

ALEXANDRA ASSEILY

As witness of the pain of the civil war in Lebanon, (1975 to 1991), Alexandra Asseily decided to explore her own responsibility for war and peace and became a psychotherapist. Her focus is conflict resolution- whether in the individual, family, tribe or nation. She helps people to transform beliefs and behaviour associated with painful memories and inherited experiences- from the smallest personal tragedy or illness to national traumatic events, past or present. In August 1997 Alexandra Asseily was profoundly moved by a vision she had concerning the repetitive nature of conflict; that consciously and unconsciously held grievances are received by each new generation through an ancestral 'contract' that can only be released through forgiveness and compassion.

This vision inspired Hadiquat as Samah, the Garden of Forgiveness in Lebanon to which Alexandra has been committed since 1998. The garden is under construction in Beirut Central District. It is situated in the heart of Beirut, between three cathedrals and three mosques and amongst the archaeological ruins of 3,000 years of human living and dying.

Alexandra Asseily is a governor and a founder of the Centre for Lebanese Studies, University of Oxford, a trustee of the Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace, a board member of the Ara Pacis Initiative (Rome), a member of the Leadership Council at Harvard Divinity School, an advisor on to the Fetzer Institute (World Religions and Spiritualities Council), and a former member of the Advisory Board of the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University.

In 1978 Alexandra was the co-ordinator of International Aid Organisations in Lebanon after the first Israeli invasion. She has travelled widely to help various ethnic and social groups to nurture understanding and co-operation.

Alexandra is married to George Asseily O.B.E. and lives between Beirut and London. She has five children and eleven grandchildren. In 2000 she and her husband developed a Silk Museum in Bsous, Lebanon, which opens to schools and the general public.