

Breath – HIK & SAM

The following is a relatively brief, fully footnoted, compilation of excerpts from Murshid Samuel L. Lewis's (SAM) Forty Lessons on Breath and Pasi Anfas: Breath, Gatha, Series I&II: Number 6, Hazrat Inayat Khan with Commentary by Samuel L. Lewis, (all from <https://dancesofuniversalpeace.org>); Hazrat Inayat Khan's (HIK) Gathas (Volume 13) on Breath (from <https://hazrat-inayat-khan.org> [This site has redirected to nowhere once so, to be safe] these Gathas are also here - https://wahiduddin.net/mv2/XIII/XIII_0.htm).

There is also a sprinkling of jewels from various Indian sages and texts via Gregor Maehle's book *Pranayama: the Breath of Yoga*.

[Bracketed] inserts are edits/clarifications, further material and/or links.

The breath is from Heaven. The breath is the hi-way to God. It is also the hi-way of God to man and through man.¹

Breath controls all aspects of life from the seen to the unseen. When breath is in the body, life is in the body; and when breath is not in the body, life is not in the body.²

Without prana the body is dead and without prana the mind is utterly inert. It is prana that moves both.³

Breath is the very life in beings, and what holds all the particles of the body together is the power of the breath, and when this power becomes less then the will loses its control over the body. As the power of the sun holds all the planets so the power of the breath holds every organ.

Besides this the breath purifies the body by taking in new and fresh life and by giving out all gases that should be put out.

It nourishes the body by absorbing from the space the spirit and substance that are necessary, and more necessary than all that man eats and drinks.⁴

¹ Pasi Anfas: Breath—Gatha with Commentary Series I: Number 6 The Rhythm of Breath SAM

² Forty Lessons on Breath 1. SAM

³ Pranayama: the Breath of Yoga Gregor Maehle pg 4

⁴ Vol 13 Gathas, Breath 1.1 The Power of Breath HIK

The whole mechanism of the body works by the power of the breath, and every disorder in the working of the mechanism is caused by some irregularity in the breath.⁵

This shows that breath is the key to health, which is all happiness in life.⁶

According to the point of view of the mystic a natural full breath gives perfect health, and to a mystic's view in a hundred people not one breathes rightly.⁷

Powers that are considered supernatural become natural when man leads a natural life. The first lesson of a natural life is right breathing. Many people breathe a half breath, many a quarter and many still less.⁸

[Antidote: daily, simplified *ujjayi* (Sanskrit: victorious) breathing
Simplified here means very slightly contracting the glottis, thereby making both the (full & steady) inhale and (full & steady) exhale gently audible (to oneself). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ujjayi_breath (for typical yoga description)]

There are many reasons why people in general do not breathe rightly, but one among them is a lack of education in this. As health is more important than anything else on earth, and as health depends entirely upon the breath, which is the very life, it is necessary that the culture of the breath should be considered as of the highest importance.⁹

[Much more here: <https://www.narayandance.org/breathe/>]

A mystic sees the whole body as a plant of the breath. Therefore in the Sanskrit language breath is called *Prana*, which means the very life. It spreads life and magnetism in all parts of the body, for breath in itself is life, and is magnetism.¹⁰

Pranayama is a compound noun made up of prana and ayama. The term prana can mean breath, but more often it refers to its subtle equivalent, the

⁵ ibid

⁶ ibid

⁷ Vol 13 Gathas, Breath 1.2 The Culture of Breath

⁸ ibid

⁹ Vol 13 Gathas, Breath 1.2 The Culture of Breath

¹⁰ Vol 13 Gathas, Breath 1.3 Sending the Breath

life force. Ayama means extension. Pranayama, then, means extension of life force.¹¹

If the lower creation [animals] can do so much by the power of breath how much more can man do, if he only knows the right way of the development of breath!¹²

Thus the breath makes the mortal out of the animal. Thus the breath makes the immortal out of the mortal.¹³

