Who does not avenge himself and bear a grudge like a snake?

Some commentators explain the comparison to a snake as follows: A snake does not attack its victim out in the open but waits for the appropriate time to do so. Similarly, the Torah scholar, while he is permitted to retain a grudge against one who has insulted him, should not act on his feelings but should wait until the perpetrator is punished by divine providence, when he will see his anguish avenged (Meir). Others explain that just as a snake does not benefit from biting his victim, a Torah scholar too should not derive personal pleasure from taking revenge (Iyyer Halom).

HALAKHA

Who does not avenge himself and bear a grudge like a snake?

It is befitting a Torah scholar to forgive one who insults him in private. However, if he was insulted publicly, he should avenge the insult and bear a grudge like a snake for the sake of the Torah's honor (Rambam Sefer HaMadda, Hilkhot Talmud Torah 7:13).

Bearing a grudge – Eitz Hayyim: One who bears a grudge of hatred against one’s fellow violates a negative mitzva. Bearing a grudge is defined as a case where one maintains hatred toward his fellow and reminds him that he had once acted inappropriately toward him, e.g., if one’s fellow refused to lend him an object, and the second person then reminds the first of this when he lends something to him (Rambam Sefer HaMadda, Hilkhot Deot 7:8).

 NOTES

Who does not avenge himself and bear a grudge like a snake?

Some commentators interpret the difference between these two terms as follows: Being insulted refers to hearing an insult directly from the offender, while hearing oneself being shamed refers to one overhearing something disparaging that was not addressed to him personally (Rabbi Yosha Pinto).

They that love Him be as the sun when it goes forth in its might.

This baraita shows that one should forgive personal insults as well as wrongs in monetary matters.
The Gemara responds that the prohibition against taking vengeance and bearing a grudge indeed applies to cases of personal anguish; however, actually, the scholar may keep resentment in his heart, though he should not act on it or remind the other person of his insulting behavior. The Gemara asks: But didn’t Rava say: With regard to whoever forgoes his reckonings with others for injustices done to him, the heavenly court in turn forgoes punishment for all his sins? The Gemara answers: Indeed, even a scholar who is insulted must forgive insults, but that is only in cases where his antagonist has sought to appease him, in which case he should allow himself to be appeased toward him. However, if no apology has been offered, the scholar should not forgive him, in order to uphold the honor of the Torah.

The Gemara describes that the lottery between competing priests is conducted by the priests extending their fingers for a count. And the Gemara elaborated: And what fingers do they extend for the lottery? They may extend one or two fingers, and the priests do not extend a thumb in the Temple. The Gemara asks: Now that the Gemara states that the priest may extend two fingers, is it necessary to state that they may also extend one finger?

Rav Hiśda said: This is not difficult. Here, when the mishna speaks of extending one finger, it is referring to a healthy person, who has no difficulty extending just one finger without extending a second one. There, when the mishna mentions two fingers, it is referring to a sick person, for whom it is difficult to extend a single finger at a time. And so it was taught in a baraita: The priests may extend one finger, but they may not extend two. In what case is this statement said? It is said in reference to a healthy person; however, a sick person may extend even two fingers. And the sick priests who sit or lie alone, separately from the other priests, extend two fingers, but their two fingers are counted only as one.

The Gemara asks: And are the sick priest’s two fingers really counted as only one? Wasn’t it taught in a baraita: The priests may not extend the third finger, i.e., the middle finger, or the thumb, together with the index finger, due to concern for cheats. One who sees that the count is approaching him might intentionally extend or withdraw an extra finger so that the lottery will fall on him. But if he does extend the third finger it is counted for him. This is because the third finger cannot be stretched very far from the index finger, so that it is easily recognizable that both fingers are from the same person, and this is not taken as an attempt to cheat. If he extends his thumb, however, it is not counted for him, and moreover he is punished with lashes administered by the person in charge of the pakia. The implication of the baraita is that when the third finger is extended along with the index finger, both fingers are counted.

The Gemara asks: What does the baraita mean when it says that if the priest extended his middle finger along with his index finger, it is counted for him? It also means, as stated earlier, that the two fingers are counted as one.
The rabbata mentions lashes administered by the person in charge of the pakia. What is a pakia? Rabbi said: It is a madra. However, the meaning of that term also became unclear over time, so the Gemara asks: What is a madra? Rabbi Pappa said: It is a whip (matra'ka) used by the Arabs, the end of which is split into several strands. That is the pakia mentioned above, which was used for punishing the priests.

