



Sleep

A Collection of Quotations from Rudolf Steiner



IASWECE

International Association for
Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education

Foreword

Dear Reader,

We would like to place the theme of sleep in the center of your attention.

In these times, we encounter many problems which are connected to the lack of healthy sleep. Good, healthy sleep can no longer be taken for granted. Many children and adults suffer from sleep-deficiency, not only through too few hours of sleep but also from the absence of a much-needed quality of sleep. Sleep-disturbances can be observed worldwide, with all the related physical and psychological consequences.

For children, sleep is of primary importance. Its duration and quality have a deep impact on the child's further development and health. As adults who form the surroundings of the child, we are therefore called upon to devote our attention to questions about sleep and about life and life habits related to the development of the little child.

Rudolf Steiner gave us many indications to help us understand sleeping and waking, through his research in Spiritual Science. In offering this collection of quotes from lectures and writings of Rudolf Steiner, we would like to encourage each of you to seek and find new approaches to the world of sleep, to your educational work and to your own development.

We are grateful to the Rudolf Steiner Archive and Steiner Books for their kind permission to use the quotations in this collection.

With greetings from the International Birth to Three Working-Group,

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Introduction:

The following quotations are from lectures and writings by Rudolf Steiner. They contain an important supplement/completion to the findings and results of recent research activity on the theme of sleep. They open for us the **spiritual dimension** of sleeping and being awake. This view of the phenomenon of sleep offers us the possibility to think about and experience it in a wider sense. These quotations may enable us to discover new aspects and ways to promote the quality of sleep and thus also our psychological and physical health.

What is printed here on the theme of sleep is only fragmentary, but even aphorisms can sometimes offer new directions. Spiritual research can broaden our understanding of sleep. The word "sleep" is used by Rudolf Steiner for the whole spectrum of unconsciousness. When we are unconscious we have a very different relationship to the spiritual world than when we are awake and conscious. We also carry sleep within us in our waking consciousness. Even when we are awake, only a part of us is fully awake and conscious. Sleep accompanies us from when we wake up until we fall asleep. Rudolf Steiner characterizes everything that is connected to unconsciousness and sub-consciousness with the words "sleep" and "night". And we are called to observe more profoundly the different soul conditions and relations and through this effort to reach a better understanding of sleep.

In the first part of this collection of quotations, you can find general statements on the theme of sleep from the research activity of Rudolf Steiner. These statements relate to the sleep of adults. Those of us involved in education may discover that our understanding and inner attitude toward sleep can have a decisive influence on the sleep of the children and their health. Our attitude toward sleep results in a much more conscious and careful way of relating to our own sleep and thus - directly or indirectly - also to the sleep of the children. In the second part of the collection, you will find more specific quotations and indications about the sleep of the child.

Part 1

Basic Thoughts on Sleep - What Happens during Sleep

“When we fall asleep, the connection between the elements of our makeup changes. The part of a human being that lies sleeping on the bed contains the physical body and ether body, but not the astral body or ego. Life’s processes continue during sleep because the ether body remains united with the physical body. If the physical body were left to itself, it would have to disintegrate. What is extinguished in sleep, however, are our mental images, our pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, our ability to express our conscious intentions, and similar realities of our existence. The astral body is the vehicle of all these, however.

“If we are unbiased in our assessment of this situation, we will never be able to entertain the notion that the astral body is destroyed during sleep, along with all our pleasure and pain and the entire world of our ideas and will. It is simply present in a different state. For our I and astral body to have a conscious perception of our pain and suffering and all the other things just listed, rather than simply being filled with them, the astral body must be connected to the physical body and the ether body. And in fact it is connected when we are awake, but not when we are asleep. In sleep, the astral body withdraws. It takes on a different form of existence than the one it has when it is connected to the physical and ether bodies.”

- *An Outline of Esoteric Science*, GA 13, “Sleep and Death”, p. 61

“Even though the astral body experiences no mental images during sleep, no pleasure or pain or anything similar, it does not remain inactive. On the contrary, it is obliged to maintain a lively activity in the sleeping state, an activity it must take up again and again in rhythmical succession after periods of being involved in the activity that it shares with the physical and ether bodies. Just as the pendulum of a clock that has swung to the left and then come back to the middle must then swing to the right because of the momentum gained by swinging to the left, the astral body and the I that rests in its bosom, having been active for a while in the physical and ether bodies, must then spend the next period of time being busy and active in the body-free state in an environment of soul and spirit.

