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Better and Best

Rabbi Yochanan says: What does the verse refer to when it says, “Many daughters have fought, and you have done better than all of them.” “Many daughters have fought” refers to Yosef and Boaz (who overcame their evil inclination and did not engage in promiscuity). “And you have done better than all of them” refers to Palti ben Layish (who had the most difficult test of this type and passed it with flying colors).

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman says in the name of Rabbi Yonasan: What does the verse refer to when it says, “Grace is false and beauty is vain”? “Grace is false” refers to Yosef, “beauty is vain” refers to Boaz. “A God-fearing person is praised” refers to Palti ben Layish.

Another teaching regarding this verse is as follows. “Grace is false” refers to the (Torah study of) generation of Moshe Rabbeinu; “beauty is vain” refers to the generation of Yehoshua; “a God-fearing person is praised” refers to the generation of Chizkiyah. Alternatively, “Grace is false” refers to the generation of Moshe Rabbeinu and Yehoshua; “beauty is vain” refers to the generation of Chizkiyah; “a God-fearing person is praised” refers to the generation of Rabbi Yehudah the son of Rabbi Ila’i. They said regarding the generation of Rabbi Yehudah the son of Rabbi Ila’i that there used to be six students covering themselves with one cloak (on account of their poverty) and learning Torah. (20a)

Mishna

If a king loses a relative, he does not go out of the entrance of his palace for the funeral. Rabbi Yehudah says: If he wants to go behind the deceased during the funeral procession he may,

just as we find that King David joined the funeral of Avner. This as the verse states, “And King David went after the bier.” They replied: This was only done to appease the people (who thought David was involved in the death of Avner). When they comfort him, the people sit on the floor while he sits on a dargesh (defined in the Gemora below). (20a)

Following the Bier

The Gemora cites a braisa: In a place where the custom is that women follow the bier, they may do so. If the custom is that they go in front of the bier, they may do so. Rabbi Yehudah says: Women must go in front of the bier, as we find that King David went after the bier of Avner (presumably he was with the men). This is as the verse states, “And King David went after the bier of Avner.” They replied: This was only done in order to placate the people, and they were indeed placated. At this funeral, David went from being amongst the men to being amongst the women, and then went back to the men. This is as the verse states, “And all of the nation and all of Israel knew that David did not orchestrate Avner’s death.”

Rava says: What does the verse mean when it says, “And the entire nation came to comfort David”? The verse is written “to cut off,” but it is pronounced “to comfort.” [It should be noted that we do not have this kri u’ksiv in our Prophets.] Originally they came to cut off David (as they thought that he had caused Avner’s death), but eventually they comforted him.

Rav Yehudah says in the name of Rav: Why was Avner punished? This was because he should have protested Shaul’s actions (of killing out Nov, the city of Kohanim) and did not. Rabbi Yitzchak says: He did protest, but was not listened to.

The *Gemora* explains: They both deduce their opinions from the same verse. *“The king lamented over Avner, and he said: Will Avner die as did Naval? Your hands were not tied, and your feet were not put in shackles.”* The opinion that says that he did not protest understands the verse as lamenting Avner’s choice of not protesting as, *“Your hands were not tied, and your feet were not put in shackles.”* *Why didn’t you protest? This is why you fell as if you were slain by sinners.* The opinion that says that he did protest understands the verse as a bewildered question. *“Should you deserve to die like Naval?! Your hands were not tied, and your feet were not put in shackles. You protested Shaul’s actions. Why should you fall as if you were slain by sinners”?!*

The *Gemora* asks: Indeed, according to the opinion that he did protest, why did he die such a death?

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak answers: This is because he delayed David from ruling for two and a half years (*by coronating Ish Boshes the king instead of David; see Rashi at length*). (20a)

Dargesh

The *Gemora* asks: What is a *dargash*?

Ulla says: A *dargash* bed is a bed of good fortune (*designated for the guardian angel of the house*).

The Rabbis asked Ulla from the following *Mishna*: When the king was given the mourner’s meal (*since it was forbidden for a mourner to eat the first meal from his own food*), all the people sat on the ground, while he reclined on the *dargesh*. Now, (*according to you, Ulla*) normally, he would not sit upon it, yet on that day he does!?

Rava answered: Why is that problematic? The rest of the year, it is optional for him to partake in meat and wine, but on this day, we bring these for him.

The *Gemora* asks on Ulla from a *braisa*: The mourner is not required to overturn a *dargash* bed; rather, one should stand it up on its side (*and lean it against the wall*). And we learned in another *braisa*: The mourners must overturn all the beds that are in his house. (*If a dargash is a bed, it should also be required to be turned over?*)

The *Gemora* answers: A *dargash* (*although it’s a bed*) may be similar to a bed used for holding utensils. And we learned in a *braisa*: A mourner is not required to overturn a bed used for utensils.

