

FORGIVENESS: ITS POWER AND COMPLEXITIES

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Abstrak

Secara tradisional memaafkan telah dihidupi oleh masyarakat Indonesia. Akhir-akhir ini disadari bahwa memaafkan merupakan sarana terapi yang ampuh untuk menyembuhkan luka-luka batin akibat kekerasan dan perlakuan buruk di masa lampau. Memaafkan merupakan jalan ke arah rekonsiliasi dan perdamaian. Maka terapi dan studi memaafkan berkembang pesat di seluruh penjuru dunia. Namun, sesungguhnya memaafkan bukan sekedar sarana terapi melainkan ungkapan kemurahan hati dari si pemberi maaf, bukan demi kepentingan si pemberi maaf itu. Memaafkan merupakan kekuatan yang menyembuhkan dan menghidupkan. Memaafkan juga berhubungan dengan keadilan dan rekonsiliasi. Dengan demikian, pengertian dan makna memaafkan sangat kompleks.

Keywords

forgiveness, power, complexity, justice, reconciliation

1. Introduction

The spirit of forgiving which is traditionally lived by Indonesian people should be encouraged. First, it is in the line of a global spirit to develop forgiveness studies and therapy for coping the violence and conflict which recently emerge in the corners of the world.¹ Second, in the last decade conflicts and violence spread in many places coloring the end of Soeharto's military government (1966-1998).² The tragedy of May 1998 besmeared Indonesia in the international arena with anti-chinese riots in some big cities, even with issues of women rapes. Then, in the name of freedom and reformation emerged many political parties and social organizations wanting to manifest freedom of speech and association which had been strongly limited for 32 years by the totalitarian government of Soeharto. In this situation emerged some radical groups which then provoking violence such as: Bali bombings (12 October 2002 & 1 October 2005), hotel bombings (2009), tribal wars in Moluccas (1999-2001) and Poso (1998-2001/on going). In recent days, group conflict occurs in Moluccas, Papua, and some places. With the weak government which is full of corruption and injustice, I am worried about Indonesia becoming the arena of violence where people tend to do violence triggered only by the very simple cause. With this background, I propose the spirit of forgiveness to be understood and raised up more. With this position also, I will explore the power and complexities of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is powerful, in the sense that it can recover mental wounds of those experiencing violence and bad treatment in the past. After forgiving the wrongdoer, someone can build his or her life without burden of the past. The forgiven one can do the same without the burden of guilty he or she did. In this sense forgiveness is very helpfull for individual life.

On other side, forgiveness also gives benefit to the communal life, in the family and society at large. Living together in a community, even in the very small form of family, can not grow without willingness to forgive among its members. There is no future without forgiveness. Michael Henderson stated that after the distruction of the world by the world wars could not be imagined the growth of human civiliation if there was no forgiveness between countries involved in the wars.³

But merely focusing on healing the victims, forgiveness seems facilitating the wrongdoing to be done and punishment for the wrongdoers is not encouraged to be applied. Then, justice is ignored. In this sense, forgiveness loses its original meaning which indeed roots on the spirit of generosity which is strongly promoted by religions which were actually the womb of forgiveness itself. The debate, then, reaches to the possibility of forgiveness to be included as virtue. Eventhough many prooves manifest it, the debates do not stop in questioning the social and political forgiveness, and its controversial role in building social reconciliation. In this controversial discourse, the title of this article is articulated. Forgiveness is powerfull but it is complicated.

The article proceeds as follows. It explains first the concept of forgiveness, pardon, excuse, and resentment. After that, it describes the sorts of forgiveness with their characters, the types of forgiveness with its consequence of the existence of third party forgiveness. It, then, subsuquently explores the related aspects of forgiveness, those are social and political forgiveness, justice, and reconciliation.

2. Forgiveness, Pardon, Excuse, and Resentment

According to *The Oxford Illustrated Dictionary*, to forgive means 'remit, let off (debt), give up resentment against, pardon (offender)'.⁴ *Webster New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* defines forgiveness as (1) 'to give up resentment against or the desire to punish; to stop being angry with; to pardon; (2) to give up all claim to punish or exact penalty for (offender); overlook; (3) to cancel or remit as a debt, fine or penalty'.⁵ The definitions are far from clarity. In what sense, giving up resentment, revenge, and anger can be considered as forgiving? Why pardoning is different from forgiving? Does it mean that someone forgiven need not to be punished? In what sense that "let off debt" is forgiveness? The following passages will make the definitions clearer.

