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PHYSICAL





The physical comprises both the human body and its nature of habits formation and maintenance, which is the psychological equivalent of the physical.

Body

The physical is composed of matter – rock, sand, building, infrastructure, environment and so on. Everything from the earth to the stars is composed of physical matter. The human body is also made up of this matter. Through evolution, this matter has been animated by vital life-force, and into it, the mind has evolved in the human being. If we compare a rock, plant, animal and human, we can see that the human body has become more erect and straight through evolution. So, the eye of the human does not just predominately view the earth like in the animal but also looks ahead and can have a much wider view. The straight posture of the human body could also be symbolic of our capacity to connect more with the higher consciousness to act as a channel for transmission and reception.

Let's dwell deeper on the miracle of the human body.

Science has made great advances in understanding the human body, healing it and sometimes even altering its appearance. However, what has been understood about the body is only a fraction of its mysterious workings and potential. In general, the body seems to have a great capacity to endure and adapt to even the most challenging conditions. Its normal state is that of healthy and harmonious functioning of its various constituent parts. Even when it falls ill, the body has its own inner intelligence to recover and return to balance quickly, if minimal intervention of facilitating the '*prana*' flow throughout the body is enabled. What prevents this self-healing are often the doubts of the mind, fear, excesses and agitation of the vital in the body. For example, if there is an injury or if the body is tired, most often, if we learn to rest our body or give it the right exercise, the body recovers rapidly.

The body is highly resourceful naturally. We do not have to do anything to create its resources, but just nourish it in the right manner and work in tune with its natural rhythm. To clarify further,

the body has its own intelligence of functioning, even though we may be only partially aware of this. When its rhythm, balance and functioning are disturbed either by internal or external factors, the important step is to understand the body's need in its own terms and gently support it to recover its natural balance and health.

The human body also stocks all our experiences within it. If we are relaxed, have positive emotions and clarity in our mind, our body too is relaxed and fresh. If we are tensed, anxious and filled with doubts, confusions or fear, it affects the body. The body gets tensed and if the pattern continues, it develops psychosomatic disorders. A good metaphor for the body is that of a receptacle or container. The quality of whatever we put into it – food, emotions, thoughts, etc., affects it and either energizes the body or makes it ill. As a practitioner of developing our Inner Presence, we need to bring awareness to our body early in our life. Many of us ignore the body and focus on vital pursuits and mental development alone. The common belief is that when the body falls sick, we will pop some pills. This is treating the body as a mechanical device. Our body however is a living entity and a great degree of awareness can be brought into it to forward our evolution.

We invite the reader to

- ◆ Connect to your body and sense its form from within.
- ◆ Extend your awareness to the breath and the energy that is flowing through all parts of the body, animating and giving life to it. The body functions smoothly as long as the energy is flowing without any blockage, through all its parts.
- ◆ Become aware of the presence of your muscles around the joints. If the muscles are well developed and strong, they protect the joints and provide the strength and vibrancy to carry out daily activities.
- ◆ Become aware whether you are utilizing all parts of your body to their fullest capacity and entire range of movement. When the body parts are used optimally and have their entire range of movement, they remain healthy. When a body part is only partially used in its movements and function, it slowly deteriorates.

So the question is to what extent can we use the full resources of the human body in its full capacity for as long as possible? This determines the duration we can remain active and healthy in our lives even when we grow into a ripe age.

Habit and Its Repetitive Nature

The psychological aspect of the physical is habit formation through a large number of repetitions. Let's first take an example. Say, you want to learn to drive a car. You go to a driving school and the instructor sits beside you and tells you which foot you should use for clutch, brake and accelerator and how to drive. You are very conscious. You try to recall everything and you drive cautiously. After a few days or weeks, since you have been practicing the driving lessons slowly, your feet move to the clutch, brake and accelerator without you having to think about it. In a few more weeks, you drive efficiently listening to a melodious song, having a conversation with a friend and still driving effortlessly. What has caused the shift? The skill of driving was first theoretical. By repeating it sufficiently, your body picks it up as a habit and learns the skill. There would come a time when someone asks you which foot we need to use to brake, and you may need to move your leg to know the answer. The conscious part of the mind does not remember but the body knows as it has become a habit – like an unconscious competence.

So, anything that is constantly repeated gets ingrained in the body as a habit. Let us note a few more examples from our own experience to understand this quality better:

- ◆ If you lack the habit of exercising, even if you are inspired and wake up early in the morning, the body resists and wants to go back to its habit of sleeping.
- ◆ If you are someone who has been exercising for years, there is discomfort in the body if it misses exercising even for a single day.
- ◆ If you have disciplined yourself, you can get up at almost the same time each morning even without an alarm.

- ◆ By eating a certain type and flavour of food frequently, you develop a liking towards it. If you have to change your food preference, it often takes some time and may require you to repeatedly taste the new kind of food till you become familiar with it.
- ◆ Even a mental activity may have a corresponding habit formation in the body. Say, you allocate some time for creative thinking every day. If you have been experimenting with this for some time, you may identify a favourite creative time or a pet creative physical space or even a chosen creative posture where your creative flow is good. By repeating any activity sufficiently, a habit is formed in the physical.

There is nothing wrong with the habit-forming nature of the physical. In fact, it is a very useful function. For example, it is very healthy that we have a habit of brushing our teeth or having a bath every day. Some useful questions would be:

- ◆ Which of our habits are healthy and serve our evolution?
- ◆ Which of them may have served some purpose in the past but have now outlived their usefulness?
- ◆ Which habits come in the way of creation of new behaviours?

It's in the nature of a habit that, once formed, it takes a while to change. So to create a new habit, it has to be repeated till it operates on its own rhythm. When we want to form a new habit, often in the beginning, there is the joyful energy of trying something new. Initially, the old habit resists the new one. Following constant repetition, the new habit becomes the norm. Now if that again has to be changed, it would certainly take some time! This mechanism of new habit formation and old habit undoing happens like clockwork.

Even the most intelligent people miss this simple beauty of the physical habit and often find it difficult to make changes in their life. They get inspired by something, try it for some time and then get distracted towards something else. Soon they fail to pursue what they were trying to accomplish and are left scratching their heads saying, change is difficult. Change need not be difficult

when the mechanics of habit formation is understood and directly experienced within you. When understood, the clockwork quality of habit formation, which is the nature of our physical being, can be utilized to create habits that really nourish us and forward our purpose and vision in life.

