Ki Seitzei 5783

If we look in this week's parsha, two unrelated sections of the parsha will emphasize and bring to great awareness this point. It says in this week's parsha (23:21) הַלָּבֶרָי תַשִּׁיךְ וּלְאָחִיךְ לֹא תַשִּׁיךְ - the famous הַלֹכה about ריבית or איסור is the איסור in the Torah to charge another Yid interest if we borrow or lend money. However, the pasuk clearly says, right there, לַּגַּרָרִי תַשִּׁיךָ וּלְאָחִיךְ לֹא תַשִּׁיךְ - To a גוי, you can charge interest, but to your brother, you cannot charge interest. Throughout our history, I remember this so clearly in ישיבה days, one of our teachers brought this up, that the גוים had this as a constant complaint against us. We were showing favoritism. We don't charge interest to a Yid, but to a goy we do charge interest. How would you answer that? He posed this question to the entire class. One of my friends, who I'm proud to say is still my friend, raised his hand and said the following very straightforward and very obvious answer. If שמעון lends שמעון money, he doesn't charge him interest. If אמעון lends האובן money, he doesn't charge him interest. But if Johnny lends me money, he charges me interest. So if I lend Johnny money, I'm allowed to charge him interest. The goy charges interest. Go to any bank, they charge you interest. So we as Yidden are allowed to charge interest to the goy because that's what they do to us. We treat them in exactly the same way that they treat us. However, Hashem says, "Don't do that to your brother." To your brother, you don't charge interest. This just shows you this incredible, exact סברא and thought process that goes into each and every part of the Torah.

Now, as a treat, I'm going to bring a totally different הלכה, which is at the beginning of the פרשה, and that is the הלכה about פּר שנים, ובֶּן הָאֲהוּבָה ובֶּן הַשְּׁנוּאָה about פּי שנים for a בכור. The פּר שנים for a בכור פּי שנים gets פּי שנים. It doesn't matter if he's from the אהובה or the אהובה. Specifically, the Torah is telling us that if the שנואה בַּבְּלר בֶּן הַשְּעוּאָה יַבִּיר לָתֶת לוֹ פִּי שְׁנַיִם בְּכל אֲשֶׁר (21:17) פּי שנים pets פּי אֶת הַבְּכֹר בֶּן הַשְּׁנוּאָה יַבִּיר לָתֶת לוֹ פִּי שְׁנַיִם בְּכל אֲשֶׁר (21:17) פּי שנים הפרא לוֹ פּי שְׁנַיִם בָּכל אֲשֶׁר.

The sefer Torah Treasures brings in the name of the גר"א that this הלכה is two הלכה in one. A) That the הלכה receives a double portion. B) That the בכור only gets that which his father has in his possession at the time of his passing. This is known as a אֲשֶׁר יָמְצֵא לוֹ . מוחזק - that which he has. If something's coming to him in the future, there's no פֿי שנים on that incoming fund. That's called ראוי has to share those incoming finds equally with all of the other children.

Now, how do we see this in the actual words of the הלכה? We see it from the word בכור אוא itself. Now, what's interesting is that in this pasuk בכור is written with a shortened version. It's not בכור It's בכור it's done on purpose. Why? The numerical value of the letters בכן, which we all know are two, twenty, and two hundred, they are exactly double of the letters that precede them: אי ק, one, ten, and a hundred respectively. But they are not double the letters that follow them. This is a דכור to the הלכה that preceives a double portion only from that which was there before, which was in his father's possession before he passed away, preceding his death, but not from the income that comes after his death.

That is so beautiful, that's classic וילנא גאון. The genius of the גאון to be able to see that in this הלכה is really quite astonishing and breathtaking. בעזרת השם, we should all be מכוון to the Torah's thoughts, we should keep on striving to work harder and harder to ascertain and to reach such a level. If we strive to it, maybe we'll get a little bit closer to what he was able to accomplish.

