

Pastoral Medicine (GA 318)
Lecture IV - 11 September 1924, Dornach

[...]

First of all it is important that we look into the question: What is really inherited by a human being? What is not inherited and must come to the human being in some other way?

[...] a great deal depends upon whether one can differentiate between these two ingredients. Human beings come out of the spiritual, super-sensible worlds into the sense world: that means, they combine what is given them by heredity with what they bring from earlier earth lives and from life between death and the new birth.

Then we see how they develop as a children, from day to day, from week to week. But if one does not perceive that they are four-membered beings, with physical body, etheric body, astral body, and ego organization, one is not in a position to understand their development, for one does not see what part each member is playing in this development. They have different origins; they come from different worlds.

First, human beings have their physical organism. The most striking phenomenon in the physical organism is that in the first period of life they have what we call "first teeth," which last until the time we call "change of teeth." The teeth are only the most obvious thing that is changed at this time. For the fact is that human beings only keep the physical substance they received at birth until the change of teeth. They are constantly stripping that physical material from their form.

The process is, of course, more complicated than is implied in the brief statement that in the course of every seven or eight years a person pushes off all physical substance and replaces it. The truth is near to that, but one need only look at the change of teeth itself to realize that this picture must be modified somewhat. For if this abstract assertion were correct, we would have new teeth every seven years. We get new teeth only once. The teeth are changed once and do not undergo any other renewal.

[...] a basic statement can be made for the first seven years. Human beings strip away all the physical substance they had when they were born, keeping none of it, keeping only the forces that have lived and worked in it during those years. These forces have so appropriated the fresh new substance that was constantly being acquired that at seven the physical body has been completely renewed, even to the teeth. And from that statement the understanding must follow that the principle of heredity as our current natural science conceives of it really holds good only for the first seven years of life. Only for those first seven years is it true that a person's characteristics come from parents and grandparents.

The physical body of those first seven years provides, in a certain sense, a kind of model from which the artist working in the human being - who consists now in these years of etheric body, astral body, and ego - fashions a new physical body. We see how what we bring down from spiritual worlds—our individuality, our own being—and what we receive from heredity work together in artistic reciprocal activity.

You can see the particular kind of work the etheric body has to do. For in the years up to the change of teeth, the astral body and ego organization participate very little. The etheric body forms a new physical human body in accordance with the model. Why? Because, like the child during the first seven years, it is not yet able to receive other than a very special kind of impression from the outer world. Here we come upon an important secret of human evolution, a secret that answers the question: What does a child really perceive? The answer lies far away from present-day ideas.

We live, shall we say, between death and a new birth (or conception) in the spiritual world. In the spiritual world we are surrounded by realities very different from those found here in the physical world. We come out of that world into the physical world and continue our life in a physical body that we receive. Now in this physical world the same forces work further, although they are hidden from human sense perception. If you look at a tree, the same spiritual forces are working in it as those you encounter between death and new birth, only they are covered over, veiled, by the

physical material of the tree. Everywhere in the physical world in which we live between birth and death, spiritual forces are active behind the sense-perceptible physical entities. We can think of the activities of the spiritual world continuing into this world in which we live between birth and death.

Now in the first seven years of life the child's whole being cannot unite with anything except this spiritual reality in all the colors, all the forms, all warmth, all cold. The child is fully aware when entering this physical world of the continuing spiritual activity. This awareness gradually diminishes up to the change of teeth. A sense impression is quite different to a child than to an adult.

[...]

Thus we have in this first life period very special laws working within all that activates the child, in all the awkwardness and uncertainty that are in the soul and with which it moves. They come from the fact that constant adjustment is having to be made to the physical world, since the child is still dreamily and half-consciously immersed in the other surrounding world: the spiritual world.

The etheric body has a great deal to do in these first seven years of life. It works quietly and steadily to develop the faculties that it will possess in the second seven-year period: independent faculties of memory leading toward the intellect. Whoever has an eye for it can see the greatest transformation in the child's soul-life when the first life period goes over into the second. The etheric body is now relieved of the work it had to accomplish—in the full sense of the word—to build the second body. It is relieved, freed. [...]

