

The Caged Bird

By the Grace of G-d
8th of Tammuz, 5722
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Sholom uBrocho:

I am in receipt of your letter of July 3, in which you write about your problem with your two parakeets, for which you want to find a better home.

I am almost certain that there are several zoos in New York City with Bird Houses, where the birds live in fairly good conditions. Among these you will probably find one that satisfies you most, and thus your problem would be solved.

As for the question of Halacha in this respect, it does not come within the sphere of my duties to give decisions on such matters, which any orthodox Rov you will approach will answer your Shaala.

Since everything is by Divine Providence, it is my duty to call your attention to the need of learning a lesson from your experience with the parakeets. You see, the soul which lives in a body and is the essence of the human being is likened to a bird in a cage. The soul wants to be free to live its own life and soar to heaven, but it is hampered by the physical and material body. The soul is a spiritual thing and desires to engage in spiritual things only, in prayer, learning Torah, doing Mitzvoth, for only then it is happy and free. The Old Rebbe, in his holy sefer Tanya, explains this at length, emphasizing that the soul of a Jew is truly a part of G-dliness. This is also the meaning of the morning prayer, "My G-d, the soul which You gave me is pure," etc. It is necessary to remember this always and to try to give the utmost freedom to one's soul through Torah and Mitzvoth. It is also necessary to help others - the near and dear ones in the family, as well as friends and even strangers - to give their souls a greater measure of freedom. This is accomplished by showing a good example to others and in other ways of influence. Where there is a strong will and determination, success is assured.

With blessing,

By