



Thoughts Poems and Reflections in a Time of Pandemic.

9. Forgiveness

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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.

It has been said that an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the way that honour is preserved in society. Any sign of giving way may be seen to be weakness or capitulation. Often pride or fear of loss of honour, power, influence, or authority prevents those who would give way from doing so. The act of forgiveness is a way of breaking the cycle. Forgiveness does not mean forgetting the wrong that is done or the consequences of it. Many people find it impossible to forgive, and nobody should be criticised for this. What forgiveness does do, when it is genuinely meant, is to release guilt and to enable people to make a new start. It does not disregard the original cause. This poem follows on from the previous poem and reflection. It begins by considering how growth may be gained by guilt's release, and how that new start may be made

FORGIVENESS

Growth we gain by guilt's release
Arises from the hope that's seen
When harmony brings inner peace
And sense of worth the self esteem
That makes us free to set our role
And gain a life that's fully whole.

But human nature lacks the power
To steer the perfect course we seek
So guilt's dynamics then will scar
Our lives with blame for each defeat
Yet with forgiveness and in grace
We may give guilt a proper place.

Forgiveness does not say forget
Instead it brings the future course
Where guilt's atonement can be met
Within the power that we engross
So freed from inner guilt to bind
We may rebuild the lives we find.

And we must know we are forgiven
Or that we've fully paid the price
To cancel grief our guilt has riven
And find the peace we seek in life
But we shall never gain this prize
Unless repentance rules our lives.

The trauma our dissention swells
Finds true power in guilt we face
But when we show we too forgive
With penitence we find the grace
To know that guilt must only test
To see if we have done our best.

Then with our lives we seek ideals
That lie beyond our power to gain
So self-forgiveness when each fails
Becomes the goal we can't maintain
Yet life will shine with peace we set
Once God's forgiveness we accept.

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REFLECTION

I have stated previously that, although I make considerable use of religious scriptures in this account, I am using them in a secular way. The word "God" in this poem is used to describe a power which is beyond our personal selves. Although the word is often used to describe a supreme being in a religious context, it need not be expressed in supernatural terms. It can also describe a fount or essence of love. In the poem "Religion" (Number 11), I will examine why this is.

In the Christian Gospel, Matthew (18: 21-22) states: *"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'"* In the Lord's Prayer we read *"Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us"*. In Matthew (22:27-39) Jesus said: *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets"*. Although these texts are taken from the Christian Gospel, the same themes are common to all religions, and it is in this spirit of love and forgiveness we should seek to live our lives.

Let us ask or pray according to our own beliefs that we may be able to forgive others without limit, and that we can build our lives in this spirit of universal and inclusive love, which we share with all people, and is common to all of us whatever we believe and however we live our lives.

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