

# Forgiveness and Remembrance of Things Past

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Tess of the D'Urbervilles is a pure woman. So says the subtitle of Thomas Hardy's classic work, and this is how she is characterized throughout. She is pure and righteous, innocent and tender. Her husband, Angel Clare, might bear the name "angel," but he is far from angelic. Tess's tragic story is inextricably bound up with his stubborn refusal to forgive her for her sins, of which he was unaware when he decided to marry her: She once had a brief love affair, or perhaps it was rape. In any event, it was impossible to disavow the result of that hallucinatory evening: Tess was impregnated by Alec D'Urberville. The baby died soon after it was born, but Tess managed to baptize him while he was in his death throes. She gave him the name "Sorrow." Tess confesses to Angel and begs his forgiveness, but he refuses. "O Tess," he cries, "forgiveness does not apply to the case! You were one person; now you are another. My God—how can forgiveness meet such a grotesque—prestidigitation as that!"<sup>1</sup>

"Forgiveness does not apply to the case." "You were one person; now you are another." What is the connection between these two statements? It seems to me that Angel's brief words veil the following monologue: I knew

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and cherished a young woman named Tess. I loved her and I married her. She was righteous and pure, innocent and tender. She was incapable of sin. I would have been willing to forgive her. I would have extended my hand to her so that we could continue on life's journey together. But you—your confession darkens your whole being. You are capable of committing terrible sins. I do not know the Tess who has now been revealed to me. I do not cherish her. And I am incapable of having any further dealings with her. In a certain sense, she is not the woman I married. Therefore, "forgiveness does not apply to the case."

The Tess presented by the narrator, the Tess the reader knows, and Tess as she sees herself are all the same Tess as before. This is not merely because the narrator, the reader, and Tess herself already know about the sin and are not surprised by it, as is Angel. It is because Hardy's book is trying to demonstrate a truth that transcends the question of when the sin is revealed to a specific character: The book insists that Tess is "a pure woman" *despite* her sin. And yet, her sin makes her a different woman in Angel's eyes.

Why isn't Angel satisfied with saying something like, "I wouldn't have believed that you were capable of such a deed"? Why doesn't he express himself in a way that preserves Tess as Tess, and acknowledges that his view of her has changed only in relation to the actions of which he now knows she is capable? It seems to me that the word Angel uses to characterize Tess—"another"—is not simply a rhetorical flourish. Instead, it expresses the commonly held belief that there is a close connection between a person's actions (or, at least, some of them) and his personality. Something similar happened to the mishnaic rabbi and eventual Jewish apostate Elisha ben Abuya, whose heresy earned him the moniker "Other."<sup>2</sup> Before he sinned, he, too, was deemed incapable of such a deed, but from the moment he chose a different path, he was defined as "Other."

To be "another person," as Angel describes Tess, implies separating between the world you came from and the world to which you currently belong. The act of forgiveness is meant to restore the relationship between the sinner, the person he sinned against, and the life which the sinner has

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repudiated. One who is considered “other” is relegated to the outside, expelled, and excoriated as irredeemable, while one who is forgiven is permitted to return to the fold. The Hebrew word for repentance, *tshuva*, meaning “return,” attests to this. The expression *hazara bitshuva*, signifies a wrongdoer’s redemption twice over: both words—*hazara* and *tshuva*—have the connotation of “return.”

Strangely, however, the penitent who has been forgiven is characterized in words that, as we have just seen, closely resemble the description of the unforgiven. Maimonides writes,

Some of the modes of manifesting repentance are that the penitent cries continuously before the Lord with tears and supplications; gives charity according to his means; keeps far away from that wherein he sinned; changes his name, as much as to say, “I am another individual and not the one who committed those deeds.”<sup>3</sup>

Like Elisha ben Abuya, the penitent is considered “other” and, like Elisha, he changes his name.

This seems odd at first. Two opposites—the sinner who is beyond redemption and the penitent who has been redeemed—are described in exactly the same terms. On second thought, however, it is not so surprising. Both cases actually refer to the same problem: A decent and righteous person cannot dwell together with a sinner. He must distance himself from the transgressor, expelling him from his presence. Tess and Elisha were good and honorable before they sinned (or, in Tess’s case, Angel thought she was). Thus, the only way for the righteous person to stay away from sin is to see the sinner as an “other”—someone who has taken the place of a formerly blameless person. In the case of the penitent, iniquity and sin preceded the welcome change that makes him a “new person.” In order for him to separate himself from sin, he must see it as something left behind when he embarks upon a new life. The redeemed person, who is born out of the darkness of iniquity, is therefore “other” than the wrongdoer. This is how many

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philosophers have perceived the concept of repentance. Norvin Richards, for example, says this about someone who regrets his transgressions:

We are speaking here of the person who has “seen the light,” who has come to disapprove of a kind of behavior which she had thought of as perfectly permissible. A new moral principle is acquired, or there is a new realization that her old principles are inconsistent and that her behavior violated the most important of them.... Her repentance is thus like repairing that part of a house which contributed to an accident. The child took a nasty fall right here, in part because the steps were uneven, but now I have fixed them.<sup>4</sup>

To Richards, repentance is like “repairing part of the house.” In other words, the penitent changes the aspect of his personality that caused him to do wrong. Does this mean that the past has changed? Not necessarily. It is easy to recognize new steps in an old house, because they are shiny and clean. They have not been marked by time. The replacement of old steps with new ones may be keenly felt by the residents of an old house. But it is also possible that professional builders will know how to combine the new and the old so that a stranger would not be able to tell the difference between them. He would not know that once there were other steps, and a child fell from them. In this case, the past has indeed been erased.

Richards’s analysis of remorse has been echoed by other philosophers regarding the notion of forgiveness, with one important difference: It is not the repentant wrongdoer who erases the past, but rather the injured, forgiving party. Berel Lang has expressed this idea in particularly pointed language. He describes forgiveness as forgetting an act of injustice, or at least placing “the wrongful act in moral brackets.” This involves “a literal remaking or rewriting of history, rendering the wrong committed null; in that case, the moment it had constituted would in effect disappear.”<sup>5</sup> Jean Hampton, who has written an important book about forgiveness with Jeffrey G. Murphy, put it somewhat differently:

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When the wrongdoer is forgiven, it is presumed that he has committed an immoral action, but the forgiver nevertheless “forgets” what the wrongdoer has done to him, not literally, but in the sense that he will not let the wrongdoing continue to intrude into his dealings with the wrongdoer in order that they can reestablish some kind of relationship.<sup>6</sup>

Note that Hampton puts the word “forgets” in quotes. She does this later in her book as well—for example, when she speaks of the forgiver’s “change of heart” that “washes away” the wrong.<sup>7</sup> Clearly, she does not think that the forgiver can “forget” in the literal sense of the word. Nevertheless, this is the ideal she describes: One must strive to behave as if the wrong never occurred.