“As far as our normal state of life is concerned, unconsciousness sets in when the astral body and the I are in this body-free state, because this represents the counterbalance to the state of consciousness that develops in the waking state through union with the physical and ether bodies, just as the pendulum’s swing to the right is the counterbalance to its swing to the left.

The soul-spiritual principle in the human being experiences needing to enter this state of unconsciousness as fatigue. However, this fatigue is the expression of the fact that during sleep the astral body and I are preparing themselves to re-form, during the next period of wakefulness, what has arisen in the physical and ether bodies through purely organic—and unconscious—formative activity while they were free of the spirit and soul principles. This unconscious formative activity is the polar opposite of what happens in the human being during consciousness and by means of consciousness; these states must alternate in rhythmical succession.”

- *An Outline of Esoteric Science*, GA 13, “Sleep and Death”, p. 67

“In the sleeping state, the astral body receives images from the world that surrounds it, just as the physical body receives nourishment from its surroundings, for example. The astral body actually lives out there in the universe, outside the physical and ether bodies, in the same universe that gave birth to the entire human being.

- *An Outline of Esoteric Science*, GA 13, “Sleep and Death,” p. 68

“Sleep has often been called “the younger brother of death.” I get up in the morning. The continuity of my activity has been interrupted by the night. Under normal circumstances, I cannot resume my activity arbitrarily— I must link up with what I did yesterday if my life is to have any order and cohesiveness. Yesterday’s actions are now the conditions I must abide by in what I do today; through what I did yesterday, I have created my destiny for today. I have disengaged myself from my own activity for a while, but it belongs to me and pulls me back again after I have withdrawn from it for a while. My past continues to be connected to me; it lives on in my present and will follow me into my future. Instead of waking up this morning, I would have to be created anew, out of nothing, if the effects of my actions from yesterday were not meant to be my destiny today. It would be as absurd as if under ordinary circumstances I had had a house built for myself and then did not move into it.

“But we are not created anew each morning, nor is the human spirit created anew as it starts

the journey of its earthly life. We must try to understand what really does happen when we set out on this journey. A physical body makes its appearance, having received its form through the laws of heredity. This body becomes the vehicle for a spirit that is repeating an earlier life in a new form. Between the two, leading a self-contained life of its own, stands the soul. It is served by its likes and dislikes, and its wishes and desires, and places thinking in its service. As the sentient soul, it receives impressions from the outer world and carries them to the spirit, which extracts and preserves their fruits. The soul plays a mediator's role, in a sense, and its task is accomplished in playing this role satisfactorily. The body forms impressions for the soul, which reshapes them into sensations, stores them in the memory as mental images, and passes them on to the spirit to be made lasting. The soul is what actually makes us belong to this earthly life. Through the body, we belong to the physical human genus; we are members of this genus. With our spirit, we live in a higher world. The soul binds the two worlds together for a while."

- *Theosophy, Destiny and the Reincarnation of the Spirit*, GA 9, page 116 (82)

"That is why sleep is a helpful image for death, because during sleep we are also withdrawn from the arena in which our destiny waits for us. While we are sleeping, events in this arena continue without us, and for a while we have no influence on the course they take. Nevertheless, how we live the next day still depends on the effects of what we did the day before. In reality, our personalities are re-embodied anew each morning in the world of our actions. It is as if what we were separated from during the night is spread out around us during the day."

- *Theosophy, Destiny and the Reincarnation of the Spirit*, GA 9, page 120 (87)

"Every falling asleep is a question, an unconscious question to the spiritual world, and every waking up is an unconscious answer from the spiritual world. With our subconscious, we are in a certain way in a kind of correspondence with the spiritual world, in that we receive the answers from this spiritual world to the question of what it means inwardly to be a human being. "

- Dornach, 12. November 1921, GA 208, *Anthroposophie als Kosmosophie* (Anthroposophy as Cosmosophy)

“Thus we work over our whole life as it transpires by day between our waking and sleeping. Everything we experience by day we work upon during the night. Thus as it were, we learn lessons which we need for all the rest of our life here, and beyond death into the next incarnation. When we are asleep, we are our own prophetic transmuters of our life. This sleep-life is full of tremendously deep riddles, for it is much more deeply connected with what we experience, than is the external consciousness, and we work at it all from the standpoint of its fruitfulness for the following life. What we can make of ourselves through what we have experienced, is the object of our labour in the time between sleeping and waking. Whether we become stronger and more powerful in our soul, or perhaps have to reproach ourselves, we labour at all our experiences so that they become life-fruit. You see from this, that the life between sleeping and waking is really enormously significant, and that it goes deeply into the whole riddle of man.”

