



Human Development and Moral Force: An Anthropology of Moral Education

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Among the notes and fragments of the German poet Novalis we find the following remark: “Rightly understood, morality is the actual realm of life for a human being.”¹ What we call morality begins when we look beyond our narrow, personal wishes and interests; when we free ourselves of the bias of egotism; and when other persons, other beings, become important to us and we feel the urge to share their experiences. When empathy and caring move us to dedicate our lives to others, to place ourselves at the service of our fellow human beings and our surroundings, then the realm in which we live can be called moral. It is easy to imagine that life in this realm can grow ever stronger and more powerful. As this happens, we move from having a childlike dependency on our environment to taking on a co-creative role. We can experience how our actions flow from a living center, our own “I” or ego.² Through this living center we are able to gain insight into the nature of things, to see the spiritual in outer manifestations. In this living center, this ego, we experience the inspirations of our artistic creativity. We can sense that human nature reaches its highest form of expression when we connect ourselves with our surroundings through moral forces and impulses. When this occurs, the illusion of separation disappears. The moral realm is related, too, to the element of warmth, which, with its invigorating force, penetrates the surface and reaches deep within us.

Morality is a realm of human perfection. It

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can only be attained gradually. Here lies the future of humanity, an endangered future. To work beyond these introductory remarks, however, toward a more concrete understanding, we begin by posing a series of questions:

- What is the origin of moral impulses?
- Which stages of development enable the soul to bring moral impulses to life?
- Which outer conditions—configurations of the human body—make realization of moral impulses possible?
- In which ways is a developing individual connected to various forces of morality?

Anatomical Basis of Morality

If the human body were a structure that was completely determined by the laws of heredity, it would be impossible to understand how it could become an instrument through which a self is able to realize moral impulses in action. The impersonal nature of genetic determination would lead to a body that was complete in itself. How could it possibly become the tool of ethical or moral action? This is possible only because the ego plays a role in the formation of the body.

In early childhood, and especially in the first year of life, an individual, through her own effort, gradually takes hold of the body from within, working to permeate it from top to bottom with the forces of her will. When a child stands, we can recognize in the vertical posture an inner being who, through an act of will, overcomes gravity and holds herself in balance. Self-balanced uprightness is a sign of centeredness. A self arises in a being that acts intentionally and experiences itself as centered.

1. Novalis. *Werke*, Herausgegeben und kommentiert von G. Schulz. München o. J., S. 560 (Novalis. *Works*, edited with commentary by G. Schulz, Munich, no year, p. 560).

2. In German, “das Ich” translates literally as “the I,” but we have substituted the more common “ego,” “self,” or “self-hood,” depending on use, for common understanding.

As a child's self grasps its body and raises it up against the forces of gravity, it works to reform the body. I have presented this in depth in other writings and wish only to recall certain details to mind.³ The legs of a small child tend to bow outward. The weight of the body presses down on them. By the time a child has reached seven, a characteristic human posture has been attained: feet and ankles are close together, and thighs slant outward above the knees and carry the weight of the body in the hip joints. This new structural configuration, with its narrow base and sovereign support of the body, brings a quality of centeredness and inner activity to expression. The form of the legs takes on the signature of active selfhood. Feet elongate. An arch forms through the activity of walking. The weight of the body is overcome through an inner concentration of forces. This is why we find a point of balance between the ball and the heel of the foot. Thanks to the formation of the arch, the foot receives a signature of the activity of the ego and becomes the foundation for the free posture of the human body.⁴

The skeletal-muscular system within our trunk also goes through a process of transformation. In striving to raise the head in order to look at the world around it, a child forms the upward curvature of the neck, the cervical lordosis. In striving to stand upright and to carry the body freely, a child forms the downward curve toward the base of the spine, the lumbar lordosis.