Clearly, the most common perception of forgiveness is that of “negating the wrong.” Richards, Hampton, and Murphy present us with two possible answers to the question of who is supposed to do the negating. Richards suggests the offender, who repents; Hampton and Murphy suggest the wronged individual, who forgives. But there is a third possibility: The sinner and the sinned-against can erase the past together. Sociologist Erving Goffman, who has done groundbreaking work on the subject of apology: says that “an individual splits himself into two parts” at the moment of apology, “the part that is guilty of an offence and the part that dissociates itself from the delict [the offense] and affirms a belief in the offended rule.”<sup>8</sup> In this way, the wrongdoer joins with the wronged, and they stand together to denounce the evil deed.<sup>9</sup> When the offender aligns himself with the offended, he also makes the reverse possible: The aggrieved party can now embrace the guilty party anew. In other words, he can forgive. Philosopher Joram Haber puts it this way:

The repentant wrongdoer repudiates her deed and refuses to identify with the person she was who committed it.... By repenting, the wrongdoer can in some sense become a new person... the person she was who committed the wrong is nothing more than a metaphysical shadow. Should this be the case, we would then be able to join the wrongdoer in resenting the person from whom she now stands detached.<sup>10</sup>

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Some of the terms mentioned above describe erasing the past: “to place the wrongful act in moral brackets,” “to forget,” “to wash away,” a “new person,” a “metaphysical shadow.” The problem with this is that any attempt to change history is going to fail. Forgiveness and repentance address a person’s previous actions, and it is impossible to completely separate a person from his deeds. They *did* happen; he *is* the person who did them. This basic truth inescapably applies to him. This seems especially true with regard to wrongdoing. Once an offense has been committed, somebody has been hurt, and this hurt cannot be undone.

In this sense, repentance is simply impossible. It is self-negating. It can occur only when a wrong has been committed, but the indelible existence of that very same wrong precludes the possibility of repentance. The same holds true for remorse, apology, and forgiveness itself. In order for them to occur, a wrongful deed or improper act must be committed. Such an act cannot be undone, and therefore cannot be forgiven. This brings us to the following contradiction: In order for there to be something to forgive, there must have been a wrong committed, and, since a wrong cannot be undone, it cannot be forgiven. What can be forgiven is what cannot be forgiven. The concept of “forgiveness,” it turns out, is paradoxical.

The central tenet of Jacques Derrida’s book on forgiveness is very similar: It is possible to forgive only the unforgivable.<sup>11</sup> Derrida argues that our ability to understand a repentant person—to see things from his point of view and to speak his language—is testimony to the fact that he is already an “other.” He is no longer the ultimate guilty party we are supposed to forgive. He has become a different person. We can forgive the sinner only *as* the sinner, not as a penitent or a partner in dialogue. The sinner as the sinner, however, cannot be forgiven, because he is the incarnation of the unforgivable. Hence the following paradox: “There is only forgiveness, if there is any, where there is the unforgivable. That is to say that forgiveness must announce itself as impossibility itself. It can only be possible in doing the impossible.”<sup>12</sup>

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When Derrida speaks of the unforgivable, he is referring to sins that not only cannot, but *should not* be forgiven. He is talking about the immoral *per se*. One can associate this with the most horrifying crimes of human history—and I will return to this later—but Derrida’s paradox is not necessarily limited to such extreme examples of sin. It is based on simply recognizing an offense *as* an offense.

Philosopher and political theorist Aurel Kolnai articulated a similar paradox thirty years before Derrida: If the wrong is indeed a terrible offense, then there is no way to forgive it. In fact, one can argue that forgiveness in such a case would be morally improper. Whoever forgives such a crime “accept[s] it and thus confirm[s] it and make[s] it worse.” On the other hand, if the criminal has succeeded in negating his act, there is no longer anything to forgive. “Briefly, forgiveness is either unjustified [if the wrong still exists] or pointless [if the wrong no longer exists].”<sup>13</sup>

The paradox we are grappling with obviously requires us to view the guilty party as guilty, and to forgive him in spite of, or perhaps even because of, his guilt. To forgive by “forgetting” is a cop-out, because erasing a wrongdoer’s guilt means that he is no longer guilty. Forgiveness, therefore, cannot be mere forgetting. It demands a conscious effort. We must face the dilemma of forgiveness, and then choose whether or not to forgive.<sup>14</sup> The dramatic and difficult nature of forgiveness appears prominently in the following statement by Paul Hughes: “To forgive another is to engage in an internal drama: People struggle to overcome their resentment.”<sup>15</sup> And this one from Eve Garrard: “What makes forgiveness so difficult is precisely that it requires us to recognize the full horror of what was done, and then to forgive those very actions. Ignoring, denying, or forgetting amount to evasion, not forgiveness.”<sup>16</sup>

A genuine attempt to deal with the problem of forgiveness, therefore, must recognize “the full horror of what was done,” regard the guilty party as guilty, and then “forgive those very actions.” This kind of behavior answers Derrida’s demands, but it is also quite impossible. As philosophers Hagit Benbaji and David Heyd put it, “true forgiveness can be shown only

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when there are good reasons for maintaining a hostile attitude.” As a result, they claim, forgiveness is an “‘impossible virtue,’ in Bernard Williams’s terminology.”<sup>17</sup>

Indeed, how can we forgive wrongdoing if we acknowledge it for what it is? How can we resolve this paradox? It seems to me that most philosophers who have dealt with the concept of forgiveness are ultimately struggling with this question, even though they may not attempt to answer it directly. Nonetheless, the answers they do give—both direct and indirect—turn out to be quite similar. Ironically, they usually end up returning to the idea they ostensibly oppose: Forgiveness is the repression and forgetting of a wrong.

I think there is another possible answer, one that clarifies the importance of repentance, but does not surrender to the illusion that history can be changed. I will attempt to show that forgiveness in fact depends upon preserving the wrong as an existing event that must be engaged with, confronted, accepted, and then explained.

If forgiveness is an “impossible virtue,” how is it possible at all? Benbaji and Heyd propose a way out of this impasse. They see the act of forgiving as a shift in our point of view. Instead of looking at the wrong itself, we should look at the *wrongdoer*. “The solution we would like to offer,” they write, “involves the separation of acts from persons.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, we should examine the whole of a person’s life, his beliefs, and his behavior before we decide whether to forgive him. When we consider the offender as a whole person, we reject an atomistic approach that highlights the offense as an isolated event while still regarding the wrong as wrong. When we forgive in this way, we do not forget the wrong; we see it from a point of view that looks at the person and not the deed. This is like looking at an optical illusion in which two different images can be seen. The viewer can see one or the other, but not both simultaneously. In the same way, we can change our point of view from one focusing on the wrongful act to one focusing on the person who committed it. When we decide to forgive, we see that person in a different light.

