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Foreword

Perhaps there is no other term, which is globally more popular and well known than the term meditation. But at the same time, it is extremely difficult and puzzling to define it in a generic and precise sense. There are innumerable traditional, cultural, religious, and scientific modes of thinking and practice. Each one of them has a specific approach to the issues concerning meditation, such as its nature, definition, purpose, objective, method, and goal to achieve. Broadly speaking, for example, Indian traditions of the Upaniṣads and Buddhism, the Abrahmic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), and Neuroscientific empirical study of the process of meditation and its neurophysiological impact on meditation practitioner can be taken as three prominently diverse approaches to meditation for discussion. It is interesting and also important to note that each view on meditation in the first two traditions Indian and Abrahmic is guided by its metaphysical, theological, and soteriological paradigms, whereas the modern neuroscientific view about meditation is devoid of these approaches.

Furthermore, whereas Abrahmic religions cannot dissolve the duality between humanity and divinity in the form by claiming I am God, because it will be considered an act of blasphemy for which the claimant can be persecuted with death, an Upaniṣadic adept or a Buddhist will set the target to achieve the essential identity between him and the Supreme Reality Brahman by saying I am Brahman) and Buddhatva by saying I am a Buddha respectively, even if the two are radically opposite to each other in respect of beliefs and doctrines. But the neuroscientist is indifferent to such issues. He is, of course, curious to verify the claims of health benefits like peace, self-transformation in attitude and right conduct, holistic thinking, happiness, longevity, etc. by the traditional meditation theorists, and he is excited to find that these claims are scientifically proved. Thus meditation theory and practice gets scientific approval and even prescribed as a medical strategy to treat the patients.

However, one thing is indisputable across the diverse traditional disciplines of meditation throughout the world, and that is that the four phenomena or realities, namely, consciousness, mind, self, and body constitute our status as human beings irrespective of their metaphysical positions. It is also a fact that these are the seats of opposite dualities of positive and negative in such cases as good and evil, knowledge and ignorance, egoism and altruism, individualism and holism, cruelty and compassion, peace and unrest, happiness and sorrow, transcendence and immanence, fragmenting and synthesizing, hurting and curing, killing of others and self-sacrifice for others, and so on. The purpose and target of meditation mission is to overcome negative, and cultivate, promote, and practice positive only. This helps the meditator to gradually restrict first the sensory inputs to enter into the mind, control the proliferation of mind, and then to come to its original state of being,

which is free from concepts, language, predispositions, memories, emotions, etc. by showing the emptiness of their ontological claims. The result of this process is a state of mysterious but insightful experience of the ultimate truth. When the meditator comes back to the common world, it is assumed, he will be a transformed person in attitude, thinking, and moral action, which result in the benefits of stress-free mind, awakening, virtuous life, peace, happiness, contentment, caring nature needed for compassion, sound health, long life, etc. It is worth noticing that the greatest achievement from meditative practice is the holistic integration of mind, body, and soul. In brief, it is clear that meditation is actually a state, method, and also a process of mind to realize ones own identity, which encourages the meditation adept to go for self-actualization in the world of action.

Dr. Sonia Mehta, the organizer and convener of the conference has very appropriately chosen a theme on meditation and identified its various aspects, the threadbare discussion of which will certainly create a wide awareness about its significance and benefits for the participants, contributors, and also others. I sincerely appreciate her serious effort to organize the present conference and bring out a volume containing the articles presented in the conference. I wish her a great success in these efforts.



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Daulat Ram College

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Foreword

My heartiest congratulations to Dr. Sonia Mehta, Senior Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy, who has immense patience and zeal to compile the Plenary Sessions lectures and Research papers contributed by Invited speakers, Faculty members, Research scholars and students of different universities and colleges of India to be presented in the National Conference on 10th 11th November 2017 at Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi in the form of an edited book titled **Holistic Yoga : H³ (Health, Happiness and Harmony)**.

Yoga is a holistic science of life dealing with physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health of an individual. It was a way of life for People in Ancient India and has acquired even more relevance today. The importance of practicing Yoga has been realized by western nations and they have subscribed it to the school children. Yoga helps us to fight the ill effects consequent to industrialization. The book concentrates on three core aspects of Holistic Yoga, namely: Health, Happiness and Harmony and will be useful for both academicians and students alike.

I extend my warm wishes to the successful organization and execution of the conference. I hope the conference will enlighten the young academic minds and expand their horizons of knowledge. I feel honored to write foreword of this book and congratulate the editor Dr. Sonia Mehta as well as Krishi Sanskriti Publication to make such an attempt.

Savita Roy

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