

Anthroposophical Spiritual Science and Medical Therapy

GA 313

Lecture VIII

Dornach, April 18, 1921

If we wish to understand the effects of the mineral element in the human being, however, we must look at the general effect of the mineral in the earth. It is necessary first to become acquainted with the significance of salts in the evolution of the earth. The significance of the salts in earthly evolution is that the earth actually produces them. In salt processes we find what the earth brings into being. In developing salts, the earth builds itself up. And when we turn from the salts to the acids — looking, for example, at the acid's element present in the watery earth regions, we have the earthly process corresponding to, though the polar opposite of, the inner digestive process in the human being, that is, the digestive process beyond the stomach.

We need to study all these processes taking place in earthly development, inasmuch as they represent a relation between acids and salts. When we consider the process that develops from bases through acids to salts, which can be observed outwardly today in chemistry, we see that, regarded in this way, the process leading from base to acid to salt coincides with the earth-forming process.



This process is essentially a negative electrical process. To put it more exactly: this process, expressed in its external, spatial aspect — i.e., as a process working its way out of the spiritual into the physical — can be represented schematically as follows. We have here an effect proceeding from the bases through the acids to the salts; it is indicated only in its direction here (see **drawing**, red arrows), but it is actually a process of deposition expressed schematically. Now, when we express this process in reverse, passing from the salts through acids to bases, we must always remove these lines of deposition. They would act in a compressing way, and the opposite radiations appear, which radiate out (see **drawing** on right, arrows). Then we have to do with a positive electrical process. If you look at this sketch, I believe you will hardly doubt that it has been drawn by nature herself. Just look once at the anodes and cathodes and you will find this picture sketched by nature herself.

Now, if we approach the metallic process, that is, if we approach the metals themselves, we find in the metals that element by which the earth “unbecomes” (“*ent-wird*”) most, if I may use this expression, though it has long disappeared from the German language, despite the fact that it corresponds to reality: *werden* — *entwerden* — to become — to unbecome. With metals we find the tendency for the earth to disintegrate, to shatter in pieces, rather than the tendency to preserve or consolidate themselves in the earthly kingdom. They actually represent the “unbecoming” or passing away of the earth, and as a result they develop hidden radiating events, concealed even to external observation. You have this radiating effect everywhere. It is very important to observe this wherever we approach the metallic element with our interpretations of nature in an attempt to derive remedies.

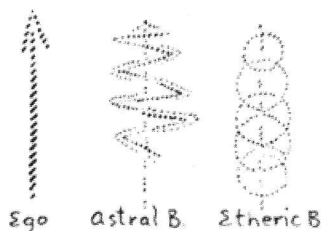
It is especially interesting to study individual metals from this viewpoint. Such a study leads us to the viewpoint represented outwardly by this table of the mineral remedies we consider valuable. To arrive at these things it is necessary to gather everything yielded by such a correct interpretation of observations. They will be reliable, because we have prepared only those remedies that have their basis in a comprehensive interpretation of observations. Here we can elaborate on this interpretation, for I am really not concerned with simply repeating this list to you. Any additions that have to be made can be given in a written exposition. At some point this will have to be done. I am less concerned with repeating this list than with guiding your thoughts in the direction that could lead to such a list in the first place.

Let us now study the metals — I would prefer to say: the metallic nature — from this viewpoint. There we find what I have just described as a radiation, and it is present in the most varied forms. It can exist in the emanating form of radiation, destroying the earthly and passing into cosmic space. This is especially the case with the lead-activity. Through this lead-activity the human being has implanted into his organism those forces that would like to disperse him into the world. This dispersing into the world is an aspect of lead-activity, so that we can best regard this effect as a radiating one. Such radiating effects appear in a different way in other metals, for example, magnesium. This can be seen clearly and is the basis for the role magnesium plays in the teeth. Through the human organism this must be brought to the point of a metallic activity. This actually happens, but the radiation must then be able to metamorphose itself again. And when this radiation has metamorphosed, it becomes what I would like to call simply “direction.” The radiation is now only “direction,” what happens, however, is an oscillation, a pendular movement to and from this direction.

We must study such effects in the healthy and sick person. In the healthy person, these radiating effects are present in the radiations of the sense organs, as remnants, you could say, of the life before birth, of prenatal existence. These are always present. What radiates from the sense organs consists basically of after-effects of lead, in which lead itself is no longer present. These radiations occur throughout the entire organism wherever there is sense activity. Nerve activity, that is, the functional activity going on in the nerves, has its basis essentially on a weakening of the sense activity in this direction. This activity is therefore based on a weaker radiation. You can see from this why I said in my book, *Riddles of the Soul (Von Seelenrätself)*, that it is difficult to describe the actual nerve-sense activity, because I would first have had to introduce everything I have now presented to you.

In this oscillatory process, this pendular movement, in which the radiation is only considered in regard to its direction, we have to do with what functionally underlies all breathing in the human organism, in fact all rhythmic activity. Rhythmic activity is based on setting up such pendular movements, on setting up a movement more consolidated in itself than the movement of radiations. Among the metals or metallic nature, tin, for example, has such a movement. The beneficial effect of tin in fairly high potencies on everything that bears upon the rhythmic system is based on this fact.

This radiating, pendular movement can be modified further, however, and this third modification is of great significance. This third modification maintains its direction and also its pendular motion only latently. On the other hand, it consists of spheres continually forming and dissolving in the direction of the radiation. What has an effect on the metabolism in the human being depends on these forces, and among metals it is iron that develops especially these forces. Hence the iron in the blood works against the effect of metabolism as a third metamorphosis of the radiating activity.



When we are dealing with the first metamorphosis, the effect is especially on everything that organically concerns the ego; when dealing with the second metamorphosis, the effect is organically on everything that concerns the astral body; and with regard to the third metamorphosis, the effect is organically on everything related to the etheric body (see drawing).