

Parasha Meditation Bereshit

Bereishit 1:1-6:8

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

Calling out to G-d for the Hidden Light

Introduction

Twofold Beginning

The world is born anew with a twofold beginning. The first word in the Torah בְּרֵאשִׁית – *Bereishit* – “in the beginning” can also be broken up to בְּ-רֵאשִׁית – two beginnings.¹ These two beginnings correspond to *chesed* and *gevurah* – love and awe. With these two מִידוֹת – attributes, G-d created the heavens and earth. Both the spiritual and the material realm were created by means of these two beginnings. Likewise everything on earth is created in pairs – masculine and feminine. Within the human being as well, we have two eyes, ears, arms, legs etc. The right eye, ear, arm etc. correspond to *chesed*, while the left to *gevurah*. Both of these opposite energies were unified in the Creation as it states “I am your G-d...” and ‘Don’t have other gods’ were said together.”² “I am your G-d...”³ includes all the positive mitzvot deriving from *chesed*/love; and “Don’t have other gods...”⁴ includes all the negative mitzvot deriving from *gevurah*/awe. Although these two energies are opposed, they are unified in the spiritual realm. Perfected Divine service includes both attributes of *chesed* and *gevurah* as one. We need to carry out every single mitzvah that we perform – positive and negative alike through both love and awe. Serving Hashem through love entails giving Him the very best, whereas serving Him through awe entails overcoming ourselves and doing what is the very hardest for each of us. We were placed in this world specifically to rectify the thing that is the very hardest in life for us, where the *yetzer hara* (negative impulse) is strongest.⁵

Coming Up:

“Scents of
Heavenly Rain”
Rosh Chodesh
Cheshvan Seminar
Tuesday, October 16

¹ *Tikunei Zohar* 13a.

² Ben Yehoyada *Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin* 99a.

³ *Shemot* 20:2.

⁴ *Shemot* 20:3.

⁵ *Netivat Shalom, Bereishit, Two Beginnings* p. 16.



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חסד <i>Chesed</i>	גבורה <i>Gevurah</i>
אהבה <i>Love</i>	יראה <i>Awe</i>
שמים <i>Heavens</i>	ארץ <i>Earth</i>
רוחני <i>Spiritual</i>	מטערי <i>Mateiral</i>
ימין <i>Right</i>	שמאל <i>Left</i>
...אנוכי <i>The First Commandment</i>	לא יהיה לך <i>The Second Commandment</i>
מצוות עשה <i>The positive commandments</i>	מצוות לא תעשה <i>The Negative Commandments</i>
נשמה <i>Soul</i>	גוף <i>Body</i>

Between Clarity and Confusion

...והארץ היתה תהו ובהו וחשך על פני תהום... – “The earth was desolate and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep...”
 ויאמר אלהים יהי אור ויהי אור – “And G-d said let there be light.”⁶

Why did the creation narrative specify what was before the creation of light? During the rest of the creation it only stated what Hashem created, without describing what was before their creation.

Netivat Shalom explains that immediately at the beginning of creating heaven and earth, the Torah teaches us that creation is divided into two: the heavens connected to the realm of the soul, and the earth connected to the realm of the body. “The earth was desolate and void” – The earthly matters of the body, into which people sink down, bring us to desolation and void – that is confusion. The highest way of serving Hashem is through *yishuv ha'da'at* – a settled mind and clarity, the opposite is desolation, void and a confused mind. All the earthly things even those permitted cause an unsettled mind and confusion. However, when the light of G-d that shines through us, “G-d said let there be light” – then we have the ability to raise up all the earthly matters to the service of Hashem.⁷

Oh G-d Let there be Light!

Although *ohr haganuz* – the hidden light was hidden away for the righteous in the World to Come, the light was never really buried, for had it been completely hidden away then the world would not have been able to exist even for one moment. Yet, it was buried like a seed concealed under the earth, while the seed disintegrates, it brings forth new life.⁸ The very brightest Divine light is still with us, ready to be revealed when we ask for it. Without Divine light a Jew cannot survive even for one moment. When we experience great darkness, all we need to do is to call out to Hashem! יהי אור! – אלהים יהי אור! – “G-d let there be light!”⁹ When we read the Torah verse ויאמר אלהים יהי אור – “G-d said let there be light” without the first word ויאמר – “said,” then it becomes a prayer: “Please G-d let there be light!” When calling out to Hashem through the darkness of our life – “Oh Hashem I’m sinking in darkness, please enlighten my despair!” then Hashem helps us. He answers with His shining light, which was only hidden away for those who do not seek it. Yet, when we ask: “G-d let there be light...” then the continuation of the verse “...and there was light,” is activated.

