

*As handed down to me by my Guru and my brother disciple Enoch Dasa Giri.
May they be blessed and may their wisdom guide and bless all who participate in this Ritual.*

This ritual is for spiritually mature souls, and “aspiring spiritually mature souls.”

It is for those of you who recognize that forgiveness is the key to releasing the hurt, anger, shame, pain, resentment, and guilt that is holding you back. Obstructing your happiness.

Often there’s a real fear of letting go of the wounds of the past. After all, if you let go—then what? Who will you be? Forgiveness means letting go of having hurts, wrongs and wounds define you. Freeing yourself from the past so you are free to discover who you are—the unencumbered you.

The beauty of this ritual is how it gently clears out the negativity and energetic binds you have with people and situations from your past—as you are ready to handle them. The practice is designed to allow memories you have consciously, or unconsciously, forgotten to surface *when you are ready* to heal them.

You may also find that things you thought you’d forgiven, return. This simply means they are seeking deeper levels of forgiveness—which is the point of the ritual. In other words,

The purpose of the Ritual of Forgiveness is to:

**Help you heal and clear out all the obstacles that are holding you back,
no matter how long ago or how small.**

Remember, your mind wants to heal and release the resentment within it. You can help it do this by offering forgiveness to the people and situations that come into your awareness—and this includes you. Forgiving yourself is essential if you want to grow emotionally and spiritually.

As you move through the ritual, focus on remaining soft, with the body relaxed, so you can allow the memories that want to be healed to arise. Use everything you’ve learned from your meditation practice to observe your mind and allow the thoughts and memories to come and go. Observe your body’s response to the memory. Observe your attitude. If necessary, remind yourself these are just thoughts and that you are safe.

You may find your mind resisting the forgiveness. You will notice the body tighten around the thought, “I can forgive everyone, or everything, but ____.” And it’s okay. This is

normal. The most important thing, when this happens, is **to be gentle and kind to yourself**. Do not try to force the forgiveness. Simply notice and acknowledge the depth of the hurt that is there. Give your hurt attention—not judgment. Attention.

Notice how it is affecting your body and then focus on calming, softening and relaxing the body using your breath. Make a mental note, or a note in your journal, so you can reflect on the situation when the meditation is over. Then let it go and continue with the ritual.

When the ritual itself is complete, you will have time to reflect on the awareness and insights you received.

Tips for practicing the Ritual of Forgiveness

- Traditionally this practice is begun at the new moon at midnight in a dark room and practiced for fourteen consecutive days. But it is better to begin it when the time is right for you rather than put it off and/or not do it.
- The first three times you do the ritual, it should be performed standing and speaking the words loud enough for you to hear. After that, it can be practiced silently and if you prefer, sitting. Use the words given with this ritual, or words of your own that will generate the same feeling and awareness.
- The Autumnal Equinox is a good time to practice the Ritual of Forgiveness as an annual practice. The Equinox, is the time when day and night are of equal length, a moment of balance. Symbolically it is the time for us to rebalance the energies we have expended over the last six months before the season of turning inward and the journey into the darkness begins.
- It is sometimes suggested to observe silence for an hour before and after the ritual.
- The ritual can be practice anytime there is a need for forgiveness.
- It is often helpful to have a shawl to place over your head to help create that sense of sacred space.
- It is very helpful to keep your spiritual journal at hand to jot down any thoughts or insights as the ritual progresses.

Opening Invocation. *Mentally light a white candle and say,*

Oh Great Spirit, Saints and Sages of all religions, all places, all times, and to my precious Ishta Devata, help me to recognize and neutralize the hurt, anger, shame, pain, resentment, and guilt within my own mind.

May I become a spiritually mature soul with the compassion and understanding to forgive others and forgive myself. May I be free to experience the wonder and joy of life.

Part One

- 1) **Facing east**—standing or sitting—say softly:

**To all those I may have hurt, knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or unconsciously, in thought, in word or in deed,
I am sorry. I ask your forgiveness.**

Let the hurt be healed. Let the karma be dissolved (complete.)

