

Forgiveness

I thought the natural progression from Guilt was Forgiveness for without asking for, and receiving forgiveness one cannot reduce the feeling of guilt to a less damaging emotion, like that of regret. Forgiveness is both requested and given and interestingly it is probably even more important to give than receive, but it can be very difficult to receive and forgive oneself.

Shakespeare says:

*The quality of mercy is not strain'd.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:
It blesseth him that gives ,and him that takes.*

Portia in the Merchant of Venice

Forgiveness is essential for mankind to live in harmony and therefore all religions, which I believe exist to help people live good, happy, peaceful lives, as well as support us through the hard times, have forgiveness as a foundation. As Christians we ask for forgiveness and pray to be able to forgive others every time we say the Lord's Prayer. We believe that Christ died upon the cross for the remission of sins.

Forgiveness is considered one of the six cardinal virtues in **Hindu** Dharma, the Hindu guide to the right way of living. Hindus are taught that they should both forgive and seek forgiveness. **Buddhists** say forgiveness is about letting go of the anger and resentment you hold in your heart, that causes you so much pain, and can lead to conflict with others. This process helps you to develop compassion for yourself and others.

The Quran says that Allah forgives all sins except one – shirk. No, it does not mean chickening out of something, but worshipping more than one god. There are a tremendous amount of writings about the mercy of Allah but the Quran also talks about forgiving as well as being forgiven. ***“But if you pardon and overlook and forgive - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful”***

I have not quite sorted out Judaism in my mind as it would appear that only God can forgive their major sins whilst their lesser sins should be forgiven by the person whom they have hurt.

No matter the slight difference in emphasis between the religions, they all consider forgiveness is of prime importance.

Unfortunately people do not always abide by the tenets of their religions which has led to conflict in so many parts of the world. In Afghanistan ancient insults have led to feuds between tribes to the present day. In Italy vendettas still carry on particularly with the criminal families. In our own backyard we have the troubles in Northern Ireland, and the SNP are resurrecting ancient humiliations north of the border.

Compare the vengeful and unjust Treaty of Versailles after WW1 which no doubt led to the rise of Nazism and the Second World War, with the Marshall Plan after WW2 which led to friendship and close links with the enemy comparatively soon after the war. The latter has given peace to Western Europe for seventy four years. Between nations and individuals alike, being able to understand, respect, accept different cultures, have compassion and admit that often we ourselves are also at fault, makes forgiveness possible.

Gandhi said **“The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong”**.

I have been thinking of Harry Dunn and the damage being done to his family by “wanting justice”. Obviously they are being encouraged and financed by someone, the tabloid press? to behave as they are. Never once have we heard them saying, “The poor woman who killed him must be feeling so awful. We do feel sorry for her.” Instead they want her dragged back to England to face justice to get their revenge. It is going to do them no good probably making them very bitter unhappy people for the rest of their lives. I only hope Mrs. Saccoolas is religious and can get comfort from God for her mistake in driving on the wrong side of the road as she obviously is not going to receive forgiveness from the Dunns.

A few ideas to discuss:

- Is forgiveness more difficult to give than receive?
- When is it difficult to forgive?

- What is the relationship between justice and vengeance and where does forgiveness fit in?
- Does retributive justice work?
- How about restorative justice?

[Forgive yourself.](#) By [Maria Imran](#)

Put your hand on your heart and say
I forgive you.

Let your eyes cry but don't let them run dry.

It's okay,* tell yourself that.
It's okay, it's okay, it's okay, sweetheart, it is
Okay.

What you did, what they did, what happened
Is Past now, has passed now.
Please allow yourself to move on and actually live
This one and only life.

You are a flower-being and you deserve fragrances.
You are a soft soul and it's time you let your scars heal...
So stop. Stop scratching your skin, stop scarring your sacredness within.
You are to live, and live happily.

Please.