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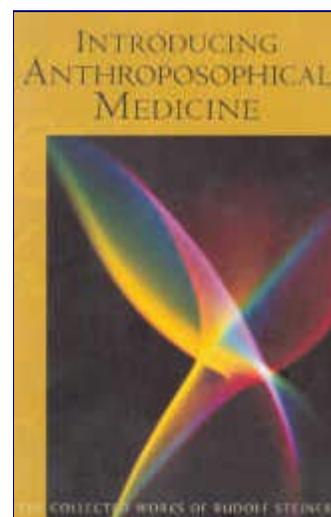
A READER'S JOURNAL

**Introducing Anthroposophical Medicine,
GA#312
Review of Lectures 8 to 20 on March 28 to
April 9, 1920 in Dornach**

See Links to other Lectures at Bottom of
Review

by
Rudolf Steiner

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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2012
Chapter: Spiritual Science

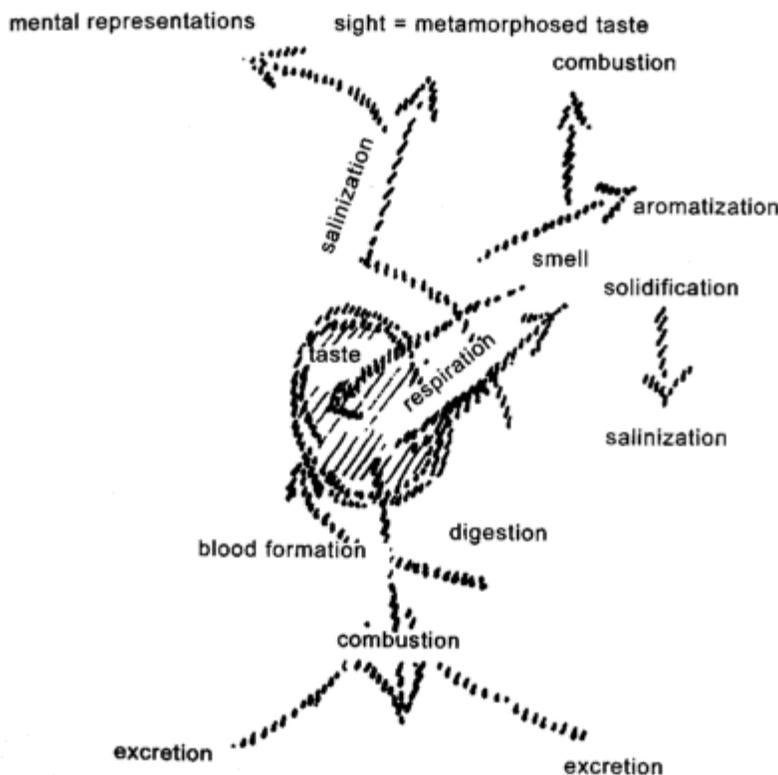


We learned in Lectures 3 through 7 that our will moves our human limbs, not so-called motor neurons which are afferent sensors; there are no efferent nerves, rightly understood. There are no so-called motor neurons to our limbs, only sensory nerves from them. We also learned about what causes intestinal disorders, and that common childhood diseases are best left to run their course. For much of these four lectures Steiner was building up in his listeners a basic understanding of how the telluric and extra-telluric forces are related to the planets of the cosmos and how these act upon the human body, particularly on its organs. One important point is that the heart is the dividing point between the upper or extra-telluric organs of the body and the lower inner-telluric organs. Our heart thus acts like the Sun in the cosmos which separates the inner-telluric planets of Venus, Mercury, and Moon from the outer-telluric planets of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Being aware of this allows us to develop a basis for understanding the whole human being in body, soul, and spirit.

[page 117] What we refer to by saying "ether body," "astral body," and so on — terms we must use to abbreviate or simplify our ideas — can definitely be traced to how they are imprinted in a certain sense in physical processes. It's just that today we are not inclined to correctly associate what is expressed through physical processes with the spiritual foundation of existence. We absolutely must make these associations, however, in order to spiritualize our methods of thinking and observation in the field of medicine. For example, we must investigate how the interplay between what we call the etheric and physical bodies takes place. You know that this interplay takes place within the human being, and we spoke [yesterday](#) of one aspect of it, an irregularity that can develop with regard to how the astral body affects it.

This same interplay also takes place outside, however, in nature external to the human being. If you follow this thought through to the end, you will have a thorough insight into the human being's connection to nonhuman nature. When you look out into nature, you are surrounded by all the individual species of plants (let's focus on plants for today), and you become aware of this flora through various senses. If you do this, you

can get at least an inkling of the interaction that takes place first of all between this flora and the Earth's entire atmosphere, and second between the plants and the planetary or astral realm that lies outside this earthly sphere.



Look at the Diagram from page 121 of Lecture 8. We notice how combustion is related to digestion and aromatization. This connection reminds us of how teas made from aromatic flowers can help one's digestion. When we taste, we bring a substance directly into our taste organs instead of it skimming the surface of our smell sensors. Similarly when we see, light enters our eyes and photons combine with our retinal receptors, making taste and sight into cognates in the sense of being allied closely, exactly as digestion and smell are cognates of each other. That makes sight a

metamorphosed taste organ, and vice versa. Thinking is a cognate of salt-making or salinization, though we rarely consider it such. Consider how a rain storm can leach salts from the topsoil — a root vegetable does a similar thing by pulling the salts into itself. As a kid I loved beets, a common root vegetable which pulls salts from below the surface of the soil(1). When we eat beets, and I still love them myself, it helps us to create mental representations, to draw conclusions while achieving logical consistency, processes every writer requires. Coffee has an abundant element, nitrogen, in its caffeine, an element which facilitates dissolving any accumulated *brain sand* formed during in the process of thinking and writing(2).