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This idea appears time and again in discussions of forgiveness. It is often accompanied by references to St. Augustine's famous dictum that we should "separate the sinner from the sin" and "hate the sin but not the sinner."<sup>19</sup> This Christian maxim has a counterpart in a story from the Babylonian Talmud:

There were certain ruffians in R. Meir's neighborhood who caused him a great deal of trouble. R. Meir prayed for mercy regarding them that they should die. His wife Bruria said to him: What is your reasoning [in praying for their deaths]? Because it is written, "The sinners will be consumed out of the earth" (Psalms 104:35)? But is it then the word *hotim* (sinners) that is written in the verse, in which case the verse would refer to sinners? No! [The word] written is *bataim* (sins). Moreover, go down to the end of the verse, which states, "and the wicked will be no more." [Now, is it definitely the case that] once sins cease from the world, the wicked will be no more? Rather, you should pray for mercy regarding [these ruffians] that they should repent, and then "the wicked will [indeed] be no more." [R. Meir] did pray for mercy regarding them, and they repented.<sup>20</sup>

In this tale, Bruria teaches R. Meir that the sinner does not have to be eliminated in order to eliminate sin. It is possible and even necessary to allow the sinner to separate himself from sin. He has to be purified.

A similar idea appears in Bruria's interpretation of the second half of the biblical verse. What, she asks, is the meaning of the phrase "the wicked"? If it is intended as a noun, this means the criminal is the embodiment of his crime, and therefore the only way to eliminate it is to eliminate the person. But Bruria suggests another possibility: "The wicked" is an adjective. It is not the name of something, but a description of it. This means that if the bad person repents, he will no longer be bad per se. It is not he who will cease to exist, but rather his transgression.

Clearly, R. Meir learns his lesson: At the beginning of the narrative he prays "for mercy regarding them that they should die," but at the end he pleads "for mercy regarding them that they should repent." To pray "for

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mercy regarding them that they should die” is, of course, an extraordinary irony. It is not merciful, it is simply cruel. When R. Meir pleads “for mercy regarding them that they should repent,” he is being genuinely merciful. He returns the ruffians to the correct path, and they repent.

The real penitent in this story, however, is R. Meir himself. By pointing out his errors, Bruria teaches him gentleness and humility. These qualities transform his previously strict and obstinate character. It is no coincidence that she tells him to “go down” to the end of the verse. R. Meir needs to humble himself. In the end, he comes to understand that the world is not divided into righteous men and ruffians. Everyone can sin, and everyone can purify himself and seek repentance. When Bruria convinces R. Meir to repent, she sets a chain of events in motion. When he has mercy on the lives of the offenders, he adds a link to this chain. They, however, must also act. The story does not end with a voice from heaven proclaiming their forgiveness. They must repent. When they do, they add their own link to the chain. And this chain is not limited to a single incident. After all, the original verse from Psalms refers not to a particular group of ruffians in a particular neighborhood, but to all sins and all sinners. This implies that the chain has no end. If one person repents, this will rouse another person from his torpor. Links will be added to the chain until repentance encompasses the entire world. Thus, sin will be eliminated.

As Israeli poet Natan Zach asserts in one of his poems, we all need mercy. We all need forgiveness. Every one of us is capable of sin, and every one of us will ask for forgiveness when we sin. Forgiveness recognizes that we are all human and capable of error. As Hamlet remarks in Shakespeare’s famous play, “Use every man after his desert, and who shall ‘scape whipping?”<sup>21</sup> But being human also means being a rational actor. When we accept that everyone is capable of error, we must also accept that everyone can change. The sinner is not exclusively a sinner. Sometimes he sins, but sometimes he purifies himself—just like all human beings.

This, in a nutshell, is the solution proposed by most philosophers when confronted with the paradox of forgiveness. The wrong is indeed wrong,

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they say, and it must not be repressed or forgotten. But we must also remember that the wrongdoer is not just a wrongdoer. He is also a whole and autonomous being. This is reflected in Benbaji's and Heyd's opposition to an atomistic view of human beings and their embrace of a more holistic approach. Other philosophers express similar ideas. Hampton writes that the wrongdoer "is understood to be something other than or more than the character traits of which she [the forgiver] does not approve."<sup>22</sup> Margaret Holmgren says, "By forgiving the wrongdoer before she repents, the victim simply accepts her as a valuable human being who has made a mistake and done wrong, and who has yet to come to terms with her own wrongdoing. Thus, there is nothing in genuine forgiveness that is inherently incompatible with respect for morality."<sup>23</sup> Trudy Govier begins from a point which is much the same, and arrives at a radical conclusion. In her opinion, there is no one whose deeds are unforgivable:

To regard people, even cruel torturers, as absolutely unforgivable is to mistakenly infer a permanent evil in their person from the atrociousness of their deeds. It is to omit considering the possibility of moral change in such persons.... To do so is to ignore their human capacity for moral choice and change, which is the very foundation of human worth and dignity.<sup>24</sup>

This approach is an extreme version of the idea that we must separate the sinner from the sin. Govier continues,

Forgiveness is something we extend or do not extend towards *persons*, and it fundamentally affects the relationships between persons. And yet, it is *deeds* which are said to be unforgivable. Although this anomaly does not seem to have been noted by philosophers writing about forgiveness, it is highly significant.<sup>25</sup>

In other words, even if the deed is unforgivable, its doer is worthy of forgiveness. One could respond, of course, by claiming that the criminal is inextricably identified with his crime. Govier replies:

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There is a sense, a tautological one, in which a person who has murdered is a murderer and one who has tortured is a torturer. But there is another sense, a human and existential one, in which such people are not only murderers or torturers. They are human beings—human beings whose past lives have included evil, but whose future lives are open to new choices.<sup>26</sup>

The tautology Govier criticizes is problematic only if you assume that it is possible and *proper* to distinguish between the wrongdoer and his deed. Thus, her point of view leads to a strange resolution: It characterizes a deed in a certain way (as “unforgivable”), and the doer in precisely the opposite way (as “worthy of forgiveness”). The truth, however, is that forgiveness always means forgiving *a person for something*. To say that a murderer is a murderer is not an empty tautology. It is an accurate description of the person, the action, and the connection between the two. If I want to forgive a murderer, I want to forgive him for the murder he committed. Otherwise I would not need to forgive him. In other words, portraying the murderer as a murderer—as the doer of the deed—is necessary in order to make forgiveness possible in the first place.

Govier’s theory contradicts itself on a deeper level as well, because it is based on the idea that a human being is “open to new choices.” In other words, a human being is capable of responsible judgment and has the ability to change. This means that deeds *do* in fact depend on the person: He chose to commit the wrong and now regrets it, and chooses to act differently. I, for my part, choose whether or not to forgive him. Clearly, even the most extreme separation between the sinner and his sin accepts that the sinner is responsible for his actions. In the end, anyone who tries to claim the opposite is forced to say something along the lines of “the devil made him do it.” And this only brings us back to the initial fallacy that wrongdoing must be the work of “another person.”