Apropos this discussion, Abaye said: At first I would say as follows: When we learned in a mishna that ben Beivai was in charge of the pakia, I would say that it means that he was in charge of producing wicks, as we learned in another mishna: They would tear (matkia) strips from the priests’ worn-out trousers and belts and make wicks out of them, with which they lit torches for the Celebration of Drawing Water. But once I heard that which is taught in the previously cited baraita: And moreover, he is punished with lashes administered by the person in charge of the pakia, I now say: What is a pakia? It is lashes. Ben Beivai was in charge in corporal punishment in the Temple.

§ It was taught in the mishna: An incident occurred where both of the priests were equal as they were running and ascending on the ramp, and one of them shoved the other and he fell and his leg was broken. The Sages taught in the Tosefta: An incident occurred where there were two priests who were equal as they were running and ascending the ramp. One of them reached the four cubits before his colleague, who then, out of anger, took an axe and stabbed him in the heart.

The Tosefta continues: Rabbi Tzadok then stood up on the steps of the Entrance Hall of the Sanctuary and said: Hear this, my brothers of the house of Israel. The verse states: “If one be found slain in the land... and it be not known who had smitten him; then your Elders and your judges shall come forth and they shall measure... and it shall be that the city which is nearest to the slain man... shall take a heifer” (Deuteronomy 21:1-3). And the Elders of that city took that heifer and broke its neck in a ritual of atonement. But what of us, in our situation? Upon whom is the obligation to bring the heifer whose neck is broken? Does the obligation fall on the city, Jerusalem, so that its Sages must bring the calf, or does the obligation fall upon the Temple courtyards, so that the priests must bring it? At that point the entire assembly of people burst into tears.

The father of the boy, i.e., the young priest who was stabbed, came and found that he was still convulsing. He said: May my son’s death be an atonement for you. But my son is still convulsing and has not yet died, and as such, the knife, which is in his body, has not become ritually impure through contact with a corpse. If you remove it promptly, it will still be pure for future use. The Tosefta comments: This incident comes to teach you that the ritual purity of utensils was of more concern to them than the shedding of blood. Even the boy’s father voiced more concern over the purity of the knife than over the death of his child. And similarly, it says: “Furthermore, Manasseh spilled innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another” (1 Kings 21:16), which shows that in his day as well people paid little attention to bloodshed.

The Gemara asks: Which incident came first, the one about the broken leg reported in the mishna or the one about the slain priest in the Tosefta? If we say that the incident of bloodshed came first, this raises a problem: Now, if in response to a case of bloodshed they did not establish a lottery but continued with the running competition, can it be that in response to an incident of a priest’s leg being broken they did establish a lottery? Rather, we must say that the case in which the priest’s leg was broken in the course of the race came first, and as the mishna states, the establishment of the lottery was in response to that incident.
Jerusalem does not bring a heifer whose neck is broken – אֶלָּא אֶלָּא נָסֵיב אֱלֹהִים יִשְׂרָאֵל. This is the main question of the Gemara: The city was not apportioned to any of the tribes, as the Gemara teaches here and in tractate Bava Kamma (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Beit HaBeira 314, Kesef Mishne).

And furthermore it is written that the heifer whose neck is broken is brought when it be not known who had smitten him – אֶלָּא נָסֵיב אֱלֹהִים יִשְׂרָאֵל. This is the main question of the Gemara: The city was not apportioned to any of the tribes, as the Gemara teaches here and in tractate Bava Kamma (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Beit HaBeira 314, Kesef Mishne).

To increase weeping – עִם בְּרֶכֶת עִם מְלֹא הַכְּלָלָה עִם מְדָמִים עִם שַׁפִּיכוּת עִם שַׁפִּיכוּת. In relation to the above incident the Tosفة said: The father of the boy came and found that he was still convulsing. He said: May my son’s death be an atonement for you. But my son is still alive, etc. This incident comes to teach you that the ritual purity of utensils was of more concern to them than the shedding of blood. A dilemma was raised before the Sages: Should one conclude from this comment that bloodshed had become trivialized in their eyes but their concern for purity of utensils remained where it was originally, meaning that while they cared less than they should have about murder, they did not exaggerate the importance of purity of utensils; or perhaps their concern for bloodshed remained where it was originally, but their concern for purity of vessels had become too strict, to the extent that its importance was exaggerated beyond concern for human life?

