



**#18 Mishpatim Exodus 21:1-24:18
Torah Teaching
by Moshe Schwab**

Names

Kefa – Peter
 Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one; Christ
 in the Greek means to be smudged
 Moshe – Moses
 Shaul – Paul
 Yeshua – Jesus' real name
 Yĕhōvāh – God's real name forever (Ex. 3:15)
 Yochanan – John

Terms

Haftarah – reading from the prophets
 House – refers to a school or the Temple
 Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible
 Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible
 Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the
 Torah
 Mishpatim – the 18th Torah portion

The portion for this week is Mishpatim and it means, "judgments." This portion contains more laws. There are more laws than the 10 Commandments. All of God's laws are a demonstration of the goodness and grace of God. Grace means favor and God's commandments are a blessing from God. I'd like to talk a little about God's goodness.

God has intentionally given mankind commandments to keep and protect mankind. When we break the commandments of our all-knowing and good God, we bring evil into the world.
 We must first understand that God has always been involved with His creation and has always reached out to mankind to help us. Some teach that God is distant and has left us on our own. That is not true. The creator God keeps the world and for that matter, and the universe functioning properly. God has also not left mankind to figure things out on our own. First, the Bible says that God preserves the earth and the heavens. Nehemiah 9:6 NKJV says, "You alone are the LORD; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all."

The Hebrew word for preserve is the Hebrew word, to exist. God not only created everything but keeps everything in order so that it continues to exist. God is at the root of all His creation and continues to make it exist. Even science has come up with the idea of a particle called the Higgs Boson which they think is a particle that is at the root of all matter. Therefore, without this particle, some scientists think that nothing would exist. Therefore, ironically, they call it the God particle.

Also, back in the early 1900s, science discovered that the universe is expanding, and the Bible also tells us that. Jeremiah 10:12 NKJV says, "He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, and has stretched out the heavens at His discretion." Jeremiah was written about 2,600 years before scientists in the 20th century discovered the universe was expanding. The Bible is not intended to be a book of science. They are writings

from God the creator of the universe that are intended to help us with life. Namely, since God is the creator, God knows what is best for us and gives us instructions on how best to live in the Bible.

It is first of all important to understand that God created the world in such a way as to provide for us. Psalms 145:16-18 NKJV says, "You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works. The LORD is near to all who call upon Him." God's commandments and the lessons of the Bible are also intended to provide for us just like His creation provides for us; God gave us instructions for life in the Bible. Some see God's commandments as restrictions and not from a God who gave us commandments to help us. He gave us the right way to live life and did not leave us alone to figure things out. God is a good God, so he did not leave mankind without direction for life; God has not left mankind to be orphans the Bible says.

God has also now given those who believe in the Messiah Yeshua the Holy Spirit to help us with life.

John 14:15-18 NKJV says,

If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

Notice that Yeshua says that God gave us another helper. The first is God's commandments and the other helper is the Holy Spirit. We have talked about the Holy Spirit in some of our other teachings. It is the power of God at work in the lives of those who believe in the Messiah. Acts 1:8 NKJV says, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."

God's commandments and the Holy Spirit are intended to help us. Nehemiah 9:13 NKJV says about God, "And gave them just ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments." How many people understand that about God's commandments? God gave us authentic and credible principles, they are perfect and correct, and inform us on how to best carry out life. Also, Yeshua said about the Holy Spirit in Luke 11:13 NKJV, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" What God gives us is good. Ungodly worldly values are not credible, not correct, or not properly informed ways to carry out life. Some people think their own values are as good as God's advice, but they are misinformed.

People who imagine that their worldly values as opposed to what God tells us is okay. They do evil because they do not keep the good commandments of our all-knowing and good God. They may even say that God's word is evil. They are the ones who are evil. They spread their false values, and they say that they are right, and God is wrong. Isaiah 32:6 NIV says, "For fools speak folly, their hearts are bent on evil: they practice ungodliness and spread error concerning the LORD."

People often do not understand that breaking God's commandments breaks the laws of nature and truth. For example, since objects fall to earth because of gravity, saying they will fall away from the earth if dropped is just ridiculous thinking. It should be easy to understand that God's commandments are as valid as the laws of nature, but people can talk themselves into any false concept or idea. They think that what they do does not cause harm but doing what is wrong perpetuates evil and pain in the world. Proverbs 16:27 NKJV says, "An ungodly man digs up evil, and it is on his lips like a burning fire." Those who are ungodly and do not keep God's commandments dig up evil. They renounce God and truth and do and will do and say whatever they want; even outright lies. Psalms 10:3-4 NKJV says, "For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire; he blesses the greedy and renounces the LORD. The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts."