The *Gemora* asks on Ulla from a *braisa*: Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: A mourner should untie the straps of the *dargash* and the bed will fall by itself. If it is a regular type of bed, why does Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel rule that one should untie its straps; a regular bed does not have straps, it has ropes attached to the frame?

The *Gemora* offers another explanation for *dargash*. When Ravin came from *Eretz Yisroel* to Bavel, he said: I asked Rav Tachlifa the Westerner, who would frequent the market for leathermakers as to the meaning of *dargash*. He told me that *dargash* is a leather bed. [*Rashi explains that it was like a sheet of leather with loops on its sides that would be attached to a bed frame. It did not have to be turned over during mourning, as the leather would become dirty as it would touch the ground.*]

Rabbi Yirmiyah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: A *dargash* contains its own loops (*the loops are attached to the leather sheet*), whereas a bed has the loops on top of it (*the ropes supporting the mattress or sheet are crisscrossed onto the frame of the bed*).

The *Gemora* asks a question from a *Mishna*. When is a wooden vessel able to become impure? A bed and crib are able to become impure from when they are sanded with the skin of a fish. If a bed is made out of ropes that crisscross over it to form a support, why does the frame of the bed (*which is covered anyway by the ropes*) have to be sanded?

The *Gemora* answers: Rather, both a *dargash* and bed have their own loops. The loops of a bed are tied into a hold in the frame, whereas the loops of a *dargash* are secured on hooks that protrude from the frame.

Rabbi Yaakov says in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi: The law follows Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel. Rabbi Yaakov bar Ami says: A bed whose footboard and headboard (*used to attach a canopy over the bed*) protrude above the bed can be straightened, and that is good enough. (20a – 20b)

Mishna

A king takes his nation out to a discretionary war based on a *Beis Din* of seventy-one judges. He can break fences (*surrounding one's property*) to make a path for himself, and nobody can protest. The path of the king has no limit. The entire nation can pillage (*during war*) and present it to him, and he takes a portion first. (20b)

Kings

The *Gemora* asks: We already learned (2a) that a king may not go out to war without the permission of a *Beis Din* of seventy-one judges. [*Why is it necessary to say this again?*]

The *Gemora* answers: Being that we are now saying the laws that apply to a king, we say this law again as well.

Rav Yehudah says in the name of Shmuel: Whatever it says in the verse regarding a king (*when Shmuel told the nation about all of the things a king could do*) is indeed permitted for the king to do. Rav says: The powers of the king stated in the verse were only a threat to the nation of what a king might do (*not what he is permitted to do*). This is as the verse says, “Place a king over you” - “in order that you should fear him.”

This is akin to the following argument among *Tannaim*. Rabbi Yosi says: Whatever it says in the verse regarding a king is indeed permitted for the king to do. Rabbi Yehudah says: The

powers of the king stated in the verse were only a threat to the nation of what a king might do. This is as the verse says, “Place a king over you” - “in order that you should fear him.”

Rabbi Yehudah also said: The nation of Israel was commanded in three *mitzvos* when they entered *Eretz Yisroel*. They were commanded to appoint a king, to destroy all offspring of Amalek, and to build a *Beis Hamikdash*. Rabbi Nehorai says: This passage (*regarding having a king*) was said as a response to their complaints. This is as the verse states, “And you will say, “I shall place upon myself a king etc.”

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Rabbi Eliezer says that the elders of the generation properly asked for a king. This is as the verse states, “Give us a king to judge us.” However, the boors amongst them acted improperly. This is as the verse states, “And we too will be like all of the nations, and our king will judge us and go before us.”

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Rabbi Yosi says that The nation of Israel was commanded in three *mitzvos* when they entered *Eretz Yisroel*. They were commanded to appoint a king, to destroy all offspring of Amalek, and to build a *Beis Hamikdash*. However, I do not know which of these should be performed first. When the verse says, “For Hashem has sworn by His throne that He will have war with Amalek,” it is obvious that the *mitzvah* of appointing a king (*which is represented by His throne*) is first. This is because a “throne” refers to a king, as the verse says, “And Shlomo sat on the throne of Hashem to be king.” However, I am still unsure if they then were commanded to build a *Beis Hamikdash* or to destroy Amalek. When the verse says, “And he will give you respite from all of your enemies...and the place that Hashem will choose etc.” it must be indicating that they were first commanded to destroy Amalek. Similarly, regarding David the verse says, “And when King David was sitting in his house, and Hashem had given him respite from his surrounding (enemies) etc.” The following verse says, “And the king said to Nassan the prophet, “See that I am sitting in a house of cedar etc.” [*It is only after Amalek was destroyed that David expressed his desire to build the Beis Hamikdash.*]



INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Shlomo

Rish Lakish says: Originally, Shlomo was king over the upper world (*i.e. demons*), as the verse says, “*And Shlomo sat on the throne of Hashem.*” He eventually ended up ruling over the lower beings only, as the verse says, “*For he ruled over the entire area on this side of the river, from Tifsach to Azzah.*” Rav and Shmuel argue about the meaning of this verse. One says: Tifsach was at one end of the world and Azzah was at the other end. The other says: They were next to each other. Just as he ruled over Tifsach and Azzah, so he ruled over the entire world. However, he ended up only ruling over Israel, as the verse says, “*I, Koheles, was the king over Israel.*” He then ended up only ruling over Yerushalayim, as the verse says, “*These are the words of Koheles, son of David, king of Jerusalem.*” Eventually, he ended up ruling only over his bed, as the verse says, “*Behold the bed of Shlomo etc.*” He then ended up ruling over his staff, as the verse says, “*This was my reward from all of my work.*” [See *Gitin (68b)* that *Ashmadai* threw him to a faraway land with only his staff.] Rav and Shmuel argue whether he only had his staff, or he only had his cloak.

The *Gemora* inquires: Did he ever return to being the king (*over the upper beings*)? This is an argument. One opinion is that he returned, and one is that he did not. According to the opinion that he did not, he was king and then a common person (*not like the king he was before*). According to the second opinion, he was king, a regular person, and then returned to the throne. (20b)

The *Mishna* says he can break things to make a path.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: The treasure house of the opposing king belongs to the (*capturing*) king. The rest of the spoils are divided, half to the king and half to the people. The *Gemora* cites the Scriptural source for this. (20b – 21a)

Superstition

Ulla says: A *dargash* bed is a bed of good fortune.

The Rishonim ask: Shouldn't such a bed be forbidden on account of the prohibition of *nichush*; *One should not act upon the basis of omens or lucky times* (Vayikra 19:26)?

The Radvaz answers that it is being used as a sign to strengthen one's luck, but not to be superstitious about it. R' Eliezer MiMitz disagrees with him and maintains that even that would be forbidden.

The Shitah Mikubetzes explains that this is a bed designated for the guardian angel of the house. It was done for the purpose of honoring the Holy One, blessed is He. This is similar in the manner that we prepare a chair for Eliyahu Hanavi by a *bris milah*.

The Ra"n in Sanhedrin explains that it is a bed which is constantly made and kept empty in order to demonstrate that the household has more than they need. Through this, one is recognizing that Hashem has blessed him with wealth and thanking Him for it.

The Rambam writes that *dargash* is a small bed that is placed before a larger bed; it is used as a stepping-stool in order to climb onto the higher bed.

The Rosh explains that the angel in charge of poverty resides in a dirty house and the angel in charge of riches and success resides in a clean house. The *dargash* is a bed which always remained clean in order to beckon the angel of wealth to reside in the house.

The Wisdom of Rabbi Yehonasan

And he may break through property to make a way for himself.

Rabbi Yehonasan Eibschitz was familiar with the royal family. Once the king was about to enter the city and to test Rabbi Yehonasan's wisdom, asked him to guess the gate through which he would enter. Rabbi Yehonasan replied that he would put his answer in writing, to be opened only after the king's entry to the city. The king thought of a trick and broke through the city wall, making a new gate and imagining that Rabbi Yehonasan could never foresee such a ploy. After his arrival, the reply was opened, showing the excerpt from the *Mishna*: "...the king may break through property to make a way for himself."

HALACHAH ON THE DAF

Gazing at Women

The *Gemora* records a dispute between the *Chachamim* and Rabbi Yehudah regarding where the women stand when attending a funeral. *Chachamim* are of the opinion that they may stand both in front and behind the coffin, while Rabbi Yehudah maintains that they may only stand in front.

Tosfos explains that since when attending a funeral it is a time of anguish, we are not concerned that the men will see the women and have illicit thoughts, therefore we allow the women to stand in front of the coffin while the men are behind them. However, Tosfos continues that there are those who have the custom to position the men in front of the coffin and the women behind it, for it is improper for the men to gaze at the women.

There are many things men are forbidden to do, so as to distance themselves from immorality. Obviously these laws do not apply to one's wife. Due to the severity of these laws and the fact that it is unknown to many people, these *halachos* will be a bit explicit.

It is forbidden to:

- 1) Wink, snap the fingers or any other bodily movement that is considered flirting.
- 2) Joke around with a woman, or to act in a light-hearted manner.
- 3) Gaze at her beauty. This also applies to an unmarried girl.
- 4) Smell the perfume that a woman is wearing.
- 5) Gaze at the clothing of a woman that one knows, even if she is not wearing it at the time.
- 6) If one is walking down the street and a woman is walking in front of him, it is forbidden to continue to walk behind her; rather, he should quicken his pace and get in front of her. If this is not possible, then he should either go to the side or wait until she is sufficiently ahead of him. There is a dispute as to how much of a distance needs to be between them. Mahari and others hold that it is enough if a man is four *amos* behind a woman, while the Radvaz rules that one must distance himself until he can't clearly see her walking and movements. This applies even where ladies go covered from head to toe.
- 7) Pass the house of a prostitute.
- 8) Gaze at any part of a woman's body.
- 9) Listen to a woman singing.