

האם ה- "צער" בעברית אחר-תנכית זהה ל- "שער" התנכי?



Sorrowing Old Man (At Eternity's Gate), an oil painting by Vincent Willem van Gogh (1853–1890)

In the Book of Psalms we read the expression: **כמו-חרון ישערנו** (Ps 58:10) that was translated to Greek as: “as if in anger he shall bestorm you.” The English translator wrote here: **He will sweep it away with a whirlwind.** Both translations do not contribute to the understanding of the paragraph that contains this verse, and are rather questionable. While in other biblical verses the Hebrew word **חרון** appears to mean “anger” (e.g. Ex 32:12; Num 25:4; 32:14; Deu 13:18; Jos 7:26; 1 Sam 28:18; 2 Ki 23:26; Is 13:9, 13; Jer 4:8, 26; 12:13; 25:37, 38; 30:24; 49:36; 51:45; Hos 11:9; Jon 3:9; Nah 1:6; Zep 2:2; 3:8; Ps 69:5; 78:49; 85:4; Job 20:23; Thr 1:12; 4:11; Ezr 10:14; 2 Ch 11, 13; 29:10; 30:18), the meaning of the word **ישערנו** (from the root: **שער** (sa’r) is less certain.

In the Book of Ezekiel we read:

כל ישבי האיים שממו עליך; ומלכיהם שערו שער, רעמו פנים.

“**All the inhabitants of the isles are appalled at you, and their kings are horribly afraid, they are troubled in their countenance**” (Eze 27:35; see also: Eze 32:10).

It is not clear how the English translator determined that **שערו שער** means: “are horribly afraid” and this understanding is not supported by the Greek translation of this verse.

In the Book of Jeremiah we find:

**ההימיר גוי אלהים, והמה לא אלהים; ועמי המיר כבודו, בלוא יועיל.
שמו שמים על-זאת; ושערו חרבו מאד, נאם-יהוה.**

“**Had a nation changed its gods, which yet are no gods? But My people had changed its glory for that which does not helps.**

Be astonished, O you heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be you exceeding amazed, said YHWH” (Jer2:11-12).

It is not clear how the English translator determined that here the Hebrew word **חרבו** means “be you exceeding amazed” and such an understanding is not supported by the Greek translation. However the comparison with verse Ps 58:10 suggests that here **חרבו** (*kharvu*) is a letter-substitution and order-type error of **נחרו** (*vekhru*) - “and (they) were angry.” In fact, the term: **ויחר להם מאד** - “then they were very wroth” appears in the Bible multiple times (e.g. Gen 4:5; 34:7; Num 11:10; 16:15; 1 Sam 11:6; 18:8; 2Sam 3:8; 12:5; 13:21; Neh 4:1; 5:6; 2Ch 25:10).

Of particular interest is verse Gen 34:7: **ויתעצבו האנשים, ויחר להם מאד** - “and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth.” The combination here of “wroth” and “grief” suggests the possibility that as a result of sibilants exchange, the few biblical words from the root **שער** (sa’r) are actually the same as those from the post-biblical Hebrew root **צער** (tsa’r), that means “grief.”

In the Book of Ezekiel we read:

ואמרת אל-עם הארץ כה-אמר אדני יהוה ליושבי ירושלים, אל-אדמת ישראל, לחמם בדאגה יאכלו, ומימיהם בשממון ישתו

“**And say to the people of the land: Thus said my Lord YHWH concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the land of Israel. They shall eat their bread with anxiety, and drink their water with appalment**” (Eze 12:19; see also: Eze 4:16).

Yet one verse earlier we find:

ויהי דבר-יהוה, אלי לאמר
בן-אדם, לחמך ברעש תאכל; ומימך ברגזה ובדאגה תשתה.

“And the word of *YHWH* came to me, saying:

Son of man, eat your bread with quaking, and drink thy water with anger and with anxiety” (Eze 12:18).

Here the Greeks translated **ברעש** (*beraa'sh*) to “in grief” which suggests that they assumed that here **ברעש** (*beraa'sh*) is an order-type error of **בשער** (*besaa'r*) - “in grief.”