When we follow these transformations physiognomically, we discover something significant: The ego of a child is at work in the uncon-

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scious depths of the body, where bones are formed and muscles develop. Through this work the ego impresses its signature on the child's body. The ego forms the body to fit, in that it brings itself to expression. In the course of the process, the form of the knee joint and the arrangement of the tendons develop in such a way that when the leg is completely extended, the thigh and the lower leg are pressed together in what is functionally a single structure. Similarly, in a fully

upright posture, the head of the femur is pressed so firmly into the cuplike acetabulum of the hip-bone that a functional unity of the two is ensured. A human becomes a being who, when standing, rests completely in the body's static equilibrium. In standing, he enters a state of will-permeated rest. All tendencies to movement and states of tension that vibrate in an animal's body, even when at rest, are eradicated. Thus, in early childhood a human becomes a being who, even in the form of the body, brings to expression a tendency not simply to move impulsively, but, rather, out of peaceful centeredness to form inner goals and then to realize them in action. Thanks to a body's restfulness, the will organization of a human being is open to intentions that the individual forms within, in thinking selfhood.

As this transformative process takes place in a child's bodily structure, a similar process takes place in the brain. Those sections of the brain by which an individual is able to grasp conceptually what he perceives are more finely developed. This occurs primarily up to age three. The formally highest areas are developed in the frontal part of the brain, just behind the forehead. By the time a child is six, structures here will have developed that allow him to grasp complicated relationships, the basis for intentional action. The frontal cortex is also the basis for recognition of creativity, which gives action its meaning. It enables us to work through our experience and practice self-reflection. Clinical observations show that development of the frontal cortex allows us to grasp ideas that raise us above fleeting impressions and desires to a recognition of the tasks and necessities of life. When such ideas become the basis for action, human life begins to become the expression of morality. Both the will-organization of the

3. Kranich, E.-M. "Entwicklung und Erziehung in der frühen Kindheit" in: S. Leber (Hrsg.), *Die Pädagogik der Waldorfschule und Ihre Grundlagen* 3. Aufl. Darmstadt 1992. (E.-M. Kranich "Early Childhood Development and Education" in S. Leber, ed., *Waldorf Education and Its Foundations*, 3rd edition, Darmstadt, 1992).

4. Ders., "Die Kräfte leiblicher Form-bildung und ihre Umwandlung in die Fähigkeit, Formen zu gestalten und zu erleben" in: E.-M. Kranich u.a., *Formenzeichnen*. 2. Aufl. Stuttgart 1992. 3 O.D. Creutzfeld, *Cortex Cerebri*. Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, 1983, S. 311. (Same author "The Forces of Bodily Form-Giving and their Transmutation into the Ability to Shape and Experience Form" in E.-M. Kranich, et al. *Form Drawing*, 2nd edition, Stuttgart, 1992. 3 O.D. Creutzfeld, *Cortex Cerebri*. Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, 1983, p. 311).

skeletal-muscular system and the physical basis for thinking take on a configuration in which the self can bring itself to expression. Thinking through which a person conceives intentional actions is permeated with the power and prudence of selfhood. This configuration forms bodily conditions for the realization of moral impulses in our outer life.

This configuration is also the basis for the development of certain moral traits. By the time she is seven, a child is able to recall in inner pictures what she experiences in her surroundings. These pictures are flexible, and thus a child can let the pictures flow into one another and, in passing from one to the other, recognize relationships. In doing so she exercises her thinking in the medium of pictorial images.

Virtues

What happens in a human being when thoughts immerse themselves in will? A person decides to speak the truth in a given situation although he knows that, from an opportunistic point of view, it would be better to say nothing or to say something else. When he raises this decision to the level of a will impulse and stands for the truth, then we say he is upright or honorable. If a person resolves to not take more than he needs to sustain his existence and then lives up to his resolution, we say he is modest. And when he fulfills an agreement, we call his behavior reliable.