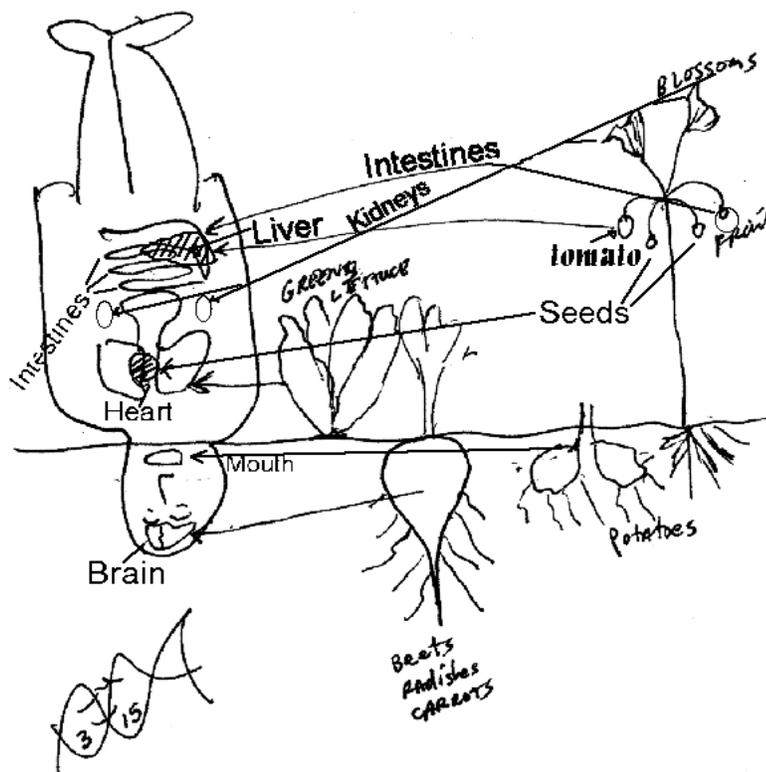
Can you instantly spot an artificial flower? If you're not sure, smelling a delightful aroma would be a sure sign of its being real, also, touching it would be another sign due to its natural softness. The very aroma given off by the flower provides its soft texture. Think of smelling ghostly replicas of roses or jasmine next time you walk in a garden by night.

[page 121, 122] Let us consider the aromatic aspect of the plant — that is, everything that allows the plant to avoid becoming solid by giving off its plant essence, extending its spirituality — pardon the lay expression — into the atmosphere, so that the atmosphere contains something of the plant's essence in the form of fragrance. Ghostly replicas of plants are present in what we smell out in the world. Consider what is actually happening in the external world when a plant gives off its ghostly fragrance, when it does not allow itself to become a totally solid plant, when its flowers emit a substance that wants to become a flower but refrains from doing so and persists in a dispersed state. This is nothing other than a restrained combustion process. . . . I might say that becoming aromatic is the process of combustion on a different level.

We can see how aromatic floral teas might

ease our digestive processes, being incompletely combusted themselves, they can assist our digestion to complete its own combustion.

Since our sight is the upward metamorphosis of our tasting process, what would be the downward metamorphosis? Might it be our digestion, an internalized version of the externalized version of our seeing ability? Indeed, it is exactly that, and we need to understand that digestion is related to tasting. See page 121 diagram above for the upper (seeing) and lower (digesting) metamorphoses of tasting. The diagram at right shows how salts from root vegetables assist thinking in the brain and the aromatic blossoms and fruit assist digestion.



[page 125] You simply cannot understand the subtle, localized digestive activities in the human organism if you do not conceive of good digestion as being based on the ability to "taste" with the entire digestive tract and bad digestion on the inability to do so.

Various polyps on the lower intestinal tract would interfere with good digestion. This reveals an interesting effect of the new medical procedure of *colonoscopy*, namely, that it can improve the digestion of someone who, during the procedure, had simple polyps removed from the walls of their intestine. So far as I know, this is not a promised nor an expected benefit from the procedure, up until now.

The separation of tasting from smelling leads us directly to the separation of excretion of solid matter by the intestines and liquid matter by the kidneys.

[page 125] The results of separating tasting from smelling and ordinary digestion from everything involved in the more subtle workings of the kidneys are like counter parts in a polarity.

Then, we must consider the internal versus external metamorphoses of seeing and the implications they bring to us.

[page 125] At this point it becomes possible to see events in the organism enclosed within the skin as the internalization of something external. In everything that has an upward continuation, we approach and open up to what is outside. We must now pursue this matter further in order to recognize our mental activity that is bound to the body (and I mean this not in the materialistic sense but in another sense that will be familiar to you from my lectures) as a metamorphosis of seeing, again transposed inward. We must think of the organs that form the basis for thinking or conceptualization [see drawing from p. 121] — that is, the structure in the interior of the human head — as organs of sight that have metamorphosed in a specific direction. Please consider the fact that most ideas are simply extensions of visual representations that live in your thinking. You need only compare this condition to the inner life of a person who is congenitally blind. Thinking is the inner extension of seeing.

Here is a passage which explicitly specifies the benefits of floral teas for lower digestive processes and root vegetables as beneficial for upper digestive processes, namely, our thinking functions.

[page 126, 127] You help the lower body when something associated with aroma and the restrained combustion process in plants is guided into the lower part of the body. Similarly, you aid the processes of the upper region if the agent responsible for restraining, or internalizing, the salt process in plants is introduced into the upper part of the human being.

Look again at the page 121 diagram above and note how taste and blood formation points into the center and respiration and combustion point out from the center circle: that circle represents the human heart which is the center of the synthesis and analysis of forces and products at work in the full human being.

[page 121] Here you see two polar processes, one separated off from digestion, the other, respiration, separated off from the more externally located sensory activities. Respiration is located behind the sensory processes (mental representations are nourishment for the soul, and the respiratory process is inserted in between); the blood and lymph-forming process is inserted in front of digestion inasmuch as digestion leads to elimination. Strangely enough, we are moving from the process itself into the entire human being, while it is customary today to consider the human being only from the point of view of the organs in question. Here we are attempting to understand the entire human being from the perspective of the relevant process and of the connection between the human being and the nonhuman outer world, and in fact we have discovered connections that provide us with a direct image of all the etheric activity in the human being. This is what we have been studying for the past hour today. These two processes, respiration and blood formation, meet up again in the human heart. You see, we encounter the entire outer world, including the external aspect of the human being, as a duality that is held back in the human heart, where it attempts to achieve a balance of sorts.

Thus we can arrive at a remarkable image that contrasts the *synthesizing* process in the human heart — with its inwardness and its activity of gathering the substances and forces that enter the body from outside and move toward the perimeter of the body — and the *analyzing* process in the outer world, where everything that gathers in the heart is dispersed throughout.

