

## Ultra Transcendental Meditation: Gateway to Infinite Bliss

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### Abstract

Ultra Transcendental Meditation (UTM) practice is secular in nature and makes no discrimination in respect of caste, colour, creed, costume, cuisine, custom, culture and conviction. Its real strength lies in refraining from age, gender, religion, race, language, and economic biases. It also looks beyond political identity and boundaries. The spirit of infinite joy of meditation pervades the entire tapestry of the society. Meditation is the main stream today that brings harmony and symphony among the residents of planet Earth. It doesn't need any ritual but it takes a lot of effort to awaken a human being. Meditation requires patience and dedication, and it matures with perpetual training, practice and experience. The 'eyes of the observer' and the 'mind of the seeker' help in attaining mastery over the 'art of meditation' with meticulous guidance and with the passage of time. Mere knowledge of scriptures does not help in achieving the ultimate bliss. Mankind continues to seek happiness in the external things of life - in physical possessions, social positions, and personal powers. They are short-lived; they neither bring eternal happiness nor contentment; they result in greater cravings and aversions. Consequently, more and more people are suffering from neurosis, psychosis and psychosomatic ailments, because modern man is laden with emotional stress, frustration and anxieties debilitated with confrontation and sorrows. Perhaps meditation is a significant ingredient of spirituality, infinite bliss and panacea for good health and well-being.

## Introduction

The saga of human tribulations is mind centric. Only a quiet and contented mind can realize that joy and bliss do not reside in external possessions, but they find a place within us. How can we transform the mind and mend the human attitudes and behavior? Meditation is the perfect answer and it also paves the way for better worldliness of human race. Meditation sharpens the mind, heightens the sensitivity, facilitates to un-condition oneself and bring about a radical transformation in the values and quality of life. Meditation is an approach of psychic revolution. The psychological toxins have to be washed away. This cannot be done by intellectual gymnastics, emotional stimulations, devotional dramas, drugs or any other chemical means. Neither can it be done forcibly; nor by suppression or repression. It is very difficult to educate the mind in a new way of perception. An individual requires enormous dedication and patience in this process and should remain alert, observant and sensitive. The mind has to learn to be quiet and relaxed in the midst of physical and mental movements. If the mind is constantly drawn hither and thither by numerous forces, it becomes distracted. All this has to be observed by the individual entity calmly, objectively, dispassionately and detachedly. These vital factors which are so crucial for contemplation are ignored by the society at large. The global challenges transcending our beleaguered world have opened new vistas for the Ultra transcendental meditation which is among the most vibrant subfields of Consciousness with a boundless potential to create a better health care habitat.

As one meditates, one may 'see' the contents of the mind as though witnessing an array of thoughts - as if there is an observer within. One observes detachedly, dispassionately and objectively - similar to one who sits on the bank of a river and watches the water flowing with no attachment and with no involvement whatsoever. Meditation comes naturally and the more one practices, the easier it becomes. As the meditation deepens, one experiences a joyous peace or even ecstasy or bliss. Meditation taps inflows of tranquility, serenity and happiness. There is an inner awakening, an inner transformation. Meditation is a state of refinement, a state of freshness and purity, a state of great sensitivity and receptivity, a state of inner perception. Meditation leads to supreme joy and this ineffable joy makes one's vision perfect and one's love universal. Meditation is a proper initiative in the direction of freedom and perfection, beauty and knowledge, wisdom and compassion.

## Meditation-An Abatement for the Global Menace

Diminishing scare of Corona epidemic was itself a harbinger of good health and happiness. The spectre of its re-emergence globally, calls for caution and renewed efforts on its containment, posing newer challenges and beckoning another triumph of science on adversity. The war between Russia and Ukraine which started in early 2022 continues unabated this year with either side unwilling to relent. The world watched helplessly as tens of thousands of Ukrainians had to flee from their homeland and take refuge in other countries. Inadequacy of the world bodies like UNO and Security Council stands exposed and Europe and USA remain indecisive with much of their own economy dependent upon the two warring nations. In this interconnected world, war in any corner has wider ramifications and affects the world as a whole. The same interconnectedness that had helped us combat Corona is now affecting the world peace and it is difficult to label any one culprit or one enemy. Imprudence of war, in any part of the world, exacerbates the dangers. Nature is sending warning signals through excessive heat, cold or rains in disparate eco-zones. We are

