

Kol Rina  
*An Independent Minyan*  
Parashat Ki Teitzei  
August 26, 2023 \*\*\* 9 Elul, 6783

Ki Teitzei in a Nutshell

[https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/2286/jewish/Ki-Teitzei-in-a-Nutshell.htm](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/2286/jewish/Ki-Teitzei-in-a-Nutshell.htm)

The name of the Parshah, "Ki Teitzei," means "when you go out," and it is found in Deuteronomy 21:10.

Seventy-four of the Torah's 613 commandments (mitzvot) are in the Parshah of Ki Teitzei. These include the laws of the beautiful captive, the inheritance rights of the firstborn, the wayward and rebellious son, burial and dignity of the dead, returning a lost object, sending away the mother bird before taking her young, the duty to erect a safety fence around the roof of one's home, and the various forms of kilayim (forbidden plant and animal hybrids).

Also recounted are the judicial procedures and penalties for adultery, for the rape or seduction of an unmarried girl, and for a husband who falsely accuses his wife of infidelity. The following cannot marry a person of Jewish lineage: a mamzer (someone born from an adulterous or incestuous relationship); a male of Moabite or Ammonite descent; a first- or second-generation Edomite or Egyptian.

Our Parshah also includes laws governing the purity of the military camp; the prohibition against turning in an escaped slave; the duty to pay a worker on time, and to allow anyone working for you—man or animal—to "eat on the job"; the proper treatment of a debtor, and the prohibition against charging interest on a loan; the laws of divorce (from which are also derived many of the laws of marriage); the penalty of thirty-nine lashes for transgression of a Torah prohibition; and the procedures for yibbum ("levirate marriage") of the wife of a deceased childless brother, or chalitzah ("removing of the shoe") in the case that the brother-in-law does not wish to marry her.

Ki Teitzei concludes with the obligation to remember "what Amalek did to you on the road, on your way out of Egypt."

Haftarah in a Nutshell: Isaiah 54:1 -10

[https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/555429/jewish/Haftarah-in-a-Nutshell.htm](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/555429/jewish/Haftarah-in-a-Nutshell.htm)

This week's haftarah is the fifth of a series of seven "Haftarot of Consolation." These seven haftarot commence on the Shabbat following Tisha b'Av and continue until Rosh Hashanah.

Forsaken Jerusalem is likened to a barren woman devoid of children. G-d enjoins her to rejoice, for the time will soon come when the Jewish nation will return and proliferate, repopulating Israel's once desolate cities. The prophet assures the Jewish people that G-d has not forsaken them. Although He has momentarily hid His countenance from them, He will gather them from their exiles with great mercy. The haftorah compares the final Redemption to the pact G-d made with Noah. Just as G-d promised to never bring a flood over the entire earth, so too He will never again be angry at the Jewish people.

*"For the mountains may move and the hills might collapse, but My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of My peace collapse."*

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Limits of Love by Jonathan Sacks z"l

<https://www.rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/ki-teitse/the-limits-of-love/>

In a parsha laden with laws, one in particular is full of fascination. Here it is: If a man has two wives, one loved, the other unloved [senuah, literally "hated"], and both the loved and the unloved bear him sons but the firstborn is the son of the unloved wife, then when he wills his property to his sons, he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the beloved wife in preference to his actual firstborn, the son of the unloved wife. He must recognise [the legal rights of] the firstborn of his unloved wife so as to give him a double share of all he has, for he is the first of his father's strength. The birthright is legally his. *Deut. 21:15-17*

The law makes eminent sense. In biblical Israel the firstborn was entitled to a double share in his father's inheritance.[1] What the law tells us is that this is not at the father's discretion. He cannot choose to transfer this privilege from one son to another, in particular he cannot do this by favouring the son of the wife he loves most if in fact the firstborn came from another wife.

