THE ORIGINS OF MEDICINE

According to ancient tradition, the attention given to healing goes back to Atlantis, where some initiates devoted themselves to the study and application of those laws which allowed them to relieve the pain of those who suffered. The refuggees from this vanished continent then transmitted their knowledge to initiates who were associated with Egyptian mystery schools. Some of these initiates specialized in this and gave birth to a fraternity which devoted itself to the healing of the ill. For many years this group gathered near the temple of Heliopolis and pursued its work of serving all sufferers, no matter what their status. The Essenes and the Therapeutae, who worked respectively in Palestine and Greece, came from this group. In fact, much knowledge in this field is derived from them, and it is from these same methods that the Druids received their inspiration in caring for others.

Therefore, the origins of medicine go back to the most ancient times, for illnesses have existed since time immemorial. The sages of long ago were motivated to study and find new techniques and remedies that would allow them to cure and alleviate suffering.

Over the centuries, science has discovered and demonstrated many healing principles that the ancient traditions taught, but few people chose to believe. Light always conquers darkness, and we can only rejoice in noting that certain truths, long ago consigned to the ranks of superstition, are now being acknowledged. A relatively recent example - the fact that the blood circulates in the body was known to the ancients long before Dr. William Harvey officially proved it to science.

With time, the medical community has become more tolerant of certain opinions which they condemned long ago. Although many areas are now accepted today by physicians and used in their daily practice, there are other methods used to relieve pain and cure various disorders that are unknown to them. Science has made tremendous progress in the realm of health, saving human lives and alleviating suffering. Yet, there is still much to learn about the realm of healing. The ideal of medical research will be attained when science and mysticism can put aside differences and combine their best efforts so as to preserve the well-being of the body and make it an efficient instrument in the service of the soul.

MODERN MEDICINE:

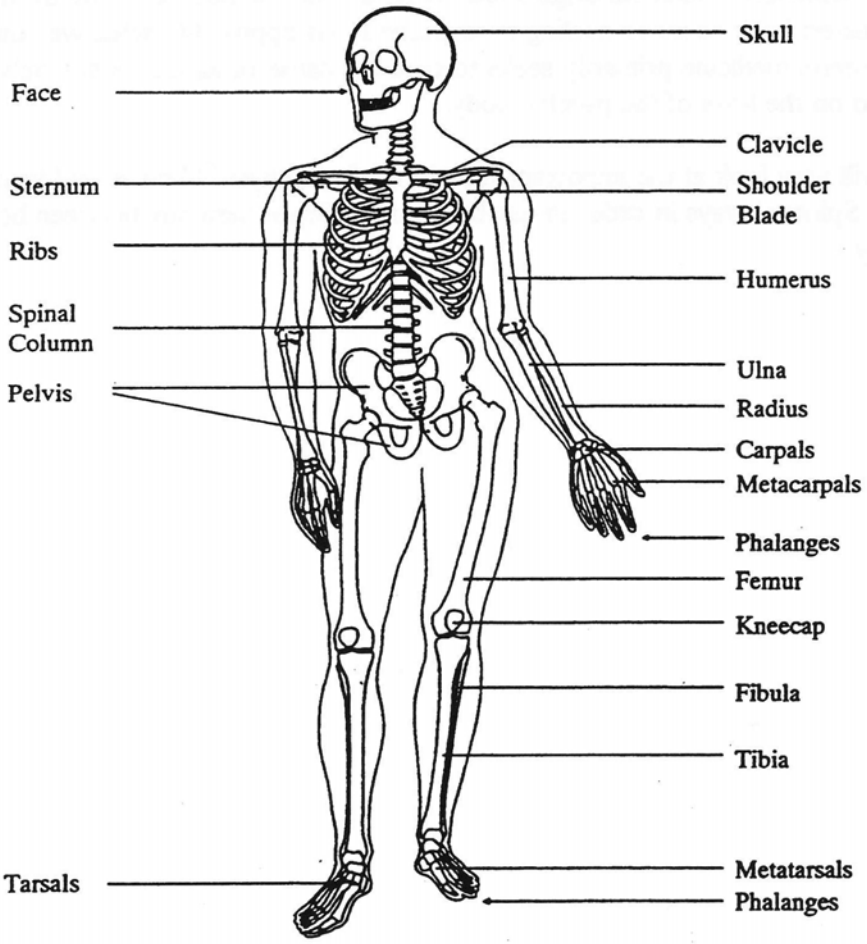
In most dictionaries the word health is defined thus: "A complete state of physiological, psychological, and social well-being." This definition is correct but incomplete, because it does not include the spiritual dimension. Also, the physical body is the vehicle used by our soul to evolve in the earthly world. If the connections uniting these two aspects of our being are inharmonious, it will be impossible to achieve good health because we have interfered with the influx of our own Vital Life Force. This means that disease does not necessarily have its origin in microbes and viruses. Rather, illness is quite often the expression of individual and collective violations of certain natural laws, or it results from an inability to remain in harmony with cosmic laws working within us and around us. We can see therefore that human beings, for the most part, shape their own health.

Current medicine has a strong tendency to regard the human as a being whose life is due entirely to the various processes of physical chemistry acting and reacting in the body. Therefore, it concentrates almost exclusively on maintaining physiological health, with the notion that only the physical body needs to be cared for in case of illness. Such an outlook is simply a reflection of a materialistic philosophy. Methods which fail to acknowledge the spiritual dimension to healing are bound to fail.

