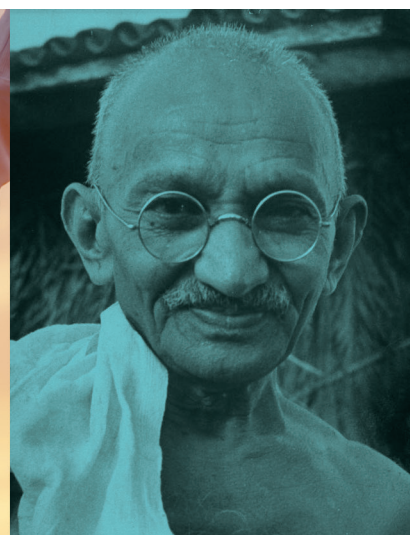


21
MARCH

THE WORLD DAY FOR INNER PEACE



INNER PEACE Association



The Project

The **Inner Peace Association** invites you to participate in a major international event that has already been a huge success in hundreds of schools around the world:

The World Day for Inner Peace

Our initiative has grown out of certain considerations that are by now generally recognised.

Today's world is tormented by constant crises, conflicts and divisions. Before this state of conflict translates into actions, it takes shape in the minds of human beings in the form of racism, religious intolerance and a lack of openness towards others.

Great figures of universal significance have repeatedly declared that it is **impossible to achieve peace in this world if humans do not first experience it within themselves.** Despite this progress in human thought, the dramatic reality of war and violence unfortunately remains the main focus of daily news stories.

Our hopes rest with the new generations, and with the decisions they will make with more awareness in the future. This is why it is necessary to **sensitise young minds**, not with mere sermons, but by stimulating in them respect, tolerance and appreciation of different cultures **through experiences that are significant to them.**

Pursuing Socrates' old admonition, "Know thyself", our research has shown us that one of the most concrete and accessible ways to feel the universal value of inner peace and truly develop a person's best qualities is the **experience of meditation based on proven scientific studies.**

Above all, the increasingly widespread problem of adolescent bullying makes it essential that appropriate solutions be found. Given that psychological and/or physical violence stems from a mental attitude, a tendency of these young people to assert themselves through aggression, it is only by helping them rediscover, and **truly experience the beauty of inner peace that we can put a stop to this disturbing trend.**

This type of activity can marry teachers' educational requirements with the desire for diversification in the educational offer expressed by students down the generations. Additionally, **that the event takes place concurrently around the world** creates the perception in the students that they belong to a **global community** participating in an initiative that promotes universal ideals.

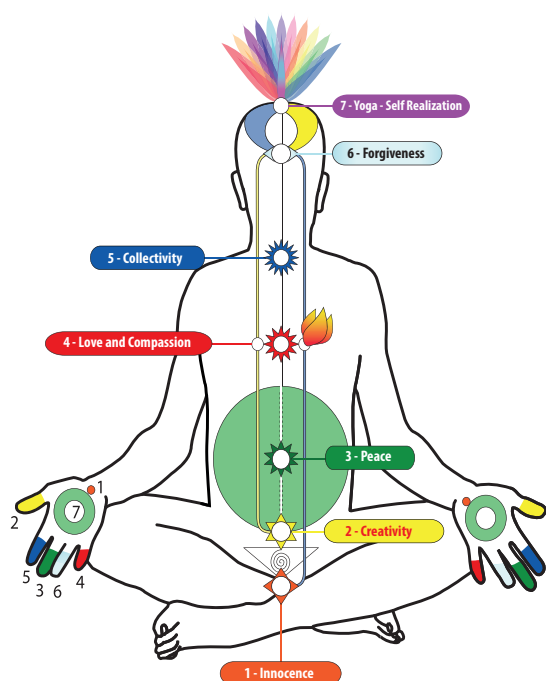


The path to Inner Peace

The importance of meditation is rooted in ancient wisdom but, as we shall see, its validity is confirmed by a body of medical and scientific evidence.

Far from being something strange or exotic, a meditative state is actually a **universal experience, witnessed and celebrated across all cultures and times.**

If we clear away all the labels and the clichés, we can agree that meditation represents something we all aspire to: **a moment of serene tranquillity**, of mental stillness, in which a subtle inner joy emerges. In an instant, our thronging thoughts subside and all that remains is a calm awareness: the recognition of the **beauty of existence.** It is a state that we have all felt, however briefly, at least once in our lives, when touched by the beauty of a natural landscape, the perfume of a flower or the splendour of a sunrise.



