

# Parasha Meditation Shemot

## Shemot 1:1-6:1

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

### The Five Leaved Bush of Light

#### Introduction:

#### The Burning Bush and Our Spiritual Growth<sup>1</sup>

When our redeemer Moshe Rabbeinu was eighty years old, and out in the desert shepherding the sheep of his father-in-law, Yitro, he noticed a strange phenomenon. As he looked closer he received his first revelation from Hashem at the Burning Bush:

ספר שמות פרק ג

(ב) וַיֵּרָא מִלְּאֵךְ הַשָּׁם אֱלֹהֵי בְלֶבֶת אִשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה הַסִּנֵּה בֹעֵר בְּאֵשׁ וְהַסִּנֵּה אֵינֶנּוּ אֶכְלָ:

(ג) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְרֶה נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת הַפֶּרֶאָה אֵת הַגִּדְל הַזֶּה מִדּוּעַ לֹא יִבְעֵר הַסִּנֵּה:

(ד) וַיֵּרָא הַשָּׁם כִּי סָר לְרֵאוֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהֵי מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי:

“The angel of Hashem appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Moshe said: ‘I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.’ When Hashem saw that he turned aside to see, G\*d called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said: ‘Moshe, Moshe.’ And he said: ‘Here am I.’”<sup>2</sup>

The word *הַסִּנֵּה*/*HaSneh* – “the bush,” is mentioned for the first time in the Torah at the beginning of the Book of *Shemot*, where it appears five times. This corresponds to the beginning of the Book of *Bereishit* where the word *אֹר*/*Ohr* – “Light” also appears five times.

ספר בראשית פרק א

(ג) יֹאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אֹר וַיְהִי אֹר:

(ד) וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאֹר כִּי טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ:

(ה) וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קִרְיָ לַיְלָה וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד:

“G\*d said: ‘Let there be light.’ And there was light. And G\*d saw the light that it was good; and G\*d divided the light from the darkness. G\*d called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. There was evening and there was morning, one day.”<sup>3</sup>

#### The Five Lights of the Bush Corresponding to the Five Emotions of the Heart

The burning fire of the bush emanated from the original light “*Ohr HaGanuz*” that Hashem hid away for the *tzadikim* to enjoy in the coming world.<sup>4</sup> Moshe’s first experience of these five lights represented by the five times the word *הַסִּנֵּה*/*HaSneh* – “the bush,” is mentioned, corresponds to the

<sup>1</sup> This meditation is a transcription and annotation of Rabbi Ginsburgh’s audio lecture from <<http://www.inner.org/audio/lectures/parsha/shemot.htm>>.

<sup>2</sup> *Shemot* 3:2-4.

<sup>3</sup> *Bereishit* 1:3-5.

<sup>4</sup> Rashi, *Bereishit* 1:4.

five primary emotions of the heart. They reflect the five emotional *sefirot* corresponding to the Five Founding Fathers:

<b>Chesed</b> – חֶסֶד (Loving-kindness)	<b>Avraham</b>
<b>Gevurah</b> – גְּבוּרָה (Courage/Awe)	<b>Yitzchak</b>
<b>Tiferet</b> – תִּפְאָרֶת (Beauty/Compassion)	<b>Ya'acov</b>
<b>Netzach</b> – נִצְחָה (Confidence/Victory)	<b>Moshe</b>
<b>Hod</b> – הוֹד (Sincerity/Acknowledgment)	<b>Aharon</b>

*Hod* is the *temimut* – simplicity – walking simply with G\*d with dedication and thanksgiving acknowledging G\*d's eternal presence.

