



6.

## Mishpatim

I WENT IN WITH AN ESCAPE PLAN.  
IT DIDN'T WORK.

*The Case For Going All -In*



What does the Torah say about keeping an eye on the **long term** vs focusing on the **short term** as long as it works out?

TEXT  
1

“Should you buy a Hebrew slave, he must work [for] six years, and in the seventh [year], he will be liberated without charge. . . .

“But if the slave says, “I love my master, my wife, and my children. I will not go free,”

“His master will bring him before the judges and bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master will bore his ear with an awl, and he will then serve him forever.”

כִּי תִקְנֶה עֶבֶד עִבְרִי,  
שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים יַעֲבֹד,  
וּבְשִׁבְעִית יֵצֵא  
לְחֻפְּשֵׁי חֲנָם: . . .  
וְאִם אָמַר יֹאמֵר  
הָעֶבֶד, אֶהְבֹּתִי אֶת  
אֲדֹנָי, אֶת אִשְׁתִּי וְאֶת  
בְּנֵי, לֹא אֵצֵא חֻפְּשִׁי:  
וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֲדֹנָיו אֶל  
הָאֱלֹהִים, וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֶל  
הַדֹּלֶת אוֹ אֶל  
הַמְּזוּזָה, וְרָצַע אֲדֹנָיו  
אֶת אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ,  
וַעֲבַד לְעֹלָם:

After miraculously  
freeing the Jews,  
and dramatically  
giving the Torah,  
G-d teaches  
Moshe the Torah  
beginning with  
the laws of a  
Jewish slave.



# TEXT

## 2

“And the Children of Israel fulfilled Moses’s instruction and borrowed from the Egyptians silver objects, golden objects, and garments.

G-d gave the people favor in the eyes of the Egyptians, and the [Egyptians] lent them, and the [Jews] emptied out Egypt.

וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עָשׂוּ  
 כַּדְבַר מֹשֶׁה, וַיִּשְׁאַלּוּ  
 מִמִּצְרַיִם כְּלֵי כֶסֶף  
 וְכֵלֵי זָהָב וְשִׁמְלֹת:  
 וְה' נָתַן אֶת חֹן  
 הָעַם בְּעֵינֵי מִצְרַיִם,  
 וַיִּשְׁאַלּוּם, וַיִּנְצְלוּ  
 אֶת מִצְרַיִם:

# TEXT

## 3

“When the Jewish people left Egypt, Pharaoh pursued them. . . [Pharaoh] adorned his army’s horses with diamonds and gems. When they reached the Red Sea and drowned, all the diamonds and gems rose to the surface and washed up on shore, where they lay abandoned. For days, the Jews made their way to shore and collected the valuables.”

בשעה שיצאו ישראל  
ממצרים, יצא פרעה לרדוף  
אותם . . . עמד וקישט כל  
אותם הסוסים באבנים  
טובות ומרגליות. כשבאו  
לים וטבעו הקדוש ברוך  
הוא, היו צפין על שפת  
הים כל אותן אבנים  
טובות ומרגליות, והיו  
מושלכים. והיו ישראל  
יורדין בכל יום ונוטלין  
מהם.

# TEXT 4

“Rabbi Shmuel, the son of Rabbi Yitzchak, said, “Which commandment does the passage refer to when it reads, ‘And G-d spoke to Moses and Aaron and instructed them about the Children of Israel’?”

“It was about the mitzvah to liberate their slaves.

אמר רב שמואל  
אמר רב יצחק:  
"וידבר ה' אל  
משה ואל אהרן,  
ויצום אל בני  
ישראל". על מה  
ציוום?  
על שילוח  
עבדים.

# TEXT 5

YIRMIYAHU  
(JEREMIAH)  
34:12–14

“The word of G-d came to Jeremiah, saying,  
 “So says the G-d of Israel: I made a covenant with your fathers on the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves, saying,  
 “Every man, at the end of seven years, release your Jewish brother who has been sold to you; when he has served you for six years, give him his freedom.””

