

# **International Seminar on Healing, Forgiveness and Reconciliation**

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Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace,  
199 Preston Road, Brighton, BN1 6SA UK

## **Notes on discussion**

### **A. Background**

The concepts: ‘healing’, ‘forgiveness’ and ‘reconciliation’ are often used (in an intertwined way) in discussions about post-conflict peace-building. The distinctions between them are, however, far from clear in terms of their nuances, how they relate to each-other, and how such relationships are played out in the dynamic of peace-building interventions. It is therefore necessary to develop an appropriate understanding of these terms, which can help shape our work in fostering harmonious relationships, and in analysing the task of rebuilding communities in divided societies.

Furthermore, for peace-building processes aimed at healing, forgiveness and reconciliation, there may be a whole range of contiguous analytical factors to identify and understand. For instance, in looking at the nature and roots of conflict, it is necessary to acquire a workable comprehension of the local cultural norms, power relationships, historical narratives and memories, politics, social policy, and religious and spiritual practices. All these invariably affect the individual and large group identities, which could further determine people’s perceptions of and attitudes towards the *other*, and the ways they relate to each other in post-conflict societies.

Additionally, the dimensions of moral and ethical principles must also be considered in framing any emergent culture of peace, and in working towards underpinning relation-formation within the society, including the perennial tension between justice, forgiveness and reconciliation. So, showing with clarity how all these factors are interrelated can help us to determine actions and interventions aimed at healing, forgiveness and reconciliation.

There is, moreover, a wide diversity of perspectives and disciplines from which and through which a professional practitioner on the ground could approach post-conflict situations. These can be simultaneously psychological, therapeutic, socio-political, educational, communal, theological, spiritual, legalistic, or rights-based. These all require deliberation, contextual understanding and professionalism.

While such terminological and analytical complexity may fascinate us, it can also serve to obscure our ideas in theory and our practice. The complexity challenges us to reach for more profound insights into post-conflict peace processes and to work on developing deeper understanding to guide our practice.

### **B. The aim of the seminar and questions to be explored**

For over a decade, the Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace (GHFP) has been exploring some key concepts in peace-building, including those mentioned above. Throughout, for example, our ‘Garden of Forgiveness’ project, the ‘Healing the Wounds of History’ programmes, as well as the narrative strands in our work, we have been concerned with seeking new understanding and clarification. So during this seminar, we explored these notions through discussion with distinguished colleagues.

Thus the aim of the seminar was two-fold:

- a. To develop a shared understanding and observation of these concepts.
- b. To explore how this understanding can be translated into practices and actions on the ground, and what challenges and opportunities are involved.

We were particularly interested in the following questions, although due to time constraints, these were not explored sufficiently in depth:

1. Why are these three concepts important in post-conflict peace-building? Does one need to come first before the others can follow?
2. What kind of intervention works well and what doesn't with a focus on healing, forgiveness and reconciliation?
3. Are there ways in which the same transformation could take place in a conflict situation *before* violence breaks out?
4. What shared understanding do we have of the three concepts for post-conflict reconstruction, and peace-building in general?

### **C. Healing, forgiveness and reconciliation – the Rwandan experiences**

It is very unusual for a national government to initiate nationwide strategies aimed at reconciliation, so the nearly twenty years of accumulated experience of the Rwanda National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) is somewhat unique and may have global importance. Dr Jean Baptiste Habyalimana is the Executive Secretary of the Rwanda NURC and at the GHFP's seminar, he focused his presentation on a few home-grown approaches intended for healing, forgiveness and reconciliation in the country:

#### ***Understanding the historical context of the Rwanda 1994 genocide***

Dr Habyalimana began by outlining the history of Rwanda and the possible reasons why the 1994 genocide took place. He says that before the colonial administrators and missionaries deliberately invented different ethnicities in the country with a view to divide-to-rule, there had always been one language, one culture, one belief system and one people in the country which was made up of different clans that cut across ethnicities<sup>1</sup>. These links were the basis for social cohesion. People recognised each other as being Rwandan and having the right to be Rwandan in Rwanda.

