the contrary, we should be aware that when the man diapers babies, barbecues meat, or mops the floor in order to facilitate the spiritual pursuits of his wife, it actually speeds up the redemption and increases the light of the *Shechinah* by “raising daughters [wives] on [their] side.”

Elevating the Lowest of our Mothers

The end of the *haftorah* describes the mystical future elevation of every material: “Instead of copper I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver, and instead of wood, copper, and instead of stones, iron, and I will make your officers peace and your rulers righteousness” (*Yesha’yahu* 60:17). Rav Tzadok of Lublin, in *Machshevot Charutz* 8, notes that the Hebrew word for iron – בַּרְזֶל (*barzel*), is the acronym for the names of Ya’acov’s four wives: **B**ilhah, **R**achel, **Z**ilpah, and **L**eah. Note that in this acronym, the letters that refer to the maidservants are mentioned first. This foreshadows the future transformation taking place when the physical dimension will be raised up, and Hashem will be one and His name one. At that time, the spiritual world –*Yud* and *Heh* (*Chachmah* and *Binah*) will be completely unified with the physical realm – *Vav* and *Heh* (the six



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middle *sefirot* and *Malchut*). This implies that the highest will become the lowest, and the lowest will become the highest, as is alluded to in our verse “in place of iron I will bring silver...”

Releasing the Iron Sparks of the Mothers

Iron is the hardest of all materials, representing the negative aspect and the power of Esau, about whom it states, “Upon your sword [made from iron] you shall live” (*Bereishit* 27:40). Yet, the source of all is the secret of the uppermost Mother. Nothing can exist without Hashem’s life-giving energy, keeping it alive. The only way to attain the hidden good inside the coarse, strong material of the element of iron is through *teshuvah*. King David brought the concept of *teshuvah* into the world. His birth was enabled by the accumulated efforts and sisterhood of the Mothers. Their hidden power of being willing to yield for one another transformed “the rock that the builders hated, to become the cornerstone” (*Tehillim* 118:22). David *HaMelech* alluded to this power of the Mothers in his *Tehillim*: “You shall break them [the enemies] with a rod of iron...” (*Ibid.* 2:9). The Hebrew word for breaking *תָּרַעַם* (*teroem*) comes from the word for blowing the shofar *תְּרוּעָה* (*teruah*). Just as we blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana in order to chase away the negative forces (Satan), so does the energy of iron with its power of *teshuvah* have the power to overcome our enemies.

The Mothers are the Iron Lock of Israel

The four wives of Ya’acov are the iron lock of Israel, ensuring that no negative exterior force enters the holy nest of our people. Through the power of the mothers of the twelve tribes, the builders of the Jewish nation, we can overcome the negative extraneous forces (*Rav Tzadok of Lublin, Drush for Rosh Hashana that falls on Shabbat*). The mothers prevent any negative intruder from the outside, especially from the hand of Esau to penetrate and inject impurity within the children of Israel. The low maidservants Bilhah and Zilpah were instrumental in locking in and perpetuating the qualities of Rachel and Leah. Together, these holy mothers anchored the spiritual within the physical. Through complete selflessness, Bilhah assisted Rachel in overcoming jealousy and drawing down the *Shechinah* in holy union, and keeping it dwelling within Israel. Zilpah assisted Leah in her hidden work of prayer and praise. At redemption, when the lower is raised to become the higher, the slaves are redeemed, and the role of women emerges, revealing their hidden qualities. At that time, Bilhah & Zilpah will be included within our four foremothers. Some mothers have already begun to bless their daughters to become like Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, Leah, Bilhah & Zilpah! (Heard by Rebbetzin Esther Kitov).

May we all become a personal link in the iron chain of the mothers!

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.



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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:

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