We have seen that all attempts to resolve the paradox articulated by Derrida involve preserving a view of the wrong as a wrong. So the question arises: If the wrong is indeed a wrong, why should it be forgiven? Supposedly,

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the answer is that the wrongdoer is not only a wrongdoer. He is a whole person, autonomous and rational, and one must relate to the whole person and not to a specific act. But if we do this, the wrong becomes a trivial event that does not reflect the true character of the wrongdoer, prompting endless excuses like, “he didn’t mean it,” or “it just happened.” It seems that all the philosophers we have examined thus far have simply brought us full circle, back to the theory we examined at the beginning of this essay: In order to forgive, one must pretend that the wrong, for all intents and purposes, never happened or was an accident.

According to Holmgren, Govier, and Benbaji and Heyd, forgiveness ultimately means forgetting. Ironically, these philosophers originally set out to prove that forgiveness does *not* mean forgetting. They were searching for a theory that would preserve the wrong as a wrong, but would also allow us to forgive. It now seems clear, however, what this kind of forgiveness actually entails: It trivializes wrongdoing as an exception to the rule. We should ignore the wrong and put it behind us without reference or explanation. In other words, we should choose to see one image from our optical illusion and ignore the other. It is true that, as Benbaji and Heyd put it, we are capable of shifting back and forth between points of view. But why should we? If we have already forgiven the wrong, there is no reason to dwell on it, and to do so makes our forgiveness seem incomplete and inauthentic. One moment we absolve, the next moment we revisit the wrong, get angry again, and find it difficult to forgive what we have already forgiven.

It seems to me, however, that this vacillation between acceptance and anger *is* the process of forgiveness, and for good reason. The two viewpoints are not and cannot be separate. The person we forgive is the person who committed the wrong. The wrong is part of who he is. He will always be the person who did wrong. And in order to forgive, we must confront the wrong. We must remember it, analyze it, discuss it, and interpret it.

It appears that all the approaches reviewed above share similar flaws. They characterize the wrongdoer as a whole and rational person. They see

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him, in a deep and fundamental way, as someone other than the person who committed the wrong. As a result, the wrong becomes a mistake that needs to be corrected and then put behind us. This is somewhat disturbing, because it seems to suggest that the forgiver has done wrong as well: When he got angry at the wrongdoer, he wronged him, and his forgiveness corrects this mistake. It would have been better if he had not gotten angry at all. For, as Govier says, forgiveness demands our recognition that even a murderer or a torturer is first and foremost a human being.

This idea is generally accepted among those who write about forgiveness. Take the following statement by psychologists Robert Enright, Suzanne Freedman, and Julio Rique, who published a comprehensive study of the psychology of forgiveness: "When we forgive, we welcome the other into the human community; we see each other as equally worthy of respect."<sup>27</sup> Holmgren's approach is similar: Forgiveness "helps to reconnect [the one who is forgiven] not only with the victim but also with the rest of humanity."<sup>28</sup> Garrard argues that even the Nazis should be forgiven, because they are "our fellow human beings."<sup>29</sup>

The problem with this approach is that we *know* the wrongdoer is human. We know he is rational, capable of making decisions, and responsible for his actions. This is precisely why we regard him as guilty. We do not resent the volcano for erupting or the ground for earthquakes. We do not blame it, expect it to repent, or debate whether to forgive it. If someone did, we would say he is behaving irrationally.

The notion that forgiveness returns the wrongdoer to the embrace of humanity suffers from two serious errors. The first undermines the argument for forgiveness itself: If we see the offender as "inhuman," then he is not responsible for his deeds, and forgiving him would be as irrational as blaming the ground for earthquakes. The second error implies that the wronged person has forgotten that the guilty party is human. He is struck by blindness. His anger is unwarranted; it is a mistake that must be corrected. This is not only troubling from a logical standpoint; it is dangerous from a moral perspective. If we are wrong to be angry at the wrongdoer,

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then we have wronged him. The wronged person therefore becomes the wrongdoer, and the wrongdoer becomes the wronged. This distorts basic morality: evil becomes good, and the seeker of justice who opposes wrongdoing becomes the wrongdoer. Of course, we must now recognize the humanity of this new offender, and whoever does not do so replaces him as an offender ad infinitum. The wheel continues to turn forever: The wrongdoers transform into the wronged, and then into wrongdoers and back again. The wheel can be stopped only by acknowledging that we are all wrongdoers or we are all wronged. And even this doesn't really stop the wheel, it just ensures its swift and eternal rotation. When the wheel turns at full speed, it is simply impossible to tell who is the offender and who is the offended or, for that matter, what is good and what is evil. Eventually, these terms cease to have any meaning whatsoever.

At first glance, this might seem like a caricature, but it resonates strongly in the ideas espoused by some of the major writers on forgiveness. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who headed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in post-apartheid South Africa, wrote about his experiences in a book entitled *No Future Without Forgiveness*. Among other things, he talks about the African word *ubuntu*, which expresses the common fate of humanity. To be human, according to this concept, means being part of the entire fabric of human existence. Therefore, says Tutu, "to forgive is not just to be altruistic. It is the best form of self-interest." He claims that "What dehumanizes you inexorably dehumanizes me. It gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them."<sup>30</sup>

In other words, the wrongdoer contaminates his victim, so that he also becomes inhuman. Forgiveness, however, releases both of them and allows them to return to humanity, their destinies inextricably intertwined. This can mean one of two things: Either the offender and the offended are both wrongdoers, or they are both wronged. Tutu addresses both possibilities. While he is careful not to portray the victims of apartheid as guilty of any actual offense, he does recognize this potential in them.