However, the divisive Colonial discourse and forced ethnic division (Hutu, Tutsi and Twa) promulgated a later belief that Tutsis were invaders and persecutors of Hutus and that Tutsis didn't deserve to live, thus setting the stage for genocide. This 'imposed' ethnic division, compounded with bad governance had resulted in poverty and a culture of impunity which led to the outbreak of mass violence and genocide in Rwanda in 1994 – one million people were killed in 100 days and two million forced into exile and held as hostages by the defeated regime<sup>2</sup>. The rest of the population were displaced inside the country. More than 300,000 were orphaned children. More than 500,000 women have been widowed, many of them sexually abused and affected by HIV. So at this point in 1994, there was no government in place, there were no police and no judicial system. Meanwhile, 120,000 people suspected of genocide and related crimes were being held in prisons. Such atrocity left the country's infrastructure entirely destroyed, the economy ruined, but most importantly, a suspicious community traumatised.

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<sup>1</sup> This idea of unified Rwanda before the Colonial era was not often included in documents describing Rwandan history, such as this one by the UN. <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/education/rwandagenocide.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> This national narrative on the roots of violence is not necessarily accepted by all the people and sectors in Rwanda society today.

## *Rwandan home-grown strategies for unity and reconciliation*

The post-genocide Rwandan government is highly committed to unity and reconciliation. It is determined to address the root causes of ongoing ethnic violent conflicts. To begin, the government instituted a nation-wide inquiry that involved all the people. The result has been a national strategic focus to unite the people under the same national identity of being Rwandan. This vision of unity is based on respect for human rights and equality amongst all. The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) has been set up to achieve this vision.

Dr Habyalimana highlighted that the Rwandan model for unity and reconciliation is inspired and founded on human-dimension approaches, rooted in Rwandan culture and understanding for lasting peace. The process of healing, forgiveness and reconciliation in Rwanda therefore, involves not only repairing the physical damage to the economy, infrastructure and social services, but also entails the reconstruction of the moral fibre of society. The aim of this focus on human transformation is to make the people feel they are human again and capable of living together in harmony.

Through a grassroots national consultation concentrating on questions such as ‘What were the root causes of the genocide?’, the NURC and Rwandan people identified three key underlying issues: bad governance, a culture of impunity (i.e. lack of justice) and poverty. Following this consultation, the UNRC launched a number of national programmes. Below are three examples:

### Civic Education:

This initiative is aimed at mobilization and sharing, accepting and celebrating a common Rwandan identity. Programmes are oriented towards bringing people together to revisit the country’s history and to revision a common future, to foster a sense of community in the relationship between Hutus and Tutsis, to instil shared Rwandan values and to create social cohesion between Rwandans who have been living inside the country and Rwandans who have been living in exile for more than 40 years.

### Ingando:

The word Ingando means to suspend normal activities in order to reflect on and find a solution to challenges. In Rwanda, Ingando was first developed by the military. Whenever Rwanda faced disasters, wars, or national calamities, the King would mobilise and prepare the population for an Ingando retreat. After the 1994 Genocide, Ingando urges people to stop and to contemplate on the past and the future. The NURC used Ingando to develop co-existence between communities. The first beneficiaries of Ingando were ex-combatants and the programme was later extended to schools. Prior to going to university, students of secondary schools will pass by Ingando. This helps prepare them for future leadership. Ingando are further extended to different social groups, including survivors, prisoners released from genocidal crimes and community leaders.

In Rwanda communities are complex as people have returned to Rwanda from different countries where they were in exile, e.g. Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, Congo and other places. This has created a climate of distrust amongst people. Thus Ingando for local leaders has played a crucial part to foster cohesion between different groups of people. As a vital tool of reconciliation, Ingando also helps build the repatriation of the sentiment in the returned refugees, and has served as a space of dynamic interaction between people, thus encouraging integration.