Such thoughts affect the will not only case-by-case; they may become such an integral part of the will that they form a character trait. Thought and will reach a state of harmony in which, as in the resonance of two notes sounded together, something new is created. In this case, a person is not simply upright in this or that situation; uprightness becomes something that grows in him. He is not just now and again modest; modesty comes to life within him. The same is true for reliability. When selfless goals of action connect themselves so deeply with the will that this takes on a stable orientation, such virtues as justice, loyalty, carefulness, responsibility, helpfulness, courage, deliberation, uprightness, honesty,

modesty, gratitude, and reliability begin to evolve. Virtues are will that has been worked through with thought, will that is spirit-permeated.

Virtues are of great significance for an individual. Are a person's actions determined by outer conditions, waves of emotion, habits, or momentary irritation? If the impulses of justice, loyalty, and honesty are at work in his deeds, he acts completely out of himself. Human will receives inner form through virtue. Our actions gain an inner certainty. The French psychologist Le Senne once characterized virtues as "the inner skeleton of the soul."

This inner skeleton is formed—as is the final configuration of the physical skeleton—through certain transformative processes.⁵ Virtues are developed through the transformation of other soul traits. Modesty is developed by overcoming inordinate desire. Reliability is developed if a person no longer allows his actions to be determined by ever-changing experiences of sympathy and antipathy. And the virtue of diligence is attained when a person transforms indolence and sluggishness through the power of intention. When we understand the human soul, we see that every virtue corresponds to a weakness and that, often, an inner struggle takes place between the weakness and its corresponding virtue. Desire, sympathies and antipathies, indolence, the tendency to react emotionally, and so on, are the elementary driving forces of the astral body. They are transformed into human virtues through a slow metamorphosis, deep in the

human soul. The individual acts out of the dynamic core of selfhood in this process of transformation, a process of overcoming. As the force of selfhood grows, the ego slowly permeates the astral body. Thus a person who acts with deliberation, carefulness, or uprightness acts completely

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5. Siehe A.R. Luria, *Die höheren kortikalen Funktionen des Menschen und ihre Störungen bei örtlichen Hirnschädigungen*. Berlin 1970. O.D. Creutzfeldt, *Cortex Cerebri*. Berlin, Heidelberg, New York 1983. J.M. Foster, *The Prefrontal Cortex*. New York 1989. (See A.R. Luria, *The Higher Cortical Functions of the Human Being and Their Disturbance in the Case in Localized Brain Damage*. Berlin, 1970. O.D. Creutzfeldt, *Cortex Cerebri*. Berlin, Heidelberg, New York, 1983. J.M. Foster, *The Prefrontal Cortex*, New York, 1989).

out of himself. He has freed himself from the chains of primitive urges.

Just as the ego permeates the body by transforming inherited forms, it now permeates the astral body. This brings about inner harmony between selfless thoughts and will, which, as virtue, forms an inner moral realm. The inner life of the individual takes on a moral character.⁶

Moral Education in the Second Seven Years

How can we support these processes through education? How can the development of moral character traits be nurtured in schools? This facet of education affects the individuality more strongly than other educational tasks and confronts educators with a challenge that, for the most part, must be met before a child reaches puberty. There are specific axioms of life that govern moral education. Rudolf Steiner characterized one of them as follows:

When we want to educate a child, whenever we believe that she should acquire this or that character attribute, we must approach the child indirectly, so to say. We should not try to graft this or that attribute upon the child, but we should first awaken the yearning for this trait; we should first get the child to yearn for acquiring this characteristic later on.

And, a little later: “If we are able to guide a child’s desires, we affect the core of a child’s life.”⁷

A desire or a longing can be awakened in a child’s soul only through intense encounters. The strongest possible feeling for the significance of virtue must be awakened in children. Plutarch was convinced of this. He began his description of Pericles’ life with the following comment:

Virtuous action affects us in such a way, that we do not merely marvel at the

deeds, but wish to imitate those who have done them.... For the good attracts us powerfully ... it forms the character of those who observe it not only when they imitate it; the observation alone awakens a quality of resolve. This has moved me to continue my biographies of famous men.⁸

