

# The Being of Man and His Future Evolution

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## RHYTHMS IN THE BEING OF MAN

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It has already been mentioned here that in the group meetings this winter we want to gather together all the threads as it were that will eventually link up to form a deeper understanding of the being of man and various other things connected with man's whole life and evolution that will lead us deeper and deeper into the secrets of the world. Today I would like to remind you of the group lecture the time before last (21st December 1908) and take our start from there. You will remember that we spoke of a certain rhythm existing in the four members of man's being. We want to start there today and find an answer to the question: How can a knowledge of these things help us understand in a deeper way both the necessity and the object of the anthroposophical movement?

Today we shall have to link up two things apparently very far removed from one another. You will remember that there are certain relationships between man's ego, astral body, etheric body and physical body. What there is to say about the fourth member, the ego, is best seen if we bear in mind the two alternating states of consciousness experienced by the ego in the course of the twenty-four hours of the day. One day with its twenty-four hours, during which the ego experiences day and night, sleeping and waking, will be seen as a kind of unity. So when we say that what the ego goes through in a day is based on the number one, we shall have to say that the number that corresponds in a similar way to our astral body is the number seven. Whereas the ego as it is today comes back as it were to its starting-point in twenty-four hours or a day, our astral body does the same thing in seven days. Let us go into this in greater detail.

Think of waking up in the morning; that is, you rise up out of the darkness of unconsciousness, as people say incorrectly in ordinary life, and the objects of the physical sense world appear round you again. You experience this in the morning and again twenty-four hours later, with the occasional exception. This is the regular course of events, and we can say that our ego returns to its starting-point after a day of twenty-four hours. If we look in the same way for the astral body's corresponding rhythm, we have to say that if the ordered regularity of the astral body is really there, then the astral body returns to the same point after seven days. So whilst the ego goes through its cycle in a day, the astral body goes considerably slower, and carries out its cycle in seven days. The cycle of the etheric body, on the other hand, takes four times seven days; after four times seven days it returns to the same point. And now please bear in mind what was said the time before last. With the physical body it is not as regular as with the astral and the etheric bodies. We can, however, establish a rough figure, and say that it goes through its cycle in about ten times twenty-eight days, and then returns to its starting-point. You know of course that a great difference exists and that the female etheric body is male and the male etheric body female. From this we can see that in a certain respect an irregularity is bound to occur in the rhythm of the etheric bodies. But on the whole the numbers 1:7:(4 x 7): (10 x 7 x 4) are the proportional figures that so to say specify the 'speeds of rotation' for the four members of man's being. This is of course speaking figuratively, for they are not really rotations but repetitions of the same conditions; rhythm ratios. A fortnight ago I had to point out that phenomena of daily life are comprehensible only when we know things like this that

lie behind the sense perceptible world. And in a public lecture I also indicated a remarkable fact which cannot be denied by even the most materialistic scientist or doctor or be ranked among the 'spectres of superstition', because it is an indisputable fact. It is something that really ought to make people think, namely that in pneumonia a special phenomena occurs on the seventh day. A crisis arises, and the patient has to be pulled through this seventh day. The temperature suddenly falls, and if the patient cannot be brought through this crisis then in certain circumstances there is no recovery. This fact is known by most people, but as a rule the starting-point of the illness is not always correctly ascertained, and if you do not know which the first day is then as a rule you do not know which the seventh day is either. But the fact remains, so we have to ask why the temperature drops with pneumonia on the seventh day. Why does a special phenomenon occur at all on the seventh day?

Only a person who sees behind the scenes of existence, behind the physical sense phenomena into the spiritual world, knows of these rhythms, and why phenomena like a temperature arise. What actually is a temperature? Why does it occur? The temperature is not the illness. On the contrary, the temperature is something that the organism calls up to fight against the actual process of the illness. The temperature is the organism's defence against the illness. There is some damage in the organism, in the lungs, say. When the human being is healthy and all his inner activities are working harmoniously, these inner activities are bound to fall into disorder if one particular organ of the human body is upset. Then the whole organism attempts to pull itself together and develop the forces within itself to counterbalance the local upset. There is really a revolution going on in the whole organism, otherwise the organism would not need to gather its forces because there is no enemy to fight. The expressing of this massing of forces in the organism is the temperature.

