

## INSIGHTS from the SEDRA

*Insights from the Sedra is a project of the Scholars' Kollel of Great Neck. It aims to provide several questions and answers about the Sedra, culled from various commentaries, including the following: Baal Haturim, Darash Moshe, Vedebartha Bam by Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky, Torah Treasures by Dov Furer, Wellsprings of Torah by Alexander Friedman, and Kol Dodi by Rabbi Dovid Feinstein, Great Torah Lights by Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Goodman, Something To Say by Dov Wasserman, The Vilna Gaon, and Growth Through Torah by Zelig Pliskin.*

### כי את הבכר בן השנואה יכיר לתת לו פי שנים

**“Rather, he shall recognize the first-born son of the hated to give him twice as much.” (21:17)**

The *Vilna Gaon* points out that Hebrew's only letters that have a numerical value that is twice the value of the letter that precedes them in the alphabet are כ and ר. These are the letters that form the word בכר – the first-born son. [כ=2, twice that of א which precedes it, ר=20, twice that of י which precedes it and ר=200, twice that of ק which precedes it.] This reflects that the first-born is entitled to “double”. The *Vilna Gaon* adds that the word בכר is written without a vav, for vav does not have twice the numerical value of the letter that precedes it in the alphabet [vav = 6, while hei = 5].

(*Vilna Gaon*)

### כי יקרא קן תפור לפניך

**“If a bird's nest happens to be before you...” (22:6)**

*Rambam* regards this command as teaching us to show kindness and consideration to animals. If our search for food requires killing an animal, then it should die in the easiest most humane manner possible, not in torment. By the same token, the mother and its young must not be killed on the same day (*Vayikra* 22:28) so that the mother not see the death of her offspring. The assumption is that to a limited extent, animals share certain basic feelings with man, included among them is the love of a mother for her offspring. The precept of sending away the mother bird from the nest has a similar reason, since it spares her witnessing the taking of the young. Now, if the Torah takes into consideration the sensitivities of birds and four-legged creatures, how much more so is it concerned about the feelings of human beings!

(*Something to Say*)

### וענשו אתו מאה כסף ונתנו לאבי הנערה

**“And they shall fine him one hundred silver and give them to the father of the girl.” (22:19)**

In mentioning the laws of a wanton accusation of a husband against his wife, several times the word *na'arah* is spelled in an unusual manner – without a *hei* at the end. Only here is it spelled with the *hei*. Why is this so?

The *Ba'a' Haturim* explains that the reason the Torah changed the spelling earlier is to indicate that because she acted in a manner of a *na'ar*, a foolish individual, therefore her husband

suspected her of wrongdoing and falsely accused her. If so, in this verse, after her innocence has been proven, it is only appropriate that no derogatory reference is made, and that *na'arah* is spelled in full. (Sifsei Kohen)

### וכתב לה ספר כריתת

**“And he wrote her a bill of divorce...” (24:1)**

QUESTION: Why is the bill of divorce document called a “get”?

ANSWER: The word גט – *get* has the numerical value of twelve. It is called a *get* to allude to the fact that it should be written in no more than twelve lines. Though the number twelve can be reached by many other combinations of Hebrew letters, the combination of ט-ג was selected because throughout the entire Torah, there is no word in which the letters *gimmel* and *tet* are together. Since this document is the Torah-prescribed method of separation, it is appropriately called *get* because these two letters are always separated from one another in the Torah and represent the opposite of unity and peace. (Likutei Sichot)

**כי תקצר קצירך...ושכחת עמר...לא תשוב לקחתו לגר ליתום ולאלמנה יהיה למען יברכך ה' אלקיך**  
**“When you reap your harvest...and forget a sheaf...you must not go back to take it. It must be left for the convert, the orphan, and the widow, in order that G-d bless you...” (24:19)**

The innermost desire of every Jew, no matter what his or her outward level of observance of the Torah, is to perform G-d's will in full. Therefore, even when we perform a commandment unintentionally, or even “mistakenly,” it is really the result of our deep-seated desire to do it. Therefore, if a person loses a coin and a poor person picks it up, G-d rewards the person who lost the coin. How much more so will G-d bless us for intentional acts of charity and kindness!

(Likutei Sichot)

### זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק

**“Remember what Amalek did to you...” (25:17)**

The reason the Torah singles out *Amalek* is because this nation was unique, attacking the Israelites by seeking them out, not even knowing where they were to be found. Just as an eagle flies far and wide to search for prey, so the *Amalekites* marched through hundreds of miles of desert in order to locate the Israelites. (Torah Gems)

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