### Redemption in the Merit of the Fivefold Unity of Souls

מדרש רבה שמות פרשה ב פסקה ה  
 ר' נחמן בנו של ר' שמואל בר נחמן אומר כל האילנות יש מהן עושה עלה אחת ויש מהן שתים או שלש הדם עושה שלש שנקרא  
 (ויקרא כג) עץ עבות אבל הסנה יש לו ה' עלין א"ל הקב"ה למשה אין ישראל נגאלין אלא בזכות אברהם יצחק ויעקב ובזכותך  
 ובזכות אהרן;

Rabbi Nachman son of Rabbi Shemuel son of Nachman says, of all the trees, there are some that produce one leaf [from the same point], and there are those who produce two or three. The myrtle produces three leaves [that emerge from the same point]. It is called “a thick-leaved tree.”<sup>5</sup> However, the bush, has five leaves [that emerge from the same point]. Hashem told Moshe, “Israel is only redeemed in the merit of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'acov, and in your merit and in the merit of Aharon your brother.”<sup>6</sup>

The Burning Bush with its five leaves emerging from one common source relates to Hashem's message to Moshe to propel him to become the redeemer of the Jewish people, taking them out of bondage. In order to successfully emerge from exile you have to have the merit of five souls. Avraham, Yitzchak, Ya'acov, the patriarchs correspond to the three leaves of the myrtle tree. The additional *tzadikim* that have to be connected and combined with the first three are Moshe and his brother Aharon. Only by joining all five of these souls together can redemption take place.

### The Five Fingers of Hashem's Redemptive Hand

The bush, initially, before it even takes on fire, represents these five emerging from one point, like five fingers emerging from the same hand. It is this hand of G\*d which will redeem Israel from Egypt.<sup>7</sup> The Ten Plagues correspond to the two hands. They reappear afterwards in the Ten Commandments, on the Two Tablets representing five fingers of two hands. The secret of Exodus is the secret of five. The first phenomenon of five is the five lights of creation. Torah itself is light, the Five Books of Moshe – the five revelations of Divinity – become even more potent and physically manifest in the Burning Bush.

<sup>5</sup> Vayikra 23:40.

<sup>6</sup> Midrash Rabah, Shemot parasha 2, piskah 5.

<sup>7</sup> See Shemot 13:3.

## Meditation:

Let us meditate upon the image of the burning bush and how we can apply it to our own spiritual growth. There is a clear correspondence between the revelation of the first light and the first Divine revelation to Moshe who received the Torah which is the manifestation of light.<sup>8</sup> Hashem chose to give all the Torah and light to the Jewish people. Divine revelation is also an experience of light and enlightenment.

Take several deep breaths, relax, close your eyes and meditate on the symbol of the Burning Bush.

1. As you breathe stay longer, relax more. Allow the warmth of the fire to flow through your body.
2. Notice a white, comforting light emanating from the bush. You can only see and feel this light when you take the time to stop and relax. The light is in the bush. The light is in you, warming you, healing you, surrounding you with white light...with a sense of unity with all of G\*d's creation.
3. Imagine the paradox of the thorn-bush burning with the fire and flame without being consumed. Visualize before you the thorny branches remaining intact even as they are surrounded by flames of fire.
4. Imagine five leaves growing out of one common point on the branch. The entire bush is filled with leaves that come in groups of five, all growing out of the same point.
5. Inhale visualize the bush, exhale visualize the fire burning it without burning it away. Repeat four more times.

## Notes:

Moshe witnessed the amazing miraculous phenomenon that the bush was burning without burning away. He saw two different creations, one is the fire and the other is the bush. The general law of nature is that all created things become consumed and expire. The bush had the miraculous character that it remained. Nothing could harm it. We can glean five levels of teachings, from the revelation of the Burning Bush, corresponding to its five leaves that emanate from one point.

