

Parshas Mishpatim – Freedom Depends on Our Connection to Hashem:

1. **Shmos 21, 2-6:** If you buy an 'Eved Ivri' [servant who is Jewish], he shall work for six years; and in the seventh he shall go free, for no charge....But if the servant shall say, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children – I shall not go free.' Then his master shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore through his ear with the awl, and he shall serve him forever.
2. **Shmos 22,2:** If he has nothing, he shall be sold for his theft.
3. **Vayikra 25,39:** If your brother becomes impoverished with you and is sold to you, you shall not work with him slave labor.
4. **Rashi quoting a Mechilta:** Why is the ear chosen to be pierced more than any other organ? Says R' Yochanan ben Zakai, 'This ear that heard at Mt. Sinai 'Don't steal,' and he went and stole, should have his ear pierced. So why then do we pierce the ear of someone who sold himself? The ear that heard on Mt. Sinai 'For the Jewish people are My servants'; they are My servants and not servants to servants, and he went and acquired a master, should have his ear pierced.
5. **Midrash Shmos Raba 30:** You will find that there are many ordinances of this character. Because God said: 'I am the Lord your God who has taken you out of the land of Mitzrayim, out of the house of bondage," what does it say of a Hebrew servant? "If you buy an Eved Ivri...". God said: 'As I created the world in six days and rested on the seventh, so for six years shall he serve you, after which he goes out a free man.'Israel will never come to this condition unless they transgress commandments.
6. **Shem Meshmuel 5679:** The inner point of a Jew can never be enslaved – all subjugation is in the external aspect of the Jew.
7. **Shmos 20,2:** I am Hashem, your God, who has taken you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery.
8. **Talmud Kesuvos 59b:** Sanctified objects, chametz, and freeing a slave release a lien.
9. **Pirkei Avos 6,2:** 'The tablets are God's handiwork and the script was God's script 'charus' (engraved) on the tablets.' Don't read 'charus' (engraved), but 'cheirus' (freedom), for you can have no freer man than one who engages in the study of Torah.
10. **Vayikra 18,2:** Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: 'I am Hashem Your God.'
11. **Rashi:** I am the one who told you at Sinai, 'I am the lord your God.' And you accepted My kingdom upon you. Now accept my decrees. Rebbi said: It was known and revealed before Him that eventually they would get involved with immorality in the days of Ezra, therefore He came to them with a decree, 'I am the lord your God,' know who has decreed upon you – a judge who punishes and is trustworthy to reward.