The Bible says that those who do not keep God's good commandments are wicked. Do not be fooled by them. They may appear to be okay people, but they are not. They will have to face a good God who must punish those who bring the pain and evil of sin into the world.

Romans 2:5-9 NKJV says,

But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who 'will render to each one according to his deeds': eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil.

Notice when people do not obey God's commandments, it says they do evil.

What is evil?

People will say that doing what is right or wrong is user defined. In other words, it is made up. We all know that there is a standard for what is right or wrong. For example, murdering innocent children for hate is wrong. Since we know that God is good and has demonstrated and told us that He is a good and caring God, when the Bible talks about evil it is singling out the actions of those who do not listen to God.

Some people who do not like what the Bible says will say that God's commandments are old fashioned or do not apply any more, or they may even say that God is a God of hate or the cause of problems in the world. That in fact is just the opposite. A lot of wars involve the breaking of two commandments, murdering others and coveting what others have. Just imagine if all the nations decided to keep just these two commandments. There would be fewer wars. I am not saying we should not defend ourselves. Often the best opposition to aggression is a good defense. For example, God had Israel put together an army so they could defend themselves against evil nations.

Here is another example. Almost everyone who has lost someone they care about to a murderer has intense and painful feelings about what happened. Also, the person that was murdered will suffer incredible fear and emotional pain while they are being attacked. God is against these terrible atrocities, and He says that these sins will not go unpunished in the afterlife. Revelation

21:8 NKJV says, "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone." God can raise the dead because He is the creator God. God will judge all of mankind someday for how they lived their lives.

God does not like sin because of the problems and pain it brings. We should also dislike sin because of what it does to us and others. Psalms 97:10-12 NKJV says, "You who love the LORD, hate evil! He preserves the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous." When we follow God's good ways, they help us in life and can keep us from wicked ways and wicked people who may do us harm. Righteous mean to do what is right and keep God's commandments. Therefore, we have reason to rejoice when we choose to do what is right.

People think they know what is going on in the world. They are often blind to truth and do not understand the negative consequences of not following God's commandments.

We talked a little about the boldness of those who do not believe in doing what is right. They do not understand the effect they are having on others and what their sin is doing to them and others. I remember years ago working in a plant that operated dangerous machinery. The machine I was operating malfunctioned, and I reported it. Unfortunately, it did not get fixed right by the repair person and the next person to use the machine got their hand cut off. That is what is going on in the life of those who do not listen to God's commandments. They think their operating instructions for life are okay, but because they do not follow God's commandments, they bring calamity into the world.

They are living a malfunctioning existence. A system wrought with false ideals and full of error. They do not understand that they are committing evil and the harm it brings. Sometimes people get away with doing what is wrong but like we said, everyone will have to face judgment for the evil they do. They will not get away with what they did.

In Communist Russia, Stalin is said to have caused some 20 million people to be murdered. Communist societies and autocratic societies often do terrible things; watch out for their false ideals. Stalin will have to stand before God someday for what he did.

Jude 1:12-15 NKJV says about their future judgement,

They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

To be ungodly is to do things our own way instead of God's way.

Some people think that as long as they do no harm to others, they can do what they want. We do not live in a bubble in life. There are consequences and effects we produce from our life both on ourselves and others. Just when we think we are getting away with what we are doing, our bubble can burst just like a soap bubble, poof.

God wants to work in our life, but we must be open to His word and His commandments. It is not automatic.

Anything achieved in life is often the result of the effort we put in. The basketball player who practiced for 6 hours a day was rewarded with a professional contract. If he had not put in the effort, no professional team would have made him an offer. Of course, he also had talent, but he did not take that for granted and he developed his ability.

Our spiritual life also requires effort and not just the afterthought that we should do something someday. Deuteronomy 6:17 says, "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you." The Hebrew words translated "diligently keep" both have Hebrew roots that mean to guard (shamar). So, we could translate them as guard, guard "the commandments of the LORD." This scripture is emphasizing that we are to guard God's commandments.

