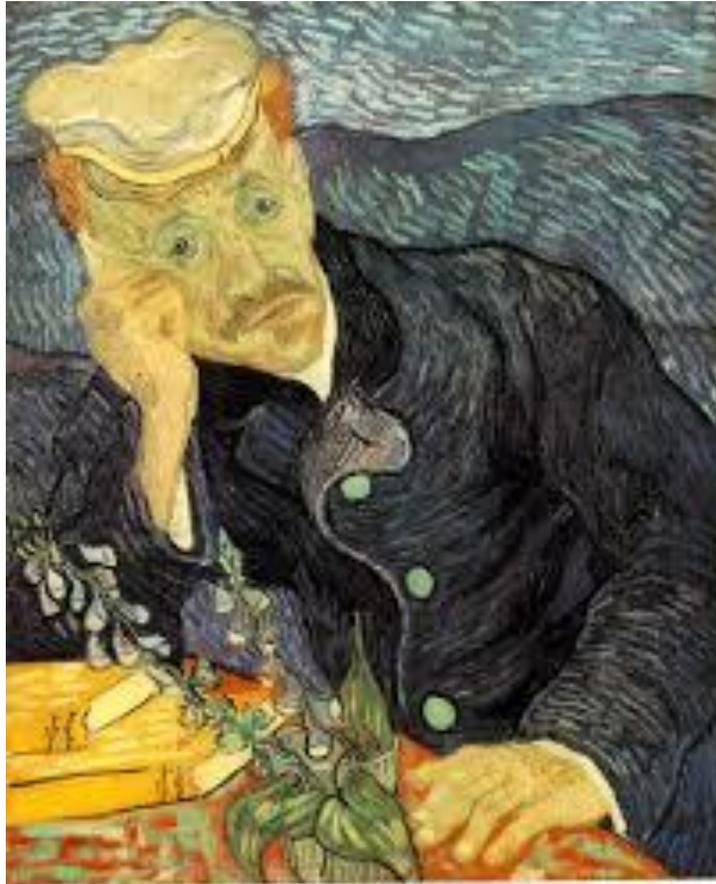


עצה, עצם, ועצב

אבנר רמו



"Portrait of Dr. Gachet" by Vincent van Gogh (1890).

We read in the Book of Psalms:

עד-אנה יהוה תשכחני נצח; עד-אנה תסתיר את-פניך ממני.
עד-אנה אשית עצות בנפשי-יגון בלבבי יומם;

“How long *YHWH* wilt You forget me, forever? How long wilt You hide Your face from me?

How long shall I place counsel in my soul, [having] sorrow in my heart, every day?” (Ps 13:2-3).

However, the logic of this verse suggests that here **עצות** is a letter-deletion error of **עצבות** - “sadness” (e.g. Pro 15:13).

We read in the Book of Proverbs: **צוף-דבש, אמרי-נעם; מתוק לנפש, ומרפא לעצם; וצוף-דבש, אמרי-נעם; מתוק לנפש, ומרפא לעצם, and a healing to the bone**” (Pro 16:24).

In the Greek translation of this verse, the marked words are missing, probably because the translator thought it to be unlikely that honeycomb could cure a bone disease. However, the logic

of this verse suggests that here **לעצם** is a letter-substitution error of **לעצב** - “to sadness” (Gen 6:6; 34:7; 45:5; 1 Sam 20:3; 2 Sam 19:3; Is 54:6; 63:10; Ps 78:40; Neh 8:10, 11). A similar theme appears in the Book of Psalms: **ומחבש לעצבותם ; הרפא לשבורי לב** - “(He) who heals the broken in heart, and alleviates their sadness” (Ps 147:3). If this understanding is correct then here the word **ומחבש** is a letter-substitution error of **ומחלש** (e.g. Joel 4:10).

Yet we also find in the Book of Proverbs: **שמן וקטרת ישמח-לב ; ומתק רעהו מעצת-נפש** - “Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; and [so does] the sweetness of a man's friend of hearty counsel” (Pro 27:9).

The understanding of **מעצת-נפש** as “of hearty counsel” by the English translator is not supported by the Greek translation. However, the logic of this verse and the comparison between these verses suggests that **ומתק רעהו מעצת-נפש** is a letter-insertion and a letter and word deletion error of: **ומתק רעהו יעבר עצבת-נפש** - “and the sweetness of his friend shall remove the sadness of the soul.” A similar theme is found in verses Pro 18:24; and Pro 27:10.