Polarities in Health, Illness and Therapy

by

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Polarities in Health, Illness and Therapy

A lecture by Rudolf Steiner
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Since I was asked to speak about the therapeutic principles which have developed out of the anthroposophical view of the world, I will gladly meet this request. However, it is difficult to be brief, especially about this kind of subject matter which is so extraordinarily extensive. In one brief lecture, which can only be aphoristic, one can hardly develop correct ideas of what is important. In addition, certain deliberations must be undertaken in such an attempt which are quite removed from what people generally think about. Nevertheless, this evening I will attempt to present the relevant issues in as generally comprehensive a manner as possible.

The fact that within our anthroposophical movement there is also a medical-therapeutic endeavor is certainly not based upon our desire as anthroposophists to participate in everything and to stick our noses, so to speak, into everything. That is absolutely not the case; but as the anthroposophical movement sought to make its way through the world, physicians too found their way to this movement. They are seriously striving physicians; and a relatively large number of such physicians had come to a more or less clear awareness of how uncertain, how vacillating the views of contemporary, official medicine actually are, of how in many cases the foundations for the actual comprehension of processes of illness and healing are lacking. These foundations are lacking in official medicine because today the claims for scientific validity are actually based exclusively upon generally accepted natural science. This natural science in turn believes itself to be moving with certainty only with what it can determine in a mechanical, physical or chemical manner from outer nature. It then applies the discoveries made through physics and chemistry about outer natural processes in order to come to an understanding of the human being. But even if there is a kind of concentration, a microcosmic concentration of all world processes within the human being, nevertheless, the outer physical and chemical processes never proceed within the human organism in the same form in which they proceed outside in nature. Man takes the substances of the earth into
himself, substances which are not merely passive, but which are actually always permeated by nature processes. A substance only appears outwardly as if it were resting within itself. In reality, everything lives and weaves in the substance. Thus man also takes into his organism these processes, this living and weaving activity, proceeding chemically and physically in nature; but he transforms it immediately in his organism—he makes it into something different.

This something different, which develops out of the nature processes in the human organism, can only be understood if one attains a comprehensive observation of the human being based on reality. But contemporary natural science actually excludes from its realm what proceeds in the human being as intrinsically human. Even, for example, what proceeds as intrinsically human in the physical body is attributed exclusively to physical and chemical processes; for in the physical body of man nothing takes place which is not at the same time subject to the influences of etheric processes, of astral processes, of ego processes. But as natural science totally ignores these ego processes, these astral processes, this etheric living and weaving, it actually does not at all approach the human being. Therefore this natural science can not really look into the inner activities of the human being in order to comprehend how the outer chemical and physical processes continue to work in him: how they continue to work when he is healthy, and how they continue to work when he is diseased.

How shall it then be possible to properly judge the effects of medicaments, of a remedy, if one has not acquired an understanding for how some substance of nature which we introduce into the human organism, or with which we treat the human organism, continues to work in that organism.

It could indeed be said that the greatest progress imaginable in medicine in more recent times has actually only been made in the area of surgery where one is dealing with external mechanical manipulations, as it were. In contrast, in the area of actual therapy, there reigns great confusion—(this is not my judgment, but the judgment of those physicians who have become conscious of all this). The reason for this confusion
is that the connection between any object of nature and its effect upon illness cannot be understood if, by virtue of a specific point of view which one has about natural science, one actually excludes the human being from scientific considerations. Since anthroposophy strives to know the human being comprehensively—insofar as he is a supersensible as well as a material being—it is also possible that anthroposophy can yield knowledge concerning the treatment of illnesses with various natural substances.

Fundamentally speaking, we are already confronting today a kind of boundary in medicine if we ask only for the actual nature of illness. What is illness? This question cannot be answered out of contemporary scientific knowledge. For, what, according to these natural scientific views, are all the processes which proceed in the healthy human being? From the head to the tip of the toes these are processes of nature. But then what are the processes which take place during illness in the liver, kidney, head, heart, wherever? What kind of processes are these? These are also natural processes! All healthy processes are processes of nature; all processes of illness are also processes of nature. Why then is the human being healthy with one sort of natural process and ill with the other sort of natural process?

