

# Parasha Meditation Ha'azinu

## Devarim 32:1-52

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

### Introduction

The Shabbat between Yom Kippur and Sukkot is the highest of the highest. Since every Shabbat includes both the lights of the previous and the coming week,<sup>1</sup> this Shabbat includes both the holy lights of Yom Kippur and of Sukkot. The Shabbat following Yom Kippur contains the aspect of forgiveness and awesome holiness. Likewise the lights of *simcha* (happiness) of the coming week of Sukkot are all included in this Shabbat. According to *Netivat Shalom*, this Shabbat is the holiest in the entire year.<sup>2</sup> At this time the solemn energies of Yom Kippur merge with the joyful happiness of Sukkot, bringing us into Hashem's most intimate chambers.

### When the *Neshama* Hears the Body Will Follow

“Give ear, you heavens, and I will speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.”<sup>3</sup>

Why is the heaven implored to give ear with the imperative form of the word הִשְׁמַעְנִי, whereas regarding the earth it uses the simple future form וְהִשְׁמַע – “will hear”?

*Netivat Shalom* explains that the heavens allude to the *neshama* (soul) of which the *kliptot* (husks) have no ability to seize. Therefore, the *neshama* always hears the heavenly voice (*Bat Kol*) which goes out daily. When the *neshama* will hear, then it follows that “the earth will hear the words of my mouth” – meaning that also the body will hear. The body is otherwise far from hearing because it is entrenched within the physical world, occupied in material matters. However, the *neshama* will surely hear, it being a part of Hashem Above. When we from times to times are aroused in thoughts of *teshuvah* (repentance) it is a result of our *neshama* hearing the *Bat Kol* speaking to the souls of Israel: “Oy to the creation for the offence to the Torah”<sup>4</sup>

By means of our soul hearing then even the body will become aroused. Then our spiritual work is only to hold on to this arousal without letting it go – אֶתְחַזְּקֵהוּ וְלֹא אֶרְפֹּנוּ.<sup>5</sup>

### Holding on to the Holiness of Yom Kippur

After we emerge so cleansed pure and holy from Yom Kippur, in my experience, the real challenge is to hold on to this holy feeling. After Yom Kippur, I'm so careful with every word I speak, every action I do, not to soil the pure holy garments of my soul with an ugly stain. But then, I don't know what happens, as the year progress, a small wrongdoing, then another and voila back to square 1. I

<sup>1</sup> *Be'er Mayim Chaim, Parashat Nitzavim.*

<sup>2</sup> *Netivat Shalom, Parashat Ha'azinu* p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> *Devarim* 32:1.

<sup>4</sup> *Shemot Rabah*, 41:7.

<sup>5</sup> *Shir HaShirim* 3:4.



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hope this year to try even harder to hold on to the holiness of Yom Kippur and make it last the entire year, washing off each spiritual stain as it comes.

### **Illuminating Shabbat Brings Lights of Elevation for the Weekdays**

The heavens also allude to the holy Shabbat, and the earth to the days of the week. This teaches us that by means of keeping Shabbat properly we have the ability to raise up all the days of the week. When a person sins, his *neshama* leaves him temporarily, however on Shabbat our *neshama* shines and we even receive an additional *neshama*. On Shabbat, the *neshama* which always cleaves to Hashem returns to every Jew. This is why Shabbat is the acronym for שבת בו תשוב – *Shabbat bo tashuv* – on Shabbat you will return, for on Shabbat every Jewish person is close to repentance. Even if it is difficult for us to elevate ourselves during the weekdays, on the holy Shabbat we Jews have the ability to return to Hashem. By means of establishing “Give ear you heavens” – that is, to illuminate the Shabbats, then it will follow that “the earth will hear” – that is, that even during the regular weekdays we will b”H achieve closeness to Hashem.<sup>6</sup>

