

Flight of the Mashiach – Ki Teitzei

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כִּי יִקְרָא קוֹן צִפּוֹר לְפָנֶיךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ בָּכָל עֵץ אוֹ עַל הָאָרֶץ אֲפֻרְחִים אוֹ בִּיצִים וְהָאִם
רִבְצָת עַל הָאֲפֻרְחִים אוֹ עַל הַבִּיצִים לֹא תִקַּח הָאִם עַל הַבָּנִים. שְׁלַח תִּשְׁלַח אֶת הָאִם וְאֶת
הַבָּנִים תִּקַּח לָךְ לְמַעַן יִיטֵב לָךְ וְהִאֲרַכְתָּ יָמִים. (דברים כב, ו-ז)

Ki Teitzei is one of the easiest and one of the hardest parshiyot to give a shiur on. It is easy, on the one hand, because there are so many subjects to choose from (it is the single parsha in the Torah with the most mitzvot – seventy-four), but, on the other hand, it is the hardest because ... which of the many mitzvot does one choose to speak about?

In this shiur I would like to touch briefly on the mitzva of שְׁלִיחַ הָקָן. I say "touch briefly" because this is a *very deep concept* that we will not even begin to scratch the surface of in this shiur. It is also one of the least understood mitzvot in the Torah.

The psukim tell us "When you happen upon a bird's nest on the way, in any tree, or on the ground, in which there are chicks (baby birds) or eggs, and the mother is nestling over the chicks or the eggs, do not take (the chicks or the eggs) while the mother is still there. Send the mother bird away and then take the offspring, in order that you will be rewarded and will live a long life".

The many perushim on this mitzva bring 4 distinct "reasons" that this mitzva was given.

1. Preventing cruelty to animals, to not cause the mother bird anguish - Rambam (מורה נבוכים ג, מח), Sforno (דברים כב, ז).
2. Teach man not to be cruel and to elevate him spiritually to emulate HKB"H's מִדַּת הַרְחֻמִּים – Ramban, Rashbam, Chizkuni, R' Bachyei, Meiri (דברים כב, ז), Maharal (פרק ז), Sefer HaChinuch (אורות המצוות ב'), HaRav Kook (מצוה תקמ"ה).
3. To prevent the extinction of the species – Ramban, R' Bachyei, Sforno (דברים כב, ז), Sefer HaChinuch (מצוה תקמ"ה).
4. Bravery of the mother bird and reward מִדַּת כְּנָגֵד מִדָּה. The mother bird could have fled from the human, but did not, therefore she is rewarded and survives – Netziv (דברים כב, ז), (העמק דבר, דברים כב, ז).

The "elephant in the room" here is the question "If it is all about preventing cruelty to the bird, or cultivating a character trait of mercy in yourself, or preventing extinction of the species, etc. then wouldn't it simply be better to *move on* and not touch the nest in the first place?" That would be the height of mercy – you *wanted* the eggs/chicks, but restrained yourself!? Have you ever seen pigeon eggs? (one of the kosher birds - שְׁלוּיַת הָקָן only applies to kosher birds), they are tiny, not something you could make a meal out of, neither pigeon chicks – they are tiny birds. At a stretch it could be considered a "nosh", nothing more – certainly not a meal and not the difference between starving or not.

This question is asked by the Chatam Sofer (אורח חיים), שו"ת חתם סופר, who says if you don't need the eggs or the chicks, then don't take them at all, because taking them if you don't need them - is cruel.

From the above it emerges that there are two main approaches regarding שְׁלוּיַת הָקָן. Is it a chiyuv, i.e a mitzva we are commanded to do? or is it a reshut, something we can do if we like? The answer to this question has a direct נִפְקָא מִינָא לְהַלְכָה.

This is a machloket Acharonim.

On the one side we have the (שו"ת חוות יאיר סימן סז) חו"ת יא"ר, the חכ"ם (חידושי רעק"א על יו"ד סימן רצב) רבי עקיבא אֵיגֶר and (שו"ת חכם צבי סימן פג) צְבִי who pasken that it is a chiyuv to perform this mitzva, *even if we don't need the eggs*. The חכ"ם צְבִי is medayek that the chiyuv is davka on sending away the mother and that taking the eggs is not a chiyuv, unlike the חו"ת יא"ר and רעק"א who say the chiyuv is on both parts.

