



## שילוח וגירוש

# Sending Off vs. Expelling

### ■ G-d Sent Him From Eden

Adam HaRishon, the first man, failed in his mission to fulfill the one and only commandment that G-d gave him: not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. As a result, he was expelled from the Garden of Eden. The next generation, too, also failed and was similarly punished. Adam's son Kayin was guilty of the grave sin of murder and was banished, as he himself said, "*from the face of the earth.*" (B'reshit 4,14)

Though the punishments of Adam and Kayin appear to be similar, they were actually very different. We can discern this from a close study of the verses and the specific terms used in each case.

Regarding Adam, two different words are used to refer to G-d's act of distancing him from Gan Eden. In Chapter 3, verse 23, we see a form of the word *shalah*, whose root is spelled *shin-lamed-het*, while in verse 24, a form of the word *garesh* is used, of the root *gimmel-resh-shin*. Both have similar meanings, but the first means "sending off," while the second refers to "banishment." Verse 23 reads:

וַיִּשְׁלַחְהוּ ה' אֶל־לְהִים מִגֵּן עֵדֶן...

*G-d sent him from Gan Eden...*

and verse 24 reads:

וַיִּגְרֹשׁ אֶת הָאָדָם וַיִּשְׁכֵּן מִקְדָּם לְגֵן עֵדֶן אֶת הַכְּרָבִים...

*G-d banished the man, and stationed east of Eden  
the angels of destruction...*

Both verses refer to "sending away" or "distancing," but the words have different implications. The word *gerush* means to banish someone to the unknown, without concern for where he will end up. This is in fact the meaning in verse 24, which emphasizes the blockade erected at the

entrance to Gan Eden to ensure that Adam would not return. The main concern was that he leave Eden and not come back; of lesser importance was where he would go.

But the word *shiluah* has a different meaning. It means to “send away” – but it also implies that the person being sent off will have a mission to fulfill in his new location. He is not being banished to the unknown, but is rather being sent to another place where he will have something to accomplish.

The first verse quoted above uses the word *shiluah*, and in fact we read that Adam was sent away for a specific purpose. Instead of working the land in the Garden of Eden, he was sent back to his original location, outside Gan Eden, to fulfill a different, less important, mission: “*to till the land from which he had been taken.*”

We must also differentiate between two different forms of the word meaning to “send someone on a mission.” There is *lishlo'ah*, לשלוח, which means “to send,” as in “to send an emissary,” and there is also *leshale'ah*, לשלח - a much stronger form of this verb, meaning “to drive away” permanently. When I “send” an emissary, I appoint him to perform a particular act for me; the destination is not as important as my desire that he return and report that he has succeeded. On the other hand, the form *leshale'ah* means not only to give him a mission, but also the intention that he leave here for good and stay in his new place. We will see this more clearly below.

### ■ Kayin's Cry: “You Have Banished Me”

Adam's son Kayin was placed on Divine trial, charged with nothing less than murder. His punishment was much more severe than the one doled out to his father: “*A wanderer and homeless shall you be in the earth*” (B'reshit 4,12). Adam was sent away, but Kayin is to be homeless. He did not receive a specific task or mission, and there was no intention to rehabilitate him elsewhere. He was to be a “*wanderer*” – not merely “sent away,” but “banished.” Kayin therefore turned to G-d and pleaded:

הוּ גִרְשָׁתָּ אֶתִּי הַיּוֹם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה וּמִפְּנֵי אֶסְתֵּר וְהָיִיתִי נֹדֵד בְּאֶרֶץ...

*Behold, You have banished me from the face of the earth,  
and I am to be hidden from Your face.*

*I am to be restless and isolated in the world,  
and whoever finds me will kill me.* (verse 14)

“I have no place to go and build myself up once again,” he lamented.

“Wherever I travel upon this earth, I am fated to have the status of the ‘banished one,’ as evidenced by the word *gerush*. Please leave me at least the possibility of living and not dying.”

### ■ Noah's Dove

The above differentiation helps us understand what happened when the heavy rains of the Great Flood stopped, three months after Noah’s Ark landed atop a high mountain. Noah dispatched a dove: וַיִּשְׁלַח, “*He sent the dove from him, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the earth.*” (B’reshit 8,8)

As Rashi emphasizes, the *sh-l-h* word used here means not the “dispatching of an emissary,” *sh’lihut*, but rather “sending away,” *shiluhin*. As we saw above, the former refers to a mission from which the agent must return, while the latter is a form of permanent banishment to fulfill a mission elsewhere. Both of these are contrasted with *gerush*, expulsion, which means banishment with no mission at all.

