

Date: 7 Elul 5786 (August 20, 2026)

Torah Portion: Ki Tetze

Topic: Compassion and Unity, Part 3

This also explains the Midrashic connection between *shiluach hakein* and the release of an Yisraelite bondservant. Possessing a bondservant creates a serious moral challenge. Although the Torah repeatedly requires the master to remember the servant's dignity and brotherhood, differences in wealth, independence, and social position can gradually create emotional distance. The master may begin by recognizing his servant as a brother who has fallen into hardship, but over time he may increasingly see him merely as a servant.

That distance is dangerous. The longer the relationship continues, the easier it becomes for the master to focus upon his own superiority and convenience rather than the servant's hardship. Eventually, when the time for release arrives, the temptation may arise to resist surrendering the benefits of the servant's labor. Yirmiyahu 34 records the tragic consequences when the people failed precisely in this responsibility.

But the person shaped by *shiluach hakein* has been trained differently. He has learned that power must be restrained by compassion. If the Torah teaches him to recognize the bond between a mother bird and her young, how much more must he recognize the bond between himself and a fellow member of Yisrael. Social status cannot erase brotherhood. Poverty cannot erase brotherhood. Servitude cannot erase brotherhood.

Thus one mitzvah prepares him for another. The person who can *send away* the mother bird with compassion becomes the kind of person who can eventually *send away* his bondservant in freedom. The three rewards identified by the Midrash are therefore united by one underlying principle: Release that leads to restored relationship.

The mother bird is released rather than exploited.

The bondservant is released rather than permanently possessed.

Eliyahu comes to heal relationships fractured by separation.

Moshiach gathers scattered Yisrael and restores the Davidic kingdom.

Yerushalayim receives her children again and consoles them like a mother gathering them to her breast.

What begins beside a small nest along the road ultimately points toward the healing of an entire people. The mitzvah of *shiluach hakein* teaches that Redemption is not disconnected from the small choices of everyday life. The world of Moshiach is a world of restored bonds, but those bonds begin to be restored whenever a person refuses cruelty, restrains selfishness, recognizes another creature's vulnerability, and chooses compassion.

In this sense, the person who sends away the mother bird does more than fulfill an isolated commandment. He practices, in miniature, the very qualities of the future Redemption. He chooses compassion over indifference, connection over separation, and brotherhood over superiority.

And because he strengthens unity within YHWH's creation, measure for measure he becomes worthy of the ultimate consolation—the coming of Eliyahu, the gathering of Yisrael, the restoration of Yerushalayim, and the establishment of the Davidic kingdom under Moshiach.

Thus the promise attached to this seemingly modest mitzvah takes on extraordinary significance: “So that it will be good for you and prolong your days.” A small act of compassion beside a bird's nest becomes a lesson in how the world itself moves from exile toward Redemption.

Shalom.