## Gacaca:

Gacaca is a civil court aimed at supporting the justice system, peace-building and conflict management. Gacaca courts take their origin from Rwandan culture, where in cases of conflict, people come together and sit on the grass or under a tree, to settle disputes. People of integrity from within the community are elected to act as ‘judges’ with the sole purpose of rehabilitating the offender and integrating him/her back into the community. So from the beginning Gacaca has a sense of integration in the community.

The NURC prepared and trained those who were called to serve in the Gacaca courts. The training enabled the ‘judges’ to be familiarised with the law, to understand the lines of classification of the genocide and to be equipped with the capacity for conflict management and peace-building<sup>3</sup>. In this way, the Gacaca was complemented by other national and grassroots approaches to confront some of the most challenging post-genocide problems in Rwanda.

With as many as 200,000 people in prison, it was important that the cases were processed in a timely manner. Up until 1999, working within the system of classical justice, only 3,000 people had been judged. Gacaca was therefore a welcome intervention that had the potential to bring some accountability with regard to truth, reconciliation and even to help restore relationships between people. By individualising the genocide responsibility, the Gacaca subtly recognised that not all Hutus were genociders as some Hutus were innocent and others had risked their lives to help the Tutsis. So the Gacaca process allowed innocent people to be recognised as such and therefore brought healing. The ‘truth’ uncovered through the Gacaca was a precondition for closure, allowing some families to lay their relatives to rest and bring dignity to the dead.

In addition, knowing who isn’t guilty also means that one can distinguish them from those who have done wrong. Such knowledge could appease the relationships between survivors and the rest of the population. The confession procedure and the community services commutation option brought further safeguarded reductions in the prison sentences given for those found guilty<sup>4</sup>. This gesture of forgiveness offered the opportunity for the individuals to put right the wrong they had done. Thus the Gacaca had, to a certain extent, helped people to see more clearly the nature of the violence during the genocide and the responsibilities that each sector of society has towards healing and reconciliation. Given its decentralised nature, mostly at village level, the Gacaca was a relatively straightforward and cohesive procedure which benefitted from the high level of local participation, often involving the entire community including victims and families of genociders.

Although the Gacaca has made it possible to process and judge hundreds of thousands of individuals who were responsible for the genocide in a relatively short period of time, there is controversy with regard to the notion of justice. Gacaca was a very hard exercise because some people have not been honest when giving testimonies, and others have been accusing people without any proof. This has created tension within communities. Further strategies are being developed in Rwanda to help with broken relationships at the community level.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> There are three broad classifications: (1) the leaders and political leaders (who were not judged by Gacaca courts but traditional courts), (2) people involved in the genocide at an important level and (3) those who destroyed properties.

<sup>4</sup> When a large number of people were in prison, their families were suffering. So to accelerate the judgement and help these individuals return to their community was very important for Rwanda’s recovery as these people were also the assets of the society as labourers and as professionals.

<sup>5</sup> 2012 saw the closure of the Gacaca courts after they had dealt with all practical cases concluding them with necessary judgements. The remaining cases will be judged at traditional courts. Following the closure of Gacaca, the NURC set up a system of Abunzi that continue similar work to Gacaca.

## *Achievement and lessons learned*

Dr Habyalimana summarises the Rwandan achievement in almost 20 years after the 1994 genocide from the following three levels: (1) at the national level, conditions are now created in the legal system, in policies and overall governance, so that the country can move deeper towards reconciliation and healing; (2) at the political level, there is a strong commitment to unity and reconciliation from political leaders, as well as political mechanisms in place to address the roots of the mass violence and to deal with its consequences; (3) at the community level, there are educational programmes, civic governance, social projects and other grassroots initiatives, run by myriads of associations and religious organisations in the villages. These engage people in collaborative work and activities to help break down the barriers between people, so that the survivors and families of those who have done wrong during the genocide can live together, providing the foundation for healing and reconciliation.

