

## Werner Hartinger

### Basic Principles of Future Research into Human Health<sup>1</sup>

For as long as a human being is living on earth he must ensure – and others must also ensure – that he remains on the earth as long as possible and can be as healthy as possible (Rudolf Steiner, GA 154).

Opinions regarding the function and task of the doctor in the process of healing have never been so diverse as they are today, although experts are far from clear as to the nature of the process described simply as the “healing” or “cure” of an illness. But this is not so surprising as it would appear at first sight, because our medical science is able, just as little, to explain the actual causes of an illness ...

If our aim is to gain a deep and accurate grasp of such questions, we must first inquire into the ability of our method of research to explain life-processes. In doing so we cannot avoid thinking beyond the self-imposed parameters of our natural science, if we wish to understand the life-processes of an organism on a causal level.

Lying at the basis of our bio-medical research are the criteria of natural science, which is presumptuously described simply as “science”. The fact is – wittingly or unwittingly – ignored, that natural science gave itself a very limited foundation for analysis through pretending to be able to explain living phenomena on the basis of space and time, logic and causality. Organizing principles of living beings such as soul or spirit are systematically overlooked or denied. Our criticism is not unjustified, because medical researchers themselves do not acquaint themselves sufficiently with the statements of the most prominent natural scientists. Otherwise they would, in their research, take into account more than they do, the judgement of the world-renowned physicist Max Planck (1858-1947) regarding the limits of natural scientific causal analysis. He said the following:

*“All matter emerges from and consists solely in a force that shapes the atomic particles into a minute solar system and brings it into oscillation.*

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*But as there is in the whole universe neither an intelligent nor an eternal force alone, there must be assumed to stand behind this force a conscious and knowing spirit. This spirit is the ultimate ground of matter; what is real is not visible and transitory matter. This would not exist without it, as only the invisible and immortal spirit is what is true and real.*

*Since there cannot be a spirit in itself, but each one belongs to a being, we must of necessity assume the existence of a spirit-being. And since a spirit-being cannot arise of itself but has to be created, I do not hesitate to call this mysterious creator as all cultures of the earth have called him: GOD!*

*Thus, throughout our whole life we find ourselves subject to an invisible higher power whose essential nature we will never be able to fathom from the standpoint of today's science, but which cannot be ignored by anyone capable, to some degree, of clarity of thought!"*

All progress in knowledge arises from research into what has been discovered so far, but from a widened perspective and without limits that haven been set artificially. This was stated by the eminent evolutionary biologist Ilya Prigogine (1917-2003) when he was researching into the emergence of living beings and described them as, from a functional point of view, an "open, dissipative system". Here, he is applying this concept, borrowed from the field of thermodynamics, to describe the self-organizing joining-together of smallest material particles or micro-organisms, from loose symbiotic association to enduring configurations of a living being. He sees in this the purposeful development of a higher-order living being, whereby he presupposes the existence of an organizational principle specific to each species.

For the maintenance of its biological autonomy, its life-functions and its thermodynamic equilibrium, the organism needs a life-long exchange of energy and matter with the environment. The most highly-developed "dissipative system" on the earth is the human being, and he brings about this exchange of energy and matter constantly through respiration and the intake and excretion of nourishment.

Since in this way biomaterial is exchanged at varying time intervals in living beings, but the structural configurations characteristic of the species and the individual, and also his qualities, capacities, organic functions remain constant, right down to the recognizable physiognomy, he says that there must exist an organizing principle that oversees these processes with respect to time, function and morphology and controls them in accordance with a clearly-defined concept. The genes cannot carry out this task, as their albuminous molecular forms are regularly exchanged and can therefore have no bio-medical relevance in the question of organization.

Important insights into the structure of matter have been provided by the epistemological “doctrine of being” or Ontology, developed by the most renowned physicist. It defines the reality of the world around us and was known to the ancient Greeks. Their statements have been confirmed in recent times by physicists.

The natural-scientific interpretation of medicine posits two forms of existence or being of true reality: matter as coarse substance and spirit as what is immaterial.