The opening three laws – a captive woman taken in the course of war, the above law about the rights of the firstborn, and the "stubborn and rebellious son" – are all about dysfunctions within the family. The Sages said that they were given in this order to hint that someone who takes a captive woman will suffer from strife at home, and the result will be a delinquent son.[2] In Judaism marriage is seen as the foundation of society. Disorder there leads to disorder elsewhere. So far, so clear.

What is extraordinary about it is that it seems to be in the sharpest possible conflict with a major narrative in the Torah, namely Jacob and his two wives, Leah and Rachel. Indeed the Torah, by its use of language, makes unmistakable verbal linkages between the two passages. One is the pair of opposites, *ahuvah/senuah*, "loved" and "unloved/hated". This is precisely the way the Torah describes Rachel and Leah.

Recall the context. Fleeing from his home to his uncle Laban, Jacob fell in love at first sight with Rachel and worked seven years for her hand in marriage. On the night of the wedding, however, Laban substituted his elder daughter Leah. When Jacob complained, “Why have you deceived me?” Laban replied, with intentional irony, “It is not done in our place to give the younger before the elder.”[3] Jacob then agreed to work another seven years for Rachel. The second wedding took place a mere week after the first. We then read:

And [Jacob] went in also to Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah ... God saw that Leah was unloved [senuah] and He opened her womb, but Rachel remained barren. *Gen. 29:30-31*

Leah called her firstborn Reuben, but her hurt at being less loved remained, and we read this about the birth of her second son:

She became pregnant again and had a son. ‘God has heard that I was unloved [senuah],’ she said, ‘and He also gave me this son.’ She named the child Simeon. *Gen. 29:33*

The word *senuah* appears only six times in the Torah, twice in the passage above about Leah, four times in our parsha in connection with the law of the rights of the firstborn.

There is an even stronger connection. The unusual phrase “first of [his father’s] strength” appears only twice in the Torah, here (“for he is the first of his father’s strength”) and in relation to Reuben, Leah’s firstborn:

“Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might and the first of my strength, first in rank and first in power.” *Gen. 49:3*

Because of these substantive and linguistic parallels, the attentive reader cannot help but hear in the law in our parsha a retrospective commentary on Jacob’s conduct vis-a-vis his own sons. Yet that conduct seems to have been precisely the opposite of what is legislated here. Jacob did transfer the right of the firstborn from Reuben, his actual firstborn, son of the less-loved Leah, to Joseph, the firstborn of his beloved Rachel. This is what he told Joseph:

“Now, the two sons who were born to you in Egypt before I came here shall be considered as mine. Ephraim and Manasseh shall be just like Reuben and Simeon to me.” *Gen. 48:5*

Reuben should have received a double portion, but instead this went to Joseph. Jacob recognised each of Joseph’s two sons as entitled to a full portion in the inheritance. So Ephraim and Menasseh each became a tribe in its own right. In other words, we seem to have a clear contradiction between Deuteronomy and Genesis.

How are we to resolve this? It may be that, despite the rabbinic principle that the patriarchs observed the whole Torah before it was given, this is only an approximation. Not every law was precisely the same before and after the covenant at Sinai. For instance Ramban notes that the story of Judah and Tamar

seems to describe a slightly different form of levirate marriage from the one set out in Deuteronomy.[4]

In any case, this is not the only apparent contradiction between Genesis and later law. There are others, not least the very fact that Jacob married two sisters, something categorically forbidden in Leviticus 18:18. Ramban's solution – an elegant one, flowing from his radical view about the connection between Jewish law and the land of Israel – is that the patriarchs observed the Torah only while they were living in Israel itself.[5] Jacob married Leah and Rachel outside Israel, in the house of Lavan in Haran (situated in today's Turkey).

Abarbanel gives a quite different explanation. The reason Jacob transferred the double portion from Reuben to Joseph was that God told him to do so. The law in Devarim is therefore stated to make clear that the case of Joseph was an exception, not a precedent.