Forgiveness is a response consciously done by the victim of a wrongdoing which is also consciously committed by the wrongdoer in the form of forswearing

resentment and revenge.⁶ Forgiving is not forgetting all bad experience in the past. It is not also ceasing from resentment and revenge by forgetting them all. Surely, amnesia and other efforts to forget the past do not fall into the definition. What is claimed by forgiveness is the intention of the victim to forgive the offender in his or her conscious situation of the past injuries. In this sense, forgiveness is moral response upon the bad event in the past. To be clearer, I will explain the difference between forgiving and the similar terms that are pardoning and excusing.

Pardoning and excusing are applied to action which hurts the victim, but it is involuntarily done by the doer. In some case, it is done in a pinch, and even for the benefit of the victim as well. An example which is famous in ethics is *the crew men throw cargoes from the sinking boat for the purpose of saving the passengers*. This action inflicts some precious things loss and harms the passengers. But the passengers have to pardon the crew men for what they did, because it was done by force and for the betterment of the passengers. Forgiveness is not appropriate for this action.

Referring to Aristotle, Griswold mentions that ignorance because of natural limitation makes the involuntariness of action, which then could be pardoned or excused.⁷ Besides, the wrongs following natural desire which is considered common is pardonable. Also, the incontinent action is involuntary because of ignorance or external force, which then should be pardoned or excused, not forgiven. In this regard, the relativity of the concept of voluntary action makes difficult to apply forgiveness or pardon and excuse. There is tendency of human to create a narrative of his or her action for the purpose of getting pardon or excuse from those inflicted by his or her action. To say *excuse me* or *pardon me* is easier than *forgive me*.

In short, forgiveness is moral response which involves the responsibility of the victim and the offender. The offender is responsible to the wrongdoing that he or she did, and the victim to the acceptance of the injuries that befell on him or her in order not holding resentment and revenge. If there is no injury upon the victim, it should be applied excuse. If there is harm upon the victim but there is no voluntariness in the side of the doer, it should be applied pardon. What is special in forgiveness is the change of moral relation between the victim and the perpetrator because there is no more resentment and revenge.

Griswold, following Joseph Butler, considers resentment as settled or deliberate anger.⁸ While sudden anger is spontaneous, temporary, and provoked by physical pain such as pinched, settled or deliberate anger is more long lasting and associated to moral judgment. Injuries and injustice stimulate our settled or deliberate anger, not the sudden one. While the sudden anger just push us to stop the physical pain, the settled or deliberate one “seeks to defend us by attempting to punish of injury and not simply to stop injurer from inflicting the injury”. It belongs to resentment which seeks to revenge the injurer. “Resentment, then, is moral sentiment in the sense that it is aroused by the perception of what we take to be unwarranted injury.

The sentiment assumes that the wrongdoer is responsible for the deed."⁹ Its object is not only the action, but also its actor. In this respect, forgiveness means forswearing resentment and revenge.

Forswearing resentment has no relation with legal process upon the wrongdoer. Punishment and retribution, therefore, are still claimed to the offender because of his or her offence, although the victim has undertaken forgiveness. It is the bases for discussing retributive justice in the passage below. Forgiveness comes from the generosity of the victim to the offender because he or she recognizes the offender as the human person. It does not mean stopping altogether negative feelings of the victim to the perpetrator. According to Butler, to moderate the negative feelings is enough in forgiveness, since totally leaving out negative feelings and resentment needs long process.¹⁰

At this point, the emphasis of Arendt on the newness and personal character of forgiveness is compatible. Arendt mentioned that forgiveness is a new action to respond an offence. Compared to revenge which is only the repetition of transgression, forgiveness creates something new and unpredictable. It comes from the freedom of the victim to respond the past experience by forgiving *what* has been done for the sake of *who* did it as a person. It emphasizes the moral character of forgiveness as human action.¹¹

3. Unconditional and Conditional Forgiveness

"Only love has power to forgive."¹² Love bridges two loving sides, the victim and offender, to meet in the event of forgiveness. There is no more in-between the two lovers. "The only in-between which can insert itself between two lovers is child, love's own product."¹³ It implies that forgiveness as the meeting point of the two lovers will produce "new born baby" in the form of transformed relation between the victim and the offender. Because of the power of love, forgiveness is unconditional. Forgiveness is manifestation of generosity of the victim which changes the naturally justified response in the form of revenge to be goodwill and love. By doing this, the victim could clean up his or her mental burden and then recover his or her health.