In this case, Noah performed *shiluhin*; Rashi says he “sent the dove off on its way, and he would thus see if the waters had begun to recede – for if the dove would find a place to rest, it would not return.” He sent the dove away on a mission, in addition to seeing if the waters had receded. What was this extra mission? The verses contain hints that will help us discover the answer. Noah first sent the raven, and the Torah says simply: וַיִּשְׁלַח, “*Noah sent away the raven.*” (8,7)

But regarding the dove, in the next verse, the Torah adds a word: “*Noah sent away the dove from him.*” In addition, when the dove returns to the ark, as described in verse 9, we see another seemingly unnecessary word:

וַיִּשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וַיִּקְחָהּ וַיָּבֵא אֹתָהּ אֵלָיו אֶל הַתֵּבָה.

*Noah extended his hand and took her and pulled her to him into the ark.*

The sending was “*from him*” and the return was “*to him.*” This careful reading of the verses tells us that the dove enjoyed a special place of affection in Noah’s heart. Noah saw the dove as a symbol of pure loyalty, such as between spouses, in total contrast to the behavior of that generation, in which “*all flesh had perverted its way on the earth*” (6,12), showing no conjugal loyalty at all to one another.

For this reason, Noah gave the two doves the special mission of building the

first nest – the first home – after the great Flood. The purpose of sending the dove away was not only to have her leave the ark, but also to have her build a new home based on mutual faithfulness and loyalty; as an aside, Noah knew that her failure to return would signal the subsiding of the waters and the availability of a place to rest.

We are left with one question: The verse seems to indicate that Noah sent only one dove, the female; how do we know that two doves were involved? The answer is hinted at here:

וַתָּבֵא אֵלָיו הַיּוֹנָה לְעֵת עֶרֶב וְהָיָה עִלָּהּ זֵית טָרֵף בְּפִיהָ.

*The dove returned to him towards evening,  
and behold, an olive branch was plucked off in her mouth.* (8,12)

The word for “*plucked off*” is written in the third-person masculine form, as Rashi explains. The verse thus describes an olive branch that “*he*” - the male dove - plucked off and placed in “*her*” mouth - meaning that there was a pair of doves. This explanation solves the many linguistic difficulties raised by Rashi and Ramban in this passage.

### ■ Banish the Bondmaid

The important differentiation we have made concerning “sending on a mission” and “banishing” will also help us understand the difference of opinion between Avraham Avinu and his wife Sarah regarding her maidservant Hagar. Sarah insisted that Avraham drive away Hagar and her son Yishmael because of his negative behavior and influence on Yitzchak. Avraham did not like this idea, but had no choice after Hashem told him to “*listen to everything Sarah says.*” (B'reshit 21,12)

Let us look at the Torah’s account of this story, and particularly at the nuances that are generally overlooked at first glance. What does Sarah say? “*Banish this bondmaid and her son!*” (21,10) She uses the word *garesh*, banish. She is not concerned with where Hagar will go; Sarah’s only interest is that Hagar and her son not remain in Avraham’s house even one more day.

G-d tells Avraham to do this, and the Torah tells us:

וַיִּשְׁכֶּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקַּח לֶחֶם וְחֶמֶת מַיִם וַיִּתֵּן אֶל הָגָר שֵׁם עַל שִׁכְמָהּ  
וְאֵת הַיֶּלֶד וַיִּשְׁלַחַהּ וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתֵּתַע בְּמִדְבַּר בְּאֵר שָׁבַע.

*Avraham awoke early in the morning, took bread and water*

*and gave it to Hagar ... and sent her away,  
and she went and roamed in the Be'er Sheva desert.* (verse 14)

Avraham did not follow exactly what Sarah had told him. He did not “banish” Hagar, but merely “sent her away.” He thought about how to help her in her new location, preparing food and drink to help her get re-settled. Did Avraham thus violate G-d’s command? Let us look again at what G-d told him:

כָּל אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֵלַיךָ שָׂרָה שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלָהּ... וְגַם אֶת בֶּן הָאֲמָה לְגוֹי אֲשִׁימְנוּ...  
*All that Sarah tells you, listen to her voice... and also the son  
of the bondmaid, I will make into a nation...* (21,12-13)

G-d thus hints to Avraham that Yishmael has a goal in his new location. He is to become a great nation – but in a different place: not in Avraham’s house, and not as a competitor to Yitzchak. Avraham was thus justified in “sending them off” and not “banishing” them, for he was preparing Yishmael for his new mission.

Why, then, did G-d tell him earlier to listen to *everything* that Sarah said? He meant that he should listen to her both when she originally said to take Hagar as a wife, and also when she later said to send her away.