- Berlin, 16th November, 1915, GA 157a in: *The Forming of Destiny and Life after Death, Spiritual Life in the Physical World and Life between Death and Rebirth*

The Sleep of the Adult and the World of the Angels

“We have been conscious the whole day long and now we lie down in sleep. This means that the physical and etheric bodies are left to themselves, working in sleep as a plant and mineral world. But by day we have *thoughts*; all day long, ideas have been passing through our being. They have left their traces in our physical and etheric bodies. We should not be able to remember the experiences of our earthly existence at all if these traces which we subsequently use in our memories did not remain. There they remain, these traces, in what is left of man as he lies asleep at night — in that part of his being which he has left behind. A mysterious process takes place there, above all in the etheric body. All that man has thought during his waking life from morning till evening begins to move and, ring on waves of sound. If you think of a certain region of the earth where men are sleeping, and think of all that weaves and works in the etheric bodies as an echo of all that these sleeping men have been thinking during the hours of their waking life, this will give you a picture of what has happened through the hours of the day.

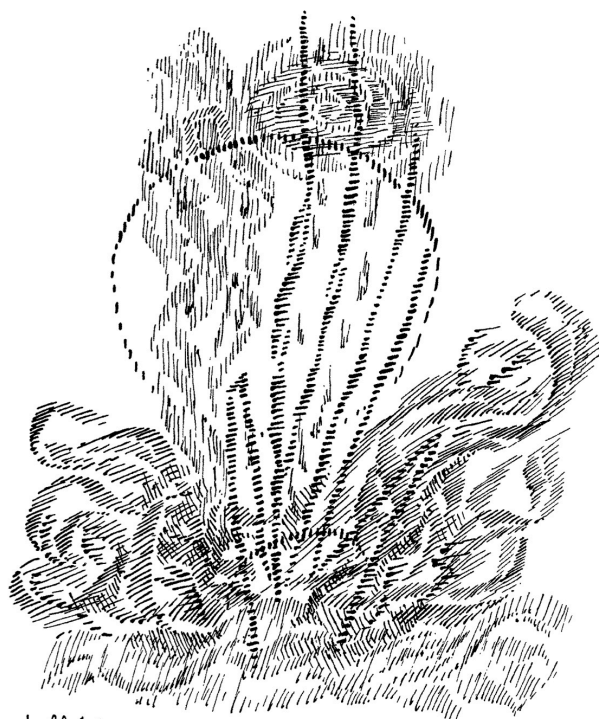
“And those Beings who hover over us, rising and descending, busy themselves through our hours of sleep with the traces that have remained in our etheric bodies. This becomes their field of action. It is an immediate experience in them and absorbs their attention. When this is revealed to us, we say with a sense of deep reverence: “Thou, O Man, hast left thy body. And as it lies there it bears within it the traces of the day's experiences. It is the field where live the

fruits of thy thoughts and ideas during the day. The Beings of the Third Hierarchy, the Angels, Archangels and Archai, now enter this field. While thou hast left thy physical and etheric bodies, these Beings experience what thou hast thyself experienced from the thoughts and ideas of thy waking hours.” — Deep reverence fills us at the sight of some region of the earth where human bodies are left in sleep and whither the Angels, Archangels and Archai wend their way to all that unfolds as an echo of the life of day. And we here behold a wonderful life, born of all that is unfolded between the Beings of the Third Hierarchy and the traces of the thoughts we have left behind.

“As we gaze at this field, we become aware how, as human beings, we have our place within the spiritual cosmos, and how, when we wake, we create work for the Angels during our hours of sleep. It is so indeed: during our waking hours we create work for the Angels during the time of sleep. And now we learn to understand something about our world of thought. We realise that the thoughts which pass through our heads contain the fruits of what we lay into our own physical and etheric bodies — fruits which Angels gather at night. For Angels gather these fruits and bear them out into the cosmos in order that they may find there their place in the cosmic Order.