God's commandments are often called words of wisdom, knowledge or understanding in the Bible (see Deuteronomy 4:6). Proverbs 2:10-11 NKJV says, "When wisdom enters your heart, and knowledge is pleasant to your soul, discretion will preserve you; understanding will keep you, to deliver you from the way of evil." It is not knowledge of science that this is talking about. That is a different subject. God's commandments keep us from doing evil because the creator God's commandments help us to do what is right and are from an all-knowing God that cares about mankind. We talk about this a lot because we need to understand this. The word preserve there in Proverbs chapter 2 is again the word to guard. Having the discretion to know what is good or evil will guard you; God's commandments will keep you from the consequences of doing evil.

So, know and keep God's commandments and apply them to your life. Psalms 119:63 NKJV says, "I am a companion of all who fear You, and of those who keep Your precepts." Won't you join me in keeping and in guarding God's commandments. Again, the Hebrew word there for keep can mean to guard. Then in Psalms 119:101-103 NKJV it says, "I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Your word. I have not departed from Your judgments, for You Yourself have taught me. How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" God commandments are sweeter than honey because they are "right and good." Again, he kept, he guarded God's words and His commandments. He guarded his ways from doing evil and kept God's commandments.

Fasten your ways to how God wants you to live so that you can walk in His ways.

To walk in God's ways means to keep His commandments. The Bible describes our life as a walk, perhaps we could call it a pilgrimage that ends with the final judgment and making it into the future kingdom of God. Deuteronomy 5:33 NKJV says, "You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you,

and that you may prolong your days." Living right can prolong your days because you are not giving in to sin and therefore the consequences of a wrong lifestyle.

Deuteronomy 11:22 NKJV says, "Keep all these commandments which I command you to do – to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him." The word keep is again the word for guard. We are to guard God's commandments. We are to walk in God's commandments and to hold onto them. We are to hold onto the words of life. The word for hold fast in the Hebrew means to, "cling or adhere; figuratively, to catch by pursuit," see Strong's Dictionary. We must pursue God and His commandments. We need to grow up in life and make the effort to pursue God.

We have a choice. We can either bring goodness or evil into the world and our life. God gave us His good commandments to help mankind. Don't we want what is good? I think most people want what is good. They just need to understand what is good. But people often think that they know what is right without knowing the goodness of God towards mankind. Therefore, they often bring evil into the world instead of what is "right and good." God wants what is best for us, but we must first be willing to accept Him and His commandments so that we can do what is right. Just like anything in life, we need to be willing to work on our spiritual life as well as the physical and emotional things of life. Hold Fast to God's ways and walk in His ways. Pursue God and a future eternal life with our good God.

Torah Study

Mishpatim means, "judgments" and this portion contains more laws. There are a few hundred applicable laws in the Torah. There are more than 10 commandments. In this portion, our loving God was giving them laws they needed for life. They were being reminded to live a new and good life through God's commandments that was passed down to them by Abraham (see Genesis 26:5) and given again at Mount Sinai. Just like Israel lived a changed life through God, we are to live a changed life through God's commandments and the Messiah Yeshua.

Mishpatim begins with the laws regarding a Hebrew male slave. He is to be set free after six years and his wife with him unless his wife was given him by his master. The slave may choose to remain under his master. A daughter who is sold as a slave if married to her master must be treated well and if not, she is to be set free. If married to the master's son she should be treated as a daughter. If divorced she cannot be sold to a foreigner, and she can be redeemed. We should remember that slavery for Israel was not like the abusive slavery of our world. If they were mistreated, they would be set free. The slaves were to be treated well and set free after 6 years. A slave could choose to work for their masters indefinitely. Shaul says that he has chosen to be a slave, for the Messiah Yeshua in Romans 1:1.

We can learn something about how they applied these laws from the ancient Jewish writings. Jewish slaves were mostly what we call indentured servants. They could have been paying off the debt that they owed the person, they could be paying off the debt from theft they had done, or other debt. The poor also would become slaves for room and board.

*The United States gave everyone equal rights,
so, it is not a caste system or rule by only the privileged.*

Slavery in the United States.

I share this to show how sinful ownership slavery started in the United States, who the participants were, and the issue at stake. It is history, nothing else. In The American Story by David Barton, He says that wrongful slavery began in the United States with a Black slave owner in 1654 by the name of Anthony Johnson who went to court and won his case for slavery. He eventually owned many slaves and owned 250 acres. Before then, there were only indentured servants, and they were set free after they had served for a period of time to pay off their debt.