Self-consciousness, i.e. nufs, [ego] is the great obstacle here. It is very difficult to remove the active principle that the personality is a fixed point around which the universe revolves. All the spiritual teachings and disciplines of all schools of esotericism and inner development are for the purpose of breaking this mold. But the refinement of breath, a very simple process, is most important.¹⁴

Manu, the ancient Indian lawgiver, stated in his Manu Smrti that any accumulated demerit (i.e. bad karma) had to be deleted and erased by means of pranayama.¹⁵

Jesus has taught that we should become like little children.
.... When we attempt such attunements we are already breaking the ego-mold.¹⁶

Yogis and Sufis, therefore, and all students of the inner cult, believe that breath is the means of receiving all intuitive knowledge from every direction of life. Absorbed in a thousand things of daily life man gives very little thought to breath. Therefore he keeps his heart closed to all the revelation that can be received by the help of breath.¹⁷

When one is in difficulty, be it physically or mentally, there is no better escape mechanism than to watch the breath.¹⁸

¹¹ Pranayama: the Breath of Yoga Gregor Maehle pg 14

¹² Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 2, 6: Be Conscious of Every Breath

¹³ Forty Lessons on Breath 19

¹⁴ Pasi Anfas: Breath—Gatha with Commentary Series II: Number 6 Be Conscious of Every Breath SAM

¹⁵ Manu Smrti VI.71–72 via Pranayama: the Breath of Yoga Gregor Maehle pg 16

¹⁶ ibid

¹⁷ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 2, 6: Be Conscious of Every Breath

¹⁸ Pasi Anfas: Breath—Gatha with Commentary Series II: Number 6 Be Conscious of Every Breath SAM

Actually we can resort to breath control in all circumstances. We need not wait for any shock. We can regard the Breath as the Voice of God. We can identify the Voice of the Silence with the breath. And when we do that we can begin to learn; we can become again as little children and learn from Nature and from the Cosmos.¹⁹

But it is also true that God is the very breath. Jesus taught that God was pneuma (in the Greek version) which means “breath.”²⁰

The term pneuma derives from the Sanskrit prana and, even in the English inspiration, the connotation of inhalation and thus breath is still present.²¹

For a Sufi it is desirable to be conscious of every breath.²²

The breath can be used inwardly in meditation and outwardly in the walk and dance. It becomes the channel for blessings, and all the forms of magnetism discussed in the teachings.²³

Breathe, identifying yourself with breath. Breathe, holding Darood, i.e., “Toward the One,” with each inhalation and exhalation. Identify yourself with the breath; identify with the Darood. This helps to free you from identification with the body.²⁴

Pronouncing mantras silently in your mind is considered more powerful than pronouncing them audibly.²⁵

[For a complete Invocation Breath practice go here:

<https://www.narayandance.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/TowardOneBreathingCrystal.pdf>]

Breathing in unison helps bring harmony. Breathing with Darood helps increase that harmony. Breathing in Darood with a common concentration, e.g., the Sufi symbol, brings a still greater harmony²⁶

¹⁹ ibid

²⁰ ibid

²¹ Pranayama: the Breath of Yoga Gregor Maehle pg 32

²² Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 2, 6: Be Conscious of Every Breath

²³ ibid

²⁴ Forty Lessons on Breath 6. SAM

²⁵ Pranayama: the Breath of Yoga Gregor Maehle pg 107

²⁶ Forty Lessons on Breath 10. SAM

Fikr—concentrate on “La Illaha” with each exhalation, and on “El Il Allah” with each inhalation.²⁷

See <https://www.narayandance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/WormholeZikr.pdf>

The prayer Nayaz proposes that there are three ways toward health: Through the rays of the sun, through the waves of the air, and through the all-pervading life in space. By space is meant the akasha, which is the accommodation for the life-power. Solar radiance, the magnetisms contained in the Air element, and the life-power in space (prana) all enter the body through the channels of breath.²⁸

The Earth itself breathes. The Mother requires prana for her life.²⁹

Breath is light. It carries light; it carries color. It invigorates the whole body or any portion of it to which it is directed. Breath carries health. It also carries immortality.

