Our Possessions, Our Selves - BM 58b

The gemara in BM 58b states that oppression with speech (ona'at devarim) is a greater sin than oppression with finances (ona'at mammon). One reason given is because while the latter affects money, the former affects the "self." This distinction is well-worn among Chazal, both in terms of protecting/harming someone's possessions vs. their person and in terms of using one's own possessions vs. one's own person to do good. We will examine this distinction in this shiur.

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1. בבא מציעא נח:

אָמֵר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן מִשׁוּם רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחַאי: גָּדוֹל אוֹנָאַת דְּבָרִים מֵאוֹנָאַת מְמוֹן, שֶׁזֶּה נֶאֶמֵר בּוֹ ״וְיֵרֵאתָ מֵאֱ-לֹהֶיךְ״, וְזֶה לֹא נָאֱמֵר בּוֹ ״וְיֵרֵאתָ מֵאֱ-לֹהֶיךְ״. וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אוֹמֵר: זֶה בְּגוּפּוֹ וְזֶה בְּמָמוֹנוֹ. רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחְמָנִי אָמֵר: זֶה נִיתַּן לְהִישָׁבוֹן, וְזֶה לֹא נִיתַּן לְהִישָּׁבוֹן. תָּנֵי תַּנָּא קַמֵּיהּ דְּרַב נַחְמֶן בַּר יִצְחָק: כָּל הַמַּלְבִּין פְּנֵי חֲבֵירוֹ בָּרַבִּים, כְּאִילוּ שׁוֹפֵךְ דָּמִים.

Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: Greater is the transgression of verbal mistreatment than the transgression of monetary exploitation, as with regard to this, verbal mistreatment, it is stated: "And you shall fear your God." But with regard to that, monetary exploitation, it is not stated: "And you shall fear your God." And Rabbi Elazar said this explanation: This, verbal mistreatment, affects one's body; but that, monetary exploitation, affects one's money. Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani says: This, monetary exploitation, is given to restitution; but that, verbal mistreatment, is not given to restitution.

ּתָּנֵי תַּנָּא קַמֵּיהּ דְּרַב נַחְמֶן בַּר יִצְחָק: כָּל הַמֵּלְבִּין פְּנֵי חֲבֵירוֹ בָּרַבִּים, כְּאִילוּ שׁוֹפֵךְ דָּמִים. אֲמַר לֵיהּ: שַׁפִּיר קָא אָמְרַתְּ, דְּחָזֵינָא לֵיהּ דְּאָזֵיל סוּמָקָא וְאָתֵי חָוּּוֹרָא.

The Gemara relates that the *tanna* who recited *mishnayot* and *baraitot* in the study hall taught a *baraita* before Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak: Anyone who humiliates another in public, it is as though he were spilling blood. Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said to him: You have spoken well, as we see that after the humiliated person blushes, the red leaves his face and pallor comes in its place, which is tantamount to spilling his blood.

2. תוספות שם ד"ה זה

זה בגופו וזה בממונו - והא דאמרי' פרק הגוזל בתרא (ב"ק ד' קיט.) הגוזל לחבירו שוה פרוטה כאילו גזל נשמתו היינו משום דפעמים רעב כבד ואין לו במה לקנות אבל יש הרבה בני אדם שאינם חסרים כל כך:

3. ברכות לב:

ָוְאָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: גָּדוֹלָה תַּעֲנִית יוֹתֵר מִן הַצְּדָקָה. מַאי טַעְמָא — זֶה בְּגוּפוֹ, וְזֶה בְּמָמוֹנוֹ.

And R. Elazar said: fasting is greater than charity. Why? One is done bodily, while the other is done financially.

