

Shabbat Update August 21, 2021

To rbessman@berchayim.org



Shabbat Update

August 21, 2021

Cantor Bessman's Shabbat Update

Dear BCC Membership,

Ki Teitzei continues with laws—though they are unlike many of the laws seen in the previous week's parashah. Last week, in Shoftim, we read of laws in the Bible that should find ready acceptance in today's western justice system, such as respect the court; respect bribery (respect in the meaning of "fear" for its ability to taint justice); need for due diligence; no one is above the law; stealing is not allowed, and physical damage demands financial restitution.

Ki Teitzei continues with laws that would seem quite foreign in western courts of justice.



August Calendar of Events

*B'er Chayim
Temple is open for
in-person
services.
Same safeguards
will be in place.*

*ZOOM services
continue*

Death as punishment for promiscuity and licentiousness is one. The directive to bury the dead quickly is another. I'm sure that controversies relating to mixing materials in a garment (wool and linen) have rarely been appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. Much of Ki Teitzei would not be implemented in our American or Jewish world.

Of particular interest to many of us is Deuteronomy 21:18-21. These verses relate to the rebellious son who does not obey his parents, risking death by stoning. The parents must first warn the child to amend his wanton behaviors. If unheeded, "they shall say to the elders of the city that 'this son of ours is wayward and rebellious; he does not obey us [he is] a glutton and a guzzler (21:20).'" The punishment is revealed in the next verse. Happily, for us, our parents may not be so severe. Thanks are given to the great men of the Talmud. Conditions were set or revealed. We'll examine this at Saturday's Torah study.

We hoped to have a congregational picnic on Sunday, August 22, but COVID numbers are unfortunately increasing everywhere. The picnic is now canceled/postponed. However, we can still look forward to our "welcome back" in-person Shabbat Under the Stars Friday dinner and service this Friday. It will be at the Bel Air Pavilion with BYOD (bring your own dinner after 6:30 pm) before the 7:30 pm service. Oneg follows. Address: 14401 Barton Boulevard SW. Weather and technology permitting, we plan to set up a Zoom camera for the 7:30 pm service for those unable to physically attend.

Shabbat shalom,

Cantor Richard Bessman

This Week's Torah Portion

Friday
August 20
Shabbat Under
The Stars
7:30 pm
Bel Air Pavilion *
with BYOD
(Bring Your Own
Dinner) at 6:30
pm

Saturday
August 21
10:00 am
Torah Study

CANCELLED
Sunday
August 22
Congregational
Picnic
CANCELLED

Friday
August 27
7:30 pm
Erev Shabbat
Service

*address for
Shabbat Under
the Stars:

take 220 South
towards Keyser,
In Belair, make a
right onto Barton
Blvd. Pavilion is
located above
the ballfields and
Bel Air
Elementary

Ki Teitzei

כִּי-תֵצֵא

When You Go Out (to Battle)
Deuteronomy 21:10–25:19

Summary:

- Moses reviews a wide variety of laws regarding family, animals, and property. (21:10–22:12)
 - Various civil and criminal laws are delineated, including those regarding sexual relationships, interaction with non-Israelites, loans, vows, and divorce. (22:13–24:5)
 - Laws of commerce pertaining to loans, fair wages, and proper weights and measures are given. (24:10–25:16)
 - The parashah concludes with the commandment to remember for all time the most heinous act committed against the Israelites—Amalek's killing of the old, weak, and infirm after the Israelites left Egypt. (25:17–19)
-

D'Var Torah

The Power of Collective Memory by
Cantor Evan Kent

This week's Torah portion, Ki Teitzei, contains 72 of the 613 commandments. We read of laws regarding the taking captives, how to deal with a rebellious son, laws specific to the burying of the dead, whom you cannot marry, and laws of divorce. In addition to enumerating many laws, this portion also asks us multiple times to remember both our slavery and the Exodus from Egypt. When Moses shares the rules to not subvert the rights of the widow or the fatherless (Deuteronomy 24:17), he follows this commandment with a demand to recall the



Yahrzeits for week ending

**August 21, 2021
13 Elul 5781**

Anna Mandell
Abraham Olin
David Aaron
Lazarus
Elsa Lichtenstein
Max Spear
Bronya Valdman
Annie Kaplon
Margot
Steinberger
Shile Devorah
Margolis
Donald Truesdell
Edna A. Aronson
Samuel Arzt
Doris Ann Herron
Richard G.
Kagey, Jr.
Joel Joseph
Lipsch
Jacob Nathan



Happy Birthday

August 1
Howard Pallik

Israelite slavery experience:

Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and that the God redeemed you from there... (Deuteronomy 24:18).

