

Speech is greatest among the faculties, an index of the mind, and the glory of human culture; but the origin of all speech is in Breath. Whence comes the Breath and whither it goes may be learned by following the advice of the Delphic Oracle: "Man Know Thyself." — THE ZODIAC.

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BREATH.

MEMBERS of the human family breathe from the moment of entrance into this physical world until the time of their departure, but not until the last quarter of the last century has the western branch of the family given serious attention to the great importance of breathing, and to the process of breathing. Attention having been directed to the subject, they have adopted the methods advised by "teachers" and many have gone breathing mad. Professors of the science of breath have appeared among us, who, for a consideration, teach the uninitiated how to get and how to keep immortal youth, rise in opulence, acquire power over all men, control and direct the forces of the universe, and how to attain to eternal life.

We are of opinion that breathing exercises would be of benefit only if taken under the instruction of one who possessed real knowledge and after the mind of the student had been trained and fitted for them by the study of philosophy, because that would teach of the different faculties and qualities in the student as they are developed by breathing, and would let him cope with dangers of psychic development. Long deep natural breathing is good, but, as a result of practicing breathing exercises, many have weakened the action of the heart and contracted nervous disorders, developed diseases, more frequently consumption become despondent and melancholy, acquired morbid appetites and exaggerated fancies, have unbalanced their minds, and have even ended in suicide.

There are different kinds of breath. There is the Great Breath which ebbs and flows in ceaseless rhythm; by it systems of universes are breathed out from the invisible to the visible realms. From each of the innumerable solar systems is breathed out its own system of worlds; and again each of these breathes out multifarious forms. These forms are reabsorbed by the inbreathing of the world systems, which disappear in their solar system, and all flow back in the Great Breath.

Through man, who is the copy of all this, many kinds of breath are playing. What is commonly called the physical breath is no breath at all, it is the act of breathing. The movement of breathing is caused by the psychic breath which is common to man and animals alike, this breath holds the life in form. Breath is not nitrogen and oxygen, but these elements with others are used by the psychic breath to support the body with certain food. This breath plays many parts and serves many purposes. When it enters the body at birth it makes the connection between the life in that body and the ocean of life in which the earth and the body of man are moving. Once the connection is established this breath relates the life current without and within the body to the principle of form, which moulds the fiery current of life into the design and form of the body. Acting on stomach and liver this breath stimulates in them the appetites, the passions, and desires. As the wind plays over the strings of an aeolian harp, so the psychic breath plays over the net-work of nerves in the body, agitates the mind and leads it in the direction of vagrant thoughts, thoughts not one's own or the dwelling on and carrying out of the desires suggested by the body.

But the true breath of man is the mind breath and is of a different nature. It is the instrument through which the incarnating mind works with the body. This is the breath which affects the thoughts, that is, the thoughts produced by the mind. This mind breath is the body or the nascent principle of the mind itself, which the eternal soul of man uses as its vehicle to make connection with the physical body at birth. When this breath has entered the body at birth, it establishes the relationship between the physical body and the ego or "I am" principle. Through it the ego enters the world, lives in the world, leaves the world, and passes from incarnation to incarnation. The ego operates and works with the body through this breath. The constant action and reaction between body and mind is carried on by this breath. The mind breath underlies the psychic breath.

There is also a spiritual breath, which should control the mind and psychic breath. The spiritual breath is the creative principle through which the will becomes operative, controls the mind, and conforms the life of man to divine ends. This breath is guided by the will in its progress through the body where it awakens the dead centers, purifies the organs which were made impure by a sensual life, stimulates the ideals, and calls into actuality the latent divine possibilities of man.

Underlying all these breaths and supporting them is the Great Breath.

With a rushing vortex-like motion the breath, which is the mind breath, enters into and surrounds the body at birth with the first gasp. This entrance of the breath is the beginning of the building up of the individuality through that earthly human form. There is one center of the breath within the body and another center outside of the body. Throughout life there is a tidal ebb and flow between these two centers. At the time of each physical inbreathing there is a corresponding outbreathing of the mind breath. Physical, moral, and spiritual health, depends on the harmonious movement of the breath between these centers. Should one wish to breathe by any other than the involuntary movement, care must be taken that the kind and process of breathing

determined on should depend on the student's physical, moral, and spiritual fitness, in his ambitions and aspirations. The breath is the inward and outward swing of the pendulum which ticks off the life of the body. The movement of the breath between the two centers holds the balance of life in the body. If it is interfered with through stupidity or by intent, the health of the body and mind will be impaired and disease or death will result. The breath normally flows from the right nostril for about two hours, then it changes and flows evenly through both nostrils alike for a few minutes, and then through the left nostril for about two hours. After that it flows evenly through both, and then again through the right nostril. In all who are fairly healthy this continues from birth to death.

Another peculiarity of the breath not generally known is that it pulsates in and around man in waves of varying length, which is determined by the breathing of nature, and on his physical, moral, and spiritual health and development.

Now the practice of breathing consists in the voluntary changing of the flow from left or right nostril to the right or left, as the case may be, before the natural change sets in, involuntarily preventing the flow, and also in changing the wave length. In connection with what has been said of the breath it must be apparent that the subtle connection of man with the universe may be easily interfered with and his relationship thrown out of balance. Hence the great danger to the ignorant and rash who take breathing exercises without the assurance of being fitted, and of having a qualified teacher.

The movement of the breath acts in many capacities in the body. The maintenance of animal life requires the continued absorption of oxygen and excretion of carbonic acid. By inbreathing the air is drawn into the lungs where it is met by the blood, which absorbs the oxygen, is purified, and is conveyed through the arterial system to all parts of the body, building and feeding cells; then by way of the veins the blood returns charged with carbonic acid and with part of the waste products and effete matter, all of which are expelled from the lungs by outbreathing. So the health of the body depends on sufficient oxygenation of the blood. Over or under oxygenation of the blood causes a building of cells by the current of the blood which are defective in their nature, and allows disease germs to multiply. All physical disease is due to over or under oxygenation of the blood. The blood is oxygenated through the breathing, and the breathing depends on the quality of thought, light, air, and food. Pure thoughts, plenty of light, pure air, and pure food, induce correct breathing and therefore a proper oxygenation, hence perfect health.

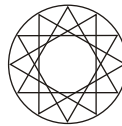
The lungs and skin are not the only channels through which a man breathes. The breath comes and goes through every organ in the body; but it is understood that breath is not physical, but psychic, mental, and spiritual.

The breath stimulates the stomach, liver, and spleen; the appetites, passions, and desires. It enters the heart and gives power to the emotions and thoughts; it enters the head and starts the rhythmic motion of the soul organs in the inner brain, bringing them into relation with the higher

planes of being. So the breath which is the nascent mind is transformed into the human mind. The mind is the conscious "I am," but the "I am" is the beginning of the path which leads to the ineffable One Consciousness.

This is one of a number of editorials that first appeared in Harold W. Percival's monthly magazine, The Word, between 1904 and 1917. By the time his books were published - between 1946 and 1952 - he had developed a new terminology that would enable him to better convey the results of his thinking. This largely explains any differences between these earlier writings and Percival's later works.

Mr. Percival dictated most of the editorials that appeared in The Word. Occasional typos were not uncommon and likely due to tight monthly deadlines and the necessity of typesetting each letter by hand. In the interest of preserving the authenticity of these documents, we have reproduced them here in their original format, including typographical errors and the punctuation usage and style of a different era. As much as possible, we have also retained the typestyle and layout of the pages as they appeared in the early years of the twentieth century. More of the Percival editorials are available at www.TandD.org.



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