

**EXPLORING THE EXISTENCE OF OUR SUPREME SELF: THE INNER PEACE**

Dr. Anjum Ahmed\* and Roman Shafi Shawl\*\*

\*Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh-202002

\*\*Research Scholar, Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh-202002

Email: [anjum.ed@amu.ac.in](mailto:anjum.ed@amu.ac.in), [rommanshaw171@gmail.com](mailto:rommanshaw171@gmail.com)

Mobile: 9756707878, 7006962756

**ABSTRACT**

*Today's world is tormented by constant crisis, conflicts and divisions. Before any conflict gets translated into action, it takes shape in our minds in the form of prejudice notions, racism, regionalism, lack of openness towards others. In other words, we grow intolerance towards everything that is different from us. To free ourselves from the imprisonment of our negative thoughts and stereotype notions, the study will conceptualize a dimension that is deeper or higher than thinking that is the awareness within us or 'Inner peace'. Outer peace cannot be achieved until there is a peace within us. An individual whose mind is full of negative thoughts could not help in achieving peace in the world. Inner peace is achieved when an individual has an attitude of forgiving others, developed positivity, spend healthy life style, and developed self-transcendence and have attitude of gratitude. The paper will elaborate different hindrances in achieving inner peace and ways to overcome these hindrances for attaining peace of mind.*

**Keywords:** - Inner peace, Self-awareness, Positive emotions, Self-transcendence

**INTRODUCTION:**

Today world is talking about peace which is stated as an absence of any violation, conflict or disturbance in any part of world, peace understood at a very microcosm level. Different organization came into being like United Nations which took different steps to maintain peace and minimize conflict but seems to be unsuccessful. The question arises why? The answer to this question is simply that they only focus on one dimension of peace and neglects the other dimensions of peace. As per Yoichi Kawada (1999), Peace has three dimensions which are inner peace; peace in the community of humankind i.e. outer peace and ecological peace or peace with Earth. The inner and outer dimension of peace are the two sides of the same coin due to which one is incomplete without the other. Inner peace (spiritual peace)

and outer peace means (material) are interconnected and interdependent (Groff and Smoker, 1996). One will be incomplete without the presence of other. Moreover prayer and meditation are the two dimensions that links inner and outer peace. In prayer a person ask for something from God or spirit that means he/she is going from outer life to inner life whereas in meditation a person listen to God or spirit that means he/she is going from inner life to outer life thus connected inner life to outer life of world. From point of view of Campbell and Houston (1972), 'Mythology' (myths and archetypal hero figures) of various cultures help to provide knowledge to spend one's life linked with the inner life of spirit. Mahatma Gandhi also advocated the method of 'Non-violence' as a way to attaining spirituality. Thus inner and outer life of world could be summarized in the below figure: (Figure 1)

Education is very important tool for the people all over the world to live in peace. It is education that helps in acquiring knowledge, skills, and values to live in harmony with other people and with one self. Education helps in making people aware about various concepts relating how to attain peace in the world. It is a tool which helps to inculcate various values and skills to live harmony with oneself and attain spiritual wellbeing. At individual level, education develop intellect which help an individual to learn to deal with negative emotions resulting in peace within. When there is no inner peace in an individual like presence of negative thoughts and attitude which is against the social norms, how can they conceptualize outer peace? Inner peace cannot be attained when there is no peace outside and vice-versa. Inner peace helps an individual to develop a positive attitude towards others as human beings and develop harmony with others. An individual with inner peace have attitude of forgiveness, gratitude, self-contentment, etc. which automatically results in world peace. Inner peace helps an individual to create a sense of self-awareness and self-perception and has different dimensions. It is through education that all these values, skills and dimensions can be inculcated in individuals from their initial stage of learning.

Religion is also one of the instrument of achieving inner peace. Almost all the religions focus to attain inner peace to attain world peace. Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh states, "When we have peace within, real dialogue with others is possible." Similar views can be found in the Christian tradition Gospel of Thomas, Jesus is said to have stated, "If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you." In Islamic perspective inner peace can be attained through the presence *riḍa* (contentment), *sakina* (serenity), *itminan* (peace) and *husn al-zann* (positive opinion). In Hinduism, it is mentioned that God is in heart of every person and

help to separate from Maya and attain peace in oneself. Sikhism also stated that if a person obeys God, he will bestows all his pain and abide him with peace. But attaining inner peace is not a simple process, there are obstacles and an individual has to overcome the hindrances in order to achieve the essence of inner peace.

