

Body perfect prayer

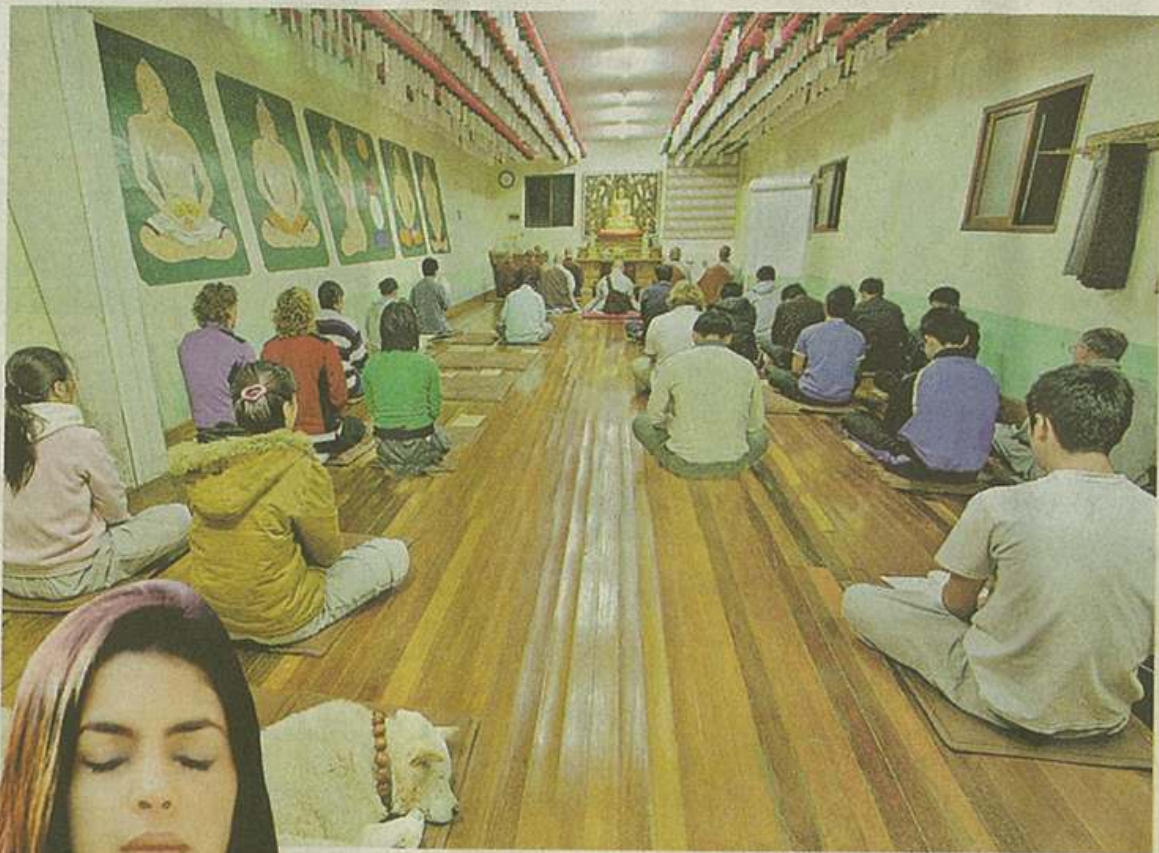
Nawaz Modi Singhania
emerges from new motherhood amazed at the human body

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THE human body is widely accepted as one of the greatest miracles of all time. When one has children, and I've recently had a daughter, one appreciates this all the more. Truly fascinating and mind-boggling, how matter is created from energy; a new-born, alive, breathing, and kicking, performing millions of bodily functions.

The body being the only known (or at least universally accepted) vehicle of the soul on earth, is it really so hard to see why it is the temple of the soul? Nurturing it requires integration of the mind, body and spirit, an understanding, contemplation and a greater respect for all three.

Fitness isn't just about the body. It's largely about the mind. Some common benefits include increased self-esteem and self-confidence, improved sleep, increased concentration and mental alertness, a "feel-good" factor due to the release of endorphins during a workout, a greater amount of energy to go right through the



Exercise is the first point of prayer

day without tiredness, an improved social, personal and professional life, and so much more. Going further, it's really about the soul. A healthy mind in a healthy body lend towards a wholesome, happy, purposeful soul.

My personal experience with people who're extremely physically unfit is that generally speaking they are more unhappy, dissatisfied, insecure and discontent than others, and this naturally affects even their spirituality greatly. I am not

saying that those who're fitter are more in sync or in tune with their spiritual side, but that I have noticed that those who're very physically unfit often tend to have big issues with their spiritual side. Of course, this is based purely on my personal experience.

Both exercise and healthy eating require self control and dedication, which are very good training for increasing spirituality. Some people lose themselves in their workouts; others, find themselves. To me, actively cherishing and nurturing the greatest gift God has given me, life, and the quality of it, is a religious endeavour. It is the first stop of worship.

The practice of yoga is well-known for it's spiritual aspects. There is a great overlap between the spiritual, philosophical and physical aspects of yoga, and so it is hard to extract one element without bringing in part of the other. The origin of yoga was, in the words of Sudhir Anand, author of *The essence of Hinduism*, "about the union of the soul with God, and not about a collection of physical and/or breathing exercises to promote good health or reduce stress."