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As I listened in the TRC to the stories of perpetrators of human rights violations, I realized how each of us has this capacity for the most awful evil—every one of us. None of us could predict that if we had been subjected to the same influences, the same conditioning, we would not have turned out like these perpetrators. This is not to condone or excuse what they did. It is to be filled more and more with the compassion of God, looking on and weeping that one of his beloved had come to such a sad pass.<sup>31</sup>

Tutu's compassion reverses the roles of wrongdoer and wronged. The wrongdoer becomes a victim, a son of God, an innocent child brought up in a barbaric culture. We should be compassionate toward him, forgive him, embrace him, and join in his sorrow. He too is a victim. Tutu says this explicitly:

In a real sense we might add that even the supporters of apartheid were victims of the vicious system which they implemented and which they supported so enthusiastically. This is not an example for the morally earnest of ethical indifferentism. No, it flows from our fundamental concept of *ubuntu*.<sup>32</sup>

It is difficult to imagine a more appalling reaction to horrendous crimes. Tutu was exposed to the full horrors of the apartheid regime, and in his book, he does not shy away from ghastly descriptions of murder and abuse. Yet in his eyes the wrongdoers are victims of the system that they themselves created, and he has deep compassion for them. Similar ideas can be found in the writings of Garrard, who argues that the Nazis are “our fellow human beings.” We should forgive them, adopt a “loving stance” toward them, and “wish them well.”<sup>33</sup> We express our common humanity, she says, by accepting that “we share, to some unknown extent, their capacity for evil.”<sup>34</sup> Through compassion for them, we recognize that in addition to hurting other people, they harmed themselves as well. We should try to correct this error and “desire for him [the perpetrator] to be different and better.”<sup>35</sup>

Garrard's and Tutu's positions are infused with a Christian spirit of infinite love for man as man.<sup>36</sup> Tutu was appointed to head the Truth and

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Reconciliation Commission precisely because he was a clergyman. At his initiative, the commission went for a retreat under the direction of a spiritual mentor before beginning its work. All its sessions opened and closed with a prayer. Tutu was convinced from the outset that religious figures would be better at exposing the truth and achieving reconciliation than politicians, whose main objective is finding ways of trouncing one another.<sup>37</sup>

The idea that the sinner is, in some way, separate from the sin is not exclusively Christian. Other, less radical outlooks share the assumption that forgiveness allows us to regain perspective and, consequently, embrace the wrongdoer as “the person he truly is.” Sin is the offender’s deviation from the correct path, while anger is the wronged person’s deviation from the correct path. The philosopher Robert Roberts, for instance, gives the following description of a mother’s outrage when her son lies to her:

In the anger-construal the moral offense is synthetically locked onto the offender so that he looks offensive, alien, and unwelcome; he looks guilty and deserving of suffering (punishment); he has decidedly *not* the look of a friend (even if he is a friend), and in the extreme case he has the look of an enemy. As it dawns on the mother of the little liar that she has been offended against in this matter of importance, her vision of her son—however fleeting, in whatever degree of intensity, and whatever the degree of belief or disbelief she may attach to her perception—comes into the focus of anger and she sees an OFFENDER.<sup>38</sup>

Roberts capitalizes the word “offender” in order to emphasize the intensity with which the mother sees her son as a “little liar,” “alien and unwelcome,” and perhaps even an “enemy.” Forgiveness demands the utter abandonment of this outlook, an abrupt and total shift in one’s point of view. But Roberts is mistaken: The mother does not regard her son as an enemy, an alien, a liar, or an offender. He is her son and she loves him, and she is angry at him *because* she loves him. She would be less angry at an enemy because she would have lower expectations of him. Her anger at her son, like her forgiveness of her son, is contingent upon seeing him *as* her son.

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Holmgren makes a similar error when she writes, “To forgive a wrongdoer is to reach an acceptance of that person as a person—not as a husband, an employee, etc.”<sup>39</sup> The phrase “to accept a person as a person” is empty of any real content. It applies to everyone in general and to no one in particular. When we get angry at a specific person, we are angry at him *as* a son, a father, a friend, a partner, an employee, and so on. These categories are the basis of our interaction with people around us. They are also the basis of our anger toward them and our struggle to forgive them. Real forgiveness requires, therefore, a perspective that does not separate the sinner from the sin, but understands the wrong as something that is an integral part of the wrongdoer’s biography that cannot be erased from his relationship with the wronged.

Imagine a woman who has betrayed her husband. Make no concessions on her behalf. Imagine the event in full, with the enormous wrong that it involves. One day her husband discovers that for years she has been secretly seeing another man. Years of bliss are suddenly transformed into years of deceit. What had seemed to be a happy relationship grounded in friendship, love, and mutual trust appears, in retrospect, to have been a hoax. Every conversation, look, and intimate moment between husband and wife has concealed perfidy and deception. The man who defined himself as a “husband” discovers that the woman he loves has not considered herself a “wife” for years. She is not the person he thought she was, and since his identity is bound up with her identity, he is not the person he thought he was. The past has been contaminated, the present undermined, and the future appears dark and uncertain. This is a heartbreaking wrong. The wife took advantage of her husband’s naïveté and destroyed the essence of their home and family—the foundation of a person’s life.

Nevertheless, the husband wants to forgive his wife—in the name of their love, their relationship, their home and family. He decides to forgive while fully embracing the paradox of forgiveness. He doesn’t deny that she

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is certainly guilty. She insulted and betrayed him. And nevertheless, he will forgive her. Why? Because she is his wife and he loves her. The wish to hold on to this connection is the answer to the question of why to forgive.

This emotional bond is the source of the husband's sorrow. He is wounded to the depths of his soul because he loves his wife, and he forgives her for the very same reason. He is torn between the inclination to break off the marriage and the desire to hold on to the relationship. The paradox of forgiveness does not preclude this vacillation—it is a clear expression of it.

The decision to forgive means investing all one's emotional resources in choosing the second option: to hold on. The husband chooses to forgive his wife, but he does not stop regarding her as guilty. He does not distinguish between her and her deed, and he does not ignore the whole of her personality. He is angry with her because, as his wife, she betrayed him; and he forgives her because, although she betrayed him, she is his wife. Her betrayal is an essential component of who he is and who she is, of his biography and her biography. There is no escape from it. The decision to forgive is a resolution to embark on a journey which includes a perpetual struggle between two poles. This forgiveness does not mean victory over anger and resentment, but rather a renewed acceptance and embrace of the one who is forgiven.

Such an acceptance is only the beginning of a journey. It will be followed by a long, perhaps perpetual dialogue. Husband and wife will walk together while they reexamine their relationship, the nature of the wrong, and the reasons it occurred. The husband will become angry again, and the wife will apologize again. This will be an apology in the original sense of the word: *apologia*, from the Greek word *apologos*, which means “story.” Whenever a person apologizes or asks forgiveness from another person, he tells a story: the story of the wrong and its motivations, the story of their relationship then and now. The wronged person receives the story, but he is not a passive listener. He reacts, interprets, analyzes, expresses his anger, and tells his own story: the story of the wrong that was done to him. He is a full partner in a mutual narrative.

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Supposedly, the statement “I forgive you” marks the end of this process, when the two parties finally reach “closure.” The final sentence of the story is marked with its final period, and it is now written and sealed. But there is no such period. Even a story printed in a book is open to interpretation, reaction, and a dialogue with its reader. It is retold every time someone starts to read the book, and all the more so when the story is not printed or written, but takes place in real life. This story of the wrongdoer and the wronged is bound up with the biography of each of them: their identities, their way of thinking about themselves and others, their insights into love and betrayal, relationships and honesty, truth and falsehood. This story never ends.

