

YOGA BEATS CONFLICT – PROJECT

*Yogabeats*TM real work began with my Palestinian/Israeli teaching seminars and how a unique class between both my Israeli and Palestinian students came together on the 18th October 2006, which was repeated in the West Bank in October 2007, and will be repeated again during my forthcoming trip to Israel in April 2008. (NB *Yogabeats*TM policy has always been to teach Israelis only if the possibility also exists to teach the Palestinians as well and has been going on now for the last 3 years). *Yogabeats*TM has had a profound effect upon the Palestinians who live in extremely tough environments alongside the constant threat of aggression and in an almost permanent state of fear. I also teach large groups of Israeli Teachers who in themselves would be more willing to follow my lead and take Yoga across the border to the Palestinians as quite a few have dual passports) – but this would literally be like signing their own epitaphs!

So my question to everyone is simply this – how could we open up this project to more teachers who would be willing to reach out to these extraordinary people caught up in this conflict – because the difference Yoga can bring about in these situations in terms of transformation and easing stress is immeasurable!

At the last International yoga Convention hosted by the Israeli Teacher's Association a well know respected Israeli senior teacher patronizingly told us all how it was such a shame the Islamic culture has little, if any, inclination towards Yoga – adding that "their culture allows little room for it". Not able to contain myself any longer – I replied by stating that I had just returned from Jericho, where I had taught a group of eighteen traditionally dressed woman to a backdrop of Egyptian 'Breakbeats' on a lawn in front of the Mosque – while the Imam was calling the faithful to prayer – the women were rolling backwards with their legs up in the air – shrieking with laughter! I told the convention there was absolutely no problem or inhibition that I had found in regards to teaching Muslim groups. They were always enthusiastic and extremely appreciative, plus if 'we', as teachers, can create and support the experience that Yoga brings to these people's lives – we can only guess at the long term effects this might have in the Middle East? And then again what is the alternative – to leave it in the hands of the Politicians?? I told them that maybe the effect of Yoga is a slow one – but then again it is also a permanent one – because the psyche of a person remembers the epiphany that yoga brings forever and a day. And so the growth of peace is insidious and all we have to do – the real responsibility we have, as teachers, is to constantly plant these wholesome ancient seeds of joy and harmony – and this awesome honour and responsibility is what we all share as teachers of this extraordinary ancient practice.

My belief is that if enough teachers are interested in this conflict resolution work – we might form a consortium or group – that could consistently send teachers into these regions on a regular basis? Already the Peres Peace Foundation has been pivotal in assisting Yogabeats and I am positive this would lead toward a permanent funding situation – which would support a rota of teachers from the UK. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has also given his support to the Yoga Beats Conflict Project.

I very much look forward and welcome any and all suggestions as to how this project might be developed and properly expanded upon??

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