

Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Statement of Vision and Purpose

The vision of the Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation is that the activity of forgiving is vital if healing and reconciliation is to take place, as part of our collective efforts to seek restorative justice and sustainable peace.

Fostering and practicing forgiveness has the power to transform deep-seated responses to memories and legacies of injustice, conflict and war. It can liberate people from being imprisoned in their pasts and long ingrained mental and emotional conditions created by such legacies. Faith and spiritual traditions have long guided us and inspired us to awaken the best of our human potential, to practice love, forgiveness and reconciliation, and to reshape our destinies.

Forgiveness is understood as an activity arising directly out of a compassionate consciousness. Compassion is an indispensable spiritual disposition for every faith, religion, *dharam*, or *deen*, as well as for our everyday human relations. Forgiveness stems from our ability to see a larger context to our individual and collective existence, and from our impulse to seek and forge genuine and sincere bonds with one another as members of one human family. It is fostered by our experience of unconditional love and an inner calling to live responsibly.

To see forgiveness as a most profound expression and manifestation of our spiritual and human nature, and a catalyst for inward and outward change, will be at the heart of the Charter. To love one's neighbour as oneself means that the efforts to seek forgiveness for oneself are related to endeavours to forgive and receive forgiveness from the other. Our human journey of forgiveness and reconciliation can only be navigated freely and voluntarily. Sharing forgiveness can therefore only be inspired, not demanded.

Tangible examples of forgiveness will be identified to highlight and inspire practical and effective actions, leading to reconciliation, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Forgiveness and reconciliation are an indispensable part of our journey to peace, in our interdependent world and our quest for restorative justice.

Throughout history, acts of forgiveness have helped to de-escalate national and international conflicts, and to restore and sustain harmonious relationships in the daily lives of families, communities and societies. Insights from the lives of outstanding individuals and inspiring grassroots movements will be combined with learning from a shared global heritage of sacred teachings in order to take forward the Charter's work.

By offering paradigms of forgiveness, the Charter will direct commitment and activities towards a growing practice of forgiveness and reconciliation, both in public processes and in private settings, in order to foster healing and peace in a wounded and fractured world.

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