

About forgiveness

Leviticus 16:30

“כִּי-בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכָּפֵר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטָּאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תִּטְהָרוּ:”
“For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; you shall be clean before the LORD.”

Genesis 20

וַיֹּטֵעַ מִשָּׁם אַבְרָהָם אֶרְצָה הַנֶּגֶב וַיָּשֶׁב בֵּין-קְדֵשׁ וּבֵין שׁוּר וַיֵּגֶר בְּגֵרָר:

Abraham journeyed from there to the region of the Negeb and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he was sojourning in Gerar,

2

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל-שָׂרָה אִשְׁתּוֹ אַחְתִּי הִוא וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ גֵּרָר וַיִּקַּח אֶת-שָׂרָה:
Abraham said of Sarah his wife, “She is my sister.” So King Abimelech of Gerar had Sarah brought to him.

3

וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ בַּחֲלוֹם הַלַּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הִנֵּנִי מֵת עַל-הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר-לָקַחְתָּ וְהִוא בְּעֵלְתָּ בְּעַל:
But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, “You are to die because of the woman that you have taken, for she is a married woman.”

4

וַאֲבִימֶלֶךְ לֹא קָרַב אֵלֶיהָ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי הַגּוֹי גַם-צַדִּיק תַּהַרְגֵּנּוּ:
Now Abimelech had not approached her. He said, “O Lord, will You slay people even though innocent?”

5

הֲלֹא הִוא אָמַר-לִי אַחְתִּי הִוא וְהִיא-גַם-הִוא אָמְרָה אַחִי הִוא בְּתַם-לִבִּי וּבִנְקִינָה כִּפִּי עָשִׂיתִי זֹאת:
He himself said to me, ‘She is my sister!’ And she also said, ‘He is my brother.’ When I did this, my heart was blameless and my hands were clean.”

6

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הָאֱלֹהִים בַּחֲלוֹם גַּם אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי כִּי בְתַם-לִבְבְּךָ עָשִׂיתָ זֹאת וְאַחֲשֶׁךָ גַם-אֲנִי אֹתָךְ מִחַטּוֹ-לִי עַל-כֵּן לֹא-נִתְתִּיךָ לְנִגַע אֵלֶיהָ:
And God said to him in the dream, “I knew that you did this with a blameless heart, and so I kept you from sinning against Me. That was why I did not let you touch her.”

7

וַעֲתָה הִשָּׁב אִשְׁתְּ-הָאִישׁ כִּי-נָבִיא הִוא וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל בְּעֶדְךָ וַחַיָּה וְאִם-אֵינְךָ מְשִׁיב דָּע כִּי-מֹות תָּמוּת אֶתָּה וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר-לָךְ:

Therefore, restore the man's wife—since he is a prophet, he will intercede for you—to save your life. If you fail to restore her, know that you shall die, you and all that are yours.”

8

וַיִּשְׁלַח אֲבִימֶלֶךְ בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקְרָא לְכָל־עַבְדָּיו וַיְדַבֵּר אֶת־כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם וַיִּירָאוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים
מְאֹד:

Early next morning, Abimelech called his servants and told them all that had happened; and the men were greatly frightened.

9

וַיִּקְרָא אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לְאַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מַה־עָשִׂיתָ לָנוּ וּמַה־חָטַאתָ לָךְ כִּי־הִבַּאתָ עָלַי וְעַל־מַמְלַכְתִּי חַטָּאת
גְּדוֹלָה מֵעֲשִׂים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַעֲשׂוּ עֲשִׂיתָ עִמָּדִי:

Then Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us? What wrong have I done that you should bring so great a guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done to me things that ought not to be done.

10

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ אֶל־אַבְרָהָם מַה רְאִיתָ כִּי עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה:

What, then,” Abimelech demanded of Abraham, “was your purpose in doing this thing?”

11

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבָרָהָם כִּי אָמַרְתִּי רַק אֵין־יִרְאתָ אֱלֹהִים בְּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה וְהִרְגוּנִי עַל־דְּבַר אֲשֶׁר־

“I thought,” said Abraham, “surely there is no fear of God in this place, and

Mishnah Bava Kamma 8:20

אִף עַל פִּי שֶׁהוּא נוֹתֵן לוֹ, אֵין נִמְחַל לוֹ עַד שֶׁיִּבְקֹשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (בְּרֵאשִׁית כ) וְעַתָּה הֲשִׁב אֶשֶׁת וְגו'.
וּמִנֵּין שְׁלֹא יֵהָא הַמוֹחַל אַכְזָרִי, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (שִׁם) וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אַבְרָהָם אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּרְפָּא אֱלֹהִים אֶת אֲבִימֶלֶךְ
וְגו'. הָאוֹמֵר סָמָא אֶת עֵינָי, קָטַע אֶת יָדֵי, שָׁבַר אֶת רַגְלֵי, חִיָּב. עַל מְנַת לְפָטֵר, חִיָּב. קָרַע אֶת כְּסוּתֵי,
שָׁבַר אֶת

