

Parasha Meditation Ki Tetze

Devarim 21:10-25:19

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

Going out to Battle our Spiritual Enemies

Introduction

Overcoming our Personal Enemies

This week's *parasha* is about personal struggles. The Torah urges every Jew to wage war with our personal enemies especially at this time when we prepare for the New Year: "When you go forth to battle against your enemies, and Hashem your G-d deliver them into your hands and you take them captive."¹ Why does the Torah state: "When you go out (צאת)..." rather than "When you go (הלך) to war?" *Netivat Shalom* explains that "When you go out" is directed at our *neshama* (soul) from the moment when it went out from the upper world, into this physical world, in order to fulfill our purpose by waging our personal war.²

The main reason we are sent into this world is to overcome our negative natural tendencies. If a day goes by without battling our negative inclination, it is considered as if we didn't accomplish anything on that day. This is why the Torah verse states "your enemies" rather than just "the enemies." For every person has a particular spiritual enemy to overcome. For this mission he is sent into the world.

Believing in our Ability to Succeed with Hashem's Help

In order to succeed in this spiritual warfare, we need to believe in our ability to succeed. We must believe that Hashem supports us to become aware of our spiritual enemies and that He empowers us to overcome them. Our Torah verse continues "...Hashem your G-d deliver them into your hands" in order to drive home this *emunah*, that Hashem will give us the ability to succeed if we only "go out" and try our very best. Just as in a physical war, the soft-hearted fearful soldier was sent home,³ likewise our ultimate success is contingent on not being afraid, because we believe that "Hashem our G-d is with us, He elevated us from Egypt."⁴ When we go out to war against our spiritual enemies through *emunah* in our ultimate victory, then "Hashem your G-d will deliver them into our hands."

Finding our Purpose in the World

Sometimes I wish I was born in Arizal's time. He would be able to take a quick look at my face and tell me exactly my purpose and mission in life. Most of my life I have been struggling to figure out my personal purpose in life – my *tikun* – that I was sent into the world to fix. Wouldn't

¹ Devarim 21:10.

² This entire Torah is based on *Netivat Shalom, Parashat Ki Tetze, Ma'amar 1*.

³ Devarim 20:8.

⁴ Devarim 20:1.



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we all like to know exactly what we are supposed to achieve in our lives? *Netivat Shalom* explains that when we come to the upper world (until 120) we will be asked, “What did you accomplish in the world?” Even if we learned a lot of Torah, and fulfilled many mitzvot, if we didn’t overcome our personal enemies, we didn’t fulfill our personal mission. Reading this gave me great *chizuk*, to be determined to find my own personal mission, and make a plan to fulfill it! *Netivat Shalom* explains that the cue to discover our personal enemies that we need to overcome in order to fulfill our purpose is looking for the area where our negative inclination is strongest. Our personal enemy is to be found where our negative inclination is overpowering us with otherworldly power. Our battle in life is to focus on overcoming this enemy. This is the entire purpose of our lives.

Going out of Ourselves – to Overcome our Spiritual Enemies

Just as in war it is not enough to know how to shoot, in order not to waste bullets, we also need to know how to aim and hit the bull’s eye. Therefore, we need to focus all our might on the point where the negative inclination is trying to overcome us the most. Just as the soldier enters into war ready to give over his life, if that’s what it takes, we too, need to be willing to go out of ourselves in complete *mesirut nefesh* (self-sacrifice, literally to hand over our soul) in order to overcome our personal enemy and achieve our rectification. This is why our *parasha* opens with “When you **go out**” – of yourself and your comfort zone, and your natural tendencies... Just as a soldier mustn’t fear or think about his wife and children or anything that distracts him from dedicating himself completely to warfare,⁵ likewise we need to transcend everything that’s keeping us down, gather all our energy and focus on our spiritual goal, while turning away from the distractions that side-track us.