It is not a matter of speaking in vague generalities: well, yes the healthy processes of nature are normal, but the sick processes of nature are not. One can get the impression that, if one doesn’t know anything, there arises “at the proper time,” a word, a label for our ignorance.

What is actually going on when customary natural science is applied in approaching the human being? The predominant practice is not to look at the living being, but at the corpse; here and there a piece of the organism is sampled and then various abstractions are made about what kind of healthy or sick natural processes proceeded within it. Thus it actually doesn’t matter whether one takes some kind of tissue out of the head, out of the liver, out of the big toe, or the like. Everything is finally reduced to the cell. Gradually histology, the study of tissues and cells, has actually become the most highly developed teaching of the human being. Of course, if one goes into the smallest
parts and ignores all other forces, all other relationships, then, as at night all cows are grey, all organs are the same. The result is a benighted “grey cow science,” not a true science which acquaints itself with the uniqueness of the separate organs in man.

What must provide the basis there I actually dared to express only a few years ago. Although it is generally imagined that it is easy for spiritual science to come to its results, this matter has occupied me for more than thirty years. It is thought that one only needs to look into the spiritual world to find out everything, while it is difficult if one has to work in laboratories or in a clinic—there one must really struggle. In spiritual science it is only a matter of looking into the world of the spirit and then one finds out everything. It really isn’t that simple. Thorough and responsible spiritual investigation demands more effort and above all more responsibility than the manipulations in the laboratory or in the clinic or observatories. And so it is that the first conception of what I will now briefly indicate in principle stood before me approximately thirty-five years ago. I was only able to speak about it a few years ago after everything was worked through and, above all, verified completely on the findings of the entire contemporary official natural science. It was under the influence of these principles of the membering of the human being that what I just told you about developed — this medical-therapeutic endeavor within our anthroposophical movement.

Even if we confront the human being as a solely physical being, we must definitely distinguish three members which differ one from another. These three different members can be labeled in the most varied ways, but we can best approach them if we characterize them by saying that one system of the physical being is the nerve-sense system which is primarily localized in the head. The second system is the rhythmic system, which encompasses respiration, blood circulation, the rhythmic activities of the digestive system, and so forth. The third system is represented in the interconnection between the movement system, the system of the limbs, and the actual metabolic system. This interconnection becomes immediately evident to
you if you think of the fact that the metabolism is enhanced especially through the movement of the limbs and that inwardly the limbs are organically connected with the metabolic organs. That is directly evident also in anatomy. Just look at how the legs are continued inwardly into the metabolic organs and, similarly, how the arms are continued inwardly. Thus we can now distinguish the nerve-sense system, located primarily in the head; the rhythmic system, located primarily in the chest; and the metabolic limb system, located primarily in the limbs and the attached metabolic organs.

This membering, however, may not be done as a professor once did who wanted to ridicule the anthroposophical movement. He did not attempt to penetrate into what is actually meant with this membering. He said: these anthroposophists maintain that man consists of three systems: a head, a rump consisting of chest and abdomen, and limbs. Of course, in this manner it is easy to ridicule the matter.

What matters is not that the nerve-sense system is only in the head. It is primarily in the head, but it extends over the entire organism. The head organization spreads out through the entire organism. Similarly, the rhythmic system extends upwards and downwards through the entire organism. Spatially speaking the human being is entirely metabolic-limb system. If you move the eyes, the eyes are limbs. So these systems are not spatially next to one another; instead they interpenetrate one another. They totally interpenetrate and one must accustom oneself a little to an exact thinking if one wants to evaluate this membering of the human being in the right way.

Now both these systems, the first and the third, the nerve-sense system and the metabolic-limb system, are placed polarically opposite each other. What the one creates destroys the other. What destroys the other is created by the one. They thus work in completely opposite ways. And the middle system, the rhythmic system, establishes the connection between the two. There is a kind of vacillation, oscillation, between them, so that a harmony can always exist between the destruction of the one system and the construction of the other system. If, for example, we look at the metabolic system, we recognize that
it naturally works with its greatest intensity in the lower body of the human being; but that which goes on within the human abdomen, or the lower body, must call forth the polar opposite activity in the head, in the nerve-sense system, when the person is healthy.

