

## The RYS Daily 10/3/06 Harboring Resentment

From The Mussar Movement Volume 1, pages 186 - 187.

In his younger days, his disciples were told, he based his approach on Halachah. He found many Talmudic references which conveyed that resentment, just like property damage, is governed by law. In certain instances the Talmud rules: "He may only harbor resentment against the other party." Now the Gemara asks in some cases: "What basis is there for resentment?", which implies that the other party should really not have the right to bear resentment.' Accordingly resentment is governed by definite rules. In some cases one has the right, in other cases one does not have the right, to harbor a grudge. If one nevertheless harbors resentment when this is not justified by the Halachah, he is guilty of a form of robbery. This juridical approach obliges one to tread warily and to be deliberate in Halachic judgments concerning harboring grudges.

This approach would suffice to restrain the Torah observant individual and contain his resentment. R. Israel added another angle to this strategy, one that he himself utilized effectively. When anyone harmed or provoked him, he would express at that very moment by word of mouth that he completely forgave the individual who had offended him. Now although the law might permit harboring the resentment in such a case, nevertheless he had now denied himself the right to bear any grudge, since he had explicitly forgiven the person. To retain any feeling of resentment would be analogous to the case where one had cancelled a debt. He no longer had the right to demand payment.

Like all other means, such an approach is contingent upon many prior assumptions: that one realizes the gravity of robbery and that it not only applies to objects having some monetary value, etc. Were one to master these prior considerations, this means would become, according to R. Israel, the most effective method of all. He enumerated other stratagems for dealing with anger and resentment — some having a psychological, ethical background — others an intellectual, Halachic background.

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