An Exercise to Change Habits

We need to use our discrimination and note which of these habits are healthy and, which, unhealthy. Examples of healthy habits are brushing teeth, taking bath, exercising, cleaning the room and concentrating for a particular period of time each day. And unhealthy habits examples are keeping the room untidy, eating and sleeping at odd hours, addictions, watching television while eating, working long hours without breaks, carrying work home at the loss of personal time, spending too much time on the net, etc.

A simple method to overcome an unhealthy habit

- ◆ Identify an unhealthy habit that you want to change. For example, say you choose to overcome your over-sleeping habit.
- ◆ Observe when the old habit starts. What triggers it? For example, the moment the alarm goes off, do you find the bed cozy and the breeze lulling? And do you think, 'Let me sleep just for another few minutes?'
- ◆ Strategize a new habit that will fulfill the following conditions:
 - ◆ The solution would be to just develop the new habit. It should not be a step towards the solution (for instance, thinking about something) but a tiny part of the solution itself; should be an action. For example, you can instruct yourself, 'For a few seconds move your toes, fingers, legs and hands. Then sit or stand up vertical. Whatever you do then is fine but remain vertical'. This is a direct solution framed as an action. A new habit framed as 'a step towards the solution' and not a solution itself may be to tell yourself, 'If you get up, it will be good for you'. This may not work as by the time you utter this, you may be already asleep. A new habit should be direct action.

- ◆ Carry out the new habit the moment the old habit raises its head. For example, the moment you hear the alarm/find the bed and breeze cozy/get lulled to sleep just for a few minutes more – that very second, you need to act out the new habit.

- ◆ Rehearse this sequence in your mind through visualization a few times:
 - ◆ Think of the old habit
 - ◆ Think of the trigger
 - ◆ Instantly imagine you are doing the new habit

- ◆ In real life, practice the new habit action the moment the trigger for the old habit rears its head. Practice and repeat till the new habit is naturally formed and is stable.

The simple principle is that to form a new habit we need to persistently repeat it till it stabilizes. To undo an old habit, we need to repeatedly break old patterns till it is permanently gone.

Delights of the Physical

Health

Health is the greatest delight of the human body. A body that is healthy all through life and that can recover quickly from any setbacks is a great blessing that one can have. The pursuit of health is best if started as early as possible in life and needs to continue into old age, so that one leads a sound and fulfilling life. Sometimes people believe that health is a matter of luck. While it is true that there is an element of Grace in one's health, we must put in sustained, dedicated and methodical effort to take care of our health and prolong our life.

When we work on our health, we need to remember that the body has its inherent drive to self-preserve. When there is felt or real danger, the body automatically does what it can to protect itself. Using this understanding, we need to only detect what is causing the challenge or illness in the body and just remove the cause. This alone often gives the body the capacity to take care of itself. We can

also learn to detect what our body naturally does to self-preserve and remain healthy. We can then consciously strengthen this movement of our body to ensure that our own actions and choices are in line with the body's natural movements to remain healthy. We will further explore health in more detail throughout this chapter.

Medicinal Systems to heal the body

Many people tend to fall sick often because of unhealthy lifestyles and eating habits. They complicate the problem by getting into the habit of popping pills even for simple discomforts of the body. Today, this is one of the greatest maladies of the body. Our body falls prey to illness easily due to our environmental conditions, personal hygiene and lifestyle.

The biggest limitation inherent to the body is death. Our work can live much longer than us, but our bodies are finite.

Most often as people start growing older and do not take care of themselves, they gradually lose their capacity for fullness of work. A proactive practitioner begins work in the body early enough to be able to sustain and prolong the capacity to do high quality work all through life. Today, there are people who are at the ripe age of 80–100 and are still engaged in their work with full control of their faculties. From early childhood, they all have a common characteristic – healthy habits and also do sufficient physical activities.

By developing the physical body, we can detect illness early and take the most appropriate approach to heal the body. A robust daily exercise regimen is mandatory which we will discuss later. Now, one of the most important choices we need to make consciously is our preferred method of treatment we rely on to facilitate healing of our body if it falls ill. The options are galore and we shall present just a few with brief descriptions here:

- ◆ **Allopathy:** This is the most commonly used method today, where for every ailment, there is a pill, injection or treatment leading up to surgery. While it is often the quickest, allopathic treatment often leads to side effects. Allopathy works directly on the symptoms and aims to alleviate them.

- ◆ **Homeopathy:** Not many people understand this medicinal system, but nevertheless, those who have experienced it swear by it. This system needs a very accomplished doctor who can understand the patient's body, energy and mind and prescribe a suitable remedy. Homeopathy treats the entire person and not just the body. If the remedy is accurate, it creates a lasting fundamental change. Homeopathy treats the source of the problems and not just the symptoms.
- ◆ **Ayurveda:** This is again a holistic treatment, which looks upon the body as having three *doshas* or constitutions called *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. Ayurveda through its medicinal preparations and therapy seeks to balance the three constitutions in the body, thus leading to overall health and well-being.

The three medicinal systems mentioned are some of the most common ones.

There are many other methods of treatment like Acupressure, Acupuncture, Reiki, Pranic Healing, Siddha, *Marma Kalai* and Unani to name a few. As practitioners wanting to heal ourselves, we need to be aware of these options and arrive at an understanding about what works best for us.

Regular Maintenance

Dispersion is the characteristic of the physical due to which it tends to fall apart if not maintained on a regular basis. Let us take some examples and then study this limitation in the human body. Say, you build a house. If you don't maintain it well, there will soon be some leaks, cracks, a few cobwebs and dirt. And if you clean up your room, which was in a mess through the day, you feel a great sense of achievement. However, following this exercise, if you don't maintain it regularly, soon the room turns into a mess again. This is because the physical has a tendency to disintegrate if not maintained regularly. The human body too is similar. To keep the body healthy, we need to exercise and take care of it daily. Even after exercising for five years if, for some reason, you stop exercising for a long period of time the body would dissipate and lose the robust health it enjoyed in the past. The key to tackle this limitation is regular maintenance of the human body and the physical environment.

Stability

The second delight of the physical is the stability of the established habit – whether it can continue without any hindrance or interruption. Once the delight of stability is established into the habit, we can be rest assured that the desired habit can continue almost in an autopilot mode. In the beginning when any new habit is established, resistance or lethargy can form and hinder it. So, in the beginning, the new habit is on shaky ground and can dissipate any moment. But through repetition and persistence, when the physical opens up and becomes malleable, the delight of stability of habit slowly settles in.

