

*Tuesday, February 6, 1923, 4:00 p.m.*

*Dr. Steiner:* Today, we want to have our agreed-upon discussion with Dr. Kolisko on health in the school. I will not go into the details of treating students because there are a number of principle things we need to present first. They will form the basis for further work that must also occur. We will proceed, then, by selecting some typical cases that could arise here. You will also have an opportunity to ask questions about specific cases.

I would first like to draw your attention to the fact that all of our Waldorf School pedagogy has a therapeutic character. The entire teaching method is itself oriented toward healing the child. If you create a pedagogy that does the proper thing during childhood, then educating children takes on a healing aspect. In particular, if we properly handle the child as an imitative being before the change of teeth, then use authority properly, and then appropriately prepare the child to form judgments, all of that will have a thoroughly health-giving effect upon the child's organism.

It is fundamentally necessary that the direction of our behavior at school be hygienic. That is, that the teacher, in flesh and blood, has penetrated the three aspects of the human organism. The teacher should have an instinctive feeling for each child, that is, for whether one of the three aspects of the human organism, the nerve-sense system or the rhythmic system or the metabolic-limb system, predominates, and for whether we need to stimulate one of the other systems in order to balance a harmful lack of balance in the other systems.

For that reason, we will look at the threefold human being in a way particularly important for the teacher. We have the nerve-sense system. We can properly understand that only if we are aware that there is a regularity in the nerve-sense system that is not subject to the physical and chemical laws of earthly matter.

We need to be aware that the human being rises above the laws of earthly matter through the nerve-sense system. The form of the nerve-sense system is completely the result of prenatal life. The human nerve-sense system is received by the human being in accordance with pre-earthly life. The nerve-sense system is thus capable of independently developing all activities related to the spirit-soul, because all material laws of the nerve-sense system are removed from earthly matter.

The case is exactly the opposite with the metabolic-limb system. Of the three human systems, the metabolic-limb system depends most upon external material processes. When people understand the earthly processes playing out in physics and chemistry, they also understand which processes continue within the human being, at least to the extent that human beings have a metabolic-limb system. However, they learn nothing about the laws of the nerve-sense system.

The rhythmic system lies between these two and, in a certain way, naturally balances the two extremes.

These things form quite individually within every human being. This is particularly true of children. The activity of one system always predominates over the others, and we need to do what is necessary to create a balance. For that, we must have a capacity to really listen to how children express themselves, so that expression can become a revelation of what we need to do with the child in order to help it achieve a completely harmonious health.

It is important that we become clear about the fact that, for example, we can have a beneficial effect upon the nerve-sense system by adding the proper amount of salt to the foods the children eat. Thus, if we notice that a child tends to be inattentive, to be flighty and turn away from what you present, that the child is what we might call too sanguine or too phlegmatic, we will need to see to it that we strengthen the child's pictorial forces so that he or she becomes better able to pay attention to the outer world. We can do that by providing the child with more salt. If you have, for

instance, children who are inattentive or who tend to wander, then, if you look into the matter, you will find that the child's organism does not properly process salt.

In more severe cases, it will often not be enough to simply suggest putting more salt into the child's food. You will notice that because of some lack of knowledge, or perhaps inattentiveness, the parents salt the food too little. There, you can help with such suggestions. It is, on the other hand, also possible that the child's organism refuses to accept salt. In such cases, you can help achieve the proper intake of salt by using a very dilute dosage of lead compounds. Lead is what, to a certain extent, enlivens the human organism to properly process salt. Of course, if you go beyond that boundary, the organism will become ill. What is important is to achieve the proper limit, which you may notice when a child has the first traces of a tendency for mental dysfunction. That is something many children have. You will then see that you will have to bring the whole healing process into line with what I have just described.

It is certainly a major deficiency that many educational systems pay no attention to such things as, for example, the external appearance of the children. You can stand in front of a school and see both large and small-headed children. We should treat those children with larger heads, in general, in the way I just presented. Those with small heads should not be treated that way, but in a way I will shortly describe. In those children with a physically oversized head, you will be able to find what I have just described as deficiencies, namely, lack of attention or a too-strongly developed phlegma. Now, however, we have all those children who have the contrasting tendency, that is, those whose limb-metabolic system is not sufficiently active throughout their being. Of course, such children feed their organic metabolism, but what the metabolism should be for the human organism does not sufficiently extend throughout their entire being. External observation of such children shows that they like to brood over things, but

that they are also very strongly irritated by external impressions, that is, they react too strongly to external impressions. We can help such children improve throughout their entire organic system by taking care that they receive the proper amount of sugar.

You should also study the development of children in the following way. There are parents who overfeed their young children with all kinds of candy and so forth. When such children come to school, from the perspective of the soul and spirit, and thus also physically, they are concerned only with themselves. They sit and brood when they do not feel enough sugar in their organism. They become nervous and irritated when they have not had enough sugar. You need to pay attention, because when such children have too little sugar for a period of time, their organism slowly decays. The organism becomes fragile, the tissue becomes brittle, and they slowly lose the capacity to properly process even the sugar in their food. For that, you need to take care to properly add sugar to their food. Nevertheless, the organism may, in a sense, refuse to properly process sugars. In that case, you again need to assist the organism by giving a small dose of silver.

