

Jewish Texts on Slavery

Exodus 21:1-11

א וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר תִּשִׂים לִפְנֵיהֶם: ב כִּי תִקְנֶה עֶבֶד עֲבָרִי שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים
יַעֲבֹד וּבְשִׁבְעַת יָצָא לְחֻפְשֵׁי חֲנָם: ג אִם־בְּגֵפוֹ יָבֵא בְּגֵפוֹ יֵצֵא אִם־בְּעַל אִשָּׁה
הוּא וַיִּצְאָה אִשְׁתּוֹ עִמּוֹ: ד אִם־אֲדֹנָיו יִתֵּן־לוֹ אִשָּׁה וַיִּלְדֶּה־לוֹ בָּנִים אוֹ בָנוֹת
הָאִשָּׁה וַיִּלְדֶּיהָ תִּהְיֶה לְאֲדֹנֶיהָ וְהוּא יֵצֵא בְּגֵפוֹ: ה וְאִם־אָמַר יֹאמֶר הָעֶבֶד
אֶהְבֹּתִי אֶת־אֲדֹנָי אֶת־אִשְׁתִּי וְאֶת־בְּנֵי לֹא אֵצֵא חֻפְשִׁי: ו וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֲדֹנָיו
אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים וְהִגִּישׁוּ אֶל־הַדֹּלֶת אוֹ אֶל־הַמְּזוּזָה וְרָצַע אֲדֹנָיו אֶת־אָזְנוֹ בַּמַּרְצֵעַ
וַעֲבָדוּ לְעַלְמִם: 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
לְמַכְרָהּ בְּבִגְדוֹ־בָּהּ: ט וְאִם־לִבָּנוּ יִיעַדְנָה כְּמִשְׁפַּט הַבָּנוֹת יַעֲשֶׂה־לָּהּ:
י אִם־אֶחָרָת יִקַּח־לוֹ שְׂאֵרָה כְּסוּתָהּ וְעִנְתָּהּ לֹא יִגָּרַע: יא וְאִם־שָׁלַשׁ־אֵלֶּה לֹא
יַעֲשֶׂה לָּהּ וַיִּצְאָה חֲנָם אֵין כְּסָף:

Chapter 21

1. And these are the judgments which you shall set before them.
2. If you buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve; and in the seventh he shall go out free, for nothing.
3. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he was married, then his wife shall go out with him.
4. If his master has given him a wife, and she has born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.
5. And if the servant shall plainly say, 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 door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.
7. And if a man sells his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the menservants do.
8. If she pleases not her master, who has designated her for himself, then shall he let her be redeemed; he shall have no power to sell her to a strange nation, seeing he has dealt deceitfully with her.
9. And if he has betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her as with a daughter.
10. If he takes for himself another wife; her food, her garment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish.
11. And if he does not do these three things to her, then shall she go out free without payment of money.

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Leviticus 25:47-55

מז וְכִי תִשָּׂג יָד גֵר וְתוֹשֵׁב עִמָּךְ וּמָךְ אַחִיד עִמּוֹ וְנִמְכַר לְגֵר וְתוֹשֵׁב עִמָּךְ אוֹ
לְעֵקֶר מִשְׁפַּחַת גֵר: מִח אַחֲרֵי נִמְכַר גְּאֻלָּה תִהְיֶה-לוֹ אֶחָד מֵאֲחִיו יִגְאֻלְנוּ:
מִט אוֹ-דָדוֹ אוֹ בֶן-דָּדוֹ יִגְאֻלְנוּ אוֹ-מִשְׁאֵר בְּשָׂרוֹ מִמִּשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ יִגְאֻלְנוּ אוֹ-הַשִּׁיגָה
יָדוֹ וְנִגְאָל: נ וְחָשַׁב עִם-קִנְיָהּ מִשְׁנֵת הַמְכָרוֹ לוֹ עַד שְׁנַת הַיָּבֵל וְהָיָה כְּסֹף
מִמְכָרוֹ בְּמִסְפַּר שָׁנִים כִּימֵי שְׂכִיר יִהְיֶה עִמּוֹ: נא אִם-עוֹד רַבּוֹת בְּשָׁנִים לְפִיָּהּ
יָשִׁיב גְּאֻלְתּוֹ מִכְּסֹף מְקֻנָּתוֹ: נב וְאִם-מְעַט נִשְׂאָר בְּשָׁנִים עַד-שְׁנַת הַיָּבֵל
וְחָשַׁב-לוֹ כְּפִי שָׁנָיו יָשִׁיב אֶת-גְּאֻלְתּוֹ: נג כְּשֹׂכִיר שָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה יִהְיֶה עִמּוֹ
לֹא-יִרְדְּנוּ בַּפָּרֶךְ לְעֵינֶיךָ: נד וְאִם-לֹא יִגְאֹל בְּאֻלָּה וְיִצָּא בְּשְׁנַת הַיָּבֵל הוּא וּבָנָיו
עִמּוֹ: [מִפְטִיר] נה כִּי-לִי בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדִים עֲבָדֵי הֵם אֲשֶׁר-הוֹצֵאתִי אוֹתָם
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

47. And if a sojourner or stranger becomes rich by you, and your brother who dwells by him becomes poor, and sell himself to the stranger or sojourner by you, or to the offspring of the stranger's family;

48. After he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brothers may redeem him;

49. Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any who is near of kin to him of his family may redeem him; or if he is able, he may redeem himself.

50. And he shall reckon with him who bought him from the year that he was sold to him to the year of jubilee; and the price of his sale shall be according to the number of years, according to the time of a hired servant shall it be with him.

51. If there are yet many years, according to them he shall give again the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for.

52. And if there remain but few years to the year of jubilee, then he shall count with him, and according to his years shall he give him again the price of his redemption.

53. And as a yearly hired servant shall he be with him; and the other shall not rule with rigour over him in your sight.

54. And if he is not redeemed in these years, then he shall go out in the year of jubilee, both he, and his children with him.

55. For to me the people of Israel are servants; they are my servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt; I am the Eternal One, your God.

Genesis 1:26-7

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וַיְרִדוּ בְדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ: כז וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים
אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצַלְם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אוֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אוֹתָם:

26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

27. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female He created them.

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From the Rabbinic Writings, Sanhedrin 38 et al, as presented in the Jewish Encyclopedia

"Why was only a single specimen of man created first? To teach us that one who destroys a single soul destroys a whole world and that whosoever saves a single soul saves a whole world; furthermore, so no race or class may claim a nobler ancestry, saying, 'Our father was born first'; and, finally, to give testimony to the greatness of the Eternal One, who caused the wonderful diversity of humanity to emanate from one type. And why was Adam created last of all beings? To teach him humility; for if he be overbearing, let him remember that the little fly preceded him in the order of creation."