Concentrating on the heart, one can purify the breath. Concentrating on the breath and blowing “Hu” one can purify the heart.

The breath is the channel for many kinds of magnetism, including what is called baraka— which means blessing.

Practice of Fikr with consciousness of breath develops what may be called the ark—which carries the soul symbolically in the next world. More important, the ark of breath carries the soul actually in all worlds.

Identifying oneself with breath is a form of self-effacement which takes one from mortality to immortality.

All the denseness of the Earth is left behind when one has this breath realization.³⁰

The Shatapatha Brahmana describes prana as the elixir of immortality (amrita).³¹

The importance of breath is only now becoming known to the scientific world, and there is much of this mystical subject which is unexplored. But mysticism has been founded on the science of breath. There is no mystic,

²⁷ Forty Lessons on Breath 22.

²⁸ Forty Lessons on Breath 31.

²⁹ Forty Lessons on Breath 33.

³⁰ Forty Lessons on Breath 35-40.

³¹ Shatapatha Brahmana X.2.6.18 via Pranayama: the Breath of Yoga Gregor Maehle pg 32

whether Buddhist, Vedantist, or Sufi, who makes use of another process than that of the breath. Breath is the first lesson and it is also the last.³²

The mechanism of the body is so made that in each direction breath accomplishes a certain work, even to such an extent that the degree of its strength differs on the right and left. By a deep study of breath a seeker after truth will find that, as every particle of his body is formed and nourished by breath, so from that and according to that his character is formed.³³

Prana is thus the body and actions of the Great Goddess, with which she causes, produces, maintains and destroys not only the entire world of manifestation but also each and every individual by means of breath. The downward-moving process of manifestation of individuals (Shakti) and the upward-surging process of their spiritual emancipation (Kundalini) are the two directional manifestations of prana. Prana is the God immanent that permeates and sustains this entire universe and all beings.³⁴

The mechanism of the body is dependent in its work upon five different aspects of breath, and these aspects are the five different directions of breath. [5 Breath Angels] One stands on the left side of man, one on the right, one before, one behind, one within him

Among these five aspects the first is the breath which is like the stem on the tree, and which one feels through the nostrils. By the purification, development and control of this breath all five aspects are developed.

In short, there are faculties in man which, by the artificiality of his life, are closed, and man lives an incomplete life. To live a full life the wise in all religions have taken the breath in hand and awakened atoms and centers which are instruments for those faculties. As soon as breath touches those centers it makes them vibrate and then they do their work. Therefore breathing exercises given to a mureed are like the winding of a clock. Once in twenty-four hours the clock is wound and after that it goes on without effort.³⁵

Breath is a channel through which all the expression of the innermost life can be given. Breath is an electric current that runs between the everlasting life and the mortal frame. Those who have attained any intuition or

³² Vol 13 Gathas, Breath 1.3 Sending the Breath

³³ ibid

³⁴ Pranayama: the Breath of Yoga Gregor Maehle pg 34

³⁵ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 1.4, Five Aspects of Breath - 1: The Air Stream

miraculous power or any power have achieved it by the help of the breath. But the first essential thing is a pure channel for the breath, and that channel is the human body.

