

Article

CHALLENGES TO THE INCARNATION OF THE EGO

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The human Ego is a breathing Being in active balance between a point-centered and a periphery form of existence. The Ego is continuously incarnated and excarnated at the same moment and striving for balance. Every single moment and situation will show an unstable, dynamic, breathing position of balance; at different ages, at different states of consciousness, at different activities or times of the day. Out of balance, the Ego will be too deeply incarnated or too excarnated; i.e. out in the periphery, in the surroundings of the body. This out-of-balance situation may become organic constitution or may be transitory. In *Balance in Teaching*, by Rudolf Steiner, we learn how to make a diagnosis as well as what to do pedagogically and therapeutically. Studying these materials will prepare us to help the individual destiny and development of the children we work with.

The particular situation of the newborn. Pregnancy and prenatal embryological development is a first step for the human Being to achieve individuality; this stage is a "first point" for a Being that

comes from the most cosmic, expanded, existence. To achieve the "point" is only possible on earth.

At the birth, just the body shape is born. This newly born physical shape is the result of a tremendous effort by the Ego; breathing out of the cosmos and breathing (or perhaps diving) into a stream of earthly heredity. In order to be able to shape the body physically, the individuality needs the moral forces acquired as spiritual fruit from its previous earthly existence. This work is done together with, and helped by, the spiritual hierarchies. The moral forces brought from the past are used up in shaping the body at birth. With the birth, this process comes to an end.

On the other hand, the individuality also has the will to realize a destiny, an earthly biography. Both the will and the physical shape are an instrument to this task. Yet the will is chaotic. Human potential at birth carries no defined qualities, only future possibilities. On the contrary, the shape is past, fixed, a ready result of the moral forces. The will has no moral forces left at birth. Morality

will need to be developed anew, struggling with earthly existence'

A new breathing process begins at birth. The uneducated, unformed will struggles to make a destiny, having as a counterpart the ready, divine-shaped physical body; morality and will are acquired anew. This is the path towards individual freedom and the creation of the spiritual hierarchy of freedom.

Tasks of the Ego during the first years of incarnation. Initially there are four levels of work for the Ego during the first years of incarnation. The first is to build a breathing warmth organism. At birth, the warmth organism is mainly to be found in and around the head. The will to go through birth also takes place mainly in the head, not the limbs. After birth, the head sacrifices warmth to the metabolic system, i.e. to the limbs and to blood circulation. As this occurs, the nerve/sense system acquires a healthy coolness and calm neces-

Next page

Article

Previous page

-sary for thinking and perceiving. The Ego lives in the balance between daily and yearly warmth differences. Closely related to this is the maturity of the digestive system. When the digestive system does not mature appropriately (with allergies for instance) the child may experience ear infections during the first years.

The second task for the Ego during the first years of incarnation is in the realm of movement, speech, and gesture. The child's efforts in this realm will work in large measure on body shape and will build a "moral body" which is revealed by behavior. During this phase of development the child relies on imitation. It is necessary for the child to have models which are worthy of imitation; models of gesture, speech, movement, and morality.

The third task for the Ego during the first years of incarnation lies in the chemical realm. The child is now deeply working with the inherited organs in order to acquire and remodel his/her own organic instruments. Metabolic development includes digestion (including diseases), life processes, care and practice of bodily life functions, and diet. The caring adults surrounding the child can help with proper diet, response to disease, practice of bodily life functions, and daily rhythm.

The fourth task for the Ego during the first years of incarnation is in the realm of balance between gravity and levity. In this phase the child works to achieve active uprightnes, active bodily positions, and passive bodily positions; struggling with space and earthly laws. Caring adults can help by providing experiences and opportunities for appropriate movement and posture. Toddler's groups and kindergarten provide a venue outside the home.

A challenging characteristic of today's children. The threshold to the spiritual world has now been open for over 100 years. This means, for the developing child, that the individual forces of will and destiny are no longer hidden. It means that children and adults are more in touch with their destiny than in past lives. Individuals are relating to one another more and more in the feeling realm. In this realm there is an actual confrontation between the will which is shaped and educated and will that is formless and chaotic.

The newborn, infants, and school children all show this awakened feeling. Even if they are not nervous, children are more awake; more in touch with their dream state as an expression of feeling. They have a special feeling attention and sensibility for social processes and phenomena today. They have a sensibility

for the deeper aspects of life, a sense of calm observation. Children today sense and observe with their feelings; trying to sense whether it is possible to realize their own destiny in the moment.

On the other hand, fears will raise up in the soul life of children; fears that come from the metabolic system. This stems from the fact that the relationship of the soul with body organs is no longer so hidden; there is an open threshold here; an awakening of feeling and observation. For this reason, we see children who decide out of themselves to be vegetarian or to avoid dark and heavy foods. All these metabolic processes, whether taken up by the child or not, appear in daily life as feeling and consciousness. Sometimes they may manifest as dreams or nightmares, fantasy images, intuitions, or will impulses.

We carry the whole world in our being. It is not that the evil is out and the good is in. We are really a microcosmos. We carry in our inner world that which exists in the outer world. Some of this reality is incarnated and some has excarnated to our surroundings. Projections of inner life will come up to consciousness and will be found almost anywhere. When children express themselves in this way they bring us gifts from their inner world and manifest aspects of human nature to us. They

Article

often experience them more strongly than we do. The experience can be frightening, incomprehensible, or even repulsive and strange. The threshold for these new Beings is open to the outside and to the inside. In this way, children wake us up, help us to know and deal with unfolding and uneducated will.

The will and violence on different levels. The will wants to be taken by the Ego as a tool and carries no qualities and properties at birth. The will is to be found in the body-free, excarnated Being as well as in the body-bound, incarnated, Being. The will, being active, will show up in behavior whether taken up by the Ego or not. The bodily constitution, including the will, has different levels. Perhaps the will appears as wildness and violence when not directed and inhabited by the Ego. When the Ego is engaged, it will strive for breathing balance.

Instincts are will which is bound to the physical body and which give form to the body or the life forces which surround the body. Drives

are will which is bound to the ether body; all that pushes, grows, and takes volume. Drives can manifest as bodily expansion or behavioral expansion; controlled or uncontrolled. Desires are will which is bound to the astral body; to movement, speech, gestures. Desires can be permeated by the Ego or they can be uncontrolled and even violent.

Meeting the child's individuality in Child Study; a source for daily work. The child's individuality breathes in the will, decides in the will between violent tempests and Ego-guided ways. Through the open threshold all of this world of will dawns into social day-consciousness. It is in the "social day-consciousness" that the realm of danger, challenge, gifts, fears, learning, and help occur. A Whitsun-like round table will be present when a community of caring adults, who concretely work with and are socially related to the child, surround the unfolding Being. The attitude of these adults must be openness of soul and genuine togetherness with the child. This meeting of the child's individuality in an awakened consciousness makes it possible for us to understand their will development. Coming from this attitude,

every adult working with children will know how to help children grow and learn. And the adults will be changed by the process. Love for humanity and respect for community will live more strongly in those who can work in this way.

A social virtue out of today's needs. The teacher, the school doctor, the nurse, the therapist, the counselor, the parents, the participants of the child study, having encountered children in this way, all come back to their daily occupation. If they can recreate the child study experience with their fellow workers, they will experience together a source of social health and also learn the way to reach that source. Be thankful for the child when this happens. Difficulties, fears and paralyzing misunderstandings will become tools for both social and individual development and transformation.

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