

Three Strange Stories about Forgiveness

I

Rabbi Abba was once offended by Rabbi Jeremiah. Rabbi Jeremiah went and sat down at Rabbi Abba's door and just then the maid poured out some dirty water some of which splashed onto Rabbi Jeremiah's head. Rabbi Jeremiah then said: They have made a dung heap out of me! He cited this verse about himself: *He raises up the poor out of the dust, the wretched from the dung heap* (1 Samuel 2:8). Rabbi Abba heard Rabbi and came out towards Rabbi Jeremiah, saying: Now I am obliged to come out to appease you according to what is written: *Go, grovel and urge your neighbor...* (Proverbs 6:3).

II

When Rabbi Zeira had an issue with someone who had offended him he would repeatedly walk by that person making himself visible so that the other might approach him.

III

Rav was once offended by a certain butcher and when, by the eve of Yom Kippur, the butcher did not come to him, Rav said: I will go to the butcher and reconcile with him. Rabbi Huna, a student and colleague, met Rav along the way and asked: Sir, where are you going so close to Yom Kippur? Rav answered: I am going to reconcile with So-and-So. Rabbi Huna thought: Abba is about to kill someone. Rav went to the butcher and remained standing in front of him as the butcher was sitting and chopping an animal's head. The butcher raised his eyes and saw Rav. Then he said: You are Abba. Go away! I will have nothing to do with you. While he was chopping the head, a bone flew off and killed him.

Babylonian Talmud Yoma 87a

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