

THE SCIENCE OF BREATHING AND WHITE MAGIC

INTRODUCTION

Breathing is the primal and most vital requisite of our life. The first thing we do when our physical body is born is breathing in and the last thing we do before the soul leaves our body is breathing out. Our life has its course between the first breathing in and the last breathing out. In fact, our life is happening between every in- and outbreath. The breath of Life is the rhythmic inflow of the spirit and of vital energy, it is the essential impulse or Life which is the cause of all manifestation.

In this paper I will discuss what the Ageless Wisdom is telling us about the Science of Breathing and its relation to White Magic, according to the great book *'Treatise on White Magic'* of Alice Bailey. I will add to this my own observations and thoughts that I gathered during my thirteen years' experience as a breath therapist in which I worked, and still work, with many clients.

WHO IS BREATHING WHAT?

Who is the one who breathes during our whole life? Is our personality, our lower or earthly self, breathing on its own by a mere physical or mechanic process, or is the breather something, or someone else? And if so, what or who is this?

For ages we have identified ourselves with the form, our physical body, and still a large group within humanity, including many scientists, is doing this. We have emphasized the effects of breathing but have not understood its nature. Nor did we know the nature of the One who breathes. Now in our work as aspirants and disciples, learning to be White Magicians, we are concerning ourselves with that One who breathes rhythmically and drives, in doing this, the form (our physical body) into right action and right control.

That One is the Soul. This is the One who breathes the life in the body through the life thread or Sutratma. Through this Sutratma it vitalises the triple instrument of the body (physical, emotional and mental) and thus sets up a communication with the brain. Through the conscious control of the brain we become intelligently active on the physical plane. In TWM (p. 62) Master Djwhal Khul (DK) states: *"The soul breathes and its form lives thereby."* This is a clear statement that the Soul is the animator of the Breath of Life.

And what exactly is that Breath of Life that the Soul breathes? *"Who shall say?"* asks Master Djwhal Khul (DK) in *'A Treatise on White Magic'*. He proceeds: *"We trace it back to the soul or consciousness aspect, and from the soul to the spirit (as we call the three aspects of the one breath) but what these words really signify, who has the courage to declare? We call this unknown something by differing names, according to our particular school of thought; we seek to express it in words, and end by call it Spirit, the One Life, the Monad, Energy."* (TWM, p. 23)

He adds *“that understanding as to the nature of this one life is purely relative.”* (p. 24) Those who are focused on the exoteric form side of life think in terms of physical vitality, feeling, impulse or mental force. Those who are interested in the esoteric approach and in the soul-life, speak about spirit, soul manifestation, life or quality.

I count myself as belonging to this last group and I regard the Soul as the one who breathes the “one life”, or the spirit or vital energy, through the body and, by doing this, brings and keeps its form alive.

So, in short, it is the Soul who is the breather, and he breathes the Breath of Life or the Life-Breath, the mysterious and vital life energy, through the body.

THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS OF BREATHING

When we, as aspirants, adjust ourselves to the rhythmic nature of the Soul life and the Soul’s meditation, we begin to realise that there is ever a flowing in and a flowing out. This steady and inevitable rhythm can be compared with the waves of ebb and flow that occur in nature, like the tides of the ocean. This is an eternal law that is also applicable on the Breath of Life. The inbreath, which is vitalising and stimulating the etheric body, is rhythmically and inevitably followed by the outbreath as long as life occurs.

But the breathing process consists of three stages:

1. Inhalation or breathing in
2. The retention of the breath
3. Exhalation or breathing out

Each of these three stages is described in Rule IV of the process of White Magic, which is formulated as follows:

“Sound, light, vibration, and the form blend and merge, and thus the work is one. It proceedeth under the law, and naught can hinder now the work from going forward. The man breathes deeply. He concentrates his forces, and drives the thought-form from him.” (TWM, p. 123)

Let’s first look at the stage of *inhalation*. In this Rule the phrase “The man breathes deeply” refers to this inhalation. In our phenomenal or outer life as a physical form it is the Soul who draws the breath into the body from the very depths of the source of life. When, as aspirants or disciples, we start to detach ourselves from the outer process of phenomenal living, we discover that by practising the science of breathing we can activate our vital body with its force centres or chakras through deep breathing.

