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ROSH HASHANA

Right Place, Right Time: Living Rosh Hashana with Emunah

Emunah is the belief that Hashem has us in the exact right place, at the exact right time, for us. Not for anyone else, not by accident, not as a mistake of scheduling or circumstance. Where you are right now—that is where you are meant to be for your benefit.

Sometimes, that realization is pleasant. Things fall into place, our plans unfold smoothly, and we feel aligned with the life we imagined. Other times, it feels exactly the opposite. We end up in situations we never asked for, places that are uncomfortable, circumstances that seem to block us rather than help us. Those are the moments when frustration, disappointment, and even anger threaten to take over.

But emunah whispers otherwise. It tells us: this too is designed, tailor-made for you. Right

here is the greatest opportunity to live your avodat Hashem.

EVERYDAY TRAINING IN EMUNAH

On an ordinary day, this might look like getting stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic when you were “supposed” to be at work. Or the dinner you planned lovingly for your family burns in the oven, and you have to start over from scratch. The cashier’s register malfunctions, the line in the supermarket doesn’t move, and your patience is tested. A flat tire, a sick child at home, a meeting canceled at the last minute—the list goes on.

These are not just inconveniences. They are invitations. Hashem is quietly asking:

ועתה ישראל, מה ה' אלוךך שואל מעמך?

And now Israel, what does Hashem your God ask of you? (Devarim 10:12)

What does Hashem want from you in this moment, here and now?

Maybe the unexpected traffic means more time to call a loved one, to listen to a shiur, or simply to breathe. Maybe the burned dinner becomes a chance to laugh together as a family and make do creatively. Maybe the slow line at the supermarket becomes a test in patience, say a chapter of Tehillim, or even an opportunity to smile at someone else who is also waiting.

It is not about where you wanted to be. It is

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about where Hashem has placed you. That is the avodah of the moment.

ROSH HASHANA ON GUARD DUTY

This lesson became vivid for us the Rosh HaShanah right before the war broke out. My son, Binyamin, was assigned guard duty on an army base near the Egyptian border. Instead of being in yeshiva or at home with his family, he was standing watch with just a few other soldiers.

Guard duty meant something else too: no minyan. No chazzan leading the tefillot, no shofar blasts surrounded by hundreds of voices rising together. Just him and Hashem.

Binyamin could have tried to switch shifts. But his response to us was: it's Rosh HaShanah for everyone, and this is where Hashem placed me. So, he stood guard during his assigned hours. And when he finally sat down to daven alone, it became one of the most powerful prayers of his life.

Hours spent in private tefillah, uninterrupted, him and the Ribbono Shel Olam. He later told us it was one of the most spiritual experiences he had ever known. He had not only accepted his circumstances—he had maximized them. He won that moment, elevating it higher than he might have if everything had gone “according to plan.”

THE BIGGER PICTURE

These last few years have given us all a crash course in this lesson.

Covid closed the shuls, and suddenly dining rooms, porches, and backyards became sanctuaries. We discovered that Hashem can be found just as much in a whispered Amidah beside our children as in the grandeur of a full synagogue. Recently during war, sirens and rockets have interrupted prayers and meals, pushing families into safe rooms. Yet there, crammed together in anxiety and hope, voices of tefillah

rose from the depths of the heart.

But this is nothing new for parents with younger children. Mothers (and fathers) have stayed home from shul to care for children, feeling they were “missing out” and not in the “right atmosphere” for Yamim Noraim. As a new mother, I recall my friend Beth comforting me by saying “you take care of your children, and Hashem will take care of His”. In truth, home is exactly where Hashem wanted them, serving Him in the holiest of ways.

Each time, we thought we knew where we belonged. Each time, Hashem reminded us: “I am placing you exactly where you need to be.”

HASHEM'S PLAN, NOT OURS

We often measure our lives by what has “always been”:

I've always davened with a/minyan on Rosh HaShana. I've always hosted this meal, served these foods. I've always sat in this seat, followed this routine, kept this tradition, prepared like this, been with these people, etc.

But Hashem doesn't operate by our statistics. He doesn't calculate according to our “always.” His plan is infinitely deeper and wiser. Sometimes, His opportunities for us lie outside our comfort zones, outside our expectations, and outside our control.

That does not make them less holy. In fact, that often makes them more holy. Because it

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is in those moments—when our plans unravel and we stand face to face with His plan—that true emunah is born and true greatness is unleashed.

THIS ROSH HASHANA

As we approach Rosh HaShanah, the Day of Judgment, it's upon us to not only ask "Where do I want to go this year? Who do I want to become? What do I want to accomplish and achieve?"

But perhaps the deeper question is this:

Wherever Hashem places me, will I recognize it as the right place?

This Rosh HaShana, our avodah is not only to crown Hashem as King of the universe, but to accept Him as King over our personal moments. To believe that each detour, each frustration, each unplanned circumstance is not an obstacle, but an opening.

Hashem is asking of us: "What will you do with this moment I have given you?"

When we answer with grace, with patience, with creativity, with kindness, with tefillah, with faith—we transform the moment into eternity.

May we be written and sealed for a year of life, health, joy, clarity, kedusha, and unshakable faith in Hashem's plan- a year of witnessing with our very eyes בְּשׂוֹב ה' צִיּוֹן, with the Geulah Shelayma. ■

The **Airleys** have built **Beit Binyamin**, a retreat center in Tzfat for those directly affected by the war. Soldiers, Zaka members, security forces, bereaved families and widows can come for respite, relaxation and rejuvenation. For more information and to donate, visit Beitbinyamin.org

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