On the other side we have the (שו"ת חת"ס, או"ח סימן ק') חת"ס סוֹפֵר and the (יו"ד סימן קעה) חו"ת יא"ר who say that if you do not need the eggs or the chicks you have no chiyuv to chase the mother away.

The Gemara (חולין קלט, ע"ב) makes one clear distinction, this mitzva applies when you "happen upon" a birds' nest, כִּי יִקְרָא קֹן צִפּוֹר לִפְנֵיךָ. The Torah does not tell you to *actively go out looking* for birds' nests to perform this mitzva.

This is the kind of mitzva that HKB"H presents to you when He deems necessary. Either you are on the road (שֶׁטַח הַפֶּקֶר) and happen to see a nest, or even if you happen to see a bird building a nest in the garden of your house. (Halachic nuance: to perform this mitzva, the nest has to be הַפֶּקֶר, therefore to perform this mitzva in your own garden, you first have to declare that you have no need for the nest or its contents, thus making it הַפֶּקֶר, otherwise the nest, being in your garden, is your property and not הַפֶּקֶר).

One point of note is the incredible reward one gets for performing the mitzva of שלוח הקן - למען ייטב לך והארבת ימים. Only twice does the Torah specify the reward for performing a mitzva that it will lengthen your life – with כבד את אביך ואת אמך למען יארכיו ימך (שמות כ, - כבוד אב ואם and שלוח הקן (יא. The Gemara (קידושין לט, ע"ב) says that although they both have the same reward, שלוח הקן is an "easy" mitzva to perform while כבוד אב ואם is "hard".

In this shiur we will attempt to understand the logic behind the shita (חוות) that שלוח הקן is a chiyuv, a mitzva that you would actively want to perform, even though you do not need the eggs or chicks. It is a deep perush based on the Zohar, which goes far beyond birds and eggs.

The Zohar (פרשת בלק, חלק ג, קצו, ע"ב) asks why the king of Moav was named בן ציפור? בלק בן ציפור? Who cares what his father's name was? Why does the passuk specifically add the words בן ציפור?

This is a *major shita* of the Zohar, not only in parshat Balak, but in other places as well, as we will soon see.

The Zohar (ibid.) says the entire episode detailed in parshat Balak took place in the first place because of the words בן ציפור. Balak saw by prophecy that he was going to have a son who is a ציפור. The Zohar brings an incredible perush that the word ציפור is - a **pseudonym for Mashiach!**

The Zohar paints a dazzling picture of what goes on in Heaven –

"There are three 'rows' in Gan Eden and between each one there are many neshamot that stroll about and enjoy the fragrances and the delights of the Tzaddikim who are inside the Garden, even though these neshamot have not merited to enter.

And there are special days in the year, the days of Nisan and Tishrei, when these neshamot wander about and are sent to the place where they are needed. They hover *above* the rows of the Garden, each one like birds chirping every morning.

Their 'chirping' is praise for HKB"H, prayers for the lives of all human beings in this world, since on these special days Am Yisrael are preoccupied with HKB"H's mitzvot. Above the rows of Gan Eden they chirp in joy, sing praise, give thanks, and pray for the lives of those in this world.

Then HKB"H shows them a hidden, concealed palace called קן צפור where they don crowns in preparation for the arrival of Mashiach.

And the Tzaddikim in the Garden are called 'שְׂנֵי מַזְבְּחוֹת', as they have acquired both תּוֹרָה שֶׁבִּכְתָּב and תּוֹרָה שֶׁבִּעֲלֵפֶה in this world and the merit of their children in this world protects them and gives them crowns in Gan Eden".

According to the Zohar's shita - צִיפּוֹר in the Torah alludes to both Mashiach and the Beit HaMikdash.

Some additional examples. In parshat Metzora we learn about the purification process for leprosy. The Gemara (סנהדרין צח, ע"ב) likens the Mashiach to a Metzora (this analogy is the subject for a different shiur). The purification of a Metzora involves two birds וְלָקַח לְמִטְהָר שְׁתֵּי צִפֹּרִים חַיּוֹת טְהוֹרוֹת (ויקרא יד, ד). The Or HaChaim (ibid.) says this is referring to the two Mashiachs (ben Yosef and ben David) and he quotes another Zohar (בלק מ"ז, תקד) –

"And on the day when the star is created (or, according to another version, 'is concealed'), Eretz Yisrael will be shaken for forty-five mil (22.5km) around the place where the Beit HaMikdash once stood. And one cave beneath the earth will be revealed. From that cave a powerful fire will emerge to consume the world. And from that cave there will emerge a great, exalted bird that will rule over the entire world, and מַלְכוּת will be given to him. And the angels above will gather around him. Then מְלֶךְ הַמַּשִּׁיחַ will be revealed throughout the entire world".