In view of the history of divisiveness in Rwanda and the need to re-integrate people within close-knit communities, where the former perpetrators or wrong-doers and genocide survivors live together, the government has focused its reconciliation strategy on consolidating a national identity which serves as the basis for unity. Having a national identity which is spiritually unifying is particularly necessary in order to liberate the young people from identity labels that were connected with a violent past. As we will see in the discussion that followed, although this de-ethnicised approach to identity is not problem-free, it is considered the most effective strategy to meet the country's need for unity and reconciliation.

In Rwanda, some of the home-grown traditional approaches (set up and evaluated with support from South Africa) to conflict transformation were adapted and used to help with societal mobilisation and fostering harmonious relationships within communities. Compounded with socio-economic and structural reform, these strategies seemed to effect some positive change in the country. The mass atrocity dehumanised the people and destroyed trust and hope. It is therefore humanisation that all strategies stress. These strategies are further supplemented by the significant contributions made by religions (i.e. Protestant, Catholic and Muslim) in Rwanda where religious institutions have set up a forum for working together in both the negotiation process and the development process.

In these processes, forgiveness is not an approach, but a value and a process. It is perceived as the individual's personal journey towards healing and requires motivation from within the individual. Truth-telling, confession and repentance can serve as helpful pre-conditions of forgiveness, but not necessarily the only pre-requisites.

Having the wrong-doers judged and sentenced has been important for the community to restore trust in justice and in the government's commitment to shift the culture of impunity, which further serves the purpose of healing. The fact that within Rwandan communities, people have been able to forgive and are open to working together and to rebuilding trusting relationships, is a moral security for the country's future generations.

However, truth-telling and public confession and testimonies that take place during the genocide commemoration week can sometimes traumatise people, especially the youths. Therefore avoiding re-traumatisation is another important task for the country. The country is seeking ways to liberate the younger generation from its traumatic past, in order to create a future that is inspired by a vision of peace.

The NURC is now a permanent entity mandated by the government to ensure that the process of healing and reconciliation continues and a culture of peace is restored in Rwanda.

## **D. Discussions**

Jean Baptiste's reflection on the Rwandan journeys also provided a nudge to help us expand our thinking and to initiate a conversation around the key questions. A number of themes emerged from our discussions:

### ***The potential problem with a unifying national identity***

In the Rwandan example, to have a unifying national identity and undifferentiated Rwandan-ness seemed to have served as a constructive nation-building strategy, to help overcome the divisiveness that was initially part of the root cause of mass violence in the country. This has been regarded by the government as effective. However, the question remained whether such national identity is possible in a society that has rich cultural, regional, geographical and religious diversity and whether de-ethnicising national identity is just another way to silence differences and to instil a totalitarian discourse of moralised identity. Imposing a national narrative and unity amongst people is controversial – utopians can also become dystopians.

Concerns were also expressed that by simplifying narratives and thinning historical myths in the name of unity and reconciliation, the narratives of exclusion, oppression and social injustice are in danger of being dismissed by such political discourse. In adopting an uncontested national narrative, there is a further risk of obscuring the divisions that are already deeply buried and are now being forced deeper in the political engineering of national identity. Some individuals in Rwanda and elsewhere are found to be resisting such political discourse of national identity in fear of 'forgetfulness'.

A connected issue concerns the teaching of history. In most post-conflict societies, historians can't agree on the national narratives, especially in contemporary history.

On the other hand, as evidenced in Rwanda, there is an overwhelming societal will (prompted by political reinforcement) to be Rwandans. This has been due to the fact that people were (made to become) aware of the importance of unity and reconciliation so that there will not be another genocide. Therefore, a unified and uncontested national narrative of unity is not the ultimate aim, but an effective strategic step towards reconciliation. Under the overarching Rwandan national identity, it might even be possible to celebrate the diversity of people's backgrounds and to engage in more complex narratives. Furthermore, such national identity could be conceived within citizenship (from a Western perspective). Thus linking national identity with the notion of citizenship has the potential to reduce power imbalance and disharmony between different identity groups with a view of maximising social justice.

