

Parashah #18

(Updated for 1.29.11)

Mishpatim ~ **משפטים** ~ Rulings

Torah: Sh'mot/Exodus 21:1~24:18

Haftarah: Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 34:8-22 & 33:25-26

B'rit Hadashah: Mattityahu/Matthew 5:38-42 & 15:1-20

Mark 7:1-23; Acts 23:1-11; Ivrim/Hebrews 9:15-22 & 10:28-39

Here I am again with WAY more information than I can assimilate this week. I guess that's one reason we get to keep doing this year after year!!! Baruch HaShem!!!

Before I get to the “meat” of our Torah portion, I have another thing or two to share.

First: The Hebrew phrase for “the Ten Words” is (ah-seh-reht ha-dee-broat) *aseret ha-dibrot*. *Dibrot* is plural of (dee-behr) *diber*, which means a *wise saying*, denoting the revealed word of HaShem.

Second: I have one other item **AND** I am so in agreement with these words, I want to quote them exactly.

“It is crucial for us to understand theologically, that the primary purpose in HaShem giving us the Torah, as a way of making someone righteous, only achieves its goal when the person, by faith, accepts that Yeshua is the promised Messiah spoken about. Until the individual reaches this conclusion, his familiarity of the Torah is only so much intellectual nutrition. Only by believing in Yeshua will the person be able to properly understand HaShem and consequently, his Word.”

Torah teacher, Ariel Ben-Lyman HaNaviy

Our Parashah reading is entitled (Mish-pah-teem) *Mishpatim*, translated *ordinances, instructions* or more adequately *rulings*, and concerns social justice.

Research indicates this Torah portion can be divided with the following outline:

- Judicial Requirements Sh'mot/Exodus 21:1-21:17
- Making Restitution Sh'mot/Exodus 21:18-22:16
- Safeguards for True Worship Sh'mot/Exodus 22:17-19
- Safeguards for the Vulnerable Sh'mot/Exodus 22:20-26
- Miscellaneous Instructions Sh'mot/Exodus 22:27-23:19
- Renewal of G~d's Promises Sh'mot/Exodus 23:20-33
- Covenant Ratification Sh'mot/Exodus 24:1-18

CHAPTER 21

How does your translation begin in **verse 1**? The original Hebrew begins with the word “**And**” which is reflected in The Chumash and Tanakh. However, several other translations I checked do not reflect it.

Since the **original language** begins with the word **And**, it indicates it is directly associated with what came before it. “**AND**” (pun intended) the subject just before this was the Decalogue, so it would stand to reason what follows, is equally as important.

I want to emphatically state Torah is **NOT** “Law”!!! It actually comes from the root word (shah-faht) *shaphat* which means *to establish, reduce, bring, ordain, and set on*. There are a few other Hebrew words which come from this root word also: (show-faht) *shophat* means *judge* and its plural form is (showf-teem) *shoftim/judges*. The name (Y’hoe-shah-faht) *Y’hoshafat/Jehosaphat* is a combination of this root word and one of the Hebrew names of G~d/Yah. In (Ah-lehf M’lah-keem) *Alef M’lakim/1st Kings* we learn that Y’hoshafat is king of *Y’hudah/Judah* and **Mattityahu/Matthew 1:8** tells us he is in Messianic genealogy.

As we study Torah, I believe, it is important to study the root words (usually 3 Hebrew letters). Knowing the root helps us better determine the original meaning in its proper context.

In the past, when beginning this Parashah reading, I was tempted to read through it very quickly. Honestly, I was even tempted to skip over most of it. After all, who cares about what happens to the oxen, the donkeys, the slaves and such? How applicable is it for us today, anyway? But then, HaShem got my attention, as He usually does!

Upon closer examination, I came to realize these instructions of Torah are standards of godliness. HaShem’s instructions are the very definition of right and wrong, righteousness and sin. No matter how irrelevant the rulings of Torah might seem to us, we must always remember, these are the true words of the Living G~d. They are His standards of righteousness.