Indeed, perfect forgiveness involves two parties that are the victim and the perpetrator.¹⁴ The perpetrator must do remorse for his past deed and commit of not doing it again. On other way, the victim should reframe, that is "changing his or her heart and see the perpetrator from a new light," or as mentioned by Hampton "a change in the injured person's belief that the wrongdoer is simply 'bad person' with whom one ought not to consort."¹⁵ The two parties involvement will enable the ideal forgiveness taking place. Then, the ideal change of moral relation between the injured party and the injurer occurs. This situation is in the line with Hannah Arendt's opinion regarding the link between forgiveness and promise. Forgiveness takes place when promise is strongly kept. Perfect forgiveness is conditioned by

remorse, contrition, and promise of not repeating the wrongdoing. In this regard, it is conditional.

From the description above, it should be emphasized that forgiveness is unconditional and conditional as well. It is unconditional because it flows from love and generosity of the victim. It is conditional because even though it is beneficial for the victim to release his or her traumatic experience, it still postulates contrition and remorse to be perfectly undertaken. In this sense, forgiveness therapy is criticized for it emphasizes on healing the victim by ignoring requirements from the side of the wrongdoer.¹⁶

In accordance to the description above, Roy F. Baumeister *et al* distinguish two levels of forgiveness.¹⁷ The first level is the intrapersonal one, when forgiveness does not require the involvement of the perpetrator. The motive of forgiveness here is only for the sake of the mental health recovery of the victim. It does not deal with the perpetrator at all. Roy F. Baumeister *et al* mention it as the individual or intra-psychic level, which occurs inside the mind and the heart of the victim. It motivates the individual to consciously effort for the mental betterment of himself or herself, even to the extent of transforming actions. The second level is the interpersonal forgiveness, when forgiveness is not only the business of the victim but also the perpetrator. The perpetrator is involved in the process of forgiveness by acknowledging or confessing the wrongness done upon the victim in the past. In this occasion, the perpetrator expresses his or her repentance and contrition. In the interpersonal level, forgiveness encourages the both parties - the victim and the perpetrator - to renew their relationship. Therefore, the effect of forgiveness is the possibility of reconciliation between the victim and the perpetrator. Forgiveness has power to repair the brokenness between the victim and the perpetrator. In this regard, the motive of forgiveness is not only for the sake of the victim himself or herself, but also for the perpetrator.

4. Four Types of Forgiveness

Based on the combination between the presence or the absence of interpersonal act and intrapsychic state, can be designed four types of forgiveness. (1) When there is interpersonal act but there is no intra-psychic state, the result is hollow forgiveness. (2) When there is intra-psychic state but there is no interpersonal act, the result is silent forgiveness. (3) When there is no intra-psychic state and interpersonal act, the result is no forgiveness. (4) The ideal one is the total forgiveness which occurs when there are intra-psychic state and interpersonal act. It effects to the building of new relation between the forgiver and the forgiven or between the victim and the perpetrator. When it occurs, there will be reparation of the human dignity of the victim and the perpetrator.

There was misperception that only the victim who needs self reparation because of human rights abuses which grasped away his or her-selfness as human being.

Forgiveness is considered only for the interest of the victim. Indeed, the perpetrator needs also self reparation because he or she has lost his or her dignity as human being because of violence and abuses done in the past. Therefore, the perpetrator needs forgiveness as well for repairing his or her human dignity. That is why he or she should do repentance, and then will be reconciled with the victim after getting forgiveness from the victim.