### **CONCEPT OF INNER PEACE:**

“We can never obtain peace with the outer world, until we make peace with ourselves”

*Dalai Lama*

Inner peace is a state of mind in which an individual develops positive attitude towards life and become free from any stress. Inner peace can be achieved when a person detach oneself from the material world (Kenneth, 1949). Inner peace is a condition of self-awareness in which an individual gain serenity. Inner peace is a harmony between self and the Supreme Power. As per Chinmoy(2007) inner peace is achieved through self-realization which results in realization of God. Inner peace frees an individual from egocentricity. Inner peace has been explained explicitly by Sara Wiseman, the founder of Intuition University as *‘Inner peace is not based on outer events. It’s a way of looking at things, a way of understanding our true nature as infinite beings. We begin to create inner peace in our everyday lifestyle by connecting to the universe more often. We can do this in many ways: meditation, prayer, stillness, nature. The more often we connect to this beautiful state, frequency or vibration, the more attained we get to this level of consciousness or understanding.’*

It is a state of mind in which an individual converts negative thoughts into positive thoughts to become free from any kind of mental stress. It is peace within us to make harmony between oneself and society. The concept of inner peace is now gaining momentum and popularity. Amidst this turmoil we all want peace, no one wants to be fighting and in be conflict with other. It is exhausting. Initiative have been taken to celebrate *‘The World Day for Inner Peace’* on March 21 by several European Countries. Moreover Inner peace project came into existence by fusion of two international initiatives which was Inner peace and Mediate to Regenerate to disseminate mediation among younger generation to attain inner peace. 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. Pursuing Socrates old admonition ‘Know Thyself’, research has shown 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 studies. Inner peace is not the absence of conflicts but to cope with it by constructing ways and means for well-being. Nobody feels peaceful all the

time but one has to learn letting go those things by turning inward which are responsible for disruption of peace within us.

The state of inner peace has been promoted by a well-known Buddhist religious leader Dalai Lama who played a vital role in reinforcing association between Buddhism and inner peace. He always talked about inner peace in his speeches and his words have been source of content in a number of books on inner peace. One of his book is “The art of Happiness” written in collaboration with Howard Cutler which remained best seller for two years in US as per New York Times. *Lama (2015)* gave a wider concept of inner peace as the prevailing tendency to quit negative thoughts and emotions to gain one’s strength and stability despite of any outside unfavorable condition. He laid stress on love and compassion as basis for inner peace.

*Fleck & Stevenson (2007)* stated inner peace as a state in which a person feels peaceful with one self and the source of that peace gains either through connectivity with God or with their moral set of rules.

The process to attain inner peace starts when one gets into some kind of conflict that can be intrapersonal or interpersonal in nature. As we know that conflicts are natural, normal and unavoidable part of every individual life, but still people are surprised and distressed when they face conflict. This results in emergence of stress, anxiety, fear and other mental health issues because of negative attitude towards conflict. So there is a need to adopt positive attitude towards conflict and self-constructive ways to deal with it. When a person encounters with any kind of conflict, he should adopt some ways which results in attaining peace of mind so that he cannot face the consequences of the conflict like with anxiety, stress, etc. In case of intrapersonal conflicts, one should think positively, developed self-transcendence, self-forgive to attain peace within. On the other hand, in case of interpersonal conflict, a person should follow forgiving nature, reconciliation, and gratitude nature to overcome with conflict in positive way. So there exists a close relationship between conflict and inner peace. Conflict acts as mean and inner peace acts as end. Conflict provide opportunity to an individual to construct various ways to cope up with such conflicts in positive way resulted in attaining inner peace.

The benefits of inner peace as depicted by Peace revolution (an online platform that aims to help cultivate individual inner peace), is not confined to spiritual and psychological but also helps in physiological aspect of an individual. Some of the most important benefits are given below:

1. Inner peace bring body, mind and spirit in harmony.
2. Helps to learn forgive others.

3. Increase acceptance of one's self.
4. Increase passion and grow wisdom.
5. It help to build self-confidence
6. It resolve phobia and fear.
7. It helps to improve memory and creativity.
8. Increase emotional stability.
9. It help to reduce anxiety attacks.
10. It enhances the immune system.

