

שׁוֹ אֶל-הַדֹּלֶת אוֹ אֶל-הַמְּזוּזָה וְרָצַע אֶדְנָיו אֶת-אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ וְעָבְדוּ לְעֵלָם:
There are a lot of things that are covered here in Parashat Mishpatim. The Torah portion begins speaking of the issue of debt and if it happens that a Hebrew man sells himself into slavery in order to get out of debt. The Scriptures say *21:2* “*If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment. (NASB)*” The Text goes on to speak of a situation when a slave desires to remain with his master and chooses to become a permanent slave (*Shemot / Exodus 21:5-6*, וְאִם-אָמַר הַיָּמִים יָמֵי עֶבְדוֹ אֶת-אֲדֹנָיו אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת-בְּנֵי לֵאמֹר הָעֶבֶד אֶהְיֶה לְאֲדֹנָי וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֶדְנָיו אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֶל-הַדֹּלֶת אוֹ אֶל-הַמְּזוּזָה וְרָצַע אֶדְנָיו אֶת-אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ וְעָבְדוּ לְעֵלָם:). The Torah goes on to discuss personal injuries in the sense of a man striking another man (*Shemot / Exodus 21:12-26*). Moshe wrote about property rights related to sheep and oxen (*Shemot / Exodus 22*), vineyards and planted fields, paying back for damages to a neighbors land, etc. Moshe goes on to discuss Sorcerers (*22:18*), sacrificing to other gods (*22:19*), lending money (*22:25-26*), bearing false witness (*Shemot / Exodus 23*), the Shabbat rest for the land (*23:10-12*), National feasts (*23:14-19*) and the Angel of the Lord that goes before His people (*23:20-33*). These words of the covenant are sworn to by all of God’s people, and seeing the Lord is paralleled to walking in God’s ways of mercy, justice, righteousness, and truth. If one does not walk in God’s ways, he will not see God. This is connected back to the beginning of the Torah portion of one having a desire to become a permanent member of a family as a slave.

The commentary *Chizkuni on Shemot / Exodus 21:6 Part 1* states the following:

Chizkuni on Shemot / Exodus 21:6 Part 1

אל הדלת או אל המזוזה, “*against the door or door-post of the courthouse; we find an example of this in Deuteronomy 17,5: וְהוֹצֵאתָ אֹתוֹ אֶל שַׁעֲרֶיךָ*,” “*you are to take out that man to your gates, (court);*” *This procedure is designed to give publicity to the irrational behavior of this Jewish “slave;” let all the people passing the courthouse know who it is that has pre-*

ferred life as a slave with a gentile slave to life as a free Israelite. He will have no chance to escape this status before the next Jubilee year.

This suggests the city gate is the location of the court where justice and truth are determined. The idea here is in relation to the one who makes this life changing decision does so publicly. Chizkuni states this is irrational behavior. In the sense of one getting out of debt, one would want to be free afterwards. Such a person however wishes to remain with his master and to become a permanent member of the family through servitude. Rashi interprets this verse in the following way.

Rashi on Shemot / Exodus 21:6 Part 4

וְעַבְדוֹ לְעֹלָם *AND HE SHALL SERVE HIM FOR EVER*
 — *This means until the Jubilee. Or, perhaps this is not so, but לְעֹלָם means for ever as is its usual meaning? Scripture however, states, (Leviticus 25:10) “[And ye shall sanctify the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof] and ye shall return every man unto his family”. A comparison of these two passages tells us that a period of fifty years is termed עֹלָם. This does not, however, imply that he has to serve him a whole period of fifty years, but that he has to serve him until the year of the Jubilee (the fiftieth year) whether this be close at hand or far ahead (Kiddushin 15a; Mekhilta d’Rabbi Yishmael 21:6:6).*

Rashi states that the word לְעֹלָם means forever and that this is the usual meaning. He draws in the context of *Vayikra / Leviticus 25:10* י וְקִדְשְׁתֶּם אֶת שְׁנַת הַחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה וְקִרְאתֶם דְּרוֹר בְּאָרְץ לְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל (יֹבֵל הוּא תְּהִיָּה לָכֶם וְשַׁבְתֶּם אִישׁ אֶל-אֶחָזְתּוֹ וְאִישׁ אֶל-מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ תָּשׁבוּ: of proclaiming liberty in the Yovel (Jubilee) year. The phrase וְעַבְדוֹ לְעֹלָם “*And he shall serve him forever*” is interpreted to be in line with the Jubilee. This is the same length of time as the Levites perform-