The predisposition for and the seeds of morality are present in a child’s soul. When children experience morality in their encounters with the world around them, these seeds are awakened and brought to life. Initially this takes place in their encounters with adults, including their teachers. As Rudolf Steiner wrote, “We should praise that human being and call him fortunate who is able to look up to his teachers and educators as natural authorities—not only in the special moments of life, but always.”⁹

In a time in which children are exposed through the media to images of untransformed forces of the soul, to licentious actions and brutality, a teacher needs a strong inner preparation to be able to counter the effects of this miseducation. In striving toward a moral education, he may immerse himself intensely in the images of fairy tales and legends and in the figures of mythology and history. He first learns to experience deeply within himself what lives in them as virtue, transformed soul forces, and moral strength. Then his storytelling will be permeated with the experience of this majesty and strength. It is only thus that a teacher’s words can find their way into the deeper soul regions of a child in which the seeds of morality lie. By living into the experience of these images, children find themselves moved to look up to the figures in the stories and discover an inner sympathy, an inclination for what lives in them as moral strength. The emotional nature of this inclination can cover the entire spectrum from gentle sympathy to a feeling of being thunderstruck. In these

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6. A precise description of the field termed ‘astral body’ can be found in Rudolf Steiner’s *Theosophy*, GA 9, Dornach, 1987, p. 56ff.

7. Steiner, Rudolf. *Der Christus-Impuls und die Entwicklung des Ich-Bewusstseins* (*The Christ-Impulse and the Development of the “I” Consciousness*) GA 116, Dornach, 1982, p. 48f.

8. Plutarch. *Lebensbeschreibungen*. Bd. 1. München, 1964, S. 317. (Plutarch. *The Lives of Great Men* Vol. 1, Munich, 1964, p. 317.)

9. Steiner, Rudolf. *The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy*, New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1997.

encounters of the soul, the seeds of morality sprout in each child differently and with a different intensity.

The soul opens itself through emotions to the manifold world of moral forces. In this emotional opening, longing awakens to develop these forces in our own souls.

Strengthening the Seeds of Morality in Sleep

Longings, unlike momentary waves of feeling, do not dissipate quickly; they live on in the soul, giving its striving an inner direction, even when it is no longer stimulated from without. When addressing questions of moral education and the development of a moral disposition, we must take into account a segment of life that poses a riddle to our normal consciousness: sleep.

When a human being falls asleep, his inner being releases itself from its connection to his body. This being can be recognized in the conscious individual in many ways: in posture, expression, gesture, voice, action, and so on. In sleep, the body is like an empty container. The ego and the astral body are separated from it. For a time, they exist free of influences that affect them in consciousness; they exist within a lawfulness that is innate. Through this shift in the modality of existence, much is clarified that was still confused as we pass into sleep. Thoughts and judgments take on breadth and depth. Emotions, which may have held the soul captive, recede; their insignificance becomes apparent. At times, we arise from sleep with new goals and resolutions. Sleep provides a deeper awakening and a space of inner work.

Where does this take place? Who participates in these processes which are of such importance to the individual human? The ego and the astral body enter a realm that is fundamentally different from the natural world. Spirit manifests itself in the natural world through the earthly media of matter and force. A human being cannot become conscious of the earthly world without his body. But in the world that the human being enters in sleep, beings live who do not need physical bodies to apply their gifts or to develop their capacities. These are beings with stronger inner forces. The concept of evolution can aid in understanding these beings.

According to Steiner, in the future, human beings will evolve to higher stages. The next stage

is that of the spirit-self.¹⁰ The beings higher than humans, the beings of the so-called third hierarchy, have already developed the spirit-self and, in part, still higher spiritual forces. The fact that the spirit-self is developed “becomes apparent in so far as instincts, drives, and passions become translucent, illuminated by that which the ‘I’ has received from spirit.” As with development of character virtues, we look to transformation of the astral body: urges, desires, and passions are the forces of impulse that live in the astral body. They are dark and of glowing intensity. The darkness is illuminated by spiritual light, which the ego has taken into itself and transformed in a process of transubstantiation.