Now the person who looks behind the scenes of existence knows that the various organs of the human body came into existence and developed at very different periods of human evolution. What from the spiritual scientific point of view is called 'the study of the human body' is the most complicated matter imaginable, for the human organism is extremely complex and its individual organs came into existence at quite different times. The rudimentary beginnings of these organs were developed further at a later stage of evolution. Everything in the physical organism is an expression or outcome of man's higher members, so that each physical organ expresses the higher Organisation of the higher members. What we call the lungs today have their origins in the astral body and are to a certain extent connected with it. We will eventually come to talk about what the lungs have to do with the astral body, how the very first, archetype basis of the lungs came into man on the predecessor of our Earth, ancient Moon, and how at that time the astral body was as it were planted into man by higher spiritual beings. But today I want you to look at the fact of the lungs being an expression of the astral body. The actual expression of the astral body is of course the nervous system. But man is complicated, and the development of the various parts always runs parallel. The construction of the lungs began at the same time as the development of the astral body and the incorporation of the present-day nervous system. This in a way includes the lungs in the rhythm of the astral body, that rhythm that is governed by the number seven. The phenomenon of a rising temperature is connected with certain functions of the etheric body. Something must be happening in the etheric body if a temperature runs a certain course. The temperature, then, is somehow within the rhythm of the etheric body. Whenever you have a temperature it has this rhythm, but in what way? We shall have to be clear about the following:

The etheric body, which completes its cycle in four times seven days, moves considerably slower than the astral body with its seven day rhythm. So if we relate the rhythmic course of

the etheric body to that of the astral body, we can compare them with the hands of a clock. The clock's hour hand goes round once whilst the minute hand, in the same span of time, goes round twelve times. There you have the relationship of 1:12. Now suppose you look at the clock at noon, when the minute hand lies on top of the hour hand. The two hands coincide. Then the minute hand goes round one, and when it returns to the twelve it can no longer coincide with the hour hand, for this has meanwhile moved on to one. It will be roughly another five minutes before the two hands can coincide, so the minute hand does not point to the same place as the hour hand an hour later but after an hour and just over five minutes later. Now you have a similar relationship between the movement of the astral body and the movement of the etheric body. Imagine that your astral body, that is connected the whole time with the etheric body, were to be in a certain position in relation to the etheric body. Now the astral body begins to rotate. When after seven days it returns to its original position, it does not coincide again with the etheric body, for, after seven days, the etheric body has moved round a quarter of its cycle. So seven days later the position of the astral body does not coincide with the same position of the etheric body but with a position that is a quarter of the cycle behind the original one. Now imagine you have a case of the illness in question. A definite position of the astral body is connected with a definite position of the etheric body. And at this moment, with the co-operation of these two positions working together, the temperature appears, as a summons to fight the enemy. Seven days later the astral body covers an entirely different part of the etheric body. Now in the etheric body there must be not only the power to produce a temperature, for in that case, once it had really got going, it would never drop again; so seven days later this point of the etheric body that is now covered by the part of the astral body that produced the temperature seven days previously has the tendency to counteract the temperature and bring it down. If the patient's disorder has been overcome in seven days, then all is well. But if the disorder has not been overcome, and the astral body has not got the tendency now to push the illness out, the patient comes into the unfortunate position in which the etheric body has the tendency to bring the temperature down. It is important to pay good heed to these two points of coincidence. We could discover points like this for all kinds of phenomena in human life. And just through these rhythms, these mysterious inner workings, man's whole being could be understood. The etheric body really has a tendency that expresses itself in four times seven. In the case of other illnesses you will notice that the fourteenth day is of special importance; that is, two times seven. And we can definitely say that with certain phenomena the paroxysm has to be especially strong after four times seven; The point being that if the trouble decreases then, you can definitely hope for recovery. All these things are connected with rhythms of the kind we touched on three weeks ago and have dealt with in greater detail today. With such things as these, which appear difficult but which can nevertheless be understood, we can begin to penetrate a little way beneath the surface of the physical sense world. And we must penetrate further and further. Now let us enquire into the origin of such rhythms.