Throughout the process of forgiveness, the wrongdoer and the wronged bear the burden of the wrong together. In the Bible, the root נ-ל-ס represents only absolution by God, while the root נ-ש-נ represents forgiveness by human beings. Before we examine the root נ-ש-נ in the context of forgiveness, we should look at its general meaning. In the Bible, as in modern Hebrew, *nesiah* (נשיאה) means first and foremost to take something upon oneself, to lift up or to load a burden, to bear it. Sometimes this is physical cargo. But the burden can also be spiritual and metaphorical, such as a person who “bears his iniquity.” For example, Moses instructs the Israelites how to properly perform the peace offering: “It shall be eaten the same day you offer it, and on the morrow. And if aught remain until the third day, it shall be burnt in fire. And if it be eaten at all on the third day, it is abominable; it shall not be accepted. Therefore everyone who eats it *shall bear his iniquity*, because he has profaned the hallowed thing of the Lord: and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.”<sup>40</sup> In the same way, a person is also commanded to report a sin he has witnessed: “And if a person sin, and hear the voice of adjuration, and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of it; if he does not utter it, then he shall *bear his iniquity*.”<sup>41</sup>

One who “bears his iniquity” carries it with him wherever he goes. It weighs heavily on him. To bear it is his punishment. The Bible emphasizes

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the weight of this burden by equating it with heavy physical objects. For instance, Ezekiel is commanded to do the following:

Thou also, son of man, take thee a brick, and lay it before thee, and trace upon it a city, namely Jerusalem. And lay siege against it, and build a siege wall against it, and cast a mound against it; set camps also against it, and set battering rams against it round about. And take thou an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city. And set thy face towards it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel. Moreover lie thou upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, by an equivalent number of days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah: I have appointed thee forty days, each day for a year.<sup>42</sup>

Here, Ezekiel is commanded to act out the fate of Jerusalem in microcosm. He must engrave the city's shape on a stone and lay symbolic siege to it. An iron pan symbolizes the wall of iron that separates him from his figurative city. Then he must lie on his left side for a number of days, each day being equal to one year of "the iniquity of the house of Israel." Then, he must lie on his right side for "the iniquity of the house of Judah." What will Ezekiel do while he is lying there? "Thou shalt bear the iniquity," says the text. He lies with the iniquity upon him. Ezekiel is surrounded by objects—a brick, a rampart, battering rams, and the iron pan—which symbolize the fate of Jerusalem. But the iniquity itself is not symbolized by an object. Instead, it *functions* as an object, laid upon the shoulders of the prophet.

In the story of Ezekiel, iniquity is a spiritual burden similar—if not identical—to a physical weight. This burden can be borne on behalf of someone else or in the name of someone else. Ezekiel takes the iniquity of

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his entire people upon himself, even though he has not sinned. He functions in a manner identical to the biblical scapegoat:

And Aharon shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of an appointed man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon it all their iniquities to a barren land. And he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.<sup>43</sup>

The story of Ezekiel and the story of the scapegoat confirm that someone *can* bear the iniquity of others. The burden may overwhelm the sinner, but he is not permitted—or able—to evade it. Like Cain in the book of Genesis, he cries out, “My punishment is greater than I can bear.”<sup>44</sup> This is Cain’s response when he receives God’s harsh punishment for murdering his brother, Abel. He recognizes his sin. He is ashamed. He repents and confesses. Yet he also asks for mercy, saying, “Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face I shall be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that anyone that finds me shall slay me.”<sup>45</sup> In other words, Cain asks for compassion and assistance in bearing his burden. And God accedes to his request: “And the Lord said to him, Therefore whoever slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should smite him.”<sup>46</sup>

Thus, a person who asks for forgiveness is actually asking for help in bearing his iniquity, and the person who decides to forgive agrees to assist him. This is why the Hebrew root נ-ש-ח is used to express forgiveness. The forgiver neither erases the wrong nor forgets about it. How could he? The wrong cannot be denied or obliterated. When a person forgives, it is as if he were saying to the forgiven: I am willing to bear this burden with you. From now on, it will be shared by both of us, and we will struggle with it together. The forgiver embraces the forgiven. The burden does not disappear. It is not forgotten. Instead, it becomes their joint legacy.

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Following the death of Jacob, Joseph's brothers say to him: "Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall you say to Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brothers, and their sin; for they did evil unto thee: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father."<sup>47</sup> Here, each "forgive" has the Hebrew root נ-ש-ח. Joseph does not reply. He weeps as he remembers what his brothers did to him: They tried to kill him, threw him into a pit, and stripped him of his beautiful coat. The story they told their father was a lie, claiming that "an evil beast has devoured [Joseph]."<sup>48</sup> The brothers recognize the evil of their deeds and confess it frankly, saying, "for they did evil unto thee." This statement serves as grounds for their forgiveness. Why should Joseph "forgive the trespass of thy brothers, and their sin"? After all, "they did evil unto thee." But Joseph accepts this. He does not deny that he was gravely wronged. He says explicitly, "you thought evil against me."<sup>49</sup> But he concludes that "God meant it for good," because by virtue of his arrival in Egypt "much people should be saved alive."<sup>50</sup> As a result, Joseph embraces his brothers, saying, "Now therefore fear not: I will nourish you, and your little ones," and later, "he comforted them and spoke kindly to them."<sup>51</sup> The family continues to dwell together in Egypt and, though the narrator does not add any further details, we can be sure they will work through the sin and its consequences. They will tell one another about the years of difficulty, suffering, and sorrow. The process is just beginning.

Most philosophers of forgiveness seem to have been either unaware or uninterested in the idea that forgiveness can be seen as bearing a burden. This beautiful passage by Pamela Hieronymi stands out as an exception:

With forgiveness, the offended agrees to bear in her own person the cost of the wrongdoing and to incorporate the injury into her own life without further protest and without demand for retribution. (In some cases forgiveness can be uncomfortably intimate: You must allow me to creatively incorporate the scars that bear your fingerprints into the permanent fabric of my life, and trust that I can do so.) This very important aspect of

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forgiveness has been largely overlooked in most accounts. It deserves much better explication than I have here given it.<sup>52</sup>

The intimacy that Hieronymi describes is possible precisely because forgiveness occurs between human beings who feel, love, hurt, and can be wronged. The scars she mentions are the burden we must bear. The marks that you leave on my skin are proof of our close relationship, even as they leave scars on my body. The wrong does not disappear; quite the contrary. Forgiveness is a process that embeds the offense inside me, and gives it meaning. By choosing to take the wrong upon me, its presence is accentuated.

This is a paradox, of course, because the scars are present only because of the offense. They are the consequence of the wrong, not of forgiveness. And according to Hieronymi, forgiveness makes the scars permanent. Forgiveness does not heal the wound—it deepens it; and this is exactly why it is so important: It increases the wronged party's burden. And yet he takes it upon himself "without further protest and without demand for retribution." He bears it with him.

