



# SHARING OUR DISTRESS

*How can the Yidden cope with the hardships of golus?*

*Rashbi explains, Rebbi Elazar expands, and we transform the darkness to light.*

There are several famous sayings of Rashbi. One of these is “בכל מקום שגלו, שכינה עמהן—Wherever Jews were exiled, the *Shechinah* is with them.”<sup>1</sup> Hashem and Yidden are not separated, us being in *golus* and Hashem in heaven. No, Rashbi says, Hashem is with a Jew always; thus, when Yidden are in exile, Hashem is there with them! Further, not only is He with them, but He also shares the sorrows of the exile, “בכל צרתם לא [לן] צר”—In all their troubles, He is troubled.” When a Jew is pained and distressed

by the exile, Hashem too is pained and distressed. And because Hashem partakes of our difficulties, the help Jews receive from Hashem is surely enough to overcome all difficulties.

Because Hashem shares in the sorrows of Yidden in *golus*, the redemption from that exile comes that much more quickly. As it says in Tehillim, “Not for our sake L-rd... but for the sake of Your Name... Why should the nations say, ‘Where, now, is their G-d?’”<sup>3</sup> If the nations of the world taunt Jews with the impotence of their G-d as evidenced by the fact that Jews suffer in *golus*, how much greater is the mockery when Hashem Himself suffers in the exile! And thus, surely Hashem brings the end of the *golus* quickly.

The knowledge that the *Shechinah* is also in *golus* should affect all Yidden, causing them to cry out from their

depths of their hearts, “How much longer!” When will the *geulah* come, when will Hashem leave the *golus*?!

Yes, Hashem is in *golus* with His people. But do not think that Hashem leaves the *golus* before the Jews, leaving them alone even for a minute. As Rashbi continues: “Wherever they are exiled the Divine Presence is with them. And when they are redeemed the Divine Presence is with them.”<sup>4</sup> Yidden—do not worry, says Rashbi. Every moment you are in *golus*, Hashem is with you; He will not leave *golus* before you, but shall go together with each and every one of you.

But even in *golus*, before the *geulah*, Jews will have light, both physical and spiritual—just as in the first exile in Egypt, where the Jews ceased to work as slaves, and “For all B’nei Yisroel there was light in their dwelling places.”<sup>5</sup>



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לזכות  
 הת' מנחם מענדל שיחי'  
 לרגל הגיעו לעול המצוות  
 וחי' מושקא שיחי'  
 לרגל הגיעה לגיל שתים-עשרה שנה,  
 היא עונת בת מצוה  
 נדפס ע"י הוריהם  
 הרה"ת ר' משה פינחס  
 ומרת עלקא שיחיו  
 וואלף

The relationship between Hashem and Yidden in *golus* is described in a parable given by Rebbi Elazar, Rashbi's son. On the *possuk* "When they [Yidden] shall be in the land of their enemies I will not reject them nor will I abhor them to destroy them,"<sup>6</sup> Rebbi Elazar said the following, "If a man loves a woman who lives in a street of tanners, [though] if she were not there he would never go into it (due to the foul smell), but because she is there it seems to him like a street of spice makers where all the sweet scents of the world are to be found. So too 'even when they are in the land of their enemies'—which is the street of tanners—'I will not reject them nor will I abhor them'..."<sup>7</sup>

The *nimshal* for this is: The Yidden in *golus* are like a person in "a street of tanners," a foul place. This itself teaches the qualities of a Yid: A Yid

does not become assimilated in *golus*, reconciled to his fate; since the exodus from Mitzrayim the Yid has been a free man, free of bondage to anyone but Hashem. A Yid is merely in a **street**, a public place, surrounded by a foul smell, the smell of exile, but he does not let it become part of him. He remains a Yid, free and proud.

Despite the foul smell, Rebbi Elazar says, Hashem is with Yidden; moreover, because Yidden are there, the exile seems to Hashem like "a street of spice makers where all the sweet scents of the world are to be found." For when Hashem sees that the Yidden, while in a "street of tanners," still observe Torah and mitzvos and educate their children in the same and even more intense spirit—i.e. they transform darkness into light—it is a "pleasant fragrance" to Him. The foul odors have not

deterred the Yidden from properly educating their children; instead, the harsh and unpleasant conditions of *golus* have called forth the innermost powers of parents to give their children a proper education. And such behavior, revealing the qualities of the Jewish people, hastens the *geulah* through *Moshiach tzidkeinu*.<sup>8</sup> **T**

1. Megillah 29a.  
 2. Yeshaya 63:9. Although the *passuk* is written as לא צר - He is **not** distressed, it is read as לו צר - it is painful **to Him**.  
 3. Tehillim 115:1  
 4. Megillah *ibid*.  
 5. Shemos 10:23  
 6. Vayikra 26:44  
 7. Zohar vol. 3, 115b  
 8. Adapted from sichas Lag B'Omer 5744 at the Parade