ing their duties in the Tabernacle (50 years). Ibn Ezra writes that the reason the text is written that he is to bring the servant to **הָאֵלֹהִים** instead of writing **שׁוֹפְטִים** was because men are working as God's court here on earth to carry out His will. Nachmanides states *"the master is to bring the servant in question before a judge, a legally constituted tribunal, a site which enjoys the presence of the Shechinah and which inspires the judges to ensure that their verdict will be in line with G'd's wishes."* This comment is interesting because it suggests the Shechinah (glory/presence) of God is at the city gate, which presupposes the people living in the city are righteous and holy. The Judges were authorized by God to rule upon what is right and wrong (good and evil). The context of this suggests that the servant is to be brought to the door post (mezuzah) and push through the servants ear using a metal punch. Based upon the context we know today, the Mezuzah which is placed next to the door contains a portion of the Torah scroll, blood is shed upon the Mezuzah illustrating the permanent covenant that the servant is making with the master. It is in this context, of making a permanent covenant with the master that Paul is using of himself in the giving of his life to Yeshua the Messiah (the Master) and of his statement to the Galatians saying, *"For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant (δοῦλος) of Christ."*

Shemot / Exodus 21:1-19

21:1 'Now these are the ordinances which you are to set before them: 21:2 'If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment. 21:3 'If he comes alone, he shall go out alone; if he is the husband of a wife, then his wife shall go out with him. 21:4 'If his master gives him a wife, and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall belong to her master, and he shall go out alone. 21:5 'But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,' 21:6 then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the door-post. And his master shall

pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently. 21:7 'If a man sells his daughter as a female slave, she is not to go free as the male slaves do. 21:8 'If she is displeasing in the eyes of her master who designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He does not have authority to sell her to a foreign people because of his unfairness to her. 21:9 'If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters. 21:10 'If he takes to himself another woman, he may not reduce her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights. 21:11 'If he will not do these three things for her, then she shall go out for nothing, without payment of money. 21:12 'He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. 21:13 'But if he did not lie in wait for him, but God let him fall into his hand, then I will appoint you a place to which he may flee. 21:14 'If, however, a man acts presumptuously toward his neighbor, so as to kill him craftily, you are to take him even from My altar, that he may die. 21:15 'He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. 21:16 'He who kidnaps a man, whether he sells him or he is found in his possession, shall surely be put to death. 21:17 'He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. 21:18 'If men have a quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, and he does not die but remains in bed, 21:19 if he gets up and walks around outside on his staff, then he who struck him shall go unpunished; he shall only pay for his loss of time, and shall take care of him until he is completely healed. (NASB)

א וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׂרֹם לְפָנֶיךָ: ב כִּי תִקְחֶנָּה
 עֶבֶד עֶבְרִי שָׁשׁ שָׁנִים יַעֲבֹד וּבְשִׁבְעַת יֵצֵא לְחֻפְשֵׁי חָנָם: ג
 אִם-בְּגִפּוֹ יָבֵא בְּגִפּוֹ יֵצֵא אִם-בְּעַל אִשָּׁה הוּא וַיִּצְאָהּ אִשְׁתּוֹ
 עִמּוֹ: ד אִם-אֲדֹנָיו יָתֵן-לוֹ אִשָּׁה וַיִּלְדָּה-לוֹ בָּנִים אוֹ בָנוֹת
 הָאִשָּׁה וַיִּלְדֶּינָה תִהְיֶה לְאֲדֹנֶיהָ וְהוּא יֵצֵא בְּגִפּוֹ: ה וְאִם-