Hieronymi does not explain precisely how forgiveness integrates these scars into one's life. Perhaps it can be understood as follows: As long as there is no forgiveness, the scars are a superfluous feature. The wronged person does not understand them. They cause him pain, and he tries to get rid of them to no avail. He feels they have been forced on him by something outside himself. He did not choose them, and he does not see them as part of his identity. He becomes willing to make them part of himself only when he decides to forgive. Forgiveness makes the scars part of his being, and from then on they belong to him. They are no longer just the fingerprints of an offender. The wronged person becomes responsible for them as well. In embracing the offender, he also embraces the offense. He participates in bearing the wrong, and turns it into a part of himself. He does not reject his scars; he deals with them.

This process is quite painful. It makes the scars something present and tangible which cannot be ignored. They demand to be interpreted, grappled

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with, and embedded in the body. Indeed, the paradoxical nature of forgiveness remains intact. Derrida is correct in arguing that the guilty party can only be forgiven *as* the guilty party. Thus, the solution to the paradox of forgiveness lies within the paradox itself. The guilty party remains guilty, and the forgiver recognizes this, but he chooses to embrace the wrongdoer *despite* his guilt and *because* of it. The forgiver chooses to bear both the scars and the wrong. This does not mean that the wronged person is an accomplice to the wrongdoing. The crime remains the deed of the criminal. The forgiver does not carry it as an offender, but as one who is willing to shoulder the consequences of the offense: to remember the wrong and remind us of it, and to forgive it while refusing to forget.

In order for forgiveness to take place, the wrong must remain a wrong. The dialogue of forgiveness is not a process through which the wronged person becomes convinced that the wrongdoer is innocent. It is much more complicated than that. The wrongdoer must analyze his own behavior. He will offer his explanations. He will say: These were my motives. And he must eventually admit: they do not justify what I did—I am guilty. I am responsible for my actions. These were not accidental mishaps. I must confront them. I must understand why I did what I did. I should be afraid that I might do it again. The penitent does not “see the light” all at once. He sees it gradually, over the course of his dialogue with the person he has wronged, and he will repent many times over. This is a continuing process of self-examination and reflection.

The mutual recognition of a wrong by the wrongdoer and the wronged stresses the dialogical nature of forgiveness. It is also what distinguishes forgiveness from reconciliation. Two people can reconcile if they decide to forget their mutual grievances. They can also agree to disagree. A believes that he behaved correctly and that B is guilty, while B thinks the opposite. They listen to each other and then continue their joint lives without deciding who is right. Forgiveness, however, requires identifying the guilty party and his victim. This is a case not of two people who disagree, but of one

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person who has wronged his fellow. The identities of the wrongdoer and the wronged must be clear and agreed upon by both sides.

The dialogue between these two very different people is crucial. They are dependent on each other. The wrongdoer depends on the wronged person's willingness to forgive him, and the wronged person depends on the wrongdoer's willingness to enable the process of forgiveness. The Talmud gives a good example of this in the following story about R. Zera:

When R. Zera had grounds for a grievance against someone [Rashi says "he had reason to be indignant"], he would repeatedly pass in front of [the offender], making himself available to him, so that the man would say the thing [ask forgiveness] of his own initiative.<sup>53</sup>

This is dialogical forgiveness at its best: R. Zera longs to forgive, and he expects that the offender will ask to be forgiven. While it is appropriate that the guilty party should approach the wronged, R. Zera does not wait. He makes the first move. He does everything in his power to ensure that the offender will ask his forgiveness. He walks in front of him again and again. According to Rashi, "He passes and doubles and triples back many times over." The Talmud teaches that a person should not ask forgiveness more than three times, but R. Zera walks in front of the guilty party many more times than that. He "makes himself available" to the offender, but he does not say a word to him. Instead, he waits for him to speak up. Why? Because the wrongdoer is the one who is guilty, and he must recognize his guilt. R. Zera cannot forgive the wrongdoer unless he initiates the process. As Hieronymi wrote, "You must allow me to creatively incorporate the scars that bear your fingerprints into the permanent fabric of my life." Therefore, I depend on you. I cannot forgive you unless you are willing to let me do so.

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The dialogical essence of forgiveness also teaches us about the person who is not worthy of forgiveness. We are unwilling to maintain a dialogue with him, and we do regard him as “another person.” He is unworthy of being one of us, and unworthy of being embraced by us.

This is an inversion of the idea presented at the beginning of this essay, which claimed that seeing the wrongdoer as “another person” defines forgiveness rather than its absence. From this perspective, after you repent, you are “another person,” not the one who committed the offense, and therefore it is proper to forgive you. Or perhaps you were “another person” when you committed the offense, and therefore we must look at who you truly are. We must shift our point of view and forgive you, because “you weren’t yourself.”

But now we should consider a different kind of “other person,” whose otherness does not contribute to forgiveness. In fact, it becomes the reason for its denial. Jean Améry, a survivor of Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen who committed suicide in October 1978, makes a powerful point:

The experience of persecution was, at the very bottom, that of an extreme *loneliness*. At stake for me is the release from the abandonment that has persisted from that time until today. When SS-man Wajs stood before the firing squad, he experienced the moral truth of his crimes. At that moment, he was with *me*—and I was no longer alone with the shovel handle. I would like to believe that at the instant of his execution he wanted exactly as much as I to turn back time, to undo what had been done. When they led him to the place of execution, the antiman had once again become a fellow man.<sup>54</sup>

Améry is not “quiet and conciliated” by the execution of his tormentor because there are many others—SS men, *kapos*, clerks, and generals—who would also have to die in order to be “with him.” Only at the moment of death would they feel, like him, a fierce desire to “undo what had been done.” Améry knows from bitter experience that this is a hopeless

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aspiration, that what is done cannot be undone. The most egregious crime these men committed was the utter loneliness they forced upon him. His fate concerned no one, and no one desired to do the impossible: to return to the past and change it. This absolute divide can be crossed only by the criminal's execution. The wrongdoer must be killed because so long as he lives he cannot be forgiven. This is why Améry titled his essay "Resentments." Resentment is the only way he can make sense and find meaning in suffering. Améry cannot go gentle into that good night so long as he remains alone. To rid himself of his solitude, he must make sure the criminals are punished. Only when they have been removed from humanity can they finally become human again.

Améry describes the SS-man Wajs in the strongest possible language, calling him an "antiman." Certainly, the Nazis deserve such a name. And Améry's uncompromising moniker provides an interesting counterpoint to the equally extreme statements by Garrard and Archbishop Tutu. According to Garrard, the Nazis are human beings like us, and therefore worthy of forgiveness. This implies that the question of forgiveness is really the question of who is human. Someone identified as human should, by definition, be absolved of his crimes, either because he is "our fellow human being" (Garrard), or because everyone is capable of sin (Tutu). An "antiman" may not deserve such charity, but ordinary moral categories do not apply to him.

