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**CORONA: THE HUMAN BEING – THE CROWN OF CREATION?
An Attempt at an Anthroposophical Contemplation**

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Publisher: IGNIS Verlag

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Corona: The Human Being – The Crown of Creation?

Is there an Anthroposophical Answer to Humanity's current Corona Crisis?

"If only the external materialistic impulses work in the world and in human heads and in human hearts, then (...) the whole civilized earth will little by little be girded with terrible slave chains and will never be happy again, for through what comes up only from olden times, the world is at an end! Nothing new will come from there. Something new will have to come from the spiritual world, but it won't come if human beings do not want to approach it, if human beings do not want to take it up in free will."

Rudolf Steiner on December, 31, 1918, CW 187, p. 167. (My emphasis - I.D.)

On January 6, 1920, in a public lecture held in Basel on "*The Spiritual Scientific Foundations of Body and Soul Health*", Rudolf Steiner described the direct connection that exists between spiritual scientific thinking – taking into account the whole human being – and the bodily health of a person. In that lecture he developed the thought foundations for an intuitive, spiritual scientific medicine and also dealt with germs (bacilli) and bacteria (viruses had not yet been discovered). Among other things, he explained:

*"Once the world realizes the full significance of what spiritual science can achieve here, then (...) much more than how the germs and bacteria enter our organism, will be seen how strongly we have developed from our soul and spirit to withstand these invasions. This strength will not require an outer remedy in the natural being of the human other than the remedy from the spirit and from the soul that strengthens the human being internally through a healthy spiritual scientific content."*¹

One hundred years later, on January 7, 2020, the Chinese authorities identified a novel virus that had already led to cases of illness. The virus was given the provisional designation 2019-nCoV (2019 novel corona virus).² –

On March 20, 1920, Rudolf Steiner gave a lecture in which he explained that at all times occult knowledge was synonymous with knowledge of healing the human being, for "*the process of knowledge is the process of healing*". He explained:

"We have to again find the way back to the view that all knowledge, insofar as it wants to come to human beings, has a medical character. We have to again be able to come to the concept that we have to seek knowledge for the sake of healing, that medicine is also not just one knowledge among other knowledges, and that all knowledge in the developmental process of humanity has to be a healing factor, because humanity needs to have what arises within it on the physical plane continually healed. (...) For even the best earthly conditions have to be healed continuously, healed right into the human organism. This, too,

¹ In: CW 334.

² See: [Novel Coronavirus\(2019-nCoV\) SITUATION REPORT-1: Data as reported by: 20 January 2020](#). (PDF) WHO, January 21, 2020, accessed on January 25, 2020 (English)

*is constantly interspersed with disease systems. This means there has to be a life of spirit here within humanity that has the strength to form healing powers out of itself."*³

A day later, on March 21, 1920, in the morning, Rudolf Steiner opened the first course for physicians and medical students in Dornach, which consisted of 20 lectures and continued until April 9, 1920.

Since then, March 21, 1920, has been considered the moment of birth of Anthroposophical medicine.

A hundred years later, on March 22, 2020, German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced a strict restriction of contact for Germany – in order to prevent the alleged infection by a virus that was given the name "Corona" (crown). The consequences of this "Corona crisis" are – as one can already see quite clearly – far-reaching and defining for the future of humanity. Burning questions about humanity have since then entered very widely into our awareness; vehemently carried out discussions arise on all sides of our social, cultural and spiritual life. Clearly one can feel: This is about the future of humanity; this is what is being struggled over.

On April 7, 1920, Rudolf Steiner gave two lectures: in the morning a lecture within the Medical Course⁴, and in the evening a public lecture on "Anthroposophy and Hygiene as a Social Problem"⁵. In both lectures he spoke extensively about "germs (bacilli)" – viruses were not known back then. He began the evening lecture with the words:

*"I (...) do not want to take sides in regard to the old superstition that devils and demons go around as diseases and move in and out of people, nor do I want to take sides for the modern superstition that germs and bacteria move in and out of people and cause diseases."*⁶

A hundred years later, a virus is dominating world events.