It is the grace that inspired **Mozart's** glorious melodies, the power and harmony of **Michelangelo's** sculptures, and the skillful, musical lines of **Shakespeare** and **Dante.**

According to the yogic tradition, the process is very simple, even if the mechanism that is activated is marvellously complex.

There is an energy present in every sentient being, known in Sanskrit as the Kundalini (literally "female serpent") because it is curled up in three and a half coils in the sacrum bone.

It is no coincidence that the Ancient Greeks gave that name to the seat of this energy, given the influence the Indian culture has been historically proven to have on that of Greece.

When this energy is awakened, **it rises up along the spine**, passing through the primary nervous plexuses ("chakras" in Sanskrit), and finally coming out of the fontanel bone. This name, too, has always been shrouded in mystery, but in the light of this experience it seems anything but accidental: when the Kundalini comes out of the limbic area, it can be perceived as a **cool breeze**, as if it were gushing out of a fountain.

The effects of the Kundalini are felt on our "subtle body", illustrated in the diagram on the left. The awakening of the Kundalini, the goal of all the traditional yoga techniques, has the ability to guide our minds into a state of **thoughtless awareness**, thanks to its profoundly relaxing and balancing effect on our nervous plexuses. The results are extremely positive and are reflected in our health and inner serenity.

Putting into practise the message of the great figures of history

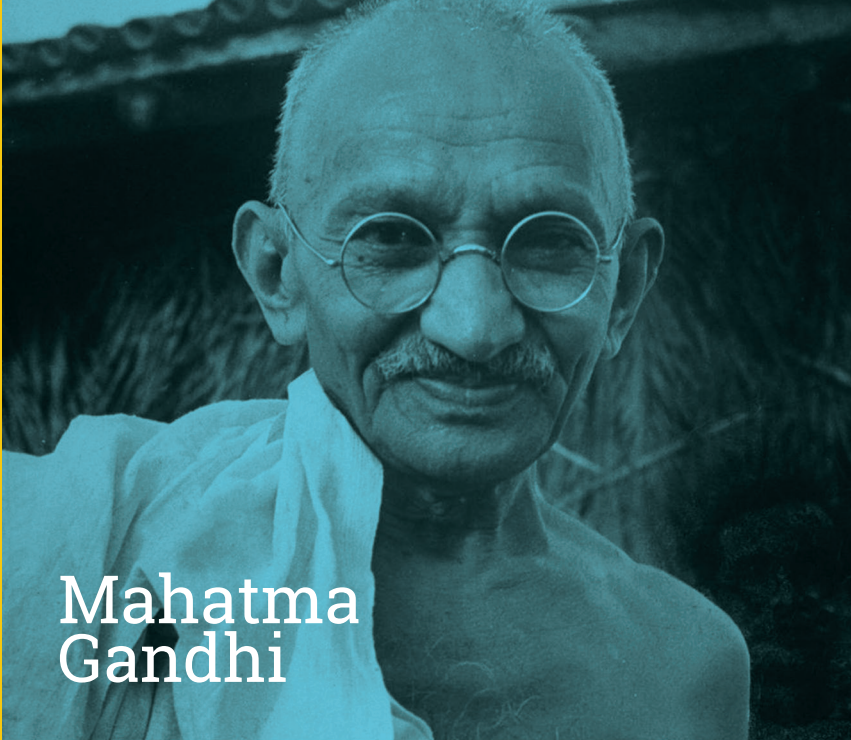
The **twentieth century** saw the advent of a number of universal figures who did not simply talk of peace but actually brought about changes in society that, prior to their arrival, had seemed to be impossible utopias.

We need only think of **Gandhi**, the apostle of non-violence, a political leader capable of leading his people to freedom, and of overthrowing the power of the British empire without firing a single shot, purely with the strength of truth and love.

Or of **Martin Luther King**, a martyr in the fight against racism, whose arrival swept away the dreadful ethnic prejudice towards black people, and whose sublime speech, "I Have a Dream" remains an unforgettable source of inspiration to all those who fight for a better world.

And we must not forget the recently departed **Nelson Mandela**, a shining example of courage and consistency, and the living embodiment, in his actions, as a political leader, towards his own prison guards and oppressors, of his message of forgiveness.