As in previous lectures 1 through 7 in this book, Steiner points to the heart as the balancing center of the human, placed strategically between the upper- and lower-telluric organs of the body to balance their forces. These are important lectures to be read in their entirety, whose content I can give glimpses of by way of pointing to their importance.

In Lecture 9 Steiner deals with functions of various organs. For the heart he suggests that people spend more time in motion which is self-generated instead of motion in cars or trains. For the bladder he describes proper rest after a meal which is eaten properly, not being wolfed down.

[page 133] One example of this is failing to pay careful attention to the act of eating, disrupting the entire digestive process by gulping down our food instead of chewing. Another is not maintaining the right balance between rest and movement during the digestive process, and so on. Everything that disrupts inner mobility from within also disrupts what we might call the life of the bladder.

Meals are best followed by a time of rest, e. g., a post-prandial repose is good medicine for one's digestive processes and a healing balm for one's bladder. Riding a bicycle is better than driving a motor scooter or motorcycle.

In Lecture 10, Steiner describes how a vegetarian diet creates stronger forces in the human body than does the eating of animal flesh. When one eats meat, the animal has already done the work of digesting the

plants, obviating the need for the human to do that work. Yes, a hamburger provides one a quick and easy-to-digest meal of animal protein, but one misses the benefit of the forces one acquires by eating equivalent plant material and digesting it directly. In other lectures, Steiner describes how the length of the large intestine is shorter in carnivores and longer in herbivores and thus, some humans are genetically disposed to meat versus vegetable diets. He simply describes the effects of meat versus vegetable diets and does not promote either. In northern climates where animal diets are necessary for humans to survive the freezing winters with little vegetation, humans evolved short intestines to deal with the primarily meat-based diets. In southern climates, vegetable-based diets have led to longer intestines able to handle a greater portion of plant-based foods. The issue of meat or vegetable eating is best left to a case by case basis, he reminds us on page 148 after saying the following.

[page 147, 148] People who eat meat do not engage in the process that animals do; they allow animals to relieve them of this effort. Thus, they fail to develop the forces that they would develop in themselves if they consumed only plant foods and had to do this portion of the work themselves. This means that a vegetarian has to muster up quite different forces from the abdomen than a meat eater. Nonetheless, the forces that would have to be used to overcome plant substance and raise it to the animal level are still present in the meat eater. They rebound on the organism and work within it. Essentially, they have a very fatiguing and disruptive effect on the human being. It must be strongly emphasized that a vegetarian diet offers noticeable relief from fatigue. People become capable of more work if they become accustomed to summoning up forces out of themselves that they do not summon up if they eat meat, in which case these forces disrupt the organism.

What is it that rebounds on the meat eater? The meat eater does not have to do the amount of work that the vegetarian did when eating plants in order to raise them to the animal level. The animal flesh eaten by the meat eater had already been raised to the animal level, obviating the need for the meat eater to do this work. This extra work remains available and can have a disruptive and fatiguing effect on the meat eater, like a washing machine that stays on its spin cycle unnecessarily long can have a destructive effect on the washing machine.

One can always choose to test this on oneself. There are a variety of ways of incorporating more vegetables into one's diet, in order to notice the difference. From our own experiments, we have noticed that a Portobello mushroom burger offers as delicious and energy-giving a meal as a burger made of meat-based hamburger. A rice and beans meal, which is very common in South Louisiana cooking, creates a well-rounded protein, the beans providing the protein parts missing in the rice. We have noticed that our weight increases whenever we are not at home for any period of time, but are dependent on food prepared by others, but returns to its normal levels after a week of being back on our normal diet.

Steiner explains in this next passage that his explanations are not regurgitated from some ancient volumes, and if it seems to match some ancient knowledge, it is because those ancients happened to tap into the knowledge independently.

[page 156,157] I want to mention again that nothing I am saying here comes from studying ancient knowledge. Everything I have to say has been derived solely from the facts themselves, although I occasionally point out how they coincide with ancient wisdom. The content of these lectures, however, is not derived from ancient wisdom. If you follow the processes I characterize here, you simply arrive at ways of looking at things that in turn lead back to some aspect of ancient wisdom. I myself, for example, would never feel called upon to discover anything by studying Paracelsus, but I sometimes do feel a strong need to look up how Paracelsus presents a subject that I have discovered on my own. Please accept what I have to offer in the spirit in which it was intended. We must, however, acknowledge the fact that when we look deeper into the human organization from the spiritual-scientific point of view, we develop a great

respect for ancient wisdom.

A study of Steiner's [An Outline of Occult Science](#) will enlighten anyone who might be confused by his claim below that no aspects of nature are external to the full human because nature and the human being evolved in parallel and what seems external in nature now was once internal to the human being in early stages of cosmic evolution. Without understanding this, materialistic science scoffs that the planets could be somehow related to the organs of the human body. Would you as a parent scoff if someone made fun of your relationship with your offspring? In a real sense, the planets are human offspring, once having resided inside of humans during the Old Saturn stage of cosmic evolution.

[page 159] Actually, what aspects of nature truly are external to the human being? None of them, because everything we now encounter as external was removed from humankind and relocated outside in the course of human evolution. Humankind had to pass through evolutionary stages that were possible only because certain processes began to take pace externally as opposed to internally, enabling human beings to internalize certain other processes. In this sense, a contrast and a relationship always exist between certain outer and inner processes.

We have learned elsewhere food which arrives to be digested must be treated to remove all traces of the outside world before its nutrients can pass into the blood stream. Its outside "life" must be "killed" so that it can turn into living matter for absorption into the blood stream. Any food matter not so treated will be fatal to a human being if it enters their blood stream. In this next passage Steiner goes into some detail about this process as it affects carbon (e. g. in *Carbo vegetabilis*, a partially oxidized form of plant matter).