### **Overcoming Evil by means of Good**

In the service of Hashem, there is both the aspect of turning away from evil, and doing good; as King David implores us: “Turn away from evil, and do good.”<sup>7</sup> The usual interpretation of this Torah verse is that it is necessary to first turn away from wrongdoing in order to be a suitable vessel for good deeds. However, the Chassidic outlook is opposite. We turn away from evil by means of doing good. Rambam teaches us that in order to get rid of anger we need to go to the other extreme. Even if someone yells and curses us, we shouldn’t feel hurt and we shouldn’t get affected by it at all. “One should teach oneself not to get angry, even over a matter that is proper to get angry about.”<sup>8</sup> However, not everyone is on the level to control his emotions, and not be affected by curses and insults. Yet, when we begin to perform a great holy deed, we get empowered to uproot the negative from within us. Performing good deeds will enable us to turn away from evil, just as the holy pleasure of Shabbat and the holidays infuses the rest of the year with holiness, and enables us to rise beyond the laws of nature even within the regular weekdays. This is the meaning of “Give ear, you heavens, and I will speak” – the heavens allude to the good deeds. When we listen to Hashem by performing His mitzvot and are involved in giving pleasure (נחת רוח) to Hashem, then it follows that “the earth will hear the words of my mouth” – that also the body which is involved in material desires will hear and become illuminated. By means of the power of good we can overcome evil, and become elevated to our source in holiness.<sup>9</sup>

### **Give ear, you heavens, and I will speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth**

Heaven	שמים	Earth	ארץ
Soul	נשמה	Body	גוף
Shabbat	שבת	Weekdays	ימי חול
Positive Mitzvot	מצוות עשה	Negative Mitzvot	מצוות לא תעשה

### **Meditation**

<sup>6</sup> *Netivat Shalom, Parashat Ha'azinu* p. 119.

<sup>7</sup> *Tehillim* 34:15, 37:27.

<sup>8</sup> *Rambam, Mishna Torah, Hilchot Deot* Chapter 2: Halacha 3, Halacha 7.

<sup>9</sup> *Netivat Shalom, Parashat Ha'azinu* p. 120



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Let us take proper advantage of this holy time when Hashem is so near to really open our *neshama* and hear His messages for us. Sit in a comfortable place with your eyes closed, breathe deeply and allow yourself to drift into a meditative state.

1. Concentrate on your breath, breathe in all the way to the very deepest place inside yourself, into the pure *neshama* blown in you by Hashem. No corruption, confusion or discord has ever penetrated to this place of your essential purity.
2. הָאָזִינוּ – *ha'azinu* – Give ear. Inhale to the sound of “*Ha'ah*” – אָזִינוּ exhale to the sound of “*Zinu*” – אָזִינוּ. Breathe out from this place of depths. Repeat 5-10 times.
3. Visualize a flowing heavy curtain before you. Imagine going through the curtain and entering a new space with another curtain lighter than the previous. Breathe into this new place and open the next curtain before you lighter than the previous. Keep breathing and opening curtains before you, lighter and lighter until the curtain becomes so light and thin that it barely is recognizable. Open the last transparent curtain and enter the innermost chamber of your soul.
4. הָאָזִינוּ – *ha'azinu* – Give ear. Listen to the sounds you hear in this innermost space of your soul. Visualize your ear as an amazing open funnel, ready to be filled with new light.
5. Listen to the voice calling your name and calling you to be reborn to the mission of your life.
6. Wrap your personal message inside of a beautiful silk material and carry it close to your heart.
7. Return to the earth. Go through the transparent curtain, enter a the old space with another curtain heavier than the previous, breathe into this place and open the next curtain before you heavier than the previous. Keep breathing and opening curtains before you, heavier and heavier until you reach the first heavy curtain bringing you back to the earth.
8. Visualize standing barefoot on the naked earth. Feel the texture of the moist earth beneath your feet. Imagine your silk wrapped message emanating from the earth, softly whispering your truth.
9. Feel closer to yourself, who you are, and where you are headed, then open your eyes.

## Notes

This is the Shabbat of Listening (from the opening phrase of *Ha'azinu*). Let us remember to listen, to be mindful and pay attention to each moment. Let us remember that in each moment we are standing between Life and Death. We must choose life. *Ha'azinu* lifts up each moment and says, “It is your life! What will you do with it just now?”

Let us look at who and where we are and return to the path of our true 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:*

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*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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