Along with this denial of spirituality we must unfortunately acknowledge that the Hippocratic Oath is not always respected in some medical circles and may no longer form the philosophical and ethical code of life that governs the whole of medicine. On the other hand, if one considers the increasing interest that our contemporaries are giving to alternative therapeutics, such as homeopathy, acupuncture, music therapy, etc., we can suppose that many people are no longer satisfied with various forms of medicine and that they are now searching for healing in practices which better address human duality.

Therefore, hopefully the day will come when *esoteric medicine* will be officially recognized as beneficial for humanity. Since its origins are divine and not human, this type of medicine will offer the world the greatest hope so far as healing is concerned. As opposed to what we could call *exoteric medicine*, esoteric medicine primarily seeks to cure the cause of all illness not only on the physical level, but also on the level of the psychic body.

We will now look at the important functions of our physical bodies and learn how to interact with them in Spiritual ways in order to establish and maintain harmony between both the physical and spiritual body.



THE SKELETON

THE SKELETON

In medical books, the skeleton is defined as being the "bone structure" of the human body. This expression describes its role perfectly. In fact, its primary role is to sustain and support the muscles, organs, and tissues which compose our entire body. Without the skeleton, we would only be a mass of flesh incapable of holding itself together. Consequently, we could not live. Added to its ability to sustain and support, the skeleton protects many vital organs. For example, the ribs and sternum constitute a bony cage around the heart and lungs, while the cranium contains the brain and assures its protection. finally, we should remember that the bone marrow manufactures most of the blood cells which contain certain chemical substances - calcium salts in particular - that are sent in turn into the bloodstream whenever necessary.

In general, the skeleton is composed of three types of bones, each of which has a different function. First, we have the *long bones*, found in the limbs. All these bones have a hollow canal containing the marrow and they play a major role in the movement of the body. Secondly, we have the *short bones*, found in our hands and feet. they are connected by ligaments and small muscles, allowing us to perform delicate movements. Finally, we have the *flat bones* which form the ribs, sternum, shoulder blades, pelvis, and skull. Their principal characteristic lies in an ability to resist shocks, either because of their flexibility and elasticity - as is true of the ribs - or because of their solidity - as is true of the skull. In the case of the shoulder blades and pelvis, their particular feature is that they offer a large surface for the insertion of the muscles which maintain the limbs connected to the trunk.

The composition of all bones consists of two thirds mineral substances (calcium and phosphate salts) and one third protein substances (bony and elastic). The first provides durability and solidity, while the second provides elasticity. In other respects, all of them are composed of two kinds of tissues: *compact tissue* and *cancellous (spongy) tissue*. Should a particular bone be solid rather than elastic, then the first type of tissue would be found in greater quantity. All bones are surrounded by a thin, fibrous sheath called the *periosteum*. It should be noted that the inner portion of this fibrous membrane intervenes in the growth and thickening of the bone, with its lengthening being assured by the cartilage coverings.

Finally, to close this brief presentation of the skeleton, keep in mind that scientists compute the number of bones in the entire skeleton to be more than 260. Naturally, if you wish to gain a more thorough background on the subject, you should consult an encyclopedia or some other good reference work.

The spinal column constitutes the main axis of the skeleton. Besides its sustaining role, it has a flexibility which allows a great variety of trunk and neck movements. It is composed of 33 vertebrae - a very symbolical number - divided into 5 sections. Starting from the base of the skull, we find 7 cervical vertebrae located in the neck area; 12 thoracic vertebrae upon which the 12 pairs of ribs are articulated; 5 lumbar vertebrae located at the kidney level' 5 sacral vertebrae fused to a single bone, the sacrum, on which the lower limbs are articulated; 4 coccygeal vertebrae also fused together into a single bone, the coccyx, which some scientists consider to be a rudimentary tail.

The area where two bones meet forms a joint or articulation which, depending on the situation, is either movable or fixed. The sutures uniting the cranium bones (frontal, parietal, occipital, and temporal bones) are an example of fixed joings. The sutures connecting the first seven pairs of thoracic

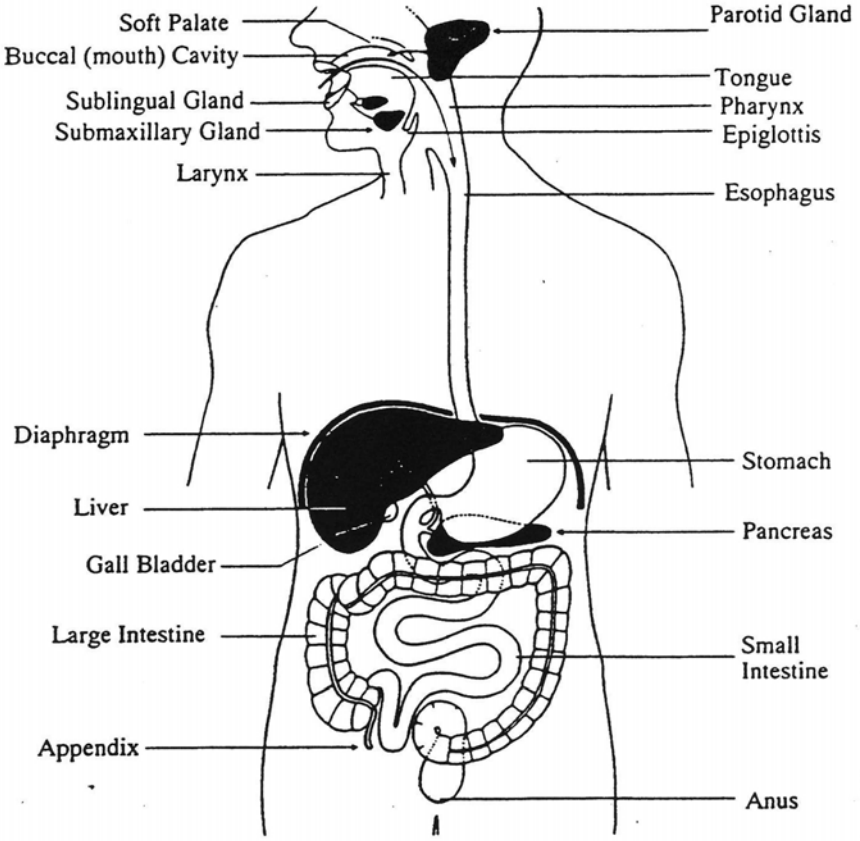
ribs to the sternum also belong to this category. As for the movable joints, their role is, as indicated by their name, to allow movement between the bones so described. The knees and elbows are perfect examples of this kind of joint. bones that are in contact with each other - such as the femur and tibia in the first instance, and the humerus and ulna in the second - are separated by a membrane called the synovial membrane, which secretes a viscous lubricating fluid called the synovia. It should be noted that the knee joint, which is relatively fragile, is protected by the kneecap, which also serves as an attachment to the tendon of the thigh muscle.