[page 163] At this point, we come to what I might call a truly painful chapter in modern natural science, a chapter that cannot be concealed from you for the simple reason that you cannot circumvent it if your intention is to understand the connection between the human being and the external, nonhuman world. The great obstacles to an objective grasp of how substances in general (and medicinal substances in particular) work in the human organism are the laws of the so-called conservation of energy and of matter. These laws, posited as universal natural laws, are nothing but an absolute contradiction of the process of human development. The entire process of digestion and nutrition is not what the materialistic way of thinking sees it to be. The materialistic viewpoint sees this entire process as the taking in of substances — let's keep carbon as our example — that were initially outside of us, after which the carbon — appropriately processed — is led further into the organism and then absorbed, so that we continually carry within ourselves small particles of what the outer world has given us. As far as this view is concerned, there is no difference between the carbon that is outside us and the carbon we carry around in our bodies. But this is not so. The human organism has the ability to totally destroy external, nonhuman carbon in the lower body, to eliminate this carbon from space and use the counter-effect to simply create it anew out of nothing. This is the true fact of the matter: within the human being is a site where substances external to the human being are created, while at the same time the possibility to destroy these substances is present.

Of course, this is not conceded by a modern science . . .

This brings us to the formation of light within the human being.

[page 163, 164] The re-enlivening of carbon is connected to what we have described from a different point of view as the "formation of light" in the ordinary human being. This internal light-forming process confronts the influx of external light. With regard to the upper part of the body, we are organized in such a way that outer light and inner light meet and interact. The most essential aspect of our organization rests on the fact that

where these two forms of light are meant to work together, we are in a position to keep them apart rather than allowing them to merge, so that they influence each other but do not mingle. Wherever we confront the outer light, whether through our eyes or through our skin, a dividing wall is erected between the light that originates within us and the light that works in from outside. The light that works in from outside is significant only as a stimulus to the creation of internal light. Thus, in allowing the light from outside to flow in on us, we allow ourselves to be stimulated to create internal light.

We are human beings, not materialistic productions imagined by scientists: robots, androids, etc. with superhuman intelligence. Superhuman is in fact an oxymoron which contradicts itself: there is no superhuman intelligence. My basic hypothesis is that any process any human has ever had, we all have right now, and are doing it, often out of our awareness; it comes with being alive. Scientists cannot explain life's origin, so they want us to accept that life came to Earth on a meteorite or with some alien life form. This shows that scientists accept Francesco Redi's statement in the 17th century that "Life can only arise from life."

[page 170, 171] In conclusion, I would like to comment in passing that it will no longer surprise you that modern science does not succeed in achieving insight into the origin of life itself. Modern science limits its search to regions where, thanks to Mercury's influence, only the counterimage of life — death — is present. To find life itself, we would have to look out there in places where today's scientists do not want to go. They want to avoid having anything to do with extra-telluric realms if at all possible. Even when scientists have been unable to avoid considering these realms, they make everything materialistic. Their hypothesis that the seeds of life are carried down to our Earth from other heavenly bodies is a convenient materialistic translation of the working of life forces. Supposedly, these seeds are carried down in a materialistic way by other heavenly bodies, avoiding all the obstacles, and then appear on our Earth. Some people even see meteorites as the vehicles these seeds of life drive down to Earth. So you see, today people can even claim to have successfully explained matters with their materialistic theory. Just as they believe they have explained everything that is observed on a macroscopic level by relegating it to the microscopic level or to the submicroscopic level of molecules and atomic theory, they also believe that they have explained life when they have really only relegated it to someplace else.

As we wend our way through the rest of the lectures, dear Reader, we will focus briefly on various pieces of advice given by Steiner on the operations of the human body, especially how the normal functions are sometimes upset by certain imbalances whose subsequent removal can restore the person to health.

Inflammations: We learn in Lecture 13 that the etheric body spreads normally in all directions in the human body, and that anything which disrupts or impedes the flow of the etheric body will be due to inflammations or tumors.

[page 187] In inflammations, the etheric body's activity is guided only in specific directions, whereas the activity of a healthy etheric body extends into the organism in all the appropriate directions. In essence, we can say that if the etheric body as a whole is still healthy but has become sluggish with regard to a particular organ system, we will be able to discover agents, which we will discuss later, that are capable of stimulating it to develop its universal activity, if I may call it that, in this specific direction.

Tumors: These are processes in the human body which make the etheric body sluggish and push it away from its area of formation.

[page 188] With tumors, then, it is a matter of using natural processes to stimulate the removal of the physical processes opposing the etheric body so that it can once again

work in a spot its effects formerly could not reach.

Carcinomas and Mistletoe: Mistletoe is a crazy plant: it flowers and bears fruit in the winter time.

[page 191] This behavior, however, is exactly what we will put to use when the human organism goes physically crazy, which is what happens in the development of carcinomas.

Networks and Cable News: Steiner points out, early in the previous century, the two kinds of journalists who exist, and refuses to name names of those he was thinking of, but surely some names will come to mind today as you read his passage.

[page 196] It is not right to name names, but it is an idiosyncrasy of the field of journalism in particular that people with feeble minds can become good journalists because their slow wit puts them in a position to reflect the opinions of the times rather than giving their own obstinate views. For example, dull-witted journalists reflect the opinion of the times to such an extent that their accounts are much more interesting than those of self-possessed, strong-minded journalists. We learn much more about what humanity as a whole is thinking from weak-minded journalists than from strong-minded ones, who are always intent on developing opinions of their own.

Lungs, Liver: We have a friend in her 90s, sane and lively, who often repeats a memory or story she has just finished telling us, without offering any reason for it. After receiving chemo-therapy for her cancer, her repetitive story-telling has tapered off.

[page 197, 198] The person who suffers from frequent repetitions always has a potential for illness that is related to a formative lung process that is not in order, while the one who suffers from omission of thoughts [RJM: without supplying transitions from one thought to another] always has an inherent predisposition to a liver process that is not functioning properly. Other symptoms fall in between.

COFFEE, TEA Drinkers: Many people prefer to drink one or the other of these beverages, but Steiner is the first person I've encountered who points to the difference in behavior and habits of the two types of people. I can attest to being a coffee drinker, but when on a cruise with an afternoon tea, we often take tea there, possibly because we have so many new people around to toss off witty comments to aboard ship.

[page 197] Thus, drinking a lot of coffee should be one of the habits of modern journalists, so that they do not have to chew on their pens so much in order to connect one thought to another. . . . Just as coffee is a good drink for journalists, tea is an extremely effective drink for diplomats, who have great need of the ability to habitually toss off disjointed thoughts that allow one to appear witty.