Yeshua said, “You shall love the L~rd your G~d with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second *is* like unto it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (**Mattityahu/Matthew 22:37-40** which is originally from **D’varim/Deuteronomy 6:5** and **Vayikra/Leviticus 19:18**) In essence, He was saying, all the other commandments stem from these two. Therefore, all the other “laws” are the hands-on examples of how to implement these two and the subsequent ten. Another way I explain it is there are a total of 613 commandments. $6 + 1 + 3 = 10$. There are two tablets on which the Ten were written. Yeshua gave us two which encompassed the Ten and likewise the 613.

In the *B'rit Hadashah/Renewed Covenant*, (Hah Mah-she-ahk) *HaMashiach/The Messiah* is referred to as (Ha Tzah-deek) *HaTzadik/the Righteous One*. Yeshua was not merely righteous, He was **THE** Righteous One. He was more than just a good and lawful man, He was without sin. His life was not only completely submitted to the will of the Father but His life was completely consistent with the rules of Torah. His life and His teachings were consistent with even the seemingly “nitpicky” matters of “what happens to the oxen, the donkeys, the slaves and such” which dealt with civil law. If He had transgressed any of G~d’s commandments, He would have failed to remain sinless. His death would have been sad and unfortunate. We can’t have it both ways. Either He kept the **WHOLE** Torah and was sinless or He broke the Torah and was sinful. **1st John 3:4** (NIV) “Everyone who sins breaks the Torah; in fact, sin is lawlessness.”

Consequently, the “laws”, rules, regulations of Torah teach us about the life of our Messiah. He is a perfect, living example of Adonai’s Law lived out. This is why we refer to Him as the “Living Torah”. Just as Torah reveals G~d’s righteousness in written form, Yeshua revealed it in human form. This helps explain why the Apostle (Yoke-ahn-nahn) *Yochanan/John* called the Messiah the “Word made Flesh”. It’s as if HaShem wrapped His Holy Torah in flesh and bone and sent it/Him to walk among us.

This casts a new light on the laws about “the oxen, the donkeys, slaves and such”. This really isn’t skip-over material, at all! When we study Torah, we are learning the revelations of the Holy One, the expression of His righteousness and the very nature of *HaMashiach/The Messiah*.

“And these are the rulings you are to present to them” (**verse 1**). Torah is the standard of righteousness. But it is also the rule of מִשְׁפָּט (mish-paht) *mishpat/justice*. It is primarily a list of guidelines for righteousness and justice. Righteousness can be understood as the fulfillment of all legal and moral obligations. In the judicial sense, it is a state of innocence. Justice can be understood as the fair administration of authority, rightly deciding between contestants, rightly rewarding and rightly punishing.

The twin concepts of righteousness and justice are at the very center of Torah, Messiah and the Kingdom of Heaven. Avraham was originally chosen because he would teach his children after him in “dong righteousness and justice” (**B’resheet/Genesis 18:19**). The Scriptures tell us HaShem loves righteousness and justice (**Tehillim/Psalms 33:5**). He desires them more than sacrifice (**Mishlei/Proverbs 21:3**) and His very throne is founded upon them, for it is written in **Tehillim/Psalms 97:2**, “Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.” As we grapple with the laws of Torah, we are seeking to understand the foundation of the throne of Adonai. When we read the Torah’s laws, we are reading about the administration of King Messiah, the ultimate champion of justice and righteousness.

In **verses 2-6**, we learn about the Bond Servant! Notice in **verse 5**, “Nevertheless, if the slave declares, ‘I love my master, my wife and my children, so I don’t want to go free,’ then his master is to bring him before G~d; and there at the door or doorpost, his master is to pierce his ear with an awl; and the man will be his slave for life. Garry Capps has an incredible teaching on this subject! While a Baptist pastor, he came to the realization of Torah being the foundation of all other scripture. I’m sure there are many others but some former Baptist pastors who now teach Hebrew Roots and whose insights I find enlightening are:

- Garry Capps www.bondservantministries.net
- Monte Judah www.lionlamb.net
- Mike Clayton www.joinedtohashem.net & www.joinedtohashem.org