As you read this, we encourage you to reflect on how developed your capacity to create a conscious habit and the capacity to hold it is.

You are invited to see where this capacity is for you right now and to what level you want to move it forward. If you want to enhance this capacity of holding the stability of habits, you can draw insights regarding what you could ‘do’ specifically to master this capacity from this chapter.

Another aspect of a well-developed physical consciousness is a sense of grounding felt within the body. Our body is always supported by gravity, which we do not feel most often. When someone is not grounded, they tend to trip or keep knocking against things as they walk. A sense of grounding can be experienced when we become aware of our feet touching the ground or by firmly standing or sitting on the ground. We can also try gently rocking our body back and forth till we find an inner point where it feels stable and rock solid. Sensing the grounding of the body anchors it in the present moment and gives it its legitimate place on planet earth. This also allows coordinated movements and a sense of centeredness in the body as we go about our everyday actions.

Transformation of Body

We shall now explore the transformation of the physical from the angle of bringing in health, lightness and flexibility into the body.

Health

Using the full capacity of human body

Health itself is the greatest delight of the physical and it augments the capacity of the human body to endure and do the work that is required of it. The inherent laziness of the body needs to be thrown off and the body should be pushed beyond what it thinks are its limits. We had a participant in our workshop a few years back. The workshop was being conducted on the fifth floor. During the breaks, we served tea and snacks on the ground floor. There were a few participants who took the elevator to go down. After one of the sessions, we were walking down the stairs and invited the participants to join us, as it would be a good exercise for them. Interestingly, one of the participants hesitated saying if she walked down and up, she would get tired! This is a complete misunderstanding of the body. The human body is capable of much more than we think! However, due to our lifestyle and faulty beliefs, we underutilize the body's capacity during exercising and physical work. If this continues for a long time, the body actually loses its capacity and deteriorates.

Let us imagine that you pull a muscle. Often then, you don't use that part of the body. It is good to take rest for some time, but soon, we need to resume our full activity. However, normally our body remembers the pain. We often reduce our activities involving that body part. But if we keep doing this, the part will lose its strength and capacity. A typical modern example is a problem that many people have – stiff hips. This occurs because we don't often use this joint, not giving it sufficient work and rotation. Recovery of the capacity is possible only when we fully start using the hips and exercising it to its full capacity through a judicious selection of rotational exercises, dance, activities or work. So, in essence, we need to pay attention to all parts of our body and use it to its full capacity so that they will retain their capacity through our lives.

Honouring body's boundaries and rhythms

At the same time, we need to remember that the focus is on the body and its development needs to happen in its own terms. The earlier point is that the body itself has the capacity and we are under-utilizing

it due to lack of awareness, exercise and physical work. However, we should never push the body beyond its natural rhythms because of vital rush or impatience. For example, say, you are going to a dance class and you notice someone who is able to split their legs fully and sit on the ground. You notice how beautifully they do it. You may also want to do it. That is laudable, but you also need the patience of practice and method. You can't declare that in two weeks, you will also do your splits. Such vital rushes and impatience often lead to some injury. The crucial point to remember is that the human body needs some time, method and repetition for it to change. So if you learn the right method from a good teacher and practice it every day for a period of time, soon, you too will be able to do your splits. Let's take another example – you are overweight by 10 kilos. You can't exercise for just six days and then start asking why you have not reduced. A good and steady exercise regimen, followed for a sufficient period combined with good eating habits will help you lose weight and sustain the loss.

Providing time for exercise and physical work

A few centuries back, the human body was required to do a lot of physical activity and work. The human body was thus stronger and better-built than what we have today. It is good to engage in appropriate physical work and to follow a well-planned exercise regimen. Small lifestyle changes will be helpful in the long run. This may mean getting up slightly early and going for a walk, jogging, yoga, cycling, swimming, climbing up the stairs instead of taking the elevator, bending and cleaning up our room from time to time, etc. Once again, the trick to succeed in developing the physical is to exercise and do work for a sufficient period of time every day without fail. The best time for exercise is arguably in the morning but if that is difficult, we can certainly find time during the evening. The most important point is to thoroughly feel and do the exercises with full conscious participation so that there is enjoyment built in as well.

Health in all inner and outer parts of body

For a perfect life, our entire body needs to have perfect health. Our body is composed of many internal parts such as organs, nerves, tissues, bones, blood, etc, and has several external parts as well. We need to ensure that our entire body is healthy and functioning well.

The moment we notice some imperfection in any part of our body, we can bring our attention to it and look at a holistic method to heal it.

Lightness

A feeling of lightness is another delight in the human body. If the body is left in a passive mode or when we eat heavy food, the body gets into *tamas* or laziness. Also, when we go through stress, the body picks up the tension and accumulates stress. The antidote to this is the delight of lightness felt and experienced in the body. Let us explore some simple ways by which we can infuse lightness into the body:

- ◆ The food that we consume has a direct impact on the lightness of our body. For example, if we eat heavy or stale food, our body feels lazy. The same happens when we overeat or add too much spice into our food. However, if we select our food in right quantities and balance and include more fresh vegetables and fruits, our body turns alive and fresh.
- ◆ The quality and duration of sleep, too, has an impact on the body. If we sleep too less, we will tire during the day. Also, if we sleep too much, we become lazy and lethargic. The right amount of sleep and waking early brings in freshness into the body. Morning hours between 4.00 a.m. and 6.30 a.m. are especially suitable for exercising, learning and to keep the body fresh. However, for this one needs to sleep at the right time.
- ◆ A good walk in the company of nature where we can feel the breeze, see the splendour of our surroundings and hear birds chirping always rejuvenates us and makes our body fresh and light.
- ◆ The other significant factor that brings in life and freshness into the body is breath. Most often, we have an unconscious relationship with breath. We consider it something mechanical. But breath is what brings life into our body. The first step is to make our breathing conscious. We can become aware of our 'in-breath' and 'out-breath'. If we continue this awareness for

some time, we may notice that our breath is often shallow and jerky. We can practice by breathing out (exhalation) fully and then allowing a nice full in-breath (inhalation). If we do this exercise for 10-20 minutes in the morning and for a short period at several intervals during the day, we will notice that our breath becomes deeper and smoother and that there is an increased freshness in the body. With awareness, we can notice that when life gives us jolts, our breath becomes jerky, shallow or rapid. Correspondingly, the body also gets tensed.