SUGAR and EGO: Consuming sugar bolsters a person's inner sense of self. If you will notice movies in which aliens come to Earth, the first thing they do is consume a lot of sugar. The first "Men in Black", "Starman", and "Michael" are three movies in which the newly arrived in an earthman's body consume a huge amount of sugar. Steiner looks at two extremes on a cultural basis during his time: Russia and Britain.

[page 198] Russians express a certain selfless devotion to the outer world and have less ego awareness, which they substitute for on a level that is theoretical at best. This is related to low sugar consumption. In contrast, the British possess a strong, organically based sense of self that is relate to high sugar consumption.

Near- and Farsightedness: From doing close work without plus-lenses, normal sighted people become nearsighted or myopic. Steiner draws a colored diagram to explain how he sees a difference between the

etheric scaffolding (yellow) and the *I-scaffolding(white)* such that in myopic people the two are much closer together than in farsighted people.

[page 201, italics added] It is interesting to see how close these *two* come to each other in nearsighted people, how what I have sketched here in white comes very close to the other scaffolding, the yellow. In contrast, in farsighted people the white scaffolding moves outward.

Eyes and Ears: Processes which happen in the body at the right speed are valuable and healthy; those same processes at the wrong speed are not healthy. The inflammatory process is essential for us to be able to see, but too much inflammation is a problem. Ears are connected to proliferation processes which, if too strong, produce tumors.

[page 207] Sight is possible simply because the inflammatory process is integrated into nature as a whole. It has a specific tempo, however. If the wrong speed is imposed on it, it turns into the pathological process of inflammation in the human being. Similarly, the tumor-forming or proliferation process is significant in the natural world when it takes place at the correct speed. If you were able to do away with this process, not a creature in the world would be able to hear. If you give it the wrong speed, however, you end up with everything that takes place in the development of myomas, carcinomas, and sarcomas.

Hair Preservation: Steiner points out a way of preventing hair loss.

[page 211] We can even go so far to prevent the peripheral process of hair loss — if it's not too late, of course; if it is done in time — by supporting the scalp through the stimulating effects of rosemary droplets finely dispersed in liquid.

Sprains, External Injuries: There is an arnica flower which grows in northern areas such as Montana which can be extracted and used with success as a compress.

[page 211] If you want to tell the astral body — which I have described as being deeper in the interior, as even its phantom indicates — to come to a particular spot and help, you do not administer a bath. Instead you wrap arnica in a woolen rag and apply an arnica compress to a sprain or similar external injury where the effect of the I has been weakened. In this way, you summon the astral body from the interior to come to the aid of the I. This is an example of a remedy working as a balancing factor on the surface or periphery of the human being.

If you have trouble understanding how all these remedies work, consider the blackbird, who is never confused. If he eats a cross-spider, a local garden spider in Germany with a cross on its back, he flies immediately to a henbane plant and pecks at it until he is safe from convulsions and death. The planetary and earthly factors of the cross-spider and henbane are explained on page 214. If blackbirds were like humans, they would need a doctor immediately to medicate them if they had convulsions. We humans have lost this natural sense of the connectivity of things in the world, and Steiner, in his development of anthroposophical medicine, is able to reveal this connectivity and how we can heal ourselves with it.

Diabetes: This is a disease which results from a weak I and a strong intellectualism. Doyle Henderson, whom I got to know during the last decades of his life, had a very strong intellect from his early childhood and very little control over emotional influences. He was also diabetic from an early age and used insulin injections into his ninth decade when he died. His strong intellect made sure that he calculated exactly how much insulin he needed for the type of food he had just eaten in order to keep his blood sugar balanced with his body's needs and ability to handle it.

[page 217] We can say that predisposition to diabetes occurs if the I excludes itself from internal processes. These internal processes, especially that of secretion, are strongly related to the development of feelings or emotions. All of this secretion, where as you know is an oscillating and circulating activity, is neglected while the I is focusing its chief activity on the brain. As a result the person in question loses control over certain psychological influences that assert themselves in the form of emotional influences.

Doyle's inability to control his emotions as a child led to his eventual discovering that emotions are recapitulations *in the now* of early childhood events⁽³⁾ and pioneering a way to remove unwanted feelings and onerous emotions. His three decades of hard work culminated in the science of [doyletics](#) which is helping people to change their lives for the better. In a way, his diabetes led him to create a method to overcome the limitations placed on him by the disease, a disease which accompanies the type of highly-developed intellect that Doyle needed to recognize the origin of feelings and emotions and to create a way to derail the most onerous of those bodily states.

Rashes, Gout, Rheumatism: In the white birch tree, we have a plant which could be a "wonderful herbaceous flowering plant" but for the fact that the process of the salt-development in its bark is dramatically separated from the protein-development process in its leaves. (Page 221)

[page 222, Rashes] Through its bark, which contains the appropriate potassium salts, it works in cases where the patient's desalinizing processes need to be stimulated, as in skin rashes, for example. What shoots outward into the bark in the birch tree also shoots outward in the human being, where it has a therapeutic effect.

[page 222, Gout, Rheumatism] But if you take the leaves, which preserve the protein-forming forces, you get the birch factor that influences the center part of the human being, where it proves to be a good remedy for gout and rheumatism.

Kidney Stones, Internal Bleeding: Plants such as Shepherd's purse, *Capsella bursa-pastoris*, are useful for treating kidney stone and internal bleeding.

[page 222] When you look at plants with very pronounced root development — plants that develop very strong root forces that then deposit potassium and sodium salts in the plants — you find that this tendency to hold fast to the roots has a healing effect on internal bleeding and also on the formation of kidney stones, and so on.

The Spleen: Our spleen is the most valuable organ in our human body which leads one to wonder why doctors treat it cavalierly as if it were unimportant. Perhaps they are treating the entire human the same way as they treat the spleen, as if it were simply a material object with no spiritual components. Steiner here takes a break to remind us of the spiritual aspects of the human body by pointing to the etheric spleen which remains after the physical spleen is removed.

[page 223] I hope you will not find it extraneous if I conclude today's lecture with a topic that will help us with subsequent observations, namely the peculiar way the spleen functions in the human organism. Human spleen function tends very strongly toward the spiritual aspect. This is why I once said in a lecture cycle on esoteric physiology that, if you remove the spleen, the etheric body — that is, the etheric spleen — takes its place very easily, so that this is one of the human organs that can be most readily replaced by its etheric counterpart.