accustomed to hearing about unusually strong hurricanes, tornadoes and even the polar vortex, but atmospheric events can get a lot weirder [1]. The ordinary citizens of the world are unable to stem the rot. Perhaps to eschew prevailing indifference from the happenings around us and acceptance of nonviolence as a creed that can make us individually and collectively stronger. Whether would it have any impact on the ordeals near us or far away in a different place? Definitely not but what harm in trying an experiment on oneself. Why not equip oneself with the shield that God has blessed us with....the power to control oneself, limit one's greed and secure nature for a scalable solutions for a peaceful and sustainable existence. While doing all this we should follow the path of frugal life style abound with sharing and caring to seek the core principles of life.

### **Purview of Values, Ethics and Meditation**

In the present technological and materialistic era, ethical values have lost their essence. Man is running after worldly pursuits forgetting his aim of life. The treasure of ethical values can only save man from falling. In his valedictory address during the Diamond Jubilee of the Radhasoami Educational Institute in 1977, Revered Dr. M.B. Lal, the Seventh Religious Head of the Radhasoami Faith and the former Vice-Chancellor of the Lucknow University, stressed "..... The torch of learning has been received by you from your elders and it becomes your responsibility now to make the flame brighter. It is not merely the study of books that is required of you, you have to assimilate what you read and more than that imbibe the values of humanism, secularism and democracy. Moreover it is not enough for us to grow in wealth and material prosperity. If there is no peace in the world today, it is not because of lack of material wealth. It is because there is lack of poise and balance of judgment in distinguishing right from wrong. We have failed to recognize our own spiritual dimension and to kindle the spark of the Divine in us. So long as we do not accept and advocate the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man, we would neither trust each other, nor behave as dutiful children of the Supreme Father" [2]. The moral and ethical issues in the widespread scenario are expected to be fraught with conflicts. That makes an indispensable choice for the future generations to sensibly exercise of power of discrimination and judgment conducive to their spiritual well-being. Let us not forget that the new generation is focused, confident and innovative in their quest towards a better tomorrow.

### **Meditation as a Salvager**

Yoga first appeared as a system of philosophy between 500 and 200 BC. Its main ideas are presented in a text called the Yoga Sutras, composed by an Indian sage named Patanjali [3]. It says "There is no other way of controlling the mind except through systematic and persistent practice". Meditation transports us to a new dimension leading to self-transformation. The mind is open to the light of wisdom which leads to a transmutation of the personality. The entire transformation is not brought about instantaneously. It is a progressive pathway requiring firm exertion and sustained efforts. Meditation is only for those who have the zest to follow the arduous path to perfection. Meditation demands self-discipline. Without ethical and moral purity, right meditation is impossible. A pure and virtuous life is the very foundation of meditation.

There has been an advent of various incarnations of saints over the last millennium and their teachings are referred to as "Religion of Saints". Saints and prophets have revealed the significance of the spiritual sound

as the essence of consciousness and the very basis of creation, the higher ultra-transcendental states of consciousness characterized by distinct spiritual sound currents. The Indian culture and treasure of the ancient scriptures had a proud lineage and a heritage [4]. Of the various noble things India has inherited, the Sanskrit language and literature is the noblest. In it are preserved all our sacred literature, all our religious philosophy, all the records of our ancient civilization and culture in all its rich and varied manifestations, containing a complete scheme of society, providing for the physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual welfare of individuals and for their organization into powerful communities. Sanskrit has been the medium of expression of the most sublime thoughts conceived by man and uttered in the most elegant and majestic forms [5]. The whole creation is one existence, regulated and upheld by one eternal, all-pervading intelligent power, or energy, one supreme life without which no life can exist. We all are aware that this universe is the manifestation of such a power, of the ONE without a second, as say the *Upanishadas*, (the most recent part of the *Vedas*, the oldest scriptures of Hinduism) the creator and sustainer of all that is visible and of a vast deal which is invisible to the human eye. Such a power, call him Brahma, call him God, is both imminent and transcendent, and has existed throughout all stages of evolution. We also find that during the Vedic period the prevailing society was abundantly concerned about the environmental protection and ecological balance that enabled them to nurture their spiritual and intuitive faculties [6].