### ***Healing, forgiveness and reconciliation***

In this seminar, healing was considered as an overall process, which ends with reconciliation. Forgiveness is part of the healing journey which involves truth-seeking (as in confession) and justice<sup>6</sup>. Connected are the concepts of acknowledgement and apology, a mutual apology. Often in post-conflict or divided society, creating spaces for bringing former 'enemies' or opposite parties together is ideal for truth-seeking, confession and mutual apology. Whereas forgiveness is an individual affair and it doesn't have to be mutual. It helps unlock the self that is imprisoned by the hurt, hatred and pain, and can bring healing. Forgiveness is liberating (i.e. I am not willing to go on to live as a victim) and it is the freedom of the victim, and no one should be under any moral pressure to forgive. Forgiveness includes self-forgiveness which is often much harder.

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<sup>6</sup> Sentences are perceived in two ways: prison sentence which is a more isolated, punishment at an individual level; and then there is community service, which is more collective.

Forgiveness can take place at many different levels – at a political level, societal level, group level and an individual level. With forgiveness, reconciliation can be achieved in a much deeper sense.

Structural reform, the strengthening of judicial system and political commitment to justice also help free individuals from the accusation or reticence to engage in the forgiveness process at a personal level. For some people, justice and forgiveness are connected. In fact, here lies a fundamental tension between forgiveness and justice. Often individuals and groups associate the omission of punishment with lack of justice, and regarding lack of punishment as accepting wrong-doing. Therefore they require ‘justice’ before they feel able to forgive. This is contradictory to the conception of forgiveness as an individual and liberating process.

However, when justice is perceived from much broader perspectives, for instance, where violent atrocities are the failures of institutions, the legal system, religious communities, the economy and the international agencies, and so forth, recognition about the imperative to restore structural justice is helpful for forgiveness. In this sense, justice is beyond punishing wrongdoers and condemning wrongdoings.

Whilst forgiveness is liberating for the ones who have forgiven, for those who are forgiven, it seems to provide them with permission to be human again. Many such individuals who have done wrong during wars and other violent conflicts are able to return the gift of forgiveness by taking on responsibilities to the society beyond forgiveness.

Two different ways of understanding reconciliation are highlighted. The first regards reconciliation as fundamentally about repairing and building relationships; the second considers reconciliation from the perspective of peace-building in a holistic sense to include economic reconstruction, institution-building, good governance and a whole range of structural reforms. Each of these has a relationship component in a post-conflict or divided society.

When justice is included in the ‘equation’ for reconciliation, there might be two ideological positions: (1) reconciliation as a process of humanisation, making a shift in the way we perceive the *other*; (2) reconciliation as legal fraternity through the rule of law to monitor and safeguard human rights. Therefore, the starting point for promoting reconciliation is to understand the ideology underpinning how relationships in a particular society are reconstructed and to interrogate our own view of how relationships are changed and created, as such views will affect the way we approach reconciliation and peace-building.

Historically speaking, it is necessary to distinguish between reconciliation on a societal level and reconciliation at individual level. The former is often connected to putting right the wrongs from ideological/political, societal, institutional and moral perspectives, without which the society cannot assume the ability to move on. The latter is often connected to a change of heart through personal encounter, dialogue, education, religious inspiration, and other activities.

Reconciliation at the societal level generally involves a number of priorities:

The first is developing a common vision about the purpose of the ‘project’, such as a better future for the society, more harmonious relationships (eg. intra/inter-religious, intra/inter-group, between countries, religions etc.), political stability, a fairer and more just society and so forth. In brief, there is no ambiguity about the future. This is *forward looking*.

The second is finding ways to deal with the past in two senses: (1) seeking ‘backward justice’ through truth-seeking, retribution and restorative justice, including healing the traumas and wounds left by the past; (2) addressing the roots of violent atrocities or wars, which is linked

to other reconciliation routes below. This is *backward looking* in order to move forward which requires an absolute finality to violent conflict, including different parties clearly accepting their respective parts in the violence and responsibilities to put things right.