Ovadia Sforno suggests that the Deuteronomy prohibition applies only when the transfer of the firstborn's rights happens because of the father favours one wife over another. It does not apply when the firstborn has been guilty of a sin that would warrant forfeiting his legal privilege. That is what Jacob meant when, on his deathbed, he said to Reuben: “Unstable as water, you will no longer be first, for you went up onto your father's bed, onto my couch and defiled it.” (*Gen. 49:4*).

This is stated explicitly in the book of Chronicles which says that “Reuben ... was the firstborn, but when he defiled his father's marriage bed, his rights as firstborn were given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel.” (*1 Chron.5:1*).

It is not impossible, though, that there is a different kind of explanation altogether. What makes the Torah unique is that it is a book about both law (the primary meaning of “Torah”) and history. Elsewhere these are quite different genres. There is law, an answer to the question, “What may we or may not do?” And there is history, an answer to the question, “What happened?” There is no obvious relationship between these two at all.

Not so in Judaism. In many cases, especially in mishpat, civil law, there is a connection between law and history, between what happened and what we should or should not do.[6] Much of biblical law, for example, emerges directly from the Israelites' experience of slavery in Egypt, as if to say: This is what our ancestors suffered in Egypt, therefore do not do likewise. Don't oppress your workers. Don't turn an Israelite into a lifelong slave. Don't leave your servants or employees without a weekly day of rest. And so on.

Not all biblical law is like this, but some is. It represents truth learned through experience, justice as it takes shape through the lessons of history. The Torah takes the past as a guide to the future: often positive but sometimes also negative. Genesis tells us, among other things, that Jacob's favouritism toward Rachel over Leah, and Rachel's firstborn Joseph over Leah's firstborn, Reuben, was a cause of lingering strife within the family. It almost led the brothers to kill Joseph, and it did lead to their selling him as a slave. According to Ibn Ezra, the resentment felt by

the descendants of Reuben endured for several generations, and was the reason why Datan and Aviram, both Reubenites, became key figures in the Korach rebellion.[7]

Jacob did what he did as an expression of love. His feeling for Rachel was overwhelming, as it was for Joseph, her elder son. Love is central to Judaism: not just love between husband and wife, parent and child, but also love for God, for neighbour and stranger. But love is not enough. There must also be justice and the impartial application of the law. People must feel that law is on the side of fairness. You cannot build a society on love alone. Love unites but it also divides. It leaves the less-loved feeling abandoned, neglected, disregarded, “hated.” It can leave in its wake strife, envy and a vortex of violence and revenge.

That is what the Torah is telling us when it uses verbal association to link the law in our parsha with the story of Jacob and his sons in Genesis. It is teaching us that law is not arbitrary. It is rooted in the experience of history. Law is itself a tikkun, a way of putting right what went wrong in the past. We must learn to love; but we must also know the limits of love, and the importance of justice-as-fairness in families as in society. [1] This is already implicit in the story of Jacob, Reuben and Joseph: on this, see below. The Sages also inferred it from the episode of the daughters of Tzelophehad. See Num. 27:7, Baba Batra 118b. [2] Sanhedrin 107a. [3] Gen. 29:25-26. A reference to Jacob buying Esau’s birthright and taking his blessing. [4] See Ramban to Gen. 38:8. [5] Ramban to Gen. 26:5. [6] This is the subject of a famous essay by Robert Cover, ‘Nomos and Narrative’, Harvard Law Review 1983-1984, available at [http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3690&context=fss\\_papers](http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3690&context=fss_papers). Cover’s view was that “No set of legal institutions or prescriptions exists apart from the narratives that locate it and give it meaning. For every constitution there is an epic, for each decalogue a scripture.” [7] Ibn Ezra to Num. 16:1.