Several influential philosophers, great thinkers and spiritual masters of all time have cast light upon the deepest mysteries of meditation and consciousness with exquisite precision. The practice of meditation is more than thousands of years old according to a “Source book of Indian Philosophy” [7]. Radhakrishnan’s lucid remarks are in consonance with key to spiritual meditation “In meditation, the soul is furnished with a symbol on which we fix our gaze, on which we concentrate all our imagination and reasoning. When meditation reaches its end, when there is no distraction or disquiet, when there is calm repose, sweet tranquility, there is the vision. We start with prayer, we pass on to meditation; when the discursive acts cease, we have contemplation” [7].

*Bhagvad Gita* of the epic *Mahabharata* is a treatise par excellence on the sublime worship of the embodiment of Lord Krishna. While admitting that meditation of the Un-manifested Absolute also leads to the goal, Lord Krishna urges that it is an arduous process and that effective devotion to the Supreme is possible only with a personal God manifest in human form, whom the devotees can love and behold. In *Bhagvad Gita* He says “Those, whose goal is the un-manifest, increase the difficulties; arduous is the path to the Absolute for embodied beings. ....”. *Bhagvad Gita* further says “Better than mechanical practice is knowledge; better than knowledge is meditation. Better than meditation is renunciation of the fruits of actions, for peace immediately follows such renunciation [8].

The extraordinary interactions between Swami Vivekananda and Scientists Lord Kelvin, Hermann Helmholtz, Edourd Hospitalier and Nikola Tesla, as an aftermath to the Parliament of Religions in 1893, in Chicago led to an initiation of the recovery of ancient sciences in the form of the science of electromagnetic pulses and their processing in Quantum-relativistic revolution of Modern Physics and Biological sciences in the late 20th Century [9]. Swami Vivekananda says: “Meditation is the gate that opens infinite joy to us. Prayers, ceremonials, and other forms of worship are simply kindergartens of meditation” [10]. While prayer is an invocation seeking contact with God outwards, meditation is a reaching for God from within.

Meditation brings about the change from outward authority to one that rests within the essence of each human being. Prayer is a communication process of talking to God. Meditation is a medium for listening to God. Meditation seeks wisdom that is within. There is no self-centered desire in meditation. Meditation eventually leads to a conscious union with the ultimate reality and truth from within.

Sri Aurobindo wrote..... “O India, land of light and spiritual knowledge! Wake up to your true mission to the world, show the way to union and harmony”. Sri Aurobindo adds: As we progress and awaken to the soul in us and things, we shall realize that there is a consciousness also in the plant, in the metal, in the atom, in electricity, in everything that belongs to physical nature; we shall find even that it is not really in all respects a lower or more limited mode than the mental; on the contrary, it is in many “inanimate” forms more intense, rapid, poignant, though less evolved towards the surface [11].

According to Buddha, “mind is the focal point. Mind is a set of cognitive faculties including consciousness, perception, thinking, judgment and memory. One of the Buddhist texts, Ratnamegha Sutta declares: “If the mind is comprehended, all things are comprehended”. Mind is the fount of all the good and evil that arises within us and befalls us from without. In *Dhammapada* a Buddhist scripture, it is said: ‘If one man conquers in battle a thousand men a thousand times, and if another conquers himself, the latter is the greater conqueror’. It further says: “Mind precedes all phenomena, mind matters the most, and everything is mind-made. If with an impure mind, you speak or act, then suffering follows you as the cartwheel follows the foot of the draft animal. If with a pure mind, you speak or act, and then happiness follows you as a shadow that never departs” [12]. We should, therefore, turn inward into the recesses of our own mind. Only through a change within, can there be a change without. It goes without saying that “Mind is an entire world, heart is an entire cosmos, and soul is an entire universe”. It is thus necessary to know the mind - which is so near us and yet so unknown; to shape the mind-which is so unwieldy and obstinate: and to free the mind-which is in bondage and yet can be freed here and now. However, the nature of mind-body dilemma always remains an open inquiry. Buddha further unfolds “..... I know not of any single thing that brings such misery and the mind uncontrolled, unguarded and unrestrained. Such a mind indeed brings great suffering...”

