



SICHA – LAG B'OMER 5744-1984

*Free Translation**

Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai revealed a concept in Torah, which at first glance needs explanation:

We live in a world between many nations. And the situation is that “darkness covers the land”: the light of justice and righteousness has not yet reached some parts of the world; and some big parts of the world.

Specifically, those Jews who are behind the iron curtain, with their small children. They have great hardship in educating their children on the path that G-d wants them to: To learn Torah and fulfil the Mitzvot.

This is the greatest blessing and the greatest freedom for which we must consider ourselves lucky: Those parents who live in countries where there are no disturbances to educating children in G-d's path all year round. And the feeling is renewed on special “meritorious days,” when we resolve to add even more to the Jewish education of their children.

And to learn from the self-sacrifice of the Jews in those countries, who, regardless of the hardships, educate and bring up a generation who knows G-d.

And very soon, when G-d will free them, and bring them out from behind the iron curtain, we will see them present the “Army of G-d”: camps of Jewish boys and Jewish girls, who say “Modeh Ani” and the blessings and lead a Jewish life proudly.

This adds to the strength in educating children in the free countries. We learn not to consider the hardships, for even if there are hardships, they cannot be compared to the hardship “over there.” With self sacrifice we bring up proud boys and girls, proud of their Judaism.

The question may arise: How can it be done? There are neighbors and nations around us who scoff at us and say how can we educate children with something which is unrelated to making another dollar for we are teaching them Moshe's Torah, which was given thousands of

*) Taken from the Subtitles that appear on the screen



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years ago in a desert. Yet we teach it to a child as he is in these times and in these countries with everything that entails.

Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai says: "Wherever they are exiled, the Shechina is with them."

Not that, G-d forbid, a Jew is in exile, and G-d is in His palace in the heavens, and looks on from above at what is happening to a Jew down below, and blesses him.

Says Rabbi Shimon Ben Yochai—this is not the case! Rather, the situation is, that G-d finds himself where every single Jew is, and when a Jew is in exile, "God is with them." G-d is there together with him in that exile.

Not just as an observer, but "in all of their oppressions he is oppressed." And when a Jew feels oppressed by the exile, whether spiritually or even physically, G-d declares that he suffers the very same pains, the very same hardships, and the very same oppression. When "their pains" — the pains of Jews in exile, any exile, whether it is this one—Edom, or, the first exile, in Babylon— "in all of their pains, He is pained."

This allows us to appreciate how great G-d's assistance is to us in overcoming all hardships, for He takes upon Himself, so to speak, the very same hardships.

We can also understand G-d's effort, that the redemption will take place as soon as possible.

However, it is "in all of *their* pains" that "He is pained." A Jew must feel broken that he screams out: "Until when?! When will the redemption finally arrive, when will G-d finally leave exile and take all of us out, with Him and all the Jews will leave exile?"

Just as by the first exile in Egypt, even while they were still in exile, "for all the Jewish people it was light in their dwellings," and "the servitude stopped for the Jewish people" several months earlier, on Rosh Hashana So too, G-d blesses, that even while still in exile there is illumination for every Jew and all Jews; spiritually illuminated, and also physically.

In fact, Rabbi Shimon continues, one should not think that although G-d is in exile with us, He will go out some time before the Jewish people, or even a moment earlier.

Says Rabbi Shimon that the Jew can be certain that every single moment that he is in exile, not a moment before him does G-d leave the exile. On the contrary, "And G-d will return your captivity": G-d goes out of exile together with "your captivity"! When He redeems Jews, and sees that every Jew has left exile, then He Himself goes out of exile!

