

Parashah Ki Teitzei

The one that outlines laws for fairness in the community, including honesty in business dealings and giving a fair divorce (a "get") to a wife.

Parashah Ki Teitzei is a collection of laws and regulations intended to guide the lives of the community. It begins with rules for conducting warfare, emphasizing ethical conduct during conflict. This includes how to treat captives with dignity and the importance of ensuring sanitary conditions within the camp.

The parashah also goes into the details of family life, such as the permission to marry a captive woman only after giving her the time to mourn her parents who died in the battle. It addresses the rights of the firstborn son and outlines the consequences of having a rebellious and disobedient son, which involves a trial and potentially severe punishment.

The parashah stresses the importance of honesty in business dealings. It prohibits the use of inaccurate weights and measures, promoting fairness and integrity in economic transactions. Additionally, it forbids charging interest on loans made to fellow community members, fostering economic equality and support within the community.

There are guidelines for showing kindness to others with compassion. These include returning lost items to their rightful owners, helping a neighbor lift a fallen animal's burden, and not muzzling an ox while it treads grain, emphasizing empathy for all living creatures.

Parashah Ki Teitzei also outlines the process of divorce, aiming to ensure fairness and protection for the vulnerable person, typically the wife. It provides guidelines for when a man divorces his wife, including the writing of a bill of divorce, known as a "get," and stipulations for her future welfare.

This portion offers a comprehensive code of conduct for community members, stressing the importance of ethical behavior, kindness, and justice in various aspects of life, including family, business, and social interactions.

Teen Takeaways from Parashah Ki Teitzei

- 1. Doing the right thing in tough times:** Even in difficult situations, it's crucial to do what's right and ethical, treating others with kindness and respect. Every human has two basic inclinations: one leads us to do good, and the other to do evil. When faced with moral dilemmas, we can often feel these two inclinations battling for our attention. That is why the Torah portion begins with the words, "When you take the field against your enemies." Even though we are not engaged in a military battle, we fight against the evil urge so that we can be *mensch*, people doing the right thing.
- 2. Compassion for all creatures:** Show empathy and kindness to animals and all living beings. This means not causing unnecessary harm or suffering. The Torah encourages us to be kind. If we are told to treat animals well, obviously we should treat other people well, too.
- 3. Family matters:** Respect and cooperation are essential within your family. Be responsible toward and considerate of your parents and siblings.
- 4. Fairness in everything:** Be honest in your dealings, whether in school projects or with friends. Treat everyone fairly, and don't take advantage of others.
- 5. Supporting your community:** Be a good neighbor and friend. Help out when someone needs assistance, like carrying a heavy bag or returning lost items to their owners. When we find a lost item, we might be tempted to keep it unless someone comes looking for it. Jewish tradition teaches us to seek out the owner in every way possible.
- 6. Protecting vulnerable people:** Stand up for those who might be in a tough spot, and make sure everyone's rights are respected.
- 7. Consequences for actions:** Realize that the choices you make can have consequences. Be responsible for your behavior.
- 8. Acceptance and respect:** Be inclusive and respectful of people from different backgrounds or cultures. It's important to make everyone feel welcome and valued. America is a refuge for immigrants from all over the world. Your family likely came here from somewhere else, too. It may have been several generations, but the people who treated your family well made it possible for you to be here now.
- 9. Looking out for others:** Care about the well-being of your friends and classmates. Make sure nobody is left out or feels alone.

Summary

These lessons from **Parashah Ki Teitzei** can help you grow into a **responsible, compassionate, and ethical** teenager who **contributes positively to your family and community**.