4. סוכה מט:

ַתָּנוּ רַבְּנַן: בִּשְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים גְּדוֹלָה גְּמִילוּת חֲסָדִים יוֹתֵר מִן הַצְּדָקָה. צְדָקָה — בְּמָמוֹנוֹ; גְּמִילוּת חֲסָדִים — בֵּין בְּגוּפּוֹ, בֵּין בְּמָמוֹנוֹ. צְדָקָה — לָעֲנִיִּים; גְּמִילוּת חֲסָדִים — בֵּין לָעֲנִיִּים בֵּין לָעֲשִׁירִים. צְדָקָה — לַחַיִּים; גְּמִילוּת חֲסָדִים — בֵּין לַחַיִּים בֵּין לַמֵּתִים.

The rabbis taught: bestowing kindness is greater than charity in three ways: 1) charity is done financially, while bestowing kindness is done bodily and financially; 2) charity is given to the poor, while bestowing kindness is given to poor and rich alike; 3) charity is for the living, while bestowing kindness is for both the living and the dead.

5. משנה נגעים יב:ה

כֵּיצֵד רְאִיַּת הַבָּיִת. וּבָא אֲשֶׁר לוֹ הַבַּיִת וְהִגִּיד לַכֹּהֵן לֵאמֹר כְּנָגַע נִרְאָה לִי בַּבָּיִת (ויקרא יד). אֲפְלּוּ תַלְמִיד חָכָם וְיוֹדֵעַ שְׁהוּא נָגַע וַדְאי, לֹא יִגְזֹר וְיֹאמֵר נָגַע נִרְאָה לִי בַּבָּיִת, אֶלָּא כְּנָגַע נִרְאָה לִי בַּבָּיִת. וְצִוָּה הַכֹּהֵן וּפְנוּ אֶת הַבָּיִת (בְּטֶרֶם יָבֹא הַכֹּהֵן לְרְאוֹת אֶת הַבָּנִע וְלֹא יִטְמָא כָּל אֲשֶׁר בַּבָּיִת וְאַחַר כֵּן יָבֹא הַכֹּהֵן לְרְאוֹת אֶת הַבָּיִת) (שם), וַאְפְלּוּ חֲבִילֵי עָבִים לָרְאוֹת אֶת הַבָּנִע וְלֹא יִטְמָא כָּל אֲשֶׁר בַּבָּיִת וְאַחַר כֵּן יָבֹא הַכֹּהֵן לְרְאוֹת אֶת הַבָּיִת) (שם), וַאְפְלּוּ חֲבִילֵי עָצִים, וַאֲפְלּוּ חֲבִילֵי קָנִים, דְּבְרֵי רַבִּי יְהוּדָה. רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן אוֹמֵר, עֵסֶק הוּא לַפְנוּי. אָמַר רַבִּי מֵאִיר, וְכִי מָה מִטְּמֵא לוֹ. אִם עָּבְתֹּא עָצִיו וּבְגָּדִיו וּמַתְּכוֹתָיו, מַטְבִּילָן וְהֵן טְהוֹרִים. עַל מֶה חָסָה הַתּוֹרָה. עַל כְּלֵי חַרְסוֹ וְעַל טָפְיוֹ. אִם כָּךְ חָסָה הַתּוֹרָה עַל מְמוֹנוֹ הַבָּזוּי, קַל וְחֹמֶר עַל מָמוֹנוֹ הֶחָבְיִיו. אִם כָּךְ עַל מְמוֹנוֹ, קַל וְחֹמֶר עַל עָּל שֵׁל שַׁל צַּדִיק:

What is the procedure for the inspection of a house? "The owner of the house shall come and tell the priest, saying, "Something like a plague has appeared upon my house" (Leviticus 14:35). Even if he is a learned sage and knows that it is definitely a nega, he may not speak with certainty saying, "A plague has appeared upon my house," but rather, "Something like a plague has appeared upon my house." "The priest shall order the house cleared before the priest enters to examine the plague, so that nothing in the house may become unclean; after that the priest shall enter to examine the house." Even bundles of wood and even bundles of reeds [must be removed], the words of Rabbi Judah. Rabbi Shimon said: clearing keeps him occupied. Rabbi Meir said: But which [of his goods] could become unclean? If you were to say, his articles of wood, of cloth or of metal, he could immerse them and they will become clean. What is it that the Torah has spared? His earthenware, even his cruse and his bucket. If the Torah thus spared a man's humble possessions, how much more so would it spare his cherished possessions! If for his material possessions, how much more so for the life of his sons and daughters! If for the possessions of a wicked man, how much more so for the possessions of a righteous one!