The really important lesson to learn has to do with our wanting to be FREE or wanting to be a BOND Servant. Ya see . . . if you are FREE, you are personally responsible for all that does and doesn’t happen to you. If you are a Bond Servant your Master takes care of your needs. This relationship is what the Apostles ascribed to. They were Yeshua’s bond servants. This sheds new light on “. . . choose you today whom you are going to serve! Will it be the gods your ancestors served . . . or the gods . . . in whose land you are living? As for me and my house, we will serve Adonai.” (**Y’hoshua/Joshua 24:15**)

Verses 12-17 address the death penalty and the five capital offenses it covers:

- Criminal homicide
- Premeditated murder
- Hitting one’s parents
- Kidnapping
- Abuse of Parents

Torah says murderers, kidnappers and insolent children are to be put to death. “Whoever strikes (attacks) his father or his mother shall surely be put to death” (**verse 15**). According to Strong’s Concordance the word **strike** or **attack** comes from the Hebrew root word #5221 (נכה nah-kah) **nakah** which is a primary root meaning **to strike** (lightly or severely, literally or figuratively). There is no indication the parent was killed or ever badly hurt in the altercation with the child. The mere act of hitting one’s father or mother is enough impudence for HaShem to deem it as bad as murder. This shows us how HaShem’s values are sometimes different from ours. Of course, we would never advocate striking one’s father or mother, but neither would we feel comfortable putting someone to death for doing so. Family counseling? Yes. Anger management classes? Sure. Death by stoning? Probably not. HaShem sees it differently. When He says, “Hone your father and your mother” (**Sh’mot/Exodus 20:12**), He means it!!!

Then, in verse 17, HaShem says if a child curses his father or his mother he is to be put to death! What does it mean to curse one’s parents? According to traditional Judaism, the passage is not speaking only of abusive language; it is speaking of a real curse. If a son or daughter uses the holy name of Adonai to utter an intentional curse against one of their parents, that son or

daughter is worthy of death. Without a sovereign Torah-court wielding civil authority, the death penalty no longer applies. No one has been stoned by Torah-law in almost 2,000 years. The extreme punishment for striking or cursing one's parents teaches the importance biblical religion places on the integrity and decency of the family. Rebellion, violence and insolence against one's parents, whether physical or verbal, is as much a threat to the fabric of society as murder and kidnapping.

Unfortunately, in today's world, society teaches children, particularly teenagers, to disrespect their parents. It is normal to hear teenagers speak to their parents with impertinent and insolent words. It is embarrassing to be around a family where the children are out of order. Children who speak back to their parents disrespectfully are a public disgrace to their family. As a society, we have lost the biblical value of honoring father and mother. **Rav Sha'ul/Apostle Paul** warned in the last days, a spirit of rebelliousness would be unleashed upon the world. He said men will be "arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable" (2nd Timothy 3:2-3). He advised us to "avoid such men as these" (2nd Timothy 3:5)

Before we leave this chapter I want to visit **verse 24**. We have all heard this expression, primarily taught to us from **Mattityahu/Matthew 5:38** about an "eye for an eye . . ." etc. The Sages tell us this term was always known to mean the responsible party must pay the "monetary value" for an eye, in restitution for the eye which he had blinded. Never did a court **EVER** blind or otherwise inflict a physical injury in revenge or retribution."

CHAPTER 22

Reading commentaries from the Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash and Tanakh, I found interesting and important information. I quote:

"The fact that all editions of the Chumash list this as a new chapter illustrates a problem that came into being many centuries ago. In the Torah scroll, there are no chapters. The division of the Torah into the commonly used chapters is a Christian device introduced into printed editions of the Torah by non-Jewish Italian printers. The Bible scholars responsible for the divisions did not take into account the interpretations of the Torah as it was transmitted from Sinai. Consequently, one often finds new chapters that should have been continuations of the previous ones and long chapters that should have been divided into two."

In these chapters, most of the commandments relate to interpersonal relationships. If time would allow, we could probably comment on each of these guidelines. Perhaps one or two will suffice for now. For instance . . .

