

Adar 5781

**EMUNAH &
BITACHON**

IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

FAITH & TRUST IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

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A Upside Down World

The month of Adar is the time of the year when the state of the Jewish people became completely transformed - *V'nahafoch hu* – it's all upside down! In this month of our history, Haman tried to destroy the Jewish people, and the situation was turned around and everything worked out great for us.

Our Sages explain in our *sefarim hakedoshim* that the concept of *V'nahafoch hu* wasn't a one-time occurrence that took place in the times of the Purim story. For example, Hashem overturned Sodom in order to destroy Sodom. Hashem has many ways of how to destroy the world, such as in the Mabul, when He brought a flood to the world that destroyed all of mankind. He destroyed the world then with water. But with Sodom, Hashem destroyed it by overturning it.

The month of Adar is the particular time where this concept of *V'nahafoch Hu* often occurs. As we know, about a year ago in the month of Adar, the world has changed completely. The world before the month of Adar last year, and the world afterwards, is not the same world.

Recently, I was at the house of the *Mashgiach* and *tzaddik*, *HaGaon* Rav Don Segal *shlit"á*, and he said as follows: “People think that they will deal with this epidemic. They will get the vaccine, wear masks and keep social distancing, and that eventually we will be past all of this. But, I have told this to you before, and I will keep saying it: The world will never go back

to the way it was before. I have no idea what will happen, but one thing is for sure, the world is never going back to before.”

It is a situation of “*V’nahafoch hu*” that came to the world – Hashem is beginning to turn over our world. **He didn’t overturn it completely yet, but He has begun to turn it over.**

So Much For Our Plans

There are many aspects how the world has become turned upside down, but there is one particular aspect I want to dwell on.

Until now, people were able to make plans for what they will do next week, next month, next year, where to live, where to travel to. People planned what businesses they would open, what professions they would choose, where they will fly to, etc. Even if your plans didn’t always materialize, you were still able to plan your schedule. This is no longer the case. It has totally changed.

If you planned to get shoes, do you know if the shoe store will open for you soon? Do you know if it will be open for the next week? How many people made plans to fly to *chutz l’aretz* for their Pesach vacation? Does anyone know if their flight will happen? If a person thinks he knows about his flight status, he must have *ruach hakodesh*!

People had plans to come live here for a year in *Eretz Yisrael* and then go back to *chutz l’aretz*. People had all kinds of business plans, to open stores, to open hotels. People spent millions of dollars trying to open up hotels. They opened them, and what happened? Now hotels are close to 0% occupancy as compared to last year. Millions of dollars and so much energy

and thinking went into all of this planning, with several years advance planning since it takes a lot to open a hotel. And what happened when the hotels were built and everything was ready? Everything was closed! There is no tourism! No one could fly in from *chutz l'aretz!* Everything has changed. No one can make their plans anymore. We can give many examples of the changes in our world today, but there is one common denominator – you can no longer plan what you're going to do.

The End of Exile Is Compared To Moving Through Thick Darkness

It can be compared to the following analogy. When there is thick darkness, you can't see anything when you are driving in the fog. You can only see a bit of light in front of you. That is the most you can see. You go one more inch and you can see a bit further, and inch by inch you can move forward, barely seeing what's in front of you, until you finally get to where you need to get to. Chazal gave this analogy in comparison to our final journey at the end of *galus* when we are approaching the final *Geulah*. We are not able to know what will happen, and all we can see is a little bit in front of us, but not more than that.

This is called *arafel*, the thick dark cloud, which is so thick that you can only see a bit in front of you. The Torah says that Moshe approached the *arafel*, and that was where Hashem was. In the darkness of *arafel*, which epitomizes the end of *galus*, you can't see anything clearly in front of you. The clearest example of this is in the world we are living in today. You can't really plan where you will go. You can "plan," but you can't be certain at all if the plans will materialize.

Walking With Hashem

If you can't plan, what is there to do? How can we know how we will live if we don't know what the next step is? If this epidemic goes on for the next few years, how many more businesses and stores will close? Are most people working now in offices or at home? Most are working at home. If this lockdown goes on for longer, how many offices and businesses will close...? All flights are canceled, we can't fly anywhere out of the country.

Now that we can't plan anything, does that mean we should just not do anything at all and spend our lives in boredom? No, that is not a way to live. So what is the answer? The prophet Habakkuk explained¹ that it is *emunah* (faith in Hashem) which enables the Jews in the final generations to live and survive.

The word *emunah* is from the word *neeman*, to trust, and it is also from the word *omen*, to raise, as in the term *Mordechai omen es Hadasah*. He raised Esther, as Chazal explain. The root of the word *emunah*, therefore, is to not only trust and believe, but to be raised, in the same way that a child is raised by his parents, placing his complete trust in them.