One of the skeleton's functions is to sustain and support the body's muscles. It is useful to know, therefore, that there are about 650 muscles within our body, divided into two major categories: the voluntary muscles,also called *skeletal muscles*; and the involuntary (visceral) muscles, also called *smooth muscles*. The first category includes those muscles which we use to accomplish movement - the most important ones being the muscles of the lower and upper limbs (biceps, triceps, and quadriceps). All respond to our will. In other words, they allow the accomplishment of voluntary acts.

The second category of muscles includes those which constitute the internal organs - i.e. such viscera as the lungs, liver, spleen, kidneys, stomach, intestines, etc. In contrast to the skeletal muscles, their activites are involuntary and are not under the control of our objective consiousness. Unique in its kind, the heart is a muscle belonging to both categories. In fact, it is skeletal like the voluntary muscles, but its fibers are laid out like those of the involuntary muscles.

DISEASES OF THE BONES:
fractures
sprains,
twists, dislocations
acute synovitis (excess of synovial liquid within knee joint)
arthritis
osteoarthritis (acute or chronic inflammation)
osteitis (bone and osseous marrow infection)
osteomalacia (decalcification of the bones due to lack of calcium and phosphorus)
osteoma (benign tumor of the bone)
osteopetrosis (abnormal thickening of the bones)
osteoporosis (thinning of the bones)

What can be done to keep the bone structure in good condition?
1. absorb proper nourishment (obtain the vitamins, proteins, and mineral salts necessary)
2. guard against bad posture
3. exercise regularly to keep joints flexible. (walking is excellent)



THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

We know that digestion is the function whose purpose is to prepare and convert food so as to provide the body with the nutrients that it needs, But what is food? Without going into detail, we may say that food is any *nutritive substance* necessary for the purely physical vitality of humans. Nutritive substances contain proteins, carbohydrates, lipids, as well as vitamins and mineral salts. Before the body can assimilate them, they need to be broken down into simpler chemical elements, which is the purpose of the digestive action. However, these chemical elements alone cannot keep our physical body active. We must also daily provide it with drink, particularly with water.

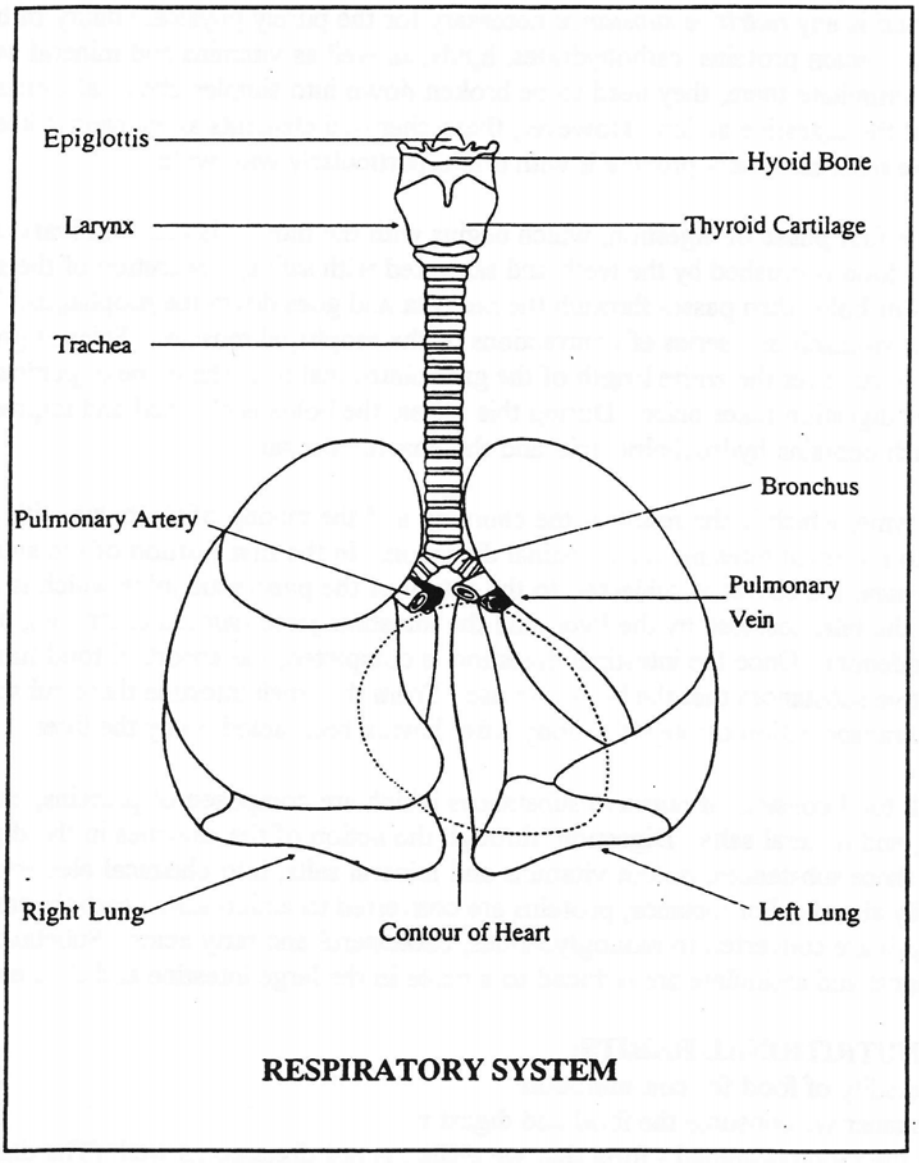
The first phase of digestion, which begins with the mouth, is called salivary or oral digestion. In this phase, food is crushed by the teeth and saturated with saliva, a secretion of the salivary glands. The food mass or bolus then passes through the pharynx and goes down the esophagus. The food is pushed toward the stomach in a series of contractions of the esophagal muscles. Science gives these contractions that occur over the entire length of the gastrointestinal tract the name of *peristalsis*. In the stomach gastric digestion takes place. During this phase, the bolus is churned and impregnated with gastic joice, which contains hydrocholric acid and the enzyme pepsin.