- In **21:33** “If a man shall uncover a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit and not cover it . . .” teaches us that we need to be mindful of others at all times.
- If **22:15-16 (16-17)** were in effect today, I believe we would have fewer abortions and out-of-wedlock babies. It says, “If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged to be married and sleeps with her, he must pay the bride-price for her to be his wife. But if her father refuses to give her to him, he must pay a sum equivalent to the bride-price for virgins.”

In **verses 20-26**, concern for the disadvantaged of society is discussed. Four social groups, which are especially vulnerable, are singled out as being the object of HaShem’s special concern. They are . . .

- The stranger
- The widow
- The orphan
- The poor

One of the things we need to remember concerning these (mish-pah-teem) *mishpatim/rulings* is the fact they are the standards set up for the judicial system. It is my belief, if society, in general, would adhere to these principles, we wouldn’t have overcrowding of our jail and prison systems across this nation.

Verse 27 (28) says “You are not to curse G~d, and you are not to curse a leader of your people.” This scripture alone is why we should be VERY careful who we, as a nation, choose to lead us. Oy vey!!!!

CHAPTER 23

“You are not to repeat false rumors . . .” (**verse 1**). Today, this is called gossip and in Biblical times it was referred to as (Lah-shone Hah-rah) *LaShon Hara/slander/evil tongue*. A good rule of thumb concerning this matter is . . . if you were not there; if you did not hear it first hand, and furthermore, if it does not concern you, don’t repeat it. You are not supposed to!!!!

Verse 5 encourages us to take care of another’s concerns, even if that someone hates us. A year or so ago, I was made aware of very dire circumstances of a couple who live in our town. My husband suggested we help in a small way financially, even though we had been maligned by them. Reluctantly, I agreed to do so and felt better about it after the fact. Although they did not thank us, I was blessed when reminded of this scripture, knowing I was walking Torah. This is my heart’s desire . . . to walk out His word.

“. . . do not cause the death of the innocent and righteous; for I will not justify the wicked” (**verse 7**). It doesn’t get any clearer than this. Woe be unto the United States for promoting abortion both nationally and internationally. I believe this falls under the category of “death of

the innocent”! And just think, our Federal Government is sending money around the world for just such a purpose. Oh, Abba Father, please forgive us!!!!

Verse 8 states “*Bribery blinds the wise.*” Torah warns us “*Do not take bribes*”. A deeper meaning is found by the root word. The Hebrew word for *bribe* is (show-kaHD) *shochad* and the root word is (ay-kaHD) *echad* meaning *one*. If you take a bribe from someone, you become “one” with him and cannot be objective.

The Sages were very self-critical in this respect. A woman’s tears, a helpful hand extended to cross a bridge or the bringing of rental payment one day early were all considered as slight bribes which caused the judge to disqualify himself.

There is even a Sabbath rest for the land as described in **verses 10 & 11**. If this practice had been continued in the United States, our land wouldn’t be robbed of its natural nutrients and there would be no need for all of the chemicals used. These chemicals and prescription medicines are destroying our bodies! Unfortunately, this isn’t affecting just the United States, it is world wide. Last year I received an email concerning this. Should you be interested, here is the link: <http://www.marketskeptics.com/2009/02/2009-global-food-catastrophe.html>
(Global Food Catastrophe 2009~February 10, 2009~By Eric deCarbonnel~Market Skeptics)

“For 6 days you are to work. (**verse 12**) But on the 7th day . . .”

The commandment to keep Shabbat is repeated several times throughout Torah highlighting its unique importance. Just a few of those places are:

- Sh’mot/Exodus 16:23
- Sh’mot/Exodus 20:8-11
- Sh’mot/Exodus 23:12
- Sh’mot/Exodus 31:14-16
- Sh’mot/Exodus 35:2-3
- Vayikra/Leviticus 16:31
- Vayikra/Leviticus 23:3 & 32
- D’varim/Deuteronomy 5:12-15
- Nechemyah/Nehemiah 10:31
- Yesha’yahu/Isaiah 56:2 & 6
- Yesha’yahu/Isaiah 58:13
- Yirme’yahu/Jeremiah 17:21-22
- Luke 23:54-56

HaShem Himself chose Shabbat as a sign of the eternal covenant between Himself and His people. If it is **THAT** important to Him, it should be **THAT** important to us also. Don’t you agree? It is said, “Keeping His Shabbat” is the wedding ring for His Bride. I want the wedding ring!!!! How about you?

