

Power of collective meditation can help stop wars? Here's a healthy pathway to peace

Can meditation reduce murders, traffic deaths and infant mortality or reduce the intensity of fighting across a border without interacting with other people?

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Armed conflicts continue around the world, inflicting horrific [pain](#) and suffering, which establish that every [war](#) is a tragedy but the greater tragedy today is that these conflicts are no longer necessary or inevitable. Experts claim that they can be resolved quickly, easily, safely and at low cost. We got one such expert on board to describe a simple approach — a technology, actually — that has been

proven effective again and again over the past 50 years and has been tested in locations around the world, East and West, and at every scale of society, from cities and countries to the world as a whole.



Power of collective meditation can help stop wars? Here's a healthy pathway to peace (Image by Freepik)

Its effectiveness has been validated in 58 studies published in 28 peer-reviewed scientific and scholarly journals like the Journal of Conflict Resolution, Social Indicators Research, the Journal of Mind and Behavior, the International Journal of Neuroscience, and the Journal of Social Behavior and Personality. In other words, the expert claimed that this technology works, consistently and no existing approach to peace — ceasefires, peacekeeping forces, mediation, negotiation — offers anything comparable.

Unconventional and highly efficacious

In an interview with HT Lifestyle, Dr Tony Nader, MD, PhD, MAAR, shared, “Turn back the clock forty-one years, to the summer of 1983. Lebanon, my home country, is engulfed in a violent civil war that has been raging for eight long years, immune to all attempts to stop it. That summer, about 200 people check into a hotel in downtown Jerusalem. Their goal: to reduce the fighting in Lebanon, across the border to the North. They plan to do this through long periods of [meditation](#) — specifically, Transcendental Meditation and its advanced techniques. These “technologies of consciousness” enable them effortlessly to settle inward into a natural state of pure, wakeful silence.”

He added, “They’re not wishing or praying for [peace](#). They’re simply experiencing a state of profound inner peace, such as saints and others in traditions worldwide have described for millennia. During those two months, the quality of life in Jerusalem and Israel is transformed. Jerusalem sees crime, car accidents, and fires all drop significantly. In Israel as a whole, fires decline significantly, the

stock market increases, and the national mood improves. Most striking, the intensity of fighting and number of war deaths drops significantly in Lebanon. This study was [published](#) in the prestigious *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, edited at Yale University.”

Dr Tony Nader revealed, “Over the next two years, this experiment is replicated [six more times](#). When scientists combine the results of all the experiments, what they find is astonishing: During the experimental periods — that is, when the large meditation groups gathered — war-related deaths in Lebanon plunge 71%, war-related injuries plummet 68%, the level of conflict falls 48%, and cooperation among the adversaries jumps 66%. Experiments like this have been conducted around the world.”

Meditation responsible for reduced crime in Washington, DC

In June and July 1983, meditation experts came together in Washington, DC, for a highly-publicized experiment to demonstrate this technology — 4,000 people from 73 countries, traveling at their own expense. Dr Tony Nader said,

“They predicted they would reduce violent crime in the nation’s capital — known as the “murder capital of the world” because of its high homicide rate — by 20%. A DC police department spokesperson quipped that it would take “twenty inches of snow to keep people off the streets.” But shortly after the demonstration began, the violent crime rate unexpectedly started to drop, continuing to fall throughout the two-month period. During the last two weeks in July, when the group swelled to nearly 4,000 people, *violent crime dropped 23%*. At the same time, quality of life improved significantly throughout the city.”

Meditation for improved quality of life in US

The longest-running experiment took place in the United States between 2007 and 2010. Dr Tony Nader gushed, “A long-standing meditation group at Maharishi International University (MIU) in Fairfield, Iowa, became large enough, theoretically, to create an effect for the whole country (about 1,700 participants, or the square root of one percent of the population). During these four years a wide range of negative trends, which all

had been increasing, suddenly began decreasing. Homicides dropped by 16%, rapes by 6%, aggravated assaults by 11%, robberies by 12%, drug-related deaths by 15%, traffic deaths by 21%, child injury-related deaths by 18%. Even infant mortality dropped, by 11%.”

Reality-checking the results

Dr Tony Nader explained, "In each experiment, the negative variables were rising before the experiment began, declined in unison during the experiment, and resumed rising when the experiment ended and the participants dispersed. It was as if a light had been switched on and then off again. In these studies, scientists predicted the outcomes in advance. They gathered statistics from open, public sources and they used advanced statistical tools to show that other possible factors could not account for the changes and that the changes were not due to chance.

Why is it effective?

