

Laying the Physical Foundation of the Consciousness Soul

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How can we support child development between birth and seven so that the Consciousness Soul can develop fully between the ages 35-42? This is a matter of present development working for the future. We can consider three important principles.

1. The state of the child and his relationship to his own higher members.

At birth the physical body is born but immature and not yet mastered. The other bodies are in embryonic form. The child lives in a created world - things just &. This is the world of the Father God, or greater God, 'Thou shalt not'. The child and the world are one. Gradually independence comes about, but within our physical body the world of childhood is written. This world encompasses also the people in our world, together with their inner qualities.

2. The relationship of body and soul between 0-7.

The soul is embryo-like within the child. It perceives physical bodily processes and incorporates them into itself. Later these are transformed into soul processes. We must look carefully at them. The soul is "watching" now in order to act later. We must be responsible for what is observed.

The physical body is a temple, reflecting the macrocosm both generally and individually. We need to have reverence and tremendous care for it. The wisdom of the human body is far greater than that of individual wisdom.

It is especially important to observe the child's gestures, e.g., his way of walking. This can be a part of the evening review. We can then begin to see the essential being. This is living on the threshold between what is manifest to the senses and what is spiritual. Humanity has crossed this threshold unknowingly. We are continually encountering threshold experiences and there is a danger of losing control of thinking, feeling and willing.

Every gesture counts. A sense of our inner life can bring the spiritual into any gesture. We can take consciousness into every deed. This requires being as skillful as possible. We can recognize in each individual a child of God. Care and love can enter all that we do; then things will not fall into destruction. Whenever people are brought together in a relationship of love, we construct a spiritual architecture in which we will meet again after death. To continually live in such thoughts is the task of the age of the Consciousness Soul.

3. The principle of change.

We need to remember that there is much development to come. This is an inevitability. When we are older the Consciousness Soul learns by overcoming. We must allow the child to overcome and not always hasten to take away the struggle.

We must cultivate in the child the joy of learning. When lessons become more personal, more individual, then we enter the realm of the childhood illnesses - measles, mumps, whooping cough, chicken pox. We must give time for illness and the joy of recovery.

Change means sacrifice. Fever in the small child is a sacrificial fire - it burns itself in order to move forward. The adult world has become frightened of fever. We tend to judge illness instead of listening to it. It might be necessary for the child to produce illness in order to bring about change. The child may be fine, but his environment awful. Illness in small children may have to do with us. Who needs to change - me or the child?

There are two dangers:

1. Medical technology. Ahriman slides in and takes away illness.
2. Arrogance under the excuse that illness is necessary. Lucifer takes hold in a different way.

Therapeutically both sides need to be brought together. Again, the joining of extremes, which is one aspect of the Consciousness Soul.

How can we work? In the first seven years the four lower senses are particularly important for the development of the child and for the Consciousness Soul. These bodily senses are portals for the soul/spirit nature to communicate with the physical world.

Touch - With this sense we experience, "Here I end" - the limit of ourselves. This leads to a trust in oneself, in the world and in destiny.

Well-being - This emphasizes the relationship of the whole to the parts and that the whole is greater than the parts. Sometimes we need to sacrifice personal destiny for the greater community. We struggle between the calls of personal and professional karma.

Movement - This awakens awareness of one's own activity. Movement leads to deeds, which cannot be undone. After each of the days of creation, God saw that it was good. We have the responsibility to do what we ought, because we can. (In the kindergarten, after the age of five, we encourage the child to move from what he wants to do, to what he should do). With physical handicap, movement has to be achieved through struggle.

Balance - We are able to hold ourselves upright in three-dimensional space. Balance also brings the ability to weigh up the extremes in our soul, the polarities of Lucifer and Ahriman. We can seek a balanced state-of-being even when life about us is unbalanced. Children need strong limbs (these limbs serve the Will forces). It is a tragedy that walking is no longer a part of daily life and that it is often not safe for children to run free. Movement can have many qualities, e.g., purpose, generosity. The kindergarten is a place to practice motor skills. Eurythmy in the kindergarten is an extra dimension and a gift for the future of individuals and humanity as a whole. It balances the mechanistic movement that surrounds us today.

These senses can be strengthened and used consciously in the service of spiritual development. Many of Rudolf Steiner's exercises start with sense-perception. If we fail to cultivate the senses, we place a barrier before human development.

The senses are difficult to experience because they work together, but we can become more observant of them individually. (In her book Nobody Nowhere Donna Williams describes her experience of autism.

Each sense was like a pearl on a string but they weren't working together. Her breakthrough with this experience is movingly described in a second book, *Somebody Somewhere*.

With these senses a foundation is laid for soul-qualities. Certainty-of-self arises from these, e.g., from touch, I experience the "I am."

Well-being is a foundation for an understanding that the whole is greater than the parts. There needs to be a wholeness in the atmosphere of the kindergarten. Saying and doing should form a whole - we need to speak the truth and remember that children are very literal. We need to strive to be appropriate in our questions of them and in our replies to their questions. Thinking, feeling, and willing are parts of a whole, a three-leaf clover with the four-leaf clover being the addition of the ego.

Movement offers freedom but also responsibility. What is movement? In his book, Under the Eye of the Clock, Christopher Nolan, who is paralyzed, explores these questions: "How do I conquer my body? Can a paralytic move?" From this questioning we are led to the theme of a more inner, spiritual movement. Children need strong limbs to remain 'upright', even though the ground is 'rough' - we can take this metaphorically. At the famous Vienna Riding School the horses are taken into rocky pastures when young, then back to Vienna where they can then achieve almost impossible movements, for on the rough terrain they have learned balance. Children need also to experience the different qualities of movement, e.g., the fine motor skills involved in sewing, finger games, modelling. Eurythmy is a great gift.

Touch introduces the experience of limitations. Children now desperately need new forms of limits for they are no longer held by tradition. We need ourselves to develop awareness in order to support them, e.g., consistency and punctuality. Punctuality brings time and space, which are the qualities of incarnation, together. This self-mastery gives our children new possibilities. Limits on behavior are needed to contain a child. Children test our limits and then re-test. Then they change, move on, and expect the limits to change. We need a strong will to meet today's children and an artistic and creative approach to discipline.

We only have a short time with the child in the kindergarten. It is therefore imperative that we make contact with parents. This potentizes our work. The child desperately needs this cooperation, which can then cradle him or her in consistency.

This prayer is for a child who is far away or in special need:

Lord place your head on her shoulder
speak to her ear
whisper in her heart
lead her the way she should go.