Only 3% of the world's slaves went to the United States. So, most of the world was engaged in slavery more so than the United States. There were many slave owners in the Southern United States who were black. So not all slave owners were White or Indian. Many Indians also had slaves. In 1830, a Black historian by the name of Carter Woodson did a study and found that 43% of free black households in South Carolina owned slaves. The United States gave everyone equal rights. Ownership type slavery developed in the South backed by the Democratic party.

Although the Democratic party seems to stand up for the rights of the people, they often engage in power grabs to enslave society to their ideals instead of helping people to live right. The Ku Klux Klan was started by the Democratic party back in the 1800s as a terrorist effort to keep this ungodly slavery going. Even to this day, the Democratic party in the United States supports giving out money to people that keeps them poor. The people living off the government lose their incentive to work and instead of working, they must continue to live off the state.

Lincoln was a Republican and not a Democrat. The civil war in the United States was fought to free slaves who were being mistreated. The original settlers of the North were mostly white people who believed in the Bible and did not believe people should be treated as property. Instead, they believed in working for themselves. The people in the South held incorrectly to the idea that the Bible taught that slaves could be mistreated **merely as property**. The Bible does not teach the kind of slavery the South practiced.

As we can see, there is more to the story of slavery than some so flippantly give us. Also, prejudice was practiced toward every people group no matter whether White, Irish, Jewish, Black, or other various people groups. That is a different issue than slavery. Like other people groups, Jews often had to form their own settlements because of prejudice, and they provided their own services for each other in order to get by. Sometimes their services were used outside of their community. The problem of unjust slavery was eventually corrected in the United States because the system of government allowed the people to correct problems in the system and not keep them going.

This portion goes on; the person who kills someone is to be put to death unless it was an accident. If a person attacks or curses their mother or father, or is a kidnapper they are to be

put to death. Notice that kidnapping is considered a serious crime, and the death penalty is incurred. Any religion that practices kidnapping is a false religion according to the Bible. Also, this cursing of their mother or father would not be spurious occasional words, but some form of abuse or the use of God's name in a curse or a form of witchcraft. A curse in the form of witchcraft is punishable by death according to Exodus 22:18. Also, no Jewish child was ever put to death for cursing their parents. The Jewish writings also say that children must have attacked and injured their parents. There must be grounds for being put to death. Also, a person who injures someone is to care for them until they are well. A person is to be put to death for killing his slave; the Hebrew word is retribution and for murder it means to put to death. A person is to be put to the death for causing a death of an unborn child; again, the word in the Hebrew is retribution.

A note about abortion.

Since the Bible enforces the death penalty on those who kill unborn child there are very few just reasons for putting a fetus to death. They will have to stand before God for what they did and explain themselves. Surely aborting a child for birth control is wrong. Children in the womb are human beings in their most needy state; it is the same for babies who would not survive without someone caring for them. They need to be protected and taking their lives through abortion is murder unless the mother could die. In that case it is permitted to save a life if both would die. See Luke 14:5 where Yeshua talks about the importance of saving life. Saving a life can also be applied to the great emotional trauma that comes through rape. It can be done to save the mother's life in the case of great emotional trauma. There is never an insignificant reason where abortion is right. Abortion is not a matter of personal preference as in "my body."

Appropriate retribution must be made, as an eye for an eye relative to the damage. It was always understood that "eye for an eye" would be some sort of proper remuneration for damages depending on what happened. That is the understanding of this scripture. Exodus 21:23-25 NKJV says, "But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound." It was never understood that we are to actually put out someone's eye as retribution. Some people don't know what they are talking about.

*The Mishna and the Talmud are
not God's word as some treat them.*

Differing opinions in Jewish thought.

Some things in the Talmud are extreme. The rabbis had differing opinions. For example, the house (school) of Hillel taught if a person had stolen a beam, they should make remuneration. The house of Shammai taught that the house had to be torn down and the beam removed and given back. The Jewish writings were commentaries and not God's word. They may have some good things to say, but they are not God's word as some treat them. In this case, I think the house of Hillel had a better approach. If it was an expensive beam, the reparation would be higher than for that of a lesser expensive beam.

