

Haftorat Parashat Re'eh

Yesha'yahu 54:11-55:5

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

The Mother Tzion – Swaying in the Wind

Hashem comforts the “afflicted and storm-tossed” Yerushalayim. “O you afflicted tempestuous one, who are not comforted, behold I will set your stones with garnet, and I will lay your foundations with sapphires” (*Yesha'yahu* 54:11). Although the dispersed children of Israel are being ingathered from the Diaspora, Yerushalayim is still like a poor woman shaking in the stormy wind writes *Metzudat David*. This metaphor seems to perfectly describe the political situation in Israel today. Jerusalem is being pulled in different directions, by nations fighting for the right to her as their capital. For several years Israel has been forced by the nations to apply settlement freeze to Jerusalem, especially in East-Jerusalem. Therefore, there is a severe housing crisis in Jerusalem. While young couples are struggling to find affordable apartments in Jerusalem, our mother – Tzion – is helplessly striving to provide shelter for her beloved children. Despite the stormy winds from both North and East, threatening to break the frail mother, Hashem comforts Jerusalem, assuring her that in the end she will be rebuilt. Her foundation, walls and ground will be laid with precious stones. Any weapon pointed against her will eventually fail.

Her Foundation is the Kingdom of Torah

Malbim explains, that following the beginning of chapter 54 in *Yesha'yahu*, about the barren woman who became blessed with children – alluding to the ingathering of the exiles, the prophet now describes how Tzion is still not rebuilt. Although Tzion is no longer barren, as the dispersed Jews are being ingathered and the land filled with her children from the Diaspora, Yerushalayim is still in ruins. However, Hashem renews the hope of Tzion “...behold I will set your stones with garnet...” Garnet is the stone upon which the foundation of Tzion will lay, while the foundation itself will be of sapphire. The garnet, the stone of Yehuda, is the sign of Kingdom, and the sapphire, the stone of Yissaschar, is the sign of wisdom and Torah. These two – the crown of kingdom and the crown of Torah – will become the foundation of the Temple.

The Secret Attributes of Sapphire and Garnet

In *The Secrets of Crystals*, by Shani Toder, I found that the **sapphire** (ספיר) creates balance, wisdom and stability. The blue sapphire, symbolizing the celestial, improves ones mood, and relieves pressure. It is good for communication. It lightens situations of deep hopelessness and increases intuition. White sapphire strengthens spiritual wisdom. Wearing a sapphire helps us talk

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from within with higher inner wisdom. These attributes ascribed to the sapphire fit perfectly with Yissashar who represents the wisdom of the Torah. The **garnet** (נוֹפֶרֶת) strengthens self-confidence and is known as the stone of commitment because it strengthens determination and devotion to a cause or goal, to other people and to self obligation. This fits perfectly with the character-trait of Yehuda and kingdom. The garnet affects the lowest vertebra, the foundation of the body, and the nerves along the spine. This stone, which resembles blood by its color, strengthens, purifies and provides renewed energy to the body, especially to the blood system. During the transition between exile and redemption, we need purification and renewed energy. Therefore, it makes perfect sense that the garnet and what it represents will serve as the foundation of the building of Tzion.

Her Children Support Her with Stones of Strength

“I will make your windows of onyx and your gates of beryl stones, and all your borders of desirable stones (*Yesha'yahu* 54:12). Malbim continues to elucidate the metaphor about the different stones that build up Yerushalayim. According to *Chazal* (our Sages), the פְּנֵי כֹד (Cadchod) is the **onyx** – Yosef’s stone, which is the sign of success and wealth. The windows, called in our verse שְׁמֵשׁ תִּהְיֶה (Shimshotayich) literally “your suns,” will be made from onyx. This symbolizes that Hashem will provide us with all kinds of sun-grown produce bringing wealth and success. According to *The Secrets of Crystals*, the onyx eases fears, pressure and depression, and is therefore recommended during times of pain and sorrow. This fits perfectly with “your windows of onyx,” as it is known that sufficient sunlight is one of the main keys to preserve happiness. Several studies have proven, that people living in dark basement apartments, are predisposed to depression. Onyx is also the stone that protects against negative energy. It, therefore, makes sense that our windows, prone to outside influence, are made of the protective onyx stone. Malbim explains that our gates will be made out of beryl, which is Levi’s stone. These are the gates of Hashem, which the *tzaddikim* (righteous) enter. The **beryl** is a spiritual, physical, and mental healer. It is good to wear while working with others. Just like the Levites were involved with the holy worship of the heart, and played music in the Temple, the beryl increases the ability of self-expression and strengthens the heart. According to Malbim, “...all your borders will be desirable stones” refers to the stones of the rest of the tribes, which will be established in the complete building of Israel. This symbolizes that all the tribes will be unified in the Land, and no longer divided into two kingdoms.

Happy is the Mother Engraved with the Peace of her Children

All your children shall be students of Hashem, and your children’s peace shall increase. (*Yesha'yahu* 54:13). Living according to the Torah brings peace to Israel. It is the saddest thing when adult siblings don’t get along. The Torah naturally guides us to get along with our siblings, by teaching us never to gossip, bear a grudge or take revenge. More than her kids being physically close, it is the peace and love between the children that gladdens their mother. Baruch Hashem, my two sisters and I continually make our mother happy and honor her with our closeness. Sprouting forth from the same stem, we have a piece of each-other within us wherever we go. Although there are more than fourteen years between my oldest son and his brother, their love and care for each other warms my heart. There is nothing that makes me happier than when I see my two sons studying Torah together. This is when I joyfully experience the greatest and deepest bond between them. The more we learn Torah, the more we refine our character and ability to love each other in the deepest way. The prophet comforts our mother, Tzion that her children – all of Israel – will come to Torah, and



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thereby find everlasting peace with one another. Each of her children contributes the necessary qualities for the greater, unified good. With the purification, self-confidence and devotion of Yehuda; Yissaschar's wisdom, balance stability and communication; Levi's heartfelt self-expression; the success and protection of Yosef; and all the qualities of the rest of the tribes, we will build the renewed reality of peace and redemption. Once we establish true peace among ourselves, despite our differences, then the prophecy: "You shall not fear, and from terror; then it shall not come near you" (Ibid. 14) will be fulfilled. May we all live to experience the end of terror in our Promised Land!

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>



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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.

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