⁶ Bereishit 1:2-3.

⁷ *Netivat Shalom, Bereishit* “and there was light” page 17-19.

⁸ *Zohar*, part 2, 148b- 148a.

⁹ Bereishit 1:3.

Meditation

Sit down. Make yourself comfortable in a quiet place where you can be alone with yourself for ten to fifteen minutes. Make sure your phones are turned off. Relax, close your eyes. Breath in relax, breath out relax, relax relax. Allow all the impressions of your day flow through you.

1. Let the right side of you forehead relax, your right eye, right ear, cheek, nose mouth and chin. Imagine and feel the entire right side of your head relaxed including the back of your head.
2. Imagine drawing the outline of the right side of your body, relax as you draw. The right side of your neck, your right shoulder, right upper arm, elbow, lower arm, each of the fingers, relax, relax relax.
3. Continue drawing in your mind's eye up the underside of your hand, wrist, arm, all the way up to your armpit. From the armpit a curved line to your waist, extending outwards to the outline of your hip, relax, relax relax.
4. Continue drawing all the way down your right thigh, knee, calf, foot and toes, back up the foot to the ankle, the inside of your calf, knee, and thigh relax, relax relax.
5. Now continue from the point in between your legs down the inside of your left thigh, knee, calf, foot and toes, back up the foot to the ankle, the outside of your calf, knee, and thigh relax, relax relax.
6. Continue drawing in your mind's eye up the extended outline of your left hip, the curved line to your waist, all the way up to your armpit relax, relax relax.
7. From the armpit draw the outline of the underside of your left arm all the way down to your wrist, then continue through each of the fingers, to the outer side of your hand, lower arm, elbow and upper arm all the way up to the left side of your neck relax, relax relax.
8. Allow your right ear to relax, your cheek, right eye and right side of your forehead. Feel how your entire body is relaxed, yet tingling with energy.
9. Try to imagine the entire outline of your body as you are seated today in your place, as you breathe deeply and relaxed.
10. Now focus on the point between your eyes, and imagine complete darkness, imagine the blackness of black mixed with different shades of darkness from murky darkness to the most pitch black darkness.
11. Imagine the darkness filled with gray clouds of confusion. Each cloud contains one of your personal confusions, something you are unclear about, different murky mixed up confusions about



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what to believe and what to do. Each cloud carries within its void desolation a particular confusion of yours.

12. Bring one of the murky clouds of confusion close, enlarge it in your mind's eye, and open up the confusion residing within it. As you think about this particular issue for which you seek clarity and imagine it before you, pray silently to Hashem: אֵלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר! – “G-d let there be light!” Visualize how G-d's light begins to illuminate this dark cloud, which slowly evaporates. Feel your mind settle about this particular confused issue which has now been transformed to complete clarity. Repeat this with the rest of the murky clouds of confusion.

13. Breathe deeply and slowly from your nose as you feel the entire outline of your body both right and left illuminated with Divine tingling light.

Notes

“The people who walk in darkness saw a great light.”¹⁰ This refers to the Oral Torah which is difficult and painful to learn. Some people lose sleep over it, and wear themselves out for its sake. They don't eat, drink or sleep, and by means of this they merit to see great light – the hidden light which is revealed before them. By means of hard work in the Torah we can purify the earthly matters. “I have created the *yetzer hara*, I have created the Torah its antidote.”¹¹ Also on Shabbat, *Ohr Haganuz* – “The Hidden Light” is revealed.¹² On the holy Shabbat, we, Jews have the power to elevate all our earthliness. “You shall keep the Shabbat for it is holy to you (לְכֶם).”¹³ The word לְכֶם – “to you” can also refer to your matters. The light that shines on the holy Shabbat gives us the ability to sanctify even our own earthly matters which get illuminated by the Divine light.

¹⁰ *Yesha'yahu* 9:1.

¹¹ *Babylonian Talmud, Kedushin* 30b.

¹² *Zohar*, part 1 21a.

¹³ *Shemot* 31:14.

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.

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