

# Forgiveness

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**Abstract:** *The concept of forgiveness tinged with Christianity is essentially an ethical subject. However, inspite of that the subject has attracted the attention of moralists, psychologists and the like. Though it is often said that the subject of forgiveness has not been credited with the kind of attention it deserves, but the last two-three decades has witnessed sustained engagements in political, psychological, philosophical and therapeutic studies. Though forgiveness as a religious value continues to command support but empirical studies on the theme has suggested that its religious roots are often overlooked. As a theme of popular psychology and therapeutics, forgiveness is approached almost entirely in terms of the benefits it brings to the one who forgives.*

**Keywords:** *Forgiveness, Resentment, Victim, Offender, Restoration, Retribution*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Unlike the past, when discussions about forgiveness were typically circumscribed to the domain of religion and theology, the contemporary period has witnessed its arrival in academic spheres. The notion of forgiveness has acquired importance in several academic disciplines as psychology, philosophy, medical science and neuroscience. Several studies and experiments are being conducted on forgiveness across the globe. One such example is the Campaign for Forgiveness Research funded by Templeton Foundation. Several experiments are also being conducted by medical and neuroscientists in exploring parts of human brain that stimulate and impede in undertaking acts of forgiveness. Contemporary researches have proved that forgiveness acts as a catalyst in transforming peoples' emotions thereby evoking their mental and spiritual well-being. The goodness of acts of forgiveness, advanced studies has proved, reduce negative attitudes as mental stress, depression and resentment and stir positive thoughts and hopefulness, decrease frustration and spirituality in humans. The overall effect of acts of forgiveness leads to physical and mental wellbeing with fewer problems of mental and physical sickness. Though the notion of forgiveness has been much debate following the 'positive psychology' movement and South Africa's Truth and

Reconciliation Commission, but not much attention has been devoted to defining forgiveness.

## II. WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

The concept is not bereft of controversy as some claim that the idea of forgiveness suffers from insufficient clarity of construct while others claim that the theme has been diversely defined. However, inspite of the continuing debate the common notion is that forgiveness is the best alternative to resentment and hatred.

Bishop Butler preaches forgiveness as, "the forswearing of resentment – the resolute overcoming of anger and hatred that are naturally directed towards a person towards one who has done one an unjustified and non-excused moral injury." (J. Butler, Fifteen Sermons, London 1726) John Milbank defines forgiveness as "as a nonviolent way of life that involves acting as if sin were not there, by offering reconciliation." (J. Couenhove 2010, p.151) Forgiveness for Hampton ("Forgiveness, Resentment and Hatred") involves the overcoming of indignation and moral hatred, in addition to the overcoming of resentment, spite or malice, to which resentment may give rise.' (Murphy & Hampton 1988, p. 42) A psychological interpretation to the concept of forgiveness has been provided by McCollough, Pargament and Thorsen

(2000) as they define forgiveness as “intra-individual, pro-social change towards a perceived transgressor that is situated within a specific interpersonal context.” (M. Webb, Sarah A. Chickering, T. A. Colburn, D. Heisler, & S. Call 2005, p.356) Robert Enright views forgiveness not only “a willingness to abandon one’s right to resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behaviour toward one who unjustly injured us, but takes a step forward in asking the victim to exhibit “qualities of compassion, generosity and even love toward him or her” (J. Couenhove 2010, p.156)

The modern proponent of the idea of forgiveness is Archbishop Desmond Tutu, whose views have rarely been popularized and celebrated. Tutu advocates that forgiveness concerns more of oneself than the other. His thoughts rest on the belief that one does not forgive others for ‘the other(s)’ sake, but for one’s own self. Forgiveness is not something we do to other people, it is something we do to ourselves to move on, as Archbishop Tutu claims that ‘to forgive is not just to be altruistic; it is the best form of self-interest.’ More than the desire to relieve the suffering of the offender, forgiveness simply is getting rid of one’s destructive emotions of anger and hatred. Tutu advocates that acts of forgiveness be bereft of any strings or conditions. Forgiveness can have no conditions. He placed no importance to the notion of conditionalism, that is, certain conditions have to be met before undertaking any act of forgiveness. But he never ignored the fact that the victim must forgive the offender for good reasons in order that forgiveness has moral positive status. As such, forgiveness is always for morally good reasons and hence, morally permissible.