Ontology however, sees between them another form of matter which it describes as “substantiality of energy”. Thus it recognizes for all that has real existence three forms of being, namely: spirit as the non-material, matter as coarse material and between them the substance of energy is immaterial. The world-renowned physicist David Bohm (1917-1992) defines and quantifies the differences when the units of energy known to us as matter are reduced beyond a given threshold, they not only escape our sense-perception but are also beyond the range of demonstrability by physicists. In the case of a “quantity” below the natural constant  $10^{-13}$  a particle or process connected with it can no longer be proven to exist by natural-scientific methods.

In other words: They lose for us the usual quality of matter, they are no longer visible or measurable, but they maintain in the real world their effects as energy.

One might to compare this insight of theoretical physics with the trichotomy of living beings and their organization and ask why this knowledge

has so far found no acknowledgement in bio-medicine.

Equally hard to understand is the fact that in bio-medical research knowledge of the matter-energy relation is ignored. This becomes clear in the compilation of statements of well-known physicist Heisenberg (1901-1976) said: "The precondition for a true understanding of nature is a fundamental change in the structure of one's thinking." What he meant by this is clear from the words of Nobel prize-winner Planck: "For a whole lifetime I have been working in the most difficult branch of science, research into matter. According to the knowledge I have gained, I assert: 'There is no matter as such!'"

Einstein (1879-1955) adds: "The atoms that appear to us as matter are a concentration of energy."

Planck explains further: "Since there is in the universe no energy without a source, a spiritual force must be assumed to underlie every form of energy. That is the ultimate origin of matter."

Heisenberg states it still more plainly: "According to quantum cosmology the world of being and all forms of material appearance depend for their existence on a higher ordering through ontological cycles of implication. They occur at such a high frequency that we receive the impression of steadiness and continuity. But the atom is not solid matter; it is not a thing or an object: it is energy formed and held in that form."

One would add to this the observation that, for the complete picture of a "formed energy" that appears to us as matter, there must be on the one hand a high-power formative energy and, on the other, a less powerful energy that is formed by it and held in a given state, in this case as an atom. I will speak about this later.

This is what Heisenberg meant when he spoke of a transformed thinking that is needed if one is to understand nature.

Though this may have been for a number of different reasons, the understanding of matter has always been a problem for the human being, and still has not been resolved today. R. Steiner therefore proposed a thought-exercise that was meditated already in the ancient Mystery schools with the aim of making comprehensible their idea of spirit on the one hand

and, on the other, its adaptability to surrounding conditions. First, they pointed to the qualities of ice, such as solidity, brittleness and non-elasticity. When warmed, the same element turns to water, with entirely different properties, such as mobility, the possibility of assuming different forms and the tendency to spread out. When heated further it turns to steam, thereby becoming light, airy, capable of expansion and compression. If heated still further the molecules of hydrogen separate from those of oxygen: a gas arises that is no longer visible and has no smell. Yet further heating would cause the molecules to break up into their atoms which, given a further rise in temperature, would separate into their etheric components and astral formative forces and therefore become imperceptible to the senses and be no longer demonstrable by natural-scientific means. The two forces of energy are released and unite with the earthly ether and cosmic astrality.

Please compare this description with Heisenberg's demand that one should think in a fundamentally different way about the quality of matter, and the statement of Bohm regarding the substantiality of energy or rarefaction of matter in Ontology.

In this account we have already crossed natural-science's self-imposed, materially-oriented limit to knowledge, because it ignores a spiritual organizational principle of living beings and believes itself able to explain their life-processes on the basis of chemical-physical analysis alone. But in this way one can only analyze the present state of an organism and its functions, not the influences that upset its functional equilibrium and lead to departures from norms, which can be analyzed and are described as sickness.