.7. יומא כב:-כג

וָאמַר רַבִּי יוֹחַנַן מִשׁוּם רַבִּי שָׁמְעוֹן בֵּן יָהוֹצַדַק: כָּל תַּלְמִיד חַכַם

And Rabbi Yohanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehotzadak: Any Torah scholar

שֶׁאֵינוֹ נוֹקֵם וְנוֹטֵר כְּנָחָשׁ — אֵינוֹ תַּלְמִיד חָכָם. וְהָכְתִיב: ״לֹא תִקּוֹם וְלֹא תִטוֹר״? הָהוּא, בְּמָמוֹן הוּא דְּכְתִיב, דְּתַנְיָא: אֵיזוֹ הִיא נְקִימָה וְאֵיזוֹ הִיא נְטִירָה? נְקִימָה — אָמֵר לוֹ: הַשְּׁאִילֵנִי מַגְּלְךָ, אָמֵר לוֹ: לָאו. לְמָחָר אָמֵר לוֹ הוּא: הַשְּאִילֵנִי קַרְדוּמְךָ, אַמַר לוֹ: אֵינִי מַשְׁאִילְךָ, כְּדֶרֶךְ שָׁלֹּא הִשְּאֵלְתַּנִי — זוֹ הִיא נְקִימָה.

who does not avenge himself and bear a grudge like a snake when insulted is not considered a Torah scholar at all, as it is important to uphold the honor of Torah and its students by reacting harshly to insults. The Gemara asks: But isn't it written explicitly in the Torah: "You shall not take

vengeance nor bear any grudge against the children of your people" (Leviticus 19:18)? The Gemara responds: That prohibition is written with regard to monetary matters and not personal insults, as it was taught in a *baraita*: What is revenge and what is bearing a grudge? Revenge is illustrated by the following example: One said to his fellow: Lend me your sickle, and he said: No. The next day he, the one who had refused to lend the sickle, said to the other person: Lend me your ax. If he said to him: I will not lend to you, just as you did not lend to me, that is revenge.

וְאֵיזוֹ הִיא נְטִירָה? אָמַר לוֹ: הַשְּאִילֵנִי קַרְדּוּמְּךָ, אָמַר לוֹ: לֹא. לְמָחָר אָמַר לוֹ: הַשְּאִילֵנִי חֲלוּקְךְּ! אָמַר לוֹ: הֵילֶךְ, אֵינִי כְּמוֹתְרְ שֶׁלֹא הִשְּאַלְתַּנִי. זוֹ הִיא נְטִירָה.

And what is bearing a grudge? If one said to his fellow: Lend me your ax, and he said: No, and the next day he, the one who had refused to lend the ax, said to the other man: Lend me your robe; if the first one said to him: Here it is, as I am not like you, who would not lend to me, that is bearing a grudge. Although he does not respond to his friend's inconsiderate behavior in kind, he still makes it known to his friend that he resents his inconsiderate behavior. This *baraita* shows that the prohibition relates only to monetary matters, such as borrowing and lending.

ָוְצַעֲרָא דְגוּפָא לָא? וְהָא תַּנְיָא: הַנֶּעֱלָבִין וְאֵינָן עוֹלְבִין, שׁוֹמְעִין חֶרְפָּתָן וְאֵינָן מְשִׁיבִין, עוֹשִׂין מֵאַהֲבָה וּשְׂמֵחִין בְּיִסּוּרִין, עֵלֵיהֵן הַכָּתוּב אוֹמֵר: ״וְאוֹהַבַיו כָּצֵאת הַשְּׁמֵשׁ בִּגבוּרַתוֹ״!