### [Ki Tetze: We Cannot Look Away by Rabbi Judith Edelstein](https://truah.org/resources/judith-edelstein-ki-tetze-moraltorah_2023/)

[https://truah.org/resources/judith-edelstein-ki-tetze-moraltorah\\_2023/](https://truah.org/resources/judith-edelstein-ki-tetze-moraltorah_2023/)

You may be familiar with the notion about the wounded healer, popularized by the author Henri Nouwen in his book by that name. He asserts: *“When we become aware that we do not have to escape our pains, but that we can mobilize them into a common search for life, those very pains are transformed from expressions of despair into signs of hope.”*

Those of us in spiritual and psychological healing professions who delve into our own souls undoubtedly discover a deep wound that motivated us to choose our “calling.” During our lifetimes, we devote ourselves to helping others overcome their hurts.

On the other end of the spectrum, we find individuals who, traumatized and/or neglected during their childhood, strive to overcome their pain by dominating others, sometimes to such an extent that their search for recognition goes as far as imperiling nations. We have seen them throughout history, and we are witnessing several at this very moment. They have become ubiquitous and are

terrifying. Among the goals of these despotic leaders is to steamroll our values as they seek greater control over our lives. And, even more devastating, hordes of supporters stand behind them regardless of the havoc these authoritarians create. They egg each other on. The wounded rouse the zealots, and the zealots manipulate them

Israel is a traumatized society, currently in the grip of leaders who would rather practice a politics of grievance than pursue healing. It is now our responsibility to lean into the paradigm of the wounded healer and do what we can to transform pain “from expressions of despair into signs of hope.” The Torah, in this week’s parshah, gives us guidance on how and why to lean in. Amidst a long series of civil, family, and criminal laws, the beginning of Deuteronomy 22 presents the laws of “lost and found,” so to speak.

“You may not observe your fellow Israelite’s ox or sheep gone astray and ignore it; you must take it back to your peer.” (*Deuteronomy 22:1*) Commenting on this verse, Rashi, the classic Torah exegete, admonishes us, “Do not avert your eyes as if you don’t notice it.” This statement is a lynchpin to the current crisis in Israel and our responsibility as Jews in the diaspora. Despite what Israeli nationalists are saying, we must take notice! We may not turn away and pretend that we do not see what is happening!

*Deuteronomy 22:2* extends this obligation to apply even “if your fellow Israelite does not live near you or you do not know who they are.” Some might say we as diaspora Jews are not close enough — either geographically, politically, or socially — to the matter to stick our noses in. Not so, the Torah says.

*Deuteronomy 22:3* further reinforces and generalizes the notion of taking responsibility for others: “...Anything that your fellow Israelite loses, and you find: You must not remain indifferent.” That, perhaps, is the key takeaway.

Finally, *Deuteronomy 22:4* enjoins us: “Do not observe your brother’s...ox collapsing on the road and ignore them. You must surely lift it up with him.” This adds another layer to the previous obligation: Do it as a team. Support one another. Stand with Jews throughout the world, especially Israelis, to return Israel to its democratic roots.

In these four verses, the Torah repeats itself, emphasizing that we may not run away. It also recognizes the human tendency to look the other way when effort is required or there is potential for trouble — from something as minimal as picking up a dropped glove and handing it back to the owner to demonstrating against oppression. Do not give in to this tendency, the Torah admonishes. We are required to act, which becomes one of the most fundamental values of Judaism. As spiritual leaders, we face an immense challenge in dealing with the current crisis in Israel. Old paradigms fall to the wayside as we see losses mounting for the Israel we knew, even with its imperfections. We must harness the energy that

transformed our lives from hurt to healing to mending the torn society that Israel has become. If we look away, we will all suffer the consequences of deep woundedness now and in future generations

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### Do Not Turn Away - Then and Now by Eliezer B. Diamond