## Avraham's Teaching of Hashem's Omnipresence

1. The first teaching is that there is no place devoid of the Divine presence, even the lowest of bushes – the thorn bush.<sup>9</sup> If you put your hand into *הַסֵּנֶה*/HaSneh – “the bush” you will get scratched. On the other hand a thorn bush also produced roses with the most amazing aroma. The bush represents the Jewish people, which more than any other people on earth includes both the greatest *tzadikim* (righteous people) and greatest *reshaim* (wicked people).<sup>10</sup> There is no place vacant of G\*d, דלית אתר

<sup>8</sup> “For a candle is a mitzvah and the Torah is light” (*Mishlei* 6:23).

<sup>9</sup> *Yalkut Shimoni, Shemot*, Chapter 3, Allusion 169.

<sup>10</sup> *Midrash Rabah, Shemot, parasha 2, piska 5.*

פנוי מניה – *D'Leit Atar Panui Minei*,<sup>11</sup> even this thorny bush manifests Hashem's presence. The omnipresence of the Creator even in the lowest part of creation, was Hashem's first teaching to Moshe.

This teaching is related to Avraham, the first of the great souls in the fivefold unity, which gives the Jewish people the merit to be redeemed from Egypt. Avraham was the first person to teach the world true monotheism. With great חסד/*Chesed* – (Loving-kindness) he taught the world that G\*d is everywhere. Not only is G\*d the only G\*d, His presence, moreover, permeates the entire world. G\*d and the world is one. The basic teaching that G\*d is omnipresent, even in things that appears to be negative and lowly, arouses and inspires us to come closer to G\*d.

### **Yitzchak: Hashem Feels Our Pain and is with Us in All our Troubles**

2. From one revelation to the next of the five levels, we descend stage by stage from the fire to the bush – from the light to the vessel. The first revelation was to realize that G\*d is everywhere. Wherever you look there is G\*dly fire, even if you don't see it. The second teaching is that G\*d experiences pain from the pain of his people. עמו אנכי בצרה – *Imo anochi b'tzara* – "I will be with him in trouble."<sup>12</sup> This second stage of descent makes the experience much more touching to one's heart. First the bush represented all of reality, now the bush represents the Jewish people. The bush is experiencing pain, but Hashem is there in the midst of the pain.

The very concept of pain and suffering comes from the second emanation of the heart which is *Gevurah*/גבורה, (Courage/Awe), represented by Yitzchak. Hashem participates in our pain. He is not just patting us on the back, he is actually experiencing our very pain. בכול צרתם לו צר/*B'chol Tzaratam lo Tzar* – "In all their troubles, He experiences pain".<sup>13</sup> G\*d suffers together with the Jewish people. He wants us to feel that He is together with us. This is also a support that He definitely will redeem us.

### **Ya'acov: The Beauty of Paradox the Coexistence of Fire and Bush**

3. The third teaching is to experience the paradox of two opposites existing simultaneously. Before Moshe saw the paradox in the situation, he wasn't drawn to go over and see what was going on. Only when he saw the paradox that the bush was burning, but not burning away, did he take five steps to approach the bush. Divine beauty is reflected in the existence of opposites within the wonder of nature. When two opposite blend together in perfect harmony, it produces beauty. Nature is never just one color. The Jewish deep sense of Divine curiosity, to try to understand the very experience of opposites existing simultaneous is the third level of revelation. Whereas the first teaching focused on the fire – the fire of G\*d's omnipresence, the second teaching focuses on the bush – that G\*d participates in the pain of the bush. At the third teaching we have reached the middle point where all is equal. There is equal existence of fire and bush. It is the wonder of the co-existence of fire and bush.

Compassion is to see and witness what is happening – the bush is burning, but not burning away. The coexistence and harmony of opposites is *Tiferet* – תפארת/Beauty/Compassion) represented by Ya'acov who was a scientist. Actually, he performed all kinds of scientific experiments to understand what is going on in Nature, and come to the root of the phenomenon of nature. He understood G\*d by understanding the wonders of Nature.

<sup>11</sup> *Tikunei Zohar, Daf* 91b.

<sup>12</sup> *Tehillim* 91:15.

<sup>13</sup> *Babylonian Talmud, Ta'anit* 16a.