Imagine now that the activity actually inherent in the human digestive system intensifies so much that it extends right up to the nerve-sense system, so that the activity which should actually remain in the metabolic-limb system reaches over to the nerve-sense system. Then you have a natural process, so to speak, but you can see immediately how that natural process becomes an abnormal one. It should remain in the metabolic system, but breaks through, so to speak, upwards into the nerve-sense system.

That results then in the various forms of the illness treated by medicine today as insignificant, but not treated in that way by a large part of humanity because these various forms of illness are known everywhere. What develops is known as the various forms of migraine. In order to understand migraine in its various forms we must comprehend this process which ought only to take place in the metabolic system but which breaks through to the nerve-sense system so that the nerves and senses are so affected that the metabolism shoots into them instead of remaining in its own place.

The reverse can also take place. The process which ought to be most intensive in the nerve-sense system, and which is completely opposite to the metabolic process, can in a certain sense also break through to the metabolic system. Consequently an enhanced nerve-sense process takes place in the metabolic system where normally a merely subordinated nerve-sense process should be active. Thus what belongs to the head, as it were, breaks through into the lower body. If this happens then the dangerous illness develops which is known as typhoid fever.*

Thus we can see how a fundamental understanding of this three-fold human being makes it possible for us to understand

* A febrile illness of prolonged duration which is marked by hectic fever, delirium, enlargement of the spleen, abdominal pain, and a variety of systemic manifestations such as headache, diarrhea, skin lesions and more.
how a process of illness develops out of a healthy process. If our head, with its nerve-sense system, were not organized as it is, then we could never have typhoid fever. If our lower body were not organized as it is, we could never have migraine. The head activity should remain in the head, the lower body activity in the lower body. If they break through then such forms of illness develop.

And just as we can point to two especially characteristic forms of illness, so can we point to other forms of illness which always develop when an activity which belongs to one organ system asserts itself in another place, in another organ system.

If one proceeds only anatomically one merely observes the status of the smallest parts in the tissues of the organism. But one does not see the working of polar opposite activities. When studying the nerve cell you can only study that its organization is opposite to that of the liver cell, for example. If, however, you were able to look into the totality of the organism in such a way that it appears to you in its three-foldness, then you will also notice how the nerve cell is a cell which continually tends to dissolve, which continually tends to be broken down if it is healthy; and how a liver cell is something which continually tends to be built up if it is healthy. Those are polar activities. They work in the right way upon one another if they are appropriately distributed in the organism; they work incorrectly within one another if they penetrate into one another.

The rhythmic system is in the middle and always strives to create the balance between the two opposed polar activities of the nerve-sense system and the metabolic-limb system.

I would now like to select a special example to let you have insight into how one can find the relationship of a remedy which has been taken from nature with its forces to the health-giving and illness-generating forces active within man.

Let us direct our gaze to an ore which can be found in nature, so-called antimony. As soon as we look at it externally we see that it has an extraordinarily interesting property. Its form in nature is such that certain rods develop—stem-like, lance-like structures which lie next to one another—so that if we
were to draw the ore schematically we could draw the following:

It grows almost like a mineral moss or a mineral lichen. One can see that this mineral wants to order itself into threads. One can see this even more clearly if we subject it to a certain physical-chemical process. Then the thread-like crystals become even thinner. It orders itself into clusters of very fine threads. Especially important, however, is what occurs when this antimony is subjected to a certain kind of combustion process. You get a white smoke which can then condense on the walls and becomes mirror-like. That is called the antimony mirror. It is hardly respected at all today but in older medicine it was widely used. This antimony mirror, which first arises out of the combustion process and condenses on the walls so that it shines like a mirror is something exceptionally important.

In addition there is another property. I will emphasize only this: if antimony is subjected to certain electrolytical processes and it is brought to the so-called electrolytic cathode, then it is only necessary (after the antimony was subjected to the electrolytic process on the cathode), to exert a slight action on it and a small antimony explosion will occur. In brief, this antimony has the most interesting properties.