Thus, at the 8<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council man's spirit was the first to be removed from the actual trichotomous structure of each living being, and with the entry of the natural sciences into medical research his soul has also been abolished. But as the soul and spiritual "organizational principles" – if I may express it so 'scientifically' – are of decisive importance for our life-destiny, we will first view these concepts in more detail from a spiritual-scientific perspective, with regard to their functions. We will only give a schematic outline of basic aspects, not pretending that our account is complete or authoritative. Their many-layered and complex ways of

working will only be considered to the extent that they are of relevance to the theme of sickness and healing.

Rudolf Steiner defines more precisely the religious concept of 'trichotomy' and sees in the human being the combined function of physical body, etheric or life-body, soul or astral body and spirit (constituent members) which he describes in its individual form as 'I'.

In perception of his fellow-man the human being sees only the lowest – and oldest – of the constituent members with their different structural densities – the bio-material body composed of mineral substances. Already the next-higher organizational principle – the life-body – is generally invisible. It is responsible for formation, growth, function and regeneration of the bio-material body. It also looks after the exchange of energy and matter of the organism, its body temperature and regulates the growth of the organs. It directs these functions by way of the internal and external secretory glandular system, for which it is largely responsible. It must be viewed as an energy system – formed out of the four earthly ethers –, which is organized in a multi-layered fashion and pervades the physical body.

One level higher and to some extent acting in opposition (to the ether-body) is the astral principle, finer in its substance and greater in energy, the similarly invisible soul-body. It is formed predominantly out of the cosmic astrality. The organ through which it works is the nervous system and its localization primarily in the blood. It is in addition responsible for all stirrings in the soul-life that we classify as sympathy and antipathy, and for opinion, attitude, mental grasp, inner representation and their tendencies. But it is also the most uncontrolled way of access of alien astral forces into the soul-principle.

The fourth human constituent member, representing the highest soul-principle, is the individual spiritual 'I', which an animal does not have in this form. In the Old Testament it is also called 'Jahve', because it was the Jahve-Elohim who bestowed upon the human being this gift of the Divine.

The sphere of its biological activity is the immune system in the blood. Otherwise it has the task of intellectual control of the soul-principle, in the sense of a development and transformation of the other constituent members. This might sound relatively simple, but long periods of evolu-

tion are needed for the former human group-soul – which it no longer is today – to evolve into an individual soul – a process that has not yet been fully completed.

The constituent members differ not only with respect to their origin – the ‘I’ stems from the region of the Trinity, the others from forces of the Angelic hierarchies –, but also on the level of their structural autonomy. Thus, the physical body, for example, is to a great extent cut off from the world around it and is very independent as a system. By contrast, life and soul-body are by no means isolated to an equal degree or protected from encroachment by alien forces. The astral and etheric forces can flow into, influence and change one another.

This has advantages and disadvantages. Where there is a possibility of therapy these qualities are advantageous, because all forms of therapy depend upon this openness to outside influence.

The spiritual science of Rudolf Steiner tells us that the human being, subject as he is to the laws of reincarnation and karma, undergoes after death a process of development. Under the guidance of his guardian spirit, who oversees and directs each incarnation, his errors of thought and behaviour are made understandable to him and the need for a rebirth under corresponding circumstances is discussed. The human being must now bring to bear, for the structuring of the ether and astral bodies for his new earthly activity, whatever burdens he carries over from his previous life. In the case of shortcomings, this leads to structural weakness and organizational deficiencies of these constituent members which manifest as a weakness of immunity against pathogenic influences from the environment. In medical diagnosis they come to expression as immune deficiencies or a disposition to illness. If these individual differences in strength of resistance or in regenerative capacity did not exist, people living in one place and exposed to the same environmental influences would all have to get the same illnesses. This is not even the case with infectious diseases or with epidemics. Individual differences in the ability to compensate for pathogenic influences are so great that, in combination with the equally variable outcomes of treatment, other essential factors must be added, which determine one’s chances of success.

[Dr. Hartinger now cites a poem “Human Being and Destiny”, which we omit.] Thus, it is upon the organizing strength of the life-body that the health and regenerative and compensatory capacity of the organism against pathogenic influences depends: and this, in its turn, depends upon what has to be brought over from the previous life. However, these karmic burdens are not in every case the deeper cause, there are also others.