The root-cause of the restlessness of the mind is the presence of impurities. We need a method to annihilate these impurities. Purer the mind, easier is it to control. In the *Gita*, Arjuna says: “The mind is restless, turbulent, powerful and obstinate. To control the mind is as hard as to control the wind.” Lord Krishna replied: Undoubtedly the mind is restless and hard to control. But by sustained practice and detachment, it can be controlled. Krishnmurti regarded as one of the greatest thinker’s offered an insightful guide to the art of meditation, “Meditation is a state of mind which looks at everything with complete attention, totally-not just parts of it” [13]. Paul Brunton in his masterpiece book “A Search in Secret India” (The Garden of the Lord, Chapter XIII) highly admired the magnificent spirit of humility, dynamism, confidence, sanity and cleanliness emanating with astonishing achievements at Dayalbagh during his interview with His Holiness Sahabji Maharaj [14]. Dayalbagh, the headquarters of Radhasoami Satsang was established in 1915 having branches throughout the world and is energized by the aura of a living Master. The first-person inner experience of spiritual phenomenology through “Surat-Shabda-Yog”, i.e. meditational practice of uniting spirit current with sound current is the foundation of the Radhasoami faith, Dayalbagh.



## Scientific Approach to Meditation

The Nobel laureate quantum physicist Erwin Schrödinger addresses this quandary with great eloquence - “The scientific picture of the real world around me is very deficient. It gives a lot of factual information... [but] it cannot tell us a word about red and blue, bitter and sweet, physical pain and physical delight; it knows nothing of beautiful and ugly, good or bad, God and eternity. So, in brief, we do not belong to this material world that science constructs for us... the scientific worldview contains of itself... not a word about our own ultimate scope or destination” [15]. A Scientific research on meditation may be able to identify which neurons are activated in meditative states, but this is insufficient. We need to include the first-person perspective and to examine heightened awareness during meditation. This might involve a new way of categorizing brain function. It requires examining the possibility that protracted awareness is normal and there are sustained states of consciousness that are currently not acceptable to the scientific community. However, these processes are dynamic in nature and shall never end up in hibernation. Scientists are beginning to unravel a mystery that has long vexed philosophers [16]. It is now strongly advocated by the scientific community that Consciousness is all pervasive property of the Universe [17]. Importance of experiential knowledge in scientific pursuit of consciousness has now been acknowledged [18]. How the inner universe of subjective experience relates to biological and physical processes unfolding in brain and body has been explored in a thought-provoking neuroscience of consciousness [19]. There has been a compelling case for consciousness as a ubiquitous feature of all physical matter, from subatomic particles to human brain [20]. Active role by the scientific community and the concomitant realization in western culture for inducing spirituality as way of life to realize the eventual objective of enlightenment has been traversed in a fascinating book [21].

Rigorous scientific studies employing sophisticated tools for neuro-imaging robust techniques like functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), electroencephalography (EEG), Magnetoencephalography (MEG), Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy have brought a renewed focus on mapping brain activity during ultra transcendental meditation. Acquisition and analysis of thermal information from non-contact thermal imaging device e.g., Infrared thermography (IR) allows evaluation of neurocognitive and somatic components of temperature increases during g-Tummo (inner fire) meditation practiced by monks in Tibetan Buddhism [22].