If antimony is introduced into the human organism in a moderate dose one can study various processes which show how in fact the same forces which behave as I have just described experience a kind of continuation in the human organism and how they take on all kinds of forms of forces and effects within it.

I can naturally not explain all the details and proofs to you: I only want to briefly sketch for you what is inherent in these forms of activity. These processes which arise in the human
organism occur especially strongly wherever blood coagulates. Therefore they strengthen or enhance the coagulation of blood. However, if we use those methods of study which are consistent with an understanding of the threefold human organism, we are permitted to gradually look into the human being and gain knowledge of how the separate systems behave in the different organs. If we look into the human organism in this way, we find that what lives in antimony lives not only outside in the mineral antimony, but also is active as a force-system in the human organism. This force system is always present in the healthy human organism. In the sick human organism it takes on forms of the kind which I have just explained to you.

This antimony process existing in the human organism is opposed in a polar way to another process. It is opposed to that process which arises where the plastically active forces, for example, the cell-forming forces occur. These are the forces which round out the cells, which form the cellular substance of the human organism. I would like to call these forces, because they are primarily contained in protein substance, the *albuminizing forces*. Thus we have in the human organism the forces which we find outside in human nature in antimony if we subject antimony, for example, to combustion, and bring about an antimony mirror. In addition we also have the opposing forces active, the *albuminizing forces*, which immobilize, which take away the *antimonizing forces*.

These two force systems, albuminizing and antimonizing, work against one another in such a way that they must be in a certain state of equilibrium in the human organism. One must now recognize that the process which I have described to you before in principle, and which lies at the basis of abdominal typhus, is essentially based on a disturbance of the balance between these two force systems.

In order to look properly into the human organism one must be able to take recourse to that which I have described to you from the most varied — although not medical — points of view in these morning lectures.

In them we have seen how man has not merely his physical body, but also an etheric body — a body of formative
forces, an astral and an ego organization. And just yesterday I was able to explain to you how there is an intimate connection on the one hand between the physical body and the formative force body, and on the other, between the ego and the astral body. There is a looser connection between the astral body and the formative force body, for they separate every night.

This interconnection, which consists of a working into one another of the forces of the astral and etheric bodies, is radically disturbed in typhoid fever. In this illness the astral body becomes weak and is unable to work with a corresponding intensity into the physical body because it works for itself thereby bringing about that excess which presses downward, so to speak, the nerve-sense organization, which is primarily subject to the astral body. Instead of transforming itself into metabolic activity, it remains active as astral activity. The astral body works for itself. It does not work properly into the etheric body. The consequences are the symptoms of illness which give us the symptomatology of typhus.

Now that which occurs as antimony is active in such a way that antimony denies its mineral nature. It gets crystalline threads, so that even the antimony mirror, wherever it deposits, appears like ice-flowers in the window, thereby showing the inner force of crystallization as in nature. This force of crystallization, which becomes active in antimony, if it is properly incorporated into a remedy and introduced into the organism, works in such a way that it supports this organism enabling it to insert its astral body with its forces into the etheric body in the right way, so that it can bring these bodies again into the right connection.

With antimony prepared in a proper way into a remedy we support that process which opposes the typhus process. And just with this antimony remedy, to which other substances are added, one can battle against the illness by stimulating and supporting processes in the organism so that it unfolds its own, I would like to say, antimonizing force which has as its goal to call forth the proper rhythm in the working together of astral body and etheric body. Other substances must be mixed in to establish a proper connection to the organism depending on whether an
illness takes one or another course.

Thus an anthroposophical consideration leads to the recognition of a relationship between what is active in the objects of nature, as I have shown you with the example of antimony, and that which is active within the human organism. You will be able to follow up this albuminizing, this plastically rounding force, and the other force which works linearly right into the germ cell.