Garrard is correct in stating that the Nazis were human beings. She makes a terrible mistake, however, when she claims that they are worthy of forgiveness. Améry is right when he defines the Nazis as "antimen." Their actions were so appalling that we do not want them to be part of us. We do not want them as part of the human race. Because of their actions, their right to be members of our community has been revoked. This is despite the fact that they are human beings, and precisely *because* they are human beings. They are responsible for the actions that made them unworthy of forgiveness. They do not deserve to be embraced.

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Forgiveness is possible only if the wronged party is willing to embrace the wrongdoer. Then the wrong can become a building block for the future the two of them will build together. The talmudic tractate Gitin describes just such a structure:

The rabbis taught that if someone stole a beam and built it into a building, Beit Shammai says that he must demolish the whole building and restore the beam to its owner. Beit Hillel, however, says that the latter can claim only the monetary value of the beam. This was instituted due to the regulations concerning penitents.<sup>55</sup>

Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai are arguing about the penalty for someone who steals a beam and uses it as the foundation of a building. Beit Shammai takes the extreme position: The thief must demolish the entire building and return the beam to its owner. Beit Hillel appears to be more lenient: The thief must compensate the owner according to the monetary value of the beam. At the end of the passage, we are told that this rule was instituted “due to the regulations concerning penitents.” In other words, in order to allow criminals to repent.

Beit Hillel’s ruling, however, is not so simple. When the thief pays compensation, he leaves the beam in its place. As a result, the penitent will have to come to grips with the presence of the stolen object. He cannot demolish the building and start over as if the crime were never committed. The deeper meaning of “the regulations concerning penitents” may be that repentance does not negate the past. Real repentance enables life to go on while continuing to remember the wrong we have done—and to deal with it.

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## Notes

1. Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman* (London: Macmillan, 1974), p. 271.
2. Hagiga 15a.
3. Maimonides, *Mishneh Tora*, book 1, trans. Moses Hyamson (Jerusalem: Azriel, 1937), Laws of Repentance 2:5, p. 83a.
4. Norvin Richards, "Forgiveness," *Ethics* 99 (October 1988), p. 88.
5. Berel Lang, "Forgiveness," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 31:2 (April 1994), p. 108.
6. Jean Hampton, "Forgiveness, Resentment, and Hatred," in Jeffrie G. Murphy and Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988), p. 37.
7. Hampton, "Forgiveness, Resentment, and Hatred," p. 83.
8. Erving Goffman, *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1972), p. 143. "Delict" is a legal term for an offense or misdemeanor that demands compensation on behalf of the injured party.
9. Trudy Govier and Wilhelm Verwoerd, "The Promise and Pitfalls of Apology," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 33:1 (Spring 2002), p. 70.
10. Joram Graf Haber, *Forgiveness* (Savage, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1991), pp. 95-96.
11. Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).
12. Derrida, *Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, pp. 32-33.
13. Aurel Kolnai, "Forgiveness," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 74 (1973-1974), pp. 98-99.
14. Admittedly, as Murphy notes in the wake of the works of Nietzsche and Freud, we must be wary of using expressions such as "mere forgetting," because forgetting does not always happen by chance, and can be the product of complex psychological mechanisms. Jeffrie Murphy, "Forgiveness and Resentment," in Murphy and Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*, p. 23. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to say that the decision to forgive a certain incident means embarking on a psychological process that will bring about the desired result, namely, forgiveness. On the other hand, a decision to forget will usually bring about the opposite result: One is guaranteed to remember the event. Forgiveness is the outcome of a conscious deci-

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sion, while forgetting transpires only accidentally, if the psychological mechanisms are unconscious.

15. Paul M. Hughes, "What Is Involved in Forgiving?" *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 27:3 (1993), p. 333.

16. Eve Garrard, "Forgiveness and the Holocaust," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 5:2 (June 2002), p. 153.

17. Hagit Benbaji and David Heyd, "The Charitable Perspective: Forgiveness and Toleration as Supererogatory," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 31:4 (December 2001), p. 569.

18. Benbaji and Heyd, "The Charitable Perspective," p. 571.

19. See, for instance, Margaret R. Holmgren, "Forgiveness and the Intrinsic Value of Persons," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 30:4 (October 1993), p. 347; Murphy, "Forgiveness and Resentment," p. 24; Hampton, "The Retributive Idea," in Murphy and Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*, p. 153; Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), p. 83; and Joanna North, "The 'Ideal' of Forgiveness: A Philosopher's Exploration," in Robert D. Enright and Joanna North, eds., *Exploring Forgiveness* (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin University, 1998), pp. 26-27.

20. Brachot 10a.

21. *Hamlet*, Act II, Scene 2.

22. Murphy and Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*, p. 85.

23. Holmgren, "Forgiveness and the Intrinsic Value of Persons," p. 347.

24. Trudy Govier, "Forgiveness and the Unforgivable," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 36:1 (January 1999), p. 71.

25. Govier, "Forgiveness and the Unforgivable," p. 65. Emphasis in original.

26. Govier, "Forgiveness and the Unforgivable," p. 66.

27. Robert D. Enright, Suzanne Freedman, and Julio Rique, "The Psychology of Interpersonal Forgiveness," in Enright and North, eds., *Exploring Forgiveness*, p. 49.

28. Holmgren, "Forgiveness," p. 345.

29. Garrard, "Forgiveness and the Holocaust," p. 156.

30. Tutu, *No Future*, p. 31.

31. Tutu, *No Future*, p. 85.

32. Tutu, *No Future*, p. 103.

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33. Garrard, "Forgiveness and the Holocaust," p. 155.
  34. Garrard, "Forgiveness and the Holocaust," p. 161.
  35. Garrard, "Forgiveness and the Holocaust," p. 163.
  36. For a similar view, see Richard Holloway, *On Forgiveness: How Can We Forgive the Unforgivable?* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2002).
  37. Tutu, *No Future*, pp. 80-87.
  38. Robert C. Roberts, "Forgivingness," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 32:4 (October 1995), p. 292.
  39. Holmgren, "Forgiveness," p. 342.
  40. Leviticus 19:6-8.
  41. Leviticus 5:1.
  42. Ezekiel 4:1-6.
  43. Leviticus 16:21-22.
  44. Genesis 4:13.
  45. Genesis 4:14.
  46. Genesis 4:15.
  47. Genesis 50:16-17.
  48. Genesis 37:33.
  49. Genesis 50:20.
  50. Genesis 50:20.
  51. Genesis 50:21.
  52. Pamela Hieronymi, "Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 62:3 (May 2001), p. 551.
  53. Yoma 87a.
  54. Jean Améry, *At the Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and Its Realities*, trans. Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1980), p. 70. Emphasis in original.
  55. Gitin 55a.