



Carnegie Shul Chatter

August 17, 2021



Starting Anew

When you are of school age, Labor Day and the beginning of September seem more like New Year's Day than our calendar New Year's on January 1. After all, the new school year always started right around Labor Day, and wasn't that the new year for us as school kids? We got new clothes for back to school, met our new teachers, and had a chance to make new friends. And, if the previous year hadn't been all that good, well, we had a chance to start anew, putting the past behind us and moving forward.

And this year, our Jewish New Year coincides exactly with Labor Day, and it is a time when, once again, we can get new clothes for the holidays, celebrate with friends and family at shul and at home, and, more importantly, it is also a chance to start anew, putting our past mistakes behind us, repenting for our sins, and moving forward to better things with God's forgiveness for our past failures.

The last couple of years have been tough, there is no doubt about it. The pandemic has affected us all. Some of us have lost friends and loved ones. Our lives have been disrupted in numerous ways. We cannot even pray in shul in our usual way, as we have to wear masks, socially distance, and take aliyah at our seats. When will it all end?

But the New Year gives us hope. Let this New Year spell an end to the misfortunes of the past, and the beginning of an end to the pandemic. Let us all pray that Hashem will help us and that there will be brighter days ahead.

Reserve Your Seat

We are down to less than three weeks until Rosh Hashanah, so if you have not yet reserved your seats for the High Holidays, it is time to do so now. Here, once again, is our High Holiday schedule and protocols (pages 7 and 8).

To make your reservations, email mrmike7777@yahoo.com and please include your name and the number of people who will be sitting with you.

Ki Teitzei in a Nutshell

Deuteronomy 21:10–25:19

From Chabad.org

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.”

Ki Teitzei For Today

At first glance, Ki Teitzei may not appear to have much to offer for today's day and age. There are 74 mitzvot enumerated in the parshah and some, like 39 lashes for the transgression of a Torah prohibition, don't seem to have any modern relevance. And one thing I always like to find in a Torah portion is relevance to our world today.

But, wait. When searching for articles on Ki Teitzei, I found this one from a source I had never visited before, wjcschul.org, which is the site of a Jewish congregation in Woodstock, New York. This excerpt from the article does a wonderful job of explaining the relevance of this parshah to Jews of today. I hope you like it.

Ki Teitzei | A Living Tradition

Rabbi Jonathan Kligler • 49 Ki Teitzei

יָמַע מִיִּקַּת סָקָה סְהַמְתֶּם לָעֵתָהּוּ רָדַדְבּ מִלִּפְנֵי וְרוּשׁוֹ, וְאֶרְיַחֵץ רֹמְמִתָּא הָאֲרַתְאֵלָּ

Lo tir'eh et hamor akhikha o shoro noflim ba'derekh v'hitalamta mei'hem; hakeim takim imo.

If you see your fellow's ox or ass fallen on the road, do not ignore it; you must raise it together (Deuteronomy 22:4).

Ki Teitzei contains more mitzvot — more commandments — than any other portion in the Torah. In fact, there are no stories in Ki Teitzei, only laws. Maimonides counts 72 discreet commandments that originate in this parashah.

The laws in Ki Teitzei describe the needs and conditions of an ancient agrarian society, radically different from our own. We read about the proper treatment of women captured as spoils of war; harsh punishment for rebellious sons; what to do with a lost ox or sheep. The novice student of Torah will wonder what relevance these instructions could possibly have to contemporary life. Many a bar mitzvah boy and bat mitzvah girl have despaired upon reading this as their assigned portion, knowing that they were somehow supposed to find a message in it.



But the novice does not yet understand that in Judaism, Torah is not a static document locked in time, but rather, a living tradition. The laws of the Torah are the basis of a 3,000-years-and-counting exploration of the deepest meaning and best application of the commandments. “Jewish Law” is not contained in the Torah; “Jewish Law” is the ever-evolving debate and interpretation of the Torah by Jewish scholars. Some of the commandments in Ki Teitzei become the foundation for entire areas of Jewish law and ethics, and occupy entire tractates of the Talmud. Some that are found too harsh or offensive are marginalized and shunted aside by Jewish tradition. Others remain the object of fierce debate to this day.

When read and studied in this light, the significance of portions like Ki Teitzei as the basis of Jewish law becomes apparent. Some examples:

If you see your fellow's ox or ass fallen on the road, do not ignore it; you must raise it together (Deuteronomy 22:4).

If you chance upon a bird's nest ... do not take the mother together with her young. Send the mother off before you take the young for food ... (Deuteronomy 22:7).

You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing (Deuteronomy 25:4).