The third is to actively rebuild relationships by creating opportunities for groups to engage with each other through forums, spaces, activities and initiatives. In other words, in order to build/rebuild relationships, there has to be platforms on which to develop closeness between peoples and communities.

The fourth is about shifting and even transforming people's attitudes, prejudices, perceptions and views about the *other*. Again, this involves further contacts and encounters, but at a much deeper level. In many countries, the effort here is aimed at creating a civic society, such as in Rwanda, where the emphasis is not so much on the differences and divisiveness, but on what unites people.

The fifth is creating societal structures towards building equality – political equality, economic equality, social equality, and so forth. Here, equality is an aspiration, not equality in an absolute sense. Individual traumas are often part of the larger societal trauma. Thus systemic and structural change would ultimately support healing and forgiveness at both individual and societal levels.

Embedded is the crucial part that education plays in fostering a culture of peace, cultivating, in future generations, humane qualities and moral ethics, equipping young people with critical awareness of political, social and economic disparity and power imbalance as key factors that perpetuate divisiveness and cycles of violence. This includes an awareness of education itself as potentially being part of a larger system of control.

It was also recognised that education has a humanising effect and humanisation can help shift the identity boundaries between people, thus liberating young people from the large group identities that define the hostility and division between 'us' and 'them'. Furthermore, educational institutions, i.e. schools, colleges and universities are ideal encounter spaces where young people learn to develop skills, attitudes and aptitudes for dealing with conflicts, express emotions, respect oneself and the *other*, and accept differences. Thus education has huge potential to support the endeavour for building a civic society where young people are encouraged to develop a strong 'we'-consciousness and the capacity to collaborate with others from diverse backgrounds, belongings and truth-claims.

Also recognised is the important contribution made by religious institutions in the peace-building process and religion itself that serves to provide a moral compass for individuals and communities. Religion and religious institutions tend to promote forgiveness as a virtue, and often encourage and empower the individuals and groups to reconcile with each other.

Amidst these processes of reconciliation at the societal level, there is much complexity and contradiction, and to such an extent, reconciliation becomes precisely the process of ongoing negotiation and managing these intertwined relationships and tensions amongst different priorities. Thus, embracing (creative) tensions can be the initial step towards reconciliation. By embracing tensions, a society might be able to set aside a certain sense of animosity and contradiction in order to pave the path for individuals to begin to consider and reconsider the possibility of forgiveness.

To enable a society to embrace tensions in the process of reconciliation, it is necessary to initiate dialogue in myriad settings, such as a national dialogue, inter- and intra-religious dialogue, cross-sectorial dialogue, dialogue within the communities and dialogue as being practised in schools, colleges and universities as part of education.

However, as dialogue can be a mere superficial gesture, care must be taken so that dialogue is directed at one or more of these purposes, including genuine exploration of meaning, better understanding of self and the *other* as well as the roots of violence, closer bonds between individuals and groups, and ultimately promoting systemic and structural change.

Reconciliation at an individual level often builds on grassroots initiatives. Some are cultural and artistic experiences such as theatre, music festivals and sports, in which barriers between people can be opened up and hatred and fear of the *other* and vulnerability of oneself can be transformed; some are workshops and programmes that offer psychological healing and/or create safe spaces for narrative sharing and storytelling; others are social projects that bring together individuals from diverse groups and communities so that in working towards effecting social change, people also learn to respect each other and to live with one another in harmony.

These grassroots initiatives support national strategies such as the work done by the NURC in Rwanda and provide additional opportunities to create a culture of enduring and sustainable peace in post-conflict societies. These are crucial steps towards humanisation. Indeed, it is recognised that mass violence is partly due to systematic dehumanisation and therefore it must be through (re)humanisation that relationships between individuals and groups can be (re)negotiated, restored and further developed.

