

Parasha Meditation Vayeshev

Bereishit 37:1–40:23

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

Tuning into our Dreams, Visions & Aspirations

Introduction:

From the Darkest Pit to the Fulfillment of the Greatest Dreams

This week's *parasha* is about reaching the bottom of darkness and emerging from there with new light. "Yehudah went down from his brothers."¹ Yet, from his downward spiraling, the light of Mashiach was conceived. Yosef was a young dreamer, far from being ready to actualize his Divine potential. It was only after being thrown in the darkest pit that he began his path to spiritual fulfillment.

The Dream that Silences the Intellect

The *Sefat Emet* explains regarding Yosef's dream about "*Binding sheaves inside of the field*,"² that the work of the tribes was to bind everything to its root in life – Hashem – permeating all reality. It was their holy endeavor to clarify that all things are connected, and cleave to their Divine root; in spite of the matters of this world which seem to separate everything.³ The Hebrew word for sheaf – אֶלְמָה – shares the same root as the word for silence – אָלֵם. Therefore, "*My sheaf rose*,"⁴ can mean "I was silenced."⁵ This is the aspect of Rachel and her children who grabbed the character-trait of silence.⁶ "Silence" is knowing that we cannot act according to our intellect and will, except by being nullified to the upper providence.⁷

Believing in our Dreams

Even as Yosef told his dreams to his brothers, he was still in the process of internalizing this profound message. His ultimate metamorphosis took place only after being thrown into the pit. In the darkness of the pit, he transcended his intellect, realizing that "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but Hashem delivers him out of them all."⁸ This is where Yosef changed to become Yosef *HaTzadik* (the righteous), ready to actualize his dreams. We, likewise have the ability to tune into our dreams and visions and believe in their fulfillment beyond the limitations of our intellect. With Hashem's help we have the opportunity to turn the bitterness of our lives into sweetness, and the darkness into the greatest light.

¹ Bereishit 38:1.

² Bereishit 37:7.

³ This is also the spiritual work of counting the Omer.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Bereishit Rabah, Parasha 1, Piska 5.

⁶ Bereishit Rabah, Parasha 71, Piska 5.

⁷ Sefat Emet, Parashat Vayeshev, Year 5631.

⁸ Tehillim 34:20.



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Meditation:

Sit comfortable in your chair, close your eyes and take several deep breaths. Breathe deeply and feel completely relaxed in all of the limbs of the body.

1. After several minutes of relaxing breathing, imagine that you are dreaming. Allow the dream waves to rush over you, to wash over you, to flash over you.
2. Imagine the letters of the Hebrew word for dream לֹחַם. First imagine the letter ח-*chet*, like a gateway into a higher reality. The letter *chet* combines the two previous letters, ו-*vav* and ז-*zayin*, with a thin bridge-shaped line.⁹
3. The new energy created by the union of the straight line of the *vav* (*ohr yashar*-straight light) and the bent line of the *zayin* – (*ohr chozer*-returning light) is the secret of “hovering” – “The spirit of G*d was ‘hovering’ over the water,”¹⁰ – “touching yet not touching.” By “hovering” over us, being revealed yet concealed, G*d continues to sustain us while allowing each of us to develop separately. Let the letter *chet* flash in and out as you connect to its energy of “touching yet not touching.”
4. Now allow yourself to imagine the letter ל-*lamed* as a tower soaring in the air aspiring to learn¹¹ to receive new insights from above. Imagine how your heart is thirsting to ascend and reach a higher level of consciousness through your dreams.
5. Let the connecting letter ו-*vav* appear in your mind’s eye. Imagine a straight line from above to below. Imagine this line of the *vav* opening the channel to bring down every level of higher consciousness that you are able to contact.
6. While bringing down all of your higher insights, you imagine the final מ-*mem*, the closed container, containing the underground stream of your dream-water. Breathe in ח – *Cha*, breathe out לֹחַם – *lom*, repeat four more times.
7. Get in touch with your dreams as you breathe, what are your aspirations? What did you once hope to become but never followed through? As you inhale ח – *Cha*, and exhale לֹחַם – *lom* Discover your long lost yearnings, which may be buried under your fears, your feelings of inadequacy, and low self-esteem.
8. Imagine yourself in the field where all is open. There in the field – בְּשָׂדֵה – you can silence all the statics of your fears that conceal your true will.
9. Now imagine the sheaves in Yosef’s dream אֶלְמִים. In your breathing of the word לֹחַם exchange the ח-*chet* with the א-*alef*. Breathe in א – *Aa*, breathe out לֹחַם – *lum*, אֶלְמִים – sheaf/silence.

⁹ The meanings of the Hebrew letters brought here is based upon *The Hebrew Letters* by Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh.

¹⁰ *Bereishit* 1:2.

¹¹ The word *lamed* – לֹמֵד derives from the same root as *lilmod* לִלְמוֹד – to teach.

10. Silence yourself to the one-ness of Hashem. Allow all your exterior fears and feelings of inadequacies to melt away, as the oneness of the *alef* draws out your true Divine inner dreams and aspirations. As you get in touch with your true dreams, choose the strongest brightest one and take it with you into the darkest pit.

11. You are now alone in the well of darkness. It is pitch-dark, it is cold and scary. You are alone, solitary. All your fears re-emerge. Get in touch with your different fears, perhaps the fear of death, the fear of illness, the fear of the unknown, the fear of not being good enough, the fear of not being able to succeed... Allow each of your fears to emerge to the surface and acknowledge each of them. Breathe into each of your fears, and try to relax them.

12. In the midst of the darkness of your fears, it seems as if all is lost, but then, in the darkness, you re-connect with your brightest dream and aspiration. Your dream is a shining beacon in the darkness. Its light cannot be extinguished by the gloom of darkness. Allow your dream to show you the way out of the dungeon and into a brighter reality.

13. Hold on to your dream, float on your dream, as if on a cloud, and fly away from the darkness on your dream. Imagine yourself fulfilling your dream, actualizing your Divine potential.

14. Breathe into this new image of yourself being what you have always dreamed to become. Allow yourself to become your very highest self! Stay with this feeling and image of yourself for as long as you can. Enjoy the Divine Image of yourself. Then slowly tap your feet and hands to the ground and table before opening your eyes with a renewed resolve to live your life to its fullest.

Notes:

Yosef's story is one of continual ups and downs. From being the favorite elevated beloved son, he gets dumped into a pit and sold down to Egypt in slavery. Sometimes it is only when we are in the pits, that we rediscover ourselves and tune into the light within. Our normal awake state prevents us from descending "to the moral depths," and likewise keeps us from ascending to "the very heights." When we free ourselves from the constrictions of the external world, through deep meditation, our imaginings, daydreams and emotions may either lead us "to the moral rock bottom" of Freudian fantasies, or to "the very heights" of cleaving to the Divine. What makes the difference? "It all depends on our spiritual stature, "on the spiritual level of our soul and on Free Will."¹² This week's meditation guides us to get in touch with both our greatest highest potential as well as our rock bottom, with the goal that through the darkest darkness we will be able to access our hidden light.

¹² Based on Rav Avraham HaKohen Kook, *Mussar HaKodesh*, p.304.



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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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