



## THE POWER OF LOVE

Erev Shabbos Parashas Ki-Seitzei 5782

Dear Parents,

The unique *Mitzvah* of *Shiluach Hakan*, sending the mother bird away when taking her young, brings with it the promise that one who fulfills the *mitzvah* will merit to have children of his or her own. (*Midrash Rabba Devarim 6:6*) What connection is there between the two? One explanation is that by preserving the species of this bird, by not destroying mother and offspring at the same time, but allowing the mother to continue to procreate, one is rewarded by their own continuity – in the form of children and future generations.

“...this bird does not fly away ... because of her overriding love for her children....”

There is perhaps a deeper message, that has great relevance for us. In *Oznaim LaTorah*, (*Devarim 22:7*) *HaRav Zalman Sorotzkin zt”l* explains that when one approaches a nest filled with chicks or eggs and the mother is hovering nearby, she is exercising tremendous power. The natural tendency of a bird is to fly away when a human being approaches. The reason this bird does not fly away is because of her overriding love for her children, which overpowers her natural instinct of self-preservation. In this instance the Torah forbids us from exploiting the mother bird’s love, which renders her vulnerable to our capture.

According to this interpretation, the *mitzvah* of sending the mother bird away is showing high regard for the powerful maternal instinct and has as its reward the opportunity to shower such love on one’s own children. The connection between appreciating and respecting the love between parent and child on the one hand, and the opportunity to become a parent oneself, highlights what is perhaps the central feature of what it means to be a parent.

“...feeling genuine love for our children, is perhaps the most important factor in the children’s success...”

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Love of a parent for a child may be instinctual and occurs fairly naturally. But deepening the love and demonstrating that love takes work. A person develops greater love for the one they give to and sacrifice for, much more than for the people from whom they receive kindnesses. (*Michtav Me’Eliyahu Koach HaNesina - Rav Dessler*) This explains why parents love their children more than children love their parents. Why one parent can take care of 10 children but it’s hard for 10 children to take care of one parent!

Speaking practically, we need to realize that feeling genuine love for our children, and showing it (even when it’s difficult like it is for the mother bird) is perhaps the most important factor in the children’s success. *Baalei Mussar* explain that to the extent a person recognizes the greatness of another, to that extent will he be able to do *Chessed* for him. *Rabbi Shlomo Goldberg*, (*Al Pi Darcho p.300*) gives this *moshol*: Imagine the *Rambam* would walk into the room right now and ask for a glass of water. Everyone present would rush to try to be the one to serve the great *Rambam*. If, however, our three-year old would walk in and ask for a glass of water, the motivation level would be vastly reduced. Why is that so? A *chesed* is a *chesed*, is it not?!

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The difference is that we recognize the *Rambam's* greatness, so the *chesed* is a special opportunity and an honor. Our three-year-old is just a three year old, making yet another request. We don't rush to do the *chesed*, perhaps because he has not yet demonstrated his greatness, so it's harder to be excited about performing the *chesed* for him. We see from here that the more we value the child before us, which is an outgrowth of our love for him, the more we develop the strength and desire to do real *chesed* for him – the ability to love him unconditionally.

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Our children present us with many challenges, frustrations and disappointments. And yet we are the very ones who have the ability to help them overcome struggles and achieve success. They need to feel our love. They need to know that we will value them, respect them and love them no matter what. The love they feel from us is the fuel that will propel them forward. When they mess up they need to be straightened out, but always balanced by the unconditional love. A child who grows up confident that his parent's love is guaranteed will be empowered to strive for great things, work hard and persevere when obstacles present themselves.

May we take the lesson from the mother bird and commit to always be there for our children. *Hashem's* message here is that the essence of being a parent is the true love we have for our children.

Have a wonderful *Shabbos*,

Rabbi Kalman Baumann

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