Do try an experiment. When you are faced with a challenge, relax your breath and breathe in deeply and focus consciously on the breath entering and filling your body. You will soon sense a shift in your body and your inner state. Now, if you can make your breathing even and rhythmic with an equal count of 'in-breath' and 'out-breath' with a harmonious rhythm, you find that it brings more balance in the body. This gives you a better center and inner-poise to tackle external challenges. A good practice is that the stomach bulges or 'expands out' when you breathe in and contracts or 'goes in' when you breathe out. An interested practitioner can delve more into conscious breath and its impact in our body and inner states.

Flexibility

Flexibility is another delight that can be developed in the human body. If we observe, we find that children, in general, are quite flexible. They can twist and turn in many different ways. They can jump up and down with ease. Even if they fall down they cry, brush the dirt away and continue to play. Somehow, as we grow older, our body becomes less flexible in its movements and becomes stiffer. Is this the normal state of our body or do we land up like this because of a lack of awareness and physical education? We need to look at some role models around us to arrive at a conclusion. There are several people well above the age of 80 whom the author met. Even though their body has become old, they still retain a good degree of flexibility. There are those aged more than 100 who are able to eat by themselves, bathe by themselves and move around comfortably – perhaps with the help of a walking stick. What is it that gives some people flexibility and others stiffness of the body?

Let us take an example of a physical object such as a nut and a bolt. If we keep using it to its full capacity, there will be the regular wear and tear, but if we keep oiling it and using it well, it serves its full life to the best possible extent. However, if we leave it unused for a long time it rusts, gathers dirt and withers away. It is similar with the human body and its flexibility. When the human is engaged in more physical work, the body is well developed and is quite flexible as all parts and joints are used. But today, often the body is static – sitting at a desk before the computer. To regain its fullest flexibility, we need to carve out a separate time for exercising. Some of the best ways of bringing in flexibility through exercise are:

- ◆ A good yoga asana practice is one of the best ways to bring in flexibility. A good yoga teacher can teach a well-orchestrated yoga routine that takes care of all parts of the body and its development and flexibility.
- ◆ Specifically during our exercises, every joint in our body can be rotated both anti-clockwise and clockwise to increase flexibility. These rotations can be done to a fixed count of 21. In a subsequent section, a good exercise regimen that helps to build flexibility, strength and the full use of each part of the body is explained.

Getting out of the way!

The body has an inherent urge to self-preserve and more or less take care of itself. If we accidentally put our hand into an electrical socket, it immediately withdraws by reflex action. From this example, we can infer that the body is programmed to survive and take care of itself. However our habits, fears, vital excesses, incorrect thought patterns and self-limiting beliefs cripple our body and weaken it. An effective method of *Sadhana* with respect to the body is to get these interferences out of the picture and allow the body to do its own healing.

Let's take something very simple. You go to a house where someone is sick and is coughing. You become fearful wondering if the coughing is infectious and you might catch it. Once outside, you suddenly realize that you are mildly warm. The mind then is gripped in fear and

doubts wondering if you have got the germ now within you. In short, through your fears you often manifest the sickness. If you could bring in some cessation to the vibration of fear and the worrying thoughts, most often you observe that the body soon rejects the temperature or other discomforts it has picked up and is totally fine. With this solid foundation of health, lightness and flexibility brought into the physical, we can now move on to explore how the other parts of being (vital life-force, mind and our deeper self) influence and enhance the physical.

Other Parts of Being Enhancing Physical

Sensory Enjoyment enhancing Physical: *Sensory awareness and joy during exercise or routine tasks*

Here we explore how the delight of sensory enjoyment and its capacity to make things sensorially interesting can be brought into the development of the physical. So, when we exercise, we can either do it mechanically with no fun or we can thoroughly enjoy the whole process and make it a new enriching experience. To accomplish this, we need to first become aware of our body at a sensorial level.

Let's understand this with an example. When you take a bath normally, it is a mechanical process.

The mind is thinking of something and you do it in a hurry to get the job done. However, if you slow down a bit and become aware of the water trickling down your skin and the touch of your hands as you apply soap throughout your body, you will feel very much energized even in the doing of this normal daily habit.

Similarly, when you exercise, you can bring in full sensory awareness into the body. If you walk in the company of nature, it is very easy. You can feel the breeze touching the skin. You can hear all the sounds in the background; relax your eye and take in a peripheral vision of all the colours and details around you. You can also bring in awareness of your breathing as you walk. Once you begin to enjoy this sensory awareness, you will find that your body comes out of the walk very much energized. On long treks when you grow tired, one of the best ways to become re-energized is by breathing in the fresh air and smelling the leaves and flowers along the path. Somehow, this

sensory connection to nature energizes your body and uplifts your inner state.

Even if you exercise indoors, you can bring in sensory awareness into the body and enjoy the whole process. You can start with your breath and notice how your breathing shifts with every movement of the exercise. In certain exercises and yoga asanas, built into the exercise is movement of the limbs in rhythm with breathing. For example, you can lift the leg 90 degree with the 'out-breath', say to a count of 6 or 8 and then bring it down with your 'in-breath', to an equal count. If you learn to do this, rhythmically and with a sense of enjoyment, the benefits of the exercise get much enhanced.

You can try to be aware of the sweat as it trickles on your skin during exercise; become aware of the inner stretch in your body and enjoy the flexibility as you practice regularly. You can appreciate the different sensations in your body like warmth, cold, mild tensions and knots. If you breathe in a gentle rhythm of inhalation and exhalation in a relaxed harmonious manner slowly, you will find the tensions in the body dissolving and the body restored to its best condition.

In a similar way, any routine task or habit can be performed with full enjoyment and awareness. That is when we can derive full benefit from the activity. Hence routine activities like cleaning, bathing, washing, gardening, walking or commuting from one place to the other can all be done joyfully.

Dynamic Energy enhancing Physical: *Resilience in the body to deal with challenging conditions*

Another important aspect of the body is building strength. Most often, we do our exercises in a slow manner, which primarily relaxes and brings flexibility to the body. We also need to pay attention to strengthening the body. We don't necessarily need to use weights to build strength. If we learn to do our exercises by bringing and holding strength, the body becomes strong and well built. Such a body will also give a great degree of inner strength and confidence. The exercise routine detailed at the end of this chapter gives a practical way to do this.

Psychologically, building resilience in the body is also key. If we expose the body to too much comfort, it loses its capacity to deal with challenges. A simple example is how people get so used to air-conditioning, that they cannot tolerate even a short power outage during the summer. Enjoying comforts is all right to an extent but at the same time, we need to support the body to retain its natural capacity to adapt to and endure any challenging situation. This natural capacity often withers by indulging in too much comfort.