These great figures, who produced not only fine words but also real, historical social transformations, always stressed the same point: **that it is impossible to achieve peace if we do not first find peace within ourselves.**



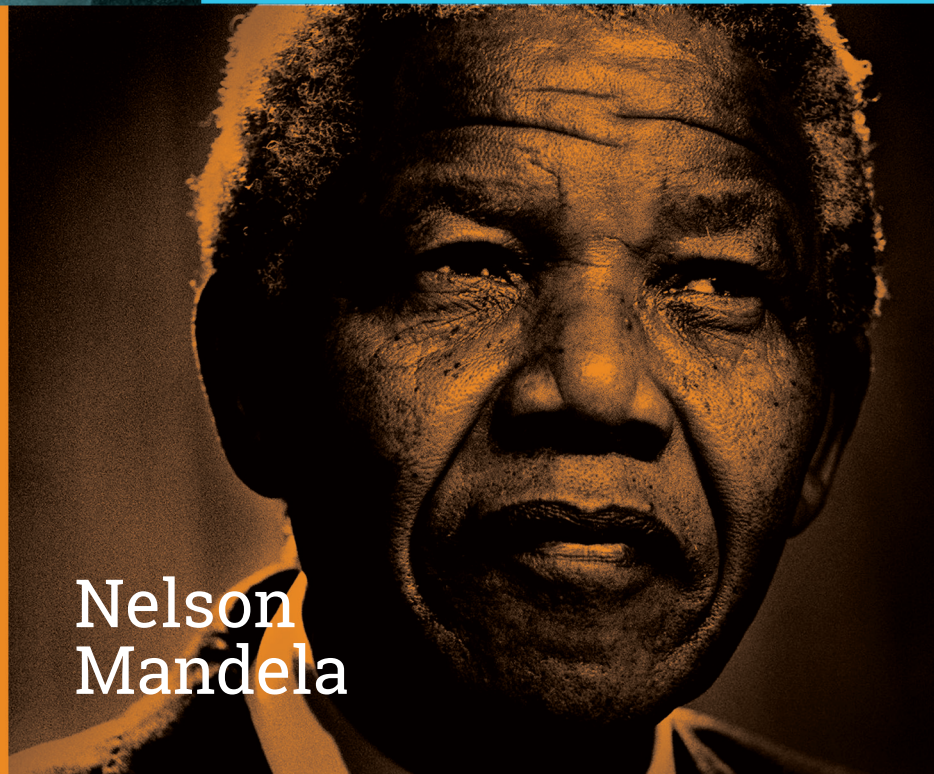
Mahatma
Gandhi

“

If we are to reach real peace in the world, we shall have to begin with the children.

“

Peace is not a dream: it can become reality; but you have to be able to dream if you want to keep it.



Nelson
Mandela

“

Be the peace you wish to see in the world!



Martin
Luther King

Why March the 21st

We propose 21 March as the international date for the **World Day for Inner Peace** for two reasons:

- it is the day that marks the arrival of spring and thus the hope for a new, harmonious rebirth;
- it is the birthday of **Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi**, the founder of the meditational method known as **Sahaja Yoga**.

Shri Mataji is an unprecedented figure in the search for our inner selves. From a very young age, **she has dedicated her life to changing the world**: starting with India's struggle for independence, at Gandhi's side, **Shri Mataji** has continued to fight unceasingly to spread a culture of universal peace, defending the rights of women and of the weakest among us.

In 1970, Shri Mataji realised her desire for **worldwide emancipation** at a higher level: she succeeded in finding the key to inner peace on a global level through a simple meditation. She made **Gandhi's** universal ideal into a concrete experience accessible to everyone through **Sahaja Yoga** meditation.



“

There will never be peace in the world until we have peace within ourselves

Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi

Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi's international awards

Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi, has received many prestigious international awards for the recognised effectiveness of **Sahaja Yoga** techniques. The most significant are given below:

- Shri Mataji was twice nominated for the **Nobel Peace Prize**
- In 1987, Shri Mataji received the **United Nations' Peace Medal**
- Shri Mataji was invited from 1989 to 1994 by the UN to discuss means and methods for achieving **world peace**
- In 1995, Shri Mataji was officially invited by the Chinese Government to speak at the **World Conference on Women**
- Shri Mataji has received official letters of appreciation and tributes from the US Presidents **George W. Bush** and **Barack Obama**. She has also received letters of welcome from mayors all over the world.

