

# Parasha Meditation Va'etchanan

**Devarim 3:23-7:11**

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

## Connecting with the Unity of All Israel and Hashem

### Introduction

#### **Shema Yisrael – The Centerpiece of Jewish Belief, Prayer and Spiritual Healing**

The *Shema Yisrael* is like a seed that contains the entire Torah – a direct shortcut to Hashem. This centerpiece of Jewish belief and prayer contains the power to draw us back to our Soul's purpose: Loving G-d, and sanctifying His Name as One. שמע ישראל השם אחד – “*Shema Yisrael*, Hear O *Yisrael*, Hashem is our G-d Hashem is One.”<sup>1</sup> It says “*shema*” – hear/ listen, not just because we cannot see G-d, but because we are to bring the truth of Hashem's Oneness deep into our being. What we see remains external to ourselves. We cannot ‘see’ but we can ‘hear’ Hashem communicating to us especially through the words of His Holy Torah. We unite with Him through seeing and remembering, but even more so by hearing and listening.<sup>2</sup> The *Shema* is a verbal mikvah, pouring into every level of our souls. It aligns us to the truth of Hashem's Oneness, purifying doubt and the temptation to believe that there is anything in the world that is separate from Hashem.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Complete Active Listening**

שמע/*Shema* – Hear: The first word of the *Shema* prayer means hear or listen. Its first letter ש/shin represents שׂ/esh – fire, the following letter מ/mem – is associated with מים/*mayim* – water. To truly listen is to unite our vital energy of fire with the receptiveness of water. This kind of hearing is called active listening. The last letter in the word *Shema* is ע/ayin, which means eye and has the shape of an eye. To truly listen is to visualize the message we hear in our mind's eye. The letter ע/ayin has the numerical value of seventy, corresponding to the seventy facets of the Torah, and the seventy languages of the world. To listen is to integrate the message with all its possible numerous aspects.

#### **Israel – Straight to G-d**

ישראל/*Yisrael* – Israel. This word can be broken up into two: Straight ישר/*yashar* אל/G-d. The first letter of the word *yashar* is י/*yud* – the smallest most humble of letters. When writing any Hebrew letter, we always begin from the top, forming a י/*yud*. This letter – the most hidden beginning of all the letters – is the first letter of *Yisrael* – the beginning and purpose of Hashem's creation plan. He created the world for the sake of Israel, but our greatness is hidden throughout our exile and persecution. *Shin*, the second letter of Israel looks like flames of fire. It represents

<sup>1</sup> Devarim 6:4.

<sup>2</sup> Rabbi Shelomo Carlebach, *Parashas Eikev*, Issue #25, 19-20 menachem Av 5767.

<sup>3</sup> By alumna student Tziona Achishena for full article see < <http://berotbatayin.org/Spirituality/Shema.htm>>.



Midreshet  
B'erot Bat Ayin

Holistic Torah Study for Women

(011-972-2) 995-4945

info@berotbatayin.org

www.berotbatayin.org

the fiery energy to keep us going, and keep our passion for Hashem strong. ר/Reish, the third letter of Israel – has the shape of the back of the head. The letter *reish* also means head (*rosh*). With this letter we become the leader of the world, but only if we connect with the א/alef- lamed of G-d's revealed name. "El" also means power, and interestingly it may be the root of the English word electricity. This name of G-d consists of the א/alef the oneness of G-d together with the ל/lamed – the tallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet – symbolizing going upwards reaching towards its higher spiritual purpose.

### The Eternal Name

יהוה – The four lettered name of G-d is translated most correctly as the Eternal. It includes within it the letters of *heh*, *yud*, and *vav* through which you can spell הָיָה /*haya* – was, הָיָה /*hove* – is, יִהְיֶה /*yiheye* – will be. Hashem is beyond time and includes all past, present and future. The ה/*heh* is the letter of breath, birth and creativity, the letter ו/*vav* is the letter of connection. G-d created and breathed life into all existence and connected the world to himself. The first י/*yud* of His name denotes beginning, He is the first, nothing preceded Him. Likewise Israel is called the first.<sup>4</sup> In this way both Israel and G-d begin with this same letter signifying the connection between us.

### Elokim – The Power of Nature

אלוהים – The root of this word is *Elokim* the word for G-d which is manifested within the physical world also denoting judgment. *Elokim* decreed that the natural rules of the world operate in according to set laws. The first two letters are shared with the word for Israel denoting our connection with *Elokim*. It is interesting that these letters are in the end of the word *Yisrael* whereas they appear in the beginning of the word for G-d. Our end goal and purpose to reach the Divine, is only the beginning of G-d's infinite being which is so uplifted beyond what we can even begin to imagine. The *heh* is the birth not only of our world, but of all the worlds beyond us, reaching towards the *yud* that most spiritual letter corresponding to the world Above – The World to Come. The suffix ם – is always used to denote “us” or “our”. The nun stands for the fifty gates of understanding all which Hashem wants to grant us, and the *vav* is the letter of connection. Whatever is ours is what we connect with on the deepest level.