In moments of passion, we give ourselves completely to an experience of enjoyment; our astral body flares up in enjoyment of sensual experience. This flaring up can be illuminated by the spiritual light of truth and of moral ideals. The more comprehensive the truth and the higher the ideal, the more able they are to permeate the heat of passion. In this process the warmth of passion unites itself with the truth, with the moral ideal. The soul begins to glow with the warmth of its devotion to the spirit. The hot coals of passion become the selfless flame of enthusiasm.

A dull impetus, without form or direction, works in the realm of urges. These too can be illuminated by the spiritual light with which the ego fills itself. Unarticulated will then frees itself from the body. It unites its strength with the light of truth and of ideals. The undirected impetus becomes inner striving, striving to realize the spirit within our own will. Urges thus become transformed into a form of spiritual service.

Desire also becomes a significant capacity in the realm of the spirit-self. In contrast to urges, desire flares up in relation to surroundings. In search of satisfaction, it draws those things toward itself that it seeks to turn into itself. The consuming energy of desire can be satisfied only momentarily. Transformed, however, desire becomes the kind of devotion through which we take the spirit into ourselves in such a way that we experience bliss. Desire becomes our soul's inner force of devotion to the spirit.

These three traits—selfless enthusiasm, inner spiritual devotion, and striving to reveal the spirit-

10. See Rudolf Steiner's commentary in *Theosophy*, Note 5, pp. 53ff and 59.

self in action—characterize the beings of the third hierarchy. Because they have transformed the astral body into the spirit-self, their being is living morality.

Children enter the realm of these beings when they sleep. They bring with them the quality of sympathy and a will-directed inclination for the moral that have already been awakened in them through their lessons. This gives them a certain openness to the beings of the third hierarchy. In that children have been touched by virtue, that is, by the forces of morality, an inner relationship to these beings—beings who are no longer at the stage of striving for morality but rather have enabled morality to ripen within them—lives in children's astral bodies. This allows the beings of the third hierarchy to bring their forces to bear on the seeds of morality, to enliven them, and to strengthen them. Significant processes of moral development unfold in the course of this nightly communication between the inner beings of children and higher beings.

What the moral forces of higher beings enliven and strengthen in sleep flows into the waking life of a child. It is possible to recognize the slow maturing of a child's moral forces. A child's behavior changes slowly. Bad habits or character traits recede or disappear altogether, and positive activity appears. For instance, a child begins to share the feelings of others more than before, and another child begins to enjoy being able to help. Another appears to be more focused and undertakes more seriously to do what he says he will. In such instances we see the budding of the seeds of moral forces in a child. We can also see, at times, that a child's inclination toward what is good or noble becomes a basic mood of soul.

These outer changes are connected to changes in life processes, in the etheric body. Feelings modify the rhythm of breathing. What come to expression are qualities of serenity and stimulation that live in various feeling states. Breathing rhythm becomes increasingly peaceful or excited, its amplitude increases or decreases. Feelings immerse themselves in the living rhythm of the breathing process. Their effects disappear with the same rapidity as do the feelings themselves. If, however, in sleep, a child's relationship to what is good and noble is deepened through the beings of the third hierarchy, the child's astral body immerses itself with strengthened sympathy

in the child's breathing life. Soul forces can become so strong that they do not merely modify the rhythm momentarily, but rather immerse themselves fully in this life of rhythm. They then live on in the form of a fine modification of a child's breathing. Sympathy for the moral is now present in a medium whose rhythm continues unbroken. It no longer dies away, but lives on in the flowing rhythm of the stream of breathing; it becomes a basic mood of soul.

