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Going over to pickups

The *Alte Zachen* horses' time is up

They starred in movies and songs, crawling along with their horse and cart laden with junk. The rag and bone men may still be with us, but the horse is leaving the stage. The reason: it disturbs the traffic and also because of complaints about abuse of the horses.

"Alte zachen, alte zachen" – many of us are familiar with the cry of the man and his cart laden with old furniture drawn by a horse or donkey. It seems that this sight, at least in its horse or donkey version, is about to disappear from our lives. Minister of Transport Yisrael Katz — a moshavnik and former dairy farmer and a dog owner — has decided to adopt a recommendation to prohibit the carters from using animals to carry their goods.

The reasons for the decision: the slow passage of the carts causes a safety problem on the roads, and no less important, complaints and reports about the fact that many of the carters neglect their horses, cutting back on food and medical care in order to save money, and working them sometimes to the point of exhaustion and death, just in order to save on fuel and insurance.

The complainant: the Hakol Chai association. As it says in Hakol Chai's complaint, "Enforcement of the law against the abuse of animals falls between the government offices, and so the horses are not protected by the state".

The new regulations are currently being drawn up, to be put forward for approval by the Knesset Finance Committee. The new law will come into force only after the elections. Enforcement against offenders will be carried out by the police, but the penalties have not yet been determined. It has not yet been decided whether it will also be prohibited to harness horses to carriages to carry people in the tourist trade.