Chyme, which is the result of the churning and the mixing of the bolus with gastric joice, then passes into the small intestine for intestinal digestion. In the first portion of the small intestine, called the *duodenum*, the chyme is subjected to the action of the pancreatic juice which is secreted by the pancreas; the bile, secreted by the liver; and the intestinal joice (succus entericus), secreted by the walls of the duodenum. Once the intestinal digestion is completed, the absorbed food has been transformed into nutritive substances that the body can use. From the small intestine these substances pass into the blood for transportation through the body, after having been acted on by the liver.

All food consists of nutritive substances which are composed of proteins, carbohydrates, lipids, vitatmins, and mineral salts. Digestion, through the action of the enzymes in the digestive juices, transforms all these substances, except vitamins and mineral salts, into chemical elements that the body can more easily absorb. For instance, proteins are converted to amino acids; carbohydrates are converted to sugars; lipds are converted to monoglycerides, cholesterol and fatty acids. Substances that the body cannot digest and assimilate are reduced to a paste in the large intestine and then evacuated.

GOOD NUTRITIONAL HABITS:

1. High quality of food for comsumption
2. The manner we consume the food and digest it.
3. Enjoy the food consumed - food that we dislike is not digested as well. (The digestive juices and saliva are secreted in a reflex action induced by the autonomic nervous system, an action linked in part to the stimulation caused by the sight, smell, and taste of food. It follows that eating without an appetite - especially when doneautomatically or forcibly - does not fully stimulate digestion.
4. Chew food fully
5. Good sitting habits promote good digestion.
6. Avoid certain food combinations (i.e. coffee with milk - together they produce a chemical reaction that can be harmful to the digestive functions)
7. Avoid reading while eating. Digestion requires an increase in blood circulating throughout the digestive system. When we perform certain mental activities during a meal, our brain then needs and extra supply of blood. This act removes some of the blood that was destined to be used for the digestive system. The same applies for our thoughts during digestion. Digestion is affected by distress & anger.



RESPIRATORY SYSTEM

THE RESPIRATORY SYSTEM

Air can enter the body through the nostrils or the mouth. However, it is preferable to breathe through the nose. By passing through the nasal cavities, the inhaled air is warmed, humidified, and filtered, which is not the case when we breate through the mouth. When we carefully examine the wonderful instrument we possess in the human nose, we cannot help admiring how nature works to protect, as much as possible, the interior of our bodies from impurities.

The inhaled air passes from the nose or mouth into the larynx, and then through the trachea or windpipe. the trachea is a tube consisting of cartilaginous double rings that provide rigidity. Its inside is coated with membranous tissue containing mucous cells and ciliate cells. the function of these cells is to detain the atmospheric dust particles that have passed through the mouth or escaped filtering by the nose. When their number is such that they congest the windpipe, we feel the need to cough or, in extreme cases, to spit.

