



Avshalom: Anger and Envy

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Dedicated by Fred and Susan Birnbaum in memory of Fred's mother, Esther bat Shlomo Pesach z"l, whose yahrtzeit is the 19th of Tevet

The Story

II Shemuel 13:1-19:10 (Artscroll Tanach, pp. 753-773)

1. Metzudat David, II Shemuel 13:20

ועתה. הואיל וכבר נעשה, החרישי ואל תבזי אותו, כי הלא אחיך הוא, וראוי לך לחוס על כבודו.

And now. Since it has already been done, be silent and do not despise him, for he is not your brother, and it is fitting for you to spare his honour.

2. Malbim, II Shemuel 13:20

אל תשייתי את לבך לדבר הזה. טוב שתשכחי זאת מלבך כי מה שהיה היה.

Do not concern your heart over this matter. It is good for you to forget this from your heart, since what happened has happened.

3. Malbim, II Shemuel 13:21

והמלך דוד חרה לו מאד, אולם לא הוכיחו ע"ז, וכל זה עורר שנאת אבשלום.

King David was extremely furious at him [Amnon]; nevertheless, he did not rebuke him about this, and all of this aroused Avshalom's hatred.

4. Radak, II Shemuel 14:25

וכאבשלום לא היה איש יפה. סמוך לסיפור המרד שמרד באביו ספר מה גרם לו זה כי היה יפה ובכל ישראל לא היה כמוהו ונתגאה ביופיו ובשערו ותשב כי אין ראוי למלוכה מבני דוד כמוהו ומרד אולי שמע כי בלב המלך להמליך שלמה אחריו ומרד על אביו בחייו וגנב לב ישראל.

No man was as beautiful as Avshalom. This account is described directly preceding the rebellion against his father to tell what caused it. He was beautiful, and there was so one in Israel whose beauty or hair compared to his. He thought there was no one else from the sons of David who were as worthy of the kingship. Perhaps he heard that it was in his father's heart to crown Shlomo as his successor, and he rebelled against his father and stole the heart of Israel.

5. Talmud, Sotah 10b

אבשלום נתגאה בשערו וכו' ת"ר אבשלום בשערו מרד.

Avshalom was excessively proud of his hair, and therefore he was hung by his hair. The Sages taught (*Tosefta* 3:16): Avshalom rebelled [and sinned] due to his hair... (Davidson translation)

6. Metzudat David, II Shemuel 15:1

מאחרי כן. אחר שמחל לו אביו על עונו.

After this. After his father forgave him for his sin.

7. Ralbag, II Shemuel 15:1

והמשים איש רצים לפניו. הנה מפני שלא היה מדרך מלכי ישראל להרבות סוסים כמו שהזהירה התורה הנה היה הענין הזה דבר גדול בחק אבשלום כי לא היה מלך.

And fifty men to run before him. It was not the way of the kings of Israel to acquire so many horses, as the Torah warns. Therefore, this was especially significant because Avshalom was not king.

8. Metzudat David, II Shemuel 15:4

והצדקתיו. רצה לומר: הייתי מצדיק את הדין לדונו בצדק, כי מאד הייתי נותן לב להבין דבר המשפט.

[I would] judge him fairly. Meaning, I would justify the law to judge him justly, since I would give my full attention to understand the legal matter.

9. Ralbag, II Shemuel 15:6

ויגנב אבשלום את לב אנשי ישראל. ר"ל באלו הכזבים כאלו גנב לבם מאת המלך דוד ולקחו לו כי בזה משך לב העם אליו.

Avshalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. In those falsehoods, he stole their hearts from King David, and he took them away. It was with this that he drew the hearts of the people to him.

10. Rashi, II Shemuel 15:11

קרואים והולכים לתמם. מפורש במסכת סוטה ירושלמית (א ח) שבקש מאביו שיכתוב לו, שכל שני בני אדם שיבקש שילכו עמו, ילכו והיה מראה אותו לשנים כאן, ואחר כך לשנים אחרים, וכן הרבה.

They were invited and went along innocently. It is explained in Yerushalmi Sotah that he [Avshalom] requested of his father that he [David] write [a document] for him that any two people that he request go with him, should go. He [proceeded] to show it [the document] to two people here and afterwards to two other people, and in this way to many.

11. Mishnah, Sotah 9b

אבשלום נתגאָה בשַׁעָרוֹ, לְפִיכֶךָ נִתְלָה בְּשַׁעָרוֹ. וּלְפִי שָׁבָא עַל עֶשֶׂר פִּילֵגְשֵׁי אָבִיו, לְפִיכֶךָ נִתְּנוּ בוֹ עֶשֶׂר לִזְנוּבוֹתָיו, שְׁנָאָמֶר (שמואל ב יח) וַיִּסְבוּ עֲשָׂרָה אַנְשִׁים נְשָׂאֵי פְלִי יוֹאָב. וּלְפִי שָׁגַב שְׁלֹשָׁה לְבָבוֹת, לֵב אָבִיו, וְלֵב בֵּית דִּין, וְלֵב יִשְׂרָאֵל, שְׁנָאָמֶר (שם טו) וַיִּגְנֹב אֲבִשְׁלֹום אֶת לֵב אַנְשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְפִיכֶךָ נִתְקְעוּ בוֹ שְׁלֹשָׁה שְׁבָטִים, שְׁנָאָמֶר (שם יח) וַיִּקַּח שְׁלֹשָׁה שְׁבָטִים בְּכַפוֹ וַיִּתְקַעֵם בְּלֵב אֲבִשְׁלֹום.

Avshalom was proud of his hair, therefore he was hanged by his hair. And because he had relations with the ten concubines of his father, he was pierced by ten spears, as it says: "And ten young men who bore the arms of Yoav surrounded [and smote Avshalom and killed him]" (II Shemuel 18:15). And because he stole three hearts, the heart of his father, the heart of the court, and the heart of Israel, as it says: "And Avshalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel" (II Shemuel 15:6); therefore three darts were thrust through him, as it says: "And he took three spears in his hand and he thrust them into the heart of Avshalom" (II Shemuel 18:14).