We have to look once again to the great cosmic relationships to find the origin of such rhythms. We have often drawn your attention to the fact that what we call the four members of man, physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego have evolved through Saturn, Sun, Moon and Earth existence. If we look back to our old Moon we find that it also separated itself from the sun for a certain length of time, though a large part of what is the moon today was then part of the earth. But outside there was a sun, and when such heavenly bodies belong together then their forces, which are the expression of their beings, always have an influence on regulating the life of their creatures. The orbiting of a planet around its sun or of a satellite around its planet is by no means mere chance, nor is it unconnected with life, on the contrary it is regulated by those beings we have learnt about in the hierarchies of spirits. We have seen that it

is absolutely untrue that the heavenly bodies rotate by themselves through mere lifeless forces. We have pointed out how grotesquely the modern physicist explains the Kant-Laplace theory by means of his experiment with the blob of fat. A cardboard disc is inserted through the floating blob of fat in the direction of the equator and a needle stuck through it from above, and then the whole thing is rotated, whereupon small droplets break off from the large drop and rotate as well. Thus the experimenter shows how a planetary system in miniature arises, and physicists generally draw the conclusion that this is how the large planetary system must have arisen. Although it is usually good to forget yourself, in this particular case it is not. For the good man usually forgets that the miniature planetary system could not arise if he did not turn the handle. It is perfectly permissible to do such experiments, and they are very useful, but you should not forget the most important part. What an infinite number of people fall victim to such suggestions! They overlook the fact that the professor was doing it. There is no gigantic professor out yonder of course, it is the hierarchies of spiritual beings who regulate the rhythms of the heavenly bodies and actually bring about all the ordering of matter in the cosmos, so that the individual planetary bodies revolve around one another. And if we could go into the movements of the planetary spheres that form a correlated system — and a time will come for this — we should recognise the rhythms of our own human members. For the time being, however, we need only point to one thing.

Modern man, with his materialistic mode of thought, laughs at the idea that in earlier times certain conditions in man's life were organised in connection with the four quarters of the moon. Now just with the moon in particular there is in a wonderful way a cosmic reflection of the relationship existing between the astral and the etheric body. The moon moves round its cycle in four times seven days. Those are the positions of the etheric body, and these four times seven positions of the etheric body are exactly mirrored in the four quarters of the moon. It is by no means nonsense to look for a connection between the phenomenon of the rising temperature we described and just these quarters of the moon. Just think, there really is a different quarter of the moon at the end of seven days, just as there is another quarter of the etheric body and the astral body covers a different quarter of the etheric body. Originally the relationship of the human astral body to the etheric body was indeed regulated by spiritual beings bringing the moon into a corresponding orbiting of the earth. And you can see how the things are to a certain extent connected, in that even modern medicine reckons with an ancient heritage of rhythmic knowledge. As the rhythm of the body is ten times twenty-eight and the physical body is as it were back at the same point ten times twenty-eight days later, there are about ten times twenty-eight days between the conception of a human being and his birth, ten lunar months. All these things are connected with the regulating of the great cosmic relationships. Man as microcosm is a true image of the great world relationships, for he is created out of them.