Based on the description above the complexity will come with regard to the third party forgiveness which is actually not problematic in the therapeutic forgiveness but it is morally questionable. Is there any possibility that someone undertakes forgiveness on behalf of the victim? For instance, someone's relative was killed by an aggressor. Then, the aggressor repents for his or her wrong deed. May the relative of the victim offer forgiveness to the aggressor? In this case, the relative of the victim can be considered also as the victim, because he or she feels injury of his or her relative's death. Then, forgiveness is possible to be applied. But, in other case when the third party is not truly the victim, he or she can not automatically forgive the perpetrator in the name of the victim. In principle, the authority to forgive belongs to the victim because forgiveness involves forswearing resentment and comes to the common-sense moral individualism. Individual is responsible for contrition and forgiveness.¹⁸ Another problem is related to forgiving the dead. If the aggressor has died, is it possible for the victim to forgive him or her? It can be understood that the willingness to remove the mental burden and urge of forswearing resentment encourage the injured party to "work out a simulacrum of forgiveness by gathering data that help explain why the offender acted so badly up to cease to see the offender as a monster." But, in this situation the injured party is still "fated to live with a limited measure of moral satisfaction, of anger forsworn, and reconciliation."¹⁹ In short, forgiving the death is morally questionable.

Another case is forgiving the unrepentant. For the injured party, forgiving the unrepentant can be letting go resentment. It functions in the context of mental therapy. But in the context of perfectly interpersonal forgiveness it is not incompatible. Besides, it is susceptible to be interpreted as as condoning and colluding the wrongdoing. Whatever reasons to forgive the unrepentant, in accordance to Griswold's position, it has not yet crossed the threshold of interpersonal forgiveness.²⁰

5. Social and Political Forgiveness

The potentiality of forgiveness to build reconciliation extended the area of forgiveness to the social scope, not limited only in the individual one. In this regard, Robert Schreiter mentioned the individual and social dimension of forgiveness.²¹ In the individual dimension, forgiveness is the business of the victim as an individual, where he or she is free to grant forgiveness or not. He or she is responsible to the forgiveness which he or she undertakes in terms of motives as personal healing

or reconciliation with the perpetrator. In the social dimension, the victim belongs to one group of the society where he or she is tied to the consensus of the group. He or she cannot stand as an individual who unilaterally forgives or not forgives the perpetrator. Undertaking forgiveness or not, without consensus of the group, is considered as betrayal. It could happen that an individual would like to reconcile with the perpetrator, but his or her group refused it for the honor of the group. In this sense individual choice of forgiveness is very much influenced by the group. If there was never consensus in a group regarding forgiveness, then, the resentment occurred in long periods of time; even it could be across generations. On other way, it could happen that the victim individually was unwilling to forgive the perpetrator because hard suffering he or she bore in the past, but for the benefit of his or her group he or she felt forced to give forgiveness to the perpetrator. It seems problematic to apply interpersonal forgiveness in the social and political area.

Joshua LaMorey criticizes the inconsistency of Hannah Arendt in considering forgiveness as public and private in character.²² On the one hand, Arendt put forgiveness in the context of plurality of human action so that forgiveness is social and political in character. But on the other hand, she distanced the political character of forgiveness when she mentioned “the power of love” as the only energy which generates forgiveness. Even, she preferred to use “respect” as the political facility rather than forgiveness.²³ LaMorey, then, rejects the possibility of social or political forgiveness. He rather proposes the public display of forgiveness as “performative dispensation” which entails judgment and remembrance: “judgment insofar as the political body must reason together and agree to act and remembrance insofar as it must remind itself by creating one account offered by members of the body.”²⁴

Donald W. Shriver, Jr. and Michael Henderson are more affirmative in considering social and political forgiveness based on many examples of countries which undertook political forgiveness in overcoming conflicts not only inside the countries, even between countries involved in the cruelty of the second world war. Henderson gives examples from countries such as Australia, South Africa, Ireland, America etc. Shriver emphasizes the role of political leader in influencing his or her constituents to his or her stance on political forgiveness by referring to America as an example which realized reconciliation in the national level with Germany, Japan, and African Americans. “A political leader who speaks publicly of how his mind has changed is beginning to teach his constituents to change too.”²⁵

P.E. Digeser, beside acknowledging some critics on political forgiveness, raises his theories about it. Political forgiveness, because it involves group of people, should be distanced from its emotional character of forswearing resentments. As mentioned above, forswearing resentments is not clearly definite. Therefore, Digeser proposes his theory of social forgiveness as illocutionary act. It means that “the locutions associated with forgiveness must have certain force to them in order to be

successful”.²⁶ The locution should be expressed clearly and in formal form in order to be perfectly understood. Then, it will take effect in releasing debt or transgressor. In this sense, political forgiveness results to promote justice and to condition to the state of reconciliation. The last two topics will be discussed below.

