



From the desk of
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Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

TORAT

Parashat Emor

HAMELECH

Both in One Day

We are instructed in this week's *parashah* not to slaughter a mother animal and its child on the same day. Targum Yonatan explains that Hashem is saying to us that just as He is compassionate, so must we be. Zohar HaKadosh also explains this mitzvah that it is to prevent us from being cruel.

Ramban (Devorim 22:6) discusses the mitzvah of sending away the mother bird before taking the eggs or the young birds. He mentions there as well this mitzvah of not slaughtering mother and child on the same day. He explains that both mitzvot were given to us so that we do not become cruel people. Sefer HaChinuch (#294) says this as well.

Gemara Bava Metzia 32b discusses the prohibition banning inflicting pain upon wildlife. Is it a Torah prohibition or is it Rabbinically proscribed? This matter is disputed by the Sages, the majority of whom insist that it is a Torah prohibition. That is the bottom line Halacha.

Of Birds and Beasts

The Ramban (ibid.) asks from Berachot 33b – where we are told that one who prays to Hashem

and says: "Just as You have had compassion upon the birds (as You commanded us to send away the mother before taking the child), so too, have compassion upon us," we are to silence him. Why? One answer given is because this person is making mitzvot out to be indications of Hashem's compassion while in truth they are decrees.

This seems to be saying that the mitzvah of *shiluach haken* was not given for the sake of compassion?

Ramban answers that Hashem did not give us the mitzvah so that the birds will be properly tended to. Rather He gave us the mitzvah so that we do His mitzvot and at the same time, we acquire within ourselves positive character traits. If Hashem really cared about birds and animals to the utmost degree, then He would not permit the slaughtering and eating of them altogether. That is certainly not true. Animals and birds were created, partially, to provide people with nutritious meals. At the same time, Hashem gave us guidelines as to how to go about making them suitable for human consumption; in a way which trains us to be compassionate and not cruel.



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Be Nice

Many sources teach that we are to strive to be compassionate and merciful. The three hallmark attributes of a fine Jew are compassion, generosity and bashfulness (Yevamot 79a). One who is compassionate upon others invites Heavenly compassion upon himself (Shabbat 151b). One who is compassionate upon the needy, Hashem will have compassion towards him (Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 247:3). Be similar to Hashem: He is gracious and compassionate, so shall you strive to be (Shabbat 133).

The Mitzvot Train

A number of mitzvot teach us to be nice to animals. The classic example is the mitzvah to help unload a laden animal (Bava Metziah 32b). Sefer HaChinuch (#451) explains the mitzvah of *shechitah* with a non-serrated knife, at the neck, as that is a less painful way to kill the animal.

Three times the Torah tells us not to seethe a kid in its mother's milk. Ramban (Devarim 14:21) explains that it is cruel to milk a mother animal and use that very milk to cook the mother's little

kid. By extension, it is some degree of cruelty to use any animal milk to cook any animal.

When we slaughter a kosher wild animal of a bird, we cover its blood. Sefer HaChinuch (#187) explains that this also helps us uproot the trait of cruelty, for the blood is the soul and we are to cover the blood before partaking of the flesh.

Another such example is the prohibition of *eiver min hachai*, that is, partaking of flesh of an animal which was removed from the animal during its lifetime. Here as well, the Chinuch (#452) explains that doing so would train us in cruelty.

There are numerous mitzvot which train us in compassion and help us avoid being cruel.

Qualified Leaders

How does Hashem choose His leaders for His People? He tests them on animals. Hashem was very impressed with how David Hamelech took care of the sheep. First he let the young ones eat the soft grass. Then he let the old ones eat the medium grass. Only then did he allow the strong one to eat the hard growths which only their teeth had the strength to attack. Hashem looked



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at this and said, "If this is how you take care of these sheep, come take care of My sheep."

Also Moshe Rabbeinu was, at first, a shepherd. One kid ran away and Moshe followed it until it reached a stream and began drinking. Moshe said to it, "You must be tired," and carried it on his shoulders. Here, too, Hashem said, "You have compassion upon your flock. Come take care of My flock."

Rebbi and the Weasel

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi once told a calf to go to be slaughtered as that was a fulfillment of its purpose in creation. Even though he was correct, his lack of compassion for this calf which came to take refuge under his cloak, was the cause of thirteen years of suffering. When did Rebbi's suffering cease? When his maid was sweeping out the weasel family and Rebbi told her to leave them alone!

The Rabbi and the Cat

Rav Yitzchak Elchanan Spector was once vacationing in a summer resort when he met up with none other than Reb Yaakov Lipshitz who was headed back to town. Rav Yitzchak Elchanan

asked Reb Yaakov to do him a favor, "There's a cat I always feed. I give him a plate of milk every day. Please feed the cat for me until I will return."

Rav Ovadiah and the Bird

Rav Ovadiah Yosef once did the mitzvah of *shiluach hakein*. He then looked at the mother bird and told her, "I am sorry for the pain I caused you. You and I both must do the will of our Creator. This is one of the mitzvot which Hashem commanded. You now have a part in this great mitzvah."

It was amazing to watch as this *Gadol* attempted to appease the bird.

Feed the Birds

Reb Chaim Pilagi writes that one who is ill should make a point of feeding the birds. This show of compassion can arouse Heavenly compassion for a speedy recovery.

So we have seen how important it is to be nice to all of Hashem's creations. Let us follow Hashem's compassionate ways, rendering us worthy recipients of all goodness.

Shabbat Shalom Umevorach,
Mordechai Malka