Some simple ways of building resilience and endurance in the body are:

- ◆ If you notice you are bound by certain comforts, see if you can gently push your body to endure some discomforts with equanimity.
- ◆ Take up some challenging physical activity once in a while like going for a trek, mountain climbing, cycling, long and brisk walking, climbing the stairs up and down or walking from one place to another for the entire distance.
- ◆ Strength can also be used to weaken the hold of an old habit. It can also be used to sustain the new habit with determination till it becomes part of our routine.

Food is another source from which we can develop strength and resilience in the body. Today there is a trend towards skimpy eating and fad diets in an effort to lose weight. Weight in itself is not an issue as long as the body is well toned, strong, flexible and developed. We can eat all the different grains and food that provide strength. For example, potato when cooked in a *sattvic* way (e.g., avoid frying, add green chillies instead of red chilli powder) is an excellent source of strength.

Emotional Care enhancing Physical: *Love and care for the body*

Now it is an excellent move to encourage the body to endure and go beyond its limits. However, if the body is over burdened with vital rush and hurry, it often results in an injury. This necessitates the bringing in of love and care into the body. We all would have had this experience – if we cherish our pen or our bike or our mobile and

take good care of it, it lasts longer and functions very well. Even a plant in our house responds well to our care, love and appreciation. In such conditions the plant remains fresh, grows well and blossoms. Similarly, the human body responds to touch and care positively.

If there is any part of our body that is in discomfort, we can place our palms over it and give it our warmth, care, love and healing. We can admire and appreciate the body for its great support; give it a nice self-hug and love each part of our body no matter what its condition is. We can learn to respect the body and be sensitive towards it and engage in an activity only if it is healthy for the body – from the food we eat to the hours we sleep and the sensory inputs we feed into it. We will thus learn to treat the body as a living entity and take care of its holistic needs. The body responds very well to this care and love.

Objective Mind enhancing Physical: *Precise awareness of body's health/functioning*

Now it is time to bring in the delight of objectivity and measurement to serve the body's well-being. Too much love and care can cause us to miss the factual detail that is staring in the face and the intervention it requires.

The objective mind works very precisely. When there is a specific discomfort in the body, it can pay attention to the exact details and observe objectively – where exactly the pain is, how frequently does it occur, is it constant or intermittent, what seems to trigger this pain, what seems to reduce its intensity, etc. This mind can make a note of these objective observations over a period of time, for effective diagnosis of the problem. A person who has developed this capacity will thus be able to communicate clearly about what is happening in the body to a doctor or healer or even make notes for oneself.

A person adept in this delight will search around for the best solution to the precisely diagnosed problem. When choosing a doctor, the person will do his or her homework and collect all relevant information. He or she may also take references from someone who has been treated by that doctor besides reflecting on the merits and demerits of different medicinal systems and select what suits their personality and temperament.

So, in short when the objective mind serves the physical, there will be a precise awareness of the body, accurate diagnosis of the condition or problem, evaluation of various options and the ability to choose the best treatment. This also includes periodic monitoring of body parameters like weight, pulse, sleeping cycle, etc., to know accurately and track the condition of one's health.

There is a constant internal running commentary happening about our own body. These are some conscious or unconscious words or statements about our own body that is often running like a broken tape record that just repeats itself in seemingly endless loops. For example, say you have had a 'catch' twice in the hip when you bent down. Next time, you bend to lift up a large can of water, a word is muttered within, 'Watch out'. If you are conscious you will notice that the body cringes back instantly. Now if this thought 'Watch out' is repeatedly replayed within, the limitation slowly gets reinforced and starts to appear more real. This is where we can counter the mechanical mind's hold over the body by bringing in 'affirmations'. Affirmations act as an antidote to the limiting thoughts played constantly within. By consciously forming an empowering word or set of words and by repeating it consciously several times, we can imprint a healthy thought into our body. An example of such an affirmation is, 'I am healing' or 'Every day, the cells of my body are rejuvenating'. Any inspiring insight or message from this chapter can be converted into a short and crisp affirmation statement. An affirmation statement is positive, has a belief embedded into it and is stated in a present continuous tense. Here is an example of an affirmation, 'Every part of my body is relaxing NOW and is absorbing the healing energy from the sun, air, food and water.' You can try with your own affirmations. Upon few repetitions, if it feels good and feels as if the desired state is building up for real within you, then that is your perfect affirmation.

Idea Force enhancing Physical: *Realizing the ideology of physical development*

Contemplating on questions like 'why should the physical be developed?' and 'what is the larger purpose physical development plays in the evolution of the human species?' is a function of the pure mind. Whatever clarity of ideology the pure mind brings in about

the body, the idea force converts it into a creative plan to implement the ideology and enhance the quality of life through a holistic development of the physical. Say for example, the pure mind's prompt for the ideology of the physical is – physical transformation – to hold the essence of higher consciousness within the physical. The idea force, then further imagines or translates what the physical would appear as if it houses higher consciousness within it. It could clarify as (a) presence of inner beauty in the body, (b) body developing natural capacity to reject illness and (c) body developing capacity to relax and be still, when concentrating on something important. This brings lucidity about the revealing signs of the ideology for the objective mind to observe and realize.

Now, in the first instance, the critical nature of the objective mind could say that these are unrealistic and pie-in-the-sky ideas with no validity and perhaps no practical use. A well-developed idea force can visualize – What would be new systemic and systematic plans to realize these ideals in the body. It can envision the strategies and plans to realize these ideals in the physical.

To summarize, the idea force justifies the ideology and governing principles of physical development and upholds them with its creative will to transform the physical nature. It visualizes creative ways of transforming the physical and chooses what serves the ideology best.

Pure Mind enhancing Physical: *Clarified ideology for body's wellness, health and development*

We are primarily mental beings and for anything we do, we need an answer to the question: Why are we doing it? Or What purpose does it serve? Only then do we get full permission from the 'big boss' of the mind for anything we undertake. This 'why' is the ideology, philosophy, abstraction or the concept.

If we observe in an aware manner, we find that we have all kinds of concepts and ideologies about the body and its health floating in our mind. They are picked up from what we have read, heard and inferred. Most often these concepts and ideologies are contradictory and not well understood and internalized. So the first step is to become aware of the concepts of the body that are floating around.

Second is to understand, internalize and discriminate them. The third step is to arrive at a core ideology for the body and internalize it. We encourage you to do this right now and right here as you are reading this, so that this is experiential for you.