Whoever has truly gained knowledge in this field — however uncomfortable it may be for him to say so, because he knows he will call forth hate and antipathy in certain people — and who thus looks into the operation of the human organism will consider the otherwise amazing and wonderful microscopic studies about the germ cell, exceptionally dilettantish. There people look externally at the egg cell, observe the development of the so-called centrosomes — you can read about that in any textbook about embryology, — without knowing how these albuminizing forces, which also rule throughout the entire human organism, are opposed, polarically opposed, to the antimonizing forces. The rounding of the egg cell as such is brought about by the albuminizing forces; the centrosomes, after fertilization, are called forth by the antimonizing forces.

That, however, goes on in the entire human body; and by preparing remedies in the right way, and knowing through the diagnosis where one must support the human organism, one introduces into this organism the forces which can work against a process of illness.

By bringing anthroposophical points of view into medicine a connection is established between the macrocosm and the human being. Naturally I would have to say much more about antimony if I wanted to scientifically explain it in detail, but I only want to point out general principles here. In addition I wanted to tell you about the processes which antimony is able to bring forth out of itself, which it has in itself, depending on how one treats it.

I could also show you now, as an example, the entire behavior within nature and its processes for that which we call quartz, or silicic acid. It is one of the constituents of granite.
It is transparently crystalline and so hard that you can’t score it with a knife at all. If we treat this substance in the proper way and administer it to the human organism—in the proper doses that are determined from the diagnosis—then it gains the characteristic of being able to support that which is to be active in the nerve-sense system, which the organism through the nerve-sense system is to bring forth as the intrinsic forces of this system. So what, by rights, the senses actually should do is supported by the remedy, which is prepared in the right way from quartz, or silica and administered in the proper doses. It is necessary then, depending upon the accompanying symptoms, to add still other substances, but here it is primarily a matter of the effect of that which lies in the silicic acid formation process. Thus if one brings this silicic acid formation process into the human organism, then a weak activity in the nerve-sense system is supported so that it then works with the proper strength. Now if this nerve-sense activity becomes too weak, then the digestive activity is able to penetrate through to the head and the migraine-like symptoms develop.

If one then supports the nerve-sense activity in the right way with a remedy which is produced in the proper manner out of silicic acid, the nerve-sense system becomes so strong in the person suffering from migraine that it can again press back the digestive process which broke through.

Naturally I am characterizing these matters somewhat crudely, but you will see what is significant here. What matters is to really be able to see through the healthy or ill human organism, not merely in accordance with its cellular composition but according the forces active in it, whether they work co-operatively, rhythmically or in opposition. Then one can look in nature for what in the human organism can fight against this or
that process of illness.

Thus one can find, for example, how the process which is contained in *phosphorus* is in outer nature a process which, if introduced into the human organism, works in a supportive way upon a certain kind of inner disability of the human organism; namely, when the human organism becomes incapable of allowing to act in the right way certain forces, which should always work in the healthy organism. This is when a person has too little strength and cannot let certain forces be active within him which are a kind of organic combustion process which is always present in the transformation of substances in the human organism. This takes place in every movement, in all that man does, and also in what is active within organic combustion processes. Now the human organism can become too weak to regulate these organic combustion processes in the proper way, for they must be inhibited in a certain manner. If they are insufficiently inhibited, they develop an excessive activity. The organic combustion processes in themselves actually always have an immeasurable, unlimited intensity. If that were not so, an excessive fatigue would arise immediately, or one would be unable to keep moving. However, the organism must also continuously have the possibility of inhibiting the boundless intensity of the organic combustion processes.

If now these inhibiting forces are neither in an organ system nor in the entire organism, if the organism has become too weak to inhibit its organic combustion processes in the proper way, then there develops something which manifests itself as *tuberculosis* in the most various forms. The suitable nutrient soil for the bacilli is created through this organic loss of strength, through the inability of the organism to inhibit the combustion processes.

Nothing will here be said against the bacterial theory which to a certain extent is very useful. In the various ways by which bacilli arise here or there one can naturally find out many things; for purposes of diagnoses one can generally get a lot of information. In no way do I want to say anything against official medicine, except that it needs to be augmented and developed further when it arrives at certain boundaries; and it can be
developed further when the points of view of anthroposophy can be applied to it.

