

ושן בהמות אשלח בם – And I will send the tooth of cattle amongst them

OVERVIEW

The גמרא asks that we can derive שן from the word ושלח (and ובער is not necessary), for we find that the תורה refers to שן with the word ושלח, as it is written,¹ ושן בהמות אשלח בם. The unique characteristic of שן is that יש הנאה להזיקה. It would seem that ושן בהמות אשלח בם is referring to an aggressive behavior (that is more similar to קרן) than to an eating experience. ושן בהמות תוספות discusses how ושן בהמות can be referring to שן.

anticipates a difficulty:

אף על גב דאמרינן בעלמא [בספרי פרשת האזינו²] בהמות שיש להן ארס כנחש ונושכות וממיתות - Even though it is stated elsewhere that the בהמות of this פסוק is referring to בהמות that have venom,³ like a snake and they bite and kill -

דהוי נשיכה שהיא תולדה דקרן⁴ -

This places their damage in the category of נשיכה, which is a תולדה of קרן; how can the גמרא derive from this פסוק that ושן refers to שן (where יש הנאה להזיקן)?!

responds:

מכל מקום איירי נמי בחיות רעות שדרסו ואכלו להנאתן -

Nevertheless this פסוק is also discussing wild animals which prey and eat for their benefit; wild animals eat meat, which makes their biting and killing שן, for they kill to eat -

כדמתרגמינן ושן בהמות ושן דחיה ברא וחיה⁵ בכלל בהמה:

As the תרגום renders the words of ושן בהמות; 'and the tooth of the animals of the field'; for an animal is included in the word בהמה.

SUMMARY

The פסוק of ושן בהמות is (also) referring to wild animals that prey and kill for their food (and benefit)

¹ דברים [האזינו] לב, כד.

² The commentaries (see אמ"ה) note that in our ספרי this דרשה is not found; rather the ספרי mentions (as רש"י comments on that פסוק) that it occurred that the sheep bit and killed (people). [The דרש may be based on the fact that the ושן בהמות אשלח בם פסוק continues with עפר חמת זוחלי עפר referring to the venom of snakes.]

³ Perhaps this means that when ה' will punish with בהמות שן, those בהמות will have venom; but it does not refer to a species of בהמות that have venom.

⁴ דהמות do not eat meat (see לקמן יט, ב); it follows that their biting (and killing with their venom) is an act of aggression, which is a תולדה of קרן. See מהרש"א (הארוך). See 'Thinking it over'.

⁵ בכלל בהמה is חיה, since ושן חיות ושן בהמות can translate the תרגום. תוספות explains that the תרגום can translate ושן בהמות to mean ושן חיות, since חיה is בהמה.

THINKING IT OVER

Under which אב would we categorize animals that kill in anger?