

Blame, Accountability and Forgiving. Versus Living in a State of Forgiveness

The greatest challenge most people face is how to give or accept forgiveness. Because they find it difficult to stop blaming the person or circumstance in which they were wronged. They hold on to the memory of the hurt, even when the wrong no longer has an effect on their physical or material well-being. And the “living” memory takes on a life of its own, to continue inflicting emotional or psychic pain, that experts call trauma.

It is noteworthy that two people can have the same painful experience. One person, in time, reconciles with the experience and is able to continue with their life, unhindered by the memory. The second is unable to stop reacting to or from the memory. Therefore, it is rational to conclude that how one reacts to the memory is the differentiating element between the two people. After all, memory of the experience lives in the psyche (spirit) of the first person, as it does in the second person.

Thus, one’s attitude and grasp of the concepts of forgiveness and blame, must play a key role in how one treats or reacts to being hurt, or the memory of it.

Let’s start with blame.

Also, first, let’s understand the difference between blaming, and holding someone accountable.

Blaming is putting *all* of the responsibility onto someone for a particular outcome, whereas holding someone accountable is acknowledging that their actions have impacted us somehow.

In holding someone accountable, we take ownership of our feelings, reactions as well as acknowledging the possibility of our contribution to the situation and outcome, no matter how slight.

Blame only looks to find fault and punish directly (e.g. by revenge) or indirectly (by withdrawal or holding back affection).

Accountability looks to finding solutions, which empowers the parties involved, to learn and grow. Thus, while blame closes off communication, accountability fosters trust, understanding, and positive change.

Next, let’s review the concept of forgiveness.

As hinted, “forgiveness” or letting go, is not the same as forgetting. Forgiving is about letting go of resentment and anger, while forgetting implies erasing the memory of an offense. In fact, forgetting may be impossible, since the memory of an event can become embedded beyond the brain, in the psyche; as is evidenced by traumas attributed to past life experiences. Also, research confirms that we rarely forget past wrongs.

A spiritual perspective

Having laid a foundation, let us now pivot to look at the matter from a spiritual perspective.

First of all, there is no disputing the fact that the subject we are dealing with gives the strongest evidence of the existence of man's inner non-physical or material essence. Otherwise, how could people experience or re-live past life traumas?

Even when materialist wish to attribute these experiences to subliminal, unconscious environmental stimuli, it fails to explain such traumatic experiences, that span times and cultures, of people who live in isolated communities. People who are cut off from contact or information about the times or cultures that form the background to their trauma.

So let us dive straight into a spiritual perspective that may shed some light on this matter.

Here, we will start with forgiveness.

We hear the word forgiveness, and immediately we think of one letting-go. We see ourselves in the driver's seat, making a conscious choice and decision. Therefore, forgiveness becomes a conscious self-willed act, by an ego. One that the ego makes for each and every situation.

However, if the ultimate goal of spiritual development is to voluntarily evolve into a consciousness that aligns completely with a higher Supreme Will, it means that our focus on our ego being the primary determinant for forgiveness may, unknown to us, work against attaining that ultimate goal. But if we see forgiveness as a state of being, rather than an act, it would change our approach at how we see and arrive at forgiveness.

To explain, let us imagine a person who lives in a state of total alignment with the Supreme Will. They will automatically seek the Supreme Will (creation's purpose) that is contained in any experience in their life. This outlook will not focus on the agency, because it recognizes that there can be no injustice in any experience. Rather, it focuses on trying to extract the educational lesson, regardless of the pain that may be attached to it.

This perspective actually explains the true meaning of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:39. During the Sermon on the Mount, He said:

"But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also."

When properly understood, this advice captures the expected natural response of anyone who can see the benefit arising from a painful experience (i.e. the slap on one cheek). It goes without saying that if there was a benefit from such experience, one would welcome more of it. This is represented by the turning of the other cheek.