וַיְהִי דְבַר ה' אֶל  
 יִרְמְיָהוּ, מֵאֵת ה'  
 לֵאמֹר:

כֹּה אָמַר ה' אֱלֹקֵי  
 יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲנֹכִי כָרַתִּי  
 בְרִית אֶת אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם,  
 בְּיוֹם הוֹצֵאִי אוֹתָם  
 מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית  
 עֲבָדִים, לֵאמֹר:

מִקֵּץ שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים,  
 תִּשְׁלַח אִישׁ אֶת אָחִיו  
 הָעֶבְרִי אֲשֶׁר יִמְכַר לְךָ  
 וְעַבְדְּךָ שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים,

וְשִׁלַּחְתָּן חֲפֹזֵנִי מֵעַמְּךָ:





Why was this chosen as the **first** law? Was it not A) Too **sensitive** post- Egypt, B) **Irrelevant** as they were wealthy, and C) already **known**?

How is this **relevant today** and for all times?

TEXT  
6

 NACHMANIDES,  
EXODUS 21:2

“The Torah begins with the commandment concerning the Jewish slave because the slave’s liberation in the seventh year is reminiscent of our liberation from Egypt, mentioned in the first of the Ten Commandments. . . . It is also reminiscent of Creation, as is the Sabbath, since the slave’s seventh year is like a Sabbath of sorts—it is when he is freed from serving his master. The slave has an additional liberation date in the Jubilee (the year that follows the seventh set of seven years) because the seventh was selected by G-d to represent freedom in terms of days, years, and the Jubilee. Thus, because of their distinction and because the laws of slavery parallel important themes of Creation, they were chosen as the introductory mitzvah.”

התחיל המשפט הראשון  
 בעבד עברי, מפני שיש  
 בשילוח העבד בשנה  
 השביעית זכר ליציאת  
 מצרים, הנזכר בדיבור  
 הראשון . . . ויש בה עוד  
 זכר למעשה בראשית  
 כשבת, כי השנה  
 השביעית לעבד – שבתון  
 ממלאכת אדוניו, כיום  
 השביעי. ויש בה עוד  
 שביעי בשנים שהוא  
 היובל, כי השביעי נבחר  
 בימים, בשנים וביובל,  
 והכל לענין אחד . . . ולכן

המעשה הנזכר

TEXT  
7

“There is nothing more difficult in the human experience than to be bonded to a fellow human; therefore, the Torah begins with the laws of slavery.”

ואין לאדם  
יותר קשה  
עליו, מהיותו  
ברשות אדם  
כמוהו. על כן  
החל משפט  
העבד.

TEXT  
8

“G-d gave his nation ten brief commandments, but since they were unable to hear the subsets of these commandments . . . G-d had to instruct Moses to teach them these laws . . . which are clear subsets of the Ten Commandments. He therefore opened with the words “and these are the laws that you should place before them.” And implies that these laws are [a continuation of the Ten Commandments because they are] included in those commandments. . . . A wise person knows that all these laws and more are contained in the commandments. However, G-d illustrated His point with these laws and left the wise person to infer that the same applies to all the laws that the Torah would eventually elucidate.”

הקדוש ברוך הוא השמיע לעמו  
 עשרת הדיברות מאמרים  
 קצרים, וכאשר ישראל לא רצו  
 לשמוע מפי הגבורה התולדות  
 ותולדות התולדות מהדיבורים  
 ההם . . . הוצרך יתברך לצוות  
 את משה שישים לפניהם אלה  
 המשפטים . . . כי הם באמת  
 ציוויים נכללים  
 בעשרתהדיברות. ולזה אמר  
 “ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים  
 לפניהם” בוא"ו העטוף, כלומר:  
 שים לפניהם הדברים שנכללו  
 בדיברות אשר שמעו . . . כי הנה  
 החכם יודע כי כל המשפטים  
 האלו נכללו בדיברות ההם,

Commandment	Sub- Law	Rationale
Murder	Slavery	Slavery is like a living death.
	Injuring a Parent	Inflicting an open wound on a parent is the equivalent of murder.
	Cursing a Parent	Committing murder with words.
	Kidnapping	Deprives the victim's parents of life.
	Killing a Slave	Is an actual murder.
	Your Ox Gores a Person	Your possessions caused the murder of a fellow human.