If phosphorus is then introduced into the human organism, then these capacities of containing the organic combustion process are supported. But one must see to it that this containment can emanate from the various organ systems. Let us begin by looking at the system which primarily works in the bones. There the activity of phosphorus in the human organism must be supported in that one directs it towards the bones. That can happen when one combines the remedy phosphorus — in a way which becomes clear through a more exacting study of the matter — with calcium or a calcium salt. When dealing with tuberculosis of the small intestine one will mix some kind of copper compounds in the right dosage with the phosphorus. When dealing with a pulmonary tuberculosis, one will add iron to the phosphorus. But still other additions come under consideration since pulmonary tuberculosis is an exceedingly complicated disease. Thus you see that the possibility of a true therapy is based on how the chemical and physical processes continue to work on in the human organism.

Official medicine often starts out from the opinion that the working of the antimony forces outside in nature is the same as it is in the human organism, but that is not the case. One must be clear about how these processes work on in the human organism, and this can be seen if one applies actual anthroposophical insights to the experiments which must be done.

We have seen how antimony establishes the rhythm between the astral body and the etheric body. Now we can see how the forces which are active in quartz are especially suitable to reestablishing the proper relationship, when it has been disturbed, between the ego and the astral body, in order thereby to work in a healing way upon the nerve-sense system. We can also see how calcium — especially that calcium which is obtained from the calcium excretions of animals — provides remedies which establish the proper relationship between the body of formative forces, the etheric body and the physical body.

Thus one can say that a correct view of the human being
leads to the use of calcium or something similar, namely, what is secreted from the animal organism, — oyster shells, for example — in order to establish the proper relationship between the etheric body and the physical body, which, if out of balance, always expresses itself in physical processes of illness. That is what one must reflect upon when preparing remedies from such calcarious or similar excretions.

When dealing with an arhythmical working together of the body of formative forces and the astral body, one must look for what is present in antimony, and also in numerous other metals. If one wants to use remedies prepared from plants, one must also look especially into those constituents which are contained in the middle parts of the plants, those which are particularly present in the leaves and stem, whereas those forces which correspond to the phosphorus process are contained primarily in the blossom organs of the plants. Those processes which correspond to the silicic acid process are contained in the root organs of the plant. Thus one finds relationships between the forces which are in the various parts of the plant and the human organism. The root forces have a definite relationship and connection to the human head and to the nerve-sense system; the leaves and the stem organs have a specific connection to the rhythmic system; the blossom organs have a special connection to the metabolic system.

If one therefore wants to give assistance in a simple way to the digestive, metabolic system, that can often successfully be done — after having made the diagnosis in the correct way — by choosing certain blossoms of which one makes a tea. In this way one can assist the digestive organs. If one wants to gain a remedy which works especially upon the nerve-sense processes, upon the head organization, one would have to extract the salts from the roots by a special extraction process.

Thus it is necessary to penetrate into nature on the one hand and into the human organism on the other. Then it is possible to really find the remedies in nature so that one can see how the two are connected. Otherwise one does things by trial and error in order to find out how something works only to discover that it is not valid, or to write up a number
of cases where 90% or 70% showed a favorable result, but 40%
were unsuccessful. Then the matter is statistically treated, and
depending on what result the statistics yielded, a determination
is made whether or not a particular remedy should be used.

Because of the brief time available I can only speak about
these matters aphoristically in order to indicate how in fact,
without succumbing to dilettantism or medical sectarianism, one
can proceed strictly in accordance with science in approaching
illness processes through remedies which come out of a full
perception of man.

Just as the correct knowledge of natural substances and
natural processes is important in order to create a remedy, so it
is equally important to know the specific manner of application
of the remedy.

One can either work upon the nerve-sense system in bring-
ing about, in the right manner, the process of healing, or one can
work on the rhythmic system, or on the metabolic-limb system.
In order to work on these different systems it is essential to
know how the method of treatment must be initiated, for almost
every remedy can be used in three different ways. To begin with
it can be taken orally. This makes it possible for a person to take
up the remedy through the metabolic system, which then in turn
works upon the other systems. Some remedies are meant to be
used in just this way.