Human Conscience

As educators we must also keep in mind that an inner source of moral impulses exists in each human being: the human conscience. When a person whose heart has not grown entirely cold notices another person in need, what speaks within him at that moment is the voice of his conscience. If we pass by without reaching out to help, conscience speaks again, with similar decisiveness. Conscience is a source of moral impulses and of moral judgment. It speaks with the certainty of inspiration. It points us with irresistible force in the direction of moral action. The German philosopher J.G. Fichte wrote of conscience: "To listen to my conscience, to obey it honestly, without fear or cleverness, this is my only goal, my *raison d'être*. My life has thus ceased to be an empty game, without truth or meaning."¹¹

Many philosophers and psychologists have explored the nature of this inner moral voice, often asking where it is located within the human constitution. Some hold to the view that it is to be found within the realm of feeling. The voice of conscience is perceived in the emotional sphere. Conscience does not, however, belong to the circle of other emotions. It is different from such emotions as joy, sorrow, hope, reverence, or love. In these emotions we experience our own being. Conscience speaks within human souls with a quality of objectivity that supersedes the merely personal. Other thinkers have placed conscience in the will, not in the sphere of will as it is manifested in daily activity, but in a higher form of will, for conscience commands the will. It is the origin of the deepest moral impulses. It appears to be rooted in the depths of the will. From there it works up to the surface of consciousness in the

11. Fichte, J.G. *Die Bestimmung des Menschen (The Destiny of Man)*, 5th edition. Hamburg, 1979, p. 94f.

emotional realm, where we experience it as a source of direction for our personal lives.

The development of human conscience presents a burning question today. The voice of conscience has become silent in many persons. The lack of moral orientation creates a vacuum that allows destructive forces of behavior to arise.

How does conscience develop? What can education do to help in its development? Take, for example, the situation in which the inner disposition for what is good comes to life in the soul of a child and moves the child to help or protect another child. The impulses of helping and protecting penetrate the child's will like rays of light.

When this child falls asleep, she bears with her, in her astral body and in her ego, will that has been permeated by moral action. This enters the world of the third hierarchy. There the beings of the third hierarchy can work on what lives as goodness within the child's being with the strength of their spiritually permeated morality. Into the child's will flows the strength and certitude of the moral. The child bears the effects of this encounter into her world when she awakes. What has been impressed upon the child from out of the realm of sublime moral will expresses itself within her as the voice of conscience.¹² Fichte experienced this dimension of the human conscience and wrote that it is "an oracle from the eternal world that reveals to me how to take my place within the order of the spiritual world."¹³

In Rudolf Steiner's view, nurture and cultivation of forces of human conscience belong to the challenge of moral education. This widens the spectrum of what we have described significantly. If conscience is to develop further, a child must gain not only an emotional disposition that inclines toward what is good, but this disposition must also find its way into the will in the form of

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moral impulses. A child receives the strongest stimulation toward moral action from adults whom he learns to acknowledge as moral authorities based on the selfless nature of their actions. A child carries moral will impulses, sparked through meeting such individuals, into his or her sleep life, where these impulses are permeated with the moral strength of the third hierarchy. Thus, much depends on the adults and teachers in a child's life. The formation of conscience lies in the hands of educators.

The moral certitude that a child gains with the development of her conscience is brought to the child's consciousness by a specific organ. This organ is a metamorphosis of the will organization; conscience develops through acts of will born of the warmth of moral ideals. Formative activity of the will manifests itself directly in the contractile properties of muscles. Muscles are permeated by moral force when a person acts without thought for himself. The organ of conscience is a muscular organ. It must, however, be one that is free from all activity that reaches into the outer world. It must have a relationship to feeling, for conscience speaks to us in the realm of emotion.

Feelings express themselves inwardly through rhythm. Thus, the organ in which impulses of will—which originate in the spiritual—are perceived as the voice of conscience is a rhythmically pulsating muscle: the heart. When children awake in the morning and carry enlivened forces of conscience into the world, they become aware of these impulses within their hearts. Just as the enduring inclination of the soul toward what is good lives on in a child's breathing, the voice of conscience speaks in the rhythm of a child's heart. Moral education brings about a significant development within the rhythmic organization, in the etheric body. "We must attain morality through an inner development of rhythm in the years between 7 and 14."¹⁴

12. See Rudolf Steiner's comment in *Anthroposophie als Kosmosophie. Zweiter Teil (Anthroposophy as Cosmosophy, Part Two)*. Lecture of November 12, 1921, GA 208, Dornach, 1992.

