

Negative Ions and Consciousness

Your awareness is in the air...For centuries, yoga masters of the East have taught that breath is life, and by altering the intake of air, one could alter one's consciousness. The quality of the air we describe as prana or life energy. Now, Western science has coined a name for at least one aspect of that energy and called it "ions." More and more individuals are finding that these tiny electric charges have a lot to do with their awareness.

For the uninitiated, ions are charged particles in the air that are formed when enough energy acts upon a molecule, such as carbon dioxide, oxygen, water, or nitrogen to eject an electron. The displaced electron attaches itself to a nearby molecule, which then becomes a negative ion. It is the negative ion of oxygen that affects us most. Remember that feeling you have experienced near a waterfall, or high in the mountains? Those are two such places where thousands of negative ions occur. They create an effect on human biochemistry. Some of nature's other best known negative ion resources are air friction, lightning, falling water, earth's radioactivity, and even evergreens and ferns.

The normal ion count in fresh country air is 2,000-4,000 negative ions per cubic centimeter (cm³ is about the size of a sugar cube). At Yosemite falls, you will experience over 100,000 negative ions per cubic centimeter. On the other hand, the level is far below 100 per cubic centimeter on Los Angeles freeways during rush hour.

Dr. Kreuger excited the scientific world when he discovered ions to be biologically active; stimulating the production of the powerful chemical serotonin of 5-HT. Serotonin is a very active neuro-hormone, which causes profound neural, glandular, and digestive effects throughout the body. Dr. Sulman corroborated Kreugers' findings while studying positive ion victims of the hot, dry Sharav winds in Jerusalem. He demonstrated three effects of positive ion excess: irritation and tension, exhaustion, and hyperthyroid response. Most of these conditions, along with symptoms of depression, anxiety, headaches, and low energy physical and mental functions, were shown to be alleviated or totally eliminated by increasing the negative ion count in the air.

Negative ions break down serotonin and thereby give one a clear, alert outlook with a higher awareness function. The primary reason for this is the increased speed with which the nerve impulses can travel along the synapses in the brain and the rest of the body.

The metabolism is enhanced to create better utilization of nutrients from our foods and vitamins, while our brain's intuitive, nonlinear activities flow more smoothly.

Negative ions promote alpha brain waves and increase brain waves amplitude, which translates to a higher awareness level. Those ion-induced alpha waves spread from the occipital areas to the parietal and temporal and even reach the frontal lobes, spreading evenly across the right and left brain hemispheres. All of this creates an overall clear and calming effect, benefiting meditation and concentration.

While ionization of the air is mandatory in many European and Russian hospitals and workplaces, it has only recently come to light in our country with the growing problems to toxic air in our urban environments.

Jan Stolwijk, of the World Health Organization, stated that, "there is probably more damage done to human health by indoor air pollution than by outdoor pollution." Most people spend 70% to 80% of their time indoors!

The late William Radley, a Bay Area environmental health expert, coined the term "orthomolecular architecture" opening up a whole new area for designers and architects to consider, namely, the choice of building materials that will not release toxic fumes such as formaldehyde and hydrocarbons.

It may have been difficult to be an urban mystic in the past, but now, we can look forward to environmental solutions that will aid us in maintaining a more conscious and healthful life. Ionization is one of our first major steps.

Negative Ions and Allergies

Negative ion is a step further to reduce airborne allergies. In its most natural state the "electrical balance" of air is slightly negative. Unfortunately, airborne allergens (both natural and industrial) are almost entirely positive charged and positive electrical charges are very irritating to respiratory membranes.

Negative ions, on the other hand, help counteract the swelling and inflammation brought on by the allergy-triggering positive ions.