Another example of this idea that we have developed is found in the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

כִּי בַיָּד חֲזָקָה יִשְׁלַחֵם וּבַיָּד חֲזָקָה יִגְרֹשֵׁם מֵאֶרֶצוֹ.  
*For with a strong hand, he [Pharaoh] will send them away, and  
with a strong hand, he will banish them from his land.* (Sh'mot 6,1)

Both terms are used in this verse: *shiluah*, sending, and *gerush*, banishment. The “sending” is for the purpose of worshiping Hashem, as we see in 7,16: *שלח את עמי ויעבדוני*, *Send out my nation and they will worship me*. This was against Pharaoh’s will.

The “banishment,” on the other hand, referred to leaving the idol worship of Egypt, to which the Jews had come close over the course of their many years there. Egypt is not their land, and they are being sent away – against their will.

## ■ Yitzchak and Yaakov

We saw above, regarding Noah and the dove, that Rashi differentiated between *sh'lihut*, dispatching an emissary who must return and report on

his mission, and *shiluhin*, sending one to perform a mission with no return required. This will help us understand the Torah's precise description of Yaakov Avinu's departure, as commanded by his father and mother, to Aram Naharayim: "*Yitzchak called Yaakov and blessed him... 'Arise and go to Padan Aram, the home of Betuel, your mother's father, and take yourself a wife from the daughters of Lavan, your mother's brother.'*" (B'reshit 28,1-2)

Yitzchak sends Yaakov to find a wife from Rivka's family. Together with this important mission, Yitzchak adds a special blessing: "*May E-l Sh-dai bless you... and grant you the blessing of Avraham, to you and your descendants with you, to inherit the land where you now reside that G-d gave to Avraham.*" (28,3-4)

In other words, Yitzchak blesses Yaakov that he should return from Aram Naharayim and inherit the land that had been given as an eternal inheritance to Avraham. This was thus a *sh'lihut*, not a *shiluhin* – and this is precisely why the Torah uses the word *vayishlah* to depict what happened:

וַיִּשְׁלַח יִצְחָק אֶת יַעֲקֹב וַיֵּלֶךְ פְּדָנָה אֲרָם.

*Yitzchak sent Yaakov, and he went to Padan Aram.* (verse 5)

Yitzchak sends him off on a mission from which he must return; it is not open-ended.

Yaakov's brother Esav, however, saw the situation differently. Observing from the side, he heard only the beginning of what Yitzchak told Yaakov, and therefore came to a different conclusion. The Torah describes the situation from Esav's standpoint:

וַיֵּרָא עֵשָׂו כִּי בָרַךְ יִצְחָק אֶת יַעֲקֹב וַיִּשְׁלַח אֹתוֹ פְּדָנָה אֲרָם  
לְקַחֵת לוֹ מְשָׁם אִשָּׁה...

*Esav saw that Yitzchak blessed Yaakov  
and sent him off to Padan Aram to take a wife there...* (verse 6)

In other words, Esav thought that Yitzchak had sent Yaakov away, never to return. He thought Yaakov was now leaving Eretz Yisrael for good! This is why the Torah, when describing what Esav perceived, uses the *shiluhin* form of the verb. This explains why for the next 22 years, Esav did not pursue him - but as soon as Yaakov returned, Esav was surprised, and came after him with 400 warriors.

## ■ The Mother Bird

Another example of these two different verb forms is found in the commandment to send away the mother bird before taking her chicks – the mitzvah of *shiluah ha-ken*:

לֹא תִקַּח הָאִם עַל הַבָּנִים, שִׁלַּח תְּשַׁלַּח אֶת הָאִם וְאֶת הַבָּנִים תִּקַּח לָךְ.

*Do not take the mother [with] the offspring [there]; send away the mother, and [then] take the chicks for yourself.* (D'varim 22,6-7)

The verse does not say *tishlah*, send, but rather the stronger form *t'shalah*, send off; not *sh'lihut*, but rather *shiluhin* – sending off the mother bird so that she should build her nest somewhere else.

In closing, let us note that the Torah uses the verb *gerush*, expulsion, a total of six times when referring to the banishment of the Canaanites from Eretz Yisrael. Yet, when it warns Israel that its sins could cause it to be exiled from the land, *gerush* is not used even once! This tells us that when the Canaanites are thrown out, they will never return – whereas Israel's exile will only be temporary, until its punishment has run its course. In the end, Israel will return to the Land – marking the fulfillment of the covenant that G-d forged with Avraham to give him and his descendants Eretz Yisrael as an “*eternal inheritance*.”