Steiner's description of spleen function is included in its entirety here because it explains how doctors who learn about the human body through dissecting corpses have no way of coming away from the dissecting room understanding the spiritual processes at work in the human spleen. Without a spleen, we would lose our inner synchronism with the cosmos in which we live, and our haphazard way of eating would destroy us prematurely. A good spleen massage is essential to good digestion and health. In another place Steiner

describes how a post-prandial nap creates a mild spleen massage and assists the process of digestion.

[page 224, 225] What is the spleen actually? To spiritual-scientific research, the spleen presents itself as the organ that is called upon to create constant harmony between crude metabolism and all the more soul-like or spiritualized processes in the human being. The spleen — and this is basically true of all other organs to a greater or lesser extent — is a strong subconscious sensory organ, and it reacts extremely strongly to the rhythm of food intake. Constant eating induces a totally different kind of spleen activity than leaving intervals between meals. We can observe this particularly in the irregular spleen activity that develops in children who snack constantly. We can also see it in the fact that when eating does not intervene — after we fall asleep, for example the spleen comes to rest to a great extent, but only in its own particular fashion. The spleen is the organ of sensation that allows the more spiritualized aspect of the human being to perceive the rhythm of food intake, and it speaks to the human subconscious, telling us what needs to be done to mitigate at least in part the damaging impact of unrhythmical eating.

Thus, spleen activity works less in the direction of metabolism as such and more in the direction of the rhythmic processes. It participates in rhythmic processes that must take place between food intake and respiration. An intermediate rhythm provided by the spleen is simply interposed between the rhythm of respiration and the intake of food, which otherwise does not tend to be especially rhythmical. Respiratory rhythm enables human beings to live within the strict rhythmicity of the cosmos. Our irregular food intake constantly disrupts this strict cosmic rhythm, and the spleen is the mediator.

This state of affairs can actually be confirmed by simply observing the human being. Please do study anatomical and physiological details. You will find all of this is confirmed down to the smallest detail. On the one hand, you will find proof of what I have said in how the artery to the spleen is almost directly connected to the aorta and also externally in how the spleen is incorporated into the organism. On the other hand, you will find evidence that the spleen mediates the direction of food intake in how the splenic vein is placed with the entire organism; it leads to the portal vein and is in direct connection with the liver.

Here a rhythm that is half outer and half inner aligns itself with the lack of rhythm so that they regulate each other. The activity of the spleen is interposed between the rhythmic human being and the metabolic human being. Many symptoms that are related to improper spleen function can be put in order by building on the knowledge we have acquired about the connection between the respiratory system and the metabolism or between the circulatory system and the metabolism as mediated by the spleen. It is not surprising that the physiology of the spleen is largely ignored by materialistic science, which knows nothing about the threefold human being — the metabolic human being, the circulatory human being, and the neurosensory human being.

After Meal Naps: Busy people in important jobs tend to have digestive problems of various kinds, often carrying anodynes like Maalox with them as a first-aid kit. The magnesium hydroxide acts to stimulate peristalsis in the intestines, one by-product of which is an internal spleen massage.

[page 227, 228] People do not do as certain animals do, which stay healthy by lying down after eating and refusing to allow their digestion to be disturbed by outer activity. These animals spare the functioning of their spleen. People who are engaged in outer, nervous, hurried activity do not do this. As a result, spleen activity is gradually becoming highly abnormal among all of civilized humanity, and it is becoming especially important to relieve the functions of the spleen by using the methods that I have just spoken about.

Massage: It makes a great deal of difference whether we massage the arms or legs of a person. When the arms are massaged it has an anabolic (build up) effect which assists the body's blood flow and intestinal functions. When the legs are massaged, it has a catabolic (destructive) effect which assists the body's

elimination and excretion functions. (See pages 228, 229 for more information on massage effects on the body.)

Migraine Headaches: Migraine is the shifting of digestive and sensory activities from their proper places in the body into the head.

[page 230] This is the basis for the pain of migraine and all similar conditions. It is quite understandable how someone must feel when suddenly forced to perceive the interior of the head instead of the outer world.

Color Therapy: The color of the room a person is in makes a difference to them, even if they are blind. When we bought a new house, my wife was repulsed by the bright red rose pattern which filled the wallpaper from one end of the master bedroom and bath, and that wallpaper was immediately torn out.

[page 231] It makes a significant difference, and it must be said that the effect of bringing blind people into a blue-walled room is to shift the entire organism, their entire functioning, away from the head and toward the rest of the organism. If I bring them into a red-walled room, their functioning shifts away from the rest of the organism and toward the head.

Epsom Salts: The ammonium sulfate salt is very therapeutic when dissolved in warm water; this is a treatment we used a lot as I was growing up. Any kind of ache or pain, and my mother would bring out the Epsom salts.

[page 232] On the other hand, if substances similar in nature to sulfur or phosphorus (such as sulfur itself) accompany a warm bath, they will be especially able to develop their corresponding therapeutic effects.

Head Washing vs. Foot Washing: Steiner explains how these activities promote different processes in the human being.

[page 233] I would like to present you with a few of these archetypal phenomena that are easy to state: "By putting your feet in water, you evoke abdominal forces that promote the formation of blood." Here you have an archetypal phenomenon that points you strongly in the right direction. "By washing your head, you evoke abdominal forces that regulate elimination."

Schizophrenia: One wonders about a medical establishment which is so proud of discovering chemical origins for all sorts of diseases such as schizophrenia, and yet it ignores the possibility that the chemicals they find in the afflicted person is the result of perhaps a lifetime of abuse going back into early childhood. Only when early education comes along to prevent future medication will we become truly healthy as full human beings.

[page 234] To put it briefly, if organs — these are very delicate structures, of course — that are meant to be held in reserve for adulthood are called upon during childhood, the terrible illness that we call schizophrenia appears. Since this is the real basis of schizophrenia, appropriate education is an excellent preventive. At the moment, what we are attempting in the Waldorf school can be implemented only after the age of six or seven and cannot yet be extended to early childhood education, but schizophrenia will disappear if it becomes possible someday to place education as a whole in the service of the knowledge that comes from spiritual science. Shaping education in this way prevents people from calling on their adult organs prematurely.