The second stage of the breathing process is the *retention* of the breath in which “we concentrate our forces”, as it is formulated in Rule IV. Herewith we hold the life forces steadily in a place of silence where the Soul temporarily has withdrawn the breath, the life, *“out of the three worlds and in the secret place of the most high”* where it *“is at rest and at peace, contemplating the beatific (joyful; EH) vision.”* (TWM, p. 150)

This pause between the inbreath and the outbreath, or in general between two activities, is in a higher sense the stage of contemplation, or an interlude of intense concentration in which we have an opportunity to find a deeper connection with the Soul.

The third and final stage is the *exhalation*, or the breathing out with which we “drive the thought-form from us”, as it is said in Rule IV. Through deep breathing we vitalize an intention or form with the inhale, connect with the Soul, further strengthening the intention during the interlude of retention, and then send the form forth “*to do its work and fulfil its mission*” with the exhale. This “*holds the secret of creative work*”. (TWM, p. 151) The “breathing forth” of the form is an act of the will by the Soul which goes via the mind into the brain and sends forth the created form into the outer world of phenomena.

THE TECHNIQUE OF BREATHFLOW

As students of the Ageless Wisdom we are never asked nor expected to obey blindly. “*In the training of the occidental student, blind unquestioning obedience is never asked. Suggestions are made as to method and as to a technique which has proved effective for thousands of years and with many disciples (...) in the training of the new type of disciple during the coming age (...) they be left freer than has heretofore been the case.*” (TWM, p. 152-153) So, it is up to us to study the offered knowledge very seriously, take it up as suggestions, do the best we can with it, and wrestle our own way up to the light of our omnipotent Soul.

In the above stated suggestions and hints from TWM as to the right methods of breathing, the interlude between the inhalation and exhalation is mentioned as an important part of the breathing process. But in the breathing technique I use in my practice as a breath therapist, this interlude is initially left out. I call this technique “Breathflow” which is a method of deep connected breathing. This means breathing without a pause between the in- and the outbreath. The inbreath is connected to the outbreath and vice versa. It is based on the techniques of Rebirthing from Leonard Orr and especially on one of its offspring: Transformational Breathing.

In this method the inhalation is done through the mouth in a threefold flow, starting in the underbelly, flowing through the solar plexus upwards to the hearth, throat and head. In my view this is analogue to what DK says in TWM (p. 150) about deep breathing in which he mentions the three stages of the deep, middle and top breath. He says these three aspects of “deep breathing” are covering the entire Soul experience. With this three-step inhalation of the Breathflow technique the person is breathing-in oxygen in larger amounts than he is used to. Oxygen is regarded however as the exoteric representation of life energy or prana, “*which is the subjective element underlying the air breathed in and out.*” (TWM, p. 206) So, esoterically the Soul breathes in this life energy which also can be regarded as the breathing in of light, love and power. The deeper and fuller he breathes the more he flushes its bodies (physical/etheric, emotional and mental) with these aspects, provoking and unravelling the blockages in these bodies and setting them up to be cleaned, healed and transformed through the rest of the breathing process.

With the immediately following outbreath he is emptying the bodies by letting go of these blockages. This cleansing is opening the way towards a tighter connection between the personality and the Soul and, at the same time, making space for the next inbreath. In the repeating of this process the breath is activated and the transformation process is deepened.

The pause between the in- and outbreath is deliberately left out to challenge the personality to let go of his control. It is obvious that the personality is not willing to do that by itself, so it should be helped with it by provoking a dynamic flow of energy through its lower bodies. This brings him into a state where it becomes more difficult to hold on to its usual control.

Although the interlude, or pause between the in- and outbreath, is left out, there is always a short passage of time during the changeover between the in-and exhale. In this moment of changeover, a fusion, or transformation, is taking place between the lower vibrational blockages and the higher vibration of the inhaled oxygen and prana, or life energy.

