



## It is not **FORGIVABLE!**

**I**t is not forgivable! There is a story about a drunk driver who came back to his victim several years after his car had crushed this young girl, seeking for forgiveness. His victim was sitting in her wheel chair, remembering the clash and all the pain it entailed. She had lost everything, her health, her family, her beauty, and all her hopes and joys. How could she forgive?

It was not forgivable, simply because each moment of her life she was forced to remember. She could not forget. The crime was not only a past event, it was still present today, and will always be here, reminding her of the past accident.

It was not forgivable, because her condition was hopeless; she was definitely condemned to her chair, paralyzed and alone, suffering physically and emotionally.

It was not forgivable, because the driver had no excuse.

It was not forgivable, because she did not know the man, she had no connection or feeling towards him, nothing that could help her sympathize or understand.

She could not forgive; she had neither reason nor the capacity to forgive: it was not forgivable. As she thought of the impossibility to forgive, she then understood the wonder of forgiveness: "it is not forgivable, therefore, I will forgive you", she said. Forgiveness is difficult. It is impossible. Forgiveness is not based

on oblivion, or superficial sentimental blindness. Forgiveness works only on the basis of this lucidity, which recognizes and remembers the crime, and the tragedy it implies.

Is it possible to forgive? What is forgiveness? Why it is important to forgive? And how can we forgive? These are the questions that we will address in this issue of *Shabbat Shalom*, confronting the crime, and courageously urging our effort to create life out of death.

We will face even the radical evil, the Holocaust; is it possible to forgive? Any quick answer to that question should compromise the answer. And only the victim could forgive. We will think again with the help of the Holy Scriptures, with the rabbi or the minister, but also with help of experience. We shall then understand that forgiveness is not easy. It is not forgivable, not only the crime that is against us, but also the crime we commit; then we will progress towards forgiveness; then, and only then, life will be bearable.



Jacques B. Doukhan, D.H.L., Th.D.