

# Being Defiant

Being Defiant by: Rebbetzin Keturah

Why did the King divorce Vashti? Most people think that she was right to refuse to see the drunk King and his court. Besides, who wants to be objectified in a room full of men? Even in today's society when a woman is in this type of environment, it would have ended in a disaster. However, according to the Rabbis and sages, what know that HaShem allowed Vashti's own foolishness to be her downfall.

It has often been the thought of most scholars that Vashti's group of women were wives of the nobles in court who lived the lives of what we call "socialites" or people who enjoy parties and wealth without any reason or purpose other than enjoyment. Imagine gossiping women who covet each others wealth and who were disrespectful of their husbands. The Chofetz Chaim and the New Testament both teach us that life and death is in the power of the tongue and that the tongue reveals our hearts. If HaShem judges our hearts, it seems that Vashti did not have a heart of gold.

The problem was if Vashti refused the King, her husband- she would then be the poor example to those other women. This would lead to rebellious wives throughout the entire kingdom who like today, would sadly believe that they rule their husbands and are "independent" – quite frankly, also believing that they could do and say whatever they wanted to. This type of feminism would have damaged many homes in Esther's day as it does today.

Therefore, it would not have been wise for the King to ignore Vashti's defiance. People would have seen him as a weak King. So because Vashti was prideful of her position and listened to her group of friends, she was dethroned. This can also happen

to us spiritually when we do not make wise decisions.

And for those of you who are married and have husbands who do not serve HaShem, you should want to be a good witness to your husband. Besides, who are you to deny your husband the chance of salvation at your own hands just because he is not getting with your program? We married our husbands right, then he deserves mercy and grace from us as we have received from HaShem so that we can work out our salvation together as a couple. Don't you want to see a miracle happen in your own homes? Or are we wives to act like Jonah who was angry at HaShem for having mercy on his enemies?

See Vashti's sin was not just ignoring her husband's call, it was judging him for his actions and viewing herself as more wise and righteous as well as gossiping about him with her friends. She was disloyal and in the end, was replaced by Esther who showed the King grace and mercy. Through Esther, the pagan King was able to give favor to the Jewish people because she gave the King respect and at the same time used wisdom to make her petitions known privately. Did the pagan King receive salvation? Probably not, but HaShem used him for His own purpose of saving the Jewish people. This could not have been done with a Queen-like Vashti who was self-righteous and judgmental.

Think about it- Vashti's "no show" was on purpose and was done in order to make the King look a fool. How many times have we argued with our husbands and wished for a chance to prove him wrong? However, Esther handed her perils within the King's chamber in the wisdom of privacy. Because Esther did this in private, Esther is now openly celebrated as a wise and brave Queen. So may we learn to be good wives with good motives so that we can be blessed by HaShem and not uprooted so that we do not have to watch others reap what would have been our rewards. May we learn to be like Esther, who was bold and wise, who respected her husband as her spiritual and physical authority- even though he was not like her because she cared

more about her calling than her comforts. Amen.