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Heart Lectures

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The human heart and blood constitute one of the most far-reaching of subjects. Dr. Steiner spoke of the etherization of blood that takes place there, i.e. the *transformation of matter into etheric forces*. One can quote Dr. Steiner, but one would like to understand why and how he was able to speak of such things. Today the science of physiology has only very little evidence regarding the function of the heart. But occult groups other than the anthroposophical know these secrets of the heart, and some groups do not want them made known to others, so we feel it a kind of challenge. *Also, Rudolf Steiner, in the Spiritual Guidance of Mankind, speaks of the need for a science which will be able to observe the working of Christ in Nature.* This is something far in the future. So as an anthroposophical scientist one feels that one wants to study the human heart as an organ where a bridge is being built between man's physical body and spiritual entity.

Sixteen years ago I met a leading occultist (he is not publicly known). He works in a realm which is not anthroposophical, nor is it a realm of black magic but rather gray, in between and nearer to the dark than the light forces. This man, a medical man by profession, told me a story: He said that Dr. Steiner's illness – according to research of himself and his associates – was due to the fact that Dr. Steiner wanted to tell more regarding the *spiritual function* of the human heart, and other occultists did not want this known at present. So they brought to bear on Rudolf Steiner forces against which he was unable to defend himself, and he became ill.

This knowledge which Rudolf Steiner had concerns 'the fifth chamber of the heart'. The idea is that in our time there are certain changes taking place in the heart, by which gradually a fifth chamber will develop. In this fifth chamber man will have a new organ which will allow him to control life forces in a different way than is possible at the moment

It is known that there is a kind of *endocrine* action in the blood. There have been found traces of a sort of 'suprarenalin', like adrenalin, indicating that the heart has a kind of gland function. *Rudolf Steiner was willing to tell more regarding etherization, and the heart as a dual purpose organ, both physical and spiritual. The heart is not a pressure pump, but an organ in which the etheric space is created so that the blood is sucked to the heart rather than pumped.* He also said that it was important to change the scientific concept from the idea of the heart as a pump to something else. It is difficult to bring evidence on this point, which can be presented. The matter needs more study; it is no help to quote Rudolf Steiner.

The key to the problem can be found. I want to try to make a gradual approach to it in several lectures. Among the things that Dr. Steiner gave on the subject is what he said to the workmen on the Goetheanum in a lecture on June 6th, 1923. In discussing the blood circulation and the motion of the heart, he said that with some people the heart is not quite in its proper place. *He said that in the case of*

dancers, the heart is moved from its proper position on the left to the right side. When this happens it makes man more perceptive in an inner way to the influence of his surroundings. He also said that in modern man there was such a disorganization of the blood circulation that he was able to go to the movies and not faint. And old Greek would faint immediately in the movies because of their disturbing influence on the circulation.

Together with the wrong concept of the heart as a pump is connected the fact that we have a wrong social life today. A healthy social life can develop only if the old pump-concept is removed and is replaced by the proper one. So this is a subject that should interest the student of social problems. Rudolf Steiner said that a true cognition in this regard would also make it possible to build machines that are in accord and in harmony with the human being and not destructive to him. *He said that only when people know that it is the invisible in man which moves the heart, will it be possible to construct proper machines and to solve social problems.*

In Nature there are three principles. *One is the principle of form, the second is the principle of substance, the substance that builds form – and this includes color.* We can describe any object by looking at its form and color. This is true as long as we are merely looking at an external object. *However, there is the possibility also of abstract geometrical thought-forms. But these are not found in Nature, in Nature there is always the marriage of substance and thought form.* In Nature we see the two principles of the Creative Entity. *In the form pattern we see the thought of God, and since forms are in a constant process of change and development it is a picture of Creative Thought.* In substance we begin to find our way find our way into another realm of Creation, because substance is a realm which has been emanated (with the help of the Thrones) out of the Spiritual Substance of the Creator. Thus every substance was the Spiritual Substance of the Creator. The Creator is not matter, but is the power which acts in matter, i.e. will. In every substance we find the emanation of the Will of the Creator.