Another example. The Zohar (חלק ח, קצב, ע"א) says that the birds who ate the breads from the basket of the שֵׁר האֹפִים were the nations that destroyed the Beit HaMikdash.

Another example. The Shach (שפתי כהן בראשית מ, יז) says that the gematria of וְהָעוֹף אָכַל אֶתֶם מִן הַסֵּל מֵעַל רֹאשִׁי (בראשית מ, יז) is the same as וְהָהוּא אֲדוֹנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַשִּׁיחַ בֶּן יוֹסֵף וְעֵתִיד לִיהְרֹג.

Another example: In the parsha of בְּרִית בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים, Pirkei d'Rebi Eliezer (פרק כח) compares an eagle to Mashiach ben David, וַיֵּרֶד הָעֵיט עַל הַפְּגָרִים (בראשית טו, יא).

Another example. In parshat Noach, he sends the עוֹרֵב to check if the water had receded. The Zohar (זוהר חדש, פרשת נח, קלד) says that the עוֹרֵב is Mashiach ben David and the יוֹנָה is Mashiach ben Yosef.

Based on the above, let us try now to understand, according to the shita of the Zohar, what the deeper reason is behind the mitzva of שְׁלוּחַ הַקֶּן.

In another place (זוהר חדש רות, צד, ע"ב) the Zohar HaKadosh explains –

"When the mother bird is driven from her nest, what does she say? 'Oy that I have destroyed my home, burnt my sanctuary and exiled my children amongst the nations!'

This cry causes HKB"H to have pity, because this is the only way to arouse this mercy. Therefore, HKB"H cries for His children. This is why it is written *שְׁלַח תְּשַׁלַּח אֶת הָאֵם*, *שְׁלַח* *שְׁלַח*, two *שְׁלַח* *שְׁלַח*, corresponding to Bayit Rishon and Bayit Sheini. *שְׁלַח* *שְׁלַח* – even a hundred times. So that the mother keeps returning to her chicks out of love for her children. *שְׁלַח*, even a hundred times until he [the person doing the mitzva of *שְׁלַח הַקָּן*] destroys the nest and takes the chicks in order to receive reward for this mitzva. Mercy may only be aroused in this manner.

And the mother bird, when she is driven from her children and flies away, continuously chirps [cries out] and doesn't know where to go and resolves to end her life. And HKB"H, about Whom it is written *וְיִרְחַמֵּנוּ עַל כָּל מַעֲשָׂיו*, even on a small mosquito – His mercy is on everything. And the guardian angel of that mother bird pleads with HKB"H.

Then HKB"H's mercy is aroused for His children."

According to the Zohar, the reason for *שְׁלַח הַקָּן* is the *opposite* of the other perushim above, it is not to *prevent* anguish to the mother bird, but *davka to cause her anguish!* This anguish arouses HKB"H's mercy for His children, for the nest that He left (the Beit HaMikdash) and the exile he decreed on his children amongst the nations. It evokes a longing in HKB"H (*kiveyachol*) for the Geulah and for a return of the mother bird (HKB"H) to His children. This mitzva does not emanate from mercy, but seeks to *arouse mercy* through suffering.

According to the Zohar, therefore, the entire purpose of the mitzva of *שְׁלַח הַקָּן* is to hasten the Geulah, the arrival of Mashiach and the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash.

The passuk *גַּם צָפוּר מְצָאָה בֵּית וְדָרוֹר קָן לָהּ אֲשֶׁר שָׂתָה אֶפְרָחֶיהָ אֶת* hints to the two Batei Mikdash. *גַּם* hints to the two Batei Mikdash. *גַּם* in gematria (with the *כּוֹלֵל*) is 420, the number of years Bayit Sheini stood. *צָפוּר* in gematria is 410, the number of years Bayit Rishon stood (*רבינו אפרים על* (התורה, כי תצא כב, ו ד"ה קן צפור).

We find a number of direct hints to this in the psukkim of *שְׁלַח הַקָּן* in our parsha.

We already discussed the reason for the repetition *שְׁלַח תְּשַׁלַּח אֶת הָאֵם*, two *שְׁלַח* *שְׁלַח*, corresponding to Bayit Rishon and Bayit Sheini. The lashon of *שְׁלַח*

is also central regarding sending Eliyahu Hanavi to herald the arrival of Mashiach הנה אנכי שלח לכם את אליה הנביא לפני בוא יום ה' הגדול והנורא (מלאכי ג, כג).