Moses then commands the Israelites to leave fruit on their trees and crops in the field for those less fortunate (Deuteronomy 24: 19-21) – and again we are asked to remember our slavery and subsequent liberation:

Always remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore, do I enjoin you to observe this commandment (Deuteronomy 24:22).

We are also told to remember Miriam, not because of her attributes as a leader or as a prophetess, but rather as a warning to heed the rules for examining skin diseases:

In cases of a skin affection, be most careful to do exactly as the Levitical priests instruct you. Take care to do as I have commanded them. Remember what your God did to Miriam on the journey after you left Egypt (Deuteronomy 24:8-9).

Moses presents the Israelites with rules that will guide their future and here again amplifies these ordinances with an event from the community's past. In Numbers 12:10, we recall Miriam's skin affliction:

As the cloud withdrew from the Tent, there was Miriam stricken with snow-white scales. When Aaron turned toward Miriam, he saw that she was stricken with scales.

From Moses' instructions to the Israelites, it is apparent that their collective future cannot be disassociated from their past. For both the ancient Israelite community and contemporary Jews, our collective memories continue to influence us as a people. The collective memory of Americans, for example, is likely to include such traumatic events as the assassination of President Kennedy, the 9/11 attacks, and the COVID-19 pandemic. On a lighter note, our collective memory might also

August 2

Barbie Corwell
Lydia Savramis

August 6

Betsy Hurwitz
Schwab

August 8

Zak Andrews

August 18

Polly Jo Hightower

8/19

Howard Reynolds
Bruce Dubins

8/24

Bebe Goldman

8/26

Lee Schwartz

8/28

Nancy
Friedenberg

8/31

David Pallik

8/31

Judi Lazarus
Haag

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B'er Chayim

include the appearance of The Beatles on The Ed Sullivan Show.

Families, too, have memories that are passed down from generation to generation, like that car trip to the Grand Canyon or being present at Grandma's 100th birthday party. According to the French Jewish philosopher and social scientist, Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945), who is credited with inventing the term "collective memory," these memories are transmitted through the group's telling and retelling of shared stories.

Historian Yosef Yerushalmi (1932-2009) believes that the potency of Jewish collective memory is attributable to the fact that we reinforce memory through ritual. Moses' request that the Exodus from Egypt be remembered is exemplified in the Passover seder, when we reenact the story of our enslavement and liberation from ancient Egypt. We hear Pharaoh's voice and join Moses, Miriam, and Aaron and the thousands of Israelites as the sea parts to let our people cross to safety.

When we take the Torah scroll from the ark, we are enacting the giving of Torah at Sinai, and the hakafah through the congregation reminds us that we all stood at Sinai. On Yom Kippur, during the Avodah service, we join the ancient High Priest in the Holy of Holies, and the lighting of Hanukkah candles encapsulates the story of the Maccabees and rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem.

These examples help us to reinforce our collective memories as a people. but how do we retain and relive the collective memories of our immediate or extended family? One way is to adopt texts, rites and rituals that codify memories. Begin by asking our family elders to recount their life stories, record them, create special times to tell and retell these stories.

A few years ago, after moving to Jerusalem, I realized I needed to know and understand my grandparents' journeys and stories, as I believed that their stories of immigration were

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"Virtual" instructions -

*To watch on Zoom -
send an email to
admin@berchayim.org
and the ID and
Password will be
emailed back to you.
The ZOOM Id and
Password will be the
same each Friday
evening. Please
remember that Rebecca
is part time, leave
yourself enough time.*

*Following along in
prayerbooks for ZOOM
services:*

*Links for prayerbooks
are found on our website
(www.berchayim.org).
Those links will take you
to Mishkah T'Filah for
Shabbat Services.*

linked to my own aliyah. Even though they all had been deceased for decades, my parents aided me in recreating their lives and narratives. With the help of family heirlooms, sepia toned photos, immigration records, and sketchy memories, I wove together my grandparents' and great-grandparents' stories of hardship, exile, immigration, and survival. The gathered stories and memories of a generation long-gone have now become part of my own memory repository. And just like Moses, the assembled stories of the past make me better appreciate and understand both the present and the future.

Cantor Evan Kent is an *oleh chadash* (new immigrant) living in Jerusalem, where he is on the faculty of [Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion](#). For 25 years, he served [Temple Isaiah](#) in Los Angeles, CA.

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