## **E. Questions for further inquiries**

In summary, in this GHFP seminar, the participants set out to explore the relationships between the three key concepts: healing, forgiveness and reconciliation, stimulated by the Rwandan NURC's Executive Secretary, Dr Habyalimana's rich examples of how the country has drawn on its home-grown approaches to building unity and reconciliation amongst the formerly divided communities and groups. Our concern was not limited to post-conflict reconstruction, our interest was also to envisage the kind of structural and societal culture and mechanism that can be put in place so that conflict does not have to escalate to the extent of mass violence.

With the expertise and experiences of the contributors, the seminar ended with some significant insights as summarised above. So in the concluding part, we focus on the emerging questions which require further inquiry and exploration.

### Conflict:

Conflicts are part of the ebb and flow of normal human life. As long as humanity continues, conflict situations will be there. Some conflicts can serve as the impetus for negotiation, innovation and transformation. Other conflicts can be intensified and spiralled into mass violence as witnessed in our human history. The challenge to any society is to develop sustained dialogue so that our differences will never serve as the the source of divisions, violence and wars. The questions to reflect on are:

- **What kind of structure and processes should be built in a given society so that dialogue at all levels can be sustained?**
- **What would characterise effective dialogue methodology?**

### Identity

When mass violence breaks out, individuals no longer see each other as persons, but mere representation of the large group identity. Large group identity construction can also be the result of historical memories and trans-generational transmission of trauma. It is one of the key causes of conflict and violence. While conflict is escalating, identity construction can be a demonising process, positing one group as the victim and the other group as the aggressor and

the enemy. In such identity classification, both groups are dehumanised. Thus mass killing can take place and result in unimaginable atrocities. The questions connected to identity construction are:

- **How do we identify individuals from the *other's* group as persons despite the power imbalance and perceived injustice?**
- **What processes are necessary to deconstruct demonising myths/narratives/memories about the *other*?**

#### Healing:

The concept of healing suggests a therapeutic process or an intervention through which certain ills can be restored to health and the associated pains and suffering relieved. Healing implies that things are getting better in the eyes of those who have been wounded. The 'doctor' is not necessarily the main contributor of healing, although he/she plays a part. There are definitely other factors (political/structural, economic, institutional, social and individual) in the actual healing process as we have seen in the earlier discussions. The questions emerging from our discussion about healing are:

- **What counts as healing? In other words, what are the 'signs' that characterise healing?**
- **How do different factors work concertedly in constructive post-conflict healing?**

#### Forgiveness

Forgiveness is regarded as a constructive response to human wrongdoing (as oppose to anger, resentment, hatred and need for revenge). The concept is conceived within both religious traditions and secular ethical frameworks. When we are dealing with moral failures, it is also through the moral act of forgiving that individuals can be liberated from the burden of negative reactive attitudes and emotions. Forgiving the wrongdoers as a moral disposition or moral act does not mean that responsibilities of wrongdoers are ignored or the wrongdoings are not accounted for. In fact, for some people, it is necessary to forgive the wrongdoer, but at the same time to demand punishment or accountability for the wrongs done. So the questions here are:

- **What is the nature of forgiveness?**
- **How can forgiveness be both an individual process and a political process?**
- **What does it entail to have intergroup forgiveness?**

#### Reconciliation

To reconcile means to restore or bring back to friendship or union after conflict or rupture between individuals and groups. Reconciliation also has a strong religious connotation – to reconcile one's relationship with God, in which case pardoning and forgiveness are constituted as part of reconciliation. However, often after mass atrocity, it is also necessary to reconcile between individuals and socio-political structures. In this case, reconciliation is tied up with justice (economic, social, political and environmental) which can almost play a therapeutic role in the reconciliation process, as we have seen. There is no doubt that justice contributes to healing. So the question for further exploration is:

- **In light of the complex needs for post-conflict peace-building, how does a nation balance the competing priorities between reconciliation, justice, healing and others?**