It is therefore helpful to read the thoughts expressed by R. Steiner in his works “Before the Gateway of Theosophy” (GA 95), “The Theosophy of the Rosicrucian” (GA 99) and “The Revelation of Karma” (GA 120):

- a. There are Luciferic and Ahrimanic causes of illness. The Ahrimanic work more from within the etheric (or life) body and the Luciferic work more into the astral (or soul) body.
- b. Every illness has more deep-seated spiritual causes, but these do not stand in contradiction to the recognizable outer causes. Healing can result if one seeks the spiritual causes, but this must not exclude treatment of the material causes.
- c. With regard to sickness and disposition to sickness, a strengthening of the spiritual in one’s life is a healing power. It is the source of health-bringing forces.
- d. The possibility or impossibility of curing an illness lies in one’s Karma. If the human being, with the insight gained through the illness, has the strength to progress further in the same life, then healing comes about. If from his Karma he acquires only little, so that he is unable to be of help to others, then his individuality seeks death in order to build up his organization further between death and a new birth.

Here we have moved on to a consideration of the healing of an organism. There are many references to this also, in the same works of Rudolf Steiner:

- a. It is the duty of the human being – and I would add: also of the doctor – to do all that he can to bring about the healing of an illness. The decision whether death is right for the sick person’s development is up to a higher power of reason which man does not possess.
- b. The actual healing force is the strengthened activity of the etheric and astral bodies, which enables the disturbances of the physical body to be overcome.

- c. All sickness is a disturbance of the balance between light and love in the organism. Through the application of light and love the imbalances can be overcome.
- d. The medicines for this are present in the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms, which contain matter woven of pure light – not matter that is polluted by Lucifer or Ahriman, as is the case with the human being. If these pure substances are applied, healing comes about – depending on Karma.

Here, an essential and always-neglected aspect is addressed, namely, the varying quality of our earthly matter, which cannot be grasped by natural science. Let us recapitulate:

All that belongs to this earth arose in varying proportions from the two Divine primal forces: love and light. Every soul principle, every feeling, every inner stirring and every soul disposition is a distributed variant of the universal force of 'love', and all matter arose, via the ether-forces, out of the light. However, this light which was processed into matter was polluted in a Luciferic-Ahrimanic manner for man alone, through his fall into sin, and this is referred to as 'darkness'.

Thus, the human being alone has a bio-material that is pervaded by such 'forces of darkness'. Hence, Rudolf Steiner's indication that through the administering of pure matter from the other earthly realms illnesses can be cured.

In a similar way, the soul-principle of man was also burdened, whereby the second form of therapy can now be understood. Namely, a strengthening of the soul-spiritual nature in the sick person through non-egoistic personal attention, which can also be combined with an external form of treatment. A precondition for success in one's efforts was, and still is today, the moral uprightness of those involved and the integrity in the exercise of the healing profession in relation to the sick person.

But standing over any success in healing is the Karmic justification, and this is decided neither by the doctor, nor the patient, nor the form of therapy. In this connection, a number of less well-known spiritual-scientific explanations must be given. In the case of the astrally-inclined disorders, also known as Luciferic illnesses, the beings with the guiding and oversee-

ing function add the pain in the astral body. If the connection between illness and pain were not made in this way, insufficient attention would be paid to the sickness process and the cure would not be sought in the right way. There would be no desire for healing and the body would be exposed to further breakdown, to the point of inability to function, or death. As we indicated before, the pain is to be regarded as a danger signal, but it is not brought about by the functional or morphological changes resulting from the illness.

