

THE DESIGN OF THE GARDEN OF FORGIVENESS

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The Garden of Forgiveness must provide the physical environment and psychological inducement necessary for reflections on forgiveness. It should:

- Offer a place of peace and beauty in which all can find a common bond of humanity.
- Include green space, flowing water and archaeology (well protected and preserved)
- Provide for shade and seats; using as much scented and archetypal Lebanese flora as possible- such as jasmine bowers, orange and lemon trees.
- Create a space where people can learn from this visual story board more than facts and figures and historical notes.
- Include places in which quotations on forgiveness from the major religions and separately from the great philosophers (and also from Lebanon's youth today) can be inscribed and incorporated. This will set the theme for the Garden. The quotations are to be translated into Lebanon's three major languages and into Braille for the blind.
- Provide the churches and mosques and archeological finds with the protection they require, whilst reducing visual and psychological boundaries.
- Find ways to link the Garden with all the churches and mosques in the area, as well as the ruins and public spaces
- Link the ancient past with a blossoming future by contributing to the way in which the Garden can become a feature of the archaeological trail - each strengthening the other
- Create a place of beauty and sensitivity which will be an inspiration to other towns in Lebanon and beyond.
- Encourage, through the design, planting and use of water, means to balance beauty, practicalities and upkeep
- Hark to memories of Fakhreddine's garden and another age of floral beauty in Lebanon's history.
- Provide an opportunity to show sculptures by artists on the theme of forgiveness/compassion as a lead in to the Garden (if space allows)
- Suggest practical ways in which the school children of Lebanon (under supervision) could participate in the creation of certain parts of the Garden.
- Express a statement of hope and joy/ Create a legacy for future generations
- Create secluded, contemplative open spaces, away from the throng, where people can reflect in peace and interpret for themselves the meaning of this place.

My hope is that in the creation of this garden, the very energies that will go into the roots and foundations will be those that are themselves in tune with the concept.