The Gemara answers: Come and hear an answer to the dilemma: Since the Tosفة adds a biblical teaching from the verse, “Furthermore, Manasseh spilled innocent blood,” conclude from this that it was bloodshed that had become trivialized, and the importance of purity of utensils remained where it had been.
The Gemara returns to the mitzva of removing the ashes from the altar and associated issues. The Sages taught in a baraita: The Torah states, after describing the removal of the ashes: "And he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry the ashes out of the camp to a clean place" (Leviticus 6:4). I might understand from here that this change of garments is a mitzva to change into a different kind of garment, similar to the change of garments performed on Yom Kippur, when the High Priest changes back and forth from gold clothes to white clothes. Here, too, the Torah requires that he remove his sacred garments and put on non-sacred garments.9

The baraita continues: To teach us otherwise, the verse states: "And he shall put off his garments, and put on other garments," thereby juxtaposing the garments he puts on to the garments he takes off. This indicates that just as there, the garments he removes, i.e., those in which he had performed the mitzva of removal of the ashes, are sacred garments, so too here, the clothes he puts on to take the ashes out of the camp are sacred garments.10

If so, what is the meaning when the verse states: Other garments, which implies that the second set of garments is different from the first? It means they are of lower quality than the first set of garments. Rabbi Eliezer says a different interpretation of the words: Other garments. The verse states: "And put on other garments, and carry the ashes out of the camp," in which the Hebrew juxtaposes the words "other" and "carry out." This teaches that priests with physical blemishes, who are considered others in that they are not eligible to perform sacred tasks, are eligible to carry out the ashes.

The Gemara now explains the baraita in detail. The Master said in the baraita: The words: Other garments, teach that they are to be of lower quality than the garments worn during the removal of the ashes. This is in accordance with what was taught in the school of Rabbi Yishmael, as it was taught in the school of Rabbi Yishmael: Clothes worn by a servant as he was cooking food for his master that became soiled in the process should not be worn by him when he pours a cup for his master, which is a task that calls for the servant to present a dignified appearance. Similarly, one who performs the dirtying task of carrying out the ashes should not wear the same fine clothes worn to perform other services.

The baraita taught that Rabbi Eliezer derived from the word other that blemished priests are eligible for the task of carrying out the ashes, while the first tanna derived a different teaching from those words. The Gemara clarifies the scope of the dispute between the first tanna and Rabbi Eliezer. Reish Lakish said: Just as there is a dispute between Rabbi Eliezer and the first tanna with regard to carrying the ashes out of the camp, so too, there is a dispute with regard to the removal of the ashes from the altar.11 Rabbi Eliezer maintains that the removal of the ashes may also be performed by blemished priests, while the first tanna disagrees. But Rabbi Yohanan said: The dispute is only with regard to carrying the ashes out of the camp, but all agree that the removal of the ashes is a bona fide Temple service that cannot be performed by blemished priests.

The Gemara explains: What is the reason behind the opinion of Reish Lakish? Reish Lakish could have said to you: If it enters your mind that the removal of the ashes is a bona fide Temple service, you are faced with the following difficulty: Do you have any Temple service that may be performed with only two garments rather than the full set of four vestments worn by the priests? In the Torah’s description of the garments worn to remove the ashes it says: “And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen trousers shall he put on his flesh” (Leviticus 6:3).

NOTES

Similar to the change of garments performed on Yom Kippur, that he remove his sacred garments and put on non-sacred garments — מַקֵּישׁ בַּהֲרָמָה — כְּדֶרֶךְ – מַקִּישׁ, מַקְּוָשׁ בַּהֲרָמָה, מַקְּזִי בַּהֲרָמָה. The comparison to Yom Kippur as explained here is not without flaws, as Rashā’s lengthy explanation suggests. The wording implies that on Yom Kippur there is a change from sacred garments to non-sacred garments. Rabbi Hananel explains the Gemara’s point differently: It is referring to the end of Yom Kippur, when the day’s services are complete and the High Priest changes from his sacred garments to his personal clothes.

Removal of the ashes and carrying them out — מַקֵּישׁ בַּהֲרָמָה There are several different opinions in the commentaries with regard to these two activities, both according to the view of Rabbi Eliezer and that of the first tanna, based on an analysis of the approaches of Rabbi Yohanan and Reish Lakish as well as on the Jerusalem Talmud’s version of the debate. According to the Rambam, the conclusion is that garments of lesser quality are worn for both removal of the ashes from the altar and for carrying them out of the camp. Others maintain that the removal of the ashes is a bona fide service and calls for the regular priestly garments, while clothes of lesser quality are used when the ashes are carried out of the camp. There is yet another approach that holds that both acts are performed in garments of lesser quality, but that carrying out the ashes was performed in garments of even more inferior quality than those worn to remove the ashes from the altar (Mérin; see Suh Yitzhak).

