

20th August 2022

Grudges

“If you truly love me, you will not bear him a grudge.”

Correspondence of the Kings of Ur (c2000 BC)

Letter from Šulgi to Aradngu about Apillasha

The *Correspondence of the Kings of Ur* is a collection of 24 letters written in Sumerian and attributed to the Kings of Ur from around 2000 BC. Though the originals are lost, what we have is based on copies from the “Old Babylonian Period”, around 1700 BC. Like the wisdom of King Solomon, the letters address many subjects, from irrigation work to bandits and brigands, from buying grain to digging trenches, from building fortresses to the advances of the enemy. But through it all, there are “instructions to attentive citizens”, guidance for the people to follow.

In one of the letters, from which the quote above is taken, King Šulgi is writing to one of his subordinate officers, Aradngu, about an envoy the king is sending. Whatever the previous relationship between Aradngu and the envoy, Apillasha, the king wants it sorted out now, for the good of the kingdom. It’s an “instruction to an attentive citizen” Aradngu has to take on board: “If you truly love me, you will not bear him a grudge.” For my sake, don’t harbour a grudge against this man. Get it sorted and move on – if your love for your king is important.

The book of Leviticus contains guidance from God to his people:

*Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people,
but love your neighbour as yourself.*

How easy it is to bear a grudge for a wrong done to you, either perceived or real. How easy it is to harbour that grudge and carry it with you as a burden for all time. How easy it is to make that grudge bigger and more destructive in your life than it ever deserved to be.

If you bear a grudge today, then hear God’s guidance. And if you don’t go for that, hear the instruction of an ancient and wise king. Let go of your grudge from your own life, or, better still, go to the source of your grudge, the person involved, and try to work it out to your mutual benefit. Be an attentive citizen today, under a king’s guidance or the gaze of Almighty God, and don’t be that person who continues to bear a grudge.

A prayer for today

Lord, you bear no grudges to me. So why should I carry grudges towards others? Amen

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