

Absalom's Subterfuge, David's Multicultural Illusion, 2 Samuel 13:26-27

2 Samuel 13:26 - Absalom said, "If not then please permit Amnon, my brother, to come with us." And the king said, "Why should he go with you?"

The question by the king probably indicates that David is still concerned about whether Absalom has developed revenge motivation in his soul. Absalom had given no public indication of any such thing over the past two years, but that was a part of his subterfuge, a perfect word to describe Absalom's strategy.

Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. "subterfuge":

Deception by artifice or stratagem in order to conceal, escape, or evade. Suggests the adoption of a stratagem or the telling of a lie in order to escape guilt or to gain an end.

This definition contains the words *artifice: insincere or false behavior, and stratagem: a trick, cleverly contrived, for deceiving and outwitting the enemy.*

Absalom wisely selected a well-known event for the timing of the assassination. Its location was so far removed from Jerusalem that he knew his father could not attend and that he would not permit his cabinet to do so. David's regrets allowed Absalom to then invite Amnon and good manners did not permit the king to refuse. And the reason David has no legitimate reason to refuse the request is that for two years Absalom had behaved perfectly toward him and Amnon. To refuse the request would therefore be an insult without cause.

Note the irony of David's misapplication of authority:

It was his misuse of authority that brought Bath-sheba to his castle where he raped her.

2 Samuel 11:4 - David sent his State Troopers and seized Bath-sheba. And when she was brought to him, he raped her. And when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her home.

It was his misuse of authority that caused the murder of her husband Uriah. 2 Samuel 11:14, 2 Samuel 11:15, 2 Samuel 11:16, 2 Samuel 11:17.

It was his misuse of authority that caused his daughter Tamar to be placed into a compromising situation in the castle of her half-brother Amnon. 2 Samuel 13:7

It was his misuse of authority that caused a miscarriage of justice to occur in the adjudication of Tamar's charge of rape against Amnon. 2 Samuel 13:21

It was David's failure to use his authority that allowed Amnon to enter into a situation which required Condition Red while assuming it was Condition White. 2 Samuel 13:27

2 Samuel 13:27 - But when Absalom kept pressing David, he let Amnon accompany all his sons and go with him.

David is blinded by liberal dreams of brotherhood, multiculturalism, and ethnic harmony, all brought about because the brothers have decided to get together for a barbeque at Baal-hazor: "*the village.*"

This is a 10th century B.C. mixture of Woodstock, a Shakespearian tragedy, and a family reunion. No good can come from this!

All the brothers are half Jewish through David. But Amnon's mother is a Jezreelite, Chileab's mother is a Carmelite, and Absalom's mother is from Geshur. The other three older brothers were from Hebron and God only knows of what ethnic background they had. The diversity of this ancient city is described in:

Myers, Allen C. (ed.). *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987; p. 476a:

Initially called Kiriath-arba [Kir-e-ath Ar-bah] ("city of four"), the name suggests an ancient confederation of neighboring cities. The city was founded circa 1700 B.C.

As a Canaanite royal city, Hebron exhibited the ethnic diversity of pre-Israelite Palestine; its inhabitants included the legendary Anakim, Amonites, Hittites, and Canaanites.

Six sons and a daughter was not a very large family in that day. But David had taken on a great deal more than these and it all, along with being king, was more than he could bear. His other children and wives are not all known but we do get an enlarged family tree in:

2 Samuel 5:13 - David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron; and more sons and daughters were born to David.

2 Samuel 5:14 - Now these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon,

2 Samuel 5:15 - and Ibhar, Elishua [**El- e-Shew-ah**], Nepheg [**Nee-fig**], and Japhia [**Ja--fie--ah**],

2 Samuel 5:16 - Elishama [**Eh-lish-ah-ma**], Eliada [**Eh-Lie-ah-dah**], and Eliphelet.

2 Chronicles 3:9 - All these were sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines; and Tamar was their sister.

Obviously, David created more than he could administrate as a father and therefore all his sons were basically raised by their mothers. This resulted in each one being raised in accordance with his mother's ethnic, cultural, social, educational, and economic background. They were brothers by blood to their father but through their mothers they were of different nationalities and thus different culturally with different lifestyles and behavior patterns.

It was a multiculturalist's dream family but it was a nightmare when it came to the issues of brotherhood and harmony.

Amnon is Jezreelite *hoi polloi*, Absalom is both Jewish and Geshurite royalty. Amnon was raised by a commoner, Absalom by a princess. Amnon is nouveau riche with middle class manners, Absalom is old money with upper class savoir faire.

The other brothers fall somewhere between the two in upbringing, social graces, and cultural background. David has created a blood-related Melting Pot and hopes they can all get together and love one another 'round the bonfire.

David is out of touch. His sons are members of a multicultural stew who, if not in social discord, are ethnically and culturally diverse and thus have no rapport.

There can be no harmony among such a group of people regardless of that the elitist harmonizers of our day say and regardless of what David dreams. What is needed is discipline and authority which forces people to organize around a set of established and inflexible norms and standards. Harmony is based on compromise which is born in conflict. It's nice when you have it but not at the expense of principle.

Whenever one or more of those involved in a controversy—social, political, religious, or cultural—become arrogant, then peace and harmony can never occur. Order is the only workable environment in which such diversity can function and establishment of order demands discipline and authority and one culture