### **DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF INNER PEACE:**

An individual attains inner peace when he develops positive attitude towards life. According to *Floody (2013)* inner peace encompasses factor and components like high power, harmony, positivity and lifestyle. Another study by *Tan (2012)* has revealed following categories that leads to inner peace. These are: - self-awareness, positive thoughts, positive emotions, positive attitude and self-regulation. In the light of these studies it is suggested that the different dimensions that will contribute to attain inner peace are: (Figure 2)

1. *Forgiveness/Clemency*: Forgiveness is defined as a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you. It is an internal process in which a person pardons others who hurt them and results in attaining peace of mind. Forgiveness is related with various health outcome as it reduces anger, anxiety, depression, etc.
2. *Self-contentment/Self-complacent*: It is defined as the neuro physiological experience of satisfaction and being at ease in one's situation. Contentment can be seen as not the attainment of what you want, but the realization of how much you already have. Contentment is one of the most important condition for happiness in life. It is acceptance of one's life as it is despite of facing various problems. A self-contented person always live his life happily and satisfactory which results attaining inner peace.
3. *Gratitude*: Gratitude can be defined as an individual's attitude to accept good things in life and to recognize those good things are deal to source of happiness to the self (Emmons,2007). It is another important dimension of inner peace, is a state in which a person is always thankful to others to eliminate negative buildup of emotions. It results in attaining higher level of happiness and joy which helps in peace of mind.

4. *Self-transcendence*: Self-transcendence has been defined as the ability to reach out beyond oneself and discover or make meaning of experience through widened perspectives and behavior. It is the gaining of spirituality by connecting with supreme power resulted in detaching from material world that disrupted peace of mind. It is the capacity of an individual to discover meaning of experience by focusing on higher goals involving spiritual awakening that leads to altruism which results in inner peace.
5. *Optimism*: Optimism refers to the overall expectancy that one will experience good outcomes in the future while putting efforts towards a goal. It is positive expectations and self-perception which helps an individual to attain inner peace by involving oneself in positivity.
6. *Positive Emotions*: Inner peace can be attained by eliminating negativity and developing self-awareness and self-regulation which leads to joy and happiness.
7. *Lifestyle*: Inner peace can be attained by adopting simple and healthy lifestyle in which an individual develops positive social network.

#### **HINDRANCES OF INNER PEACE:**

There are few key mental states that can stir up our body and mind in ways that can result into emotional or behavioral difficulties. The hindrances that are given below reflects the concept given by the Buddhist psychology:

1. *Sensory Desires*: Seeking pleasure through one of the five senses-smell, sight, hearing, taste and touch. There is a direct relationship between the degree of want and the potential for suffering. The bigger the want, the greater turmoil we experience when we do not get it.
2. *Anger and Aversion*: Anger involves a dislike or aversion to our experiences, some type of dissatisfaction or resentment. It is the offshoot when our desires are not met feeling angry may be justified in case when one is harmed or treated unfairly. However, when we add layer of anger or ill will, we harbor anger and resentment. We suffer greatly because we are at continuous war with ourselves.
3. *Restlessness And Worry-Feeling of agitation*: This hindrance takes the form of worrying about the future and petting over the past. We are constantly bouncing to and fro from the place of fear and hope. We hope for something new or good or better and fear that we may not get it. We need to recognize and learn to be with our situation rather than moving away from it. This 'Being' experience will free our minds to go deeper and in more peaceful face.

4. *Sloth and Torpor*: Thoughts and feelings related to boredom, low energy and inactivity. The feelings refers to both physical and mental dullness. In this technological era, when youth are away from technology they feel sluggish and are bored. Even when they are using their so called self-engrossed gadgets that they completely loose sense of purpose in life. It is important to set goals, galvanize towards it, deliberately trying some new fresh ideas and in each experience we will find some engagement and some purpose giving us peace.

6. *Doubt*: It is being indecisive or excessive skepticism. As we are caught in the grip of uncertainty, the more we dislike it. And we cannot deny the fact that life is full of uncertainty. Learning to find balance, let go and cultivate a sense of trust and faith are necessary components of inner peace. And we have to accept that the greatest control that we can exercise is how we relate and respond to our circumstances.

7. *Fanaticism*: When religious beliefs turn into dogma that one's beliefs are right and other as false that is sometime called as extremism in which hatredness and intolerance breeds and multiplies leading to the obstruction in attaining inner peace.