I should say something about the Talmud at this time. The Talmud is a commentary put together by rabbis that some Jews consider to be biblical truths, but they are not. At times they have good advice, but advice is not a commandment of God. Sometimes they are a proper application of the Torah, but just like any commentary, we must weigh what they have to say with what the Bible says and get our sense of understanding from the scriptures. The Jerusalem Talmud was written around 350 AD and the Babylonian Talmud was written around 500 AD.

*Moshe did not say to put a fence around
the Torah with extra commandments.*

The Bible says you are not to add improperly to God's commandments, so the thousands of extra commands of the rabbis are frequently wrong applications of the Torah or just personal beliefs. Pirkei Avot 1:1 (Chapters of the Fathers) says that Moshe and Joshua told us to put a fence around the Torah – namely, through extra laws. **Moshe said just the opposite.** Deuteronomy 4:2 NKJV, "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

The many misapplied commandments of mainstream Christianity are also wrong. For example, God told us to keep His feasts. Leviticus 23:2 NKJV says, "The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts." God said they are His feasts, and some mere humans say they are not. Who is right? They do not fear God. Malachi 3:5-6 says, "Because they do not fear Me, 'Says the LORD of hosts.' For I am the LORD, **I do not change.**" God does not change; they are still His feasts. These false leaders fear that people will reject them instead of following God correctly. Religion explains away truth. Let us do our best to keep God's commandments properly.

The death penalty.

As we have mentioned at other times, the reason for the death penalty is to prevent murder. Numbers 35:33 NKJV, "So you shall not pollute the land where you are; for blood defiles the land, and no atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it." People who oppose the death penalty cause that nation to be polluted (defiled) by murder. A country that acts unjustly in the way it operates is not a just country.

We continue with the portion; a slave is to be set free as compensation for personal injury from their master. An ox that gored someone is to be killed and not eaten. If has been known to gore, the owner will be put to death too; or the owner can be redeemed. Retribution should be made for a slave that is gored. A person is to make retribution for the loss of another's animal. A person that steals an animal is to make retribution even if the animal is recovered. Remember, retribution is to be done according to the offense. We are mentioning some of the commandments in this portion and not all of them.

A thief caught in the act at night that is killed is not considered murder. A person is to make restitution for another person's loss that they have caused. If a dispute arises over the ownership of an animal, they are to come before God and the one found not to own the animal

will pay double. I remember my dad being flustered over our neighbors not returning things he lent them. Perhaps they should have paid double for not returning them. At the very least they should have given my dad something extra to show their appreciation. That could be a good application of the Torah.

If something happens to an animal that is being cared for by another and it is not stolen, then the owner can swear it was not his fault. If it is his fault, he should make restitution unless he had paid a usage fee. A man who seduces someone who is not engaged must pay retribution – the bride price. He may marry her unless not accepted. There are a number of laws in the Bible that protect women. A sorceress, someone who has sexual relations with an animal, or someone who sacrifices to another god is to be put to death.

They are not to abuse or oppress foreigners, widows, or orphans. It should be noted that in some countries, they consider some people to be a burden and they will mistreat them. We are not to oppress others, especially those who are most vulnerable. I remember someone telling me that Israel oppressed Gaza. It was just the opposite. Gaza would send rockets into Israel and Israel would send food and supplies into Gaza to help them. Gaza's mission is to kill others and Israel's mission is to help those in need anywhere there is need. Israel sends people all over the world to help those in need.

They were not to charge the poor interest. If they take someone's clothes as collateral, they are to restore them the same day. They are not to curse God or their leader, they were not to delay their offerings, their firstborn sons and animals belonged to God, they were not to eat dead animals, and perjury is wrong. They are not to pervert justice, they were to return what belongs to others, and to help others regardless of their feelings for them. Fraud is wrong and so is the oppression of the innocent, oppression of the righteous, and oppression of foreigners.

The issue of bribery.

Bribery is wrong. This is another example of the Bible standing up for justice. A number of countries remain poor because of bribery. Those in power control the resources of that country through bribery and keep that dishonest system going. Those with more money can also take advantage of those who cannot afford to bribe. That is another form of oppression. I remember my one friend telling me that in one country he was in, there were people at key places taking bribes in order to allow people to proceed.