In July, 1920, Rudolf Steiner gave several lectures⁷, in which he gave a rather shocking answer to the question that people are becoming aware of today as a result of world events: What is the human being? What has to be done so that this human being – in the face of impending pandemics or in view of the measures that will be taken in the shadow of those pandemics⁸ – is not destroyed?

Between Rudolf Steiner's words 100 years ago and today's events there is a connection that is as obvious as it is mysterious. It seems to me that in this context the answer to this question is to be found, i.e. for Anthroposophists, if they really want to understand themselves as such, something that is decisive today:

Is there an Anthroposophical answer to humanity's current Corona crisis?

The Atomistic Picture of the Human Being

At the center of the worldwide erupting "Corona crisis" is the idea of an "*infectious organic structure*", which can only be perceived with the electron microscope,

³ In: CW 198

⁴ In: CW 312.

⁵ In: CW 314 and 73a.

⁶ See *ibid.*

⁷ These are the lectures in Dornach, July 17 and 18, 1920, in: CW 198, as well as the lectures in Stuttgart, July 25 and 30, 1920, in: CW 197.

⁸ In addition to the restrictions on fundamental rights during the so-called "lockdown", this also includes impending mass vaccinations, etc.

which is called a "virus", and which could lead to illness and even death in the human being.⁹ On the basis of this idea, conditions were created worldwide that minimize the contact that people can have with each other.

The first thing, I think, is to be clear that, in the face of the "corona pandemic", all the measures implemented worldwide are based on the above-mentioned idea of a tiny, transferable "killer virus" that intends to attack individuals. Every measure is based on this idea. The danger that might arise from an encounter with an "other" is depicted in a spherical shape with pointed prongs. The portrayal of this death bringing "projectile" in the media, which is repeated, infinitely enlarged and in different colors, evokes a medieval weapon, the "morning star or spiked mace", but of course is differentiated from that weapon by the suction cups to which the spikes run out. This gives the impression that the virus, which flies through the air or is on objects, can easily stick to another object (or a person). The most important, targeted effect ¹⁰ of this media-generated idea is fear – fear of illness, fear of meeting other people, fear of professional and social decline, yes fear of the world.

This image of the virus dominating today's events as decisive for life and death is part of a type of idea that dominates "*frozen thinking*" ¹¹. The central element of this type of idea is the cell, which is the smallest structural and functional unit of living organisms. The essence of this idea is to assume that a human organism can only be understood via the cell. Our organism is characterized by the fact that it consists of 10 to 100 trillion of these infinitely small elements.¹² The space that today's thinking clears away for the virus is characterized by the idea of this whole, which is made up of infinitely small parts; viruses are still much smaller (genetic) components ¹³ of the cell, which have been torn out of a healthy cell and which have to reconnect with cells ("host cells") in order to be effective.

The idea of the "human thing", made up of infinitely small parts, corresponds to the same way of thinking as is the basis of atomism. Here, too, it has to be an – this time even smaller – element from which "the world" is composed: the atom. First and foremost, both ideas are based, firstly, on tiny elements that are not visible to the naked eye, and secondly, on a "whole" that is not thought of as such, rather as a composite of innumerable elements. This type of idea lies at the basis of the quite different, sometimes critical, views to the Corona crisis; it dominates today's thinking and therefore remains unconscious.

In the first lecture of the Doctor's Course on March 21, 1920, the day of the founding of Anthroposophical medicine, Rudolf Steiner described this basic and dominant way of thinking and developed the Anthroposophical one out of it.

⁹ See the excellent essay by Gerald Brei, "**Virus -Wahn**" – **Hintergründe und Urteilsgrundlagen** (Virus-Madness" – Background and Foundation for Judgment) <https://fassadenkratzer.wordpress.com/2020/04/20/virus-wahn-hintergruende-und-urschlussgrundlagenfttmore-6194>

¹⁰ See also among other things the article: **Internes Papier aus Innenministerium empfahl, den Deutschen Corona-Angst zu machen.** (Internal Paper from the Ministry of the Interior to make the Germans afraid of Corona), in: Focus from 5.4.2020.