#### **WAYS TO OVERCOME HINDRANCES TO INNER PEACE:**

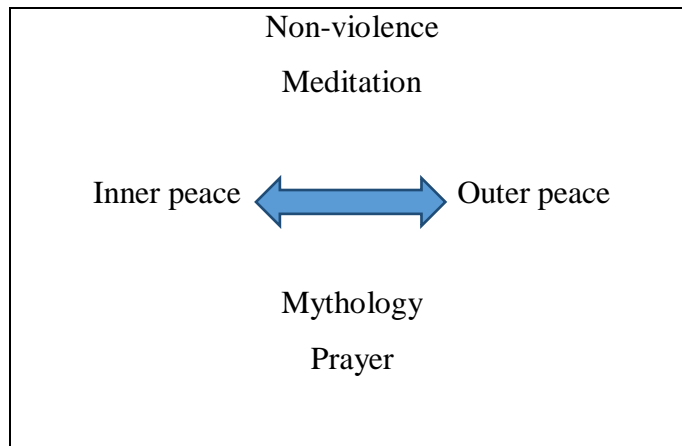
1. *Develop attitude of forgiveness*: Inner peace cannot be achieved when there grudges exists towards others. Forgiveness is one of the tool through which a person can eliminate negative thoughts towards other who hurt them and become free from frustrating agents. So by developing attitude offorgiveness one can attain peace of mind in his/her life.
2. *Develop positive attitude towards life*: In today era of conflicts, it is very hard to run away from negative thoughts towards various expectation in life which sometimes fails tofulfil and disturb our peace of mind. So if we areable to covert that negative thoughts into positive ones, we can attain inner peace.
3. *Spend healthy life style*: As we know that our lifestyle has a direct influence on our health. So it is very necessary to spend a healthy life style which helps us to eliminate negative thoughts in our life.
4. *Spend time in nature*: In this technological era, individuals spend most of their time on mobiles, laptops, televisions with internet facilities which helps one to browse information while sitting at home in their comfort zone away from reality. Nature is a best teacher. It provides us first hand basic experience learning from our surrounding is self-satisfying and helps us to evolve. Nature has always been a sense of inspiration which unleashes ones creativity and develops aesthetic sense.

5. *Mediate*: It is one of the tool to eliminate negative thoughts by following a way like prayer which helps to make spiritual harmony and attaining peace of mind.
6. *Develop attitude of contentment*: Today individual's mind is full of desires, when one is satisfied they shift their desires to another and it becomes a chain reaction. But when desires are not fulfilled, it starts to create mental health problems like anxiety, stress etc. which disturbs our peace of mind. But when individual is satisfied with what they have in their life, they can overcome any stress, depressions, etc. and can lead a peaceful life.
7. *Be optimistic*: An individual is full of desires and goals and therefore develop future expectations. A pessimist always develop negative thoughts about future outcomes which results in various mental health problems. On the other hand an optimist persons always think in positive way of future outcomes and thus can gain peace of mind.
8. *Develop attitude of gratitude*: Another tool to overcome the hindrance to inner peace is to develop attitude of gratitude .i.e., always be thankful to others this in turn will inculcate positive emotions.
9. *Engage in games & sports*: Spending time in groups helps to attain harmony with other people and develop positive emotions to live life happily and which will help to eliminate hatred towards others.
10. *Develop spirituality*: Spirituality wants individual to let go of their desires in this world which is one of the reason of an individual problems. When he/she gives up their various desires they have no expectations left in this world which help them in attaining inner peace in them.

