

UNLOCKED VOICES

A Future Beyond Mass Incarceration



MULTIFAITH EMI

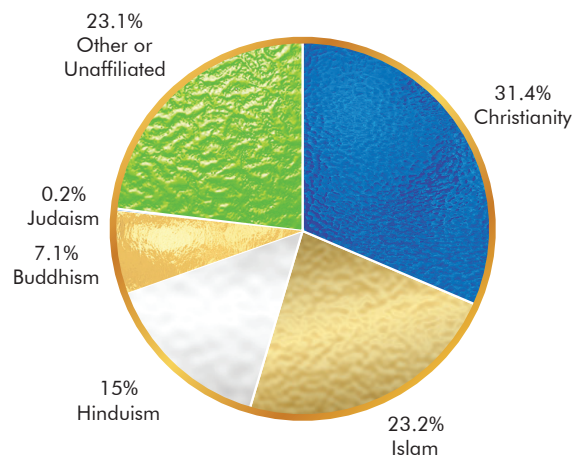
FAITH & FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness in some form is a basic tenet of every faith. For the person who has directly or indirectly experienced harm, granting forgiveness can feel like an unfair burden. At that point, it's helpful to focus on what your faith teaches about forgiveness.

Below are broad summaries of how the world's five largest religions approach faith and forgiveness. To gain a deeper understanding about how forgiveness applies to specific situations, we encourage everyone to seek insight from their respective faith communities.

Figure source: Wormald, B. (2015, April 2). *The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050*. Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/>

RELIGION OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION



Buddhism

All wrongdoing is rooted in ignorance and suffering; [unconditional] forgiveness is both an act of compassion towards one another and a means to achieve self-transformation; and, we should be grateful to those who hurt us as they give us an opportunity to advance spiritually.¹

Christianity

God is the ultimate maker of justice and mercy, and forgiveness releases people from the need to resolve injustice through revenge and violent response. Forgiveness is made possible through faith in God.²

Hinduism

Forgiveness is not taught merely as a moral injunction, but as a component of Sreyas, or our overall, holistic, long-term, or spiritual well-being. On one hand, the one responsible for harm commits to an act of seeking forgiveness called prarthana, which can be done without the presence, permission, or expectation of those who were harmed. The ones harmed, on the other hand, can also commit to the act of forgiving (karunya, advesha, abhaya). This can also take place without the harm-doer.³

Islam

Forgiveness is not an arbitrary, unilateral act of mercy. True reconciliation occurs when violence is renounced, justice sought, and guilt and responsibility are admitted. It is valid only when repentance and atonement are sincerely offered publicly by those responsible for harm, as it cannot be something that is hidden from public sight.⁴

Judaism

When one humbles themselves and [verbally] admits that a transgression was committed and takes responsibility in the harm, there shall not be a delay in forgiveness, pardon of transgression, and release of the resentment toward the one who has been forgiven and will no longer be subjected to punitive measures.⁵

¹Yancey, P. (2021). *The scandal of forgiveness: Grace put to the test*. Zondervan.

²Abu-Nimer, M., & Augsburg, D. W. (2009). *Peace-building by, between, and beyond Muslims and Evangelical Christians*. Lexington Books.

³Hunter, A. (2007). *Forgiveness: Hindu and Western Perspective*. *Butler University's Journal of Christian and Hindu Studies*: Vol. 20, Article 11.

⁴Thompson, R. (2011). *Wounded wisdom: A Buddhist and Christian response to evil, hurt and harm*. O-Books.

⁵Kaminsky, H. (2017). *Fundamentals of Jewish conflict resolution: Traditional Jewish perspectives on resolving interpersonal conflicts*. Academic Studies Press.