5. Forgiveness and Justice

Justice has been defined as “rendering to each man or human community their own and due by right”.²⁷ From this definition, it seems that forgiveness contradicts to justice, because in forgiveness - instead of asking or receiving one’s right - someone surrenders his or her right to get even. In forgiveness, someone does not take his or her right to retaliate those who offended him or her. But he or she wants to restore himself or herself, and his or her relationship with the offender. It is consciously done because, as mentioned above, there will be no even between the suffering of the victim and the retaliation he or she does. Retaliation and revenge do nothing for recovering his or her loss of suffering. Therefore, the forgiver has other orientation than to be equal with the offender. He or she orients to the restoration, not retaliation or revenge. In this sense, he or she refers to the restorative justice in which forgiveness, then, is included.

There are some distinct things in the concept of restorative justice. In the procedure of sentencing, there are three different things.²⁸ First, the offenders are required to take part in a meeting with the victim, and those who are affected by the crime, such as the members of the victim’s family, and the third side as mediator. In this meeting, the offender is required respectfully listening while the victim and the members of the victim’s family describe how they are affected by the crime. If it is needed, the offender is required to answer the questions from the victim. It is clear that in the concept of restorative justice it is facilitated the face to face meeting between the offender and the victim. Second, in the restorative sentence the offender is not obliged to “pay for” his or her crime by undergoing pain as the punishment, but he or she is expected to make amends for his or her crime through positive actions for the benefits of the victim. Of course, he or she is expected to apologize for his or her crime. Third, the decisions regarding the way the offender making amends are determined together in the conference between the offender, the victim, the victim’s family, and the mediator. It means that there is dialogue to reach agreement between all parties. In this sense, occurs a restoration of the relationship between all parties.

Theory of restorative justice was based on the different understanding of crime. In the conventional understanding, crime is understood as breaking the divine order of the universe, which then is considered as the law breaking. Therefore, crime cannot be restored by apologizing the individuals or groups affected by the crime. The crime should be redeemed by a purgatorial suffering of the doer. It is called

punishment. According to the proponents of restorative justice this understanding of crime is not relevant anymore in the secularized world. This understanding does not involve the victim at all. According to them, crime is action which affects an injury to the victim and his or her family.²⁹ The injury must be restored in order to recover the victim's trauma, to reconcile the victim and the offender, and to rebuild the peace of the community. The concern of restorative justice is the restoration and reconciliation of the victim, the offender, and the community. To reach these goals, restorative justice takes the way of involving all parties of the victim, the offender, and the community in the process of reconciliation. The involvement the government in the legal process is not enough to recover the suffering of the victim. Restorative justice, then, reduces the domination of the government.

Restorative justice is also different from retributive or punitive justice which considers the crime as lawbreaking that should be punished in order to make it back in accordance to the law. The wrongdoer must pay retribution for the wrongness that he or she has done. It seems that the orientation of retributive or punitive justice is more to the past rather than the future, to the wrongness that has occurred rather than the restoration of the defect, to the offender rather than the victim. From the facts that there is no retribution that can be equal to suffering of the victim and repair the damages affected by the crime, retributive or punitive justice is not effective. Restorative justice seems to be more available.

As mentioned above, forgiveness does not mean abolishing punishment upon the offender, because the both forgiveness and punishment are in the different fields. Forgiveness as forswearing resentment and revenge is moral stance, whereas punishment is a claim of administrative justice.³⁰ Therefore, punishment can be proceeded even if forgiveness has been undertaken. Punishment and forgiveness do not depend on each other. The famous case as an example is when Pope John Paul II forgave the jailed Mehmet Ali Agca who had shot him to die. The punishment upon the prisoner was not annulled although the pope had forgiven him. The legal process is a part of administrative justice which stays separately from the act of forgiveness.