The breath makes a circuit through the body, and the channel through which it makes the circuit is the spine. In the terms of the Yogis it is called Kundalini. When this channel is made clear by the method of breathing then this is not only a help to the physical health but it also opens up the faculties of intuition and the doors that are within, where lies the real happiness of man. In order to clear this channel of all that blocks the way one must follow the rules of mystical ablutions and of rhythmic breathing.³⁶

All virtue is in self-control, there is no virtue in being dead. Life is worthwhile only when a person leads it fully. People look for phenomena, but there is no better phenomena than breath itself, because breath is life and light, and in the breath is the source of life and light. In the mastery of breath the secret of both worlds is hidden.³⁷

As man generally neglects to think of his breath he overlooks the fact that his health entirely depends upon rhythmic breath. Rhythm is the central theme of the whole creation.³⁸

The author of the Yoga Sutra [Patanjali] offers several definitions of pranayama. Firstly he describes it as the removing of agitation and turbulence from inhalation and exhalation.³⁹ Lack of agitation and turbulence of the breathing pattern equates to a smooth flow of mind, making meditation achievable. After this is achieved, various kumbhakas (breath retentions), such as internal, external and midway suspension, are practiced with consideration of mental focus, time span and count until the breath is long and subtle.⁴⁰ This second definition makes clear that Patanjali saw pranayama not only as an extension of prana using Ujjayi breathing, but also as formal kumbhaka, with its length measured by count, while sitting in a meditation posture...⁴¹

God's breath is associated with Divine rhythm.

³⁶ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 1.5, 2: The Electric Current of Breath

³⁷ ibid

³⁸ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 1.6, 3: The Rhythm of Breath

³⁹ Patanjali Yoga Sutra II.49 via Pranayama: the Breath of Yoga Gregor Maehle pg 14

⁴⁰ Patanjali Yoga Sutra II.50 via Pranayama: the Breath of Yoga Gregor Maehle pg 15

⁴¹ Pranayama: the Breath of Yoga Gregor Maehle pg 15

This was also the beginning of all dance patterns throughout the world. These arise out of our very instincts.⁴²

Astrology, numerology, etc. are based on the existence of these rhythms and the numbers involved.⁴³

Besides the emphasis on breath being life, we can see that to bring the breath and the life into the body, heart and soul, it is necessary to establish and maintain rhythm.⁴⁴

All esotericism is based on rhythm or Cyclic Law. The whole Universe seems to be based on it, both the universe without and the cosmos within. Sufis teach both how to develop the breath and how to respond to it to learn more of themselves and the worlds within and without.⁴⁵

The rhythms [of Sufi music and dance] are used as a means to elevate the state of consciousness of the devotees, along with the use of proper sacred phrases mostly in outward expression, but sometimes in and with Fikr (Thought).⁴⁶

Thought given to the breath becomes a weight upon it and naturally holds it longer in its movement, altering it from what it would otherwise naturally be. It is the following of the rhythm of breath, and the keeping of the rhythm regular which brings about the best results [in thought].⁴⁷

The Bhagavad Gita is the most influential of the Indian scriptures. Containing the teachings of Lord Krishna, it defines pranayama in two ways.⁴⁸

[Like] the Yoga Sutra, the Gita sees pranayama both as [1] perfecting the process of inhalation and exhalation and [2] as mental operations performed [focusing on the Divine] during the time of kumbhaka (breath retention).⁴⁹

⁴² Pasi Anfas: Breath—Gatha with Commentary Series I: Number 6 The Rhythm of Breath SAM

⁴³ ibid

⁴⁴ ibid

⁴⁵ ibid

⁴⁶ ibid

⁴⁷ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 1.6, 3: The Rhythm of Breath

⁴⁸ Bhagavad Gita IV.29 via Pranayama: the Breath of Yoga Gregor Maehle pg 17

⁴⁹ Pranayama: the Breath of Yoga Gregor Maehle pg 17

Breath is termed by Sufis Kasif and Latif; Kasif means "dense" and Latif means "fine."

Dense breath is that which is noisy and labored, which strains the nerves and the lungs. The exercises of dense breath are useful for developing the muscles and for gaining control over the nerves; they are helpful also to the lungs and useful to the physical health.

But in spiritual development unless the breath be made fine it cannot penetrate through the important centers in the body and it cannot reach far enough into the innermost parts of one's life.