Unconditional forgiveness helps one to keep destructive emotions in check thereby helping one to think and respond appropriately. Forgiveness or acts of it, according to Tutu should not be dependent upon others, though it is easier to undertake acts of forgiveness if the perpetrator exhibits remorse and guilt. With clarity of pitch born out of decades of experience, Tutu exhibited a bold spirituality that helped to move forward with honesty and compassion. He advocates putting off one’s right to revenge as the best form of practising forgiveness. Waiving off one’s rights to retribution is act of forgiveness. Bishop Joseph Butler too treads the same line as Desmond Tutu but with subtle difference. Though Bishop Joseph Butler too propagates forgiveness as forswearing or overcoming revenge, but notably for him forgiveness does not entail giving up resentment for harm done or inflicted. Butler suggests that instead of overlooking moral wrongs, improper anger, resentment and revenge should be checked and that ‘the perpetrator of harm’ be dealt with the same compassion as all humans due good-will should be treated. His claim of overcoming the vices of malice and revenge towards one’s wrong-doers is not completed ‘until the negative feelings engendered by the injury have been eliminated.’

As a long emotional process, Butler’s concept of forgiveness entails shedding of all negative feelings knowing fully well that the action inflicted upon was morally wrong. He argues that forgiveness must be accompanied with good will and lack of interpersonal resentment for the harm inflicted. By cancelling all deserved hostilities and substituting by friendlier attitudes towards the wrong doer, one faces a change of heart. As prescription for forgiveness, Butler

suggests the biblical precepts of loving our enemies, goodwill and benevolence.

At one point of time, Butler seems to suggest that it is possible to both forgive and seek judicial punishment. The forswearing of revenge, for Butler, occurs at the private or individual level, but at the public level, the administration of retributive justice by those in authority is a good thing and compatible with forgiveness. Therefore, unlike Tutu, Butler does not rule out the idea of retaliation or revenge as the victim may judge appropriate.

Forgiveness entails transforming the victim’s perspective towards the offender and the offence from negative to either positive or neutral. Forgiveness bears the potential of transforming the victim’s life from one of pain and indignation. Offering the victim peace of mind it releases the victim from being emotional hostage to certain unfortunate acts of the past. Therefore, forgiveness is such a process where the victim, the target of morally-injurious act in spite of being on the negative side overcomes all negative emotions of resentment, hatred, anger and indignation towards his offender and refrains from paying the offender in the same coin. The victim consciously chooses to clear the path towards amending the relationship.

Forgiveness is not just a matter of how we treat the wrong doer but also about how we feel. To forgive or undertake acts of forgiveness, it is essential that one cultivates a right temperament of mind. But at the same time, one must guard against being completely vulnerable to the perpetrator of harm for reasons of personal safety and emotional wellbeing. Though forgiveness is a virtue to be essentially practised but at the same time the wrong acts must not escape without criticism. Again in undertaking condemnation at public or private level, one should guard against our feeling of resentment being too excessive that they diminish natural feelings of compassion and benevolence. The resentment against the injury inflicted should not result in unjust behaviour in terms of revenge and personal retaliation.

Influenced by the theological doctrine that God neither experiences pain nor pleasure from the acts of mortal beings, the idea of forgiveness has an ancient tradition. Traditional Catholicism preaches that God is impassible; divine impassibility is also preached by Islamic religion. Forgiveness between humans is demonstrative of Christian love. Apart from treating God as impassible, Judaism propagates that it is incumbent upon all mortals to forgive his fellowmen. Even the Hindu sacred texts bear innumerable instances of divine forgiveness. Buddhist religion too propagates forgiveness in its teachings of forbearance and relinquishing of resentments and ill—feelings. In Western tradition ‘Divine impassibility’ can be traced back to ancient Greek philosophers as Aristotle and Plato who forwarded the idea of ‘the Divine’ as perfect, omniscient, timeless and unchangeable not subject to human emotions. However, the idea of impassibility developed and advocated by medieval theologians as Anselm seem to divert from the commonplace emotional concept of the Divine.

From the above account one can possibly draw the conclusion that forgiveness takes the dual dimension of mortal forgiveness and divine forgiveness. While Tutu advocates human forgiveness Anselm talks of divine forgiveness. However, contemporary psychological literature on

forgiveness provides caution in that the concept should not be muddled either with 'indifference, overlooking or refusal to act.'