Dr Tony Nader answered, “I am a physician by training and I know that treating disorders involves more than suppressing the symptoms. You have to address

the source of the disease. That's exactly why this novel approach is so effective. These large meditation groups go to the source of the problem: They neutralise stress in the nation's social fabric, or what we call its collective consciousness. We know that as stress builds up in individuals, it can manifest as mental or physical illness or negative behaviors, including violence. Stress exacerbates or causes more than 90% of all disease."

He elaborated, "The same principle holds true in society. Just as the TM technique has proven highly effective in dissolving individual stress — a recent \$2.5 million clinical trial sponsored by the US Department of Defense found TM practice to be as or more effective than the "gold standard" treatment for PTSD among military veterans — so too large group practice of these techniques neutralises collective stress, the root cause of many of our social travails. This "technology of consciousness" is known as the *Maharishi Effect*, after Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who predicted it, provided the meditation techniques to create it, and urged scientists to test it empirically."

How does it work?

How can groups of people sitting with their eyes closed reduce murders, traffic deaths and infant mortality across the country — or reduce the intensity of fighting across a border — without interacting with other people?

Dr Tony Nader said, “We first need to understand what’s taking place within the individual meditators. Through their practice of Transcendental Meditation — a simple, natural, effortless, non-religious procedure typically practiced twenty minutes twice a day while sitting comfortably with the eyes closed — they settle into a state of inner quiet. Simultaneously two other things happen: Their bodies settle into a state of uniquely deep rest, dissolving deep-seated stresses and fatigue (this is what accounts for TM’s many health benefits). And their brains quickly shift from somewhat random functioning (indicated by EEG) to a highly orderly, coherent style.”

He asserted, “These changes happen spontaneously, the natural byproduct of the simple, natural process of “transcending,” or diving within. Studies show that this inner peace and harmony rip-

ples through society. For example, several studies have found that EEG coherence increases in subjects who are in the vicinity of people practicing the TM technique, even if the subjects are not meditating themselves. Another study found that when the size of the peace-creating group at MIU was larger, non-meditating residents of Fairfield showed higher levels of serotonin (associated with happiness and wellbeing) and lower levels of cortisol (associated with stress).”

What mediates the effect?

According to Dr Tony Nader, the Maharishi Effect represents an action-at-a-distance phenomenon, suggesting that a field effect is at work. He pointed out, “We take advantage of field effects all the time. For example, when we exchange calls and texts with people, even though our devices are not hardwired together. The signals are carried through space nearly at the speed of light by the underlying electromagnetic field — the same invisible, all-pervading field that carries sunlight to the earth but the electromagnetic field cannot mediate the Maharishi Effect. Although the human brain does create its own electromagnet-

ic field through its electrochemical activity, it could not operate across such great distances. Scientists posit that the Maharishi Effect is carried by the underlying, all-pervading unified field of natural law, believed to lie beyond the electromagnetic field and the three other force fields. They further suggest that the Maharishi Effect indicates that the unified field must be a field of pure consciousness.”

Expanding our paradigm

Dr Tony Nader opined, “If this is so, then beyond the breakthrough benefits of the Maharishi Effect for creating peace and improving quality of life, we’re looking at evidence supporting a radically new worldview, namely that consciousness is fundamental in the universe. This means we are all interconnected by an underlying field of consciousness and we all have access to this field within ourselves. Not only has this been the worldview of ancient traditions worldwide, but many of greatest scientists of the past century — Max Planck, Erwin Schrödinger, Sir James Jeans, Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington — also held that consciousness, not matter, is fundamental.

Eddington declared: “The stuff of the world is mind-stuff.””

He highlighted, “This view is [gaining support](#) today among philosophers and scientists. Consciousness is not only fundamental, consciousness is all there is. All forms and phenomena in the universe, in other words, are expressions of an underlying, all-pervading field of consciousness. I call this the consciousness paradigm. In the current materialist or physicalist paradigm, which holds that matter is primary, the Maharishi Effect is impossible. In the consciousness paradigm, it’s normal and natural.”

The time for action is now

Dr Tony Nader concluded, “The Maharishi Effect has an unprecedented body of experimental evidence behind it, a solid theoretical foundation beneath it — and a host of challenges awaiting its application. We only need to scale it — create large, permanent peace-creating groups of TM experts, ideally sizeable enough (about 10,000 people) each to generate coherence and harmony for the whole world. The cost is absurdly low, and the effects are immediate. Any government

could easily do this for its country. A wealthy person or family could endow a large group for years into the future. As a doctor, if I were to discover a new remedy to an intractable illness that has good research support, a solid track record, no negative side-effects and many side-benefits, I would feel obliged to use it.”



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