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September 16, 2021: Forgiveness

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Title: Forgiveness

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9/16/2021--On this day of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, we secularists should ask, how do we find forgiveness? Yes, we can ask the person we have wronged, and in the Jewish tradition, one must do that. But, the tradition does not expect this always to be successful. One need only ask forgiveness a specified number of times--any more than that is considered an act of violence. And even when the wronged person forgives, that is not perfect forgiveness. We still know and they still know. And anyway, what secularist do you know who even thinks about how he or she wronged someone. No, secularism has a long, long way to go before we can have a flourishing secular civilization. Psychiatry is not a substitute for introspection. And that introspection is going to have to be really searching. When I practiced Judaism, I used to feel on Yom Kippur that the whole sin thing was overdone. (Except on rare occasions when my failures in personal relationships were too obvious to ignore). Now I think that we do violence all the time to everyone around us. But we mostly keep it hidden. We don't love properly. We are envious. We are vain. This I think is to be human. This most generalized falling short of living rightly is what we most need forgiveness for. Only religion offers that kind of forgiveness so that we really can start over tomorrow. How will secular life deal with this?