These laws, scattered through the text, become the proof texts in the Talmud for an entire category of Jewish law that the rabbis name יְלַעֲבֵי רַעֲצָא Tza'ar Ba'alei Hayim, “the suffering

of living things,” better translated as “the ethical treatment of animals.” The rabbis endeavor to create a “balance between simultaneously permitting the use of animals for human need and prohibiting unnecessary cruelty to animals.” The ethical imperative to minimize suffering to animals extends to the laws of kosher slaughter; to rules that limit the overworking of animals (the fourth of the Ten Commandments insists that domesticated animals, as well as humans, must receive a Sabbath); and to showing compassion for all creatures, such as the mother bird cited above.

In contemporary Jewish thought, the evolution of Jewish law regarding ethical treatment of animals continues: Is factory farming kosher? Is vegetarianism or even veganism the logical next step in our acknowledgment that animals are sentient and have feelings?

You shall not abuse a needy and destitute laborer ... You must pay the wages due [the laborer] on the same day, before the sun sets (Deuteronomy 24:14–15).

You must have completely honest weights, and completely honest measures (Deuteronomy 25:15).

These commandments form the foundation of Jewish business ethics, an enormous focus of Jewish law. The Jewish legal tradition pays at least as much attention to the kashrut (acceptability) of what we may or may not do in economic practices as it does to the kashrut of what we may or may not eat. As one teacher of mine put it, as Jews we should be more concerned about what comes out of our mouths than we are about what goes into our mouths! For those of us concerned with ethical labor and business laws, we can trace a direct line back to the Torah.



If you see your fellow's ox or sheep gone astray, do not ignore it; you must take it back to them ... If you do not know who the owner is, you shall bring it home until the owner claims it; then you shall give it back ... you shall do the same with anything that someone loses and that you find: you must not remain indifferent (Deuteronomy 22:1–3).

Respecting others' property is critical to maintaining the trust that allows a society to thrive. Here again, the Talmud takes these general principles in the Torah and explores every possible nuance of what is considered “lost property,” and what our responsibilities are to those who have lost it. When can we claim something that we found as our own? When is keeping something we've found theft? To what lengths should we go to locate the owner? The



plethora of detailed debate in the Talmud can make your head spin, but without clear property laws, only the law of the jungle will prevail. In our digital age, these questions remain urgent: If we glean someone else's intellectual property or creative work from the Internet, what do we owe them? We will find that Judaism has much to teach us in this regard.

When you build a new house, you shall construct a railing around your roof, for if someone fell from your roof you would bear guilt (Deuteronomy 22:8).

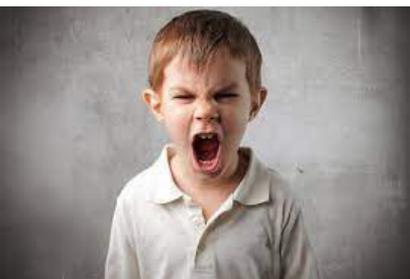
To this day around the Mediterranean, many homes have flat roofs. In biblical times, the rooftop was part of the living space, and much activity took place on the roof. Thus, a railing was a practical safety measure. This specific law from our portion becomes the foundation for another basic Jewish ethical principle: We are each responsible for public safety. For I can easily imagine the homeowner's complaint: "How can the law require me to put up a railing? It's my home!" Judaism is non-negotiable: We must consider the well-being of others.



Again, Jewish tradition offers valuable guidance for contemporary issues. I was approached by a Jewish family that did not want to vaccinate their children because they believed that the vaccinations were harmful. In order to satisfy their children's school, they needed to prove that their religious beliefs would prevent them from vaccinating. I could not write such a letter. After studying the issue, I concluded that even if there was a marginal risk that the vaccines might injure the children, the Jewish imperative to protect public health vastly outweighed the potential risk to the individual. The commandment to put a railing around one's roof becomes both the formative precedent and the metaphor for our responsibility to the greater community. We are all in this together.

A well-known rabbinic parable humorously captures Judaism's emphasis on public safety: Some people were sitting in a boat, when one of them took a drill and began to bore under his seat. The other passengers protested to him, "What are you doing?" He said to them, "What has this to do with you? Am I not boring the hole under my own seat?" They retorted, "But the water will come in and drown us all!" (Vayikra Rabbah 4:6, fifth century C.E.).

Finally, here is an example of the Jewish legal tradition marginalizing a law that was deemed too harsh:



If a parent has a rebellious and defiant son, who does not heed his father or mother and does not obey them even after they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the public square ... They shall say to the town elders, this son of ours is disloyal and defiant, he does not heed us, he is a glutton and a drunkard. Thereupon the townspeople shall stone him to death (Deuteronomy 21:18–21).