There is no mystical cult in which the breath is not given the greatest importance in spiritual progress. Once man has touched the depths of his own being by the help of the breath then it becomes easy for him to become at one with all that exists on earth and in heaven.⁵⁰

[See the "Antidote" note on simplified *ujjayi* breathing on pg 2 for a breath that is both "full" and "fine". While we're embodied we need the "full" for a healthy body and the "fine" to keep that body connected with all else.]

Breath proves the existence of the life unseen.

Man's true self is the part of his being which knows itself to exist, which is conscious of itself.

When that self takes breath as its vehicle instead of the body then it soars upward toward the utmost heights, toward that goal which is the source and origin of all beings.⁵¹

Breath is audible and visible, and when a spiritual person, by spiritual exercises, strengthens and purifies the breath, it becomes more intelligible, as a light and a sound. Life and light, in truth, are one; the breath is the life, and it is the same breath which is light. Breath in fact is the light of all senses; the senses of sight, smell, taste, hearing and touch perceive all things by the light of the breath. When the breath is absent from the body, the body with all its perfect mechanism becomes useless. It is natural, therefore, that every sense must become powerful and keen if the breath be developed and purified.⁵²

Breath in reality is light; but when it shoots forth its rays, according to the direction of the rays and the capacity which takes this light, the colors

⁵⁰ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 1.7, 4: Breath the Bridge to God

⁵¹ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 1.8, 5: Breath the Vehicle of the Self

⁵² Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 1.9: The Mysticism of Breath

manifest. Form and color both depend upon the direction the light takes and upon the degree of light. Nothing on earth is meaningless; every occurrence has its meaning and every moment has its purpose. Even the colors that manifest in the light of the breath have their meaning, which coincides with the moment and the conditions then.

Those who have not reached the degree of that power which perceives the tone and color of breath, can perceive it by the voice and expression of man.⁵³

The breath is like a swing which has a constant motion, and whatever is put in the swing, swings also with the movement of the breath.

Fikr, therefore, is not a breathing practice. In Fikr it is not necessary that one should breathe in a certain way, different from one's usual breathing. Fikr is to become conscious of the natural movement of the breath, and picturing breath as a swing, to put in that swing a certain thought, as a babe in the cradle, to rock it. Only the difference in rocking is an intentional activity on the part of the person who rocks the cradle.

In Fikr no effort must be made to change the rhythm of the breath; the breath must be left to its own usual rhythm. One need not try even to regulate the rhythm of the breath, for the whole mechanism of one's body is already working rhythmically. So the breath is rhythmical by nature and it is the very breath itself which causes man to distinguish rhythm. What is important in Fikr is not the rhythm but the concentration. Fikr is swinging the concentrated thought with the movement of breath, for breath is life and it gives life to the thought which is repeated with the breath.

On the rhythm of the breath the circulation of the blood and the pulsation of the heart and head depend; which means that the whole mechanism of the body, also of the mind, is directed by the rhythm of the breath. When a thought is attached to the breath by concentration, then the effect of that thought reaches every atom of one's mind and body.

Plainly speaking, the thought held in Fikr runs with the circulation of the blood through every vein and tube of the body, and the influence of that thought is spread through every faculty of the mind.

Therefore the reaction of the Fikr is the resonance of the same thought expressing itself through one's thought, speech and action. So in time the thought one holds in Fikr becomes the reality of one's self. So he who contemplates on God in time arrives at a state where his self turns into the being of God.⁵⁴

⁵³ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 1.9: Color and Sound

⁵⁴ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 2, 1: Swinging Breath

According to the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, all karmas are destroyed when pranayama is mastered.⁵⁵

As the mechanism of the body depends upon the breath for its subsistence as well as for its health, so the breath is important in sustaining the mind and keeping its work regular. Mostly confusion, depression, or any other disorder of the mind arises from the disorder of breathing.

