



Thoughts Poems and Reflections in a Time of Pandemic.

8. Guilt

Thoughts, Poems and Reflections in a Time of Pandemic. Number 8: Guilt

At the present time the news is dominated by two things, the rapidly increasing number of deaths from the Corona Virus Pandemic and the disruption it creates. The social isolation forces us in on ourselves and makes us face up to our personal thoughts, fears, and challenges that we might otherwise have hidden away. In these *"Thoughts, Poems and Reflections in a time of Pandemic"*. I describe some of these, and how through facing them we may find fulfilment in the lives we seek.

One of the most destructive and treacherous ways of attacking an enemy is to heap guilt on the person concerned over who they are, what they do and what they believe. In this poem I examine how we take that guilt upon ourselves and its destructive effect.

If we truly have done something wrong, we must fully bear that guilt. However, the attacks on our own senses of self-esteem and self-worth can be even more devastating when, because of the actions and accusations of others, we are made to feel that we have done something wrong or irresponsible, even when we truly believe have been behaving according to ethical standards which are unequivocally the best we can manage and are morally, socially and physically correct.

I consider both these issues in this poem.

GUILT

Hidden and unheard, guilt comes
Reclusive and malign, guilt strikes
Or through a blazing fire guilt burns
Its anguish marked it wrecks it fights
Its partner blame must set its course
To revel through destruction's force.

Yet guilt can give the warning shout
Take care! Beware! Peruse your course
Redress the force of blame and doubt
From actions past that cause remorse
For guilt assuaged can clear our way
Through all we do and see and say.

Guilt is God of "Should have been"
The force that says you must succeed
The spectre sensed of failures seen
This vampire of perfection's creed
When duty sets its cause too high
It sucks both mind and reason dry.

For guilt's escape we turn to blame
Diverting guilt that's ours to face
Or inwards bend our minds to frame
Its driving power of self-disgrace
Then guilt we find will set its grip
On what we know but can't accept.

The guilt we feel for what we are
Destroys all hope of peace of mind
But anguish faced in tearful prayer
Can set us free from bonds we find
When self-acceptance gives release
And brings us hope of inner peace.

The guilt we feel for what we do
Is guilt which we are right to fear
For we must own a guilt that's true
Before we'll make the future clear
To see the peace of mind we greet
When guilt's atonement is complete.

12 September 1996

REFLECTION

This is the first of two poems that go together, the next poem, on Forgiveness, describes how we might manage and deal with guilt. Guilt, anger, and blame are fellow travellers in any crisis. If we are truly to become free from their clutches all of these must be worked through together: they cannot be suppressed, denied, or ignored.

This is also a two-way process. If other people impose guilt, anger, and blame on us, we are just as likely to throw guilt, anger, and blame on them in return. This then becomes a tit-for-tat process where always increasing guilt, anger, and blame is imposed by both sides. Having the ability to forgive is one way of breaking the cycle, but many people cannot forgive, nor can it be asked or expected of them. What we must do is to break the cycles of retribution that are created.

According to our beliefs, we ask or pray that we can find ways of escaping from the cycles of retribution, guilt, blame and anger, no matter how just or unjust these may be. Instead of seeing those who heap such accusations upon us as enemies, let us seek ways to make them friends.

The complete collection of reflections is available is available at: www.com.tqdr.co.uk/articles/001C-PandemicThoughts.pdf