13. Quoted from H. Reiner "Gewissen" in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*. Bd. 3, Darmstadt, 1974, S. 586. ("Conscience" in *Historical Dictionary of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, Darmstadt, 1974, p. 586).

14. Steiner, Rudolf. *Geistige Zusammenhänge in der Gestaltung des menschlichen Organismus. (Spiritual Interconnections in the Formation of the Human Organism)* Lecture, December 9, 1922, Stuttgart, GA 218, Dornach 1992, p. 325.

Dangers in Adolescence

The challenges of moral education described here lie between the years of 7 and 14. Up until the second dentition, the formation of the physical body predominates. From then until puberty, development of life processes and rhythm in the organs of the trunk hold sway. In the early years, the physical body takes on a configuration that allows it to be the basis of moral action. In the middle years, we work through education to ensure that a strong connection to what is moral is created in rhythmic processes of the etheric. This is important for our paths through life. In the transition from childhood to youth, forces awaken within the human being that endanger the possibility of an ethical existence. What has to be achieved up to this point has been characterized by Rudolf Steiner as follows:

...the focus of education must be such that when an individual passes through puberty he has a strong feeling: I am not a whole human being, I do not have the right to call myself a human being, if I am not good.

Young persons need a strongly conscious, deeply felt awareness that being human and acting morally are inseparable. This gives them an orientation needed so as not to fall prey to dangers threatening their moral capabilities.

During puberty, elemental forces of the astral body burst into the soul life of the youth: sensuality, passions, desires. Other soul qualities also arise: ideals, the capacity for enthusiasm, an inner search for meaning. These latter are forces of the astral body that have already been transformed and spiritualized. Thus, youths experience a strong inner tension and disharmony. If they find nothing within to serve as an inner compass, they can easily find themselves in danger.

In order to adequately describe these dangers, we must make use of a concept that has almost disappeared and is viewed as rather antiquated. It is common today to use the word "evil" to describe the horrible events of the last century; the term "sin," however, is seldom used. Ambrosius, one of the patriarchs of the fourth century Catholic Church, taught of the seven mortal sins. These are lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, and pride. In lust, a person loses

himself in the desires and passions of sexuality. Gluttony is unbridled enjoyment of the desires of eating and drinking. In greed, a person is trapped in the urge to possess. Sloth is passive surrender to bodily indolence. When a person surrenders himself to the untransformed forces of his astral body, to those primitive drives which he shares with the animals, he falls into sin. He forgets the actual task of being human: the gradual transformation of these forces into moral capacities.

In a comprehensive study of changes in adolescent behavior we find the following:

A ... monopoly that is toppled: access to the pleasures and privileges of adults. To be an adult once meant having access to sexual relationships.... With the end of patronized youth, the lusts and pleasures are moved more closely into the vicinity of childhood. Sexuality and erotic relationships are only one example. Even adult forms of orality have become available to younger children. Ever more young people are smoking and drinking, visiting bars and night-clubs, and finding access to the drug culture and addictions....¹⁵

One of the most worrisome tendencies of modern culture is described here in the dry style of contemporary sociological studies: the propagation of temptation and the opportunity to surrender ourselves without awareness to the world of temptation. The path into what we could actually term the realm of sin is being widened, blindly, as though it were the most natural thing in the world. MacIntyre characterized this trend quite accurately when he remarked that today thinking and speaking about morality has been "abandoned."¹⁶

Commandments cannot help in the battle against temptation. Human beings no longer allow themselves to be directed from without. They need a direction, an orientation that comes from within.

