

# From the desk of Rabbi Baumann



Dear Parents,

*Erev Shabbos Parashas Tzav Shabbos HaGadol 5780*

Controlling panicky thoughts, handling emotional upsets and fighting off feelings of desperation seems harder at this time than we can ever remember. We tune in to inspirational messages and are uplifted – for the moment. What is needed is a paradigm shift – a way to look at the current situation with an entirely new perspective.

I received a short clip this week of *Rabbi Elimelech Biderman, Shlit'a of Eretz Yisroel*, telling over a story which

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captures how one's view of his situation can be upended in a very unexpected way. The story involves the great *Rebbes, brothers R' Elimelech and R' Zusha*. It happened once that the two were arrested and placed in jail. In their cell, there was a foul-smelling bucket that served as the bathroom facility. The *Rebbe R' Elimelech* started to cry. *R' Zusha* asked him why he was crying. *R' Elimelech* was incredulous. We can't daven, can't learn, we can't even think thoughts of *Kedusha* (holiness). Of course I'm crying!

*R' Zusha* asked him. Who put us in this situation? Our *Father in Heaven!* If so, it is His will that we don't learn and we don't daven. He's commanding us to not daven and to not learn. That means we have been given the opportunity to perform a rare *Mitzvah* – the *Mitzvah* of **not learning** and **not davening!** Furthermore, whenever one does a rare *Mitzvah*, for example, *Pidyon Petter Chamor*, (redeeming a first-born donkey) it's accompanied with music and dancing. Let us be *B'Simcha* over this rare *Mitzvah* opportunity!

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They began to dance, right there in the jail cell, around the pail, with great joy over their performance of the rare *Mitzvah*. Hearing a commotion, the warden came by and asked them what's going on? They didn't answer. He asked again and when he received no response, and observing that the bucket seemed to be the center of their focus and dancing, he grabbed the bucket and threw it away!

How helpful it would be to us, were we able to view our situation with the same set of glasses as *R' Zusha*. We are curtailed from experiencing so many familiar facets of our life and cannot go out to daven, to learn, to visit friends, to be with our extended family, to be secure in our *Parnassah*. We're stuck at home with the kids (and the kids are stuck at home with their parents!), *Pesach* plans eviscerated, scrambling to procure the basics necessary for normal life. Whose will is it that we are in this state of affairs? *Hashem's!*

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future truly lies.**

We have also been gifted with rare *Mitzvah* opportunities. All the seeming negatives we are experiencing are precisely what He wants us to be going through. We have opportunities to perform 'rare' *Mitzvos*; *Ahavas Yisrael* - through having (seemingly) infinite patience for children and spouse, *Tefilla* - davening on our own, slowly and carefully, *Limud HaTorah* - learning on our own amidst a chaotic or no schedule, *Hachana L'Pesach* – *Yom Tov* preparations, contending with seemingly

insurmountable obstacles, and *Bitachon* - ongoing trust in *Hashem* for our continued physical and material health.

Our children's sense of well-being and security is greatly dependent upon their parents' frame of mind. Rather than being merely swept along by the outside world's sense of anxiety and dread for the future, let us focus on the One in Whose hands we are being held right now, in Whose hands our future truly lies. He has designed our current situation down to the minutest of details for a purpose. What better way can there be for us and our children to react, than to strengthen our ties to and trust in our *Father in Heaven*. The extent to which we strive for this goal, will determine the magnitude to which *Simcha* will permeate our lives.

Best wishes for a wonderful *Shabbos* and an uplifting, *Simcha*-filled *Chag* of *Pesach*,

*Rabbi Kalman Baumann*