R' Eliezer Halevi Horowitz notes that the passuk says שלח תשלח את האם, (twice) send the "אם", the letters alef and mem. These two letters represent the Mashiach "pairs" throughout history. For example, אהרן/מש, אסתר/מרדכי, and נועם מגדים וכבוד התורה, פרשת שלח לך ד"ה וע"ד אמרם בפי' שלח (אליהו/משיח (תשלח).

If you perform the mitzva שלח תשלח את האם, hastening the Geulah, you will merit ואת הבנים תקח לך – you will get (twice) לך to match the (twice) שלח. What is twice לך? The command given to Avraham Avinu - לך לך. A hint in the passuk that if you do שליח תקן, you will merit all the blessings promised to Avraham Avinu. Amazingly, the gematria שלח תשלח את האם ואת הבנים תקח לך is the same gematria as כי ברוך אברכה וחרבה ארבה כי ברוך אברכה וחרבה ארבה is למען ייטב לך והארכת ימים את זרעך בכוכבי השמים וכחול אשר על שפת הים... (בראשית כב, יז)

The rashei teivot of קן צפור are קץ, referring to the Geulah.

We brought the Zohar (above) that there is a special place in Gan Eden called היכל קן צפור where the neshama of Mashiach is kept. R' Chaim Vital (ארבע מאות שצף קצף, עמ' רמא) says do not think for a moment that Mashiach is a supernatural being that comes down from Heaven. Mashiach is mortal and born of man and woman. However, when the time of the Geulah arrives, HKB"H will supplement his neshama with extra powers from the neshama of Mashiach in היכל קן צפור. Just like Moshe Rabbeinu was born a mortal man, but when it came time to redeem Am Yisrael, HKB"H gave him a "neshama yeteira" which transformed him into משה איש הא-לקים. This extra neshama of Mashiach has ניצוצות of David HaMelech, which is why he will be called - Mashiach ben David.

David HaMelech composed sefer Tehilim which has 150 mizmorim in it, gematria קן.

The rashei teivot of the passuk כי יקרא קן צפור לפניך בדרך בכל עץ או על הארץ אפרחים או ביצים והאם רבצת על האפרחים או על הביצים לא תקח האם על הארץ אפרחים או ביצים והאם רבצת על האפרחים או על הביצים in gematria is (א, א) referring to the two mizbechot (see above) in the Beit HaMikdash (Rashi, ibid.)

In this shiur we have attempted to ascend to high places and comprehend concepts that are רחבים מני ים. In truth, we could have saved ourselves the trouble, because instead of us ascending on high, during the month of Elul, HKB"H descends and walks among us mamash. We have a unique opportunity for just under a month, in that we have HKB"H's "ear", listening intently (kiveyachol) to what emanates from our mouths.

If we use this opportunity wisely, like the birds chirping in joy, singing praise, giving thanks, and praying for the lives of those in this world, then it will be time well spent. We need to make a special effort to guard our mouth that nothing negative comes out of it, especially in these challenging times of strife and elections. The gematria of **שְׁמוֹר אֶת פִּי** is **כִּי יִקְרָא קֹן צְפוֹר לְפָנֶיךָ**.

Once you have read this shiur, you will never listen to the chirping of birds in the same way again. The Zohar (פרשת פנחס, חלק ג, רכח א) calls the conversations of angels - **צִיּוֹץ הָעוֹפוֹת**.

The chirping of a bird has the power to tip the scales and bring the Geulah.

If you want to read more about the practical halachot regarding the mitzva of **שְׁלוּחַ הַקֹּן**, you may do so in the Shulchan Aruch (יורה דעה, סימן רצב). The idea is not to go out actively looking for birds' nests. The passuk says **כִּי יִקְרָא קֹן** **לְפָנֶיךָ**, HKB"H is "mezamen" the birds' nests to the specific people He wants to, at the times He wants to. For those lucky/worthy enough to merit performing this mitzva, a huge responsibility and the fate of the Geulah rests on your shoulders.

I will leave you with a final gematria, make of it what you will. The gematria of **תִּשְׁפִּיזוּ אֶלַף הַשִּׁישִׁי** is also the gematria of **שְׁלַח תִּשְׁלַח אֶת הָאֵם**.

Shabbat Shalom

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