אָמַר יֹאמֵר הָעֶבֶד אֶהְבֵּתִי אֶת-אֲדֹנָי אֶת-אִשְׁתִּי וְאֶת-בְּנֵי לֹא
אֵצֵא חִפְזִי: וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֲדֹנָיו אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֶל-
הַדָּלֶת אוֹ אֶל-הַמְּזוּזָה וְרָצַע אֲדֹנָיו אֶת-אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ וְעָבְדוּ
לְעַלְמָם: ס ז וְכִי-יִמְכַר אִישׁ אֶת-בֵּיתוֹ לְאִמָּה לֹא תִצָּא
כִּצְאֹת הָעֶבְדִּים: ח אִם-רָעָה בְּעֵינֵי אֲדֹנֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר-לֹא [לוֹ]
יַעֲדָה וְהִפְדָּה לְעַם נְכָרִי לֹא-יִמְשַׁל לְמִכְרָהּ בְּבִגְדוֹ-בָּה: ט
וְאִם-לִבְנוֹ יִיעֲדָנָה כַּמִּשְׁפָּט הַבְּנוֹת יַעֲשֶׂה-לָּהּ: י אִם-אֶחָרָת
יִקַּח-לוֹ שְׂאֵרָה כְּסוּתָהּ וְעִנְתָּהּ לֹא יִגְרַע: יא וְאִם-שָׁלֹשׁ-
אֲלֵה לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה לָּהּ וַיִּצְאָה חֲנָם אֵין כֶּסֶף: ס יב מִכָּה
אִישׁ וְמֵת מוֹת יוֹמָת: יג וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא צָדָה וְהָאֱלֹהִים אָנָּה
לִידוֹ וְשִׁמְתִי לָּהּ מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יָנוּס שָׁמָּה: ס יד וְכִי-יִזְד
אִישׁ עַל-רָעָהּ לְהַרְגוֹ בְּעַרְמָה מֵעַם מִזְבְּחֵי תִקְחֶנּוּ לְמוֹת:
ס טו וּמִכָּה אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ מוֹת יוֹמָת: ס טז וְגִיב אִישׁ
וּמְכָרוֹ וְנִמְצָא בְּיָדוֹ מוֹת יוֹמָת: ס יז וּמְקַלֵּל אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ
מוֹת יוֹמָת: ס יח וְכִי-יִרְיֵב אֲנָשִׁים וְהִכָּה-אִישׁ אֶת-
רָעָהּ בְּאֶבֶן אוֹ בְּאֶגְרֹף וְלֹא יָמוּת וְנִפְל לְמִשְׁכָּב: יט אִם-
יָקוּם וְהִתְהַלֵּךְ בַּחוּץ עַל-מִשְׁעָנָתוֹ וְנָקָה הַמִּכָּה רַק שְׁבֵתוֹ
יִתֵּן וְרִפָּא יִרְפָּא:

Comparison of the Masoretic Text to the Septuagint we find the following:

Masoretic Text

Shemot / Exodus 21:5-6

21:5 'But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,' 21:6 then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the door-post. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently. (NASB)

וְאִם-אָמַר ה' וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֲדֹנָיו אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֶל-הַדָּלֶת אוֹ אֶל-הַמְּזוּזָה וְרָצַע אֲדֹנָיו אֶת-אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ וְעָבְדוּ לְעַלְמָם:

Septuagint

ΕΞΟΔΟΣ 21:5-6 21:5 *‘But if the slave plainly says, ‘I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,’ 21:6 then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the door-post. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently. (NASB)* 21:5 ἐὰν δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπη ὁ παῖς Ἠγάπηκα τὸν κύριόν μου καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ τὰ παιδιά, οὐκ ἀποτρέχω ἐλεύθερος· 21:6 προσάξει αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸ κριτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τότε προσάξει αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν ἐπὶ τὸν σταθμόν, καὶ τρυπήσει αὐτοῦ ὁ κύριος τὸ οὖς τῷ ὀπητίῳ, καὶ δουλεύσει αὐτῷ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

The Greek word used here δουλεύσει (verb 3rd sg aor subj act epic) means *“to be a slave”* in this sense of αἰῶνα *“forever.”* In the Apostolic Writings, the word δοῦλος means a slave, bondman, man of servile condition. This word also metaphorically refers to one who gives himself over to another’s will. This illustrates the *“Servant attitude”* of causing one to devote his life to another disregarding one’s own interests in exchange for the person he has sworn to.

Romans 1:1 Παῦλος δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος, ἀφωρισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ,

Galatians 1:10 Ἄρτι γὰρ ἀνθρώπους πείθω ἢ τὸν θεόν; ἢ ζητῶ ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκειν; εἰ ἔτι ἀνθρώποις ἤρεσκον, Χριστοῦ δοῦλος οὐκ ἂν ἦμην.

It is within this context that Paul is speaking, of loving his master and therefore having signed over all of his personal ownership rights to another, to Christ. These things are connected back to Parashat Mishpatim through the Hebrew slave who wants to make himself a permanent slave to his master saying, *“I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man.” (Shemot / Exodus 21:5)*

Rashi states the following regarding these verses.

