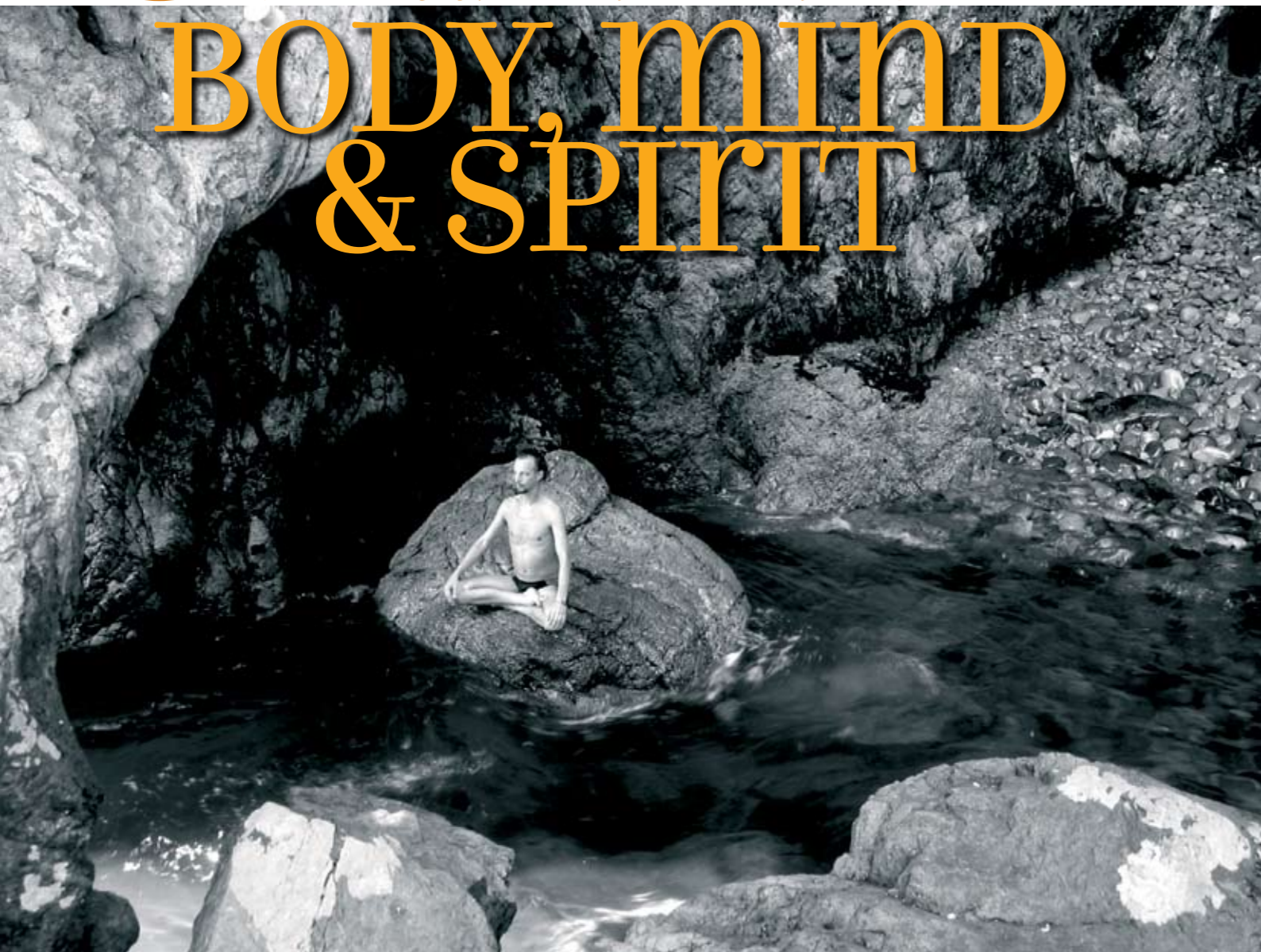
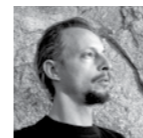


Nourish the BODY, MIND & SPIRIT



Validating both worlds, having a comfortable relationship with body, mind and spirit, comes from real joy and not superficial pleasure, when feeding the body is more than eating, exercise more than just getting fit, spirituality more than going to church.

By Johann Kotze



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All matter, material as well as non-material, is energy. This energy includes sources that make life possible – nutrition as well as thought, and often overlooked but vital aspects such as the breath and flexibility. Attaining glowing wellbeing means to provide the energetic needs of the entire being, the body, mind and spirit, with quality, life-affirming energy, as all energy has either a positive or detrimental influence on some aspect of the being, and influences the total being in one way or another.

Life prospers when fuelled by a wholesome connection to the life force that makes the existence of all living things possible. All material things exist on the material plane as an expression of the universal spirit of life; whether in the form of solar energy that makes it possible for plants to grow and human beings to eat, or in the form of dreams that shape the human mind and willpower. The human body and mind, as an organic and mentally or spiritually aware being, is most whole and therefore healthy, when attuned to the natural life-force energy of the universe.

A health-giving physical lifestyle should then include all the myriad of ways to take care of the body and mind. A lifestyle based on serving the spirit of life is best served by a truly life-affirming existence that aims to remove all negative energy from thinking, action and diet. Satisfying the body's needs with common sense dietary and nutritional sensibility, drinking enough water, getting enough rest, and exposure to a positive and stimulating mental environment and contentedness are therefore as important to establish vitality as are good posture, effective breathing, mobility and freedom from stress. This is a most potent formula for wellbeing when driven by the mental focus and calmness achieved by meditation.