Fluorine: The widespread use of Fluoride Toothpaste which has only come into vogue after Steiner's time is likely making many people unintelligent. We need a small amount of fluorine to keep us from becoming

too intelligent for our own good. But our society seems to be headed to the opposite extreme, as is vividly depicted in the recent movie, "Idiocracy" where Luke Wilson plays a certified average person who goes ahead in time a hundred years or so, and is there certified as the smartest person in the world, because, among other things, he claims it is idiocy for them to continue watering their wilting plants with Gatorade.

[page 237] Fluorine's effects tone us down to the appropriate level of stupidity that we need in order to be human. We need fluorine in small quantities to constantly counteract the process of becoming too intelligent.

[page 238] It is well known that young women can have perfectly healthy teeth until the delivery of their first child, and then their teeth decay. This is extremely enlightening with regard to the connection between toothache or tooth decay and the organism's entire constitution.

Self-Directed Diets: How many people do you know in your personal circle who are following a diet prescribed by their doctor? How many people do you know whose parents have age-related dementia? Steiner here makes a connection between doctor-diets and dementia and explains why.

[page 249] For example, I may consider it necessary for myself to avoid certain foods and emphasize others. (After what I said earlier, it is important to take this into account.) I may consider it important to adhere to a particular diet, which may be very good for me. It makes a considerable difference, however, whether I have arrived at this diet through independent experimentation on myself or whether I simply let the doctor prescribe it for me. Please don't be offended by this bald statement. From the materialistic point of view, it looks as if a diet that is good for me serves the same purpose regardless of whether I have taken the initiative to work it out on my own, possibly under my doctor's guidance, or whether I simply let the doctor prescribe it. Ultimately, however, the effects of the diet the doctor prescribes, although initially helpful, will be damaging in that they make it easier for me to succumb to age-related dementia than would otherwise have been the case, while my active collaboration will make it easier for me to remain intellectually spry in old age, although of course there are other contributing factors.

Bacteria or Processes?: Louis Pasteur discovered that bacteria were present in human beings and that by finding agents which destroyed the bacteria, sick humans could be helped to recover their health. His contemporary, Claude Bernard, a prominent physiologist, claimed that an upset to the homeostasis of the body allowed bacteria to thrive. On his deathbed, Louis Pasteur is reported to have said, "Claude Bernard was right." Rudolf Steiner takes Bernard's side in this following passage.

[page 251, 252] I believe that our scientific medical education truly needs an infusion of what might be called a return to the true causes of pathological phenomena. In recent times, the tendency has become ever more pronounced to disregard actual causes and to look at surface occurrences. A phenomenon related to this superficiality is the fact that whenever we begin to read or hear a description of any type of illness, current medicine or pathology almost always informs us about what has invaded the human organism, about what kind of bacillus provokes the illness in question. It is terribly easy, of course, to repudiate any objections to the idea of lower organisms invading the body for the simple reason that it is no longer necessary to first prove that these lower organisms are present. Since distinct forms of microorganisms are indeed evident in different illnesses, the tendency to suggest a connection is quite understandable.

But even on a superficial level, this view gives rise to an error that actually completely distracts us from the main issue. If bacilli appear in large numbers in a certain part of the body in the course of an illness, they naturally provoke symptoms, as do any foreign bodies in the organism. As a result of the presence of these bacilli, all

kinds of inflammations appear. But if we then attribute everything to the activity of the bacilli, directing our attention only to what the bacilli are doing, we are distracted from the true cause of the disease, because any habitat that lower organisms find suitable for their own development within the human body is brought about by the primary causes. For once, we need to pay attention to the domain of primary causes.

Diaphragm Separates Plant/Animal Processes in Humans: Humans beings went through a plant stage of cosmic evolution during the Old Sun period, followed by an animal stage during the Old Moon period as described in [Occult Science](#). As a result we have plant processes in our body's lung and respiratory system and animal process in our heart and circulatory system, and these processes must cooperate while remaining separate from each other. If somehow these processes become skewed such that plant processes predominate, pulmonary hardening will take place, on the other hand if animal processes predominate in a given area it becomes a seed bed for bacteria and other microbes. While so-called modern medicine can deal with the results of these skewed processes with all kinds of medication and surgery, the best medicine is that which recognizes the skewing(4) and helps humans to return to balance, a balance which when maintained sustains health over the long-term.

[page 253, 254] What happens [when lung processes predominate] is that an "etheric plant," which is built into the lungs and grows up out of them just as physical plants grow up out of the Earth, becomes the cause of pulmonary hardening or the like. . . . On the other hand, the animalizing tendency . . . [leads to a local] life-supporting medium for the microscopic plants or animals whose presence we can confirm in everything that cause illnesses.

Influences Lead to Influenza: Modern materialistic medicine cannot identify the influences which cause particular people to get influenza. (Note the common etymology of the words, *influence* and *influenza*.) As a result they urge everyone to get flu shots. Steiner was writing at the time of a world-wide epidemic of influenza, but his words aptly fit the yearly appearance of new strains of flu which affect people in various parts of the world whose respiratory/circulatory rhythms are skewed. The influence Steiner is referring to is that which the outer planets of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn have on the Sun's activity. (Page 258)

[page 259] An influence such as the one I described, however, has an exceptionally strong effect on people in whom this rhythm tends to permit further damage. All predisposed individuals who live on parts of the globe that are particularly affected by this heavenly constellation are candidates for so-called influenza.

Sluggish Digestion: People with poor digestion may find it helpful to spend some time each day walking backwards.

[page 284] We can bring about beneficial results by accustoming a person with sluggish digestion to walk backward a lot in gymnastics, which has the effect of promoting digestive activity.

Hangovers Explained: At age seventeen I came home from drinking a lot of beer and laid down in my bed to sleep and the room began spinning around me. It was a frightful experience, one which tempered my beer drinking thereafter.