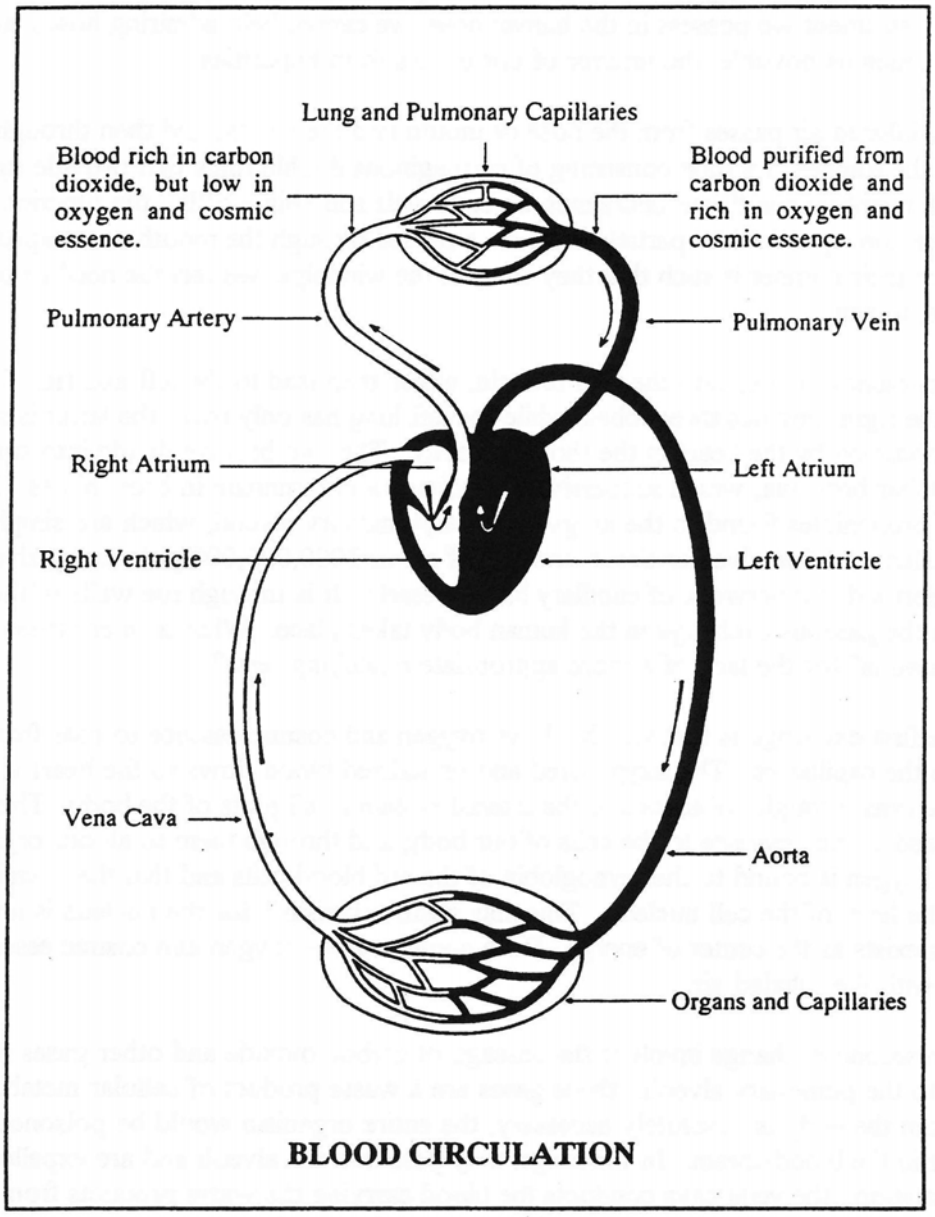
The trachea divides into the two bronchi, which then lead to the left and right lung respectively. Note that the right lung has three lobes, while the left lung has only two. the latter is smaller because of the space occupied by the heart in the thoracic cavity. The two bronchi divide into smaller bronchial tubes, the lobar bronchia, which successively subdivide and terminate in bronchioles. Each one of the millions of bronchioles found in the lungs supplies pulmonary alveoli, which are simply tiny sacs that receive inhaled air. The alveolar tissue consists of about 3000,000,000 pulmonary alveoli, the walls of which support a dense network of capillary blood vessels. It is through the walls of the pumonary alveoli that the gaseous exchange in the human body takes place. What then are these exchanges that we call "gaseous" for the lack of a more appropriate qualifying term?

The first exchange is that which allows oxygen and cosmic essence to pass from the pumonary alveoli into the capillaries. The oxygenated and revitalized blood flows to the heart via the pulmonary vein, and returns through the aorta and the arterial system to all parts of the body. This starts the supply of oxygen and cosmic essence to the cells of our body, and through them to all our organs. It should be noted that oxygen is bound to the hemoglobin of the red blood cells and that the cosmic essence condenses at the level of the cell nucleus. This may seem surprising, for the nucleus is invisible. However, the nucleus exists as the center of energy. Both components - oxygen and cosmic essence - pass into the capillaries with the inhaled air.

The second exchange involves the passage of carbon dioxide and other gases from the blood capillaries to the pumonary alveoli. these gases are a waste product of cellular metabolism. Their removal from the body is absolutely necessary; the entire organism would be poisoned if they continued to circulate in the bloodstream. In the lungs, they pass into the alveoli and are expelled from the body during exhalation. the vena cava conducts the blood carrying the waste products from the heart to the lungs for oxygenation and revitalization. **(It is so very interesting that the oxygenation increases in patients when they are experiencing harp music.)**

RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

1. Breathe through nose
2. Breathe air that is as salubrious as possible - if you live or work in the city, take country walks
3. Although breathing is an involuntary act, we can concentrate on breathing properly. Exhale deeply so as not to leave carbon dioxide in the lungs.
4. Keep a humidifier going with clean water. (especially near the bed to create alchemical conditions)
5. Avoid sleeping in a room with plants as during the night, the plants give off carbon dixode. Sleep with a window that is open or ajar.



BLOOD CIRCULATION

BLOOD CIRCULATION

In general, we can say that all exchanges in the body depend on blood circulation. First of all, blood transports to the tissues the oxygen and cosmic essence that it has absorbed in the lungs. Second, blood conducts to the lungs the carbon dioxide and other products of oxidation collected in the tissues, for elimination during exhalation. This dual exchange was the topic of the last monograph. However, blood has various other roles. It also carries the products of intestinal digestion to the liver and then to the tissues, and transports such waste products as urea to the kidneys, where they are filtered and eliminated in the urine. Moreoever, the blood carries hormones that have been secreted by the glands to the receptor organs.