¹¹ Rudolf Steiner in a lecture in Dornach, January 1, 1916, in: CW 165, pp. 104f.

¹² A cell has a size of between 1 and 30 micrometers, where one micrometer is one thousandth of a millimeter.

¹³ A virus is 20 to 300 nanometers "big"; a nanometer is the millionth part of a millimeter.

The Necessity of Overcoming Atomism

In the following I would like to basically show how in this first lecture from March 21, 1920, Rudolf Steiner develops the view of healthy and/or sick people, for it is not the individual elements of his presentation that make it into something spiritual scientific, rather the soul-spiritual activity that is here called upon. This soul-spiritual activity releases the individual elements of Rudolf Steiner's presentation from their detail and their (dead) static calculation. It is only present for as long a time as those struggling over it endeavor to understand it. It is the thinking activity that forms a whole from the individual ideas that appear separately, and this whole only exists so long as there is a struggle for this activity. If one should fall away from it, one will again only find individual, separated parts that are characterized by the fact that they can be presented with little effort. The whole, on the other hand, cannot be imagined in the usual way; it appears less clear and contoured than when we normally know ideas. This is why the first thing to do is to take seriously the inner activity struggling for an understanding on which one's usual type of ideas breaks into pieces.

If one tries in the indicated manner, one can find out that this activity continues during sleep. The next morning one will be able to take up the same process again with new strength. A slight feeling that a kind of "organ of knowledge" is developing can arise. An inner growth process that is initially blind and can only be experienced as a soul-like, structuring force can be perceived. Of course it is important, I think, to ever and again expose oneself to the process described by Rudolf Steiner. Individual sentences can, and this in part even in lectures¹⁴, prove to be "key sentences". This means that one experiences more and more how the whole process is expressed in a certain sense in such a sentence.

Yet now to the lecture of March 21, 1920, which is only to be looked at here in its supporting structure. In addition to this supporting foundational structure, it contains numerous other elements. But these will only – I believe – be able to unlock their significance when the structure bearing the lecture has been discovered.

Starting with the question "*What then is illness, and what is a sick person anyway?*"¹⁵, Rudolf Steiner turns briefly to the history of the healing arts. While during the first half of the 19th century Theodor Schwann (1810-1882), one of the founders of cell theory, assumed about it that cell formation is based on "a kind of unformed fluid formation", which would make an atomistic view of the cell impossible (the cell – the atomistic one – is presented as differentiated out of a liquid being), with the appearance of Rudolph Virchow's (1821-1902) work "*Cellular Pathology*" (*Die Cellularpathologie*) in 1858, a purely materialistic view had finally asserted itself. Rudolf Steiner explains:

"Due to this cellular pathology (Virchow's - I.D.), basically everything that occurs in human beings is derived from changes in the cell activity. (...) One can see here the ideal to study the changes of the cell in the tissue of an organ and to want to understand the disease from the changes in the cell. (...) In what has here emerged, lives precisely nothing else than the general characteristic of understanding the world in an atomistic way, as it has developed in the materialistic age."¹⁶

¹⁴ However, the basic work has to be taken up on Rudolf Steiner's written works. See on this Irene Diet: **Das Geheimnis der Sprache Rudolf Steiners. Vom ungelösten Rätsel des Verstehens** (The Mystery of Rudolf Steiner's Language. On the Unsolved Riddle of Understanding), IGNIS Verlag, 2020, 2nd edition, as well as this: **Ist die „Rudolf Steiner Gesamtausgabe“ das Werk Rudolf Steiners? Eine historische Studie** (Is the "Rudolf Steiner Complete Edition" the Work of Rudolf Steiner? An historical study), IGNIS Verlag, 2013. See also the work of Rüdiger Blankertz .