What the human being saves by not having to create a third set of teeth enables something of the etheric body to be “left over.”

What flowed during the first seven years into the physical development and is now “left over” from the physical development works now purely in the realm of soul, its nature depending upon the individual. With the faculties upon which you call as a teacher in school, the faculties you train, the child accomplished the great change from milk teeth to second teeth, and much else. With the forces that are saved by not having to form a third set of teeth, the child begins to develop soul faculties. This takes place in the depths of human nature. During the first seven years these soul forces had been entirely embedded in the physical development. We have to comprehend physical development as a soul-spiritual activity just as much as a physical activity. We see a spiritual entity active in the body in the first seven years of the human being, in the fullest sense of the word.

How does this relate to general human development? Those forces with which the human soul works in the first seven years of life are in the cosmos; they are sun forces. It is not only physical-etheric rays that stream down from the sun: in those physical-etheric sun rays, forces are streaming down from the sun that are identical with the forces by which our etheric body renews our physical body in the first seven years of life. It is the Sun Being that works there.

Look at the child—how the child works at a second physical body, copying from the model! The child is absorbing pure forces from the sunshine. [...] And when the child has certain etheric forces released at the change of teeth, they then work back upon the astral organization and ego organization. Then in the second life period human beings have access to what could not reach them at all in the first period. They now have access to the moon forces.

The etheric forces in the first seven years of life are sun forces. At the change of teeth we have access to the moon forces; these are identical with the forces of our astral body. Thus at the change of teeth human beings move from the sun sphere — in which, however, we also still remain, for it remains active in us — into the moon sphere.

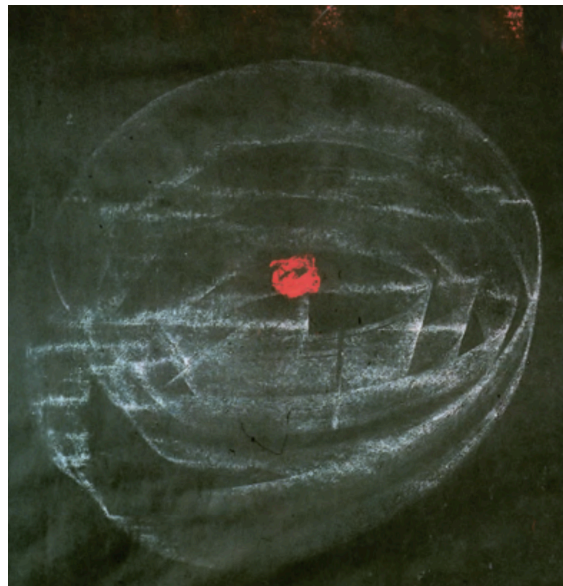
And now between change of teeth and puberty we work on ourselves with the moon forces. With the moon forces we now build our second own body (the third earthly body), in which not so much is replaced as in the first life period, but even so a great deal. Again forces remain behind, but they are now of an astral nature, and they are now transforming the soul. They were freed from their work on the body when we reached puberty. We have now reached a period in which we manifest certain forces that are now free in the soul, forces that had to work in the physical body between the ages of seven and fourteen.

So we work entirely in the first life period with what comes to us from the sun. And with the school child between change of teeth and puberty, it is sun forces that have now become free for soul activity. That is the great powerful fact we find in human evolution, that if one is educating a child's soul between change of teeth and puberty, one has to do purely with sun forces. The child-soul is so intimately related to what lives in the sunshine! One's heart can rejoice in such knowledge. The knowledge really sheds light on the relation between humanity and cosmos.

Moon forces are active in this second life period in the bodily development; they are not yet freed for the soul-life. They become free at puberty, and then they join the work on the soul. The change that takes place in the soul-life at puberty is caused by the fact that moon forces are now impressing themselves into the soul-life. So what a young person does in all kinds of behavior after the onset of puberty is a working together of sun and moon forces.

Thus we see into the depths of human evolution. We will stay clear of speaking of heredity in the crude sense in which natural science speaks of it. We will look in the opposite direction, to see what lives in the human activity of the child. It is the sun that lives in all the human activity of the child, and in the child's human thinking.

