

Haftorat Parashat Nitzavim-Vayelech

Yesha'yahu 61:10-63:9

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

Rosh Hashana and Redemption

The last *haftorah* we read before Rosh Hashana is the climax of the seven week series on redemption. In this final presentation, Hashem proclaims His personal return to the Jewish people. This reflects the feeling of Rosh Hashana when we raise ourselves up from the fallen darkness of exile, to once again face the King of Kings. Rosh Hashana celebrates the creation of Man and Woman. This is the time to contemplate whether we are living up to the purpose for which we were originally created. Hashem originally created us as perfect vessels for His light to shine through, within the radiance of His Garden. In Elul, we work on becoming a pure vessel, ready to be filled with Hashem's life-giving light on Rosh Hashana. As we prepare for Rosh Hashana, we are inspired to work on our individual redemption, contemplating what our personal goals are, and the best way to reach them.

The Wedding of Redemption

The prophet begins on a high note, describing the great joy that we will experience with the Final Redemption, by comparing it to the joy of a newly married couple. Redemption is indeed, the ultimate wedding between Hashem – the groom and the Congregation of Israel – His beautifully adorned bride. “I will rejoice with Hashem; my soul shall exult with my G-d, for He has dressed me in garments of salvation, with a robe of righteousness He has enwrapped me; like a bridegroom, who, priestlike, dons garments of glory, and like a bride, who adorns herself with her jewelry” (*Yesha'yahu 61:10*). According to Malbim, the adornment of the bride symbolizes our spiritual work which enables us to become worthy of redemption. G-d, then, wraps the “robe of righteousness” on top of our clothes for everyone to see. This symbolizes that at the time of redemption, everyone will recognize our righteousness. The whole world will recognize the righteousness and truth of the G-d of Israel, His Torah and His people. In case we feel a bit overwhelmed regarding all this talk about redemption, and wonder “where does it leave me?” Malbim explains that as part of the universal redemption, every person will also experience his or her personal redemption. We learn this from the metaphor of the “garments of salvation” with which Hashem dresses us. As opposed to the “robe” which is not sewn exactly according to the person's measurements, but is a rather lose-fitting overcoat, the “garments of salvation” are sewn exactly to fit each one's personal measure, according to Hashem's individual providence. This

Coming up at
Berot Bat Ayin:

**Meditative Rosh
HaShanah**
Sept 28th – Oct 1st

**Succot Ingathering
for Women**
October 10th - 13th

**Tikkun Olam
Gardening &
Renovation Program**
Free Holistic Volunteer
Program
October 23rd – 27th



Midreshet
B'erot Bat Ayin

Holistic Torah Study for Women

(011-972-2) 995-4945

info@berotbatayin.org

www.berotbatayin.org

teaches us that redemption is not an abstract impersonal concept out there somewhere in space and time. It is also about “me” reaching my personal goals: whether by losing weight, learning to play the harp, praying from the depths of my heart, or increasing deeds of kindness. Becoming all I can be is my ultimate “wedding gift” from Hashem.

Dancing on the Bridge of Redemption

I have always felt when dancing at a wedding in Jerusalem or the mountains of Judea, that I’m experiencing the redemption right now. The *simcha* (joy) is so powerful, breaking all the bonds of exile, as the *Shechina* joins us in our exuberant dancing. Our *haftorah* confirms my experience, by comparing redemption to a wedding. Inversely, every wedding contains a spark of the light of Redemption. Why is redemption compared to a marriage? The *tikun* (rectification) of the world is to bring about unity, that we may return us to the blessed Garden of Creation. Before eating from the Tree of Knowledge, all reality was unified. There was no separation between man and woman, this world and the Coming World, not even between humanity and G-d. As soon as we ate from the Tree of Knowledge, good and evil became crystallized in the world, and caused separation between all realms of creation. Redemption is all about returning reality to its original unified existence, before eating from the forbidden fruit. This means, that when I work on finding peace within myself, by unifying my intellect with my emotions, my body with my soul, and my actions with my intention, I’m building the bridge of redemption. When people overcome their conflicts/irritation/disputes with one another, and make true peace also in their heart, they are walking on the bridge of redemption. However, there is no greater unification than the love between the bride and groom on their wedding night. Therefore, a Jewish marriage causes the very greatest *tikun* for our split reality. At a holy wedding, our dancing, hopping, skipping and leaping on the bridge of redemption, brings us towards its culmination.

