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Posted by neshamaincharge - 16 Nov 2014 22:17

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Has anyone seen or heard a mature discussion of the story with Dovid and Avishag?  
(Yesterday's haftorah) it just seems so odd! It just seems so disturbing- halachicly and  
hashkaficly.

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Re: ?????? ???????

Posted by cordnoy - 16 Nov 2014 22:28

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INSIGHTS INTO THE DAILY DAF

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Previous Daf

SANHEDRIN 22

## 1) DAVID HA'MELECH AND AVISHAG

QUESTIONS: The Gemara explains that David ha'Melech did not want to marry Avishag because he had already married as many wives as he was permitted to marry. When Avishag heard that, she responded, "When a thief can no longer steal, he presents himself as a peace-loving person," implying that David ha'Melech had lost his strength and therefore did not want to marry her (and not because he was prohibited from taking another wife). David ha'Melech proved to her that he still had his full strength by summoning Bas Sheva to be with him.

There are a number of questions on this Gemara.

(a) The Mishnah (21a) permits a king to marry up to eighteen wives. David ha'Melech presumably was telling Avishag that he already had eighteen wives. Why, however, did David ha'Melech not marry Avishag as a Pilegish?

(b) How could Avishag talk with such temerity and brazenness to the king?

(c) Finally, where in the verses does the Gemara see that the king summoned Bas Sheva to prove anything to Avishag? From the verses, it seems that the two stories are not related! After the verse relates the incident of Avishag, it tells how Bas Sheva came to the king in order to complain that Adoniyah was attempting to usurp the kingship from her son, Shlomo. Her purpose in coming to David ha'Melech had nothing to do with his summons to her to prove anything to Avishag.

## ANSWERS:

(a) The RAMBAM (Hilchos Melachim 3:2) writes that a king is permitted to marry only up to eighteen wives, including Pilagshim. He seems to understand that once the king has eighteen wives, the king is not allowed to take even a Pilegish. The KESEF MISHNEH writes that this Gemara is the source for the Rambam's ruling.

However, the RA'AVAD there argues and says that the verse which permits the king to marry eighteen wives refers only to proper wives, not Pilagshim. This also appears to be the intention of RASHI (21a, DH v'Ha Kesiv). The CHIDUSHEI HA'RAN in the name of RABEINU DAVID

cites proof for this opinion from the verse which describes Rechavam as having eighteen wives in addition to sixty Pilagshim (Divrei ha'Yamim II 11:21). If he limited himself to eighteen wives, it must have been because he was observing the Halachah that a king may not have more than eighteen wives. It is evident from there that a king is permitted to marry Pilagshim in addition to his eighteen wives.

The Chidushei ha'Ran answers the question by saying that Avishag herself refused to be a Pilegish. (Perhaps she refused because David ha'Melech was already old, and after a king dies his wives and Pilagshim are not permitted to remarry anyone else, as the Rabanan (18a) rule. She wanted to remain an unmarried Penayah, because even though she would be prohibited to marry someone from non-royal lineage after being with David ha'Melech, she would be permitted to marry another king, as the Gemara says. By becoming a Pilegish she would neither be a full wife of David, nor would she be able to marry anyone else after his death, not even another king.)

(b) When the Gemara says that "Avishag said," it might mean that Avishag thought to herself (see TOSFOS, beginning of Nazir 10a). David ha'Melech understood what she was thinking and responded accordingly.