The uniform temperature of the human body is also the result of the particular properties of blood flow. Besides that, blood outside the blood vessels has the property of coagulating spontaneously. This stops minor bleeding and constitutes the first state in the healing process of a wound. Lastly, we finish this quick tour of the properties of blood by stressing the essential role it plays in the body's fight against bacterial infections or any other disease-carrying agent.

COMPOSITION OF BLOOD

Human blood consists principally of blood cells and a liquid medium. The blood cells comprise: red blood cells or erythrocytes, white blood cells or leukocytes, and platelets. The red corpuscles contain hemoglobin, a red pigment that gives blood its color. Hemoglobin absorbs oxygen in the lungs while at the same time giving up the carbon dioxide which has been collected by the blood cells while passing through the body and its organs.

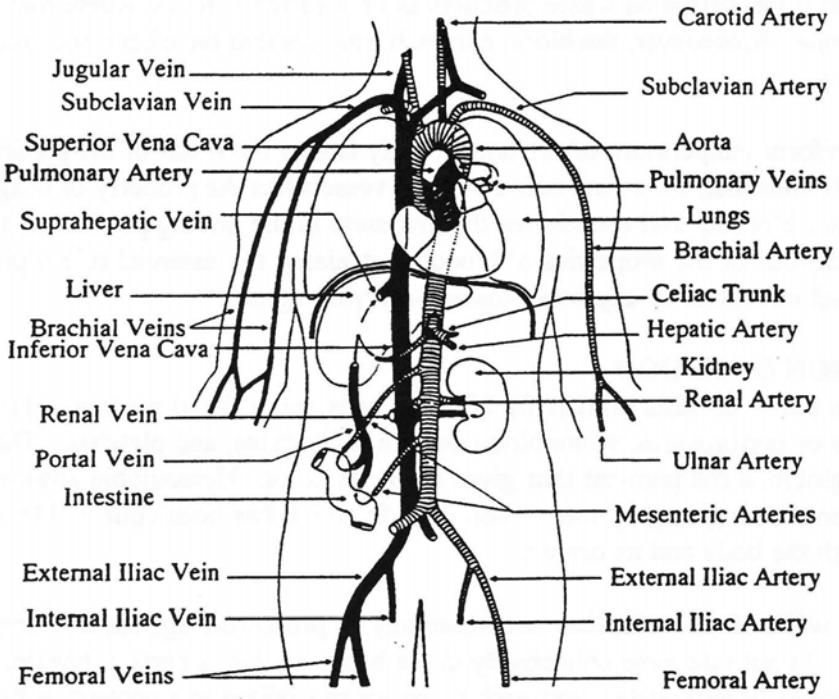
As for white blood cells, they act essentially as protectors against all microbial and viral attacks. However, they do not intervene collectively in the battle against a certain disease. Rather, there are different categories of leukocytes, and each category specializes in a protective function. To give you some examples, neutophilic polymorphonuclears are recruited to fight such acute infections as pneumonia or scarlet fever; eosinophici polymorphonuclears fight parasitic infestations or allergic phenomena and lymphocytes, which are best known, fight various diseases and viruses.

Blood platelets function as important intermediaries in the coagulation of blood when injuries occur. As soon as a blood vessel is broken, the platelets agglutinate or collect into clumps and form a temporary scar. The permanent scar is then formed by the fibrinogen contained in the blood plasma.

As is true of all living organisms, the red cells, white cells and platelets die after a time spanning several hours to several months. They are produced in the red bone marrow, liver, spleen, and lymphatic ganglia, which science now calls the lymph nodes. The liquid portion of blood is the plasma. It makes up 55% of the total blood volume and contains 80% water. Plasma contains various nutritive substances and, as just mentioned, fibrinogen. Fibrinogen, a protein, is essential in clot formation after injuries.

BLOOD DISEASES

1. Disorders linked to red corpuscles: anemia, polycythemia
2. Disorders linked to white blood cells: agranulocytosis, leukemia
3. disorders associated with abnormal level of platelets: purpura, hemophilia



CIRCULATORY SYSTEM

BLOOD VASCULAR SYSTEM

One hears quite commonly the terms *right side of the heart, left side of the heart, greater circulation, and lesser circulation.* These all indicate that the blood traverses a dual circuit. The term *left side of the heart* denotes that part of the heart which receives from the lungs blood which is rich in oxygen and cosmic essence, and then dispatches it to the body. The term *right side of the heart* corresponds to that section of the heart which receives blood from the organs that are depleted of oxygen and cosmic essence but charged with waste products. This blood is then sent to the lungs so that it can be reoxygenated and revitalized.

The lesser circulation, or pulmonary circulation,carries blood from the right side of the heart to the lungs and then on to the left side of the heart. The blood leaves the heart by the pulmonary artery and returns through one of the four pulmonary veins. In the greater circulation, also called systemic or general circulation, reoxygenated and revitalized blood is propelled from the left side of the heart to all parts of the body before returning to the right side of the heart. Blood rich in oxygen and cosmic essence leaves the heart through the aorta, and, after having left this dual vitality in the organs, and having in turn become charged with carbon dioxide and other waste products, returns to the heart through the vena cava. From there it is again pumped to the lungs for reoxygenation and revitalization, which closes the loop. Note that the blood always returns to the heart by way of the veins, and leaves the heart by way of the arteries.

In summary, you should remember that blood carries three essential elements to our body cells.