In the seventh year, the land is to be fallow, they are to keep Shabbat, they are not to talk about other gods, and they are to keep the three feasts (of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot). They are to follow the rules for the feasts; they were not bow down to other gods. If they obey God, He will protect and bless them. They were not to boil a goat in its mother's milk is a reference to a fertility ritual done by the Canaanites. It has nothing to do with not eating meat with milk. Since this is mentioned more than once (Exodus 23:19, 34:26; Deuteronomy 14:21), the rabbis said there must be a reason, so they made up an inappropriate extra man-made law about not eating meat with milk.

In this portion, God says He will send the His angel before Israel. Joshua meets the angel of Yĕhōváh in Joshua 5:13-15, and he is told to take off his shoes because it is holy ground. Moshe met God (Exodus 3:4) in the burning bush and is told to take off his shoes because it is holy ground. Messianic believers believe God's angel that goes before Israel to be Yĕhōváh in the form of the preincarnate Yeshua.

Moses then reads the covenant to the people, offers a sacrifice, and sprinkles the people with blood. Moses and the elders then ascend the mountain, and they all see God and they eat before Him; **His feet are standing** on blue sapphire. So, God appears as a man before all the elders of Israel and Moshe. Moshe then goes up the mountain for 40 days and nights to receive the tablets with the commandments from God. There is a lot more that can be covered from the portion.

There is so much that you can apply from the law.

Respect everyone.

Trust in God and His food laws instead of diet fads.

Keep the day of rest on the right day, Friday at sunset to Saturday at sunset.

Perhaps having insurance so we can make quick restitution for accidents.

Not cheating others.

Try to return anything of value that others have lost.

Having honest weights and measures.

These in themselves are important for society. And there is much much more. The New Testament portion has some 1,053 applications of the Torah in it from which we can learn.

There is so much value in following God's commandments. There are 53 commandments in this portion. This portion begins with various rules or commandments. Rules for slaves, murder, abusing parents, reparation and restitution, accidents, self-protection, some sexual sins, not oppressing others, treatment of other believers, giving of the first born to God, dietary laws, lying and perjury, returning property, bribery is wrong. We are to only work six days and rest on seventh, on Shabbat. We should note that a number of these laws are not mentioned in the New Testament portion; some say they can be implied by spurious statements in the New Testament. Without the Tanakh we do not have a complete or best understanding of how to live right.

*We need the Torah to treat
others properly and lovingly.*

For example, bribery which is mentioned in this portion is not mentioned in the New Testament portion. We know that bribery subverts justice and is wrong. We need the full revelation of the Bible as instructions for life. Some people say we only need the New Testament, but they are mistaken. The New Testament portion is based on the Old Testament portion of the Bible. The New Testament does not include all the pertinent laws for life because they already had the Old Testament to refer to. They did not need to be rewritten.

It says in Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV about God's Old Testament laws, "Therefore be careful to observe them; for **this is your wisdom and your understanding** in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a **wise and understanding** people.'" Perhaps some of these laws do not apply in our culture. We should take some time to think about how these laws might be applied in our modern times and how they could apply to us. I was taught some of these laws as a child and learned how to apply them. Many of these laws are important for a peaceful society. Keeping the law is the proper way to treat and love others. God says He will judge those who break His laws because they are bringing pain and trouble into this world.

The Haftarah for Mishpatim is Jeremiah 34:8-22; 33:25-26. We read here essentially that just as God has established day and night, He will bring back Israel to their land and show them compassion. God could have used another way to describe bringing back Israel to their land, but in using "day and night" we can say that the passage definitely alludes to the idea of something permanent in the future; and perhaps that final future time is drawing near.

Commandments, Implied Commandments, Permissions, and other Concepts. (We can also understand commandments are being implied from other scriptures in the Bible. There are other possible concepts than what is shared here.)

Laws regarding servants. Exodus 21:2-11.

2 If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. 3 If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4 If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. 5 But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' 6 then his master shall bring him to the judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever. 7 "And if a man sells his daughter to be a female slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do. 8 If she does not please her master, who has betrothed her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt deceitfully with her. 9 And if he has betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters. 10 If he takes another wife, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, and her marriage rights. 11 And if he does not do these three for her, then she shall go out free, without paying money.