¹⁵ Lecture, April 21, 1920, in: CW 312.

¹⁶ Ibid.

"A Human Way of Looking at Things That Really Leads to the Human Being"

Rudolf Steiner introduces the further course of his thought by returning to the initial question: How do disease processes differ from the "*so-called normal processes of the human organism*"?

This question is always treated negatively by the "*official sciences*"; they only work with the "*deviations*", which they regard as illness and therefore want to eliminate. According to Rudolf Steiner, however, this cannot be a realistic starting point, for disease processes – just like any other process in the human organism – are nothing else than natural processes. If we cut our fingers, Rudolf Steiner continues, it is considered abnormal, but if one cuts a piece of wood, that is a normal natural process. Basically, however, in both cases it is the same natural process.

It is crucial that Rudolf Steiner forms a thought based on these considerations that is diametrically opposed to the atomistic way of looking at things that molds modern science today. The assumption of modern medicine that disease processes are simply deviations from healthy processes has to be given a "foundation". How can this be found? Rudolf Steiner explains:

"It (the "radical difference "between health and disease processes - I.D.) will not be found unless one can enter into a human way of looking at things that really leads to the human being." 17

This sentence is the key or turning point out of which the foundational structure of the lecture of March 21, 1920, the first lecture of the First Medical Course, developed. This sentence can become the basis for meditation; both the one preceding it as well as the later elements of the lecture will connect together as a whole when looked at from this sentence. Anyone who enters into it will quickly notice that the usual, linear thinking processes dissolve, liquefy and lose their solid form, the more intensely and the more with thought flexibility an understanding is struggled for. Only the beginning of such thought work can be indicated here:

As first thing, the sentence implies that there is "*a human way of looking*" that does not "*really lead to the human being*". This is that of modern medicine, which lacks "*a thorough going view of human beings*". Only such a "*thorough going view*" can enter into a "*human way of looking at things*" that is of such a quality that it "*leads to the human being*".

Now one should read carefully: What is being said here? Nothing more and nothing less than that it should be a very specific way of looking at things that does not lead to a way of looking at human beings, no, rather to the reality of the human being itself! Through a certain way of looking at things that I can go into, I am led – where? – to the human being itself!

If one tries to think such a thought, one can experience how the firmly established world of ideas, in which daily existence is at home, rebels against it. The ordinary consciousness, which always assumes there is an object of knowledge (here: the human being), onto which knowledge has to be "fitted", will defend itself against this sentence with all the strength that is inherent in it – it will try to "think it aright". However, if I fight against this inherent longing to adapt the sentence to my habits of thinking and through that transform it, I will notice that its fixed contours dissolve: The sentence "slips away" from me, and this to the extent that I strengthen my thinking efforts and my struggling not to fall into what is usual.

¹⁷ Ibid. My emphasis - I.D.

This "slipping away" corresponds to a new birth – a new birth within the spiritual world. Or in Rudolf Steiner's words:

*"For the thought to reach the goal of spiritual research, it has to die in the soul; and in dying it goes through an inner destiny, it goes through the destiny that the seed germ also has that is sunk into the earth in order to rot: but from its rotting comes forth the strength for a new plant. In that the thought dies within us in the concentration of thought, it awakens to a completely different kind of life; and one does not discover this different kind of life until the thought has died in intense inner concentration. One has to stop thinking in order to let the soul plant, that which is coming forth from the thought, sprout up within you; and what then comes forth from the thought? It is difficult to express in human language what is coming forth from the thought, because human language is created for external sensory experiences and not really for the inner soul experiences. This is why one can in a certain sense only express in indications the inner experiences that come into consideration. – In that the thought, energetically made, dies, the soul feels a burgeoning strength within, a strength which it becomes aware of and of which it knows the moment when it becomes aware of it: this is soul-spiritual power; this is something that is not bound to your body; something that you carry within you without the need of the mediation of your nervous system and your brain."*¹⁸

The Corona Crisis and Anthroposophy

In view of the "Corona crisis", those who feel connected to Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy face their own Anthroposophical destiny essentially as a question: What answer do I find to this question from humanity, which this crisis is? What is being asked here? Is there an answer that I have to look for and that - out of my Anthroposophical destiny – really corresponds to me?