A) Slavery is linked to  
**Creation** and to the  
**Exodus**.

B) Slavery is **abhorrent**  
to humans and had to  
be dealt with first.

And, C) It is part of a  
broader theme to  
show the **subsets of**  
**law** in the  
commandments.





Our questions remain;

How could introducing slavery at this point be A) **sensitive**, B) **necessary**, and C) **practical**.

And, how to **relate** to this mitzvah in the modern era.

TEXT  
9

“Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai would interpret this verse in a beautiful manner. Why was the ear singled out from all the limbs in the body? G-d said, on Mount Sinai, “The ear heard me proclaim, ‘For the Children of Israel are My slaves,’ not slaves of slaves. Then this person went and acquired a master for himself? Let his ear be pierced.”

רבן יוחנן בן זכאי היה  
דורש את המקרא הזה  
כמין חומר: מה נשתנה  
אוזן מכל איברים שבגוף?  
אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא:  
אוזן ששמעה קולי על הר  
סיני בשעה שאמרת: "כי  
לי בני ישראל  
עבדים" (ויקרא כה, נה),  
ולא עבדים לעבדים, והלך  
זה וקנה אדון לעצמו –  
יירצע.



Is a blasé  
observance of  
Judaism  
acceptable?

The mitzvah of  
slavery tells us that  
we can't belong to  
anyone because we  
are already  
invested in G-d.



# TEXT 10

THE REBBE,  
LIKUTEI SICHOT  
16, P. 256

“The Torah does not usually emphasize a link between the reward of a mitzvah and the mitzvah. For example, the reward for honoring a parent is longevity, but there is no obvious link between longevity and honoring a parent. The same is true of sins.

“We don’t see specific links between the sins and the punishments that they incur.

“The laws of slavery are different. In this instance, the Torah links the punishment with what caused it. The ear is pierced because it is the limb that heard G-d say on Mount Sinai that Jews can only be enslaved to G-d.

“This helps us understand why the laws of slavery were the first to be taught after G-d gave us the Torah on Mount Sinai. In [the punishment for] this law, we see a clear and obvious link [one that is manifested in the physical body] between the law and Mount Sinai.”

בא אנדערע מצות געפינט מען ניט אז די תורה זאל מדגיש זיין די שייכות פון דעם שכר מצוה צו דער מצוה.

ובדוגמא: די מצוה פון כיבוד אב ואם,

וואס איר שכר איז "למען יאריכון

ימיו" (שמות כא, ה) . . . איז אין דעם

מהות השכר ניט קענטיק די שייכות צו דער מצוה דוקא.

ועל דרך זה ביי עונשים אויף עבירות,

זעט מען ניט אין דעם עונש . . . א

באזונדערע שייכות צו די עבירות, וואס

זיינען מחייב די עונשין.

ביי עבד עברי אבער פארבינדט די

תורה דעם עונש מיט זיין סיבה: "ורצע

וגו' את אזנו" קומט דערפאר וואס

"אוזן ששמעה על הר סיני כו" . . .

דערמיט איז מבואר וואס "כי תקנה

עבד עברי" (שמות כא, א) איז דער



We are a **part of** Judaism. It is a part of us. If we **break away** from G-d to take on a new master, it has an **immediate impact**.

The **ear that heard** that we belong to G-d is pierced.

A) You can never be a slave while invested in G-d, was **sensitive**.

B) This is a **necessary** new law rooted in our commitment to G-d.

And, C) We **practically** belong to G-d therefore we must give ourselves over to the Torah, and let it become a part of us.





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When it comes to Judaism, the Torah demands that we buy in **completely**.

Sometimes, you just have to **take the plunge** with no parachute. And it is at those times that you will find the **ultimate success**.



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