HALAKHA

Clothes worn by the priest during removal of the ashes — מַקֵּישׁ בַּהֲרָמָה clothes worn by the priest: The priest who removes the ashes from the altar does not wear his regular priestly garments but wears those of slightly lesser quality (Rambam, Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Terumot 8:13). Commentaries on the Rambam discuss this assertion, since the Gemara, when calling for garments of inferior quality, is dealing with carrying the ashes out of the camp, not removing them from the altar (see Kesef Mishne, Lehem Mishne, and Mishne Loubelik).
Halakha

Conform to his exact size — כמותו. A priest’s sacred garments must fit him precisely and should not be too short nor too long (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Kelei HaMikdash 8:4).

The trousers precede the other garments — כמותו. When a priest dons his sacred vestments he begins by putting his trousers on, before the other garments (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Kelei HaMikdash 10:1).

And what is the explanation for Rabbi Yohanan’s opinion? In fact, the priest is required to wear all four priestly garments. The Merciful One reveals in the Torah that the priest must wear the tunic and the trousers like any other service so that one would not think that taking out the ashes may be performed in regular, non-sacred clothes. Once the Torah has made this point and mentioned these two specific garments, the same is true for the other two garments as well, i.e., the mitre and the belt.

The Gemara asks: If the Torah requires all four garments and mentions the tunic and trousers only as examples, what is different about these two that the Torah mentioned them in particular? The Gemara answers that these two particular garments were mentioned in order to teach certain halakhot. The Torah refers to the tunic as “his linen garment,” with the words “his garment” [middō], indicating that the tunic must conform to its exact size [middato] and should fit the priest perfectly. As for the words “linen trousers,” they come to teach that which was taught in a baraita: From where is it derived that as the priest gets dressed no garment should precede the trousers? As it is stated: “And his linen trousers shall he put on his flesh,” which implies that the trousers should be donned when the priest has nothing but his flesh, i.e., when he has no other garments on him yet.

The Gemara asks: And with regard to Reish Lakish, who maintains that these two garments are mentioned because they are the only two that the priest wears when removing the ashes, from where does he derive these two halakhot? The Gemara answers: The halakha that his linen garment, i.e., the tunic, must be according to his size is derived from the fact that the Merciful One uses the expression “his garment,” i.e., his fitted garment, in the Torah, rather than calling it by its usual name, tunic. And the halakha that no garment should precede the trousers when the priest dresses is derived from the fact that the Torah added the phrase “on his flesh.”

Let us say that the dispute between Rabbi Yohanan and Reish Lakish is parallel to a dispute between tanna’im. As it was taught in a baraita that the Torah states: “And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen trousers shall he put on his flesh” (Leviticus 6:3). The words “shall he put on” seem superfluous, since these same words were already stated earlier in the verse. Therefore, the Torah could have sufficed with saying: “And linen trousers on his flesh.” What is the meaning when the verse states: “Shall he put on”? This extra expression comes to include the donning of the mitre and the belt, which are not mentioned here explicitly, for the removal of the ash; this is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda.

Rabbi Dosa says: The extra expression comes to include the permissibility of the High Priest’s clothes that he wears on Yom Kippur, which are linen garments identical to those of the common priest, to teach that they are acceptable to be used afterward by common priests in their service. In other words, the expression teaches that the High Priest’s garments need not be permanently retired from service after Yom Kippur, unlike the opinion of another Sage, as will be explained below.

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: There are two refutations against Rabbi Dosa’s interpretation: One is that the belt of the High Priest that he wears on Yom Kippur is made only of linen and is not identical to the belt of the common priest, which, in Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi’s opinion, is made of wool and linen. Therefore, it is impossible for the High Priest’s Yom Kippur garments to be used by a common priest. And furthermore, with regard to garments that you used to perform the services of the most severe sanctity, i.e., the services performed by the High Priest on Yom Kippur, can it be that you will then use them to perform services of lesser sanctity by a common priest? Instead of this, a different interpretation must be said. What, then, is the meaning when the verse states the superfluous words “shall he put on”?

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