If a small child is walking with his mother and suddenly he can't see his mother, he quickly looks behind him to see where his mother is. He won't run anywhere, because he doesn't know where to go, so he turns around, looking for his mother. *Emunah* means to rely on Hashem like the small child relying totally on his mother, because he doesn't know where to go.

¹ The prophet Habakkuk is generally believed to have written his *sefer* in the mid-to-late 7th century BC, not long before the Babylonians' siege and capture of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Life today is so different from life a year ago! Until a year ago, we could make plans for the next 20 years. Now we see that we cannot go anywhere, and our only way to get anywhere is to be with Hashem, like the small child, whose only hope of getting anywhere is to look for his mother and find her, because he doesn't know where to go.

Can we know what to do tomorrow? Yes, that much we can know. But can we know what will be in two months from now? No. I have children Baruch Hashem who are in yeshivah, but do I know if they will be back in school next week? No, and every day we are living with this uncertainty. We go to sleep at night and we have no idea if the government will decide at 2 a.m. if we will be allowed the next morning to go learn in yeshivah or not. We cannot plan far ahead, and the only planning we can do is for the very next step, and that's it. All we can do is rely on Hashem that Hashem will guide us where we need to get to.

Hashem's Changed World

This is not some idea, a nice or lofty thought, an aspiration, or a dream. We became used to thinking that all of this will just become part of the past and that the world will move on, and we will all settle down again. But we have to understand that everything has changed, the world has changed! And if the world has changed, then **Hashem has also changed His conduct of how He is running the world right now.**

This is the way to actually live life right now. Let's not think that we've simply experienced a complicated period, with times of turbulence and times of being relatively relaxed, and that some people are sick and some are healthy, and that some people left the world (*Rachmana Litzlan*) while

the rest of us are still here. That is not the way we should be looking at it! The perspective should be very different now: Hashem has changed His way of running the world.

On the external surface of our reality, there is an epidemic and all kinds of changes that came with it, but that is just the outer layer of what's taking place. It is because Hashem has changed His way of conducting the world.

If we're driving our car in a certain direction, we will end up in one place, and if we change directions, we will end up in a different place. If we drive north, we will see the views of the north, and if we drive south, we will see the southern views. In the same way, Hashem has changed gears, so to speak. He has changed all of the directions that we are used to and familiar with. Now we are seeing a whole different world than before.

Planning On Condition

We need a certain change of awareness now, and to act upon this change of perspective. We are not saying that you shouldn't make any plans at all. No, we need to make our plans and do what we can, we need to live and try to be normal. But, we just need to do all of our planning with a new change of perspective. In whatever planning we do, we must be aware that Hashem is running the world, and therefore our plans cannot happen unless Hashem wants them to happen.

One of our core beliefs of *emunah* is that we await Mashiach every day, even though he tarries. He can come any moment. If Mashiach comes today, we know that everything would change. We need to act upon that awareness right now. Whenever we make any kind of plans, we need to be aware of the following: If Mashiach doesn't come today, then we are

making our plans, but if Mashiach comes today, then our plans won't happen. In whatever you do, be aware that it can only happen if Mashiach doesn't come.

When the Chofetz Chaim made a wedding for his son, he said that the wedding depends on Mashiach's arrival or not. But he didn't just say on the invitation that if Mashiach comes, the wedding will take place in Yerushalayim, and if he doesn't come, then the wedding will be in Radin. No – he went even further than this. He wrote on the invitation, “The wedding shall take place in Yerushalayim. But if Mashiach doesn't come, it will be in Radin.” This was an example of a Jew who lived with the right perspective.

Certainly this way of living was always true, but now Hashem has made it obvious that we need to actually live like this, that all of our plans now are entirely up in the air and totally dependent on His will and on what He will or won't do.

In the past, if a person was planning a wedding, what were the chances that the wedding wouldn't happen? The chances of a wedding not taking place were very small. You planned a wedding and the wedding took place. But now, no one knows what will happen when they plan a wedding. The *chosson* is sick with the virus and maybe the *kallah* is sick too. The wedding plans don't completely happen. There are no wedding invitations being sent out, and those who do write invitations they write that the wedding will take place wherever Hashem will want it to be.

Forget about buying new shoes or new glasses for the upcoming wedding. Who knows if the wedding will happen at all! How much money, time, and thinking is spent on planning for a wedding. At least 300 or 400

invitations are sent out, and now it could be that in one moment all of these plans become nothing. People show up at the hall and find the hall closed, and even if the hall is open, the *chosson* doesn't always show up.