[M]ystics of old have for years believed it -- not only believed it, but practiced it -- and have found in the end that balance of mind entirely depends upon regularity of breathing.⁵⁶

On breath depends the capability and efficiency with which one thoroughly does one's work. Shortness of breath gives man impatience, lack of endurance; and irregularity of the rhythm of the breath gives man confusion, and makes him inclined to be easily upset. Breath being the life-power, it is the same life-power which gives man strength to endure all things. Regular and rhythmic breathing gives health to body and mind both.⁵⁷

The importance of the breath in the body is like the influence of the weather in the world. As the body and mind act and react on one another, so the influence of the breath takes the chief place in directing mind and body both. Every emotion is caused by the breath flowing in a certain direction, also the degree of the force of the breath.

There are three different rhythms of breath which have influence upon the mind:

Slow breath gives tranquility to the mind, and all the creative faculties of mind have scope of work given by this rhythm.

Moderate breath helps the mind to continue its activities. If one wanted to make out a plan of work, or wished to accomplish a certain work, the slow activity of breath spoken of above would not be helpful; though for poetry or music the activity of breath which is slow is more helpful.

But quickness in the rhythm of breath produces confusion, although it gives a force to physical activities. One can run better or swim well when the

⁵⁵ Hatha Yoga Pradipika (10 chapters) VII.18 via Pranayama: the Breath of Yoga Gregor Maehle pg 17

⁵⁶ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 2, 2: Regularity of Breath

⁵⁷ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 2, 3: The Life-Power

breath is in fairly quick rhythm. When the rhythm of the breath is too quick, it brings confusion to the mind and exhaustion to the body.

One who does not breathe fully, in other words freely and deeply, can neither be well physically nor make use of his mental faculties. This shows that the mind can live a fuller life by what I call full breath. For a Sufi, therefore, breath is a key to concentration. The Sufi, so to speak, covers his thought under the breath. This expression of Rumi's I would interpret that the Sufi lays his beloved ideal in the swing of the breath. I remember my Murshid's saying that every breath which is inhaled with the consciousness of the Divine Beloved is the only gain, and every breath inhaled without this consciousness is the only loss there is.⁵⁸

The rhythmic breath helps the mind to be clear.⁵⁹

One who masters breath becomes invigorated and strengthened in his mind, becomes quiet and peaceful and achieves self-control. The mystic's breath is not what is called deep breathing [but it] is a far-reaching breath. His is the breath reaching inmost, which touches every plane of his being. Every movement robs one of a great portion of breath, every excitement takes away a great deal of life force. Therefore those who master breathing first learn control, not only over every passion and emotion, but over every movement. By trying first to make the body still one can practice the breath better.

Therefore among Yogis different postures are taught. Every posture allows the breath to take a certain direction, for every direction the breath taken has a different result. It is posture and thought, both together, that help to direct the breath in a certain direction. As breath is a life-power, whatever center it is directed to it brings to a new life.⁶⁰

The link between the body and the mind is the breath, a link through which the influences of the body and the mind are exchanged and work upon one another.⁶¹

The breath has a great influence and entire control over two principles which work by the power of the breath: *Qabs*, or contraction, and *Bast*, or

⁵⁸ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 2, 4: Full Breath

⁵⁹ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 2, 5: The Rhythmic Breath

⁶⁰ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 2, 7: Direction of Breath

⁶¹ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 2.8: Breath in the Development of Mind

expansion. The former absorbs, attracts, and gathers energy from outside, the latter tendency expels energy from within. In this way body and mind are sustained, nourished, enriched, and made light, easy, clear and pure by the power of breath. Inhaling is contraction and exhaling is expansion. It is upon these two principles and their regular working that the health and happiness of man depend.⁶²

The more length and breadth the breath has the more scope it gives for the creation of thought. The breadth of the breath is in its volume. This comes by the facility one has of breathing through wide nostrils and open lungs. The secret of the power of voice is also to be found in this.