Today we want to turn our thoughts to evolution in the middle of Atlantean times. That was a very important point for earth evolution. Before that time we can distinguish three races in human evolution; the Polarian, the Hyperborean and the Lemurian race. Then comes the Atlantean race. We are now in the fifth race and two races will follow us, so the Atlantean epoch lies right in the middle. The middle of Atlantean times is the most important point in earth evolution. If we were to go back before this time, even then we should have found an exact reflection of cosmic relationships in the relationships of external human life. It would have had a very bad effect on man if he had done the kind of things then that he does now. Nowadays man does not adjust himself very much to the cosmic situation. In town life things often have to be arranged in such a way that people are awake when they would otherwise be asleep and asleep when they ought to be awake. If anything like being awake at night or

sleeping in the daytime had occurred in Lemurian times, and man had paid so little attention to the external phenomena that belong to certain inner processes, he would not have survived. Of course such a thing was quite impossible then, because it was a matter of course that man in his inner rhythm conformed with outer rhythm. Man lived as it were with the cycles of the sun and the moon and modeled the rhythm of his astral and etheric bodies on the cycle of sun and moon.

Let us come back to the clock. In a certain respect this also conforms to the great cosmic cycle, when the hour and minute hands coincide at twelve o'clock, that is because there is a certain constellation of the sun and stars. We set our clocks according to this and a clock is unreliable if the two hands do not coincide the following day as soon as this constellation of stars occurs again. In Berlin the clocks are set daily by electricity from the Enckeplatz observatory. So we may say that the movements or rhythms of the clock hands are set every day according to the rhythm of the cosmos. Our clock is correct if it synchronises with the central clock which, in its turn, synchronises with the cosmos. In ancient times man had no need of a clock, for he himself was a clock. His life's course, which he could clearly feel, absolutely conformed to cosmic relationships. Man really was a clock. And if he had not conformed to the cosmic situation, exactly the same thing would have happened to him as happens to a clock if its movement does not correspond to the outer situation: it goes wrong, and he would have gone wrong too. The inner rhythm had to correspond to the outer. And the essential part of man's evolution on earth is that since the middle of Atlantean times the outer situation does not absolutely coincide with the inner one. Something else has come about. Just imagine someone fancying that he could not bear the two hands of his watch coinciding at noon. Supposing he alters them to three o'clock, then when it is one o'clock for other people he makes it four p.m., at two o'clock he makes it 5 p.m., and so on. The inner working of his clock will not have changed, it will only have become displaced compared with the outer situation. Twenty-four hours later he will make it three o'clock again; that is, his clock's movement will not coincide with the cosmic situation but its inner rhythm will still agree with it, for it has only been displaced. Man's rhythm has also been displaced. Man would never have become an independent being if all his activity had remained in cosmic leading strings. The basis of his freedom lies in his having preserved his inner rhythm while severing himself from external rhythm. He has become like a clock that at the nodal points no longer coincides with cosmic occurrences yet is inwardly in harmony with them. Thus in the far distant past a human being could be conceived in one particular stellar constellation only and be born ten lunar months later. This coinciding of conception with a cosmic situation has ceased but the rhythm has remained, just as a clock keeps to its rhythm even though at midday you set it at three o'clock. Of course it is not man's circumstances only though, that have become displaced, the times have become displaced as well. Even if we disregard the last-mentioned cosmic displacement, something very special has occurred in man's inner life, in that he has lifted himself as it were out of the cosmic situation and is no longer a 'clock' in the proper sense of the word. He is more or less like a man who has put his clock forward three hours and then, forgetting how much he has put it forward, cannot sort himself out any more. This is what happened to man in earthly evolution once he was free of the situation in which he was like a clock in the cosmos. In certain respects he brought his astral body into disorder. The more the conditions of human life were regulated by the physical, the more the old rhythm was preserved; but the more his life conditions became influenced by thought, the greater the disorder that came into them. I would like to clarify this from another angle.