The second danger comes from the realm of destructive instincts. What we speak of as evil can

15. Ibid. p. 328f.

16. *Jugend '81*. Jugendwerk der Deutschen Shell. Opladen 1982, S. 99. (*Youth '81*. Youth Foundation of German Shell Co., Opladen, 1982, p. 99).

work as demonically as it has in the last century only when it arises within human beings. Individuals find themselves confronted by forces from which they were previously protected. These, too, emerge in that transition from childhood to youth. A number of phenomena point clearly to this, especially the tendency toward brutality that may surface at this age. We may also include the peculiar interest in horror films, with terrifying images of torture, injury, and destruction. No young persons could have an inclination to watch such images if there were not within them, somewhere, a lust for evil. This demonic lust is drawn out by films. Psychologists speak of an enjoyment of fear because the experience of fear is connected to this feeling of enjoyment. We could not experience such a feeling of lust for evil if we did not bear within ourselves an inner power of destruction. Individuals need this power, but it should not become a basis for action. In one of the most important works of Jewish mysticism, the Zohar, is written:

Evil is necessary because God wanted to give humans freedom of choice. For this reason alone He had to want the existence of evil, in order that in resisting evil man can save and strengthen his moral forces.¹⁷

Humans bear evil within themselves not in order to act destructively, but to develop by resisting it, forces of good in inner independence and freedom. The instincts and drives of evil work in the depths of human souls. It is a tragedy, however, when they rise up in the soul and the lust for evil or destructive instincts become the basis for action. Adolescents are not mature enough to face them alone. In watching horror films, for example, they may come to the point articulated by one adolescent: "Everything in me is erased by these films."¹⁸ What are erased are the human emotion of compassion and the ability to have sympathy for others. A moral vacuum appears within the individual.

Where does evil originate within a human being? In the processes of change which take place during puberty, youth comes into an unmediated relationship with the forces of gravity. Adolescent growth spurts begin with the bones of the limbs, that is, with those parts of the body which, due to their tendency toward crystallization, separate themselves most strongly from the inner life of the individual. Because of their density, limb bones are strongly affected by gravity. Gravity concentrates matter toward the center of the earth. It leads through concentration to solidification and separation from the rest of the cosmos. As bones grow, this force exercises an increasing influence on the individual, and the will becomes focused, through the muscles, ever more strongly on overcoming weight and inertia. Adolescents unite their wills with those forces that would draw them out of a connection with the cosmos. As their will is permeated with forces of gravity, they gain a stronger feeling for themselves. In unconscious depths of the will, a form of egotism emerges. If this finds its way into consciousness, it becomes an urge to destroy everything that is not in harmony with our own egotism. A destructive hate rises from unconscious depths. This power of destruction should remain in depths of soul, coming to consciousness only as an enhanced sense of self that supports the development of an independent personality.

Today, as these forces find their way to the surface and endanger humanity, education finds itself facing new challenges. Two things are important in striving toward a form of education that can help adolescents stand up to the threats of this inner source of evil. Adolescents must learn to understand the world so deeply that they find an inner connection to it, and they must learn to grow beyond themselves in order to place themselves in the larger context of life and the cosmos.¹⁹

17. Quoted from G. Scholem, *Die jüdische Mystik in ihren Hauptströmungen*. (Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism) German edition: Frankfurt a.M., 1967, p. 261.

18. See also: J. Loesch, "Horror und Gewaltfilme in einer Haupt und Realschule" ("Horror Movies and Violent Films in a German School") in *Pädagogik*, 11/1992, p. 12ff.

19. This aspect of moral education is the topic of my article, "Der Weg zum Verstehen der Natur als Prozeß moralischer Entwicklung." ("The Path to Understanding Nature as a Process of Moral Development").

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We are pleased to have been given permission from Ernst-Michael Kranich, just a week before his death, to translate and publish his important essay on morality. Kranich was a biologist and stalwart in the German Waldorf school movement and we are grateful to honor his life-work with this article.