This is called *entrainment*, which is the synchronizing process in physics when a pair of oscillators is coupled together. Perhaps the first to document these effects was Christiaan Huygens, the inventor of the pendulum clock, who was surprised to note that two pendulum clocks that normally would keep slightly different time nonetheless became perfectly synchronized when hung from a common beam. The idea behind this in the Breathflow technique is that the lower vibrations of the physical, emotional and mental blockages are gradually synchronized with the higher vibrational light of the Life-Breath of the Soul.

At the start of the breathing session the person is asked to formulate a mental intention which has to be stated in a positive way. In general, it will at first be the personality who formulates the intention, but with deeper questioning and meditative techniques some intuitive hunches of the Soul may be extracted. One can say that this intention is given to the subconscious and that the Soul will do what it can during the breathflow process to facilitate the achieving of it.

When the breathing is really activated and the client is starting to experience that the breath is flowing automatically and without effort and control, in other words that 'something' (read: the Soul) has taken over the breathing process and is leading the breath through 'him' (read: his different bodies), he is sinking into a deep state of meditation or trance. In this state it often happens that the process of connected breathing is spontaneously interrupted by long pauses or interludes. So, here the initially left out pauses are happening automatically and can sometimes take about two minutes in which there is no breathing at all. These spontaneous and long interludes are periods of deep Soul contact in which deep synthesis, healing and transformation is believed to take place. The client mostly doesn't have a conscious recollection of what is happening during these interludes.

At the end of the Breathflow session the breather usually finds himself in a deep state of bliss, often seeing bright light, colours or images and/or without having any feeling of his physical body. Here he is experiencing a deep connection with his Soul, or with his Real or Higher Self.

In general, the clients declare a profound improvement in their daily life and state of being, which indicates a confirmation of the deep transformation that took place during the Breathflow process.

THE BREATH OF LIFE AND WHITE MAGIC

Rule IV of the process of White Magic embodies the science of magical work and summarizes nothing less than the Process of Creation. In the science of deep breathing *“the whole process of creative work and of the evolutionary unfoldment of God in nature”* is covered. *“The right use of the Life-Breath is the whole art at which the aspirant, the disciple, and the initiate work.”* (TWM, p. 152) Deep inbreathing generates the needed energy that follows the formulated intention or thought-form, is vitalized through the Soul contact during the interlude of retention, and is breathed forth into a form in the physical world with the exhale. This is the way a thought-form is transformed into a physical form by the process of breathing (the divine breath or Life-Breath), or in other words, by *the Process of Creation*.

With this the disciple learns *“to be a conscious creator in mental matter and so produce results in the phenomenal world. (...) Rightly understood and rightly studied it would lead each aspirant out of the phenomenal world into the kingdom of the soul.”* (TWM, p. 152)

In the above mentioned state of activation of the breath in the Breathflow technique the breathing-out becomes, instead of a mere release of blockages, a breathing forth of the breather’s *“spiritual purposes, plans and life into the world of experience. The thought-form that he has constructed as to the part he has to play, and the concentration of energy that he has succeeded in bringing about, becomes effective. The energy needed for the next step is breathed forth by the soul and passes down into the vital body, thus galvanizing the physical instrument with the needed constructive activity.”* (TWM, p. 151)

And on page 152 is written the next quote which is central for the topic of this paper:

“... this stage covers that exhaling breath which, when carried forward with thought and conscious purpose behind it, serves to vitalize the centres and fill each of them with dynamic life.”

In this way *“the form is driven from its creator by the power of the expulsive breath. This is a symbolic statement but, at the same time, an experimental fact in the magical work.”* (TWM, p. 159) Here the esoteric significance of the expulsive breath is emphasized. This expulsive breath has become creative, being the result of the preceding period of rhythmic and dynamic breathing which brought the breather into a state of deep concentrated meditation. Combined with the focussing of his attention at the mentally defined intention or thought-form, this is vitalized and consequentially energized into activity in his physical life.