Men are not the only beings we know of, we also know of beings that are superior to present-day earth man. We know of the sons of life or the angels, and we know that they went

through their human stage on ancient Moon. We know of the spirits of fire or the archangels, that went through their human stage on the old Sun condition of the earth, and we also know of the primeval forces, who went through their human stage on ancient Saturn. These beings are in advance of man in their cosmic evolution. If we were to study them today we would find that they are beings of a much more spiritual nature than man. Therefore they live in higher-worlds. But in regard to the particular things we have been mentioning today, their situation is totally different from man's. In spiritual matters they conform absolutely to the cosmic rhythm. An angel would not think in such a disordered way as man, for the simple reason that his thought process is regulated by the cosmic powers which guide him. It is right out of the question for a being like an angel not to think in harmony with the great spiritual processes of the cosmos. The laws of logic for the angels are written in the universal harmony. They need no textbooks. Man needs textbooks because he has brought his inner thought processes into disorder. He no longer knows how to take guidance from the great script of the stars. Angels know the course of the cosmos, and the course of their thought corresponds with the ordered rhythm. When man came on to the earth in his present form he fell out of this rhythm, hence the lack of order in his life of thought and feeling. Regularity still holds sway in the things man has less influence on in his astral and etheric bodies, but in the parts that have been given into man's hands, that is, his sentient soul, intellectual soul and consciousness soul disorder and lack of rhythm have entered in. It is one of the least important matters that in our cities man turns night into day. It is of far greater significance that in his inner life of thought man has torn himself away from the great universal rhythm. The way man thinks all day long is in a certain respect in contradiction to the life of the great universe.

Do not imagine though, that all this is being said to encourage a world conception that will bring man back into this kind of rhythm again. Man had to get away from the old rhythm; his progress depends on this: When certain prophets go around today preaching 'Back to Nature', they want to bring life into reverse instead of helping it forward. All this chatter about returning to nature contains no understanding of real evolution. When a movement today recommends people to eat certain foods only at certain times of the year because nature herself indicates this by making foods grow only at certain times, this is the abstract talk of the amateur. The essential thing about evolution is that man grows more and more independent of outer rhythm. But we must not lose the ground from under our feet. It is not the best thing for man's progress and salvation to return to the old rhythm and ask himself how he should live in harmony with the four quarters of the moon. For it was essential in olden times for man to be like an impress of the cosmos. But it is important too that man should not believe he can live without rhythm. Just as his inner life was formed from outside inwards he must now create rhythm from inside outwards. That is the essential thing. His inner life must become rhythmic. Just as rhythm created the cosmos, man has to permeate himself with a new rhythm if he wants to share in the creating of a new cosmos. It is characteristic of our age that it has lost the old, external rhythm and has not yet attained a new inner one. Man has outgrown nature — if we call the outer expression of spirit 'nature' — but has not yet grown into the spirit. He is still floundering today between nature and spirit. This is just what is characteristic of our time. This floundering between nature and spirit reached its climax in the second third of the nineteenth century. Consequently the beings who know and interpret the signs of the times had to ask themselves at that time: What can be done so that man does not lose all trace of rhythm but acquires an inner rhythm?

What you can see today as the characteristic of mental life is its chaotic nature. Today, when you see something that has been thought out, the first thing that is bound to strike you is its chaotic nature, its inner lack of order. This is the case in almost every sphere. Only the spheres

that still possess good old traditions have something of the old order left. In new spheres man has first of all to create a new order. That is why men can see facts today, like the fall in temperature on the seventh day of pneumonia, but their explanation of them is an absolute chaos of thoughts. When the human being thinks about it, then — because he does not think in an ordered way — he piles up a medley of thoughts around the fact. All our sciences take an external fact of the world and stir up a mass of thoughts about it with no inner order, because man has gone astray in a kind of mental abyss. He has no guiding principles of thought today, no inner thought rhythm, and humanity would become completely decadent were they not to acquire an inner rhythm. Look at spiritual science from this point of view.

