

## INTRODUCTION

To add to the voluminous literature that already exists on the topic of childhood illnesses and immunizations may seem unnecessary at best. A lot has been said already! The debates raging in the public arena pit proponents and opponents against each other. In many cases, in spite of the best intentions, this happens in a manner bordering on fanaticism—on both sides.

In some circles, immunization is seen as a self-understood duty, done to prevent illnesses that are perceived as a calamity. Side effects are minimized or denied altogether. In those circles there is, of course, no controversy. The immunization proponents point to millions of lives that may have been spared because of the immunizations.

In the circles opposed to immunizations, two concerns arise. On one hand, it is pointed out that through immunizations childhood illnesses are suppressed. Injecting directly into the circulation or under the skin an antigen that causes an immune reaction is not the same as a natural infection contracted through the airways or via the intestinal tract. The difference is also seen in the fact that normally after a vaccine, no fever reaction is demonstrated such as commonly occurs after the actual illness. Secondly, significant dangers (whether immediate or delayed) connected to immunizations are pointed out. The opponents to immunization stress that many people have been seriously damaged by immunizations, which are often given unnecessarily, or are given because the law or the school demand it. In these circles immunizations are viewed very negatively, and free choice, whether to immunize or not, is emphasized. Often, however, what that choice might consist of, or what knowledge is necessary in order to make that an informed choice, is not addressed.

More importantly, however, in the debate over the usefulness of or

dangers of immunizations, the central topic of the meaning and purpose of a child's development and of the childhood illnesses themselves has been largely ignored. In an age in which we want to put illnesses behind us as quickly as possible and get on with "normal life," it seems counter-intuitive not to want to embrace wholeheartedly any method that, like immunizations, quickly rids us of the disease annoyance. On a basic level, this is an understandable desire. Nevertheless, some caution is in order, since to the same extent that childhood illnesses have disappeared, other illnesses have increased exponentially. These are illnesses that are essentially hardening, degenerative ("sclerotic"), and chronically debilitating. Childhood is being invaded by diseases that typically used to be seen only in midlife or even later: obesity, cancer, diabetes, hardening of the arteries, and so forth. Therefore, childhood illnesses seem to have an important developmental and "preventive" role.

What has also not been addressed sufficiently, or at all, are the life style and educational changes that are made necessary by the act of immunization or the very absence of the childhood illnesses due to the so-called "herd effect." We hope to address these issues in this book.

The central concern that anthroposophic doctors have is that the reality of the human being as a spiritual being with an individual destiny has been lost. No discussion is adequate without an understanding of the profound role of the childhood illnesses in the development of the totality of the mature adult. Is the childhood illness just a nuisance, or does it perhaps constitute an activity that the person actually wills on his or her own?

Is health perhaps not just absence of disease, but a struggle to achieve mastery over ourselves through the illness? After all, a healthy life is not just a state of being constantly awake or constantly asleep, but also a successful rhythmical alternating between the two states.

Without taking into account the substantial insights that have been gained (and are being constantly increased) by the original research of Rudolf Steiner and the subsequent efforts by anthroposophic doctors, no ultimate understanding can be achieved of the illnesses contemplated or the practice of immunization. Only with these insights can a clear picture emerge: whether illnesses should be prevented or not, or when. Such insights are also needed to develop an understanding of the underlying fears involved in giving or not giving these interventions.

Without significant consideration given to the supra-sensory nature of the human being, the debate will ultimately degenerate to a battle between opposing views based on the limited needs of the physical constitution.

### **About the title of this book: Why “digital age”?**

Surprisingly, the advent of most modern immunizations and the related understanding of the immune system coincide with the emergence of the so-called digital age (the 1980s). The title of this book was chosen because in the last several years very new forms of immunizations have emerged, bringing with them realities that were unheard of even a few decades ago. The introduction of human DNA, adjuvants, and other little-discussed ingredients makes immunizations different in this digital age than they were even when the polio immunization was first used. Some of these ingredients, like thimerosal, have been mostly removed. However, many more, and potentially even more damaging ones, have been added. As we shall see, it is nothing short of amazing, as well as not just a coincidence, that just at the time when the smallpox disease was declared eradicated in the 1980s (because of the most widespread immunization campaign in human history) the birth of the Internet occurred as well. Along with the beginning of the internet, all the cultural changes that were brought with it began to appear. The association made by us between the two of them may seem odd, but we hope to make it more obvious later on.

For now, let us postulate that the administration of the current vaccines in childhood is a procedure that has an overall cooling, anti-inflammatory effect and has led to making our physical constitutions more suitable to the cold computer, and the computer age. To counterbalance these hardening, cooling effects the new, spiritually oriented approaches coming from anthroposophic medicine and anthroposophic education are needed.

We have seen and treated children in our medical practices for many decades; and we have tried to bring some of the insights we have gained to a larger circle through this book.

After we had discussions with the parents, some of them opted to have their children immunized, others not. Reasonable choices were

made based on the health of the particular child, social realities in the family, and other issues.

To some parents we needed to explain that although vaccines may protect the children from the real, or perceived immediate illness threats, vaccines may expose the children to the risk of developing later on in life, among others, an autoimmune disease. To those parents who choose not to immunize their children, the risk of the child's getting an unwanted childhood illness with its potential complications also had to be explained. Social responsibilities in one direction or another certainly had to be made clear as well.

Since there is a strong soul-spiritual connection between the parent and the child, when it came to decision making—whether to immunize or not—we encouraged (beyond “just the facts ma’am”) also the use of an intuitive feeling on the part of the parent or caregiver about what would be best for their child. After all, these adults were the ones that would have to live with the risks and consequences of their decision. Again, choice involves responsibility! We respect the individual choices that are made by the parents and caregivers.