It may not be out of place to mention here what saints/sages had realized in their inner laboratory of mind-consciousness is now obvious in the cutting edge frontiers of machine-algorithms of the external laboratory of contemporary science. A recent carefully researched and convincingly argued book ‘Eastern and Western Perspectives: Studies in Neuroscience, Consciousness and Spirituality’ gracefully examines the dichotomy between western and eastern perceptions of consciousness models. This edited volume beautifully presents state of the art researches from fundamental areas in consciousness studies ranging from neurology, quantum mechanics, algorithmic science, mathematics, and astrophysics to literary studies, philosophy, and theology [23].

Sound is the very basis of existence. Every form in this terrestrial universe is reverberation of sound. The concept of Spandana (Sanskrit word meaning vibration) relates to the number of oscillations per unit time,

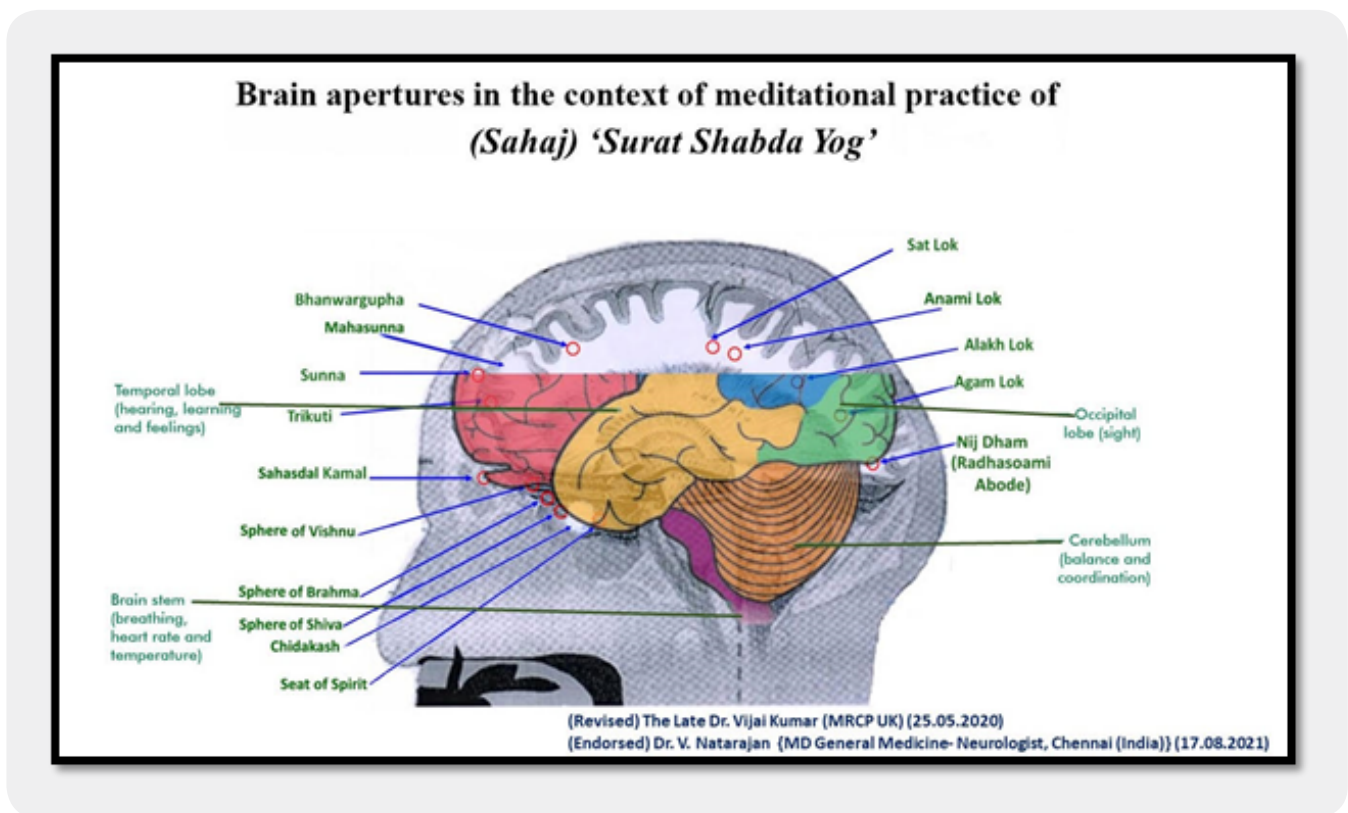
i.e., frequency. The higher the frequency, subtler is the vibration and *vice-versa*. Thus the entire universe or the macrocosm is both involved and containing us, the dots of a billion microcosms, which are all trying to evolve [24]. These vibrational energy systems have different manifestation in different layers of the universe - from gross, to subtle, to causal and beyond causal and then again in the reverse order. This is dissolution and re-creation of the universe which is described as the two-way ladder of involution and evolution [24]. There are in nature gross manifestations and subtle manifestations. The subtle are the causes, the gross the effects. The gross can be easily perceived by the senses; not so the subtle. Meditation leads us towards the acquisition of the subtler perceptions. The resonating celestial sounds in the higher regions ascending from denser to rarer medium converge to divine music approaching the monolith of ever blissfulness.