The latter part of **verse 12** says “. . . that your ox and donkey may rest . . .”. One of the commentaries says the ox is a symbol of strength and energy while the donkey is a symbol of stubbornness and obstinacy. According to this commentary, this verse is talking about MORE than your farm animals. It is talking about us!

Pondering on this, I thought, “yes, we all have strengths and we all know how to be stubborn.” Shabbat is a time to remember our strengths come from HaShem and, IF we are going to be stubborn, let us be stubborn regarding spiritual matters:

- Prayer
- Reading Torah
- Meditating on scripture
- Walking in kindness (to others and ourselves)
- Disciplining our tongue
- Obeying the mitzvot (commandments i.e. keeping Shabbat)
- Not harming others (physically, verbally, psychologically)

Unfortunately, some church people imply the Ten Words of Adonai in **Sh'mot/Exodus 20** are really just nine instructions and a suggestion. The suggestion is to observe the Shabbat. In the past, you have heard me say “were I not involved in a “Sunday” ministry, I would choose to observe Shabbat and Shabbat only.” Baruch HaShem, I have been delivered and I am so thankful I no longer have to observe a man-made tradition. While I am grateful to HaShem for providing me a wonderful opportunity to work in ministry those eight years, I am thankful, after having my eyes opened to the Truth of the Sabbath rest, I no longer have to do the “Sunday” thing. Should I choose to attend a service on that day, so be it. But nothing, absolutely nothing compares to Shabbat!

While I am on my soap box . . . for those who do choose the Catholic man-made doctrine of sun-god worship (Sunday) . . . do they follow the rest of HaShem’s instructions in **verse 12** or do they go out to eat, go to a movie or go home and work in the yard? G~d said **REST!!!** You and those who serve you. So much for those who say: “My day is just a different day of the week.” Are they breaking G~d’s other rules also? Idolatry is making one’s self a god by picking and choosing what part of G~d’s rules to follow.

In **verses 14-17** we are told about the three times each year we are to observe the festivals of HaShem. These are the three major festivals of (Pay-sahk) ***Pesach/Passover***, (Shah-voo-oat) ***Shavu'ot/Feast of Weeks*** (Spring Harvest) and (Sue-coat) ***Sukkot/Feast of Tabernacles*** (Fall Harvest). Although not specified here, we will learn later this observance was to be in (Yeh-roo-sha-lah-yeem) ***Yerushalayim/Jerusalem*** and we will learn more about these and other feasts of HaShem in ***Vayikra/Leviticus 23***.

Before we continue, there is an often read-over verse here which needs our attention. **Verse 15** clearly states “**No one is to appear before me empty-handed.**” Since it is in the middle of the above verses and right after Pesach, I assume it is referring to when B’nei Israel went to Jerusalem for the feasts at the Temple. A number of years ago, HaShem caused me to realize anytime I go anywhere to worship Him, I was not to go empty handed. I believe this is where

(core-bah-note) *korbanot/offerings* come into play. The tithe is the tithe, regardless of when it is delivered but, as I read this verse, we should never come into His presence without offering Him something. There is a saying “the gift without the giver is bare” and I can certainly agree but I might add “a giver without a gift is bare” as well. These offerings should be taught to our children as well. They should not come before their Heavenly Father empty handed either. I don’t care how small the gift, a nickel or a penny, should be brought when they come to worship so they learn the importance of giving.

And we can’t let this study go by without visiting verses 20 & 21. Do we have a picture of Yeshua here or what? What do you think? Who is this “angel”? HaShem says His name resides in Him. I know of none other whose name HaShem resides in than Yeshua! I love this stuff!!! Interestingly enough, it’s not only the eyes of the Hebrews who are blinded to the mysteries of the original covenant. Have you ever seen Yeshua in this passage before? Furthermore, did you really read HaShem’s directives in verse 21 to B’nei Israel? He told them to . . .