<https://www.jtsa.edu/torah/do-not-turn-away/>

In 1861, as a great conflagration spread across our nation, the Bostonian abolitionist and women's rights advocate Samuel Joseph May published a slender tract entitled *The Fugitive Slave Act and Its Victims*, an impassioned polemic against the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. This federal law, born of the Missouri Compromise of the same year, required all federal, state, and local authorities, including those in free states, to return fugitive slaves to their masters, while also criminalizing any attempt to aid and abet a slave seeking to escape bondage. May, a Unitarian pastor, thought it fitting—and rightly so—to grace the tract's title page with the King James translation of Deuteronomy 23:16–17, which I cite here using the JPS translation: “You shall not turn over to his master a slave who seeks refuge with you from his master. He shall live with you in any place that he may choose among the settlements in your midst, wherever he pleases; you must not ill-treat him.”

May presumably read these verses as a condemnation of the institution of slavery as a whole. However, the fact that slaves are to be freed only in a particular instance implies a general recognition of a right to own slaves (though, according to Leviticus, Israelites were limited to only enslaving non-Israelites, as discussed below).

To what circumstance are these verses referring? There is general agreement among rabbinic, medieval, and modern commentators that the verses refer to a slave who has fled from a neighboring kingdom and is seeking refuge in Israelite territory.

There is textual evidence to support this claim, particularly in verse 17. Both the content and the language of this verse are reminiscent of statements found elsewhere in Deuteronomy concerning the ger, a sojourner who seeks to settle among the people of Israel, and the ill treatment of gerim is explicitly proscribed elsewhere in the Torah. The point, then, is that this refugee is given the status of a freeman, and he is to enjoy all the rights and protections afforded to the ger.

What would be the rationale behind granting such slaves asylum? Indeed, contemporary scholars find this law particularly striking because it breaks with the consensus of Israel's neighbors. Contemporaneous Near Eastern codes often refer to extradition treaties requiring rulers to return each other's fugitive slaves. Against this background one might see the prohibition against rendition as an assertion of political sovereignty, but it seems unlikely that this would be its sole or even major motivation.

Rabbinic tradition explains that the Torah's concern is to prevent gentile slaves from returning to their place of origin and again serving their gentile masters: once they are in Eretz Yisrael and have the opportunity to serve the God of Israel, one is forbidden to return them to the idolatrous practices of their native land.

According to one view in the Talmud, even a slave serving a Jewish master in the Diaspora who flees to Eretz Yisrael is to be granted asylum so that he not be returned to a land filled with idolatry (BT Gittin 45a).

The medieval Spanish commentator Nahmanides offers an intriguing interpretation. Noting that the previous verses delineate the requirements of ritual and hygienic purity in Israelite military camps, he suggests that the slaves in question are fleeing across battle lines and seeking refuge with the Israelite army. The prohibition is therefore motivated by a concern that if returned to their masters slaves would share crucial intelligence based on their observations during their stay in the Israelite camp.

I am inclined to agree with Philo, the first century Jewish exegete and philosopher, that the Torah's concern is neither jurisdictional nor spiritual nor strategic but rather moral and ethical (On the Virtues, 124). The escaped slaves standing before us have risked life and limb to flee their homeland and find protection in ours. Only the sting of the master's lash would have been reason enough to face the dangers and uncertainties of the journey. In granting these slaves asylum the Torah declares here, as it does elsewhere (see Exod. 21, 20–21; 26–27), that while slavery is countenanced, harsh and abusive treatment of slaves is not.

It must be noted that according to Leviticus only non-Israelites may be purchased as slaves (Lev. 25, 44–46). Israelites, on the other hand, may be subjected to servitude, but never to enslavement. They may not be treated as chattel to be owned in perpetuity, nor may they be forced to perform harsh labor. "For [the people of Israel] are My servants, whom I freed from the land of Egypt; they are not to be sold as slaves. You shall not rule over [a fellow Israelite] with crushing labor; you shall fear your God" (Lev. 25: 42–43).