These are deep problems, which we neglect. Approaching them requires an attitude of worship, of beginning to sense the holiness of the problem which we approach. If we have such an attitude we are able to *discover the Will* of the Creator in matter, and the Thought or the Creator in the forming of matter. Only if we are able to approach the holy of holies in Nature can we overcome, and begin to transform matter. Then we realize that in taking substance, in breathing and eating, we are moving into the holiest realm the human being can perceive.

Form and substance in Nature are brought together by a process of growth. Form is filled out by matter through nourishment, metabolism. Thus there is a third entity which brings about the moving and changing of substance into form. this is the principle of motion in its widest meaning. It lives in the background wherever there is growth and development, it is Cosmic Motion. This Cosmic Motion exists in every body and organism, animal and human. This Motion is the Third Power of God into which we look if we look through metabolism and circulation into what is behind them. If we look into the Spirit we see this motion as something embedded in the Feelings of the Creator, say rather the Heart of the Creator. There is nothing buy harmony in the Heart of the Creator, out of it comes every motion that exists.

In the human form which is 'the image of God' we find the Thought of the Creator, the harmonious Heart of the Creator, and the emanated Substance of the Creator. Goethe said that if our eye were not of the sun nature we could not recognize the sun, and if we're not of God's Nature we could not recognize God. There is in our thought the possibility of perceiving the Thought of God in our organs. In the exchange of substance, metabolism, we participate in the Will of the Creator. And in circulation we perceive something of the harmony embedded in us by the Creator. But all these are given to man to be used by him. Nobody is influenced by the Creator. This implies responsibility: we will use them properly or misuse them. The fact is that we can all do both.

Now to the heart problem: Physiologically it is an outstanding organ of the body, anatomically it is a system of muscles. We have muscles in our arms, legs, etc., these are fibrous tissue which bears up our structure, for it is due to our muscles that our skeleton is held together. The heart also is definitely a system of muscles and as such connects with the astral body. But the heart is a different muscle because its fibers are laid down differently, and also it is a hollow muscle. I think it is the only hollow muscle in the body. The fact that it is a hollow sphere brings about an inner motion, because there is empty space inside.

I have spoken in the past of Rudolf Steiner's exercise for learning imagination: You form the image of a sphere, metamorphose it to a central point, and from this center again out to a sphere. You can think of concentric circles getting smaller until they become a point and then enlarging again. One day you will try to apply this to the outermost cosmos. Then you will feel it concentrate, with everything into the earth, and then the earth itself will contract finally into the central point of the sphere. Then you will experience the central point of your own heart as the central point of the sphere. This has to be experienced, just thinking about it is of no value. If you have this experience, you then expand again, and what expands is not the vast cosmos but it is you. Then if you are objective and are strong enough, you find that you face yourself on the Threshold of the Spiritual World. And if the Guardian allows you to pass you then see how small you are. This new sphere which expands is an incomplete and spotty cosmos, some parts of it more outlined, some less so. This is not depressing but is an objective experience. You see everything that is spiritual radiating out, you feel its radiating power; and you also experience other, dark spaces.

What you have done is to concentrate your entire God-made Cosmos to a center, and from this center radiate outward what will someday be a new cosmos. This is what makes the heart move, the motion which radiates out from the heart. This is what Rudolf Steiner was ready to give and what the occultists opposed giving out. In fact, Rudolf Steiner has given it in a meditation.

The same occultists to whom I referred earlier said when we were wrestling about these things: "We have discovered since the death of Rudolf Steiner that unless this knowledge of the center of the heart is made known, there will be no salvation for the human race but only destruction". One can call this sensational or one can say, 'How deep a secret that even the dark forces have to recognize it'.