Our own inclinations go toward less immunization, with more rigorous attention toward the developmental needs of the individual child. Our own children were not vaccinated until later, at such time when outer laws or other circumstances made their being given some vaccines mandatory. (We speak later in the book about the tragedy of this mandatory attitude.)

We have also taken care of children whose parents decided to vaccinate their children. For those situations where immunizations are given, we present here some suggestions of what can be done before and after to minimize the detrimental effects of the vaccines.

However, no matter what your choice, for both sides we tried to explain in this book why the subsequent spiritual education of the child later in life is of great importance and should not be overlooked or understated.

As we shall see, many of the so-called childhood illnesses were equated by Rudolf Steiner with the ability to develop certain moral qualities. If these illnesses do not occur, or are suppressed, then specific educational requirements arise.

For example, he associated smallpox disease with the ability to overcome lovelessness. The de facto disappearance of that illness makes it paramount that we make concerted cultural and educational efforts, especially for youth, to strengthen the ability to love one's fellow human beings. How to do this, we will address later on.

Another example: Measles is connected with overcoming self-delusions, and thus if the illness of measles does not occur, (either because of immunization or if because of a so-called herd protection there is no opportunity to get it), educational responsibilities arise that must enhance a child's ability to see reality as it is, and to develop an ever more heightened sense for the truth. You will find more examples in the following chapters.

That education is necessary in this direction may seem a self-evident requirement, until one follows more closely the contemporary debates in the media and educational circles. There, discussions often center on giving young people the tools that they will need in their jobs later on, or making them better citizens, and so forth. What is not often heard are discussions about how to strengthen the ability to love, the improvement of the will, the enhancement of the sense of truth. It is somewhat surprising that these fundamental connections between childhood illnesses (or immunizations) and education do not occupy a more central place, even in anthroposophic circles.

Although we caution against the practice of overzealous or inappropriate immunization, we should also caution against dismissing out of hand the appropriate use of immunizations. (Travel, malnourishment, or other social conditions may make them necessary.) We need to stress ever again: What must be taken on as a burden on the physical side can be overcome (and should be overcome) with appropriate spiritual means. Rudolf Steiner pointed out on various occasions that technical and cultural changes occur periodically and are inevitable, because they are connected to the evolving consciousness of humanity. These advances and innovations make our physical life on earth easier and more enjoyable, or allow us to have more time for our spiritual pursuits. We cannot fight these changes, and they will not go away. Rudolf Steiner recommended that we see it as our duty to develop ourselves at least as highly toward our spiritual ideals as we connect ourselves more deeply with the physical world through the technology around us. Therefore, if

immunizations make us more “earth bound” (which they do), then we have the duty to find ways through education and other means to lift ourselves back up again!

A good example might be the situation of the introduction of the railway and the automobile in Rudolf Steiner’s time. He explained to his listeners on one occasion how the fast movement of cars causes damage to the etheric body, and how people who are thus moving at a faster speed than they could normally do so by themselves induce trauma to the cardiovascular system. He then added that nevertheless, of course, he was very glad to have the availability of trains and cars, to have faster transportation to his lecture destinations. What followed next is telling: Rudolf Steiner immediately gave medical therapies and eurythmy movement exercises for the healing of the human etheric body, and gave indications for the so-called biodynamic agriculture to heal even the etheric fabric of the environment and improve the nourishing of the human etheric body. This spiritual balancing was meant to overcome the damage of transportation on the human being.

This book is directed primarily to professionals, but we hope it will also have value for lay parents and caregivers. The beginning chapters give basic concepts necessary for understanding the problems. We have introduced a detailed description of the immune processes involved both in illness and in the immunization process, to facilitate understanding of the issues, or to open questions for discussion.

We point out that the individuality of the child is struggling to gain mastery over the physical body. How this is accomplished, and which physical systems (immune system, lymphatic system, and so forth) are involved, should be known.

Various childhood illnesses are described in the book. This should help to distinguish the more benign illnesses from those requiring special attention. The concept of Childhood Illnesses should be differentiated from any other illnesses that may just happen to occur in childhood.

A substantial section of the book has been devoted to the presentation of various remedies or other therapeutic methods that would help in various situations: when immunizations have to be given; when side effects arise; or if one chooses to avoid immunizations altogether.

There are several chapters concerning the educational and moral process necessitated by the absence of the childhood illness, whether because of immunization or because it was made impossible by so-called herd immunity and hygiene.

The final chapters attempt a look to the future. There are dangers on the horizon that should be known and taken into account.

We hope that the extensive excerpts from Rudolf Steiner's lectures, found in the appendices, will prove useful for those wanting an in-depth study.



### **And still one more word of Caution**

In spiritually inclined or specifically anthroposophic circles, we often speak of the “karmic” causes of illnesses. The general idea is that a human being, coming into the world as a child, has been incarnated before and was part of situations in which failings occurred that need to be balanced in a next life in order to overcome them. A disease then arises as a means to overcome these past failings.

It is tempting then to see all illnesses as a “karmic punishment” for past misdeeds. This, as Rudolf Steiner points out, is a grave mistake, since an observed illness in this life can be an occurrence constituting “the beginning” of a karmic chain (undergone as a sacrifice for others) and not its consequence. Many other combinations are possible.

However, no matter what the underlying reason for the illness is, Rudolf Steiner insists that the only possible attitude toward an illness is the attempt to effect its complete cure. (Of course, he also stresses though, that the cure of the physical body should not be done at the expense of the integrity and well-being of the Ego-organization and Soul.)