100 years ago, in July, 1920, Rudolf Steiner gave four lectures in Dornach and in Stuttgart that in a rather shocking way exactly described the condition of humanity in which we find ourselves today.¹⁹ In those lectures, relentlessly and radically, he drew a picture of the possible future of humanity and in connection with it described the – necessary – place of spiritual science. Materialism is not a worldview that can be refuted, no, materialism is about to come true – Rudolf Steiner repeatedly emphasizes this in these lectures. Materialism will become true when the human being thinks only with the body – with the physical brain – when we do not use the last opportunity to tear our thinking free from the brain. Then, however, we actually will perish with physical death, just as materialism teaches, because we will lose our essential I nature:

*"The image of our essential I nature will be Ahrimanicly transformed, and the Ahrimanic powers will get what they want: they will get their hands on earthly life. This means that a large part of today's civilized world is striving not to continue the civilization of the earth rather to make people die and to hand over earthly life to completely different beings than human beings are."*²⁰

Rudolf Steiner ended his lecture on July 17 with the following words:

"It is not true that the materialistic theory that the brain thinks is incorrect. No, when human beings deny their soul-spiritual nature, then the brain begins to think like an automaton."

¹⁸ Lecture in Berlin, November 26, 1914, in: CW 64.

¹⁹ Lectures in Dornach, July 17 and 18, 1920, in: CW 198; lectures in Stuttgart, July 25 and 30, 1920, in: CW 197.

²⁰ Lecture in Dornach, July 17, 1920, in CW 198.

And if human beings do not want that their brain should think, that their soul-spiritual should think, then they will have to turn to something soul-spiritual that pulls this thinking away from matter; for the tearing away from matter, from true materialism, is not just a taking up of another worldview rather is something that will have to be grasped by the whole human being, will have to be torn away from mere material existence by the whole human being; for human beings will not simply become materialistic when they deny the spiritual, rather human beings will become something material when they deny the spiritual. (...) They will become something material, which can simply be dissolved in the Ahrimanic World-All and which only needs to work on in the Ahrimanic world, merely as a non-independent, impersonal part, while they are called on, if they understand the Mystery of Golgotha in the right way, to preserve their I and to continue earthly civilization.”²¹

“To use the still existing possibility today to tear the soul-spiritual away from the material of the brain”²² – this is the “human way of looking at things that really leads to the human being”, asked about by Rudolf Steiner in the first lecture of the First Medical Course. This way of looking at things, however, is at the same time the overcoming of atomism in medicine, as he continued to explain during the Medical Course on April 7, 1920, the day on which in two lectures he particularly addressed the question of bacteria and germs:

“We explain the phenomena of the world from the behavior and the mutual relationships of the atoms or the molecular processes, and it does not matter whether we have the idea: any one thought or feeling or any other process is only connected together with material processes of atoms and molecules, rather it matters which direction the whole state of our soul, which direction our spirit takes, if it assumes for its explanations only that which is thought atomistically, only that which comes about from the smallest part, the very smallest part discovered. Not whether one literally or mentally is convinced: there is something else than atomistic effects, material effects of atoms; it is not a matter of this, rather it is a matter of whether one has the possibility to make other explanations of the world the guideline of your spirit rather than the deriving of phenomena from what is atomistic. It is not what we believe, rather how we explain how we behave within the soul; this is what matters.”²³

Present-day human beings – already ailing in their basic disposition – read the individual world phenomena surrounding them as if they were the being, not however the appearance, that only then reveals its being when the spiritual bond is laid down that frees them from the illusion of their atomistic appearance. So long as the (unconscious remaining) cognitive behavior of people consists in considering the atomistically perceived world to be perfect, so that knowledge of it consists in forming an (as true as possible) image of this perceived world, just so long will human beings remain trapped in a “human way of looking at things” that cannot at all lead to the human being, for the human being is a supersensible being that is already constitutionally manifesting its supersensible, cosmic origin.

