



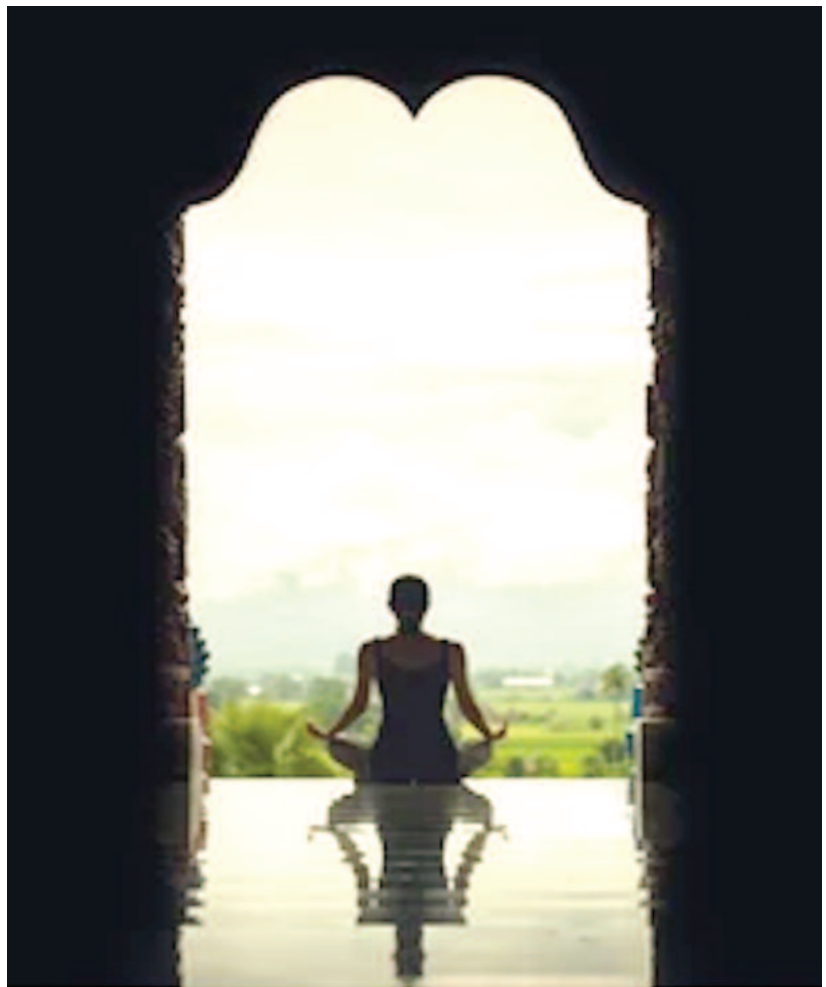
DR SHOBHA RAJU

The Sacred Temple

In the profound journey of self-realization, my friend once shared a beautiful insight with me. Every morning, as she gazes into her own reflection, she offers a heartfelt salute. Her wisdom lies in recognizing that the divine essence, the God, resides within her body as the soul. In this realization, she perceives her body as a sacred temple, a vessel of the divine.

The radiance of the soul shines through a strong and pure body and mind. The clarity of the mind is closely tied to the chemical balance of the body. To cultivate a robust and clear mind, it is essential to strike the right balance of chemicals within. A harmonious mind is the key to understanding ourselves and the world around us.

Complete human fulfillment comes from comprehending the connection between our individual soul and the Supreme Self that permeates everything. To embark on this journey of self-discovery or any pursuit in life, a healthy body forms the foundation. So, how can





we attain and maintain such a state?

Firstly, the food we consume plays a vital role. Fresh and life-giving foods, like greens and fruits, provide energy and nourishment. It is crucial to tailor our diet according to our individual needs and health status, favoring nutritious vegetarian options while carefully monitoring quantity and quality.

Secondly, engaging in physical exercises such as Gym, Zumba, Yoga, or aerobics helps maintain physical fitness and well-being.

Thirdly, the practice of Pranayama, an ancient yogic breathing exercise, infuses the body with vital oxygen, electrifying the cells and transforming both body and mind.

Fourthly, Meditation (Dhyana) acts as a gateway to unlocking our inner potential and discovering higher dimensions of life beyond the physical realm. Its positive

effects reverberate through the body and mind.

Fifthly, the company we keep and the books we read contribute to shaping our character and conduct. Associating with the right influences and avoiding vices that harm both body and mind is crucial.

Some religious texts and discourses tend to criticize the body and mind, labeling them as impure and sinful. However, these are the very instruments through which we engage in spiritual practices and perform virtuous acts. We must acknowledge their significance in our spiritual journey and treat them with reverence.

The great Saint Adi Shankaracharya eloquently portrays the Divine Mother's enchanting beauty, based on the physical attributes of a healthy woman. Yet, he also speaks of the body as a mere composition of flesh and fat. The contrast highlights how infat-

uation clouds our perception, while in reality, the body serves as the abode of the divine.

In light of this profound understanding, let us cherish and preserve our bodies with vitality, recognizing them as sacred temples.

देहो देवालयः प्रोक्तः जीवो देवस्सनातनः
त्यजेदज्ञानरिमाल्यं सोऽहं भावेन पूजये

Body is a sacred temple. It serves as the dwelling place where the soul and the Supreme Self are united in perfect harmony. Just as we remove the used material, "Nirmalyam" in a temple after worship, we must remove ignorance ("Agyanam") within ourselves and perform the true worship by embracing the awareness of "Soham" - the profound revelation that "That's me. I am that Supreme Self."

(Author is a well-known musician, Devotional singer, writer and composer.) 