For the first step, let's take some examples. Some common concepts that people have shared about their body and health are:

- ◆ The body is a sacred temple. Only when we keep this temple clean and healthy, a good life is possible.
- ◆ The body is a problem and it finally has to die. We don't have to pay attention to it. What is important is for us to get enlightened in our mind and spirit.
- ◆ The body takes care of itself. We don't have to do anything about it.
- ◆ The body is the best machine.
- ◆ The body is a complex inter-connected being.

These are only some examples and it is recommended that the reader and practitioner clarify his or her own set of concepts held consciously or unconsciously. These concepts operate in our mind constantly, but most often, we are unaware of them. It is like wearing a blue-coloured filter in our eye. Since we are seeing through it constantly, we are not even aware that it is there. But it colours and governs how we see reality and carry out our actions. So only when we reflect and step back, our concepts become clear. This is the first step.

The second step is to understand and discriminate the concepts we hold based on the degree of truth and wisdom they hold and their possible influence on our lives. Let's take the last two examples to illustrate how this can be accomplished. If someone has a conscious or unconscious concept that views the body as a machine, they will treat the body mechanically and often pop pills following any discomfort. As per their concept if there is a loose nail, it needs to be tightened or hammered in. So they treat the body in the similar manner and want to fix it with a pill or a treatment. Thus often they

end up treating only the outer symptoms and are not concerned much about the side effects that arise from their solution. However, if someone has a concept that the body is an interdependent complex living system, then for every ailment, they will look for the underlying causes both physical, psychological and perhaps even spiritual. They will choose a treatment that is more holistic.

Similarly, we suggest the reader or practitioner take each of their concepts about their body and reflect to see the degree of truth and wisdom they contain and the implications that arise from embracing it. We encourage you to actually do it now.

The third step is to identify the core concept or ideology. A core ideology is something that is truest and widest – encompassing the key ideas of all the other concepts considered. Once the core ideology is identified, it can be internalized and brought as the governing light in life.

Let's do the second and the third steps with our example, which will help you to get a feel of it. For each concept, we shall draw out the key idea and reflect on the degree of truth and wisdom it holds. This is the second step. Next, we shall consider all the key ideas and arrive at the core ideology, which holds the most width and truth.

Concept	Key Idea	Degree of Truth and Wisdom
The body is a sacred temple. Only when we keep this temple clean and healthy, a good life is possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Body is sacred ♦ Cleanliness and health are important 	High (as it takes a higher and deeper view of the body)
The body is a problem and it finally has to die. We don't have to pay attention to it. What is important is for us to get enlightened in our mind and spirit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The perishable body is less important than the intelligent mind and transcendental spirit 	Moderate (as it is true in some aspects but ignores the body itself. This is also part of the old philosophy and does not embrace the integral view that all of life is to be transformed)

Concept	Key Idea	Degree of Truth and Wisdom
The body takes care of itself. We don't have to do anything about it.	♦ Body self-heals	Moderate (it holds a partial detail and misses the full picture)
The body is the best machine.	♦ Body's workings are predictable and precise	Moderate (takes a mechanical view of the body alone)
The body is a complex inter-connected being.	♦ The body is a living being ♦ Body's workings are complex with many inter-relating influences	High (takes a comprehensive view of the body)

For the above example, a possible core ideology, from all the key ideas taken from all concepts can be:

The body is a sacred, inter-connected being. Body self-heals, facilitated by our efforts, to keep it clean and healthy.

If we examine this core ideology, we can see that it holds a fairly good degree of truth and wisdom. It also takes all the key ideas of the other concepts and collates them cohesively, thus having a broader view. This core ideology thus has the capacity to cohesively guide our action.

We recommend that you arrive at your own core ideology of your body. The goal is to arrive at a cohesive and synthesized philosophy or ideology for the body, which can clearly guide action.

Spiritual enhancing Physical: *Silence, Peace and Conscious 'Prana' felt in the sacred space of body*

This is an area not much explored by many of us and so we humbly take our baby steps into this delight. First and foremost, even some centuries back, a popular view was that spirituality had nothing to do with the body. In fact, the goal of the yogi or spiritual master

was often to transcend the body, life-force and mind and access the higher transcendental consciousness. The body was seen as a burden as it had its own aches, pains and limitations. Accessing the formless was considered the ultimate goal. However, in this book we consider the body quite important in its role as the form that holds all our life experiences and consciousness within it. The qualities experienced through accessing a higher consciousness are brought into the day-to-day life, so that the whole of life is transformed. Thus, the transformation of the body as well as the vital life-force and mind, by the higher and deeper consciousness, is considered a significant part in our work.

We shall offer some clues here and we invite you to make your own journey into this domain, as often it is an individual journey here guided by one's own inner wisdom.

- ◆ When we have a full awareness of the body, beyond its perfect and imperfect workings, we can often sense an underlying current of quiet delight that is always present. This current of delight is underneath the pains and pleasures of the surface. This is why developing equanimity in the body, was always considered as important. This will help the individual transcend the surface undulations and gently taste the underlying current of wellness within.
- ◆ Advanced *sadhaks* often testify that the state of silence and peace that they access in their higher realms of consciousness is sensed in the body as a felt experience, as a dense and solid substance.
- ◆ The body has a living inherent intelligence that communicates with us if we can train ourselves to listen to it. Many have had the experience where they sit in front of a plate of food about to take a spoonful of it. But even before they raise the spoon to their mouth, the stomach sends out a signal of discomfort. Often in such times, if they take the hint and don't eat the food, they are fine. However, if they ignore the signal and eat the food, they often fall ill.
- ◆ Some people have come to the inner realization that their body is a temple with a soul in their inner heart. So they treat the body as a sacred space with reverence.

- ◆ For the body, breath can be seen as something of a panacea. There are some practitioners who have a great degree of awareness of the '*Prana*', the life force in the breath that transforms every part of the body. They feel alive and conscious in their whole body.

