



## TORAH 4 TEENS

BY TEENS NCSY ISRAEL



**YAFIT ATLAS - CHAI GIRLS  
BEIT SHEMESH DIRECTOR**

Amidst all the mitzvot outlined in this week's parsha, we encounter one that appears almost too intuitive to require mention:

"When you build a new house, you shall make a fence for your roof, so that you do not bring bloodguilt on your house if a fallen one falls from it." (Devarim 22:8)

Isn't it logical that one should not create a situation in which someone could easily fall? If no word or even letter in the Torah is irrelevant or misplaced, why do we need to be told such an obvious idea?

The Slonimer Rebbe teaches that this week's parsha is always read in the month of Elul to teach us something vital as we prepare ourselves for the upcoming Chaggim. Elul is an introspective time in which we set goals for ourselves, reflect on the past year, and evaluate how we can reach our fullest potential in the coming one. Oftentimes, the list of goals and character traits we wish to improve spans

pages, moving from one lofty aspiration to another. While this influx of inspiration is an important part of growth, these goals are not always tangible, and setbacks are inevitable.

This is precisely why, when we look more closely at the pasuk, we are struck by the phrasing: "If a fallen one falls from it." The Slonimer Rebbe points out that this indicates a fall is inevitable, since they are already a "fallen one." During growth, we might find ourselves building a "new house," a new version of ourselves so far removed from where we presently are that we rise too quickly. Without a "fence" to safeguard us, we inevitably fall.

Anyone who has experienced such a setback on their path to growth might even ask, "If the fallen one will fall anyway, why even try?" This is precisely why this pasuk must be mentioned during Elul. Lofty goals are beautiful, but they can also be elusive. This Elul, as we set personal goals, we should make them attainable and establish safeguards against the inevitable return of old habits. With this approach, instead of stumbling, we can keep moving forward, step by step, toward lasting growth.

Shabbat Shalom.



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In this week's parsha, Parshat Ki Teitzei, we encounter many mitzvot; in fact, it's the parsha with the most mitzvot in the Torah. One mitzvah that seems minor is **Shiluach**

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**HaKen**-sending away the mother bird before taking her young.

What's surprising is that the Torah promises a reward for this mitzvah: longevity. There is only one other mitzvah for which the Torah explicitly mentions a reward: **Kibbud Av Va'Em**-honoring one's parents. At first glance, these mitzvot seem completely different. As the Gemara in Kiddushin teaches, Kibbud Av Va'Em is a tremendously difficult and demanding mitzvah, while Shiluach HaKen is relatively easy. So why do they share the same reward?

The answer lies in their unexpected nature. Many mitzvot are planned and prepared for in advance, but Kibbud Av Va'Em and Shiluach HaKen often appear spontaneously. A person may be walking down the road and suddenly see a bird's nest, or suddenly face a situation requiring immediate respect and care for a parent.

The month of Elul is a time to prepare our hearts for Rosh Hashanah. Just as we examine our deeds and refine our intentions this month, these mitzvot teach us to respond to life's unexpected opportunities with care, respect, and joy. They test our sensitivity, spontaneity, and love of Hashem. By fulfilling them wholeheartedly, we not only merit their reward but also strengthen our daily commitment to Torah and mitzvot. ■

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