Griswold argues for a more secular approach to forgiveness. He seems to differ from the many religious authors and states that forgiveness should not be confused with negation of resentment. Refusing to equate forgiveness with either forgetting or excusing nor condoning or resentment with the offender, Griswold refrains from lending forgiveness any idealistic complexion. To him, forgiveness is "to understand, to relinquish revenge and resentment, all the while holding the offender responsible." (Gaelle Fiasse 2007, p. 200)

In line with liberal tradition, individuals as moral beings are bearers of moral values; the right thing to do is that which produces good negating all instances of resentment and revenge; as such acts of forgiveness are a virtue concerning human well-being more closely than other principle guiding human life. Humans by virtue of their being have been endowed by nature with attributes of both forgiveness and revenge as tools of conflict resolution. Anger and hatred are part of human nature as much as love, compassion and forgiveness. Aristotle believes that in spite of the wrong committed, the 'incontinent acts' may not be the offender's deep character. It is quite possible that the offender has caused grievous injury 'voluntarily' without being 'intentional'. Aristotle claims such grievous acts would have been avoided had the offender rationally deliberated upon it before committing the action. Such involuntary injury caused must be pitied and offender excused because of his signs of repentance. Aristotle considers such agents as more forgivable than those who deliberately inflict injuries upon their victims.

Though forgiveness requires no condition but R. S. Downie (1965) believes that mere uttering the word 'I forgive you' does not suffice for forgiveness. Just as the injurer must exhibit remorse and offer restitution the forgiver's word must also be accompanied by appropriate behaviour. Forgiveness is not something that can be calculated in terms of a formula of 'I am sorry' or 'I forgive you'. The forgiving spirit is as essential as the act of forgiving. To view forgiveness as giving up one's right to retaliate is to view it in a negative light. To circumscribe forgiveness within the limits of overlooking the injury is a denial to appreciate its merits. An act of forgiveness or for that matter forgiveness entails something positive- a move to shed bitter feelings but without giving up the right to protest against moral injury. Forgiveness as a virtuous act involves much more than undergoing certain psychological transformations; it involves the more positive approach of a change of heart towards the injurer. Forgiveness evokes the strong approach of viewing one's injurer in a more favourable way "Forgiveness .... involves the overcoming of indignation and moral hatred, in addition to the overcoming of resentment, spite or malice ..." (N. Verbin 2010, p. 610) By overcoming moral hatred, the victim fosters good will and compassion for the injurer in spite of his wrongful acts. The author proceeds to suggest that "we can forgive a person without his knowledge or in his absence, merely by altering our attitudes and behaviour towards them." (R.S. Downie 1965, p. 131) Transformation of heart of the victim towards his injurer is core of forgiveness. However, forgiveness entails the acknowledgment of reciprocity. The injurer must acknowledge

that his actions have caused harm. It becomes much easier to forgive when the injurer owns up his fault and expresses remorse. Therefore, forgiveness is not only victim-centric but to be appropriate it must be wrongdoer dependent too. This is so because, forgiveness or acts of it should not bear the risk of 'moral reproval' in the sense that the victim must be careful in that in conceding forgiveness one does not destroy one's self-respect. Forgiveness, in this sense, to be morally appropriate must be compatible with self-respect, respect for others as moral agents, and respect for the rules of morality and the moral order. (Murphy & Hampton 1988, p. 24)

However, shedding one's resentment or the right to retaliate do not constitute forgiveness. It is something much deeper because forswearing retribution can be undertaken in ways that are not intrinsic to the idea of forgiveness. For instance, giving up the right to revenge or seek retaliation for monetary gain or otherwise is not forgiveness. Griswold (2007) claims that compensation; reparation and penance should never be conditions for forgiveness. Forgiveness is different from both payment and dismissal of debt.

Forgiveness is not an easy act; it requires honesty, openness, and determination for its earnest practice. It is only humane to retaliate or inflict injury upon one's injurer but rarely relieves one from one's pain. For instance, slapping back someone who has slapped me rarely helps in reducing my pain. Though it might foster momentary relief but in the long run, I become guilty of the same injurious act. The only exit to reduce pain and foster peace of mind is through the act of forgiveness. Unless one sheds the feeling of indignation and resentment, one remains locked out of peace of mind.