It is the sun that streams to us from the stone—for a stone has no light of its own, it can only reflect the sun's light to us. The natural researcher grants you that fact—but that is the very smallest, the most abstract detail! The child also reflects the sun forces back to us, between the seventh and fourteenth years. Just as we can designate the light reflected from the stone as sunlight streamed back to us, so we can designate what the child does in the second life period as “sun.” Sun is not merely there where it seems to be concentrated. This physical notion, that the sun is only there is like the notion of someone who looks at the soup in a soup bowl and sees a blob of fat floating on the top of it and thinks that the blob of fat is the soup. (See Steiner's black board drawing)



Yes, our physical ideas are often very childish, and if one uncovers them and shows them for what they are, then people laugh. One could wish there were the same reaction to much that is happening today in the name of science, because it is pretty laughable. When someone takes the blob of fat to be the soup itself, that's the same as when that gold ball up there above us is regarded as the entire sun. In reality the sun fills the whole world.

Laten we nu eens kijken naar het verband tussen de maankrachten en de voortplantingskrachten. De voortplantingskrachten vormen nu geleidelijk het eigen tweede lichaam van het kind dat wordt opgebouwd tussen het zevende en veertiende jaar en wordt voltooid wanneer de puberteit begint. De mens neemt gedurende deze tijd de voortplantingskrachten op; dit is duidelijk maanactiviteit. Deze krachten houden volledig verband met maanactiviteit. Ze zijn het resultaat van maanactiviteit.

And now we reach the life period in which we must form our own third body (the fourth when counted from an external view), the time from puberty to the beginning of the twenties. The division of time in the later years is no longer so exact as the time between change of teeth and puberty. Now there is always more physical substance remaining behind; it stays fixed in the human being, it becomes permanent structure. Gradually a great deal of permanent structure accumulates. The older a person becomes, the less material is stripped away from the bones and replaced. Also in the rest of the organism certain parts need a longer time to separate off. And one can see a simple fact in connection with the teeth: that once one has got one's second set of teeth, whether one still has them later depends upon how long they last—just as with a knife, one only has it as long as it lasts. The knife can't renew itself. Teeth can't renew themselves either, really.

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<https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA318/English/AP1987/19240911p01.html>

Man as a Being of Sense and Perception (GA 206)

Lecture: Development of the Child up to Puberty - Dornach, 7 August 1921

When the change of teeth has come about, the development of puberty starts within the soul element, which can be grasped to a certain degree through imagination. Through simply experiencing our imagination we can see what is forming in the soul.

[...]

Under these interesting conditions which take place in the child between dentition and puberty, we see how there is actually a strong struggle taking place in the becoming of the human being. The fight to a certain extent in this period of life is between the ether body and the astral body which undergoes a particular transformation towards puberty. When we consider the physical correlation corresponding to this condition of a struggle, then we can say that it's during this period of the child's life when there is **a struggle between growing forces and those forces which appear through physical inspiration, through breathing**. This is a very important process in inner development, a process which has to be studied time and again. A part of what becomes freed up for the soul during dentition, are growing forces. Of course a considerable part of these growing forces remain in the body and see to growth, while a part of this is freed during dentition and come to the fore as soul forces.

The **growing forces** working on in the child **resists against** what appears essentially in the **respiratory process**.

What now appears in the breathing process could not essentially appear before. The respiratory process is certainly present in the child but as long as it has the forces rising from dentition, so long will nothing in the child happen which is actually as striking, as meaningful as what later takes place between breathing and the physical body. The greatest part of our development depends upon the breathing process.

[...]

As we said, before the start of dentition, what breathing actually wants to affect in us fails to become active in the body. Now the battle starts between the **growing forces retained in the body** against **the forces penetrating through the breathing processes**. The first meaningful process appearing as a result of the physical breathing processes is puberty.

This connection between breathing and puberty is not yet being examined by science. It is, however, definitely present. We actually breathe in what brings on puberty, which also gives us the further opportunity to step into a relationship in the widest sense between the world and loving surroundings. We actually breathe this in. In every process of nature there's also a spiritual process. In the breathing process exists not only the spiritual but also the soul spiritual. This soul spiritual process permeates us through breathing. It can only penetrate when the forces have become ensouled, forces which formerly worked up to the change of teeth and stopped at this point. What wanted to stream in through the breathing process can now take place.