'Massage Master' Exercise

The exercise shared in this section has been gleaned by the author from a Master in the domain of the body and its well-being. Fondly called the 'Massage Master', he has deep knowledge of the *Marma* (hidden energy points) system of Kerala. He has taught a 20-minute exercise for the true nourishment and maintenance of the body. The exercise routine is very simple but when done in a specific way, it releases any 'energy locks' in our body and enables energy to flow through all the hidden points in our body. This protects the body and keeps it strong, flexible and in full working condition. The author acknowledges the Master's generosity for allowing him to share his method with the larger public. If one does this exercise regularly, the physical body is taken care of and remains well nourished, toned, strong and well maintained. Listed below are the key principles behind this exercise, and clarifies how this can be done to yield best results:

- ◆ **The healer in the body is the breath.** '*Prana*' or breath not only enters through the nostrils but enters through the joints of the body when we rotate them. When '*prana*' flows through all the hidden points of the human body, the physical parts of the body are well lubricated and function well. When '*prana*' gets stuck in any hidden point, then the corresponding part of the body becomes stiff and develops aches, pains or diseases. One of the methods used in this exercise is to rotate each joint of the body in a manner that activates the hidden points and enables the '*prana*' to flow throughout the body. In this exercise, each joint of the body is rotated 21 times anti-clockwise and then clockwise in a specific manner. The key benefit of this exercise is that it triggers and touches many '*Marma*' or hidden points in the body and thus it deeply contributes to the body's overall well-being.
- ◆ **The body, when it is used in its fullness of movements, retains its full capacity.** When we under-utilize the movements of the body,

the body's functions gradually deteriorate. So each movement in this exercise is to be done in its fullness of movement. For example, if we say do a hip rotation, the full rotation of hip needs to be done and not a partial movement. If we have pain in any particular body part, it would be wise to apply some oil over that region and then exercise. Either coconut or gingelly oil can be applied. The oil helps lubricate that particular part and slowly bring in the fullness of movement.

- ◆ **The muscles around each joint needs to be strong.** This protects the joints. Today, we only partially use our muscles. This set of exercises when done in the right manner, strengthens the muscles around the joints. To do these exercises weights or equipment are not needed. Each move of these exercises needs to be done by holding strength, by holding the muscles firm around each joint involved in the exercise. We then rotate the particular body part with strength to build up the muscles. This also activates the corresponding hidden energy points located around each joint and when done with a full movement, the full functioning of that body part is restored. For example, when we move our hands over our head and down and do it like a warm up, we would not get much benefit. If we hold the hands tight with strength and move the hand up to our head and down using our strength, muscles build in this part and full normal functioning is maintained. When done every day, the body develops a subtle muscular tone.

Using these three principles, we suggest that you practice the following movements of this exercise. In our understanding it takes about 20 minutes. Each part of this exercise is to be done 21 times. For example, if it is a rotation movement, it can be done 21 times anti-clockwise and 21 times clockwise. If you are not used to exercising at all, you can start with a lesser count and bring it up to 21 counts, over a period of time.

Three key pointers to keep in mind while doing this exercise are:

- ◆ Do the full rotation movement, so that any locked '*prana*' or energy is released. This will also ensure that '*prana*' is circulated sufficiently into each respective joint in the body, that is being exercised.

- ◆ Do each rotation with strength and certain tightness so that muscles build up around the joints.
- ◆ Consciously hold the right posture and movement as indicated here, so that the 'hidden energy points' are activated.

The author vouches for this method. He practices these exercises every day. Whenever he was in doubt he has clarified details with the Massage Master. The one thing that astonishes him is the belief structure of the Master – 'If this exercise is done in the exact way, no illness can touch the human'. The Master invariably then explains why this is true, based on his deeper understanding of the body. So let's get started:

1) **Knee rotations** – bend your knees forward slightly; hold it with some tightness and strength; and rotate anti-clockwise and clockwise. 21 times. When you do this movement place your hands on your knees to rotate more fully.

2) **Hip rotations** – anti-clockwise and clockwise. With hands on the hip do the full movement – forward, sideways and backwards. 21 times.

3) **Neck Strengthening** (This is one of the most important parts of this exercise. There are a lot of hidden energy points in the neck region and they get activated through this exercise)

- ◆ Up-down movements. Move your chin and head to look up. Move your chin down so that the chin touches and presses down on your neck. 21 times.

- ◆ Side to side (left to right) movements. Look full to your left and full to your right. 21 times.

- ◆ Shoulder to shoulder movements with eyes looking up in the other direction. Press your head sideways to your shoulder both on the left and right side. Without lifting your shoulders, let the side of the chin press against your shoulders with a little tightness and pressure, as you do this movement. 21 times.



- ◆ Full neck rotation – anti-clockwise and clockwise. Do a full neck rotation with your chin locking and sliding on your neck as you do a full neck rotation. 21 times.

4) Arms – Upper Region

- ◆ Stretch your arms horizontally to the side. Clench your fist tight, folding your fingers inwards and then unclench fully. 21 times.



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- ◆ Keep your arms stretched horizontally to the side. Clench your fist and hold it tight; rotate your wrists in one direction 21 times and then the other direction.



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- ◆ Keep your arm (from the shoulder to the elbow) down and hold it tight against your body. Tighten your muscles around your elbows and rotate both your forearms in a side-to-side circular outwards movement 21 times, and then do the same as an inwards circular movement.



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- ◆ Arm Rotation: Make a fist and hold your arm (from shoulder to wrist) tight in front of your body. Rotate your whole arm upwards with strength as if you are lifting someone strong and bring it down, over your head and backwards. So this will be a full upwards-backwards-downwards arm rotation. You will feel tightening and strengthening in your chest and shoulder blades. 21 times.



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- ◆ Opposite Arm Rotation: Rotate your arms from shoulders to wrist in the opposite direction as if you are pushing someone down. This will be a downwards-backwards-upwards arm rotation. Hold your arm firm and strong as you do this movement. 21 times.



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- ◆ Keep your hands beside your body, on the sides. Move your arms (from shoulder to your wrist) upwards till the arms touch your ear and your wrists cross each other; and then bring your arm down. Do this movement with some tightness and strength in your arms. 21 times.



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- ◆ Now hold your arms shoulder to elbow tight on the sides of your chest, with your arm from elbow to wrist horizontal to the ground, palms facing upwards. Now make a fist; tighten and bend your fore-arm until your wrists almost touch your shoulder. Move your forearm forwards till your arms are straight and horizontal to the ground. Repeat this movement 21 times.
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- ◆ Wrestling posture: Hold both your arms pulled outwards away from your body at chest level. With strength bring your arms together, with your arms fully crossing each other and reaching your opposite shoulders. With strength pull your arms back with your shoulder blades tightening. Continue this movement, maintaining your arms at chest level for 21 times.



5) Lower Region

- ◆ Stand with your feet wide apart. Slide your left arm down along the left leg, bending sideways to touch your feet without bending your knees; as you do this make a fist and slide your right wrist to your right armpit. Repeat the movement vice versa on the other side. 21 times.



