

# Parashat Mishpatim

## פרשת משפטים

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## The Blood of the Covenant and the Presence of God

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Exodus 21:1-24:18

הפטרה: Jeremiah 34:8-22, 33:25-26

הברית: Mark 9

החדשה

*Triennial cycle: Bereshit / Genesis 22:4-23:19*

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This week's reading from **Shemot / Exodus 21:1-24:18** is titled "Parashat Mishpatim" meaning ordinances (*הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים*) where Moshe is giving the ordinances that the Lord is setting before the people. The Hebrew text goes on to tell what one is to do if they have a Hebrew slave (**21:2**), if a man is forced to sell his daughter because of debt, what is he to do (**21:7-9**), if a man has a wife he is not allowed to reduce her food, clothing, or conjugal rights (**12:10-11**). Stipulations on murder are made, whether premeditated or accidental (**21:12-16**). Rulings are made on whether two men are fighting and one is injured, how the injured man's time in bed is to be compensated (loss of work). When two men are fighting and strike a woman and she miscarriages, the offending person is to pay compensation for the loss (**21:22**), and any other injury, the ruling is an eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth in repayment for injury (**21:23-22:2**). God's purpose for instructing the people on what to do in the cases of injury (eye for eye and tooth for tooth) is to treat each other mercifully. Most often it has been taught that the mitzvah (command) eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth is harsh and unmerciful, the facts are these rulings provided structure, justice, and righteousness in a court of law such that the guilty person would not pay more than what his crime required. In antiquity generally speaking, the wealthy would inflict harsher punishments upon those who had offended them. This week's Parashah goes on to discuss things regarding a man's property, cattle, fields, etc (**22:3-14**). Sorcerers / Witches are not permitted to live (**22:18**), bestiality is forbidden (**22:19**), and who ever sacrifices to any other god is to be put to death (**22:20**). Be good to the stranger (**22:21**), do not oppress the widow or orphan (**22:24**). No interest is to be charged on loans made to a child of Yisrael (**22:25**). The law of the first born is given (**22:29-30**). The seventh year rest for harvesting is given (**23:10-11**) along with the seventh day rest from working (the Shabbat, **23:12**). The command to celebrate three yearly festivals is given, (i) the Feast of Unleavened Bread (**23:14**), (ii) the Feast of Harvest of First Fruits (**23:16**), and (iii) the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year (**23:16**).

### פרשת משפטים ספר שמות פרק כג פסוק כ-כח

כ דִּבְרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר כִּי יֵשׁ לְךָ מֵלֶאכֶד לְפָנֶיךָ לְשֹׁמֵרְךָ בְּדַרְךָ וְלִתְבִיאֲךָ אֶל-תְּמִקּוֹם אֲשֶׁר הִכְנִיתִי: כֹּא הַשֹּׁמֵר מִפְּנֵי וְשָׁמַע בְּקוֹל לֹא-תִמַּר בּוֹ כִּי לֹא יֵשׂא לְפִשְׁעֵכֶם כִּי נִשְׁמִי בְּקִרְבּוֹ: כִּב פִּי אִם-שָׁמוֹעַ הוֹשָׁמַע

### Shemot / Exodus 23:20-25

23:20 'Behold, I am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. 23:21 'Be on your guard before him and obey his voice; do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him. 23:22 'But if you truly obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. 23:23 'For My angel will go before you and bring you in to the land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them. 23:24 'You shall not worship their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their deeds; but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their sacred pillars in pieces. 23:25 'But you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water; and I will remove sickness from your midst. (NASB)



תרגום ניופתי ספר שמות פרק כד פסוק י

וחמון ית איקר שכינתה דיי "אלהא דישראל" ותחות אפיפודין"אפיפודין" דרגלוי כעובד לבן  
 דסנפרינן וכחזוי שמיא כד אינון נקיין מן עננא "הוון נקיין מן ענניא":

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The Targum Onkelos says חזוּ ית יקר אלהא דישראל the word "חזוּ" means  
 literally "to see." The נאָל-אַצְיָלִי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל nobles of the sons of Yisrael saw God and  
 did not die. Now the Masoretic text clarifies what had happened in verse 11  
 saying: **24:11 Yet**

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**He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they  
 saw God, and they ate and drank. (NASB)** and so the people gazed upon God,  
 God did not strike them dead, and they ate and drank (table fellowship). The way  
 this portion of the text is described, it is difficult to misinterpret the meaning as  
 something other than the people actually literally seeing the Lord God. The text

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identifies the people having seen God (הָאֵל הַיְהוָה) and particularly the feet of God.  
 Note that the people did not see God's face (פָּנָיו). The Hebrew use of the word for  
 "face" in the Scriptures is to indicate that the person himself is present and not a  
 representative. For example in **2 Samuel 17:11** -

