

Chapter 30

Violation in Seeking the Welfare of Ammonites

| Torah | |
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| Deut. 23:7 | You shall never seek their peace nor their [Ammonites and Moabites] benefit as long as you live. |

| Prophets | |
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| II Sam. 10:2 | David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun, son of N-hash as his father showed kindness to me." And David sent his courtiers to comfort him over his father. |

Description of Violation

Torah law forbids seeking the peace of, or dealing kindly with, Ammon and Moab. David seems to go out of his way to do something the Torah prohibits, without any mention in the narrative of any wrongdoing.

| Rabbinic Resolution | |
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| <i>Tanhuma</i> , Pinehas 3 ¹⁴² | <p>אמר לו הקב"ה, אתה תעבור על דברי? אני כתבתי ולא תדרוש לשלוםם (דב' כג:ז) ואת עושה עמם גמילת חסד? סוף בא לידי בזיון.... ובא לידי מלחמה.</p> <p>God said to David, "Will you transgress my word? I wrote, 'You shall not seek their peace' (Deut. 23:7), and you show kindness to them?"... In the end he came unto disgrace... and unto war.</p> |

142. A parallel passage appears at *Bemidbar Rabbah* 21:6.

Analysis of Rabbinic Resolution

No resolution is provided,¹⁴³ not even the customary last resort of *hora'at sha'ah*, but the violation is acknowledged.¹⁴⁴

143. Usually, the Rabbis try to justify any act of a biblical figure who is considered righteous. Occasionally, however, the Rabbis resolve an unnoticed violation with the answer that the person did wrong, even if the person is considered righteous. See E. Margalit, *Ha-Hayyavim b'Mikra ve-Zakkaim b'Talmud uv'Midrashim* [Hebrew] (London, 1949), introduction.

144. In medieval and later rabbinic literature, halakhic justification for David's action abound. See R. Eliezer of Metz, *Sefer Yere'im*, §250, p. 226, and all commentaries there, especially A.A. Schiff's *To'afot Re'em*. See also R. Shlomo Zalman, *Toldot Adam*, vol. 2, p. 44. In addition, see Rambam, *Hilkhot Melakhim* 6:6, and *Kesef Mishneh*, *Hagahot Maimonot*, and *Or Sameah*, *ad loc.* The verse prohibits *seeking* the peace of the Ammonites. David did *not seek* their peace. He responded to their good gesture to him.