- Pay attention to him (Hear ~ Shema)
- Listen to what he says and do not rebel against him (Obey)

Then comes the reward for obedience . . . (here’s the bond servant again!!!)

- If you listen to what he says and do everything I tell you, then I (HaShem) will . . .
 - Be an enemy to your enemies and . . .
 - A foe to your foes . . . and I will make an end of them.

Verse 25 says, if we obey HaShem, He will bless our food and water. We don’t have to ask Him to bless it or pray for Him to bless it. If we obey Him, it is already blessed. We need to thank Him for His provision. We will learn more when we get to *Vayikra/Leviticus* 11. (More bond servant stuff here too!)

“You are not to make a covenant with them or with their gods. **They are not to live in your land**; otherwise they will make you sin against me by ensnaring you to serve their gods.” (verses 32-33) Since Mt. Sinai, the Word of the L~rd is very clear concerning Eretz Israel. During the last few years, it seems Israel had done just the opposite and is trading off parts of their inheritance to nations HaShem wanted out of His Land!!! (Where is the stubborn donkey when we need him???)

Pray, pray, pray for the elected officials of Israel. Under the leadership of Likud and Benjamin Netanyahu, we had hoped to see a much more stable government and less concessions about HaShem’s Chosen Land. However, limiting natural growth in certain areas of The Land and uprooting settlements in other areas just doesn’t seem to fit with what our Father wants to happen.

CHAPTER 24

The Hebrew for **verse 7** of this chapter is (Nah-ah-seh Veh Neesh-mah) *Na'aseh VeNishma* means *everything HaShem says, we will do and we will hear* (or we will understand) In the normal realm of things, one usually doesn't agree to do something without hearing first what is in the "agreement", the fine print, if you will. However, when the Creator of the Universe is doing the offering and He knows you are capable of accepting it, it would be a slap in His face not to agree. After all, if you weren't capable of accepting it, He wouldn't be offering it to you.

A principle of our Hebraic faith is, by doing the word of HaShem, we will understand. It is through the action and obedience of doing that understanding comes. "We will do" is based on faith, not on our own evaluation or perception. "We will do" combined with our faith will bring understanding.

One final note. For the majority of my life I have been taught no one has ever seen G~d. Would you read **verses 9-11**? **Verse 10** "... and they saw the G~d of Israel" and again in **verse 11** "... they saw G~d, even as they were eating and drinking." According to this, they "SAW" G~d! As we "take and eat" His Word, we discover there is "fullness of joy" in His presence (***TeHillim / Psalm 16:11***) and, taking it one step further . . . "the joy of the L~rd is our strength". (***Nechemya / Nehemiah 8:10***)

As I mentioned last week, we observed a Hebrew wedding ceremony when the Decalogue was given to *Am Yishra'el/People of Israel*. Now, in **verse 11** we have the covenant meal. You know, after the wedding when the bride's family and friends and the groom's family and friends all gather together to acknowledge the union which has just taken place. This is what was taking place on Mt. Sinai with Moshe, Aharon, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders.

According to Torah, covenants were often sealed with a shared meal. For instance . . .

- *Yitz'chak/Isaac* and Abimelech (***B'resheet/Genesis 26:30***)
- *Ya'akov/Jacob* and *Lavan/Laban* (***B'resheet/Genesis 31:54***)

. . . to name just a couple and I am sure there are more . . . many, many more.

This covenant meal idea, I believe, has filtered down through the ages even into our business world. Having come out of corporate banking, I believe I truly understand the essence of many business luncheons, as well as the corporate dinners. Those were the "covenant meals" concerning the agreement, either contractual or by handshake which took place. Once again, most people have no idea how much our lives are impacted by Torah. I love it!!!

And of course, there is one more covenant meal yet to come. We know from the writings in Revelation by *Yochanan/John* there will be the Wedding Supper of the Lamb. That covenant meal is one which will eclipse all the others!!!

