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Please see Brief Summary on previous page.
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Forgiveness

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Benziman proposes a forgiveness process based upon remembering it.

In order, for example, for a couple to resolve a marital crisis upon the wife's admission that she was having an affair, the husband and wife need to engage in an honest dialogue about what went wrong, Benziman says. The wife might explain to her husband how lonely she felt when he spent long hours at work and was inattentive to her need for emotional support. She would acknowledge the hurt caused by her infidelity and admit that she was wrong to seek warmth and comfort elsewhere instead of discussing how she was feeling with her husband. She would ask for forgiveness and commit herself to mending their relationship. For his part, the husband would tell his wife his side of the story—how he feels about what happened, what his needs were, what he expects from their relationship. The wife needs to take responsibility for her offense, and the husband needs to agree to relate to her as an individual who chose to do wrong and now chooses to atone for it, making the effort to repair the broken relationship. Others may assist in the process, but the two parties, together, carry the burden of the healing.

That said, both individuals here are not equally culpable. The offender needs to recognize that her infidelity is at the core of the couple's pain. She cannot forgive herself; she's dependent on her husband to forgive her. One cannot force forgiveness; one can only ask for it.

Mutual commitment to the relationship builds a bridge, fragile and tentative as it may be, over the abyss separating the two. It is its own act of creation, recalling Genesis 1:2: "The spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters."

In a sense, God is the third partner in the complex relationship between offender and forgiver. Over those who truly seek justice and forgiveness, the Divine Presence hovers. Our relationships matter because there is an intrinsic *kedushah* (sanctity) in them.

Imagine how we might interact with others if we took care to remember that our relationships involve the Divine. □

Books

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trial itself. Arendt's articles, written for the *New Yorker* and published in book form as *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, incensed many Jews for her scathing remarks about the lack of Jewish resistance and her claims that members of the Jewish Councils, set up by the Nazis, were essentially collaborators. Lipstadt answers Arendt's more egregious remarks, which tended to blur the distinction between victim and perpetrator and put Jews on trial instead of Eichmann.

Ironically, some of Arendt's criticisms mirrored those of the Israeli public at the time. "In Israel and many other places," Lipstadt writes, "there was a persistent *leitmotif* when the discourse turned to Holocaust survivors: *Why didn't you resist? Why did you comply with orders? Why didn't you revolt?*" At this trial, survivors spoke about how armed resistance was nearly impossible for starved and demoralized people with little or no political organization. Taking the witness stand, Abba Kovner, leader of the Vilna Ghetto revolt, declared: "Rather than demean the victims, contemporary generations should recognize how 'astonishing' it was that there was a revolt. That is what was not rational." With testimonies like these, the Eichmann trial transformed the status of Holocaust survivors from *victims* to *witnesses*—both within Jewish communities and throughout the world.

Most significantly, Lipstadt debunks Arendt's depiction of Eichmann as an exemplar of "the banality of evil"—an ordinary man who unthinkingly became a killer in a totalitarian society. Citing a memoir Eichmann wrote during the trial (which the Israeli government made available to Lipstadt during her own trial in 2000, when Holocaust denier David Irving sued her for libel), she maintains that he knew perfectly well what he was doing and was deeply committed to the Nazi ideology of racial purity. Arendt's theory is flawed, she writes, because it "ignored the bedrock of the Holocaust: the long, tortured history of anti-Semitism. Any attempt to separate anti-Semitism from the ignominious legacy of the Final Solution is to distort historical reality." □