



Bird's Blessings

“*Ki yakarei kan tzipor lifanecha ...shalech teshalach es ha-eim...* - if you come across a bird's nest...you must first **send** away the mother ...” (*Devarim 22*). The midrash states that one who fulfills this mitzvah will hasten the coming of Eliyahu Hanavi [to herald the Mashiach's arrival] about whom the word ‘**sending**’ is written, “*Hinei anochi sholeach lachem es Eliyahu Hanavi* – Behold, I shall **send** you Eliyahu the prophet.” (*Malachi 3:23*). Clearly, there is a connection between these two ideas that we must understand.

Rabbeinu Bechaye, based on the *Zohar Hakadosh*, explains that this mitzvah is meant to awaken and intensify Hashem's mercy on His creations. When one sends away the mother bird, she cries with such pain that she wants to kill herself. The angel of the birds begs Hashem for mercy, as He is merciful to all His creations. At that

moment, Hashem, as it were, says, “Who will have mercy on My children that are without a home?” Hashem Himself then extends an outpouring of His mercy to alleviate the suffering of all those in exile.

Indeed, the cry of a mother for her children, or of a woman who yearns for children, is one of the main motifs of Rosh Hashanah, notes Rav Schlesinger in *Eleh Heim Moadai*. On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, we read about Sara Imeinu's pain in childlessness, Hagar who cried at the plight of her child, and Chana who longed to have children. On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, we read about the birth of Rivka Imeinu, and the Haftorah about Rachel Imeinu crying for her children. The sound of the Shofar recalls the cries of Sisera's mother waiting for her son to return from battle. The power of a mother's cries is a mighty force to arouse mercy from Above, and for Hashem to grant compassion to His people.

Rav Bick in *Chayei Moshe* comments on

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the language of the mitzvah, “*Ki yikarei* -if you come across,” i.e., if you “happen upon” a bird’s nest. One must recognize that nothing in life is happenstance, rather opportunities to do mitzvot present themselves to give us merit. When we can integrate this level of faith, intimately feeling Hashem’s deep and close guidance, we bring the redemption closer.

There are many mystical ideas linked to this mitzvah, writes Rav Friedman in *Shivlei Pinchas*. The *Zohar Hakadosh* teaches that the place where Mashiach is waiting to reveal himself is referred to as “*kan tzipor* – a bird’s nest.” Thus, the acronym “*keitz*,” literally meaning “end”, is the word we use to express the redemption. Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz notes that there are 150 chapters in Tehillim, the numerical value of “*keitz*”; reciting Tehillim is a *segulah* to bring Mashiach.

Rav Pincus in *Zera Shimshon* notes that in addition to bringing redemption closer, the mitzvah of *shiluach haken* is a *segulah* for one to have children. Indeed, the two are strongly interconnected. Mashiach will only come when all the souls leave the “*guf*”, the place where all souls are waiting in heaven. Each time a child is born, the redemption is brought one step closer. Rachel Imeinu is the quintessential mother crying for her children, “*al beneha ki einenu.*” She yearns, so to speak, for all the *neshamot* to be born. “*Vehabanim tikach lach* – and then you may take the young,” refers to the *neshamot* being taken from their storehouse down to this world to hasten the Final Redemption, may it come speedily in our days. ■



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