**Moshe: The Eternity of the Jewish People Who will Never be Consumed**

4. In the fourth teaching the fire is no longer a symbol of G\*d, but of the servitude of Egypt. This fire is trying to consume and burn away the Jewish soul. However, it is not going to succeed in burning out the Jewish soul, for the Jewish people is an eternal people, and nothing is going to consume us. No profane fire, whatsoever, is going to consume the Jewish soul and the Jewish people. The Jewish people is essentially an eternal people, because it is a part of G\*d himself. In the fourth teaching there is greater focus on the bush than on the fire. The bush which represents the Jewish people is eternal.

This corresponds to Moshe our teacher and the *Sefirah* of נְצִיחַ/Netzach – (Confidence/Victory) Moshe who emerged victorious from Pharaoh’s wrath, and who brought us the eternal Torah stands for victory and eternity.

**Aharon: The Jewish Soul never Expires Even Within G\*d’s Transcendence**

5. In the fifth teaching, the Jewish soul is meditating upon the truth of G\*d’s essential changelessness and eternity, which is totally transcendent from the physical reality that constantly changes. This deep meditation would naturally bring the Jewish soul to spiritual consumption – *klalot nefesh* – making the soul leave the body altogether, consumed into becoming a part included within Divinity. כִּי אֲנִי הַשֵּׁם לֹא יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְאַתֶּם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּלִיתֶם – “I G\*d did not change, and you the children of Ya’acov were not consumed.”<sup>14</sup> The simple reading of this verse follows the fourth teaching that no matter what happens to the Jewish people, they will never be consumed. Yet, in the fifth and final revelation the very same verse is interpreted by the founder of Chabad Chassidic movement<sup>15</sup> to refer to the mediation taking place in the psychic of the Jewish soul itself. It is as if the verse is asking a question, “How can the Jewish soul meditate in depth upon G\*d’s essential transcendence, changelessness and eternity without the soul leaving the body?” The Jewish soul in its רָצוֹן/*ratzo* – “run” aspires to become part of G\*d, yet the soul knows that Hashem wants it to remain down on earth to live, and make this world a dwelling place of G\*d within the body. The commitment of the soul not to expire into G\*d, in *klalot hanefesh*, is the שׁוּב/*shov* – “return.”<sup>16</sup> This is the essential prerequisite before the soul begins to run up to G\*d. Because of the presence of the principle of “return,” it does not expire, even when it experiences G\*d’s absolute transcendence.

This last interpretation – the fifth level – is the deepest revelation of the bush itself. This bush is so great that it doesn’t expire, even if it totally beholds the Divine revelation that “I G\*d does not change.” In the fourth teaching the fire was negative. The Jewish people would never be consumed by this fire. In the fifth teaching the fire returns to become a positive fire, representing the fire of G\*d’s absolute transcendence. The ultimate greatness of the Jewish soul that it doesn’t expire, because it is the desire of the Creator that it remains on earth to fulfill G\*d’s will. This corresponds to *Hod*/הוֹד (Sincerity/Acknowledgment) represented by the last of the fivefold unity of holy souls: Aharon the *Kohen Gadol*. He was able to enter the Holy of Holies while his soul still remained within his body.

These five revelations that Moshe experienced at the Burning Bush, corresponding to the five lights of the first day of creation, are becoming very manifest in the physical reality, in this paradoxical experience of the Burning Bush.

<sup>14</sup> Malachi 3:6.

<sup>15</sup> Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, The Altar Rebbe, author of the Tanya.

<sup>16</sup> The Kabbalistic principle of רָצוֹן וְשׁוּב – “Running and returning” is first mentioned in *Sefer Yetzira*, Chapter 1.



# 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](mailto:info@berotbatayin.org) or in *Spiritual Healing with Rebbetzin Chana Bracha*, please contact her at [director@berotbatayin.org](mailto: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.