Laws regarding violence. Exodus 21:12-27

12 "He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. 13 However, if he did not lie in wait, but God delivered him into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place where he may flee. 14 "But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbor, to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from My altar, that he may die. 15 "And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. 16 "He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death. 17 "And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. 18 "If men contend

with each other, and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, and he does not die but is confined to his bed, 19 if he rises again and walks about outside with his staff, then he who struck him shall be acquitted. He shall only pay for the loss of his time, and shall provide for him to be thoroughly healed. 20 "And if a man beats his male or female servant with a rod, so that he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. 21 Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he is his property. 22 "If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. 23 But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. 26 "If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye. 27 And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth.

Laws concerning animal regulation. Exodus 21:28-36

28 "If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted. 29 But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death. 30 If there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him. 31 Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. 32 If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned. 33 "And if a man opens a pit, or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls in it, 34 the owner of the pit shall make it good; he shall give money to their owner, but the dead animal shall be his. 35 "If one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money from it; and the dead ox they shall also divide. 36 Or if it was known that the ox tended to thrust in time past, and its owner has not kept it confined, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead animal shall be his own.

Laws regarding property. Exodus 22:1-15

1 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. 2 If the thief is found breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, there shall be no guilt for his bloodshed. 3 If the sun has risen on him, there shall be guilt for his bloodshed. He should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. 4 If the theft is certainly found alive in his hand, whether it is an ox or donkey or sheep, he shall restore double. 5 "If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed, and lets loose his animal, and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard. 6 "If fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacked grain, standing grain, or the field is consumed, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution. 7 "If a man delivers to his neighbor money or articles to keep, and it is stolen out of the man's house, if the thief is found, he shall pay double. 8 If the thief is not found, then the master of the house shall be brought to the judges to see whether he has put his hand into his neighbor's goods. 9 "For any kind of trespass, whether it concerns an ox, a donkey, a sheep, or clothing, or for any kind of lost thing which another claims to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whomever the judges condemn shall pay double

to his neighbor. 10 If a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any animal to keep, and it dies, is hurt, or driven away, no one seeing it, 11 then an oath of the LORD shall be between them both, that he has not put his hand into his neighbor's goods; and the owner of it shall accept that, and he shall not make it good. 12 But if, in fact, it is stolen from him, he shall make restitution to the owner of it. 13 If it is torn to pieces by a beast, then he shall bring it as evidence, and he shall not make good what was torn. 14 "And if a man borrows anything from his neighbor, and it becomes injured or dies, the owner of it not being with it, he shall surely make it good. 15 If its owner was with it, he shall not make it good; if it was hired, it came for its hire.

Moral and miscellaneous observances. Exodus 22:16-31

16 "If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her to be his wife. 17 If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the bride-price of virgins. 18 "You shall not permit a sorceress to live. 19 "Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death. 20 "He who sacrifices to any god, except to the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed. 21 "You shall neither mistreat a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. 22 "You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. 23 If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry; 24 and My wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless. 25 "If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest. 26 If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. 27 For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious. 28 "You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people. 29 "You shall not delay to offer the first of your ripe produce and your juices. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me. 30 Likewise you shall do with your oxen and your sheep. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me. 31 "And you shall be holy men to Me: you shall not eat meat torn by beasts in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.

Laws regarding fairness. Exodus 23:1-9

1 "You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. 2 You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice. 3 You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute. 4 "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. 5 If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it. 6 "You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. 7 Keep yourself far from a false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked. 8 And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous. 9 "Also you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Law of times of rest. Exodus 23:10-12

10 "Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, 11 but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the

beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard and your olive grove. 12 Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed.

Do not talk about the pagan gods. Exodus 23:13

"And in all that I have said to you, be circumspect and make no mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your mouth."

Laws regarding keeping the three feasts. Exodus 23:14-19

14 "Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: 15 You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); 16 and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field.

17 "Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

18 "You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until morning. 19 The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God.

Do not do the things that pagans do regarding their gods. Exodus 23: 19

"You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk." This is something the pagans did. It was a fertility ritual.

Do not provoke the angel of God that is being sent into the land with Israel. Exodus 23:20-21

"Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. 21 Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him."

Do not bow down to idols or serve them. Break them apart. Exodus 23:24-25

24 "You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars. So you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water."

Do not make covenants with pagans and they are not to live in Israel.

Exodus 23:32-33

"You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. 33 They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me."

In closing, let us say the Aaronic Blessing from Numbers 6:24-26:

Yě-hō-váh bless you and keep you.

Yě-hō-váh make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Yě-hō-váh lift up His face upon you, and give to you peace. Amen.

Thank you for being with us today.