The etheric center of the heart draws the blood towards it and then pulses out again. Here is where substance is transformed into ether, and Dr. Steiner says forms rise up to the etheric brain and thence to the physical brain so that it can function and so that there may be harmony in the organs of the body. The organs and their functioning are regulated by what takes place between the etheric heart and the etheric brain. Through this heart muscle, with a hollow sphere and etheric center inside it, pulses the blood. The blood enters the heart with its four chambers. Between the second and the third chamber it goes to the lung to be regenerated, and from the fourth it goes out to the body again. There is no pulse in the main vein which brings blood to the heart – there is no pressure – it is taken from every vein by suction.

In the lung, with its oxygen, the blood is touched by the outer world. The old, poisoned, used up blood goes back from the lung as regenerated blood. There is really a constant dying and regeneration. New blood is really born. This is a marvelous process of which we know practically nothing. The heart is the only muscle that only gets tired once (except if diseased) and that is in the moment of death. This shows the eternal youth force in the etheric heart; the heart lives entirely in cosmic rhythms. It lives in relation to the time of the cosmic migration of the sun in the zodiac. In addition, the heart also takes up nourishment from the blood. What we eat goes in part to the lymph system, and in part to the liver, but finally, all that we eat goes into the blood. So this human blood (except proper and the lymph) bears nourishment and takes away the breakdown products of the body, and also it is the regenerated substance that pulses from the heart into the body.

What we eat has a tremendous influence on the heart. For example, if we drink alcohol this passes unchanged into our blood and can be measured exactly. This alcohol circulates through our entire body as a foreign substance. This substance imposes something on the heart. Red wine for instance has the effect of opening the capillaries to the head. Thus more blood comes to the head so that it, in a minor way, is illuminated. People have more life in their head, so they get a lot of ideas and have warm feelings. If they pat you on the shoulder at such a time, you do not take it seriously, because you know that it is simply that these capillaries have been opened. On others, it has other effects; for instance, Goethe liked a little red wine and wrote some very good poetry when he had had it.

We see that alcohol brings a change, that it distributes the entire heart function. Also, with alcohol we impose something on the liver which hardens it. Changes in the heart take place with everything we eat. The secret of digestion is that we do not take foreign matter into our system, but all foods are broken down and their forms are changed. Indigestion takes place when this process has not been carried out. This imposes action on the heart. The heart has the task of regulating everything and the blood mirrors everything that happens in our body. The kidney in a healthy person is able to filter out sugar from the blood. Then at another point, in the glomeruli, the blood reabsorbs the sugar. It is necessary that the sugar be out while the blood is being purified in the kidneys, then it is returned. Through the lung the blood is regenerated, through the kidney the blood is purified, and the heart cooperates in both these processes.

Dr. Steiner said that in older times the spiritual experiences took place mainly through the lung. In the lung man took the other world into himself, so that God could be a concrete concept for him. This relationship ceased in the 19th Century. Since the 19th Century man no longer experiences the forces of God through breathing in. So he finds in matter a God-forsaken world. Dr. Steiner added that since the 19th Century man experiences something of the spiritual world through the kidney. The kidney does not experience the outer world directly, but by way of the inner world. Dr. Steiner once called the kidney the brain of the metabolic system. If the kidney is disturbed, the retina of the eye is disturbed, and also we get high blood pressure. High blood pressure occurs when the astral is drawn too much into the blood system. This process can be influenced by medicines, but medicines cannot help the underlying spiritual and regenerative forces that are needed. So it is a good idea to learn how to behave so that we do not tax our kidneys too much.

Rudolf Steiner said that through our kidneys we perceive only our own self-created spiritual world. Therefore kidney-ideas, if not spiritualized, are ideas full of fear, ideals of incompatibility, ideas of clairvoyance. If we trust the kidney without learning about the etheric heart, the regulator, we learn only about atomic destruction of man and the world.