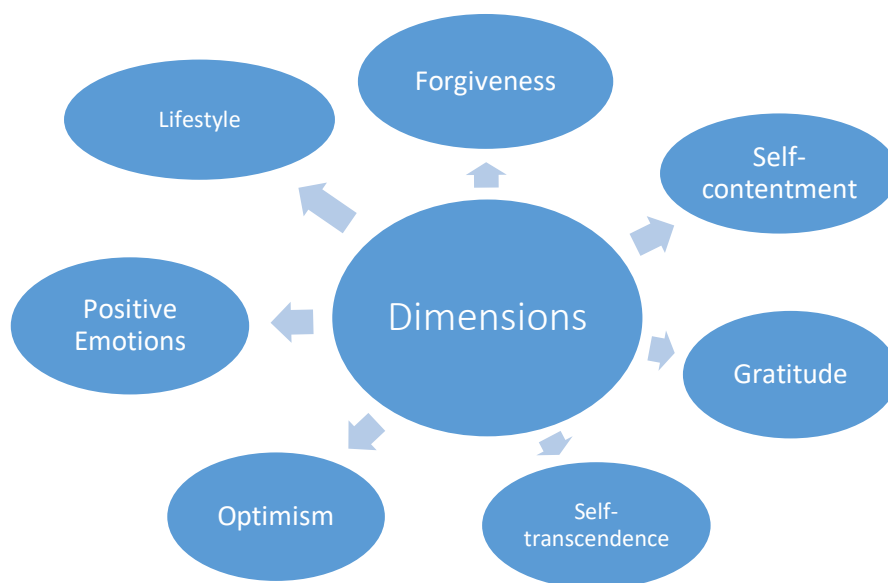
## CONCLUSION

To live in peace, it is important to work on all its dimensions from outer peace to inner peace. Inner peace helps an individual to gain serenity and positive attitude towards others to resolve conflict. Almost all religions seeks to provide inner peace to become spiritual in nature. Indian society is greatly linked with inner peace as reflected from sayings of eminent personalities to attain spirituality. An individual will experience inner peace when he develops positive and healthy attitude towards life, adopt gratitude, contentment by accepting one's life despite facing problems.





**Figure 1: Link between Inner and Outer peace**



**Figure 2: Dimensions of Inner peace**

**REFERENCES:**

Lama, D. (2009). *Dalai Lama's Little book of Inner peace: The Essential Life and Teachings* . Charlottesville: Hampton Roads Publishing Company.

Groff,L., & Smoker,P. (1996). Spirituality, religion, culture, and peace: Exploring the foundations for inner-outer peace in the twenty-first century. *The International of Peace studies*, 1(1).

Kawada, Y. (1999). From Inner peace to world peace: A Buddhist perspective. In Dorn,A.W (Ed.),*World order for a new millennium: Political, cultural, and spiritual approaches to building peace* (pp. 196-203). New York: St Martin’s Press.

Keskin, Z. (2016).Inner peace in Islam.*Australian Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1(1). <http://researchbank.acu.edu.au/theses>

- Lam,D., &Cutler,C.H.(1998).*The Art of Happiness: A Handbook for Living*. New York: Riverhead.
- Tan et.al. (2012). Inner peace in palliative care patients: A qualitative study using grounded theory. *BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care* 2 (1), 65-76.
- Floody, D.R (2013). Serenity and Inner peace: Positive perspective personal peacefulness. *Springer Journal*, 107-133.
- Fleck, M. P., &Skevington, S. (2007). Explaining the meaning of the WHOQOL-SRPB. *Archives of Clinical Psychiatry*, 34, 146-149.
- Batik, M.V., Bingol, T.Y., Kodaz, A.F., &Hosoglu, R. (2017). Forgiveness and subjective Happiness of university Students. *International Journal of Higher Education*,6(6). doi:10.5430/ijhe.v6n6p149.
- Morgan, B., Gulliford, L., & Carr, D. (2015). Educating gratitude: Some conceptual and moral misgivings. *Journal of Moral Education*, 33 (1), 97-111. doi: 10.1080/03057240.2014.1002461.
- Morgan, B., Gulliford,L., &Carr,D. (2015). Educating gratitude: Some conceptual and moral misgivings. *Journal of Moral Education*, 44(1), 97–111.doi: 10.1080/03057240.2014.1002461.
- Hotang, W.,Chaochun, H., & Meiju,C. (2016). Development self-transcendence scale of Taiwan of undergraduate students. *European Journal of Psychological Research*, 3(3), 1-16.
- Kapikiran, S., &AcunKapikiran, N. (2016). Optimism and Psychological resilience in relation to depressive symptoms in university students: Examining the mediating role of self-esteem.*Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 16(6), 2087-2110.doi10.12738/estp.2016.6.0107.
- Celebi, E.,Gundogdu, C., &Kizilkaya, A. (2017). Determination of healthy lifestyle behaviors of high school students. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*,5(8), 1279-1287.doi: 10.13189/ujer.2017.050801.
- Catalino, L. I., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2011). A Tuesday in the life of a flourisher: The role of positive emotional reactivity in optimal mental health. *Emotion*, 11(4), 938–950.

**WEBLINKS:**

- <https://www.definitions.net/definition/inner%20peace>
- <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/forgiveness/definition>
- [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/dalai\\_lama\\_385012](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/dalai_lama_385012)
- <https://peacerevolution.net/docs/en/inner-peace-benefits#/>
- <http://innerpeaceinternational.org/>