1. Blood supplies them with nutrients from absorbed food and drink, which pass into the bloodstream at the level of the small intestine.
2. Blood supplies oxygen and cosmic essence collected at the level of the lungs.
3. Blood transports to the lungs the carbon dioxide and other products of oxidation that it collects in the organs, so that they can be expelled with the breath.

THE HEART

We cannot discuss blood circulation without dwelling briefly upon the organ that makes it all possible - namely, the heart. This organ, together with the lungs, manifests most strikingly the presence of a natural rhythm in the body. However, it should not be thought that other body functions lack a distinctive rhythmic harmony. the contrary is true: all organs act and react according to individual rhythms that harmonize perfectly with our overall body rhythm. It needs to be stressed, therefore, that most of the disorders or diseases we experience can be traced to the rhythmic activity of an organ being no longer what it should be, and thus interfering with general body rhythm. Moreover, the individual rhythm of each organ is not under the control of our will. In other words, it depends neither on our brain nor on our cerebrospinal nervous system. This leads to the conclusion that a lack of harmony in the rhythmic activity of one or several organs quite often has a psychic cause and needs to be neutralized through the autonomic nervous system, which guides and controls the involuntary body actions.

Among all of these rhythms, the heart beat is quite distinct and for obvious reasons definitely one of the most marked and perceptible. As you know, the heart is located in the center of the thoracic cavity, between the lungs. It is not wrong to say that the heart consists of two organs fused together, the right heart and the left heart. Each of these contains two cavities: the upper cavity, called the *atrium*, which has thin walls; and the lower cavity, called the *ventricle*, which has thick walls. As already

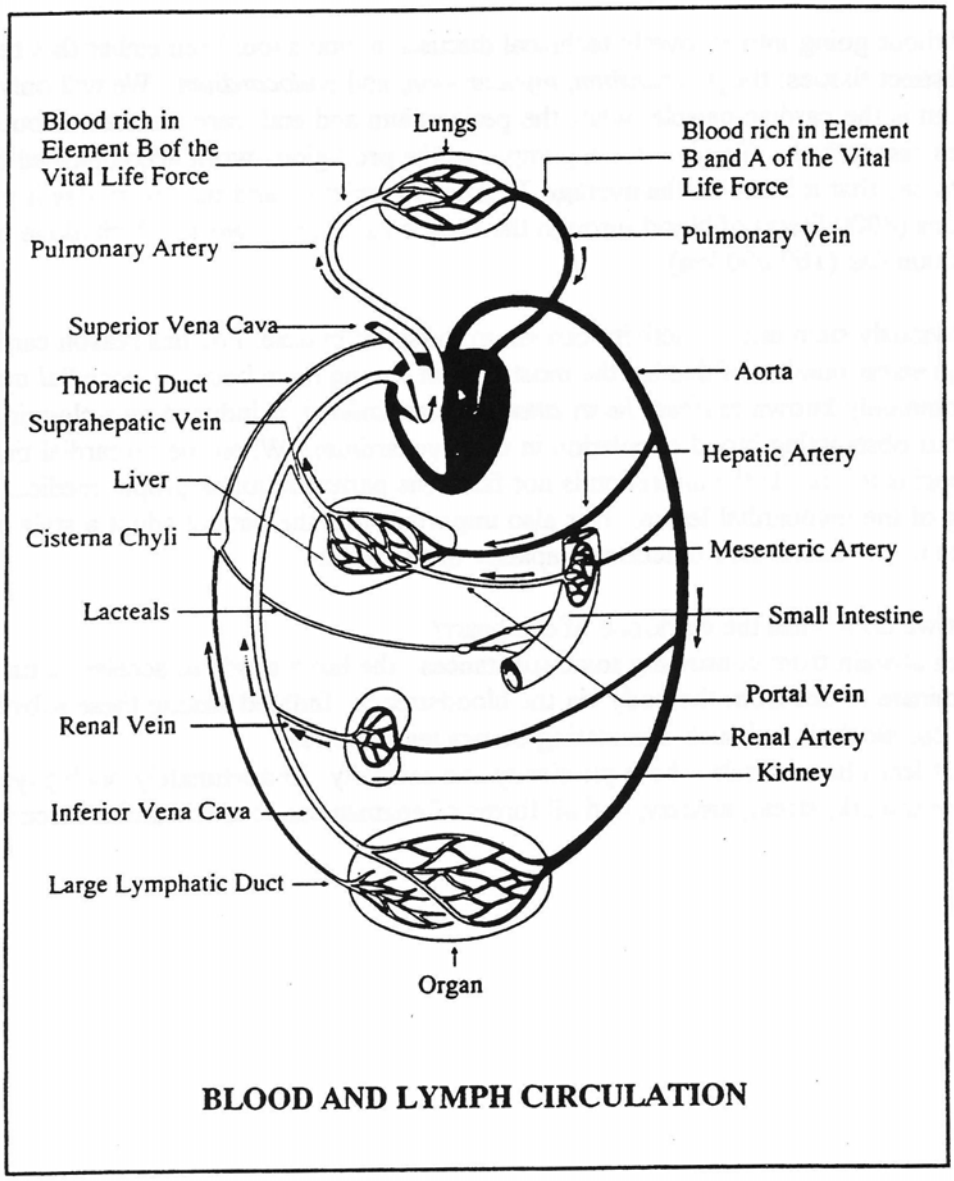
discussed, the right side of the heart receives blood charged with carbon dioxide and other products of oxidation, which is then pumped to the lungs. the left side of the heart receives blood from the lungs that is rich in oxygen and cosmic essence, and purified of waste gases, which is then pumped to all parts of the body.