Again forgetting the offender's wrongful actions do not count as forgiveness. Forgetting resentment rather than its cessation do not qualify as forgiveness. To qualify as forgiveness, the victim must cede one's own anger and pain wilfully. To quote, "my ceasing to resent ... will not constitute forgiveness ... unless it is done for a moral reason. Forgiveness is not the overcoming of resentment simpliciter; it is rather this: to fore-go resentment on moral grounds". (Howrad McGary 1989, p. 344) Authors have identified these high moral grounds as kindness, empathy, generosity, compassion, mercy, tenderness, concern for others, forgiving nature of the person and other related human values.

However, questions have been raised about cessation of resentment as necessary for forgiveness - if the victim wilfully yields one's anger and pain, then does it warrant that the victim must be cautious with the offender in all future dealings? Again, if the victim treads cautiously with the offender in respect of one's unwelcoming experience of the past, then has the victim been able to forgive the offender in the true spirit of the term?

### III. FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION

Forgiveness addresses an injury; it is said to be the backbone of restorative justice. When restoration seems to be the end, forgiveness no longer remains concerned about the injury inflicted or about the perpetrator of the harm but mending the broken relationship between the injurer and the victim becomes its prime concern. Under such circumstances,

the focus of forgiveness shifts from the perpetrator and the injury to the treatment of the offender. Retribution gives way to restoration mainly from the belief that in doing so one would achieve the best consequences. Forgiveness is a justified way of avoiding bad consequences especially personal revenge and harmful societal activities. However, the restorative aspect of forgiveness endorses the notion that forgiveness requires the victim to negate retributive emotions as anger, hatred or resentment for producing the larger good. "Tutu for instance argues that forgiveness expresses the idea of *ubuntu*, the idea that the good of one life is caught up with the good of another; entire communities benefit from a group waiving its right to revenge, and forgiveness is therefore self-interested and other oriented at once." (Jesse Couenhove 2010, p. 153) The principle of 'lex-talionis' (ie) an eye for an eye has no takers with the concept of restoration. This school diverts from the thought of, *those who have harmed should also be harmed*. Retaliation as opposed to forgiveness which is a soft feeling is prone to promote irrational and hard conduct. Individuals as moral agents are indeed holders of moral virtues and it is quite natural that they will exhibit forgiveness in hard times.

However, the tendency to forgive often depends upon the interpersonal dimension of the agents involved – the victim and the offender. Restoring the offender back to the moral community involves a long process. In the first instance, the offender must acknowledge his mistake and wait for the victim to offer forgiveness. The offender must exhibit his remorse and repent with a promise of not committing the same mistake again in future. The offender takes responsibility for his wrongful deeds and makes room for amends. This must be accompanied by a show of sympathy towards the victim. The process of forgiveness is not complete until the victim's sentiments and approach towards the offender has changed. Change of attitude of the victim towards the offender restores mutual respect and recognition between the parties and the moral community. However, there is no reason to believe that forgiveness will always lead to positive reconciliation; as much depends on the nature of the injury -- whether the injury caused is forgivable or not? As C. Fred Alford says, "forgiveness is often inappropriate." (2013, p. 1) Though we are constantly exhorted to forgive those who have wronged us but a failure to resent a moral injury is not always a good thing. Though reconciliation is neither necessary nor sufficient reason for rendering forgiveness but it is often as Robert C. Roberts (1995) considers it to be 'teleology of forgiveness'. It cannot be denied that undoubtedly, reconciliation is, if not, the sole goal of forgiveness. The best known instance of forgiveness and restoration is South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) where the sole objective had been "... to implement the healing and restoration of victims as well as offenders, families and communities and the accountability of offenders, with full participation by all directly affected parties." (Kathryn J. Norlock and Jean Rumsey 2009, p. 108)

Empirical studies have shown that forgives for restorative reasons are rather oriented for reasons of convenience. Strangely enough, sometimes forgiveness has been bought. Instances are not rare when forgiveness has been granted for reasons of financial gratifications or political gain.

Forgiveness for any underlying reasons erodes the true spirit of forgiveness. It is then that one has to examine the victim's waiving off one's right to revenge or retaliation. Forgoing one's right to retaliate must be adequately motivated to count as forgiveness, it does not suffice merely to give up one's right to take revenge or inflict punishment. Justly motivated behaviour and genuine attitudinal change towards the offender can claim to be the right spirit of forgiveness. Griswold (2007), Roberts (1995) and Garrard and Naughton (2003) consider attitudinal change of victims towards their offenders as central to forgiveness. Retaliation and revenge are construed as inappropriate moral response to injury and harm. In her 'Forgiveness, Resentment and Hatred', Murphy and Hampton (1988, p. 42) states that 'forgiveness should be analysed as a process, involving not only certain psychological preparations, but more positively, a change of heart towards the wrong-doer.'