By definition, the scientific method requires objective or third-person data that can be verified and replicated in an experimental setting. Thus, all first-person experience is excluded from traditional scientific inquiry. It is not at all valid to discount experiences that have been disclosed over hundreds of years and from discrete cultures around the world. The First-person accounts are not given credence in scientific literature, and any first-person report of mystical or paranormal experiences--which are what these experiences of luminosity or awareness beyond the bounds of the senses are--do not fall within the scope of Newtonian science [25]. Developing instruments to assess/measure spirituality and ignoring the fact that finest precise tools are already provided within the human framework calls for a somber deliberation. We seldom make good use of our gifted extraordinary faculties; instead rely on tautology/non-tautological frameworks for understanding spirituality [26]. Numerous carefully designed laboratory experiments measuring the effects of meditation on health and well-being have demonstrated significant positive effects--an increased sense of well-being, lowered anxiety, improved attentive focus, and heightened immune function. This can be further corroborated with the scientific documentation about the positive impact of meditation on human well-being and improving the immune response for treating various conditions associated with persistent inflammation having a dampened immune system profile [27].

Mindful meditation has significant effects on the brain and health of the human body. The meditation is helping people who have chronic pain, addiction, irritable bowel syndrome, and suffer from stress. MRIs of the participants who took mindfulness course showed their amygdalae shrank. The amygdala is known as the “fight-or-flight center” of the brain, and responsible for anxiety, fear and stress [28]. Shrinkage there could translate into feeling calmer. The same study found that the prefrontal cortex, responsible for things like concentration and decision-making, became thicker. Using an MRI Harvard neuroscientist Lazar determined that the meditators retained thickness in the parts of the prefrontal cortex associated with memory and executive decision-making, while in the non-meditators these parts of the brain were thinner. This suggests that meditators are better able to retain memory and decision-making functions. Researchers at Harvard Medical School have studied how it seems to change the brain in depressed people [29] “Many people diagnosed with major depression don’t respond to the frontline interventions”. “Individual cognitive behavioral therapy is helpful; an antidepressant medication also helps. Many people don’t benefit from them. There’s a great need for alternative approaches.” Neuroscientists have proven that “meditation is a mind-training technique beneficial for mental health and well-being.” It reduces the blood pressure; improves self-control and addictive habits; reduces the symptoms of depression, stress and anxiety, chronic pain symptoms are also reduced”. The scientific results published in the “Brain Research Bulletin [30] establishes that the

people who meditate were better able to control alpha rhythms, a specific type of brain waves which help suppressing irrelevant or distracting sensory information”.

*Satsang*, (reciting or listening to the hymns in the presence of a living Master) *Seva* (selfless service for the welfare of mankind) and *Abhyasa* (meditation - the Surat-Shabda- Yog) are considered to be the cure for all worldly and spiritual difficulties. Further advanced levels of Spiritual Hierarchy can be accessed through “Discourses on Radhasoami Faith” [31] conforming to “Power Law of Meditational Consciousness” [32]. According to the Radhasoami faith, communication can be established by a human entity with higher spiritual regions during ultra transcendental meditational practice through the apertures in the brain rendering parietal lobe of the cerebral cortex kinetic [33, see also Fig.1].