However, again they come into opposition—a war—of what comes out of the growing processes and what is still a growth process, coming from ether forces in other words. This war is evident between the ether forces rising from the ether body and their correlation found in the material, in the metabolism and blood circulation as astral forces. Here the metabolic system plays into the rhythmic system. We can schematically say: we have our metabolic system but this plays into our blood rhythm; the metabolic system I depict here in white (weiß) and the circulation system playing into it: red (rot) in the drawing. This is what streams from the ether body upwards between the ages of seven to fourteen.

The astral body works against it. We have the inward streaming of the rhythmical in the physical correlation which comes from breathing and the war takes place between the blood circulation and the breathing rhythms in blue (blau). This is what is happening in that period of life.

To speak somewhat vividly in perhaps a radical image: between about the ninth and the tenth year in the life of every child, what had been planned before and appeared as skirmishes before the actual main battle, now goes over into the main battle. **The astral and ether bodies direct their chief attack during the ninth and tenth year of life.**



As a result this period in time is so important for educators to observe. It is simply so, that teachers, educators and instructors need to give their full attention to something—which may appear differently in nearly each person—taking place in this moment in time.

[....]

The child first learns at this moment to really distinguish itself from the surroundings. This corresponds to a definite counter streaming of the breathing rhythm with the circulatory rhythm, the astral and the ether bodies.

Link to RS Archiv:

<https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA206/English/Singles/19210807p01.html>

Spiritual Ground of Education (GA 305)

16 August 1922, Oxford

There is, namely, for every child a critical point during the age of school attendance; roughly between the 9th and 11th year there is a critical moment, a moment which must not be overlooked by the teacher. In this age between the 9th and 11th year there comes for every child—if he is not abnormal—the moment when he says to himself: **'How can I find my place within the world?'** One must not suppose that the question is put just as I have said it. The question arises in indefinite feelings, in unsatisfied feelings. The question shows itself in the child's having a longing for dependence on a grown-up person.

Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy I (GA 304)

27 February 1921, The Hague

The turning point to be discussed now occurs around **a child's ninth year—but sometimes not before the tenth or even the eleventh year.** When our teachers recognize that a child is passing this point, they accompany the change with an appropriate change in pedagogy. In early childhood, a child learns to speak, gradually learning to refer to itself as "I". Up to the ninth year, however, the distinction between the child's "I" and the surrounding world is still rather undefined. Those who can observe things carefully recognize that the period when a child learns to differentiate between self and surroundings—approximately between the ninth and the eleventh years—is critical. It is a time when the child is actually crossing a Rubicon. The way in which the teachers respond to this change is of greatest importance for a child's future life. Teachers must have the right feeling for what is happening.

Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy I (GA 304)

26 September 1921, Dornach

In a human being, the normal course of events is that, at the time of the change of teeth, the physical body becomes separated from the soul-spiritual aspect. When the teeth change, therefore, we are actually dealing with the beginning of processes that.

[...]

Let us now look at the other end of the primary school, at puberty. There, we find exactly the opposite situation. Whereas, during the second dentition, the soul-spiritual withdraws from the child's organism, becoming liberated from and abandoning the physical body, during puberty the soul-spiritual nature, which has meanwhile developed, longs to return to the physical body, to permeate and impregnate it. [...]

While teaching the child during the years of primary education, we must continually maintain a balance between what is striving toward the soul-spiritual becoming liberated at the beginning of the second dentition and what is instinctively streaming back from the soul-spiritual sphere into the physical body at puberty. The teacher must always strive toward equilibrium in the child during the coming and going that take place during the whole period between seven and fourteen.

This becomes a particularly important and absorbing task for the teacher between the child's ninth and tenth years. Because the two streams of forces meet at the half-way stage, the child is then in a condition in which it can develop in all possible directions. Much depends on whether the teacher, as the guide, says the right words to the child, choosing the right moment between the ninth and tenth years, or whether he or she misses this unique moment. [...]

