

Parashat Ki Teitzei

Deuteronomy 21:10–25:19

SEPTEMBER 13, 2019



SUMMARY

Ki Teitzei starts by teaching the Israelites some of the *mitzvot* they will be responsible for when they go to war to conquer the Promised Land.

According to Rabbi Moshe Maimonides *Parashat Ki Teitzei* contains 74 *mitzvot*, the most of any Torah portion. Among the many *mitzvot* mentioned in the Torah portion, Moshe tells people to return any lost items that they may find; to pay workers on time; to make sure a new home is safe for family and others by putting a fence around the roof, and to be honest in doing business. It also sets limits on punishment for people and animals that do something wrong.

The *Torah* portion concludes with the commandment to remember the tribe of Amalek's attack on the weak members of the community who lagged behind the main group as the Israelites set out from Egyptian slavery.

FROM OUR COMMENTATORS

CHIZKUNI:

ולא תשים דמים
בביתך לרבות כל
דבר המזיק כגון
כלב רע וסולם רעוע
And do not put
blood on your house
this includes anything
which might harm--
such as a bad dog or
a shaky ladder.

FOR DISCUSSION

1) In this week's *parasha* we learn the *mitzvah* of making a railing around any portion of a roof that we intend to use for outdoor space:

כִּי תִבְנֶה בַּיִת חֹדֶשׁ וְעָשִׂיתָ מַעֲקֵה לְגִגְתָּךְ וְלֹא־תָשִׂים דָּמִים בְּבֵיתְךָ
כִּי־יִפֹּל הַנֹּפֵל מִמֶּנּוּ:

When you build a new house, make a railing for your roof and do not put blood on your house, when “the faller” falls from it.

Why do you think the Torah calls the person who might fall from your roof “the faller” instead of “the person”?

2) The word “מַעֲקֵה” (*ma'akeh*) translated above as “railing” only appears one time in the whole TaNaKH. The name for this kind of word is “hapax legomenon”. Because it only appears one time, we don't know exactly what it means, but we do know--from the root of the word--that it means “to hold back”. A מַעֲקֵה is likely something designed “to hold back” a person from experiencing danger.

What kinds of guests would be most likely to hurt themselves if they visited your home?

(Blind? Deaf? “Fallers”? . . .)

What could you build / do “to hold back” these guests from danger?