But, by turning the other cheek, Jesus did NOT preach that people should necessarily seek out punishment for Spiritual advancement. He was simply referring to suffering that result out of the activity of the Law of Sowing and Reaping. In the knowledge that the returning suffering offers a redemptive opportunity to the person suffering.

Seen from this perspective, it is natural that anyone who wants to grow spiritually would anxiously and happily welcome the opportunity to learn through the activity of this law, and thus grow, through recognizing and hopefully abhorring actions that they once inflicted on others.

Also, the use of the word evil has a different meaning at the time of Jesus, than it does today. The broader meaning, in the context of the saying, would include, *do not agitate against "sorrow", or one that causes you sorrow*. Therefore, the words, "an evil person", is not to be understood in a judgmental context against the perpetrator of the act.

From this perspective, anyone who has so attuned their life to any experiences that approach them, will only look for the lesson they offer, and not the role of the agents in the interaction. In other words, the search for accountability of the agent, and assigning blame never crosses their mind. Indeed, such a person can be described as living a judgement free life, that automatically takes no personal offense against any wrongful acts to them. In effect, they could be described as living in a state of *complete forgiveness*.

A person who has not attained such a level of maturity is more likely to be driven by their ego to first look at the nature of the experience; i.e. painful or pleasant. Next, to look at the agents involved. Then they react, based on their own take on the situation and experiences. Finally, their ego will decide whether to hang-on, or let go of the memory. The same process is followed regardless of whether the memory is one of pain or pleasure.

When the memory causes emotional pain, we consider it negative, and describe it as trauma. When it is pleasant, most egos see it as deserved, and revel in it, without evaluating its spiritual benefit or detriment.

By contrast, a person who lives in a state of total alignment with the Supreme Will is more likely to see a pleasant experience as part of the overall and necessary support for the upbuilding of Creation. Their attitude will be one of gratitude for having participated in contributing to the joy that is thus felt throughout creation, instead of taking personal credit for the outcome.

Closing Words

No doubt, many readers/listeners will dismiss this spiritual perspective as a flight of fantasy, and unrealistic. However, the following documented accounts by real people of how they overcame bitterness and learned forgiveness may help doubters to reconsider.

- **Erik Fitzgerald:** A driver fell asleep and crashed into Erik's car, killing his pregnant wife. Out of his deep Christian faith, Erik showed compassion for the driver instead of anger. The two men became close friends.
- **Immaculée Ilibagiza:** During the Rwandan genocide, Immaculée hid in a tiny bathroom while a violent mob murdered her family. Years later, she read the Bible and chose to forgive the killers to find inner peace.
- **Dan and Lynn Wagner:** A driver who was drinking and on drugs crashed into a car, killing Dan and Lynn's two daughters. Guided by their faith, the couple visited the woman in prison years later to offer her forgiveness.

Islamic tradition tells that when the people of Taif stoned Muhammad until he bled, an angel offered to crush the city in revenge. Muhammad refused, and prayed instead that the people would one day find peace and come to know God.

In the lecture “Father Forgive them for they know not what they do”, Volume 2 of “In The Light of Truth” (The Grail Message), Abdrushin confirms this spiritual perspective in his explanation of this biblical account of Jesus’s last words, as he died on the Cross:

WHO does not know these momentous words which Jesus of Nazareth uttered when He hung on the cross? They are one of the greatest prayers of intercession ever spoken. Clear and explicit! And yet, despite this, for two thousand years these words have never been understood! They were interpreted one-sidedly, and only in that way which appeared to be agreeable to men. There was not one person to raise his voice and call out their proper meaning in all clearness to mankind, and especially to Christians!

In these words, we see Jesus living out his injunction to us to be ever ready to forgive our neighbours. In other words, we should cultivate the ability to live in that state of perpetual forgiveness.

The common thread in all of these accounts is the voluntary subservience of each person to a Higher Will, manifesting in deep belief or faith in The Supreme One. A recognition that we can only gain through the Spirit.

Conclusion

Hopefully this article has opened another perspective for those who are giving thought to this subject.