*Figure 1*

The frequency spectra associated with various mystic names of the East resonate with eastern spiritual traditions, especially *Surat Shabda Yog* of the Radhasoami Faith wherein certain resonant frequencies have been identified through MEG experiments by meditation practitioners [32]. It is as if we are not only interested in networking or having an Internet in the physical world which improves our communication between brains, but are further concerned with connecting to the Internet among our minds in the Region of Universal Mind. Our minds thus connected through meditational techniques would allow communion from one mind to the other, just as we communicate physically on Internet or social networking sites.



Similarly, the abstract level of Universal Spirit and spirit forces are also interconnected. The individual spirit forces, in fact, are all a part, in a sense, of the all encompassing abstract source or reservoir of all spirit-forces, but unlike ephemeral particles of the quantum force-field of the physical universe. This phenomenon is referred to as connectomics to perceive the Ultimate Reality [34].

## Conclusion

Religion and Science both attempt to look beyond the ordinary world of space, time and material things and see the more basic elements of existence. Addressing these issues becomes more relevant today since meditation shapes our way of life style. Large populations with little or no interest in religion are also human beings because they too experience care and compassion for a contented life. Promoting human values, religious harmony and non-violence for a peaceful world will happen only with a calm mind under controlled conditions achieved through meditation. The ultra transcendental meditation describes the most spectacular inner journey, that humanity has taken, an arduous journey of our internal experiences of ultimate reality towards an increasingly vast nature in this cosmos. The consciousness awakening via *Surat Shabd Yog* is a meditation technique that takes the spirit back to its original abode from where it descended in the beginning of the creation. This science of the spirit has been distilled from the ancient Yoga of India. The meditation technique of “*Surat-Shabd-Yog*”, which the mystics have called the science of the soul, can be practiced by one and all. Contact with this Primal Source of peace, love, and bliss, penetrates our entire being. Reference to the divine light and inner sound, which flows out from the Creator, is found in the writings and recorded experiences of the saints, yogis and mystics. The secret to successful meditation lies in the sincere effort devoted to regular practice, and neither in worshipping an idol or relying on books nor in intellectual debate. Repetition of the Name and spiritual meditation helps the enlightened soul of the practitioner to rejoice the ultimate bliss.

We have unprecedented knowledge available today, robust scientific models on one hand and incisive sensing systems and sophisticated computational tools on the other. Very ambitious projects discerning complexities of consciousness linked to brain apertures involving fMRI, NMR and EEG etc. may see a quantum leap in the years to come. Accordingly, diligent engagement with knowledge buttressed by experimental data, managing the triad in a symbiotically organized ecosystem seems possible. Meditation helps to grow spiritually while finding inner peace, inner calmness, purpose of life and equanimity. The problems we regard as hazards/disasters including recent extraordinary COVID 19 pandemic situation and the devastating earthquakes of Turkey and Syria [35] are all experiments that the Planet Earth has carried out before, several times. Learning how to read these evidences help us to make decisions about how better to prepare to survive them. Natural disasters are essentially a part of universal order. Scientists now consider “Order of the Universe” as a value system. It reminds us that “this is God’s world, not ours.” If the human race does not respect principles on which nature operates, its wrath will take over. The repeated natural calamities and disasters are not only a serious threat but also strong message from the Mother Nature to the Mankind [26]. COVID -19 was an accidental conjuncture in the recent history to pave way for the humanity to appreciate that meditation along with frugal life style contributes to the social, moral and spiritual fiber of the system. That concludes a happy marriage of the humanity with trinity of spirituality, meditation and consciousness spearheading from Gross-worldliness to Better -worldliness and the journey from Homo Sapiens to Homo Spiritualis invoking Lacto-vegetarianism is reverberating, pulsating, and resonating in ever blissful state.

## Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest with any one in publishing the article.

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