2



4



We wish you the very best on this special birthday.

You have witnessed great milestones in American history over the decades, and your personal story represents an important piece of the American narrative. Your experiences and contributions will always be treasured.

We hope you enjoy many more wonderful years.

Michelle Obama

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1. Shri Mataji after a conference at the University of Bucharest
2. Shri Mataji receiving an award from Claes Nobel, grandnephew to Alfred Nobel, who established the Nobel Prizes
3. Shri Mataji meeting Queen Elizabeth II
4. Letter from President Obama expressing esteem and recognition

Inner Peace Day 2014

The first edition of the **World Day for Inner Peace** garnered great success and appreciation.

With neither funding nor sponsors, purely through the enthusiasm of a team of volunteers and spontaneous word of mouth, the event reached around **40 countries**, with the participation of more than **50,000 students**.

Requests from schools exceeded our ability to satisfy them all on **21 March**, and as a result the event **continued in the weeks and months that followed**, in order to allow all the schools to participate. In many countries, the event marked the start of permanent meditation courses in the schools that took part.

This widespread diffusion, and the enthusiastic reaction of school heads and students, **attracted the attention of the international media**. March 21 was declared the World Day of Inner Peace by the national news shows in several European countries (primarily Italy and Romania).

Of the hundreds of events around the world, particular mention should be made of the courses in the institute for the deaf in Rome "**Istituto Nazionale Sordomuti**", the area of **Scampia in Naples**, and the peace demonstrations in Kiev, photos of which made it as far as the **New York Times**.



40
countries

50.000
students

ARGENTINA - AUSTRIA - AUSTRALIA - BRAZIL - BULGARIA
CANADA - CHILE - CHINA - COLOMBIA - CROATIA - DENMARK
FRANCE - GERMANY - GREECE - HUNGARY - ITALY - LITHUANIA



MEXICO - MONGOLIA - NEW ZEALAND - HOLLAND
PHILIPPINES - ROMANIA - RUSSIA - SOUTH AFRICA
SPAIN - THAILAND - UKRAINE - UK - USA ...

Inner Peace Day Program 2015

Saturday, March 21st Portland, ME

East End Community School 195 North Street

3:00 pm Live Music performed by Archana Mayfield, a Classical Indian Singer

3:15 pm Inner Peace Day Introduction

3:30 pm Informational Video & Introduction to Meditation Techniques

3:50 pm Practical Meditation Experience and Relaxation Techniques

4:15 pm Music and Continued Meditation

4:20 pm Classical Indian Dance Performance by Anca Gooje

4:45 pm Refreshments and Socializing



A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a white zip-up hoodie, is shown from the waist up. She has her arms raised high, palms facing forward, in a yoga pose. Her eyes are closed and she has a serene expression. The background is a warm, orange-hued sunset sky with soft clouds. The overall image has a warm, glowing aesthetic.

The benefits of Sahaja Yoga meditation

Before selecting a particular meditation to offer to schools, the **Inner Peace Association** examined various **types of relaxation and yoga**, evaluating the historical documentation and scientific evidence associated with each discipline.

After our lengthy research, we can recommend **Sahaja Yoga** techniques as being the most suitable (in terms of simplicity, medical and scientific evidence, and the universality of its message) for engaging students in the experience of **inner peace**.

The benefits relative to this meditation technique are widely documented and demonstrated by various research studies.

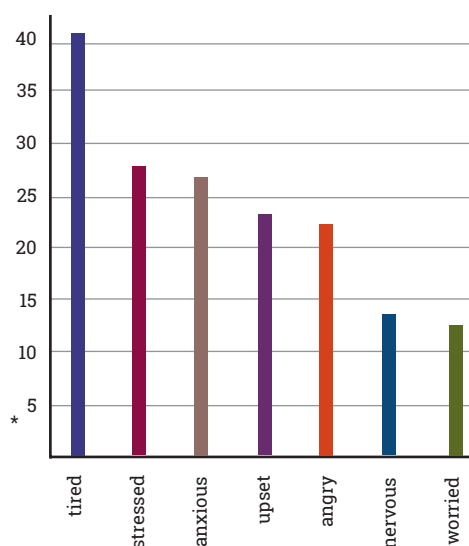
Here are some of the related publications drawn from a large selection of medical literature:

- Balk, J., et al. (2012). '**Effect of Sahaja yoga meditation on quality of life, anxiety, and blood pressure control**' Journal of Alternative Complementary Medicine, 18(6):589–96.
- Harrison, et al. (2004). '**Sahaja yoga meditation as a family treatment programme for children with attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder**. Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 9(4):479–497.
- Manocha, et al. (2002). '**Sahaja yoga in the management of moderate to severe asthma: a randomised controlled trial**'. Thorax, 57(2):110–115.