In this case, Szablowinski's way out is more significant, that retributive or punitive justice and restorative justice are complement to each other.³¹ To punish and to put in jail the gross human rights abusers and the masterminds of the policy of disappearances, murder, rape and torture is the beginning of healing the wounds of the victim. Then, the truth of the violence done by the perpetrators must be publicly disclosed. The disclosure of the truth and the recognition of the victim's suffering will recover the mental health of the victim. Of course, supporting financial compensation will completely repair the life of the victim which was damaged by the conflicts in the past. The sequences show that punitive justice and restorative justice have a related role in the process of social reconciliation. In the due process,

restorative justice encourages forgiveness, because even the heaviest punishment never returns the death victim and recovers the wounds. Besides, the offender must be accepted back by the community, because it is impossible that the offender is alienated from his or her community forever. The final path to reconciliation and peace is the willingness of the victim to undertake forgiveness to the offender. In this sense forgiveness is the fullness of justice. "There is no justice without forgiveness," said Pope John Paul II.³²

6. Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Lewis B. Smedes reminds his readers that "forgiving is not about reunion. Forgiving does not obligate us to go back; reunion may be such a threat that it prevents a wounded person from forgiving".³³ The similar idea was raised up by Worthington. Forgiveness is moral stance in the heart and mind of individu or group of people, whereas reconciliation is relational which happens in the relationship between someone or group with other. Reconciliation is restoration of relationship between the victim and the perpetrator because of trust which is successfully rebuilt between the both. "Forgiveness and reconciliation are obviously related, but separated processes".³⁴ Then, he conceptualized a matrix of possibilities of combination between the presence and the absence of forgiveness and reconciliation. The possibilities are: (1) there is neither forgiveness nor reconciliation, (2) there is forgiveness without reconciliation, (3) there is reconciliation without forgiveness, (4) there are reconciliation and forgiveness. The first possibility – no forgiveness and no reconciliation - occurs, when people still do retaliation or revenge, seek social justice, seek mediation, and insincerely say "willing to forgive" but do not forgive privately. The second possibility – forgiveness without reconciliation – occurs when people cannot reconcile for instance because the forgiven side has died, or the offender does not recognize his or her wrong done even he or she still endangers the victim because of his or her desire to repeat his or her wrong done. The third possibility – reconciliation without forgiveness – occurs when there might be force to forgive or strong willingness to hastily stop the violence. But it is questionable whether in this situation reconciliation exists. The fourth possibility is the ideal one, when reconciliation and forgiveness occur.

Social and political reconciliation are more questionable with the fact of conflicts which still took places even after the reconciliation processes were finished to be done. Also was debated the role of social and political forgiveness in committing social reconciliation.³⁵ Therefore, it is more suggested truth telling and taking retribution from the wrongdoer to attain justice. Reconciliation considered as "coming back" is threatening to be done.

In this regard, I consider acceptable Digeser's idea to distingusih between reconciliation as a process and a state.³⁶ Forgiveness takes important place in

the process of reconciliation since it is understood as illocutionary act. In this understanding, the victim cleans a moral debts with his transgressor, which then open the possibility of restoring the relation between the both. Here, forgiveness significantly functions in the process of reconciliation. Even, according to Digeser, not only both parties potentially renew their relation, but those beyond the parties potentially reopen their relationship which were tiedly built before. Besides, the illocutionary act of forgiveness guarantees that the past has been overcome and the future certainly promised. In other words, a stable state of reconciliation is created.

In this respect, should be noted the reminder of Robert J. Schreiter elaborating “what reconciliation is not”. He mentions that reconciliation: (1) is not a hasty peace, (2) is not an alternative of liberation, and (3) is not a managed process.³⁷ Reconciliation can not be achieved by forgetting and eliminating the facts of violence and suffering experienced by the victim. This kind of reconciliation was usually initiated by the perpetrator or mediator with the excuse of fastly getting peace, which in fact would offer more benefit to the perpetrator. It clearly trivializes and ignores the human dignity of the victim. On other way, the source of conflicts should be identified, examined, and disclosure, so that all historical facts would be raised up and discovered. In this sense, liberation of those involved in conflicts occurs. It means that liberation is not alternative of reconciliation, but the prerequisite of it. There is no reconciliation without liberation. Reconciliation is not also a managed process. In that process, there is bargaining and negotiation between the victim and the perpetrator in order to get meeting point between the both parties. According to Schreiter this mediation process cannot be considered as reconciliation, because it does not clearly describe the unconditional character of reconciliation. Even, Schreiter suspected that reconciliation initiated by the perpetrator and the outsider is motivated by a desire to ignore the suffering of the victim for the benefit of the perpetrator. It is not true reconciliation. “It covers up the enormity of what has been done and tries to foreshorten the process.” A genuine reconciliation should be called by those who suffered most in the conflict. It is repentance which is initiated by the perpetrator. “But reconciliation and forgiveness must come from the side of those who have suffered violence.” And the victims call for reconciliation merely because of God who supports them. The emphasis of Schreiter indicates that although there is closed relation between forgiveness and reconciliation but the long process cannot be shortcut.

