

שטט או שרט?

אבנר רמו



In the Book of Numbers we read:

ואם-לא תורישו את-ישבי הארץ מפניכם-והיה אשר תותירו מהם, לשכים בעיניכם ולצנינם בצדיכם; וצררו אתכם-על-הארץ אשר אתם יושבים בה.

“And if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then shall those that you let remain of them be as thorns in your eyes, and as pricks in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land wherein you dwell” (Num 33:55).

In the Book of Joshua we find reference to the same theme:

ידוע תדעו, כי לא יוסיף יהוה אלהיכם להוריש את-הגוים האלה מלפניכם; והיו לכם לפח ולמוקש, ולשטט בצדיכם ולצנינים בעיניכם, עד-אבדכם מעל האדמה הטובה הזאת אשר נתן לכם יהוה אלהיכם.

“Know for a certainty that *YHWH* your God will no more drive these nations from out of your sight; but they shall be a snare and a trap to you, and a scourge in your sides, and pricks in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which *YHWH* your God had given you” (Jos 23:13).

Similarly we find in the Book of Judges:

וגם אמרתי לא-אגרש אותם מפניכם; והיו לכם לצדים, ואלהיהם יהיו לכם למוקש.

“Wherefore I also said: I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be to you as snares, and their gods shall be a trap to you” (Jud 2:3).

In the Book of Proverbs we read: “Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward; he that keeps his soul holds himself far from them” (Pro 22:5).

However, the comparison between these verses suggest that the Hapax legomenon **צַדִּים** (*tsidim*) of verse Jud 2:3 is a letter-substitution error of **צַנִּים** (*tsinim*) - “thorns” (Pro 22:5), and a letter-deletion and a letter-substitution error of **צַנִּיִּם** (*tsninim*) whether “thorns in your sides” (Num 33:55), or “thorns in your eyes” (Jos 23:13).

In the Book of Proverbs we read: **וּשְׂמַת שֶׁכִּין בַּלְעָךְ** - “And put a knife to your throat” (Pro 23:2). If this understanding is correct then the reading of **לְשָׁכִים בְּעֵינֵיכֶם** (*lesikim be'ineichem*) of verse Num 33:55, may be a letter-substitution error of **לְשָׁכִין בְּעֵינֵיכֶם** (*lesakin be'ineichem*) - “as a knife in your eyes.”

It is not clear how the English translator determined that **שֶׁטֶט בְּצַדֵּיכֶם** (*shotet betsidaychem*) means “**a scourge in your sides**” (Jos 23:13). The Greek translator wrote here: “nails in your heels.” However we also read: **אֶבֶן מַעֲמָסָה לְכָל-הָעַמִּים-כָּל-עַמָּסִיָּה שְׂרוּט יִשְׂרוּטוּ** - “A stone of burden for all the peoples; all that burden themselves with it shall **be sore wounded**” (Zec 12:3; see also: Lev 19:28; 21:5). In the Greek translation of Leviticus **שֶׂרֶט** (*seret*) mean “incision” and we therefore suggest that **שֶׁטֶט בְּצַדֵּיכֶם** (*shotet betsidaychem*) is a letter-substitution error of **שֶׂרֶט בְּצַדֵּיכֶם** (*seret betsidaychem*) - “An incision in your sides.”