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**אֲבָרְכֶם כִּי יֵצְאֵתִי הָאֵסֶף עֲלֵיכֶם כֹּל - 17:11 'But I  
 counsel that all Israel be surely gathered to you, from Dan even to Beersheba, as  
 the sand that is by the sea in abundance, and that you personally go into battle.  
 (NASB)** Here the text translates as "you personally go into battle" where the  
 phrase "you personally" is written as וּפְנֵיכֶם meaning "and your face." In *Devarim /*

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*Deuteronomy 4:37* לֹא וְתַחַת כִּי אָדַב אֶת-אַבְרָהָם וַיִּבְחַר בְּנִרְעוֹ בְּנִרְעוֹ אֲחֵרָיו וַיּוֹצֵאֲךָ בְּפָנָיו בְּכָח חֹזֶק  
**4:37 'Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their  
 descendants after them. And He personally brought you from Egypt by His great  
 power, (NASB)** Here in *Devarim 4:37* it is written that "He (God) personally"  
 brought Yisrael out of Mitzrayim (Egypt). The Hebrew text says literally "with  
 His face" (בְּפָנָיו). In Parashat Ki Tisa, *Shemot / Exodus 33:13-15*

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**וַיֹּאמֶר פָּנָי יֵלְכוּ וְהִנַּח תִּי לְךָ: טו וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי אֱמִי אֵל-תִּעֲלֶנּוּ מִזֶּה:  
 33:13 'Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your  
 ways that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your sight. Consider too,  
 that this nation is Your people.' 33:14 And He said, 'My presence shall go with  
 you, and I will give you rest.' 33:15 Then he said to Him, 'If Your presence does  
 not go with us, do not lead us up from here. (NASB)** Here Moshe requests / asks  
 for the presence of the Lord to go with them. God said וַיֹּאמֶר פָּנָי יֵלְכוּ וְהִנַּח תִּי לְךָ  
 "and said my face will go with you and give you rest" translating "face" as  
 "presence" (פָּנָי). Moshe goes on to say that if your "face/presence" פְּנֵיכֶם does not  
 go with them do not lead them from there. Studying Shemot 24, the text does not  
 say they saw the "presence or face" of God therefore the text appears to indicate  
 feet imagery that God is revealing Himself in human form in a similar manner  
 like He has done throughout the Torah as the Angel of the Lord. Essentially God  
 was giving the people a physical manifestation of Himself sitting upon His throne  
 in Heaven.

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ועטרותיהם בראשיהם ונהגים מזיו השכינה, שנאמר: (שמות כ"ד) ויחזו את האלהים ויאכלו וישתו.

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So the rabbinic interpretation on these verses says that the people saw the Shekinah glory of God and did not see God himself. Yet in the Masoretic text we read in *Shemot 24*:

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ח וַיִּקַּח מִן־דַּם הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר פָּרַת יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם עַל־כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה: ט וַיַּעַל מִן־נֶדֶב וַאֲבִיהוּא וְשִׁבְעִים מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: י *24:8 So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.'*

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*24:9 Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, 24:10 and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself. (NASB)*

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The Masoretic text is clear saying that Moshe, Aharon, and the elders ascended the mountain of Sinai and saw the God of Yisrael. They saw God and under His feet under is a sea of sapphire. As we continue to study the Torah, we realize that God comes down to dwell among His people and He does so in a visible form, in the form of a man who walks and talks and shares life with His people. Just like God walked and talked in the Garden of Eden in sefer Bereshit (Genesis). It is for this reason, and being consistent with Scripture, that God sent His Word to become flesh and dwell among men (*John 1:1-14*) Yeshua the Messiah.

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Thinking on these things and what we studied last week in Parashat Yitro on approaching an altar made by mans hands. We must be careful how we approach studying the Talmud and the rabbinic commentary. I want to make a stern warning for those who want to study the Talmud. Many of the sages were not believers in Yeshua. The development of the rabbinic literature come following a century or two the death and resurrection of Yeshua. Therefore many references within the Talmud act as a sort of self-edification and polemic against the Christian church. Take for example in the *Talmud Bavli Kidushin 49a* which states:

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### תלמוד בבלי קידושין דף מט.א

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תנו רבנן: על מנת שאני קריינא, כיון שקרא שלשה פסוקים בבית הכנסת - הרי זו מקודשת, ר' יהודה אומר: עד שיקרא ויתרגם. יתרגם מדעתיה? והתניא, ר' יהודה אומר: המתרגם פסוק כצורתו - הרי זה בדאי, והמוסיף עליו - הרי זה מחרף ומגדף אלא מאי תרגום?