One last reference to a Covenant Meal is found in **Tehillim/Psalm 23**. It includes the famous verse: “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.” In modern English it could be rendered: You sit down to a covenant meal with me to show my enemies who I am in covenant with!!! This relates to Chapter 23:21 above.

How many times have we read **verse 12** and not really read it or taken into account what it has to say? “Adonai said to Moshe, “Come up to me on the mountain, and stay there. **I will give you the stone tablets with the Torah and the mitzvot I have written on them**, so that you can teach them.” If there was/is EVER any doubt as to Who provided the Torah and the mitzvot, this verse alone should cause all doubt to be removed.

The mark of a good leader is to be sure matters are taken care of in his/her absence. Here, in **verse 14**, Moshe tells the leaders to remain where they are and if there should be a problem of some type, Aharon and Hur are to be consulted. What a guy! He’s on top of it!!!!

Verses 16-18 tell us Moshe went inside the cloud and ascended the mountain and Moshe remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights. That was one L-O-N-G wedding service, my friends!!!

Mishpatim ~ **משפטים** ~ Rulings

Haftarah: Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 34:8-22 & 33:25-26

The opening verses of **Sh’mot/Exodus 21** give us the connection between our Torah portion and this haftarah.

In *Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah’s* day, some 600-800 years after the Exodus (depending on which date for the Exodus one follows), the Israelites were abusing this teaching in Torah and were not following it according to their covenant agreement with HaShem. So in our haftarah *Yirme’yahu/Jeremiah* conveys HaShem’s anger at the blatant disregard for this particular *mitzvah/ruling*.

Zedekiah was the last of the three sons of King Josiah. Actually, his Hebrew name was (Mah-tahn-yah) *Mattaniah* which, with my limited knowledge of Hebrew names, means *gift of G~d*. As I understand it, King Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of Babylon, changed his name to (Tzid-kee-yah-hoo) *Tzidkiyahu/Zedekiah* and he became a “puppet king” of the Babylonians. Although there was a lot of unrest during his reign, beginning in **34:8**, we learn about the covenant Zedekiah

convinced his leaders to make with the people. The covenant was for the people to follow the instructions found in Torah about freeing the Hebrew slaves or servants during the seventh year.

Verses 18-19 leave no doubt about the traditional practice which was used by the people in the ancient Near East, when certain covenants were made. The ones making the covenant would sacrifice an animal, cut it in half and walk between those pieces. This well known symbolism declared what was done to the animal should also be done to me if I fail to keep my part of this covenant. Apparently, this took place at the Temple in Jerusalem because **verse 15** says “. . . and you made a covenant before me in the house bearing my name.”

Because they reneged and brought their “brothers” back into bondage, HaShem was very angry and told them through Jeremiah He will not only hand them over to their enemies but will allow their city to be captured and burned to the ground.

Not wanting to end the haftarah on a negative note, the Sages chose to end this haftarah with **Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 33:25-26**, which is a sacred promise to His wayward children. “I will return their fortunes and will have mercy on them.”

Mishpatim ~ **משפטים** ~ Rulings

B’rit Hadashah: Mattityahu/Matthew 5:38-42 & 15:1-20
Mark 7:1-23; Acts 23:1-11; Ivrim/Hebrews 9:15-22 & 10:28-39

Mattityahu/Matthew 5:38-42 These verses directly parallel **Sh’mot/Exodus 21:24** and for some would fall under the category of “retaliation”. However, I believe these verses really show HaShem was not commanding revenge; rather, He was controlling and limiting it. Furthermore, for those who believe the “eye for an eye” matter, it must be made clear this is an idiom used to mean adequate compensation for the damage done. In other words, “Let the punishment fit the crime.”

Mattityahu/Matthew 15:1-20 These verses, as well as **Mark 7:1-23**, in some translations are “sub-titled” as Tradition of Elders. In these verses the (P’rue-sheem) **P’rushim/Pharisees** are condemning Yeshua and His (tahl-meh-deem) **talmidim/disciples** for not observing (n’tee-laht-yah-dah-yeem) **n’tilat-yadayim/ritual handwashing** before meals. First of all, this matter is a tradition of the Elders and does not appear in the Written Torah. It is, however, a part of the Oral Torah. The rationale behind it has nothing to do with hygiene. It is based on the idea of . . .