כְּדֵי, חִיָּב. עַל מְנַת לְפָטֵר, פְּטוּר. עָשָׂה כֵּן לְאִישׁ פְּלוֹנִי, עַל מְנַת לְפָטֵר, חִיָּב, בֵּין בְּגוֹפוֹ בֵּין בְּמִמּוֹנֵוֹ :

Even though a man pays [him that suffers the indignity], he is not forgiven until he seeks [forgiveness] from him, for it says: “Therefore restore the man's wife... [and he shall pray for you]” (Genesis 20:7). And from where do we learn that he who must forgive should not be cruel? As it says: “And Abraham prayed unto God and God healed Avimelech” (Genesis 20:17). If a man said, “Blind my eye”, or “Cut off my hand”, or “Break my foot”, he [that does so] is liable. [If he added] “On the condition that you will be exempt”, he is still liable. [If he said] “Tear my garment”, or “Break my jug”, he that does so is liable. [If he added] “On the condition that you will be exempt”, he is exempt. [If he said], “Do so to so-and-so, on the condition that you will be exempt, he is liable, whether it was [an offense] against his person or his property.

Talmud Ta'anit 20a

תנו רבנן לעולם יהא אדם רך כקנה ואל יהא קשה כארז מעשה שבא רבי אלעזר (בן ר') שמעון ממגדל גדור מבית רבו והיה רכוב על החמור ומטייל על שפת נהר ושמו שמחה גדולה והיתה דעתו גסה עליו מפני שלמד תורה הרבה

The Sages further taught in praise of the reed: A person should always be soft like a reed, and he should not be stiff like a cedar. An incident occurred in which Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, came from Migdal Gedor, from his rabbi's house, and he was riding on a donkey and strolling on the bank of the river. And he was very happy, and his head was swollen with pride because he had studied much Torah.

Ta'anit 20b

נזדמן לו אדם אחד שהיה מכוער ביותר אמר לו שלום עליך רבי ולא החזיר לו אמר לו ריקה כמה מכוער אותו האיש שמא כל בני עירך מכוערין כמותך אמר לו איני יודע אלא לך ואמור לאומן שעשאני כמה מכוער כלי זה שעשית כיון שידע בעצמו שחטא ירד מן החמור ונשתטח לפניו ואמר לו נענית לך מחול לי אמר לו איני מוחל לך עד שתלך לאומן שעשאני ואמור לו כמה מכוער כלי זה שעשית He happened upon an exceedingly ugly person, who said to him: Greetings to you, my rabbi, but Rabbi Elazar did not return his greeting. Instead, Rabbi Elazar said to him: Worthless [reika] person, how ugly is that man. Are all the people of your city as ugly as you? The man said to him: I do not know, but you should go and say to the Craftsman Who made me: How ugly is the vessel you made. When Rabbi Elazar realized that he had sinned and insulted this man merely on account of his appearance, he descended from his donkey and prostrated himself before him, and he said to the man: I have sinned against you; forgive me. The man said to him: I will not forgive you go until you go to the Craftsman Who made me and say: How ugly is the vessel you made.

היה מטייל אחריו עד שהגיע לעירו יצאו בני עירו לקראתו והיו אומרים לו שלום עליך רבי רבי מורי מורי אמר להם למי אתם קורין רבי רבי אמרו לו לזה שמטייל אחריו אמר להם אם זה רבי אל ירבו כמותו בישראל אמרו לו מפני מה אמר להם כך וכך עשה לי אמרו לו אעפ"כ מחול לו שאדם גדול בתורה הוא

He walked behind the man, trying to appease him, until they reached Rabbi Elazar's city. The people of his city came out to greet him, saying to him: Greetings to you, my rabbi, my rabbi, my master, my master. The man said to them: Who are you calling my rabbi, my rabbi? They said to him: To this man, who is walking behind you. He said to them: If this man is a rabbi, may there not be many like him among the Jewish people. They asked him: For what reason do you say this? He said to them: He did such and such to me. They said to him: Even so, forgive him, as he is a great Torah scholar.

אמר להם בשבילכם הריני מוחל לו ובלבד שלא יהא רגיל לעשות כן מיד נכנס רבי אלעזר בן רבי שמעון ודרש לעולם יהא אדם רך כקנה ואל יהא קשה כארז ולפיכך זכה קנה ליטול הימנה קולמוס לכתוב בו ספר תורה תפילין ומזוזות

He said to them: For your sakes I forgive him, provided that he accepts upon himself not to become accustomed to behave like this. Immediately, Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, entered the study hall and taught: A person should always be soft like a reed and he should not be stiff like a cedar, as one who is proud like a cedar is likely to sin. And therefore, due to its gentle qualities, the reed merited that a quill is taken from it to write with it a Torah scroll, phylacteries, and mezuzot.