Everlasting Growth of Closeness to Hashem

Yesha’yahu moves from the wedding imagery to describe the seedlings which symbolize growth on all levels. “For, like the earth, which gives forth its plants, and like a garden that causes its seeds to grow, so shall Hashem, G-d cause righteousness and praise to grow in the face of all the nations” (Ibid. 11). Radak explains that just as seeds rot in the earth before the growth of the plant causes it to become ever more beautiful, likewise even after Israel has lost all hope during our devastating exile, we will reach even higher heights than ever before. We will become fruitful and multiply, as each seed sprouts forth a new plant. Just as each season buds flower and grow fruit, so will we experience new wonders at each stage of redemption. Rather than becoming stagnant, our relationship with Hashem will always be one of growth and development, constantly bringing us closer and closer. Each newly gained level of closeness will be so precious and dear that we will experience it as a completely new relationship with all of its sensation and appreciation.

Hashem’s First and Only “Wife”

Yet, we may be concerned that the wedding of the redemption could be lacking this newness, and rather compare to a remarriage, since Israel was already “Hashem’s wife” before He rightfully rejected us. Even if Hashem truly becomes reconciled with Israel, it would not feel as joyful and special, as when a young man lives with his bride for the very first time. The prophet responds to this concern, and reveals that this is far from the truth. The unification related to our redemption



Midreshet
B'erot Bat Ayin

Holistic Torah Study for Women

(011-972-2) 995-4945

info@berotbatayin.org

www.berotbatayin.org

entails a fresh start containing the excitement and novelty of the very highest joy between the young bridegroom and his virgin bride. “As a young man lives with a virgin, so shall your children live in you, and the rejoicing of a bridegroom over a bride shall your G-d rejoice over you” (*Yesha'yahu* 62:5). Like a young couple standing under the *chuppah* (marriage canopy) for the very first time, forging their eternal bond with love and respect, Hashem's newly founded relationship with His people will be so perfectly fulfilling that it won't leave room for remembering the past. Rabbi David Siegel notes that the prophet describes not only our feelings, but also how Hashem's feelings towards His people are literally boundless, as he Himself will forever rejoice over us with the sensation of a groom over His newly acquired bride. Although we have gone astray repeatedly, Hashem will erase our past, and unite with us in the very deepest way.

Consummating Intimate Relations With Hashem in the Land

Radak explains that this incredible new relationship is expressed by the Jewish people's return to their land. Other nations' inhabiting the Land of Israel is compared to an old man living with a virgin. However, this cannot be compared to the *simcha* and unification that takes place when the Jewish people settle the Holy Land. Only in the Land of Israel can our new, eternal relationship with Hashem be consummated. “...Desolate shall no longer be said of your land, for you shall be called ‘My desire is in her,’ and your land, ‘inhabited,’ for Hashem desires you, and your land shall be inhabited” (*Yesha'yahu* 62:4). The word translated here as “inhabited” – בְּעוֹלָה – is the same term used for intimate relations. The inexpressible dimension of our eternal, intimate relationship with Hashem, is expressed by inhabiting the Holy Land infused with Hashem's Presence. In all other countries there is a *klipa* (foreskin/barrier) separating us from our highest self – the spark of Hashem within us – which prevents us from being intimate with the Divine. The Land of Israel, however, is a circumcised land, completely illuminated by the *Shechina*. Only in this Holy Land can our intimate relationship with Hashem reach its highest eternal expression, continuously producing the endless love of a bride and groom for all eternity.

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,



Midreshet
B'erot Bat Ayin

Holistic Torah Study for Women

(011-972-2) 995-4945

info@berotbatayin.org

www.berotbatayin.org

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.



Midreshet
B'erot Bat Ayin

Holistic Torah Study for Women

(011-972-2) 995-4945

info@berotbatayin.org

www.berotbatayin.org