[page 284] In a hangover, there is a real reversal of all of human organic activity. A hangover is an extension of the process that takes place primarily in the first phase of digestive activity. After overindulgence in wine, beer, or champagne, a hangover sets in when what occurs up to the point where substances are absorbed into the lymph- and blood-forming processes continues on into these processes themselves. Then the domain of the human organism whose real task is to dissolve substances is transformed into a sensory organ of a sort. Instead of directing the major part of their sensory activity

toward the outer world, instead of entering into communication with the outer world and encountering the Earth and its processes, people who are hung over condemn themselves to perceive internally, because what is now inside them has become very, very similar to the Earth's external activity. They begin to sense the Earth's rotation, and the bed begins to spin.

At one point in Lecture 20, Steiner says, "This is a difficult lecture" and I almost had to laugh, because I had struggled my way through it with great effort, and found little that I could share in this review as the subjects he covers are so interwoven with each other. For me to repeat, "Something the liver ought to pull into the physical body is pushed into the soul instead, resulting in depression," may be interesting (Page 289), but the reasons for this require studying the entire lecture.

Steiner closes out the final lecture with an important reminder about materialistic medicine (allopathy). One need only listen to people who return from the doctor with some antibiotic or other to suspect that allopathy seems to involve the writing of a prescription, no matter what the presenting symptoms, just in case.

[page 290, 291] One thing, however, may and must be said: If we survey modern allopathic medicine, we invariably find that it tends to evaluate patients with a view to the concomitant phenomena described by the bacterial theory of infection. This diverts our attention to a secondary issue. As a mere aid to recognition, the natural history of bacilli would be extremely useful. We can indeed learn a lot from the type of bacillus that is present, because a certain type always appears under the influence of a very specific primary cause. There is always plenty of opportunity to see this connection.

But, we must not make the *accompanied-by, therefore caused-by* fallacy, assuming erroneously that bacteria which accompany a disease are the cause of the disease.

[page 291] There is a tendency to mistake a secondary factor for the primary cause, as when, for example, we look at the extent to which bacilli affect human organs instead of the extent to which the human organism can become a habitat for bacilli. Such a tendency appears not only in allopathic medical theories concerning bacteria, but also in that whole way of thinking. Consequently, this tendency causes damage that I need not elucidate, since many of you have noticed it yourselves. You see, homeopathic medicine has at least certain advantages in that it always aims at the human being as a whole, keeps an image of the overall effect in mind, and attempts to build a bridge to the discovery of remedies, but we also cannot always be satisfied when we scrutinize homeopathic medicine because of another idiosyncrasy of homeopathic medical literature.

Note that Steiner is criticizing the literature of homeopathy, not homeopathy. His criticism of the plethora of cures and the diversity of ills they purport to help cure is well-founded, in my own experience, because I had an opportunity to attempt to locate something to help a friend with a problem and was overwhelmed by the large list of medicines and the equally large list of ills each medicine claimed to work for. I finally recommended a natural healer who could best prescribe the correct homeopathic medicine.

[page 291] Please forgive me for saying this, but if you look at this literature, especially the therapeutic literature, it can almost drive you to despair because you find the remedies listed one after the other, and each one is always supposed to help a whole army of illnesses. It is never easy to find anything specific. Everything is helpful for so many different conditions. I know that this is how things have to be, at least for the present, but it simply leads us astray. We can resist being led astray only by proceeding in the way that has been indicated here, at least on an elementary level. This is why I chose an elementary content for these lectures instead of beginning with the occult. The

situation can be improved only when this method of studying human and nonhuman nature enables us to move on to restricting the usage indications of remedies, to delineating remedies.

Steiner's earnest wish as he ended these 1920 lectures was that experts and professionals in medicine would take up his torch and provide an antidote to materialistic medicine, or at least a viable alternative to it. When the rampant ills beset our huge medical establishment today, it is heartening to see an alternative medical practice springing up beside it to help people regain the balance of their various bodily processes so as to achieve good health and sustain it without being subjected to onerous medicines whose side affects are often worse than the disease, without being subjected to unnecessary surgeries which reduce one's lifestyle without increasing one's life-expectancy, without being subjected dehumanizing batteries of tests given to everyone before being interviewed by the doctor.

Often the surest sign of success in a field is how your severest critics change their criticism of your work. Rudolf Steiner was for many years accused of speaking falsely about all aspects of his work, but with the success of his works in areas such as anthroposophical medicine, the accusations switched to saying he was wrong to reveal the secrets of the Mystery Schools. (page 199) Steiner said in closing the final lecture, "I, myself, of course, have never intervened and never want to intervene in the practice of healing. This is left up to practicing physicians. Everything that needs the stimulus of spiritual science should exist on the basis of the give and take between spiritual science and physicians themselves." (Page 294)

The next step is up to you, dear Reader. Even though bureaucrats may tax you to create some expensive medical monolith of healthcare, you can choose to stay healthy and avoid doctors who would force unneeded medications and surgical procedures upon you. Choosing your own diet, choosing caring professionals who treat you as a human being not a number on a chart, and keeping a balance in your own life are the first steps maintaining your good health and happiness to the end of your days.

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----- *Footnotes* -----

Footnote 1.

One must not mistake red and white potatoes for a root vegetable; rightly understood, they are stem vegetables, and their eyes are really sprouts on the stem of the plant and thus each eye can be planted separately and take root. Yams or sweet potatoes are root vegetables and the entire yam must be planted to take root and form a new plant. See expanded description and drawings here: [Nutrition and Stimulants](#).

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**Footnote 2.**

Brain sand is tiny calcium carbonate deposits in the brain. The best explanation of the effects of brain sand I have been able to come up with can be found in [From Crystals to Crocodiles](#). Fainting from a sudden lightning flash or loud noise is due to the sudden accumulation of brain sand. When we work our muscles we perspire externally, but when we work our brain, even intense focusing on a flower, we perspire internally by creating brain sand.

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Footnote 3.

When Doyle made his discovery he announced dramatically to his friends Jenny and Clovis at work, "I know how people remember feelings! The brain recreates the body state." You can read the rest of my

interview with Doyle here: <http://www.doyletics.com/dintervw.htm> .

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**Footnote 4.**

One form of skewing of the respiratory and circulatory system is the ingestion of nicotine which causes the heart to beat faster in relation to the breathing rate, leading to the phenomenon of "shortness of breath" which is an "elevated heart rate", rightly understood. Steiner says elsewhere that use of nicotine creates a susceptibility to infections of all kinds.

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