This breathing forth *“will bring his subjective spiritual life into prominence. This subjective life expresses itself as spiritual energy, through the medium of the energy*

or vital body and the energy thus expressed will change his life focus and interests, and produce a magnetic and dynamic effect which will attract and lift humanity.” (TWM, p. 194)

In the Ageless Wisdom it is said that breathing exercises are one way of awakening the centres, besides, among others, character building, right motive, study, service and meditation. DK states: *“Let no one doubt the effect of breathing exercises upon the vital body.”* (TWM, p. 207) He also warns however *“that no breathing exercises can be safely used where there is no attempt to impose rhythm upon the life of every day. The two activities must go hand in hand.”* (p. 206) And we have to be aware of the fact that the Soul, the Real Us, is the imposer of this rhythm.

DK states that all magical work on the physical plane is done through the breath and the control of the nadis and the centres of the etheric body *“by the focused attention of the soul in contemplation, acting through the head centre, focused in the region of the third eye and swept into right and specific activity by an act of the will.”* (TWM, p. 216)

The above-mentioned spontaneous and long interlude between the breathing-out and the breathing-in in the Breathflow technique, although mostly happening unconsciously, is a prelude of what DK calls *“the period of silence and the moment for effective work.”* He states: *“If disciples can learn to utilise these interludes, they can release the “prisoners of the planet,” which is the objective of all magical work, performed during this world period.”* (TWM, p. 512-513) When a student of occultism has demonstrated his devotion and his mental poise, and has kept the five commandments and the five rules¹, he can begin to use the interludes *“for intense activity and the use of the power of will to produce magical effects.”* (TWM, p. 517) *“(…) the more experienced the disciple, the longer will be the interlude and the greater the opportunity for focussed magical work and for the utterance of those words of power which will make divine purpose to be”.* (p. 518)

On this “work of the interludes” DK gives a word of warning regarding the use for black magic. *“Both white and black magicians, as you see, employ the lower interlude – that which concerns the relation of mind and brain – and both know the significance of the physical breathing interludes. But the white magician works from the soul level out into the manifested world and seeks to carry out the divine plan, whilst the black magician works from the level of the intellect as he seeks to achieve his own separative ends.”* (p. 519)

The white magician is one who is in touch with his Soul, who is receptive to and aware of the purpose and plan of his Soul, and is capable of receiving impressions from the realm of Spirit and of registering them in his physical brain. Moreover, white magic works from above downwards and not the other way around as black magicians do. White magic is a result of solar vibration and therefore of Soul energy, and it is divorced from emotion and mental impulse and not an effect of the vibration of the form side of life. The white magician has reached a conscious and steady communication between the Soul and its instrument, the personality and its three lower bodies. Therefore, he has to be an advanced human being, because it takes many lives to train a magician. (derived from p. 57, TWM)

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It is the Soul who is breathing through our lower bodies, keeping them alive and bringing them into right action on the lower planes. This breathing process consists of three stages: inhalation, retention of the breath and exhalation. With our inhale we draw the breath from the very depths of our being, or the source of life, activating our vital body as well as our emotional and lower mental bodies, and vitalizing an intention or thought-form. With the retention of the breath we hold the life forces steadily in a place of silence and connect with the Soul, further strengthening the thought-form. With the exhalation we *“drive the thought-form from us”*, breathing forth the form to fulfil its mission.

In my own practice as a breath therapist I work with a technique of connected breathing, called Breathflow, where the stage of retention initially is left out to provoke the personality to let go of its tendency to control. When the breath is activated it frequently happens that long periods of interlude spontaneously occur. In this period of silence and absence of breath a deep connection with the Soul is established which sets in motion a transformation of physical, emotional and mental blockages. These are let go with the exhalation.

Due to the activation of the breath, as well as to the longer interludes of deep Soul contact, the breathing-out shifts from a mere release of blockages into a breathing forth of the thought-form which allows its physical manifestation in daily life. This is the way a thought-form is transformed into a physical form by the process of breathing, or by the Breath of Life, which is in other words the magical process of creation.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bailey, Alice A.: A Treatise on White Magic, Lucis Trust Publications, New York, 1951
Bailey, Alice A.: The Light of the Soul, Lucis Trust Publications, New York, 1955

NOTES

¹ These refer to the first two of the eight means of yoga (from The Light of the Soul, Book II, p178):

1. Commandments (Yama): abstention from avarice, incontinence and theft and practicing of harmlessness and truth.
2. Rules (Nijama): aspiration, contentment, purification, devotion and spiritual reading.