As teachers, when pupils approach puberty, we must look for the essence of their being in their letting their soul-spiritual nature submerge into their physical nature. Indeed, our adolescents will develop abnormally if we do not recognize that we must fill their souls and spirits that are submerging into their physical being with an interest for the whole world. If we do not do this, they will become inwardly excitable, nervous, or neurasthenic (not to speak of other abnormalities). As teachers, we must direct our pupils' interests to the affairs of the wide world, so that our young people can take into their bodily being as much as possible of what links them to the outer world. When a child first enters school, we must know what is striving to be liberated so that we can work on it, but, at the stage of adolescence, we must become "people of the world" in order to know what can interest our adolescent students. By so doing, we can ensure a healthy descent of our teenagers' souls and spirits, which are about to become submerged in their physical bodies. That will prevent their becoming too strongly absorbed in the flesh and they therefore will not lose themselves narcissistically in pleasure. We should aim at helping them to become persons who live in the world and who are able to become free from too much self-interest. Otherwise, they will become trapped in egotism. We must help them toward a true and harmonious relationship with the world.

Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy II (GA 304a)

26 March 1923, Stuttgart

Contemporary physiology, consisting on the one side of anthropology and on the other of an abstract psychology, is ignorant of the most fundamental facts. One can say that, until the second dentition, all organic formations and functions proceed from the nerve-and-sense system. Between the change of teeth and puberty, the child's physical fitness or weakness depends on the good functioning of the rhythmic system, on the breathing and blood circulation. Between the ninth and the tenth birthdays, what previously was still anchored primarily in the breathing, in the upper part of the organism, basically shifts over to the blood circulation; this is the time when the wonderful number relationship of one to four is being developed, in the approximately eighteen breaths and the seventy-two pulse beats per minute. This relationship between breathing and blood circulation becomes established at this time of life. However, it is only the outer expression of deep processes going on in the child's soul. [...]

The Child's Changing Consciousness and Waldorf Education (GA 306)

17 April 1923, Dornach

Between the age when the child is likely to suffer from an overstimulation of the nerve-sense system and in the years following sexual maturity—that is, between the change of teeth and puberty—are the years of compulsory schooling. And amid all of this, a kinship lives between the child's soul life and the pictorial realm, as I have described it to you. Outwardly, this is represented by the rhythmic system with its interweaving of breathing and blood circulation. The way that breathing and blood circulation become inwardly harmonized, the way that the child breathes at school, and the way that the breathing gradually adapts to the blood circulation, all of this generally happens between the ninth and tenth year. At first, until the ninth year, the child's breathing is in the head, until, through an inner struggle within its organism, a kind of harmony between the heartbeat and the breathing is established. This is followed by a time when the blood circulation predominates, and this general change occurs in the physical realm and in the realm of the child's soul.

After the change of teeth is complete, all of the forces working through the child are striving toward inwardly mobile imagery, and we will support this picture-forming element if we use a pictorial approach in whatever we bring to the child. And then, between the ninth and tenth years, something truly remarkable begins to occur; the child feels a greater relationship to the musical element. The child wants to be held by music and rhythms much more than before.

Anthroposophical Spiritual Science and Medical Therapy (GA 313)

Dornach, April 14, 1921

The child is born in such a way that forces received by way of his head during embryonic development are then active in the human being in working through (nourishment) substances from within. But in the period between the change of teeth and puberty, which culminates between the ninth and tenth years, the ego that works from out of the lower human being, the lower ego, must meet the Higher Ego. In the child it is always the Ego working from the upper man that works through the substances until the time indicated. Of course, I am referring to the instruments of the ego. The ego is indeed ultimately a unity. But the instruments of the ego, the polarity of the ego—that is the meeting of the lower ego with the Higher Ego—only establish a proper relationship in the way I have described. Thus the ego must enter the human organization at this time in the same way that the astral body must penetrate the human organization in learning to speak.¹

¹ These processes that occur between the astral body and the human etheric and physical bodies underlie the acquisition of speech and all the changes in the human organism connected with learning to speak. These processes should be carefully observed in the child as learning to speak runs parallel with changes in the rest of the organism. (Earlier in the same lecture)