The length of the breath shows the length of life; lengthy breath is the sign of long life. This comes not only by wide nostrils and open lungs, but also by the accommodation that the body has for the breath, not only the nose and the chest but also the head and the abdomen.

There are some whose breath has volume, or breadth, but not much length, and there are others who have length and no breadth. But it is the balance of the length and breadth of the breath which gives balance to the mind.⁶³

Inspiration comes from the light thrown upon a certain idea. This comes from the radiance of the breath falling upon the mind.

The inspiration is perfect when expressed by the qualified soul. Nevertheless inspiration is independent of qualification. The light that the breath throws upon the mind is in every case different in its radiance. When far-reaching it illuminates the deepest corners of the heart, where the light has never reached, and if breath reaches further the light is thrown upon the mind of God, the store of all the knowledge there is.⁶⁴

[Breath] brings on the surface the essence from within. It is a current which is running from the outer spheres to the inner spirit. What it brings from the outer spheres to the inner spirit is not nearly so great as that which it brings from the inner spheres of life.

By breath a spiritually-developed person can impart his physical energy, his thought-power and his spiritual influence to the others with whom he may come in contact.

⁶² Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 2.9: Contraction and Expansion

⁶³ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 3, 1: The Length and Breadth of Breath

⁶⁴ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 3, 2: Inspiration

Sufis, therefore, consider breathing connected with meditation much more important than anything else in the world, their food, sleep, or comfort.⁶⁵

Pranayama prepares the ground on which meditation will become successful. Meditation, when done properly, can lead to realization of the Divine.⁶⁶

Breath is likened to water. The flowing of the breath is like the flowing of a stream. Inhalation and exhalation show ebb and flow. Parts of the earth which water does not touch remain barren; so the centers in the body, with all their intuitive, innate capacities, remain unproductive if the breath does not reach them. Besides various diseases, in spite of all their apparent causes, often have one principal cause, and that is the lack of free flow of the breath.

Water is a tonic, and breath is life itself. No tonic can be greater and better than breath. A spiritually evolved person's presence, therefore, brings about a cure in cases where all remedies fail. Water is the necessity of life, and breath the only condition for living. Without it life is impossible. Water falls as a rain from above; so breath is from above also, though from another dimension. Water rises as vapors; so breath rises with gases, also with joys or depressions. Pure water is health-giving, pure breath gives life. Water partakes of all things mixing with it; so does breath.⁶⁷

The mechanism of the human body shows the nervous system as its principal battery, in which magnetism is prepared by the action of breath.⁶⁸

Balance in man's life and being is maintained by the evenness of inhaling and exhaling. The compass of man's being is as large as the reaching point of his breath.

The spirit produces this physical body out of itself; so the body in spite of all the physical nourishment, entirely depends upon the spirit to live. One can live for some time without food and water, but one cannot live without breathing. The reason is that as the physical body is made of the spirit, it needs to breathe spirit in, in order to exist. Breath therefore does not only nourish the physical body but it gives subsistence to all planes of man's existence.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 3, 6: Breathing and Meditation

⁶⁶ Pranayama: the Breath of Yoga Gregor Maehle pg 30

⁶⁷ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 3, 7: Breath Is Likened to Water

⁶⁸ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 3, 8: Breath and Magnetism

⁶⁹ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 3, 8: The Subtle Waves of Breath

Breath penetrates, breath permeates, breath strikes, breath absorbs, breath invigorates, and breath heals. As breath creates an atmosphere it permeates the bodies of others, also the sphere, charging the whole atmosphere with its particular magnetism.

The breath of personalities healthy in mind and body is vitalizing. The breath of the spiritual beings, whose love and sympathy goes out to others, is naturally healing.

It is no exaggeration that the whole phenomenon of life has breath as its mystery, and once the knowledge of breath is attained and breath is mastered by practice, one beholds a most wonderful phenomenon within and without.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Vol. 13, Gathas, Breath 3, 8: The Mystery of Breath