

<b>Torah:</b> Sh'mot (Exodus) 21:1 – 24:18
<b>Haftarah:</b> Malakhim Bet (2 Kings) 12:1-17
Shabbat Sheqalim
<b>B'rith Hadashah:</b> Mattityahu (Matthew) 17:24-27

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

and these are the judgments which you shall set before them / if you buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing

*v'ele ha'mishpatiyim ashér tasiym lifnéyhem  
ki tiq'né éved ivri shesh shaniym ya'avod  
u'vash'vi'it yetzé la'khofshiy khinam*

וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָטִים אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמַם לִפְנֵיכֶם:  
כִּי תִקְנֹה עָבֵד עַבְדֵי שָׂנִים יַעֲבֹד  
וּבְשָׁבָעַת יֵצֵא לְחֻפְשֵׁי חֶם:

This parshah contains the first body of Torah legislation, details that flow from the Ten Words ("Commandments") that were presented in last week's reading. When read with our modern eyes, they may seem irrelevant and harsh, but they are revolutionary in the context of systems of law (eg. Code of Hammurabi, among others) practiced in their time. This context is of utmost importance. A famous example is "an eye for an eye" (Ex. 21:24), which did not mean taking out another person's eye, but that the value of the eye is not based on the social status of a victim or a perpetrator. These "laws" are so timeless that they form the basis of modern civil law.

The haftarah, for *Shabbat Sheqalim*, describes the use of money, such as that collected from the census noted in *Sh'mot* (Exodus) 30:11-16, to maintain the Temple.

## Aliyah Highlights

- Ex. 21:1-6** Authoritative standards of conduct (Ps. 82:1) given to those under covenant, beginning (Jer. 34:13-14) with ten rules for the governance of indentured male servants (*éved* – עָבֵד), who are brothers (Le. 25:39-42, De. 15:12). Sages say that to take on a servant is to take on a master.
- Ex. 21:7-11** Laws regarding a maid/concubine (*amah* – אֲמָה) daughter given to another family. The context of such a "sale" is extreme financial hardship, and the desire to elevate the daughter through marriage to someone in a more stable financial position.
- Ex. 21:12-19** Capital Offenses: murder (Le. 24:17, 21, De. 17:6, 19:15), dishonoring parents (Ex. 20:12, De. 21:18-), kidnapping. Bodily injury.
- Ex. 21:20-27** Bodily injury, continued. Assault and battery are public crimes. Monetary compensation was required for bodily injury – not retaliation. Amounts not defined in Torah: to be determined by judges? Vicarious punishment is not acceptable. The well-being of a servant is an innovation of Torah law.
- Ex. 21:28-32** Responsibility for the homicidal animal (Ge. 9:5-6); criminal negligence.
- Ex. 21:33-36** Property (livestock) damage and negligence discussed.
- Ex. 21:37-22:3** Laws of theft – penalties for stealing, and grace for the thief.

## Thought Focus

**It's logical** – The opening verse begins with a single letter that must not be overlooked: "And..." is a logical connector. It connects what came before to what follows. These *mishpatim* are therefore connected

to the Ten Words – they were also given on Mt. Sinai. They also come directly from *HaShem*. It's simple logic. We therefore must be personally responsible for our behavior regarding them. We are accountable to him.

**Responsibility and rights:** The Hebrew word, *mishpatim* (מְשֻׁפְטִים), might better be understood as “government” – how we govern ourselves in the world. 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 - as many - can experience HaShem - who is one - in unique and diverse ways.

**Judgement and the altar** – This parashah immediately follows the description of the construction of the altar. Rashi comments that this means the seat of judgment should always be near the altar, so that the judges know that HaShem is with them when they exercise their authority (Ps. 82:1).

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#### Daily Devotional questions for reflection and application

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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)