



From Swami Atmapriyananda, Chairperson of Technical Committee

Yoga is a system of philosophy (called *darshana* or 'vision' in Sanskrit) in the ancient Indian wisdom tradition. It opens up a new vision of a human being by emphasizing the spiritual core, the Divinity inherent in all beings, and systematically develops a technique to realize this Divinity within. Swami Vivekananda's famous statement in his *magnum opus*, *Raja Yoga*, may be recalled in this context:

"Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy – by one, or more, or all of these – and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details."

While Vedanta is the *science* of spirituality, Yoga is the *technology* thereof. Thus, science and technology of the Supreme Spirit, Vedanta and Yoga, form the two-pronged thrust that forms the backbone of Indian spiritual wisdom bequeathed to us through generations of spiritual Masters like Maharshi Patanjali, for several millennia. Although ancient, it is yet fresh and new—*purana*, interpreted by Acharya Shankara as *pura api nava*, although ancient, yet modern and new. Swami Vivekananda emphasized in the modern age of science that Raja Yoga forms the rational basis of religion—not only its philosophy, but its psychology and mysticism, based on actual direct experience that is verifiable and replicable. It is natural that with the rapid spread of Yoga, the possibility of its dilution and deviation from the pristine purity of its spiritual content is a danger that needs to be guarded against. Thousands of Yoga institutions and groups have come up in India and abroad so that the need for authenticity and certification is being keenly felt. 'Yoga Certification Board' constituted by the Ministry of AYUSH of the Government of India to address this need is therefore a welcome move. Yoga Certification Board has also developed a mechanism to bring on board all those who are eager to practice and preach Yoga in order to create the much needed synergy in the modern age. We call upon all the Yoga institutions and groups to actively participate in and cooperate with the efforts of Yoga Certification Board to achieve its objective to retain and perpetuate a culture of authenticity in Yoga education and practice as well as to bring uniformity in imparting knowledge of Yoga. It is my privilege to be a part of this endeavour of the Yoga Certification Board which has taken the first step in this direction by devising guidelines for ensuring uniformity in Yoga education and practice and to write this Goodwill Message to this booklet from the Yoga Certification Board meant for the Yoga Institutions and Yoga professionals.

Swami Atmapriyananda
Vice Chancellor