Rashi on Shemot / Exodus 21:6 Part 2

אֶל-הַדֶּלֶת אוֹ אֶל הַמְּזוּזָה *TO THE DOOR OR TO THE DOOR-POST* — *From this statement you might think that the door-post is also a proper thing upon which the servant's ear may be pierced! Scripture, however, states, (Deuteronomy 15:17) "[Then thou shalt take an awl], and thrust it through his ear and into the door" — into the door but not into the door-post. If this be so, what is the purpose of Scripture stating here "[to the door] or to the door-post"? By this juxtaposition it only compares the door with the door-post. What is the characteristic of the door-post? It is something perpendicular! So, too, the door must during the act of performance be in a perpendicular position (on its hinges), not detached as, for instance, lying on the ground (Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 21:6:2; Kiddushin 22b).*

Rashi speaks on the Hebrew Scriptures which say, אֶל-הַדֶּלֶת אוֹ אֶל-הַמְּזוּזָה *“upon the door or upon the door-post.”* Rashi draws together these two words (הַדֶּלֶת, הַמְּזוּזָה) *“door-post”* and *“door,”* both of which are upright in the sense of standing upright. For God's people, throughout history, persecution, mockery, oppression for our faith and standing for the truth have been a reality. In this case here, in the servant who chooses to bond himself permanently with his master, he is publicly making a covenant with God and with man. What this involves is proclaiming the truth of God's Word according to His Torah, in the testimony of the servant making public his intentions to become a permanent servant. The idea here then reveals to us how when a person proclaims his intentions about Yeshua the Messiah, he is called to tell everyone about what he has done. This proclamation is paralleled here in Parashat Mishpatim in the servant who makes himself to be a permanent bond-servant is going to the city gate and make this known (proclaiming) his intentions for all to see. The idea of going into all the world and speaking/teaching the gospel message is a very

Torah centric principle. This parallels Yeshua's words in *Mark 16:15* says, "And he said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.'" Paul wrote in *Romans 1:16-17*, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith.'" In order to stand up for the truth we must share the message of God's deliverance with the world. This appears to be what is taking place in the command on becoming a permanent servant, and in Rashi's words comparing the door-post as being upright. The One who brings his life before God and men is to do so being upright, righteous, and with good intentions.

Rashi goes on to describe this verse in the following way:

Rashi on Shemot / Exodus 21:6 Part 3

ורצע אדניו את אזנו במרצע AND HIS LORD SHALL BORE HIS EAR THROUGH WITH THE AWL — "His ear" means his right ear. Or perhaps this is not so, but Scripture means his left ear? Scripture however uses the term **אזן** here and it uses **אזן** in another passage, thereby suggesting an analogy based upon verbal similarity; viz., here it is said "and his lord shall bore his ear (**אזנו**) through", and of the leper it is said, (Leviticus 14:25) "and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear (**אזנו הימית**) of him that is to be cleansed". — How is it in that latter passage? It is the right ear! So here, too, it is the right ear. — What is the reason that the ear had to be pierced rather than any other limb of the servant's body? Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai said: That ear which heard on Mount Sinai, (Exodus 20:13) "Thou shalt not steal" and yet its owner went and stole and was therefore sold as a slave — let it be pierced! Or, in the case of him who sold himself from destitution, having committed no theft, the reason is: That ear which heard on Mount Sinai what I said, (Leviticus 25:55) "For unto Me the children Israel are servants" and yet its owner went and procured

for himself another master — let it be pierced! (Mekhilta d’Rabbi Yishmael 21:6:3; Kiddushin 22b). Rabbi Simeon interpreted this verse like a jewel (i. e. giving it an ethical signification): In what respect are door and door-post different from all other objects in the house that they should be singled out for this purpose? God, in effect, said: door and door-post that were eye-witnesses in Egypt when I passed over the lintel and the two door-posts, freeing Israel from slavery, and when I said, (Leviticus 25:55) “For unto Me the children of Israel are servants” — servants to Me but not servants of servants (of human beings), and yet this man went and procured another master for himself — let him be pieced in their presence (i. e. let them be eye-witnesses now when this man voluntarily prolongs his state of slavery)! (Kiddushin 22b.)

Notice how Rashi draws in the interpretation on the piercing of the ear to the one being cleansed of leprosy (*Vayikra / Leviticus 14:25, a disease only God could heal*), Stealing (*Shemot / Exodus 20:13*), to selling one’s self due to debt (*Vayikra / Leviticus 25:55*), saying the door and door-post are eye witnesses in Egypt during the Passover and the blood of the Lamb (*Vayikra / Leviticus 25:55*), and to the man who voluntarily prolongs his state of slavery (*Talmud Bavli Kiddushin 22b*). This is a very interesting grouping of concepts together in the commandment on becoming a bond-servant of the master. It is not very difficult to extract a NT teaching on having faith in the Messiah Yeshua and being cleansed, having our debts paid, making a visual covenant with God before God and men, the witness of the Passover, our voluntarily becoming a servant of the master permanently, and then going into all the world and proclaiming the good news of the Messiah! Traditional Christian views on the Torah and the rabbinic literature however make it difficult to understand Yeshua and his disciples teachings. Studying the Torah and the Rabbinic literature without prejudice it becomes abundantly clear how the Torah and the Gospel message are tightly coupled. In fact, the two are inseparable!