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### תוספות קידושין דף מט.א

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(דף ג.) ורבינו חננאל פירש המתרגם פסוק כצורתו כגון ויראו את אלהי ישראל (שמות כד) דמתרגם וחזו ית אלהא דישראל הרי זה בדאי דשכינה ממש לא ראו דכתיב (שם לג) כי לא יראני האדם וחי והמוסיף עליו דאמר וחזו ית מלאכא דאלהא הרי זה מחרף שתולה שבח המקום במלאך אלא הכי מתרגמי' וחזו ית ייקרא דאלהא דישראל:

It appears that the Gemara is discussing the topic of divorce and marriage. The In Talmudic times the reading of the Torah was an important part of the Shabbat and

220 Festival services and was performed by a number of congregants. The number of  
verses read by the congregant was not less than three verses, and there also  
included a public translation in the Synagogue service alongside the reading of the  
Torah. It appears that for one to have a valid marriage, one needed to be able to  
read and translate the Torah. It is at this point in *Kidushin 49a* that the Gemara  
states “*Judah said if one translates a verse literally he is a liar if he adds thereto*  
225 *he is a blasphemer and libeler.*” Rabbi Judah is saying that anyone who  
translates a verse literally such as the one in *Shemot 24* that the people had  
actually seen God, translating that meaning would be to lie in his own mind and  
essentially make the verse to mean something it does not mean. The *Tosefta* says  
something similar along those lines saying “*In the name of R. Hananel cites Ex.*  
230 *XXIV. 10 of which the literal rendering ‘they saw the God of Israel’ conveys a lie,*  
*as God cannot be seen, whilst the added words in the rendering ‘they saw the*  
*angel of the God of Israel’ involves a blasphemy”* The rabbinic literature that we  
now have was affected by Christian influences and even the Targum translations  
such as the Targum Onkelos the Aramaic translation of the Torah translated in the  
235 2nd century CE is a later translation of the Tanach and thus as we see has some  
rabbinic influences (the people saw the place or glory of God and not God  
Himself). The hermeneutic or method of interpreting of the scriptures utilized by  
the rabbis in the Talmud, in many instances use Midrash or move to a more  
mystical interpretation of the scriptures which undermines the clear meaning and  
240 understanding of these scriptures. The mystical view of the bible became fully  
developed later on in the Middle Ages known as Kabbalah. Therefore, all  
rabbinic literature in the post reformation is in some measure touched and affected  
by the mysticism of Kabbalah. We need to keep this in mind while studying the  
rabbinic literature. Many times the rabbis are using a hermeneutic that is far from  
245 the clear historical grammatical understanding of the text. Another thing that  
needs to be kept in mind is when the rabbis are discussing a particular aspect of  
the Torah they will try to keep their interpretation in line with the prevailing  
Halakhah to which they adhere. Such as what we saw while studying Rashi in  
Parashat Yitro, why doesn’t Rashi discuss the important role of the Cohen (Priest)  
250 consuming a portion of the sacrifice in order to bear the sins for the purpose of  
obtaining the forgiveness of sins before God? The Rabbinic literature can be  
appreciated in the sense that it is the only extant material that provides us with  
some insight into the rabbinic thought that is near the first century. But we must  
be aware that there may be an agenda and that agenda may have been influenced  
255 by the Christian church as a polemic against Yeshua the Messiah. Take for  
example, in the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings, NT) the Word of God  
become flesh (*John 1:1-14*) and Yeshua and the Father being One God. It is  
possible to reason within ones thoughts that Yeshua is not God in the flesh as the  
Word of God by reason of the rabbinic interpretation of *Shemot / Exodus 24*.  
260 Therefore, we should not be naive to think that the enemy has not sown his tares  
into the rabbinic literature and therefore we must be careful comparing everything  
to the Scriptures so that we can know what is wrong and what is right. The  
rabbinic literature is enlightening for background and historical purposes but it  
should be taken very critically with regards to the Holy Scriptures. Take for  
265 example the Mishnah. The Mishnah is a part of the Talmud consisting of a  
collection of oral religious laws of Judaism. It is the oldest authoritative



315 Heavenly Father,

I know according to these scriptures from *Shemot / Exodus 24* that without the blood of the covenant I could not approach You, know, or see You. Thank You Lord for helping me to know and understand Your purpose for sending Your Son Yeshua to die for my sins. I believe as You have indicated in these Scripture this week that Your will and purpose is to reach out to humanity and save all peoples. Thank You for Your great love, today I place my faith in Yeshua the Messiah and I place my faith in Your Holy Words, please forgive me of my sins and have mercy on me Lord. Use me Lord for Your purposes; help me to live my life free from sin and selfishness and to turn my life towards one of holiness, righteousness, and justice. Thank You for forgiving me and redeeming me from my sins. Help me to serve You Lord by faith and help me to regard Your truth in my heart. Thank You Lord for all that You have done; I give You all of the glory, the honor, and the praise forever and ever.

330 In Yeshua's (Jesus') Name I pray! Amen!

335 **What to pray:**

- *Ask the Lord to help you know the covenant purpose that Yeshua is the one spoken of in the Torah.*
- *Ask the Lord to help you to grow in the knowledge and wisdom of His Word.*
- *Thank the Lord for lifting the burden of sin and revealing His truth in your heart and life.*

**Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!**

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:  
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
"Yeshua" King Messiah forever and ever