- a man’s home is his Temple
- the dining table his alter
- the food his sacrifice
- and he is the *cohen/priest*.

Since the Tanakh requires the *cohanim/priests* to be ceremonially pure before offering sacrifices on the Temple altar, the Oral Torah requires the same before eating a meal. As a tradition, and considering the parallel made here, personally, I think it's a great idea!!! But this is where "legalism" creeps into our lives. No where is this in the Written Torah.

There is much confusion concerning the two Torahs in the church today. Since the concept of two Torahs is seldom taught, church people usually do not understand the distinction between the two. Paul, for instance, lists them in **Romans 3:27**. Not understanding this distinction leads to the mistaken belief ALL Torah has been done away with when, in fact, Paul clearly distinguishes between the two. It helps to remember Yeshua adhered to the Written Torah and warned his (tahl-me-deem) *talmidim/student/disciples* not to follow the Oral Torah as it was from the "traditions of men".

This is just one of many matters addressed in Matthew and Mark. Another is concerning ritually clean foods. We have neither the time nor the space to address what some people call "Jewish Dietary Laws". Actually, they are HaShem's Dietary Guidelines to keep us healthy. HaShem loves us and has given us loving instructions, since the days of Moshe, to help us remain healthy. Because we have ignored His instructions and are rebellious children we have incurred, not His wrath, but the wrath of our own decisions, which is why we have such a scourge on our health these days. This is another example of idolatry where we pick and choose what parts of His commandments to follow. HaSatan said it in the garden: You shall be as gods" (**B' resheet/Genesis 3:5**)

Mark 7:1-23 This is Mark's rendition of the above traditions of men.

Acts 23:1-11 Remember, *Sha'ul/Paul* most probably was a member of the Sanhedrin and he more than likely recognized many faces. The exchange between Sha'ul and the *P'rushim/Pharisees* and the (Z'due-keem) *Tz'dukim/Saducees* is quite interesting! In fact, his tactic of diverting the Sanhedrin's attention away from himself and his supposed crime, to a long-standing dispute among themselves succeeded.

I found David Stern's commentary on **verse 5** interesting. In essence, Sha'ul says, I didn't know, brothers, he was the (coe-hen ha-gah-dole) *cohen hagadol/high priest*. It has been suggested this line drips sarcasm. Sha'ul knew perfectly well who the cohen hagadol was but means he wasn't acting like one!

The parallel of these verses to our Torah portion occur in the latter part of **verse 5** when Sha'ul quotes **Sh'mot/Exodus 22:27(28)** "You are not to speak disparagingly of a ruler of your people."

Ivrim/Hebrews 9:15-22 These verses address the blood of the covenant. In fact, **verse 20** actually quotes **Sh'mot/Exodus 24:8**. "This is the blood of the covenant which G~d has ordained for you." According to the Torah, almost everything is purified with blood; indeed, without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (**verse 22**).

Ivrim/Hebrews 10:28-39 As in the verses above "the blood of the covenant" from our Torah portion of **Sh'mot/Exodus 24:8** is addressed here in **verse 29**. I believe Sha'ul is using these verses to encourage the Messianic Hebrews who have endured a lot for the sake of the Gospel. He is encouraging them to continue to have **faith/trust** in Yeshua's once-for-all sacrifice rather than returning to the familiar Levitical system they have known in the past.

The corresponding Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 72

Next week's lesson: Parashah #19

T'rumah ~ תרומה ~ Contribution

Torah: Sh'mot/Exodus 25:1~27:19

Haftarah: M'lakim Alef/1st Kings 5:26~6:13

B'rit Hadashah: Ivrim/Hebrews 8:1-6; 9:23-23; 10:1

Shavuah Tov (Have a good week)!

Who fills his mind with Torah clears it of fear and folly.

Rabbi Chanina Sgan HaKohanim