If the kidney does not purify the blood, it means an accumulated burden on the heart. Hence a proper diet, with not too much sugar, etc., is important. But you meet people who keep to a proper diet and follow the book in everything and still look worn out, passive and the like. This condition is caused, not by diet, but by lack of spiritual activity. This is the disease which eventually breaks down the heart. The blood is affected not only by external impressions but by every emotion, fear, joy, etc. Adrenalin production is changed by fear and rage. It is now recognized that short tempered persons have their adrenalin function affected by this condition. Joy in turn has other effects, and our blood is influenced if, for instance, we are not able to feel joy when someone speaks objectively well of us or others. *Moral effects work on the contraction and expansion of the capillary vessels, and the emotional, moral, soul life influences the composition of the blood.*

There is the question of spiritual experience: At the moment when a person becomes spiritually active (this means not only to think logically but to be spiritually active) at that moment the composition of the blood changes again. Rudolf Steiner once suggested in this connection that one might measure the nitrogen content in the blood and kidneys of a dozing person and a person who is trying to solve a mathematical problem. Furthermore, in proper meditation there is a spiritual process which breaks down used up products in the blood. A basis for life and health lies in there being enough spiritual activity to be able to transform used up substance into etheric substance. Moral joy and pure thought can do a lot of good in this connection.

With every pulse of the heart a certain amount of substance is absorbed, is taken away as physical pressure and added to the etheric substance. This then begins to radiate outward. Dr. Steiner said that a clairvoyant could see the amount of radiation that goes up from the heart to the brain, and that if a person knew this they would be ashamed to fall asleep at a lecture in the presence of a clairvoyant. The radiation from this etheric organ of the heart is actually developing into a spiritual sense organ. A new

sense organ is developing in this etheric heart, and this is the only organ by which man is able to sense and to recognize the Etheric Christ.

I can think: "Not I, but Christ in me". Such a thought might stimulate us to healthy feelings, but in itself this is not enough. There has to be something which goes through our will, and since our will is combined with metabolism to produce etheric substance, so "Not I, but Christ in me" has to work through the etheric heart, transforming substance into pure ether, pure radiance.

For us there is an experience of the heart similar to the way in which, in the old mysteries, the sun was experienced. We experience in every heart a sun. The sun shines on all people, it shines on the fields of the earth, it shines on other planets. And all the time it is consuming its own energy. The sun dissolves matter and transforms it into radiant energy. Its light can be seen everywhere in our earthly cosmos. The same power that dwells in the sun wills to live in every human being.

If you become aware of the heart as a spiritual organ, you begin to develop the power to see the Etheric Christ. You do this by realizing that the force in the heart is the same as the force in the sun, physically as well as spiritually. If you take this as a reality, there will still be conflicts but there will also be the realization that your entire picture of the world changes. *The force from the heart is a force which will be good.*

Now, day-dreaming a little, let us imagine what would happen if all those responsible for the political future of the earth, war or no war, etc., if all these were not to use kidney thinking but the radiant power of the heart. How different the future would be. But of course, this had not been developed yet, and we have to suffer the consequences of kidney thinking.

All that we can do is to be aware of the forces of the etheric heart. Because this will shine, they will be perceived from other planets and will increase the brightness of the earth. In fact the earth will only become a star through that process. In regard to making anthroposophy live in our own selves, not just as something abstract, I would say that if we only just glimpse at this etheric organ of the heart we will have begun to make anthroposophy live.

It is a peculiarity of the heart that it is the only bodily organ which is self-maintaining. This is because the blood going through the heart also nourishes the heart. The coronary vessels around the heart are like hands holding it. These coronary vessels nourish the heart and take away the used up substance. They must be the most over-taxed vessels of the body. In modern man scleroses and thromboses, diseases of the coronary vessels, are most widespread. This is because the etheric is not able to take up the impact of physical things on the heart. So it becomes stiff or clogged. We suffer a sudden end. Modern scientists also know that fear or despair bring about an increase of these diseases. These diseases come because the heart does not get proper spiritual nourishment.

(At this point, the speaker showed a painting of the etheric heart.)

He ended by saying: "I have been working on this lecture for about nine months and it is still incomplete. I received the possibility of speaking at all from working on this sketch. If you forget everything else I told you today and only experience the fact that you have in you a creative sun which actually radiates light and warmth, you have already achieved a lot."