This distinction is troubling; it condemns the institution of slavery but yet allows the enslavement of the “other.” And I can imagine a 19th-century Southern preacher declaiming the verses in Leviticus allowing the enslavement of those “from among the nations surrounding you” and assuring his congregation that the enslavement of black men, women, and children was fully in accord with—perhaps even an expression of—God’s will.

But Torah is not frozen in time. Beginning with Exodus, the biblical saga encompasses Israel’s journey from enslavement and degradation to dignity, autonomy, and a life of justice and compassion through service to God. But this saga is, and is only meant to be, the beginning of an ongoing quest. The Five Books of Moses are the Word but not the last word. For May, reading Deuteronomy in 1861, Deuteronomy’s prohibition was a declaration that no human being could ever claim full dominion over another; the ultimate fulfillment of that ideal, he believed, could come only by abolishing slavery altogether.

One might conclude that with the abolishment of slavery—if by slavery one means legal ownership of one human being by another in perpetuity—the ideal embodied in this verse, at least as May read it, has been realized. But it’s a funny thing about biblical verses—they come back to haunt us.

Refugees are at our southern border, many of whom are seeking political asylum and/or protection from physical harm. I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, so I will not claim to know God’s will in this matter. But as a people who feel obliged to hear the voice of Torah, whether as commandment, guidance, or inspiration, these verses demand our attention in this pivotal moment. There may be among those seeking entry opportunists and even criminals. But let’s be honest. Large numbers of our fellow human beings have traveled as many as two thousand miles risking danger, injury, and death. What kind of person makes such a trip? Only the desperate, fleeing an evil fate far more certain than the calamities that the journey may bring. These are the runaway slaves of today, arriving penniless and powerless, seeking compassion and protection like the refugees of old. If we do not recognize their humanity, if we ignore their pleas, have we not shut our ears to the Torah’s voice as well? *(Eliezer B. Diamond is the Rabbi Judah Nadich Associate Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics at JTS)*

Ki Teitzei: Birds’ Nests and Bringing Mashiach by Rabbi Dovid Sears

<https://www.growtorah.org/devarim/ki-teitzei-birds-nests-and-bringing-mashiach>

*If you chance upon a bird’s nest along the way in any tree or on the ground, whether it contains young birds or eggs, and the mother is sitting upon the young*

*birds or upon the eggs; you shall not take the mother bird together with her children. You shall surely send away (shalei'ach tishlach) the mother, and only then may you take the young for yourself; that it may go well for you, and you may prolong your days.[1]*

Throughout the Torah, numerous mitzvot convey the notion to regard animals with compassion. Parshat Ki Tisa contains the prohibition of cooking a young goat in its mother's milk.[2] Our parsha, Ki Teitzei, relays many such mitzvot, including the prohibition of muzzling a grazing animal,[3] of leaving a fellow's animal that fell under its burden,[4] and the mitzvah of shilu'ach hakein. While humanity is placed above the animal kingdom, as Adam is instructed to rule over the fish, birds, and land creatures,[5] it also mandates respect for all creatures. The term nefesh chayah (living soul) is used to refer to both animals and humans.[6]

Gan Eden provides the Jewish paradigm of a perfect world. Our tradition teaches that the times of Mashiach will restore an Edenic state of harmony and peace. According to Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of pre-state Israel, all creatures will then return to their original vegetarian diet, for the tikkun (spiritual rectification) accomplished by meat-eating will have been fully accomplished.[7] As the prophet Yeshayahu states, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb...the lion shall eat straw like the ox..."[8]

The Jewish approach towards animals is well represented in the Psalmist's declaration: "His compassion is upon all of His works." [9] Because the Creator shows compassion to all creatures, so should we.