Pause. Observe your mind. Watch to see what arises. Observe your mind's attitude towards what comes up.

- 2) **Turn to your left**—physically or mentally—so you are are **facing north**. Repeat.
- 3) **Turn to your left**—physically or mentally—so you are are **facing west**. Repeat.
- 4) **Turn to your left**—physically or mentally—so you are are **facing south**. Repeat.
- 5) **Turn to your left**—physically or mentally—**return to the east**.
- 6) **Rest here in the east and reflect** on the memories, situations, and thoughts that arose during the first part of the ritual.
- 7) Write any thoughts or insights in your spiritual journal.

Part Two

- 1) **Facing east**—standing or sitting—say softly:

To all those who have hurt me, knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or unconsciously, in thought, in word or in deed.

I forgive you. I release you.

Let the hurt be healed. Let the karma be dissolved (complete.)

Pause. Observe your mind. Watch to see what arises. Observe your mind's attitude towards what comes up.

- 2) **Turn to your left**—physically or mentally—so you are are **facing north**. Repeat.
- 3) **Turn to your left**—physically or mentally—so you are are **facing west**. Repeat.
- 4) **Turn to your left**—physically or mentally—so you are are **facing south**. Repeat.
- 5) **Turn to your left**—physically or mentally—**return to the east**.
- 6) **Rest here in the east and reflect** on the memories, situations, and thoughts that arose during the first part of the ritual.
- 7) Write any thoughts or insights in your spiritual journal.

Part Three

- 1) Call upon the god of your understanding, and the powers that be, to assist you in healing the memories that were awakened by the ritual.
- 2) Take a moment to rewrite “The Story.”

Closing Blessing

- 1) In your own way, send your blessing to all those you have hurt and those who have hurt you. Gently be aware of any resistance in your mind as you do this.
- 2) Offer a prayer for the people and situations that came up during the ritual.
- 3) Offer a blessing for yourself. You can use the one below—or one of your own making:

Through the power and truth of this practice, may the hurts be healed.

May all obstacles be dissolved.

May the karma be dissolved. May it be complete.

May I be blessed that I may be an ever-great blessing unto others.

May I be at peace and share that peace with the lives I touch.

May I be free.

A few thoughts to address what may arise.

1. If you are having trouble sensing the directions while sitting, try this:
 - Mentally face east—think sunrise.
 - Mentally face north—think snow/cold.
 - Mentally face west—think sunset.
 - Mentally face south—think warmth/sun.
2. **Don't prolong the ritual.** It is not about how long you reflect in the pauses, it is about how sincerely you can say the words. The key is to be sincerely willing to forgive others and yourself—even if no specific events arise.
3. When a person or situation arises that is hard to release, use everything you've learned from meditation to help you give it the attention it needs without collapsing into the emotion.

Tips to help you observe and experience the emotion without collapsing:

- Stay with the sensations in the body.
 - Bring your awareness back to the body when it gets caught up in the story.
 - Use your breath to soften the body and release resistance.
 - Allow insight to arise that will help you rewrite, complete the story.
4. **If you are having a hard time forgiving others,** ask yourself:
 - “What am I getting out of this?” Perhaps it feels good to be right, or it feels powerful to be in judgment of another. Whatever it is, acknowledge it without judging yourself. Just acknowledge why you don't want to let it go. Period. That is enough. You will feel a sense of relief.
 - “What is it in me, that I've done, that I've said, or that I've thought, that is similar—even in some small way—to what I'm upset about in this person?” Acknowledging that similarity, that equality, without judgment, is freeing.
 5. **If you are having a hard time forgiving yourself,** be kind to yourself by sincerely acknowledging you were doing the best you knew how to do at the time. **THIS IS KEY.** Come to truly understand that this is all we can do. Then extend that same kindness to someone who has hurt you. Your ability to really believe they were doing the “best they can” will make it easier for you to accept the same for yourself.