However, the restorative approach of forgiveness has been viewed negatively by substantial array of authors. The major drawback of such an approach lies in the fact that it defines forgiveness from a negative perspective. Kant believes (in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*.) that the dignity of an individual is violated when the offender inflicts harm upon the victim. And nothing suffices, not even repentance to mitigate the injury inflicted; the scar of bad behaviour cannot be easily erased. Murphy is concerned with identifying the injury and relating it to the perpetrator and it is on grounds of moral reasons that he would allow the victim to forgive the offender. Repentance rather than condemnation is identified as the rightful condition for forgiveness. Forgiving without condoning is not best called forgiveness, but assumes the status of something else.

Forgiveness has also been viewed from another perspective also. It is often seen as a sign of weakness. The victim in certain cases seems to lack the requisite material power to retaliate or seek revenge. Where the power to retribute does not accrue, forgoing retribution no longer remains the central concern for forgiveness. Again forgoing retributive right does not relate to forgiveness because in certain unfortunate cases retribution is not in question, as for instance forgiving the dead or the sick or the disabled.

In forgiving, the victim overlooks the harm inflicted. More than overlooking the injury inflicted, forgiveness has to be something more positive. Moral injuries have to be cared about in order to make the offender realize that he has mentally bruised the victim. On this basis, there have been counter-arguments against the psychological view of forgiveness. Those who provide counter-arguments harbour the view that the psychological school of forgiveness do not provide an appropriate response to 'culpable evils'. Forgiveness cannot and should not be the best choice under all circumstances.

Some undertake acts of forgiveness for 'instrumental reasons' – mainly for their own sake, preferably mental well-being. Forgoing retribution for moral injuries inflicted is to let go the culpable evil without proper confrontation. Lack of appropriate strategy to deal with such injurious acts leaves room for 'problematic indifference' to moral harm. Shedding of retributive attitudes towards the offender might help in carrying forward the relationship between the offender and the



victim, but that might not always lead to 'desired' relationship. Though forgiveness is a virtue, a much desired virtue, its unwise use prevents us from grasping its merit in the right context of concerns about blame and guilt. As virtue, forgiveness performs the useful job of promoting rules of morality but its indiscriminate use can de generate it into human weakness producing counter-effective consequences. Acts of forgiveness must be justified by outcome of good consequences, as for instance, love towards human beings.

Though there are good reasons for overcoming anger and resentment but in our zeal to forgive one should be careful enough to distinguish between the just and unjust. Forgiving should not be confused with overlooking, albeit, being emotionally overlooked. Forgiveness is not simply negative or indifference but something more; it is the road to reach out to the offender. Acts of forgiveness should be undertaken for good reasons as it is the justified way of avoiding bad consequences.

#### IV. FORGIVENESS AND RETRIBUTION

Though Murphy (1988) sympathises with Butler in designating forgiveness as 'forswearing revenge' but again he cannot override "the Nietzschean thought that forgiveness may in certain circumstances, be harmful and wrong, a vice rather than a virtue." If forgiveness is forbearance of revenge then in other words, it denotes refusal to inflict punishment on the offender. Therefore, it is quite possible to refrain from inflicting punishment on the offender without forgiving in the right spirit. Therefore what emerges is that one can be non-forgiving without seeking revenge. However, writers have distinguished between punishment and revenge and endorsed the claim that one can punish without being revengeful. For instance in a relationship of a mother and child, the mother can punish the child for any wrongdoing without being revengeful. The responsibility of a 'mother' invokes her to punish her child to amend his wrongdoing. Without being revengeful the mother through her reprimands or disapproval makes moral demands for amending her child's moral lapses. Thus punishment is consistent with forgiveness because the mother makes amends without seeking to satisfy her vindictive passions. Therefore, punishment and revenge are both conceptually and practically miles apart. Thus, one can be forgiving while inflicting punishment but forswearing revenge is a necessary condition for forgiveness. Though forgiveness is the final step towards restoration but forgiving without holding the offender accountable for his wrong acts is to concede too much too soon. In such cases one tends to fail to address the moral injury adequately. Bennett (2002) holds that some sort of retribution is necessary before endowing the offender with forgiveness to make him comply with shared communitarian norms. However, to forgive without retribution would be to commit wrong towards oneself or the victim in the sense that in overlooking the injury inflicted one fails to do justice to the moral values endowed in oneself and neglect rules of morality.