### **Support given by the Powers that Guide our Destiny**

The human being does not become aware of these connections, however, because they lie below his 'I'-consciousness and cannot be grasped. Nevertheless, this assistance through pain leads later to the insight that we should no longer yield to similar Luciferic temptations. In the next life it appears as knowledge that, in the judgement of our circumstances and one's own mode of behaviour, conveys an absolute certainty that could never be arrived at intellectually in the form of knowledge gained through experience. The ancient Greeks were well acquainted with this certainty of knowledge and called it 'pistis', which is always wrongly translated as 'belief' or 'faith'. But 'belief' has to do with something one is told and which one is meant to accept without being able to verify it. Knowledge is based on personal experiences in this life, which have been rationally grasped, cognized and worked through inwardly. Pistis, on the other hand, is founded upon knowledge and experiences in the previous life and gives unshakable certainty of judgement and decision, with no possibility of justifying this on a rational, intellectual or natural-scientific basis.

### **Luciferic and Ahrimanic Illnesses**

Thus, wherever pain has arisen without injury Luciferic influences on the astrality have led to the onset of illness. Though this statement is correct, one must not conclude that all illnesses arise in this way. Sooner or later Ahrimanic forces are also involved with varying intensity in Luciferic illnesses, particularly where longer-lasting disorders with functional or morphological changes are concerned.

The primarily Ahrimanic illnesses work at first in the life-body on an etheric level and have therefore no pain symptoms initially. These arise in

the astral body, which is to begin with not affected by these direct influences on the life-body. Only if there is a subsequent involvement of the organs, or in the case of complications, is the astral body also affected and pain symptoms appear. Important in this connection is the fact that Ahrimanic illnesses are generally preceded by Luciferic changes in a person's being and that the former manifest predominantly in the form of a non-inflammatory tumour formation, while the latter are accompanied almost without exception by inflammatory reaction of the tissues.

The inworking of Ahrimanic energies that is made possible in this way by Luciferic forces leads to a fundamental change in the interaction between life-body and physical body, initially with no involvement of the astral body, and obstructs its healing and regenerative influence. These Ahrimanic illnesses lie in the etheric body in dulled consciousness below the threshold of pain, are therefore not noticed at first and are therefore far more insidious.

Whereas in the case of Luciferic disorders pain is added by the guiding beings to raise awareness, this is not possible here, because pain can only arise in the astral. If the Ahrimanic illnesses become too strong and can no longer be overcome by the healing forces of the organism, help first comes through lowering of the organ's function to the point of paralysis. If further supportive measures are not successful, the organ can even be broken down by them and death results. This is naturally attributed to the organ failure, whereby the actual cause is not recognized.

### **Spiritual Laws**

This is an astonishing fact, but from the wider evolutionary perspective it is a help. The sick person is enabled in this way to return to the spiritual world unburdened, and this results, in the following incarnation, in a particularly healthy and resilient organ.

This brings us to a further and very important karmic law of occult medicine, which can answer many unresolved questions. A death that has been caused by the incurable disease of an organ has as its compensation in the next life an organ that is particularly well-functioning and resistant to infection, and does not become sick again. Death resulting from the incurable condition of a system or organ is not attributable to the activity of

the above-mentioned powers in the life-body. Strange as it may sound, it is help provided by the guiding beings. The adversary powers are interested, not in the destruction or death of human beings, but in taking possession of a living human being who is subservient to them, the consequence of which would be that the human being's further development comes to an end.

Quite apart from the fact that in any illness karmic elements from the past, and also the future, can make a recovery impossible, the necessary help in the case of Luciferic and Ahrimanic illnesses is due to the present structure of the human being and his level of insight. It arises within the context of a long evolutionary development, and is understandable only from this point of view.

Therefore, despite claims to the contrary, so-called spirit-healing – whatever may be understood by this – can by no means cure all sick people if, for example, karmic factors do not allow it or it is, in the view of the guiding beings, not conducive to development. For this reason, the occultist with knowledge of the spiritual laws rejects spiritual healing. He knows that in the case of a sickness that has been “healed” in this way, where the required development of insight and overcoming of karma has not taken place, this human being will, in the next incarnation, be faced with the same sickness problem in far less favourable circumstances.

If one is to acquire new and extended knowledge, it is always necessary to let go of old and perhaps more comfortable ideas!

