

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



Parsha: Ki Tetze

Title: Animal Planet

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The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

Our *parsha*, *Parshat Ki Tetze*, is one of those that is chock-full of laws.

For example:



"When you build a new house, make sure to put a fence on the roof, so that the roof is safe for everyone who goes up there!"

"Put *tzitzit* on the four corners of your shirts!"

"When you harvest your field and by accident leave a bundle of grain behind, don't go back to get it! Leave it for the needy people who need it!"

The fact that the parsha is so jam-packed with laws makes a lot of sense. In *Devarim*, the last book of the Torah (and the book in which Parshat Ki Tetze appears), *Bnei Yisrael* are really just about to enter the Land of Israel, and Moshe – who is not going to get to go with them – is doing his absolute best to set them up for success. That means giving them many, many rules to live by in their new home, where they will be building houses, working as farmers, living as neighbors, and worshipping God.

Zooming In:

Interestingly, several of the laws that Moshe tells the people they will need to follow in the Land of Israel have to do with their animals! Today, a lot of us keep animals as pets – whether dogs, cats, iguanas, hamsters, fish... the list goes on and on. Back then, though, in the times of the Torah, Bnei Yisrael had animals to help them farm and do their other work.

- a) Oxen, which are male cows, were used to pull ploughs or thresh wheat
- b) Sheep and goats were used for their milk, meat, and wool
- c) Donkeys were used to ride on and carry heavy loads

So, what sorts of animal laws did Moshe put in place?

Here are some of the animal laws mentioned in Parshat Ki Tetze!



<p>Chapter 22, verse 4 If you see your friend's donkey or ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it. You must help him raise it.</p>	<p>כ"ב:ד' לא-תראַה אַת-חֲמֹר אָחִיד או שׁוֹרוֹ נִפְּלִים בַּדֶּרֶךְ, וְהִתְעַלְמָתָּ, מֵהֶם: הֲקִים תְּקִים עִמּוֹ.</p>
<p>Chapter 22, verse 6-7 If, along the road, you chance upon a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with chicks or eggs, and the mother is sitting over the chicks or on the eggs, do not take the mother together with her young. First send off the mother, and only then take the young...</p>	<p>כ"ב:ו'-ז' כִּי יִקְרָא קוֹן צִפּוֹר לְפָנֶיךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ בְּכָל-עֵץ אוֹ עַל-הָאָרֶץ, אֲפֻרְחִים אוֹ בִּיצִים, וְהָאִם רֹבֶצֶת עַל-הָאֲפֻרְחִים אוֹ עַל-הַבִּיצִים, לֹא- תִקַּח הָאִם עִם-הַבָּנִים. שְׁלַח תְּשַׁלַּח אֶת- הָאִם, וְאֶת-הַבָּנִים תִּקַּח-לָךְ...</p>
<p>Chapter 22, verse 10 You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.</p>	<p>כ"ב:י' לא-תַחַרֵּשׁ בְּשׁוֹר-וּבַחֲמֹר יַחְדָּו.</p>
<p>Chapter 25, verse 4 You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing.</p>	<p>כ"ה:ד' לא-תַחֲסֹם שׁוֹר בְּדִישׁוֹ.</p>

Questions for Consideration:

It is pretty clear why we should help an animal that has fallen down and can't get up itself because of the heavy load it is carrying. But,

- Why shouldn't you muzzle an ox while it is threshing wheat? (This means that you shouldn't put a mask on it that will keep it from snacking on grain while it is doing work with the grain.)
- Why do you think you shouldn't attach a donkey and an ox to the same yoke, or wooden beam, so that they can pull a plow together in your field?



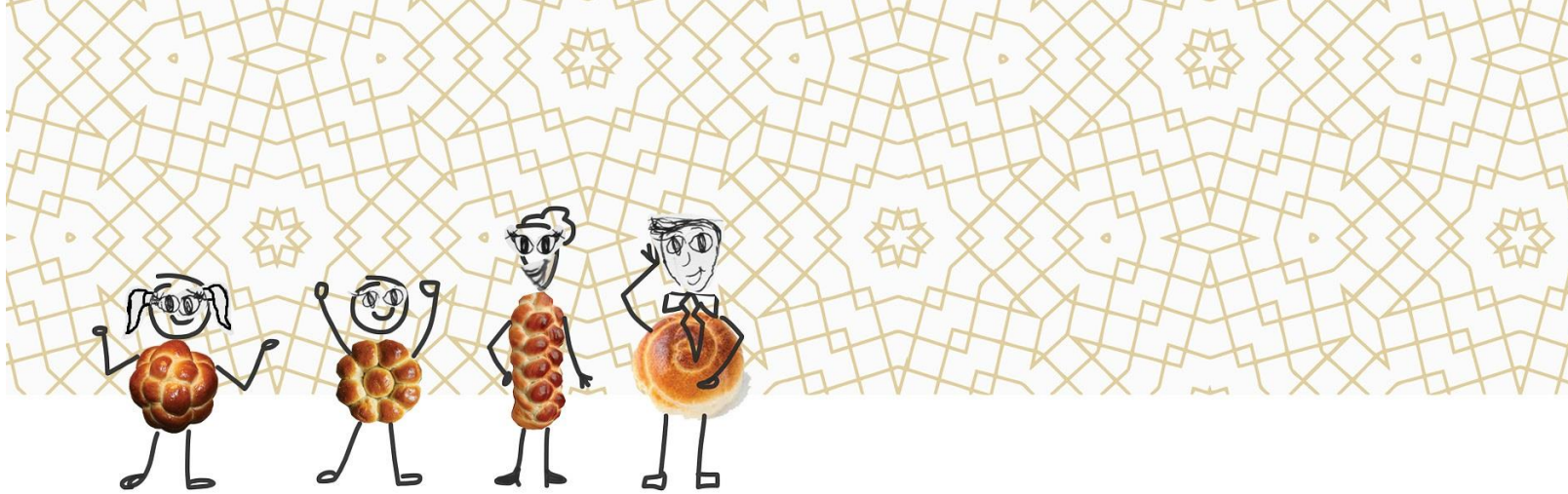
- Why, if you find a bird sitting on its eggs, are you supposed to shoo the bird away before you take the eggs for eating?

The Parsha Through Another Lens

Acting It Out:

In order to try and understand why these animal laws are so important, play out the following scenarios.

- 1) Do an impromptu three-legged race, making sure that the tallest family member and the shortest family member are put together on one team. (The rest of the family members can be paired by more equal heights.) Then discuss:
 - a. Why was it harder for the team that had such differently-sized members to succeed in the race?
 - b. Which animal law in Parshat Ki Tetze does this help us understand better? How so?
- 2) Ask one family member to serve dessert to the rest of the family, but for the first three minutes of eating, that family member shouldn't eat along with everyone else. Then discuss:
 - a. Was it fair to the server to make them do the work of serving but not let them join in dessert with everyone else?
 - b. Which animal law in Parshat Ki Tetze does this help us understand better? How so?
- 3) Then continue to discuss: let's say one family member isn't allowed to eat dessert for serious health reasons, but everyone else is allowed to eat it.
 - a. What would be the best way to serve dessert in the family – not have dessert at all? Only have dessert after that family member has gone to sleep? Other ideas?



- b. Which animal law in Parshat Ki Tetze does this conversation help us understand better? How so?

Finally, raise the thought that the point behind the animal laws that Moshe gave Bnei Yisrael before they entered the Land of Israel was to make sure they were **fair** and **kind** to their animals. Discuss: What other laws in the Torah do you know of that ensure we are **fair** or **kind** to the people or world that surrounds us?

Shabbat Shalom!