The Gemara asks: But does the prohibition against vengeance really not relate also to matters of personal anguish suffered by someone? Wasn't it taught in a *baraita*: Those who are insulted but do not insult others, who hear themselves being shamed but do not respond, who act out of love for God, and who remain happy in their suffering, about them the verse states: "They that love Him be as the sun when it goes forth in its might" (Judges 5:31). This *baraita* shows that one should forgive personal insults as well as wrongs in monetary matters.

8. Rabbi Elyakim Krombein, Revenge and Grudge in the Case of Personal Affliction (נקימה), Tehumin Journal 6, 293-4

אכן נראה שרבותינו נקטו את הדוגמא של השאלת הקרדום בכוונה מדוקדקת, משום שבכגון זה הנקמה מתייחסת לאי גמילות חסד, אך לא לפגיעה בזכויות הזולת. וכבר ראשונים עמדו על כך שלכאורה אין כלל עבירה באי-השאלת הקרדום...וע"פ זה יש לומר שכאשר קובעת הגמרא ביומא שאיסורי נקימה ונטירה נאמרו רק בממון (בניגוד לצער הגוף), היא מתכוונת דוקא לאי-גמילות חסד ולא למקרה של פגיעה ממשית בזולת. אין הגיון בהגבלת האיסורים לתחום הממוני בכללותו. אבל מכיון שהפרשה עוסקת בממון אנחנו מגבילים את האיסורים בדבר הלמד מעניינו לאותם ענייני ממון המתקבלים על הדעת – מניעת ממון של חסד דוקא בניגוד לפגיעה בזולת הן בגופו הן בממונו. מסתבר מאוד שהתורה לא תדרוש שנבליג על פגיעות ממשיות.

It seems that the rabbis used the example of borrowing a hatchet very particularly, because in such a case the revenge is a response to a lack of bestowing kindness, but not to any harm in the rights of the other. And the early commentators already observed that apparently, there is no actual transgression in refusing to lend someone a hatchet...and based on this, one may say that when the Gemara in Yoma establishes that the prohibitions of revenge and grudge were said only in the context of money (as opposed to personal affliction), it refers specifically to a lack of bestowing kindness and not to a case of actual harm caused to one's fellow. There is no

logic to confining these transgressions to the realm of the financial in general. However, since the Scriptural context is engaged in discussions of money, we confine these transgressions to what can be learned from the context, i.e., monetary issues that make sense: keeping hesed money from another, as opposed to actually harming the other, whether in body or in assets. It makes

perfect sense that the Torah would not require that we would repress ourselves regarding actual harm.

9. ברכות סא:

״וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת ה׳ אֱלֹהֶיךְ״. תַּנְיָא, רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר: אִם נֶאֱמֵר ״בְּכָל נַפְשְׁךְ״, לָמָה נֶאֱמֵר ״בְּכָל מְאֹדֶךְ״?, וְאִם נֶאֱמֵר ״בְּכָל נַפְשְׁךְ״, לָמָה נֶאֱמֵר ״בְּכָל נַפְשְׁךְ״? אֶלָּא אִם יֵשׁ לְךָ אָדָם שָׁגּוּפוֹ חָבִיב עָלָיו מִמְּמוֹנוֹ — לְכָךְ נֶאֱמֵר ״בְּכָל נַפְשְׁךְ״. וְאָם יֵשׁ לָךְ אָדָם שָׁמָמוֹנוֹ חָבִיב עָלָיו מִגּוּפוֹ — לְכָךְ נֶאֱמֵר ״בְּכָל מְאֹדֶךְ״.

We learned in our mishna the explanation of the verse: "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:5). This was elaborated upon when it was taught in a *baraita*: Rabbi Eliezer says: If it is stated: "With all your soul," why does it state: "With all your might"? Conversely, if it stated: "With all your might," why does it state: "With all your soul"? Rather, this means that if one's body is dearer to him than his property, therefore it is stated: "With all your soul"; one must give his soul in sanctification of God. And if one's money is dearer to him than his body, therefore it is stated: "With all your might"; with all your assets.