#### V. FORGIVENESS AND OTHER VIRTUES

The twin actions of forgiving and asking for forgiveness are the most perennial of mortal experiences. The most formidable questions that arise are, 'Why should I forgive a person who has harmed me? Is it possible to forgive altogether or under what circumstances is forgiveness possible ... and so on. Following the '*Traditional Scriptures*', religious men would emphasise that '*The Lord's*' love for humans is infinite bereft of any conditions and He is always merciful to forgive them. Non-forgiveness is a sin because that would be a violation of God's love. To be indifferent to one's fellow-being is to violate God's love, since 'The Almighty' has tied all in the bond of love and care. Love and compassion should not be superseded by emotions of anger and resentment. Therefore, it is only natural that one will forgive his adversary when asked for forgiveness. As per religious dictum forgiveness is a unique act of charity and benevolence. Therefore, virtues of love, care, benevolence and charity are intimately connected with forgiveness. However, critics comment that forgiveness deprives the victim his share of justice. As such, forgiveness has been equated as incompatible with justice.

Bishop Butler thinks it is the duty of human to forgive his fellow-being. In the words of Butler, since 'men are not only moral agents ... but also 'sensible creature-capable of happiness or misery', in instances of wrong-doings the feeling of compassion must prompt one to fulfil one's duty to forgive the wrong-doer. This promptness is propelled by a relationship of concern that exists between men. One would never ask for forgiveness from those about whom one does not care. When a relationship of some kind is involved the offender would try to make amends by asking for forgiveness. The other explanations for rendering forgiveness are no different from that of traditional theist. While Garrard and Naughton prescribe love as vital for forgiveness Bennett (2003) speak of sympathy and Biggar (2008) compassion as necessary for forgiveness.

Whenever one practises and receives forgiveness for small acts in the home or moral community or in a much bigger context as between nations, one relieves oneself from the shackles of the past. The virtue of forgiveness bears the potential to repair and heal the world. For most psychologists, forgiveness is an emotional blueprint for caring about oneself. Embodying human excellence, forgiveness helps one to swim through turbulence of anger and retributive feeling in which the victim often gets stuck. It is a way forward not only to make the self 'feel' better but to make the self 'be' better (C. Fred Alford 2013, p. 4). Forgiveness has the potential to make the 'difference'; it helps the victim lead a stable and meaningful existence restoring back one's self-confidence without clinging to one's injury. Forgiveness offers the victim an outlet to move away from loneliness and isolation of one's wounded self.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

Opinion on a much broader spectrum believes that hatred, anger and resentment and so on are a form of cancer having

the potential to slowly devour its victim. The remedy from such unwanted agony and mental pain is forgiveness; yet we often tend to seek relief in revenge. Forgiveness as divine gift entails the necessary elements of forswearing or overcoming hostile emotions towards one's offender, an attitudinal change of the victim towards the wrong doer; the victim moving beyond merely giving up negative attitudes and emotions and a restoration of mutual trust between the parties. Forgiveness is all about restoring the normative relation between the victim and the offender and the larger social order. Thus the end of forgiveness is restoration. Though in Theology forgiveness is viewed as a moral commandment, in actual world it is a way to release oneself from the pain that one carries, caused by wrongful acts of others. It is a way to move forward necessary for redemption from certain 'unfortunate acts' or 'from one's past'.

Forgiveness is an art; a way of overcoming powerful emotions of anger, sorrow and pain. The process involves going through stages of grief and indignation but ultimately it releases the victim from the shackles of pain and anxiety. While on the other hand, the act of being forgiven instils within the offender a sense of repentance and goodwill towards the victim. Forgiveness as a process has its seed in generosity. Forgiving someone for their wrong acts helps in overcoming one's own flaws. Forgiving one's offender is a highly admirable trait of one's nature; an inalienable part of a decent character. In forgiving the wrong-doer, the victim not only displays a rare virtue but also rectifies one's own flaws. In forgiving one displays the maturity of toleration. When someone bruises me with their harsh and unkind words, I display the virtue of absorption without paying the offender in his same coin. I become tolerant of others' weaknesses.

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