- ◆ Alternate Toe touching: Continue to stand with your feet wide apart. Bend sideways crossing your right arm to touch your left toe; as you do this, your left arm will lift up on the same side pointing to the sky; when you are touching your toes turn your neck upwards and see your left arm. Repeat the same movement vice versa in the opposite direction. 21 times. Do this with strength.



- ◆ Continue to stand with your feet wide apart. Bend down and move your arms forward and touch the ground; move backwards through the space between your legs and touch the ground. 21 times.



- ◆ Bring your feet together and stand straight with your hand held above your head, stretched upwards. Bend backwards, then bend down and try to touch your toes with your hands. Then come up and stand straight with your hand stretched upwards. Do this movement 21 times. Throughout this process keep your knees straight without bending. On the last count of 21, when your hands are touching your toes stay down for a few seconds and then come up very slowly.



6) Final Sequence

- ♦ Lie down on the floor, arms close to your body (or a bit away). Lift your legs (without bending your knees) up to 90° or more towards your head. Bring your legs down (without bending your knees) back to the lying down position. 21 times.



- ♦ Continue to lie down on the floor. Sit up and bend forwards (without bending your knees) to touch your feet with your hands. If necessary, bend your toes so that it can easily touch the tip of your fingers. Let go, come back and lie down on the floor. Do this movement 21 times.



- ♦ This is perhaps one of the most important steps in this exercise as it triggers many hidden energy center points in our body. Stand up straight and using both your knuckles tap on the sides of your forehead, closer to the hairline. Repeat this a few times. Then cross your arms and hold your left ear with your right hand, and right ear with your left hand. Pull both your ears outwards and do a full sit-up. 21 times. In this step, holding and pulling your ear outwards activates a lot of hidden energy center points in your ear. Doing a full sit-up activates many important hidden energy points on the back of your knees.



- ♦ Arms parallel to the floor at shoulder level palms facing downwards (elbows stretched out slightly with fingertips not touching) twist the upper part of the body side to side – fully from left to right. 21 times.



No matter how great an exercise is, nothing happens without the Grace of the One Will. At the end of the exercise take a few seconds, connect to your Divine, One Source or Nature. And offer the exercise and the well-being of your body into the Grace of the Higher Wisdom and Power.

Teach this Chapter to Someone!

Some guidelines on how you can teach the insights and exercises from this chapter to someone and thus gain the benefit of learning it yourself, follow:

- ◆ Teach the 20-minute exercise to someone. Both of you may do it together for a few days and do it in the specific way as instructed in the three key principles of how to do the exercise. Energize each other to practice this exercise every day. According to the 'Massage Master', this is done best before any other exercise is done and done best in a open space where the body can 'breathe' fully.
- ◆ Read parts of this chapter with each other. See which part talks to each of you. Share with the other how you plan to practice the method written here.
- ◆ Identify an old habit that you want to change. Identify a new habit you want to bring in instead. Motivate each other to 'just do' the new habit each day till it becomes established. If in a day, either of you do not feel inspired to do the new habit, still motivate the other to 'just do' the new habit till it becomes stable. If either of you feel 'bored' to do the new habit, still motivate each other to 'just do' it.
- ◆ Discuss how each of you can tune into the body's own intelligence and enable the body to remain healthy in the most natural ways possible.
- ◆ Enable each other to clarify and internalize the core ideology for the holistic development of the body, as per the method described in the 'Pure mind enhancing Physical' section (on page 64).

Reflection and Practice

In summary, in the evolution of the whole of creation, first there was matter represented by the stone. Then, there was life represented by the plant and animal kingdom and subsequently there was the mind and the emergence of human beings. A human being is a unique creation who carries the essence of all other stages of evolution within him or her and holds the seeds of the future as well. In the human, there is present a physical nature, which needs to be completely transformed from its original dull, dense and inert quality to be a conscious stable upholder of the play of the higher consciousness within it. The healthier, stronger and resilient the physical is, the greater is one's capacity to manifest one's work in life.

A great degree of patience and persistence is needed to transform the physical part of our being. Regular conscious practices chosen for this purpose help in the methodical and sustained transformation of the physical.

Any practice has two essential mantras for its success – *a practice is effective when it is gradual and a practice is sustained when it is mechanically repeated for sufficient time*. If a practice is brought in too suddenly, our system rejects it. If a practice is done for only a short time, it does not stick. So the formula for physical transformation is – take a tiny step of a practice, gradually increase its challenge to optimum level and repeat the practice till it becomes a healthy habit.

We end this chapter with an old story. There was once a very learned scholar who wanted to cross the river. So, he went to the ferry and got into a boat. As the journey began, he asked the ferryman if he had studied the science and knowledge of the world. The ferryman said no. He said 'Oh. A quarter of your life is wasted'. He then asked the ferryman if he had studied the scriptures, which pointed to the world beyond. The ferryman said no. He said, 'Oh my God. A half of your life is wasted'. And thus he continued for some time in a similar vein. Meanwhile, a hole had formed in the boat and water started to gush in. Despite the ferryman's efforts, he could not save the boat. Soon, the boat collapsed and all fell into the river. Now, it was the turn of the ferryman. He asked the scholar, 'You have learnt so much,

do you know how to swim?’ The scholar in-between gulps of water said, ‘Oh no. I had no time for that.’

And the ferryman said, ‘Then your whole life is wasted now!’

At times we are much like the scholar in our life. We take efforts to study, get a good job, get married, buy a house and car, have kids, etc. However, in the midst of this we often forget to take care of the body that makes all this possible. The modern man and woman often run into bodily difficulties as early as their 30s and 40s. What is the point of building a beautiful structure on a weak foundation?

May we start as early as we can and build a solid and healthy base of our body!

In the space below, jot down your insights and reflections that emerged as you read through this chapter. Most importantly reflect on the below:

- ◆ Overall how purified and developed is your physical – body and habits? What are the aspects that need more purification and development?

- ◆ Are you aware and giving attention to your body at an experiential level on a daily basis?

- ◆ Are you consciously nurturing empowering habits on a daily basis?

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- ◆ Do you exercise daily? Is your exercise built to give health, lightness, strength and flexibility in your body?

- ◆ From the many methods that were described for the transformation of the body and habit, which are resonating with you? Which of them are you planning to include in your daily *Sadhana* practice?

- ◆ Work on the physical part of being is not a destiny to reach, but a journey to continue. Reflect what are the physical journeys (exercises and lifestyle habits) you have begun and how you can sustain them over your lifetime.