Without going into an overly technical discussion, you should remember that the heart consists of three distinct tissues: the *pericardium, myocardium,* and *endocardium*. We will only say that the myocardium is the cardiac muscle, while the pericardium and endocardium are the outer and inner membranes respectively. To give you a glimpse of the prodigious work accomplished by the heart, suffice it to say that it beats on the average 70 times per minute, and that every day it pumps more than 2000 gallons (8000 liters) of blood through the body's vascular network, which alone measures more than 100,000miles (160,000 km).

Obviously such intense activity can strain the heart muscle. For this reason cardiac diseases cause the greatest number of deaths, the most known among them being *myocardial infarction*. This disease, commonly known as *acute heart attack (heart failure)*, is induced by a clogging of the coronary arteries, thus obstructing blood circulation in the myocardium. When the mycardial tissue is deprived of blood, it begins to die. If the infarction is not fatal, the patient requires proper medical care to assist in the healing of the myocardial lesion. It is also important that the patient adopt a style and rhythm of life appropriate to the diminished functional capacity of the heart.

What must we do to ease the workload of our heart?

1. We must abstain from consuming toxic substances. the heart needs to accelerate its rhythm so as to eliminate toxins from the body via the bloodstream. Included among these substances are to bacco, alcohol, and such stimulating beverages as coffee.
2. We must learn how to relax, both physically and mentally. Unfortunately, such psychological states as overwork, stress, anxiety, and all forms of anguish can lead to cardiac discomfort.



BLOOD AND LYMPH CIRCULATION

BLOOD AND LYMPH CIRCULATION

After blood arrives in the tissues, some of its plasma filters through the capillary walls and then nourishes the cells. The blood also allows a large number of white cells to filter out along with the plasma. This fluid consisting of blood plasma and white cells then passes through all body tissues, nourishing every cell and intervening in infections. Only a portion of this fluid returns to the blood-stream after fulfilling its task. The reason for this is that it absorbs many waste products and some toxins on its journey through the various organs of the body. If this fluid were to return directly to the circulating blood, a general poisoning of the body would occur.

The name *lymph* has been given to the fluid which, after fulfilling its tasks of nourishment and protection, does not return directly to the heart. Lymph is simply blood that lacks red cells and platelets.

Since lymph does not flow back directly to the heart to be returned promptly to other parts of the body, where does it go? The answer simply is: it flows through a network of vessels and veins that constitute what is called the *lymphatic system*. Most people are completely ignorant of the lymphatic system. Consequently, they do not understand how important this function is for the human body. A number of serious illnesses originate because of some deficiency in the lymphatic system. This is especially the case with certain cancers. thus it is important not to neglect this important function of the human body.

We have just explained that lymph comes from the blood and returns to it after being cleansed of waste products and toxins collected from throughout the body. The question then arises: where does this cleansing take place and how is it done? To answer this dual question, we need to conduct a brief survey of the lymphatic system. As always, we shall try to explain this in the simplest possible way and by avoiding overly technical terms.

THE LYMPHATIC SYSTEM

Just as there is a complex system for the circulation of blood, there also exists a network of lymphatic vessels. By the way, keep in mind that the human body has many more lymphatic vessels than blood vessels. Yet unlike the blood system, the lymphatic system does not possess an organ like the heart to keep lymph circulating in the body. The circulation of lymph is rather the result of body movement.

After blood has flowed through and nourished the entire left sidee of the body, the released lymph is routed to the thoracic duct through a number of lymphatic duct. We may say that the thoracic duct and the right lymphatic duct are the two principal trunks of the lymphatic system. They join in a dilated portion of the thoracic duct called the *cisterna chyli*. The lacteals shown in the diagram are capillary vessels that absorb nutritive substances at the level of the small intestine and pass them on with the lymphatic fluid. Indeed, you must not forget that lymph, as is true of blood, is an important provider of nourishment to all body regions.

After lymph has drained all the tissues and organs of the body, it collects in one of two large lymphatic trunks, either in the thoracic duct or in the right lymphatic duct. From there it returns to the heart by the way of veins called the *subclavian* veins. However, as already state, lymph needs to be cleansed of waste products and toxins before returning to the bloodstream. This purification takes

place in the lymphatic ganglions, now called the *lymph nodes* to avoid any confusion with the sympathetic ganglions.

Our body contains from six to seven hundred lymph nodes, ranging in size from a pea to an olive. Their role is to transform into harmless substances all the toxins that are passed from the tissues into the lymph. There is another important reason why lymph cannot return directly to the bloodstream without previous cleansing: it contains many white blood cells charged with the task of neutralizing any microbes that dwell in the tissues through which the lymph passes. If discharged immediately into the bloodstream, lymph would transport many of these microbes and many of the wastes produced in the continuous struggle against them. Before long, blood poisoning would ensue.

All the lymphatic vessels coming from the lower limbs and the abdominal organs lead to a point of confluence in the abdomen, at the level of the second lumbar vertebra.

To summarize, the lymphatic system has three important functions:

1. It ensures a constant supply of nutrients to the body cells, thus complementing the blood vascular system;
2. It prevents infections from spreading, assisted by the lymph nodes and the white blood cells;
3. It constitutes a source of plasma in cases of hemorrhaging, because most all the lymph consists of blood plasma.

The best way of maintaining one's lymphatic system in perfect working order is to keep the lymph as pure as possible. Since lymph is derived from our blood, and since the chemical purity of the latter largely depends on the quality of the food we absorb and the air we inhale, it follows that the vitality of our lymph depends on our digestive and respiratory health.