You will see the element you are in when you begin to study spiritual science. To begin with you hear — and gradually understand — that man has four members of his being: physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego. And then you hear that work is done by the ego, and the astral body is changed into manas or spirit-self, the etheric body into buddhi or life-spirit and the principle of physical man into spirit-man or atma. Now just think how much ground we have covered with this basic formula of spiritual science. Think of the many themes that were really fundamental themes, and how we had to build up our whole thought structure time and again out of this basic scheme: physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego. You know, some people actually get tired of hearing these basic facts over and over again in certain public lectures. But this is and remains a reliable thread on which to string our thoughts: these four members of man's being and their inter-working; and then on a higher level, the transformation of the three lower members: the third into the fifth, the second into the sixth and the first into the seventh member of our being. If you count all the members of man's being that we know of physical body, etheric body, astral body, ego, spirit-self, life-spirit and spirit-man, you have seven. And if you count those that form the foundation of these, namely the physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego, you have four. And you are reproducing in thought the macrocosmic rhythm of 7:4 and 4:7 when you follow this train of thought. You are producing the outer, macrocosmic rhythm again from out of yourself. You are repeating the rhythm that was once there macrocosmically in the universe and bringing it to birth again. You are laying down the plan or basis for your system of thought, as once the gods laid down the plan for the wisdom of the world. When we bring the inner rhythm of number to life in us again in this way, then out of the chaos of thought life a cosmos of thought is developed out of the innermost being of the soul. Men have freed themselves from external rhythm. By means of what is truly a science of the spirit we return to rhythm again, creating a cosmic structure from within outwards that is inwardly rhythmic. And if we turn to the cosmos and look at the earth's past, at Saturn, Sun, Moon and Earth, we find four, then the Moon in spiritualised form at the fifth stage as Jupiter, the Sun at the sixth stage as Venus, and ancient Saturn at the seventh stage as Vulcan. Thus in Saturn, Sun, Moon, Earth, Jupiter, Venus, Vulcan our evolutionary phases add up to seven. Our physical body as it is today, has developed through the number four, through Saturn, Sun, Moon and Earth. In the future it will gradually become completely transformed and spiritualised. So that here too, when we look at the past we have the number four, and when we look to the future the number three: again there is 4:3, or if we include the past in the whole of evolution, 4:7.

We are still only at the beginning of our spiritual scientific activity, even if we have been working at it for many years. Today we could only point out what men meant by the 'inner number' at the root of all phenomena. And we see that in order to gain freedom man had to fall away from the original rhythm. But he has to rediscover within himself the laws with which to regulate the 'clock', his astral body. And the great regulator is spiritual science, because it is in harmony with the great laws of the cosmos beheld by the seer. The future as created by man

will have the same great numerical relationships as the cosmos had in the past, but on a higher level. Therefore men have to bring the future to birth out of number, like the gods created the cosmos out of number.

We can see how spiritual science is connected with the course of the macrocosm. When we grasp what is there in the spiritual world behind man, the number four and the number seven, we shall understand why we must look to the spiritual world to find the impulse to carry forward what we know to be the evolutionary course of humanity. And we shall understand why just in an age when men have reached the greatest chaos in their inner life of thought, feeling and will those individualities who have to interpret the signs of the times had to draw attention to the kind of wisdom that enables man to create his soul life in a regulated way from within outwards. We shall learn to think with inner rhythm in a way that is necessary for the future, when we think in accordance with these basic relationships. And man will take into himself more and more from the world of his origins. At present he is acquiring what we can see to be the ground plan of the cosmos. He will go further and feel himself filled with certain fundamental forces and ultimately with fundamental beings.

All this is just in its beginnings today. And we appreciate the importance and world significance of the anthroposophical mission when we regard it not as an arbitrary act of this or that individual, but rather set about understanding it with all the inner force of our very existence. Then we can reach the point of being able to say that it is not a matter of choice whether we take up the anthroposophical mission or not, for if we want to understand our times we must recognise and fill ourselves with the thoughts of the divine-spiritual worlds which are the basis of anthroposophy. And then we must let them flow out of us again into the world, so that our actions and our being acquire, in place of chaos, the stature of a cosmos, like the cosmos out of which we were born.