

Tibb and the Breath of Life

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July 2017

What does a new-born baby do first? It takes a deep breath, before greeting the world with a piercing cry. This is because the environment's air is the most essential factor in maintaining life. Most can live without water for a few days, and without food or sleep for a several days longer. But without air to breathe we will scarcely survive for a few minutes. Even in times long gone by, the quality of air our ancestors breathed was important to the health conscious. Nowadays, good air quality, at home, work or social venues, is the basis of most public health programmes.

We are generally unaware of the air which surrounds us. This is because it is invisible, free, and rarely noticed, unless it is really polluted and offensive. So we tend to take this vital, indispensable substance for granted. However, our state of health depends to a surprising degree on the quality of the air we breathe in, and the various agents good (like oxygen) or bad (like toxins), it contains. It also depends on the changes in air which occur from season to season, from place to place, and whether is pure or laden with dangerous particles or hostile microbes.

Our nervous system, especially the brain, demands a high intake of oxygen for its many metabolic activities. This is obtained from the air we breathe in. If this air is polluted the brain will ultimately suffer greatly, and mental clarity and thinking will be impaired.

The Miasmatic Theory of Disease was a popular ancient theory, held for hundreds of years, and proposed that many diseases, such as tuberculosis, cholera and malaria were caused by miasmas, or a poisonous form of air or water containing toxic particles which emanated from swamps, refuse dumps, rotting carcasses and sewers. Today, the miasmatic theory takes a different form. Instead of the traditional miasma, we now have particles from cigarettes, automobiles, aeroplanes and factories which trigger various respiratory diseases like asthma and bronchitis.

Tibb regards environmental air and breathing as one of the main Six Lifestyle Factors. It is the essential component needed to provide the primary source of nutrition, pneuma, for the Vital Faculty, which is the source of life for our body. In a nutshell, our health is determined to an important degree by the quality of the air we breathe, and how we breathe it. Oxygen is required, directly or indirectly, for all biological processes in our bodies, especially providing energy.

Tibb also accepts that our environmental air is influenced by other related factors, such as seasonal variation, local climate, geographic location and environmental changes. These may have substantial effects, positive or negative, on our digestion, quality of sleep and body waste removal.

Breathing is the vehicle by which Physis maintains harmony between the balance of oxygen taken in and carbon dioxide removed from the body. It is a natural waste product, formed from biochemical respiration during the myriad of metabolic processes that life entails.

Better breathing is arguably as important as the quality of the air. Shallow breathing leads to fatigue and muscle tension. Normal rhythmic breathing has a cooling and moistening effect. It gently pacifies the heat of the heart and sustains a balanced degree of moistness needed for energy production to sustain physical and mental activities during the day.

There are several breathing exercises (<http://tibb.co.za/environment.html>) which are promoted to improve general health, reduce stress and find calm, increase vitality and mental alertness. Ultimately they revolve around varying the rate and degree of inspiration and expiration, focus on the stomach breathing, whether or not combined with meditation or other activity, and time, location and posture. The Tibb breathing exercises are simple, suitable for people of all ages.

Learning to breathe properly is a good, cost-effective way of improving in our health. The benefits you will see will take your breath away.