**נכסף או נחשב?**

**אבנר רמו**



**A camel carrying Wine jars. From the mosaic floor of a Byzantine church near Kibbutz Kissufim**

We read in the Book of Isaiah: **כל-הגוים כאין נגדו; מאפס ותהו נחשבו-לו** - “**All the nations are as nothing before Him; they are accounted by Him as things of naught, and vanity**” (Is 40:17).

Yet in the Book of Zephaniah we find: **הגוי לא נכסף** - “**O shameless nation**” (Zep 2:1; see also: Num 23:9).

It is not clear how the English translator determined that the unusual word: **נכסף** means: “**shameless**.” The Greeks wrote here: “uneducated”, but the comparison between these verses suggests that **לא נכסף** is a velar, sibilant, and bilabial letter-exchange error of **לא נחשב** - “that is not taken into account.”

In the Book of Genesis we hear Jacob’s wives saying about their father:

**העוד לנו חלק ונחלה בבית אבינו.**

**הלוא נכריות נחשבנו לו,**

“**'Is there yet any portion and inheritance for us in our father's house?**

**Are we not being accounted by him** (as) **strangers?**” (Gen 31:14-15).

Yet fifteen verses later we hear Laban saying: **ועתה הלך הלכת, כי-נכסף נכספתה לבית אביך** - “**And now you surely have gone, because you have surely longed to your father's house**” (Gen 31:30).

However, here again the comparison between these verses suggests that:

**כי-נכסף נכספתה לבית אביך** is a velar, sibilant, and bilabial letter-exchange error of:

**כי-נחשב נחשבת לבית אביך** – “**for you are surely being accounted to your father’s house**” (see also: 2 Sam 4:2).