The ARUCH LA'NER suggests a novel approach to explain the Gemara. The Yerushalmi explains that in order for David ha'Melech to repent fully from his actions with Bas Sheva, David ha'Melech constantly tried to place himself in the same situation as he was in when the incident with Bas Sheva occurred, and then, in that situation, to act with the utmost righteousness and control. (This is the highest form of Teshuvah, as the RAMBAM states in Hilchos Teshuvah 2:1.) For this purpose, David ha'Melech had beautiful Pilagshim brought to him. For the same reason, David ha'Melech wanted an attendant to be found who would be the most beautiful woman in all of Israel. When Avishag saw that David ha'Melech was already very old, she said, "You no longer have the same desire you had in your youth, and therefore having a beautiful woman around will not serve the purpose for which you intend." This is what she meant by saying that even a thief eventually loses his ability to steal and then claims that he has repented, not out of true repentance but merely out of the inability to steal. David ha'Melech showed her that he was still youthful and thus could still accomplish complete Teshuvah. (Even according to the Aruch la'Ner, Avishag might have had the hidden intention in her statement in accordance with the simple reading of the Gemara.)

(c) It is clear that David ha'Melech summoned Bas Sheva, because no one, even a queen, may come to the king without formally requesting an audience or being invited by the king. The verse does not say that Bas Sheva asked the king's permission to come to him. The Gemara infers that the summons for Bas Sheva involved Avishag since the verse mentions Avishag in the context of Bas Sheva's meeting with the king. (See MAHARSHA.)

Moreover, it seems that the story of Avishag itself is what prompted Adoniyah to attempt to take the kingship for himself. Adoniyah thought that David ha'Melech was too old to notice or to care about what happened, because his call for Avishag demonstrated his deteriorating health and strength. He did not realize that David ha'Melech's suffering was caused by a specific sin (see Berachos 62b) and not by old age. When David ha'Melech heard Avishag's comment about his age, he realized that many others might have had the same thought, and thus he felt it necessary to show his strength in order to prevent a coup against his kingship. It was at this opportunity that Bas Sheva revealed to the king that indeed there already was a coup in process, and that the time to show his strength had come.

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Re: ?????? ???????

Posted by cordnoy - 16 Nov 2014 22:36

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Orach Chayim

King David's servants consulted the doctors and wise men. They said, "Clothes will not keep the king warm as long as his body does not warm itself." So the servants looked for another way to warm him up. Some say they wanted him to have a companion just so that he would be warmed by the heat of her body when she was close to him. Others say that they hoped he would be stimulated and enlivened by her beauty, and his own body would again produce its own heat.

David was not permitted to marry Avishag because he already had eighteen wives. The Torah limits the number of wives a king may marry, as it says, "He will not have many wives" (Devarim 17:17). By tradition, we know that eighteen are permitted and no more. To have married Avishag, he would have had to divorce one of them. That he could not do. The court decreed that, if it be necessary for his health, it would be better for him to undergo the temptation of being alone with an unmarried woman than to cause one of his wives to suffer by divorcing her.

See what a serious thing divorce is! Even under these circumstances, they would not permit it! Which among David's wives would not have willingly accepted divorce for the sake of her husband, the beloved king of Yisrael? It would not have been a shame for her but a distinction. Nonetheless, the court forbade it.

If a man divorces his first wife, even the altar in the Temple sheds tears, as it says, "This, too, have you done. You have covered the altar of G-d with tears, crying and weeping. He no longer turns toward the meal offering, to accept it with good will from your hand. And when you say, 'For what reason?' Because G-d testified between you and the wife of your youth, whom you have betrayed, though she is your companion and the woman of your covenant." (Malachi 2:13)

By being together with Avishag and resisting temptation, David achieved complete repentance for the sin of taking Bat-Sheva. Although he had already repented, been punished and forgiven, his repentance was not yet complete. He had never had the opportunity to withstand a similar temptation. That is the test of true repentance. If a person again finds himself in the situation in which he once sinned, but this time he resists temptation, it is clear that he no longer has that weakness. He has overcome it, and is therefore worthy of having his earlier sin completely wiped away.

there is also stuff by R' Pinchus Picklestein, but you will need to search for that yourself

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Re: ????? ???????

Posted by ZemiroShabbos - 17 Nov 2014 21:36

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thank you Cordnoy, wonderful divrei torah!

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Re: ????? ???????

Posted by strugglenisayon - 05 Feb 2015 20:54

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