START WITH THE MIND

Meditation is a practice of conscious awareness. Achieving body, mind and spirit harmony is essentially a practice of such awareness, and should be sought in a lifestyle that is considerate to simplicity and quality of life in material and spiritual terms. Simplicity = purity + consciousness – this equation brings about a harmonious balance of the pleasure that can be had from the material world, drawing the spiritual into the physical realm. The spiritual qualities of being are brought forth without living only for the sake of materialism.

Pursuing such a vision encourages the practitioner to look inward to attain outer success. It teaches the

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value of joy or happiness as a deep and lasting pleasure, an enjoyment of all the senses without succumbing to hedonism. The sensual nature of touch, sound, taste and sight are explored as important lessons in both materialism and spirituality.

A SPIRITUAL AWARENESS OF LIFE

In a holistic body-mind-spirit sense the materialist cannot appreciate the physical world as much as a spiritualist can, and there can be no spiritual fulfilment without appreciation of the physical world. Nurturing an understanding of the vastness and simplicity of this interrelatedness deepens one's understanding of exercise, diet and lifestyle habits as outer, physical reflections of the inner world. Validating both worlds, having a comfortable relationship with body, mind and spirit, comes from real joy and not superficial pleasure, when feeding the body is more than eating, exercise more than just getting fit, spirituality more than going to church.

Spirit may be thought of as that which animates the mind and body. The being is not whole without the spirit that inspires all its actions, while spirit itself is driven by the universal life force. Spirit with its life force is a power from beyond the tangible, material world. Its presence can only be felt or sensed, and therefore often becomes a rather vague abstraction.

The 'spirit of man' may also be viewed as a fundamental emotional, activating principle that determines character. 'Spirit' in this sense refers to the ability of humans to experience thoughts, feelings and emotions, to connect to the heart and soul that renders humans capable of compassion, creativity and love. Spirit then is that which 'makes you what you are', the hidden aspect of the being. In this sense spirit is the higher self, the higher aspect of the being. When this spirit is combined with the intellect or 'thinking mind' you are a metaphysical spirit-person capable of a mixture of philosophical thinking and self-inquiry.

A whole, aware (spiritual) being will have close contact with the unseen inner spirit of being. They will be aware of the spirit energy in nature, in plants and animals, and know that spirit is the life force that animates all living things.

Blending the physical and non-physical in the same sphere (the body and mind) is the essence of body-mind-spirit integration. From a spiritual point of view one may think of the body as spirit having a physical experience. The extent to which you acknowledge your spiritual being or the material reality varies from individual to individual, but making some connection between the subtle energy and physical bodies is important to achieve whole-being (body-mind-spirit) interaction and wellbeing.

A spiritual-mental way of looking at expressions such as 'we are what we think' is similar in a physical-energy manner to the expression 'we are what we eat'. It is mental conditions that manifest as disease or health, and the reason why the ability to tap into the healing powers of the mind/spirit being is so important.

As so much of modern, busy lifestyle – attitudes, social structures and conditioning – limits the necessary sensitivity to the finer sensibilities of the mind-spiritual dimension, its impact on the body may sometimes be difficult to grasp. Acknowledging who and what we really

are, and making room to explore the subtleties of being are therefore important considerations of wellbeing. When such sensitivity is developed in accordance with posture, breathing and mobility, both aspects of being will grow. You may then find far more joy in the body, in harmony with your mind, an expression of spiritual awareness.

BODY PRACTICES AS AN EXPRESSION OF SIMPLICITY AND SPIRITUALITY

The body should be a temple of life, and the world, ideally, its temple grounds. To support and respect the body is to respect the self and nature, and will earn support from the spirit of life. A life lived fully demands a developed awareness of the spirit of life, human consciousness is as much part of the physical experience of the world as it is divine. Wholesome purity in caring for the body is not puritanical, but a mechanically and energetically sound way to support the being on its journey through life. Striving for the highest possible quality of life at all ages is not about living longer, but living more fully.

Exercise, rest, diet and cleansing should embrace life as a spiritual and physical discipline, and be reflected in holistic health values. Eating and bathing should go beyond the functionality of filling the tummy to prevent hunger, washing to be clean, exercising for fitness and sleeping when tired. Exercise should invigorate, rest should honour the rhythms of life, eating should nourish, and bathing, sanctify.

Wholesome food keeps the digestive tract in the best possible condition, and in combination with enough water, helps to avoid toxic conditions by cleansing the area where such conditions first develop. Wholesome food meets nutritional values without adding unnecessary toxins to the already compromised environment of our time. Balancing quality, quantity and a healthy attitude towards food and eating in accordance with each individual's physical needs and lifestyle, coupled with effective breathing and circulation supported by full mobility, benefit all body systems. These factors increase the strength of the immune system, improve skin tone and bring greater clarity of mind.

BECOME WHAT YOU ARE

The bliss of a spiritually awakened person radiates a peaceful purpose, a goodness and wellbeing that comes from a conscious connection with the life force – a source of stability through the highs, doubts and uncertainties of being human. Growing into such a conscious being, finding and establishing an individual identity and ways to express this spiritual self in everyday life, transform the ordinary existence into the magical, to 'become what you are' – a full body-mind-spirit being.

A being comfortable in the material world is a being in a rested, relaxed body, with a clear mind. The glow of radiant wellbeing of a body supported by a good diet, enough water, happy thoughts and carried effortlessly in a graceful manner transcends age. Wellbeing is a pursuit of the virtues that deliver this kind of beauty that shows in the glow of the skin, a twinkle in the eye, attractive radiance that comes from within, a reflection of the saying 'true beauty goes more than skin deep'. ☺