### The Gate of Brotherhood & Unity

אחד /*echad* – The first letters of the word for one (*echad*) is א/alef and ח/*chet*, which spell the word אח /*ach* – brother. In order to be united we need to feel the connectedness of brotherhood. The last letter of *echad* is ד/*dalet* which has the numerical value of four, representing the four corners of the world that needs to be united in the One. The ח/*chet* in the middle of the word represents the *chuppah* (marriage canopy), which connect together the oneness of G-d with the four directions of the world. It is the gate through which the Oneness, so to speak, has to pass in order to enter the physical world.

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



Midreshet  
B'erot Bat Ayin

Holistic Torah Study for Women

(011-972-2) 995-4945

info@berotbatayin.org

www.berotbatayin.org

## Meditation:

Seat yourself comfortably in your space, relax and close your eyes.  
Breathe deeply and relax even more.

1. Visualize the first word of the *shema* – שמע/shema with each of its letters ש/shin מ/mem and ע/ayin.
2. The ש/shin and the מ/mem represent the opposite energies of fire and water. Imagine the ע/ayin being a vessel that contains, holds together and unite both the fire of ש/shin and the water of מ/mem.
3. Breath slowly. Inhale while visualizing the letter ע/ayin, exhale while making a “shhh” sound, and visualizing the letter ש/shin.
4. Inhale while visualizing the letter ע/ayin, exhale while making a “mmm” sound and visualizing the letter מ/mem.
5. Break up the word שמע/shema into two: שמ/shem and ע/ayin – Hear how the name of ע/ayin is the Name of the wellspring.... שמע/shema –hear how the name – שמ/shem is connected to the – ע/ayin. It is the name of seventy. G-d has seventy names, to awaken all the sparks of the seventy aspects of the Torah. Imagine these seventy sparks flashing out of Hashem’s שמ/shem – name.
6. “The Name” with an open מ/mem is Hashem – the King of the lower world.<sup>5</sup> Visualize an immense light streaming down from the opening of the מ/mem into the world – spiraling down into the house you are in – then into the room you are sitting in, and finally filling your entire being. Bask in this light which floods you.
7. שמע/shema means hear, ע/ayin means eye. Can you hear with your eye? Allow yourself to visualize the message we hear in our mind’s eye. Hear the oneness of Hashem with your eyes.
8. Recite silently, שמע ישראל/Sheema Yisrael while visualizing entering a dark tunnel with a candle. Imagine how the שמע ישראל/Sheema Yisrael emanate light that pushes away all the darkness. The oneness of the light of Hashem descends and connects to the light low and spreads out to Yerushalayim and to the entire globe of the earth, then to all of the worlds.
9. Break up the word ישראל/Yisrael into two ישר/yashar and לקאל/l’kel – Straight to G-d. You as part of the people of ישראל/Yisrael have a straight connection to G-d. Feel yourself being pulled upwards straight towards G-d.
10. Visualize the four letters of Hashem’s name yud and heh and vav and heh.

<sup>5</sup> Zohar, part 3, p 236b usually when the letter mem ends a word the ending מ/mem is used which has a closed shape whereas the regular מ/mem is open at the bottom the open מ/mem refers to the King over the lower world, whereas the closed ending מ/mem refers to aspect of the Upper King in the hidden world.



Midreshet  
B'erot Bat Ayin

Holistic Torah Study for Women

(011-972-2) 995-4945

info@berotbatayin.org

www.berotbatayin.org

Feel all the love and compassion emanating from this name into your heart.

11. אֱלֹהֵינוּ-יְיָ / Hashem Our G-d. Breathe slowly and relaxed. Inhale אֱלֹהֵינוּ / Hashem, exhale אֱלֹהֵינוּ / Our G-d. Connect with how אֱלֹהֵינוּ / Hashem is the G-d of every one of us – of the entire Jewish people. אֱלֹהֵינוּ / Hashem is my G-d. We are one with each other and Hashem.

12. Breathe into אֶחָד / *echad* – Our unity emanate from His light.  
Our unity allows us to see and hear and to receive knowledge and love.

## Notes

There is a spiritual pilot light, or *Pintele Yid*, in every Jew that never is extinguished, and the *Shema* is a spark that causes that hidden light to grow and strengthen. We suffer when we are not connected to this truth without understanding why. The perpetual presence of the *Shema* pilot light gets obscured by layers of worldly impurity that comes with exile, true exile: the distance from knowing Hashem. Every time we say the *Shema*, the light that is within us grows stronger, purifying us with the truth, connecting us to a wellspring of *emunah* (faith).



Midreshet  
B'erot Bat Ayin

Holistic Torah Study for Women

(011-972-2) 995-4945  
info@berotbatayin.org  
www.berotbatayin.org

# 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.