The Being of the Human Being

Rudolf Steiner explains the basic thought of the first lecture of the First Medical Course, in which he juxtaposes the human skeleton to the skeleton of a higher-standing monkey, a gorilla. Both skeletons show an erect stance, however that of the gorilla contradicts the rest of the bodily structure, while the human skeleton underlies the erect stance of the whole bodily structure.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Lecture in Stuttgart, July 30, 1920, in: CW 197.

²³ In: CW 312. My emphasis - I.D.

This means that we can only understand the human being if we grasp that the forces for this erect stance, which we owe to the "outer earthly, to extraterrestrial forces", not only lead to an upright posture, rather – in contrast to the gorilla – "that the forces working in the upright stance are also formative forces".²⁴

Human beings are formed out of the cosmos, but we are placed as cosmic beings in the earthly environment. If this latter alone were to be active, we would have to lose our uprightness again. The meaning of earthly human existence, however, lies in the fact that the essential relation to its cosmic formative forces is to be consciously grasped and ultimately produced by the individual single human being. So our task consists in becoming aware of our cosmic origins after we have had to lose our naturally given connection with the cosmos in order to be able to be free. In the ensuing experience of this loss of human existence, the awareness should arise that each individual can only develop for themselves what they are supposed to be according to the will of the Gods. At the decisive moment in human history, the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner, which before everything else is human culture, stands in the midst of the necessary loss of human existence. For the first time, it calls on that which has been made possible by materialism: on pure thinking.

"*The human body has a structure corresponding to thinking,*" so Rudolf Steiner in his "*Theosophy*".²⁵ This body has emerged from thinking in order to lead the human I to its own thinking. The cosmic formative forces are working within the human body that are to grasp themselves in thinking within human consciousness, and since the structure of the human body is to be understood solely from the uprightness, this cosmic force is at the same time the force of pure thought itself. Out of this force, which is still forming itself inwardly today, the individual human being has to inwardly draw itself upright. As long as we do not do this consciously, we will, instead of seeing the cosmically caused human structure as a whole, only be able to imagine ourselves as consisting of cells, bacteria and viruses.

This renewed uprightness can only be brought about by human beings through the force of the resurrection of thinking; it is the grasping of the uprightness of thinking by one's self that commences the return path of the human being to the spirit; and the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner is nothing other than the self-presentation of this resurrected thinking: the coming to an understanding of human consciousness with its self, as a completely new cosmic-earthly process of creation.

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So long as Rudolf Steiner's words are read in such a way as the world phenomena are usually read – that is, atomistically, as individual elements standing next to each other – so long will they not develop that organ within the reading thinker that alone is an Anthroposophical one. So long as the basic experiences have not been gone through of how the individual parts of the perceived world dissolve within the dying away of thinking, human beings will not be able to appropriately form and bring into the upright their natural abilities. – In order to grasp this in the sense of a "deed of knowledge"²⁶, earthquake-like inner and outer shocks will have to contribute to this, just as the still quite harmless "Corona crisis" is doing, which will be called forth more and more strongly in the future.

Irene Diet April 28, 2020

²⁴ Lecture of March 21, 1920, in: Ibid. My emphasis - I.D.

²⁵ Rudolf Steiner, **Theosophy**, chapter IV, Body, Soul and Spirit.

²⁶ "So it is not a matter of replacing an old knowledge with a new one, rather a matter of gaining knowledge through the deed by means of which the soul is saved from sailing into mere materiality, saved from the sailing of the soul-spiritual – whereby the I would be set aside – into what is Ahrimanic." Rudolf Steiner, lecture in Stuttgart, July 30, 1920, in: CW 197.