There are also, however, remedies which can be used in a
way which allows them to work directly on the rhythmic system.
(In this connection antimony will provide a good example for find-
ing the proper method of treatment.) This is where administra-
tion by injection must be introduced. Injecting the remedy
intravenously or subcutaneously is the mode of administration
which can best work upon the rhythmic processes in man.

In those remedies used in ointments, or in baths, or even
wherever there is a question of treating the human organism in
an external, mechanical way, for example in massage, then one
can count upon this method of treatment as working primarily
upon the nerve-sense system.

One can thus work through every organ system in the
most varied ways in an effort at working towards a healing
process. Let us assume we have silica, or quartz. It makes quite a difference whether we prepare this remedy to be taken by mouth or to be injected. If we count upon the fact that it will be taken by mouth then we will be preparing it to work through the digestive system, and the digestive system in turn can send forces into the nerve-sense system. We are then introducing the quartz processes by detour through the digestive system. If, however, we see that more quartz processes need to be transmitted to the nerve-sense system by introducing them via the rhythmic system, via the blood and breath, then we inject the remedy and thereby attempt to heal by way of the rhythmic system.

If we want to work therapeutically by way of the digestive organs with aromatic ether substances contained in the blossom of the plant, then we will prepare a tea and introduce it into the gastro-intestinal tract by having the patient drink it. If we want to bring etheric oils which, through their aromatic properties, work directly upon the nerve-sense system — or working first upon the nerve-sense system and then into the rhythmic system — then we could make some kind of bath to which we add the juices of the blossoms. In this manner we work upon the nerve-sense system.

Thus we see how the healing effect of the different substances brought into a relationship to man depends on the various methods of application and treatment. This will become transparently clear if anthroposophical knowledge is more and more applied to bringing about a connection between nature processes and the human being. It can then become evident through anthroposophy which remedies one needs to apply and how one needs to apply them.

In this way something can be brought about in the laboratories within our clinical-therapeutic institutes and other endeavors in which physicians are involved making it possible that on the one hand, remedies and therapeutic methods can be tried out, and on the other hand, the remedies themselves can be prepared. We have such clinical institutes as well as chemical-pharmaceutical laboratories in Arlesheim, near Dornach, as well as in Stuttgart.
I must point here especially to the Clinical-Therapeutic Institute in Arlesheim (now the Ita Wegman Klinik) which is under the exceptional direction of Frau Dr. Ita Wegman, who unfolds an activity full of blessing for that institute because she has that which I would like to call “the courage to heal.” It is evident that this courage to heal is necessary, especially if you look on the one hand into the complexity of natural processes out of which healing processes must be drawn forth, and on the other hand into the immense complexity of processes of illness and health in man. — If a physician confronts this vast field even if he only has a certain number of patients, then she or he is required to have courage in order to heal.

Attached to this Arlesheim Institute is the International Pharmaceutical Laboratory (now the Weleda) in which remedies are produced. They can be used today in the entire world. The pharmacy produces the remedies and it is up to others to find the ways and means to make use of them. That is the essential point. People must find the right ways and means to arrive at the right remedies without being dilettantes. Then contemporary science will not be negated; rather, it will be taken further, extended.

If this knowledge becomes widely known, the success of such an endeavor as the International Pharmaceutical Laboratory in Arlesheim will not be a problem. But it is difficult in the face of the prevalent, purely materialistic direction of medicine to bring into the world effective therapeutics which are based upon a full knowledge of man. To bring about a change one would have to count upon the insight of every person who has a heartfelt interest in the health of his fellow man.

In pointing to that which can be achieved through natural remedies and their appropriate application, I certainly do not want to exclude what can be achieved by more soul-spiritual processes of healing. In this realm one can make especially fruitful observations. If we now carry hygienic-therapeutic considerations—as always must be the case in a proper pedagogy—into the school, one can see how the manner in which one works upon the children in a soul-spiritual manner in instruction can have an effect on the health and illness of
a person—if not immediately, then certainly in the course of life. When I give pedagogical lectures I naturally speak about these matters in greater detail. I will mention only one example: the teacher can proceed properly in relation to the memory of the child only if he expects neither too much nor too little. If he proceeds improperly, if he places too many demands on the memory in the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh years of life, then he does not have the proper pedagogical tact. What the soul must go through in an excessive activity of memory, or artificially nurtured activity of memory, will live itself out later in life as all kinds of physical illnesses. It is possible to establish a connection between diabetes and erroneous methods in education in relationship to memory. So too can the use of memory in education to the opposite extreme also have unfavorable effects upon a child.