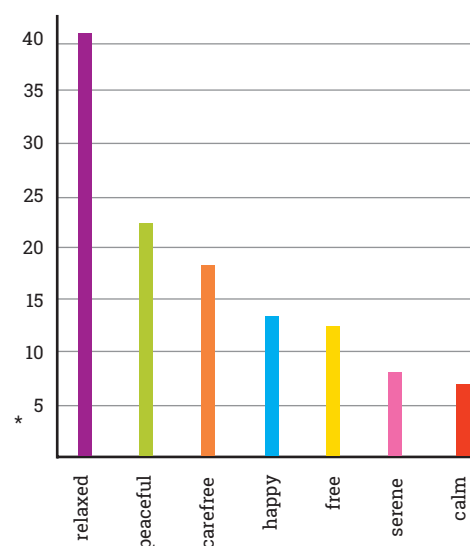
Before and after Meditation

The graphs below have been generated on the basis of the students' testimonials collected during the **World Day for Inner Peace** March 21, 2014.

State of mind before meditation



State of mind after meditation



* Number of participants

Figures collected at the Enrico Medi secondary school in Villafranca, Verona, Italy

Feedback

As we are taught, a tree is known by its fruit. We believe that the best comment on the value of the **World Day of Inner Peace** is the **students' powerful testimonies**, collected immediately after the meditation experience. The simplicity of their words is touching, but at the same time they are inspired by a **profound and illuminating wisdom**.

I think it's an experience that everyone should try; everyone should be given this opportunity, because it helps us to understand ourselves with enthusiasm and peace.

Relaxing. All my stress went away, even though I didn't believe in it to start with.

I felt really at ease with all of you; it's been a wonderful experience: it's lovely to feel your own energy and that of the others.

I felt peace in my heart. This experience is really fantastic. There are no words to describe it. Right now I feel peace inside me, and just silence.

I felt free, light and happy, like a kite in the sky. I hope you come back next year. Kisses.

I felt the energy flowing from the bottom of my body up to the top, and particularly from my hands ... I feel like Buddha!

Perhaps the lady in the photo was right. The exercise is very effective at helping you relax, and, if all the people in the world practiced it every day, they would live longer.

I think the course has been very interesting; I believe inner peace can be achieved, and if everyone meditated we could have a world of serenity.



Official partner of Unesco center for Peace

*"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."
(Constitution of UNESCO)*

The Unesco Center for Peace, promotes the ideals of Unesco by collaborating with its official partners in operating educational, scientific and cultural exchanges to promote world peace and to teach tolerance and acceptance of differences.

The sponsorship of **Unesco** concerns itself with literacy programs, teacher training, the preservation of cultural and natural heritage of the planet, and to preserve human rights.

Since 2010, the **Unesco Center for Peace**, has chosen Sahaja Yoga meditation as their **official partner** to support the diffusion of world peace, affirming that it will not be possible to obtain this state if a high enough number of people are not able to perceive their own sense of inner peace.

These are the motivations of the partnership: If we do not have peace within ourselves, how can we sustain world peace? Mankind has realized the importance of balance and self-knowledge, especially in young people and people engaged in research, politics,



education and art. As **UNESCO's peace partner Sahaja Yoga** is ready to develop, strengthen and integrate the human potential under every aspect. We literally become instruments of peace in our own countries and all over the world.

With regular practice one can experience a significant improvement in one's health and a growing sense of harmony and balance. It's an indispensable investment allowing oneself to improve at every level.

All courses are offered free and anyone can participate.



Inner peace and the Media

The event's success attracted the attention of various **media outlets, both national and international**. All together, the news about the **Inner Peace Day** reached **5 million people** around the world. These are the main outlets that reported the event:



The New York Times

One of the most important network in the world



The most popular Italian National news channel



The Italian version of CNN who covered the programme in Scampia, one of the most troubled areas of Naples



The main television news program in Romania



Website TV of the most popular Italian editorial group



The World Day
for Inner Peace