

An introduction to current scientific
thinking and research on consciousness.

CONSCIOUSNESS QUEST

Where East Meets West

On Mind, Meditation, and Neural Correlates

J P Das former director, Developmental Disabilities Centre, University of Alberta, Edmonton
Consciousness is an active area of both philosophical debates and scientific research. Rather than covering the broad spectrum of consciousness spread over multiple scientific disciplines, this book refocuses the quest for consciousness on only a specific area where Eastern contemplative traditions, mostly in Hindu and Buddhist theories of mind, meet Western empirical research. Is consciousness entirely a product of the neural circuits in the brain, or not? Probably not because the social-cultural history of the individual that interacts with the genes shapes consciousness. At the same time, neurosciences do help us understand states of consciousness-- waking, dreaming, and sleeping deeply, as well as the power of attention as a tool during insightful meditation. How does consciousness emerge from the billions of neurons that may fire in synchrony? And having emerged, what may be the uses of consciousness? For self-reflection, for sharing experiences and perhaps even releasing the better angels of our nature? The book is an introduction to current scientific thinking and research on consciousness; at the same time it acquaints the reader with the spectrum of classical and modern philosophical notions on consciousness.

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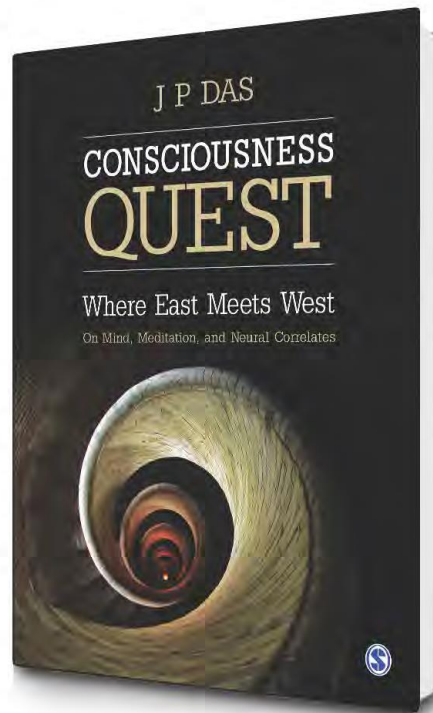
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