To be clearer, reconciliation can be distinguished in two sorts. The first is the individual reconciliation which happens when the human dignity of the individual victim is respected. The individual victim regains his or her identity as human person. It happens when “the narrative of lie” is reduced and replaced by the disclosure of the truth of the victim’s self. The second is the social reconciliation which occurs when “the dignity and well-being of the community or society, along with its good functioning and survival receives special attention”.³⁸ The social relationship

of trust and truth are restored and reestablished, basic human rights such as political freedom, equality in terms of race are implemented, and social justice restored. Of course, it implies that the dignity and honor of the members of the community or society are respected.

Social reconciliation cannot be relegated to the individual sphere because the damage affected by the violence in the past does not occur only for the individuals in the community but for the social life of the community itself. Not only individuals were traumatized but the community, even, the nation. Therefore, the reparation should enter into the social relationship in the community and nation. The “narrative lie” of the community and the nation should be reduced and replaced by the historical truth of the community and the nation. Bronkhorst, as cited by Mark Hay, proposes three approaches of the social reconciliation. That is official comprehensive report, individual disclosure, and national reconciliation. Even though, Bronkhorst reminds us that the model of social reconciliation is contextual, which should be applied in different ways in one country and another.

7. Conclusion

Forgiveness is powerful and complex which is not commonly understood. What was lasting in the tradition, including in the Indonesian one, is not comprehensive understanding about forgiveness. The tradition is automatically handed over from generation to generation without work of conscientization regarding its meaning. Therefore, the tradition is not effective, but tends to die. Also, it should be criticized that the tradition of mutual forgiving in the *Eidul Fitr* celebration tends to emphasize on the apology rather than forgiveness. It is doubtful that while shaking hand and saying “*mohon maaf lahir batin*” or in Arabic “*minal aidin wal faizin*” (I apologize for my internal and outward fault) the two parties truly forgive each other. Perhaps, they are asking apology rather than forgiving. The same thing happens in the Christian tradition. Although Christian teaching pays much attention on the obligation to forgive the neighbour, but in fact most Christians heed more on asking apology in the rite of reconciliation sacrament rather than forgiving the neighbour in their daily life. Christian *catechesis* focuses more on the reconciliation sacrament than forgiving the neighbour. Therefore, understanding comprehensively forgiveness and its complexities is very significant in raising up more the spirit of forgiveness. This article is aimed to reach that goal.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Everett I. Worthington Jr., *Forgiveness and Reconciliation. Theory and Application*, 1-2. Worthington mentioned about the emergence of more 35 studies on forgiveness from 1984 up to 1999 because of violence spreading all over the world. Recent days studies on forgiveness and forgiveness therapy fastly grow.
- ² Description of the violence and conflicts in Indonesia can be read in Charles A. Coppel, *Violent Conflicts in Indonesia. Analysis, representation, resolution*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).
- ³ Michael Henderson, *Forgiveness: Breaking the Chain of Hate*, 41-56.
- ⁴ *The Oxford Illustrated Dictionary*, 326.
- ⁵ *Webster New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*.
- ⁶ Charles L. Griswold, *Forgiveness. A Philosophical Exploration*, 9-17.
- ⁷ Charles L. Griswold, *Forgiveness. A Philosophical Exploration*, 5
- ⁸ Charles L. Griswold, *Forgiveness. A Philosophical Exploration*, 24-25.
- ⁹ Charles L. Griswold, *Forgiveness. A Philosophical Exploration*, 26.
- ¹⁰ Charles L. Griswold, *Forgiveness. A Philosophical Exploration*, 34.
- ¹¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 216.
- ¹² Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* 217.
- ¹³ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 217.
- ¹⁴ Griswold calls it as paradigmatic interpersonal forgiveness, *Forgiveness. A philosophical Exploration*, p. 38 etc.
- ¹⁵ Griswold, *Forgiveness*, 54.
- ¹⁶ Eve Gerard, *Forgiveness*, 66-70.
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