

Torah: Sh'mot (Exodus) 21:1 – 24:18
Haftarah: Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 34:8-22;
 33:25-26 (2Ki. 12:1-17 – Shabbat Shekelim)
B'rit Hadashah: Mattityahu (Matthew) 24:1-14

	year 1 21:1– 22:3	year 2 22:4-23:19	year 3 23:20-24:18
1	21:1 – 6	22:4 – 8	23:20 – 23:25
2	21:7 – 11	22:9 – 12	23:26 – 30
3	21:12 – 19	22:13 – 18	23:31 – 33
4	21:20 – 27	22:19 – 26	24:1 – 6
5	21:28 – 32	22:27 – 23:5	24:7 – 11
6	21:33 – 36	23:6 – 13	24:12 – 14
7	21:37 – 22:3	23:14 – 19	24:15 – 18

if a man grazes his livestock in a field or vineyard / and he lets stray livestock graze in the field of another / from the best of his field and from the best of his vineyard he shall make restitution	<i>kiy yav'er-ish sadéh 'o-kérem ve'shilakh et-b'iy'roh u'vi'er bis'déh akher meytav sadéhu u'meytav kar'mo ye'shalem</i>	כִּי יִבְעֵר-אִישׁ שָׂדֵה אוֹ-כַרְם וְשָׁלַח אֶת-בְּעִירָה וּבְעֵר בְּשָׂדֵה אֲחֵר מֵיטֵב שָׂדֵהוּ וּמֵיטֵב כַּרְמוֹ יִשְׁלֹם: 8
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We continue with the first body of Torah legislation elaborating on the Ten Words ("Commandments") presented in last week's reading. These laws, revolutionary in the context of their day are timeless, forming the basis of modern civil law. Justice, compassion and dignity are "legislated" in the love of HaShem!

The haftarah recalls the receiving of these laws regarding freeing servants, and how the people were disobedient, repented, and then changed their minds, taking back the servants. Severe punishment follows, but the promises of HaShem remain forever!

Week 2 Aliyah Highlights

- Ex. 22:4-8** Take reasonable responsibility for actions/allowances that have unintended results.
- Ex. 22:9-12** Law of Bailment: Responsibility based on ordinary and similar prudence and care.
- Ex. 22:13-18** In Bailment, hiring increases responsibility. Borrowing is similar. These laws are reflective of a highly developed commerce. Stolen property, stolen heart. Brideprice (*mohar* – מוֹהָר) was a pre-existing common practice. Sorcery strictly prohibited (De. 18:9-14). Bestiality prohibited (Le. 18:23, 20:15-16, De. 27:21).
- Ex. 22:19-26** Slaughter (*zevakh* – זֶבַח) to gods - to fellowship with them - was to be annihilated (*kharam* - חָרַם). See De. 13:16-18. Jos. 7:24-25. The stranger (*ger* – גֵּר) was a foreign-born permanent resident, eventually assimilated to take on membership (obligations/duties) of the covenantal society (post-Tanakh became synonymous with "proselyte"). Easily mistreated (abused/victimized/defrauded) in the process. Exploitation of widow, orphan, and poor is very tempting. But HaShem is their champion (Pr. 22:22-23, 23:10-11). Torah safeguards dignity, banning borrowing/loaning in the community with interest. The divine attribute of compassion (*khanun* – חַנּוּן) is uniquely mentioned without mercy (v.26), emphasizing the rights of the poor.
- Ex. 22:27-23:5** Duties toward HaShem are tersely stated focusing on promptness and priority, and inferring existing knowledge of the procedures; emphasis on respect and value for life and property. Ethical and moral every-day-living is the responsibility of holy people (See Le. 19). Five behavioral prohibitions to maintain justice in court. Emotions, though noble, must not color judgment. Even your enemies must be treated humanely (Pr. 25:21).
- Ex. 23:6-13** Justice continued. Agricultural prescriptions with respect to supporting the community, and the bigger picture of conservation, paralleled with principles of Shabbat, closing legislation regarding human relationships and obligations to HaShem.

7. **Ex. 23:14-19** Agricultural festivals form the core of the calendar. Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and Passover are thus omitted here. Promptness and priority round out this section. Be honest and generous in your offerings and tithes of firstfruits.

Theme

Responsibility and rights: The details of God's law establish the context for how a person and a nation interacts with others and the world around them. This is couched in terms of both responsibility and rights. Our actions should speak with one voice of normative obedience, yet we can experience Adonai - who is one - in unique and diverse ways.

Thought Focus

Debt is not a modern crisis – Read Ps. 112. All of creation borrows from one another in a dance, creating peace between one another *without interest*. Nothing is alone or complete on its own. Loan vs. Alone.

The Heart is in the details – Before morning prayer, we recite the Blessing Over Torah, then “study:”

Torah Nu. 6:24-26 May the LORD bless you and protect you. May the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the LORD turn his face toward you and grant you peace,

Mishnah Pe'ah 1:1 “These are the things for which there is no fixed measure: the corner of the field, firstfruits, appearances before LORD, acts of kindness, and the study of Torah.”

Shabbat 127a “These are the things whose fruits we eat in this world but whose full reward awaits us in the World to Come: honoring parents; acts of kindness; arriving early at the house of study morning and evening; hospitality to strangers; visiting the sick; helping the needy bride; attending to the dead; devotion in prayer; and bringing peace between people – but the study of Torah is equal to them all.”

Daily Devotional questions for reflection and application

1. (21:1) Are you *acquiring* knowledge and rules, or are you *using* them to develop personal relationship with God? (Isa 12:2-4, Jer 31:32-33, 2Co 3:3-6, Joh 4:13-23)
2. (21:20) How do you view your position to those you serve, and those that serve you? (Eph 5:22, 25, 6:1, 6:5-9, Gal 3:28, Phil 2:5-8, Joh 15:15, Col 3:23, Luk 17:7-10, 1Ti 6:1-2, Tit 2:9-10)
3. (22:4) Have you been consumed/ravaged by the world? Have you been rescued and experienced God's restoration? (Isa 5:5, 2Sa 12:5-6, Psa 51, Mat 9:36, Joh 10:11, Eze 34:13-16, Joe 2:21-27)
4. (22:27) Out of the mouth, the heart speaks. The tongue is powerful. How are you at controlling yours? (Lev 24:16, Job 2:9-10, Luk 6:45, Mat 5:22, Lam 3:37-40, Jam 3:6-10)
5. (23:6) Are you poor? How do you view the “poor?” Do you share the gospel with the poor, regardless of the reason for their poverty? (Exo 22:24, Ecc 4:13, 1Sa 18:23, Exo 23:3, Psa 9:10, Lev 27:8, 2Sa 12:4, Mat 26:11, Mat 5:3, Mat 11:5, Isa 61:1, Deu 16:19-20, Isa 10:1-2, 1Jo 3:17)
6. (23:20) Yeshua is the only way. Do you trust Him completely to lead you? (Exo 23:23, Jos 5:13-14, Num 20:16, Gen 24:7, Isa 30:21, 1Co 10:4, Col 1:15-17, 1Ti 2:5, Joh 14:6, Act 4:12)
7. (23:26) Fullness is not just quantity, but quality. Are you living life to its fullest? (Psa 90:10, Job 5:26, Pro 10:27, Pro 20:27, Deu 4:9, Luk 12:20, Job 27:8, Mar 6:27, 1Co 3:9, 1Th 3:2, Mat 11:28-30, 2Ti 2:15, 1Co 9:26-27, Mat 25:21, Ecc 7:15-18, Mar 8:34-38)