Now you see how, for the teacher, the spirit-soul life of the child can become a kind of symptomatology for the proper or improper functioning of the body. If a child shows little tendency for differing imaginations, if the child simply tosses everything together in a fantasy, if it cannot properly differentiate, then the nerve-sense system is not in order. In your attempts to teach the child to differentiate, you have at the same time a symptom indicating that the nerve-sense system is not in order, and you must, therefore, do what I just described.

If a child shows too little capacity for synthetic imagining, that is, for constructive imagining where the child cannot properly picture things, if he or she is a little barbarian in art, something common in today's children, that is a symptom that the metabolic-limb system is not in order. You must, therefore, provide assistance in the other direction, in the area of sugar. From a hygienic

therapy perspective, it is very important that you look at whether differentiating imagination or analytical imagination or artistic synthetic imagination is missing in the child.

There is now something else. Imagine you have a child whose analytical imagination is clearly missing. That could also be a sign that the child is directing his or her astral body and I too much away from the nerve-sense functions. You must, therefore, see to it that the child's head is cooled in some way, for instance, that you give the child a cool wash in the morning.

You should not underestimate such things. They are extremely important. You should certainly not see it as a kind of deviation into materialism to advise the parents of a child who shows no capacity for painting or music to give the child a warm stomach wrap two or three times per week, so that the child has it on overnight.

People today have too little respect for material measures, and they overestimate abstract intellectual measures. We can attempt to correct that modern, but incorrect, perspective, by attempting to show that the divine powers have used their spirit for the Earth in order to fulfill everything materially. Godly powers allow it to be warm in summer and cold in winter. Those are spiritual activities accomplished by divine powers through material means. Were the gods to attempt to achieve through human education, through an intellectual or moral instruction, what they can achieve by having human beings sweat in the summer and freeze in the winter, then they would be incorrect. You should never underestimate the effects of material means upon children. You should always keep them in mind.

There is also another symptom for the same organic problem that arises when there is a deficiency in synthetic thinking, namely, children become pale. Children are often pale in school. We can handle that similarly to the condition of the astral body not being properly integrated into the metabolic-limb system. You can improve the paleness of children through the same means, because

when you give a child, say, a warm stomach wrap, it sets the entire metabolic-limb system into motion so that the full metabolism develops greater activity throughout all systems of the organism.

If that system develops too strongly, so that you need to make only a small remark to a child and he or she immediately gets a red face and is terribly annoyed, treat that in exactly in the same way as when the astral body and the I are not properly integrated into the nerve-sense system. In that case, you need to give the child's head a cool washing in the morning.

It is extremely important for the teacher to be able, in a sense, to foresee the child's state of health and act preventively. Of course, there is much less thanks for that than when you heal when the illness already exists, but for children it is much more important.

Now, of course, things that have been used upon a child's organism to direct a process in one direction or another may need to be subdued. If you treat a child for a time with lead in the way I described, you will need to stop the process at a later time. If you have, for instance, treated a child for a time with lead and have accomplished what you wanted, it would be good to treat that child with some copper compound for a short time, so that nothing remains of the lead process. If you found it necessary to treat a child with silver for a period, you should later treat him or her with iron, so that the inner process is arrested.

There is one more thing I want to say. If you notice a child is, in a sense, lost in its organism, that is, does not have the requisite inner firmness—for example, the child suffers a great deal from diarrhea or is clumsy when moving its limbs, so that it dangles its arms and legs when picking up things and then lets them fall again—such things are the first symptoms of what will develop into processes that strongly affect the person's health later in life. You should never ignore it when a child often has diarrhea or urinates too much or picks things up so clumsily that they fall again or shows any kind of clumsiness in grasping objects. You should

never simply ignore such things. A teacher should always keep a sharp eye open for such things as, for example, whether a child dexterously or clumsily holds a pencil or chalk when writing upon the board. In that way, you can act as a hygienic doctor. I mention these things because you cannot accomplish very much by simply reprimanding the child. Only someone who is always active in the class can affect anything. On the other hand, you can achieve a great deal through external therapeutic means. If you give the child in such a case a small dose of phosphorus, you will see that it will become relatively easy to reach the child with reprimands about clumsiness, even with organic weaknesses of the sort I just described. Give the child phosphorus, or if the problem is deeper, for example, when the child tends toward flatulence, use sulfur. If the problem is more visible outwardly, then phosphorus. In such cases, suggest to the parents that they should feed the child foods connected with colorfully flowering plant blossoms. Speaking in an extreme case, suppose a child often wets the bed. Then you can accomplish a great deal through a therapeutic treatment with phosphorus, but still more by working with the diet. Suggest adding some paprika or pepper to the food as long as the condition persists. You will need to determine that based upon the child's further development.

