

Marrying G-d

Letters and Numbers of Torah – Mishpatim

By Rabbi Aaron L. Raskin

Chabad of Brooklyn Heights

In this portion, the Torah tells us of the case of a man who is very poor, and cannot support his family. He is allowed to ‘sell’ his daughter, who is under the age of maturity, to a Jewish master, with the intent that the master or his son will marry her, as it is written **“He should have designated her as a wife for himself...” (Exodus 21:8)**

We find in this verse the word “lo” which is a ‘*kri-and-a-ksiv*.’ A “*kri-and-a-ksiv*” is a word that is pronounced (*kri*) one way, but written (*ksiv*) in the Torah scroll a different way.

These two ways of reading the word also imply different shades of meaning.

The *kri* is spelled Lamed-Vav (לו), and means that “He should have designated her as a wife....” The *ksiv* however is spelled *Lamed Alef* (לָ), meaning “He *did not* designate her as a wife....”

What deeper meaning can we derive from this difference?