I can mention this only in principle, but one can see from it not only how the natural remedies work in health and illness, but also how the special manner in which the soul itself works can be significant to health and illness.

Starting from there one can also find one’s way to those methods whereby we attempt, through purely soul-spiritual influences, from person to person,—which I naturally cannot describe in detail any more today—to bring about processes leading to healing. Especially in this realm, however, it is very easy to get into dilettantism. One can, for example, harbor the belief that the so-called mental illnesses can be most easily healed through spiritual influences (for example by discussion). However, mental illnesses especially distinguish themselves by the fact that one can hardly approach the ill person with rational discussion. As a matter of fact it is just that impossibility of rational exchange which closes off the soul against outer influences in the so-called mentally ill. But one will find over and again that especially in so-called mental illness—which actually has been, as such, incorrectly named—physical processes of illness are present in a hidden way somewhere. Before one wants to meddle in a dilettantish way with mental illness, one ought actually, with the proper diagnosis, to determine which physical organ is involved in the illness. Only then will one be working
beneficially through a corresponding healing of the physical organism.

One can help physical illnesses much sooner through all kinds of soul-spiritual (mental-psychological) influences. This is being done today but generally in a dilettantish way. I will not go into that now. Especially in physical illness much benefit will come in this way and the outer process which is brought about through remedies and the like will be supported in different ways.

I can only indicate this. Those methods which are based on the foundation of anthroposophy certainly do not exclude therapeutic soul-spiritual influences; rather, they include them. You have evidence of this in the Clinical Therapeutic Institute in Arlesheim-Dornach. Besides the physical-therapeutic methods you also find curative eurythmy.

This curative eurythmy consists in taking what you have seen here as artistic eurythmy and transforming it into health-giving movements for the person moving them. The vowel aspect is transformed so that the person makes healthy movements which are drawn out of eurythmy and are applied specifically in support of those forces which earlier I have called the albuminizing forces in man, while the consonant forces in many ways support the antimonizing forces. Thus it is possible through the working together of consonant and vowel eurythmy to bring about a balance between these two kinds of forces. And it can show there, if things are done properly, not in a dilettantish manner, how other healing processes, also in chronic illnesses, can be immensely supported through this curative eurythmy.

This curative eurythmy is actually based upon the fact that soul-spiritual processes are awakened through that which man does with his limbs. If one knows which movements want to come directly forth out of the healthy human organism, then one can also find the corresponding movements which will work in a healing way if one works back from the limbs, i.e. from the human movement, upon the processes of the inner organs.

In the Clinical Therapeutic Institute in Arlesheim the possibility exists to look at this curative eurythmy and to see how it, as a therapy, can be a specialized branch within the
entire therapeutic process, a therapy which can be discovered out of true anthroposophical knowledge of man. It would naturally be going too far to discuss details in this area. The principles are actually given in what I have presented to you.

Thus it has happened that in the most varied ways we have had to develop this therapeutic endeavor within the anthroposophical movement because those involved in therapy have approached us. It has been a demand arising from the condition of the times. It was so-to-speak demanded by contemporary civilization. Anthroposophy has only given the answers to questions which were posed to it.

I really could only present the principles aphoristically to you today. More has not been possible during the available time. If I wanted to present matters in their totality, then I would have to do what I refused to do two days ago during the lecture on eurythmy. I would have to invite you to stay here through the night and listen to me till tomorrow morning, until the morning lecture. But that is something that would make you sick, and it would certainly be inappropriate for someone who wants to speak about bringing health to make people sick in this way. Therefore I must send you home for a healthy sleep following this sketchy presentation.