The mitzvah of shilu'ach hakein brings this compassion into much clearer focus. According to the Midrash,[10] our compassion towards animals is an extension of Hashem's compassion for us:

*Why is an infant circumcised after eight days? The Holy One, blessed be He, extended mercy to him by waiting until he became strong enough. And just as the Holy One, blessed be He, has mercy on human beings, so does He have mercy on animals; as it is written, "A bullock, a lamb, or a kid goat, when it is born, it shall be seven days under its mother, but from the eighth day and thenceforth it may be accepted as an offering to God." [11] Not only this – but the Holy One, blessed be He, declared, "[A mother cow] and her young you shall not slaughter on the same day." [12] And just as the Holy One, blessed be He, has mercy upon beasts, so does He have mercy upon birds, as it is written, "When you encounter a bird's nest..."[13]*

According to this Midrash, shilu'ach hakein comes to prove that Hashem extends his mercy even to birds, just as He is compassionate towards humans and other mammals.

But the significance of shilu'ach hakein even goes beyond that. Concerning the phrase "shalei'ach tishlach," the Midrash [14] asks:

*Why does the verse use a double expression? Because one who fulfills the "sending forth" of this precept will be granted the privilege of "sending forth" a*

*slave to freedom. As it is written, “And when you send him forth free . . .”[15] Fulfilling the precept of sending forth the mother bird also hastens the advent of the Mashiach. . . Rabbi Tanchuma said: Fulfilling this precept hastens the arrival of Eliyahu HaNavi, whose coming is associated with the expression “to send forth.” As it states, “Behold, I shall send forth to you Eliyahu HaNavi before the coming of the great and awesome day of G-d. . .” [16] [17] and he shall console you as it says, “He will return the hearts of the parents towards the children.” [18]*

The connection between the mitzvah of sending forth the mother bird, freeing a slave, and Mashiach is profound. In sending away a bird from her nest before taking her eggs, we fulfill an act that has a parallel impact to freeing a slave. This small act has the power to hasten Mashiach, an ultimate expression of the peace and goodness inherent in the mitzvah. The smallness of the act is no reason to overlook it.

Shilu’ach Hakein affirms the Jewish belief in fair and merciful treatment of animals, but it does even more than that. The example here of sending away the mother bird shows that compassion is not only measured in terms of its direct impact. As a way of putting aside self-concern and refocusing our attention on the bird, a small act of compassion can be as powerful as a large one. This means that we must care for creatures and for our environment in a way that accounts not only for the large-scale problems and solutions but also the individual. Then, to paraphrase the words of our sages, the Merciful One will surely have mercy on those who are merciful.[16]

*(Dovid Sears is an author/translator, Breslov teacher and visual artist. He founded the Breslov Center of New York in 1997 under the aegis of Rav Kenig of Tsfat, and is the creator of the [Solitude-Hisbodedus website](#), an online archive on Jewish meditation. His books include *Compassion for Humanity in the Jewish Tradition* (1998); *The Vision of Eden: Animal Welfare and Vegetarianism in Jewish Law and Mysticism*) [1] *Devarim* 22:6-7. (All translations are the authors.)[2] *Shemot* 23:19 [3] *Devarim* 25:4 [4] *Devarim* 22:4 [5] *Bereishit* 1:26 [6] *Bereishit* 1:21, 1:24. [7] *Olat Re’iyah* 2: 292; cf. Rabbi Chaim Vital, *Sha’ar ha-Mitzvot*, Eikev, et al.[8] *Isaiah* 11:6-7. [9] *Psalms* 145:9. [10] *Devarim Rabbah* 6:1. [11] *Vayikra* 22:27.[12] *Vayikra* 22:28. [13] *Devarim* 22:6. [14] *Devarim Rabbah* 6:7. [15] *Devarim* 15:12.[16] “The great and awesome day of God” mentioned here is a reference to the coming of Mashiach, teaching us that his arrival is closely associated with and will be preceded by the coming of Elijah the Prophet. [17] *Malachi* 3:23. [18] *Ibid*.*

### Yahrtzeits

Lisa Vernon remembers her grandfather Arthur J. Vernon on Sunday August 27<sup>th</sup>  
Merna Most remembers her husband Dr. David Most on Tuesday August 29<sup>th</sup>