Going out of our Negative Habits

We may have formed negative habits in response to a certain negative situation we experienced as a child. That response can become habitual and then the habit can form our character. Although habitual attitudes feel comfortable, we become their prisoners. They persist even after the negative environment to which they reacted has been left behind. Therefore, we won’t be able to overcome the “enemy” without going completely out of ourselves and our negative habits. In order to be successful, we need to totally “go out” of ourselves and transcend our situation and reality, just as Rambam teaches us to go to the other extreme.⁶

Overcoming our Enemies through Preemptive Action

“When you go out...” teaches us to be prepared, take preventative steps and go out towards the enemy before it takes us by surprise. Only “if you go out” and open war against your enemies will “Hashem your G-d deliver them into your hands.” It’s much easier to conquer our negative impulse before it has gotten a hold of us. Becoming aware of our personal weaknesses where our negative inclination is strongest is the first step in taking preventive means to overcome it. The next step is to make a realistic plan, and a firm decision to stick to it. During this month of Elul, Hashem empowers us to carry out our resolutions, overcome our personal enemies, and come closer to Him by fulfilling of our personal mission.

⁵ Rambam, *Mishna Torah, Hilchot Melachim*, Chapter 7, Halacha 15.

⁶ Rambam, *Mishna Torah, Hilchot Deot*, Chapter 1, Halacha 4.



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Meditation:

Make yourself comfortable and breathe several slow cleansing breaths in and out of your nose. Letting the chair take your weight relax, relax, relax even more. Focus on the process of recognizing and overcoming your inner enemies.

1. Become aware of the light above your head, your *Keter* – crown and umbilical connection to the higher realms.
2. Observe the consequences of your thoughts, attitude and actions. Imagine little black fast moving specks trying to enter your crown and invade you.
3. Try to identify these black specks; scrutinize deeply and carefully. Ask in your mind's voice: "What created you?" Perhaps a lack of *emunah*, self-doubts, negative thoughts and confusion created these black specks? Do not suppress thoughts and feelings, but observe, discover and examine.
4. Allow the energy field of your crown to expand and push the black specks away, see them recede backwards one by one until they disappear. Focus again on your breath and feel at peace.
5. Visualize the light in your heart, in the shape of the most beautiful red rose, see the petals unfold. It's the most exquisite rose, until little black bugs begin to eat away of its petals.
6. Look at the bugs under an imaginary microscope, scrutinize them and ask in your mind's voice: "What created you?" Is it the hatred, anger, jealousy or grudge that I keep in my heart that gave birth to these destructive forces? Ask yourself: "What is behind the anger? What is behind the self-defeat? What is behind the emptiness?..."
7. Breathe into your question and know yourself, and your spiritual weakness. Hold the self-knowledge about your personal enemies and make a decision how to eradicate the enemies of your heart.
8. Breathe love into your heart. Recite in your heart: "I am loved and I give out love!"
9. Visualize a surge of light entering your heart, strengthening the rose to push out the black bugs, see them retract one by one, and the rose in your heart growing stronger and more beautiful. The redness increases, and its heavenly scent fills you more and more with every inhalation.
10. Keep breathing and focus on the light surrounding your feet, feel how your feet are firmly planted on the ground. Beauty is within, but something is in the way. What is the shadow blocking the light? Imagine your feet stumbling over a closed door. Are you ready to open the door?



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11. Listen to where the words come from when you speak. What is the cause? Is it gossip, judgmentalness or another way to cover up your own insecurities?
12. Keep breathing into the closed door, and make a mental resolution to open the door. Allow your inner light to separate from your inner enemies, peel them off so your essence can radiate and shine! Now imagine you gather all your strength to open the door, and become bathed in your own highest hidden light!
13. When you are ready, open your eyes and with pen and paper in your hand write down, your revelation about your inner enemies, include a realistic plan to conquer them.

Notes:

We always read *Parashat Ki Tetze* during the month of Elul, because it precedes the renewal of the year. Rosh Hashana celebrates the renewal of creation. Each person has a special purpose and rectification in each particular year. This is alluded to in the phrase, "When you go out" – when you go out from the previous year towards the New Year, "to battle your enemies" – meaning this is the time open war against the particular negative point within ourselves, in order to change, overcome our nature and open the door to enter the Book of Life!



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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>

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.



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