In such questions, it is absolutely necessary that members of the faculty work together properly. We are in the fortunate situation of having Dr. Kolisko as the medical member of our faculty, and we should not undertake such therapies without speaking with him first, since a certain understanding of chemical and physiological things is necessary to arrive at the correct opinion. Nevertheless, every teacher needs to develop an eye for such things.

I once again need to take this opportunity of mentioning that in teaching it is of primary importance to take care to bring the nerve-sense system and the metabolic-limb system into a proper balance. When that is not done, it shows up as irregularities of the rhythmic system. If you notice the slightest inclination toward

irregularity in breathing or in the circulation, then you should immediately pay attention to it. The rhythmic system is the organic barometer of improper interaction between the head and the limb-metabolic system. If you notice something, you should immediately ask what is not in order in the interaction of these two systems, and second, you should be clear that in teaching you need to alternate between an element that brings the child to his or her periphery, to the periphery of the child's body, with another element that causes the child to withdraw within. Today, I cannot go into all the details of a hygienic schoolroom; that is something we can speak of next time.<sup>1</sup>

A teacher who teaches for two hours without in some way causing the children to laugh is a poor teacher, because the children never have cause to go to the surface of their bodies. A teacher who can never move the children in such a way as to cause them to withdraw into themselves is also a poor teacher. There must be an alternation, grossly expressed, between a humorous mood when the children laugh, although they need not actually laugh, but they must have some inner humorous feeling, and the tragic, moving feeling when they cry, although they do not need burst into tears, but they must move into themselves. You must bring some life into teaching. That is a hygienic rule. You must be able to bring humor into the instruction.

If you bring your own heaviness into class, justified as it may be in your private life, you should actually not be a teacher. You really must be able to bring the children to experience the periphery of their body. If you can do it in no other way, you should try to at least tell some funny story at the end of the period. If you have caused them to work hard during the period on something serious, so that their faces are physically cramped from the strain on their brains, you should at least conclude with some funny story. That is very necessary.

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1. The discussion never occurred.

There are, of course, all kinds of possibilities for error in this regard. You could, for example, seriously damage the children's health if you have them work for an entire period upon what is normally called grammar. You might have children work only with the differences between subject, object, adjective, indicative, and subjunctive cases, and so forth, that is, with all kinds of things in which the child is only half-interested. You would then put the child in the position that, while determining whether something is in the indicative or the subjunctive case, the child's breakfast cooks within the child, uninfluenced by his or her soul. You would, therefore, prepare for a time, perhaps fifteen or twenty years later, when genuine digestive disturbances or intestinal illnesses, and so forth, could occur. Intestinal illnesses are often caused by grammar instruction. That is something that is extremely important. Certainly, the whole mood the teacher brings into school transfers to the children through a tremendous number of very subtle connections.

A great deal has been said on various occasions during our earlier discussions on this topic. The inner enlivening of our Waldorf School teaching still requires considerable improvement in that direction. Even though I might say something positive, I would nevertheless emphasize that it is highly desirable, even though I am aware that we cannot always achieve ideals immediately, for Waldorf teachers to teach without preconceptions. Teachers should really be so prepared that they can give their classes without preconceptions, that is, that the teacher does not need to resort to prepared notes during class. If the teacher needs to look at prepared notes to see what to do, the necessary contact with the students is interrupted. That should never occur. That is the ideal. I am not saying this just to complain, but to make you aware of something fundamental. All these things are hygienically important. The mood of the teacher lives on in the mood of the children, and for that reason, you need to have a very clear picture of what you want to present to the class. In that way, you can more

easily help children who have metabolic difficulties than if you had the children sit in a classroom and taught them everything from a book.

It is a fact that in earlier periods of human development, teaching was generally understood as healing. At that time, people understood the human organism as tending to cause illness itself and knew that teaching brought a continual healing. It is extraordinarily good to become aware that, in a certain sense, every teacher is a doctor for the child.

In order to have healthy children in school, teachers must know how to overcome themselves. You should actually attempt to keep your private self out of the class. Instead, you should picture the material you want to present during a given class. In that way, you will become the material, and what you are as the material will have an extraordinarily enlivening effect upon the entire class. Teachers should feel that when they are not feeling well, they should, at least when they are teaching, overcome their ill feeling as far as possible. That will have a very favorable effect upon the children. In such a situation, teachers should believe that teaching is health-giving for themselves. They should think to themselves that while teaching, they can move away from being morose and toward becoming lively.

Imagine for a moment you go into a classroom, and a child is sitting there. After school, the child goes home. At home—of course, I am referring to a different cause, I am not saying the teaching would cause this—the child needs to be given an emetic by the parents. Of course, that could not have been caused by the instruction given by Waldorf teachers, that would only occur in other schools. However, if you went into a class with the attitude that teaching enlivens me and brings me out of my morose state, you could spare the child the medicine. The child can digest better when you have the right attitude in the classroom. In general, a moral attitude of the teacher is significantly hygienic.