I am davening that the wedding which I plan to make soon for my son will be in the place that Hashem wills it to be in, and at the time that He wants it to be, and that everything should work out in the best possible way. Can I know for certain what will happen? There is no way to know anything for sure.

There's no such thing anymore as having planned for something because we should not expect our plans to happen at all. Instead of being disappointed when our plans don't happen, we need to realize from the start that we shouldn't have expected anything at all.

The New Era of Bitachon - Acting Upon Our Emunah That Hashem Runs The World

We must realize that we need to accept the entirely different way of living that Hashem has brought to the world now. There is a certain change of thinking that we need to live with now.

There is *emunah* (faith in Hashem) and there is *bitachon* (trusting in Hashem). The Ramban says that *emunah* is to know in our minds and to feel in our hearts that Hashem runs everything, and *bitachon* is to act upon that belief. We all knew and believed that everything could change in an instant, because Hashem runs the world - but did we act on that belief? Until a year ago, we knew and believed that Hashem could change everything, but we did not act upon that belief in our actual lives. Now is the time to act upon the belief that Hashem runs the world and that

Hashem can change everything in one second. That is *bitachon* – to actualize our *emunah*. Hashem has caused a change in the world now in which we have no choice but to believe in Him and trust Him.

First we need to change our thinking to begin with, and then we can act upon that change of perspective. We must therefore realize that all of our plans are made conditionally, and that all of our plans can only happen on condition that Hashem lets them happen. I am not talking about plans for the far-off future, like in ten years from now, but even about plans for next week.

There are advertisements for vacations to take place on certain dates in the calendar. Does anyone know what will be when those dates come? If anyone plans to go on any of these vacations, the right attitude should be that it's all up in the air, it is okay to assume that the vacation won't happen, and instead of being disappointed when it doesn't happen, a person should realize that he never should have expected his plans to materialize in the first place. If Hashem wants you to go on the vacation, it will happen, and if not, it won't happen. That is the attitude a person needs to have, if he wants to go on these vacations.

There is no more stability anymore. When things aren't consistent, we feel instability. Our soul naturally wants stability, we all crave stability and consistency, and if we don't have stability and consistency in our lives, it makes us feel like our lives are dysfunctional. That is the way our souls are designed – we thrive on stability. If nothing now in the world is certain anymore, then how can we feel the stability that our soul needs? How can we not lose our minds?

There is only one answer. The only stability we really have in life is the unchanging *emunah* that we need to have in Hashem, Who doesn't change. We cannot rely on our talents, abilities, money. An ill person or a person who gets the virus cannot be helped by his abilities or money, and he is totally dependent on Hashem.

I understand that people are not used to thinking like this. But this is not some idea or some lofty thought, it is Hashem's change that He has brought to the world, and He is showing us now how He wants us to live: to feel completely dependent on Him. This change will come upon everyone anyway – everyone will have to realize that Hashem runs everything, and even if a person doesn't accept it, he will be forced to accept it in the future. But if we are worthy (*zocheh*), then we make this change willingly.

Finding True Simchah

Adar is the month of increasing our *simchah*. The true *simchah* is not buying anything new that we need. Although we certainly get some joy when we buy new things, this cannot be the true meaning of *simchah*. True *simchah* is to be connected to Hashem's will, and to go with Him, and holding onto Him in the dark - to want what He wants.

The month of Adar is all about *v'nahafoch hu*, an upside down situation. We need to find the *simchah* in this overturned world that Hashem has brought. If we have the *simchah* in this situation of *v'nahafoch Hu*, when we are happy with the way Hashem is running the world right now, we will find true *simchah*, and then we take that *simchah* with us through the rest of the year.

There is more to say, but I hope that I have succeeded here in just bringing out this one point which I have come here to say. Each person on his or her own level should realize, that the world has changed! What was here before, is no longer here.

When a person looks at the situation today from a superficial perspective, all he sees is frustration, suffering, pain, disappointment, and instability. But if we view the situation from an internal perspective, we will see something else entirely. Instead of seeing the physical instability of the world today, we will see the true stability that we need to have, feeling completely dependent on Hashem – the only true stability that there is for us to connect to.

In Summary and In Conclusion

May Hashem help us to realize that all of our plans and hopes are dependent on His will, and that anything we want to do will only happen if He wants it to happen. All of our plans need to be made with the awareness that all our plans are up in the air, and that if Hashem wants our plans to happen, they will happen, and if the plans didn't happen, then we are fine with this, because that is what Hashem wanted! And that is how we can deeply connect to Hashem, and that is the complete *bitachon* to have in Hashem.

This is the true, complete way to prepare for the redemption (*Geulah*), may it happen quickly, today or tomorrow, with Hashem's help. Thank you for listening, and I hope that you benefitted from this.