Now, I know many of us parents have had the urge to drag our rebellious adolescent into the town square and do something similar, but even though the Torah regularly invokes capital punishment for crimes, later Jewish legal authorities held a profoundly negative opinion of the death penalty. So, even though the law was already "on the books," so to speak, Rabbinic Judaism interpreted every word of the law so restrictively as to make it impossible

to prosecute. They declared that this law could only apply when the son was between the age of 13 and 13½, that the mother and father's testimony must exactly corroborate, that the son must be proven a repeated glutton and drunkard, and much more, reducing the commandment to an absurdity. Further, the rabbis (with no actual proof) stated that even in the time of the Torah the law had never been invoked, as a way of further delegitimizing the text without contradicting it outright.

Judaism is still evolving today, but the ongoing humane and progressive interpretation of Torah is never a given. It is truly up to each generation to study the chain of tradition and carry the values of Judaism into the future. Ki Teitzei offers a rich resource from which to begin.

Have A Look At This

Carnegie Shul Vice President Rick D'Loss recently completed work on a five-minute promotional video for our shul that includes scenes from last year's High Holiday services. You may find it on youtube at https://youtu.be/q7_eoBrMY0. It is well worth spending five minutes to view.

Donations



Our Rosh Hashana flowers for the sanctuary are being donated by **Wendy Panizzi** in memory of her parents, **Arthur & Gloria Weisz**

Our Yom Kippur flowers for the sanctuary are being donated by **Gerrie Kettler** in memory of her husband, **Jack Kettler**.

The fan in our new Kiddush room was donated by **Michael and Ellen Roteman** in memory of his parents, **Bob and Ruth Roteman**.

Facebook

Did you know that the Carnegie Shul is on Facebook? We actually first created our Facebook page in June 2018, but the page has been dormant recently. But we are now posting once again and ask that you check us out. We are on Facebook as The Carnegie Shul.



High Holidays

This year we will be conducting High Holiday Services both in Shul and on-line. Sadly, a recent surge in Covid cases in Allegheny County will require that we again have some restrictions on our in Shul services. Advance reservations will be required, masks will be required for all in attendance regardless of vaccination status, aliyah blessings will be recited from your seat rather than going up to the bimah, and Torahs will not be paraded through the sanctuary. We also request that you sit only in your assigned seat. Seats are assigned to maximize social distancing but last year some congregants sat in seats other than the ones to which they had been assigned, making others feel uncomfortable.

Here are the High Holiday schedules and protocols. Reservations can be made by sending an email to Mike Roteman at mrmike7777@yahoo.com. A streaming link will be provided in the near future.

The following protocols will apply for the High Holiday Services:

1. A face mask must be worn properly at all times even if you have been vaccinated. NO EXCEPTIONS.
2. When you enter the Sanctuary, please go directly to your assigned seat. A prayer book will be waiting for you. Please leave the prayer book at your seat when departing from services.
3. Do not walk around the Shul after you have taken your seat.
4. Please bring your own yarmulke and tallis if you have one, and take them with you when you depart at the end of services. If you use one of the synagogue's yarmulkas or tallises, please leave them at your seat at the conclusion of services.
5. Please maintain social distancing as you come and go from the synagogue.
6. Please sanitize hard surfaces in the restrooms before and after each use with materials provided in the bathrooms.
7. There will be no parading or kissing of the Torah. If you are given an Aliyah, you will recite the blessings at your seat, not on the Bimah. The reader will be the only one on the Bimah.
8. The maximum number of participants will be 50. All participants will need to RSVP before the holidays. Seats will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis.
9. Please understand that space is limited. If you cannot attend after you have RSVPed, please let the Carnegie Shul know as soon as possible to allow for someone else to take your place.
10. DO NOT attend services if you are not feeling well or if you have been exposed to someone who is a possible Covid-19 carrier, or if you have underlying health issues that may put you at greater risk of becoming infected.

High Holiday Schedule

Rosh Hashanah

Monday, September 6

Evening Services 7:15 pm

Tuesday, September 7

Preliminary Service..... 8:30 am

Shacharis 9:00 am

Torah Reading..... 10:00 am

Sermon 10:45 am

Musaf 11:15 am

Recess 1:15 pm

Tashlich..... 6:15 pm

Minchah 7:00 pm

Maariv 7:15 pm

Wednesday, September 8

Preliminary Service..... 8:30 am

Shacharis 9:00 am

Torah Reading..... 10:00 am

Sermon 10:45 am

Musaf 11:15 am

Recess 1:15 pm

Minchah 7:00 pm

Maariv 7:15 pm

Yom Kippur

Wednesday, September 15

Kol Nidre 7:15 pm

Maariv 7:30 pm

Thursday, September 16

Preliminary Service..... 9:00 am

Shacharis 9:30 am

Torah Reading 10:30 am

Sermon 11:15 am

Yizkor 11:45 am

Musaf 12:15 pm

Recess..... 2:30 pm

Minchah 5:45 pm

Neilah 6:45 pm

Shofar 7:45 pm