Just as important as insight into the actual causes of an illness, is knowledge of the spiritual-scientific aspects of the healing-process. Healing always means healing of the physical body entrusted to us, and a freeing of the soul from alien influences. In order to bring back to normal the immune forces of the constituent bodies that have been disturbed in their functioning and for health to be restored, healing is bound up with a process of spiritual cognition, and the return to health is bound up with the wish to be reconciled with the Divine laws.

Thus, healing is more a priestly than a natural-scientific act, which takes place by no means only on the physical plane. Healing capacities of this kind can only be learned to a limited degree, as in addition to initiation-

knowledge they also depend upon selflessness as a motive for action. For this reason, in early times the doctor was a priest trained in the mystery schools in spiritual-scientific medical questions, and later there existed over long periods connections with the healing hierarchies.

Every process of healing consists of two parts: overcoming of the karmically-determined functional disturbances of the constituent bodies, as the actual cause of illness, and removal of the objective and subjective symptoms. Healing of the cause should take place first, and only then treatment of the symptoms.

But the choice of a successful therapy depends upon insight into the actual development of the illness. This requires the relevant spiritual-scientific experiential knowledge and a corresponding intuitive receptivity. Through burdens brought over from previous incarnations, through hereditary tendencies, through one's individual task in life and life-circumstances dictated by destiny, the relation between the constituent bodies and their functioning can be disturbed in very different ways. Even if symptoms show outward similarities there can be different underlying causes, which call for different therapeutic measures. No soul and no organism have the same disposition and the same tasks as those of another human being.

For a successful treatment these circumstances must be taken into account and it must be borne in mind that not all patients can be cured, however well-conceived the method of treatment applied. Often karma prevents a recovery, or a cure would not be appropriate for the development of the individuality at this point in time.

In any case, the sick person must himself make an effort to regain health, whereby the process of healing can be supported by numerous therapeutic measures. But the following always applies: *medicus curat – natura sanat!* (the doctor provides the cure – nature does the healing).

For the benefit of the doctor and today's medical science, we would point to the statement of Rudolf Steiner in the lecture 'The Medical Faculty and Theosophy' of 25.5.1905: 'The doctor would arrive at other conceptions of healing if he were to study in depth the real history of medicine. Words would then enable him to recognize a meaning which, today, he dismisses

with a sardonic smile ... From occult research it is known that vivisection works great harm in various respects. In this way, through the tormenting and killing of a living creature something changes in the doctor that makes it impossible for him to work with healing effect upon his fellow human beings' (GA 53).

### **Concluding Remarks**

In spiritual perception and knowledge of the world around us we are often confused by the distorting impressions of Ahriman. And when we enter deeply into our own soul in meditation it is Luciferic influences in particular which lead to serious errors of interpretation and the drawing of false conclusions. There is only one power from which Lucifer withdraws, and that is morality. Against Ahrimanic deception spiritual-scientific knowledge, schooling of the power of judgement and a thinking that embraces in sympathy our fellow-creatures can help. For this reason the striving to attain cosmic knowledge demands a parallel development of humility and modesty, for the overcoming of pride and vanity which provide a fertile ground for the gravest errors.

Self-denial and a great willingness to perform acts of sacrifice are needed if one is to be able and also be permitted, to genuinely heal, through love for man, living creatures and creation as a whole. However, owing to the present level of human knowledge, the archetypal nature of the healing process, which is only accessible to perfected initiation insight, cannot yet be fully revealed. Therefore, any helper or healer only reflects what he himself has recognized as truth, and his healing methods are adapted to this level of insight.

All knowledge of the cosmic, archetypal healing force and its way of working is inseparably bound up with the capacity to bring about sickness in other living beings. That is to say, anyone who possesses this encompassing creative knowledge of the causally-active forces of healing also has the ability to produce an illness in other people. Clearly enough, knowledge of whatever kind can only be made available when the human being has developed to the required moral level and can no longer misuse this knowledge.