“One thing more we see as we behold these Beings of the Third Hierarchy — Angels, Archangels and Archai — coming forth from the Beings of the Second Hierarchy and their activity. We behold how behind this weaving, again Beings of sublime majesty and grandeur take part in the activity of the Second Hierarchy. We gaze at the Second Hierarchy, and we see how into this weaving life of the Second Hierarchy something else works from behind; and we soon become aware how this not only strikes, lightning-like, into the weaving and working of the Second Hierarchy, but striking right to the other side of the earth, it has to do, not with the part of man that is left on the earth, but with that other part of his being that has gone out, namely, the ego-organisation and astral body. And as we gaze at what has been left behind and behold it as a field where the fruits of thoughts throughout the day are being gathered by the Angels, Archangels and Archai for the purposes of cosmic activity, so too we see how the Beings of the Second Hierarchy, the Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes, uniting their activity with that of the First Hierarchy — the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones — concern themselves with the astral body and ego. And in his morning memory the Initiate says to himself: “I have lived from the time of falling asleep till the time of waking in my ego and astral body. I have felt myself enwrapped in all that the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones are unfolding, together with the Kyriotetes, Dynamis and Exusiai. Living in this world I gazed down at my physical body and my etheric body and hovering above them I perceived the Angels, Archangels and Archai, gathering the fruits of my thoughts. I felt myself one with the Beings of the First and Second Hierarchies, and I beheld the weaving and working of the Third Hierarchy in mighty spirit-clouds over my body.”

- Dornach, 27 June 1924, GA 236, *Karmic Relationships*, Volume II: Lecture XV



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Dornach, 27 June 1924, GA 236, *Karmic Relationships*, Volume II: Lecture XV

Part Two

Quotations on the Sleep of the Child

We meet here a pronounced difference between the sleep of children and adults. The child perceives the world in very different way than the adult and has a different relationship to the world that surrounds it. The child takes impressions of the day into its sleep in a different way and has a completely different connection to the spiritual world. From such an understanding a whole new educational attitude can be developed.

Children learn to sleep

“But there is yet another thing which the child cannot do rightly, and this must be taken in hand, in order that a harmony may thereby be created between the two members of the child's being — between the bodily corporeality and the Spirit-Soul. What the child cannot do properly at the beginning of his existence is this: he cannot yet accomplish the alternation between waking and sleeping in the way proper to man. It will strike you that what we have to emphasise from the spiritual side generally appears to be in contradiction to the external world-order. Externally speaking it is of course possible to say: “But the child can sleep perfectly well: indeed he sleeps far more than the human being at a later stage of life. The child sleeps his very way into life.” Nevertheless, what inwardly underlies sleeping and waking, this the child cannot yet do. The child experiences all sorts of things on the physical plane. He uses his little limbs: he eats, drinks and breathes. He alternates between sleeping and waking, but he is not able to carry into the spiritual world in sleep all that he experiences on the physical plane — all that he sees with his eyes, and hears with his ears, and does with his little hands, and the way he kicks and tosses with his little legs. All this he is not able to carry into the spiritual world and work upon there, carrying the results of this work back again on the physical plane.

“The child's sleep is characterised by the very fact that it is a different sleep from that of the grown-up person. What distinguishes the sleep of the adult is that his experiences during waking life are then worked upon, are metamorphosed. The child is not yet able to carry into his sleep what he has experienced between waking and falling asleep again. Thus in sleep the

child still lives his way into the universal world order without being able to take with him what he has experienced externally in the physical world.

“It is this that a rightly guided education must accomplish: it must enable the human being to carry over his experiences on the physical plane into what the Soul-Spirit or Spirit-Soul is engaged upon during sleep. We, as teachers and educators, cannot really teach the child anything about the higher world. For what enters the human being from the higher world enters in during the time between falling asleep and waking again. All we can do is to use the time which the human being spends on the physical plane in such a way that he gradually becomes able to carry over into the spiritual world what we have done with him here; and that, in carrying it over, he can receive and bring back with him power from the spiritual world which will help him to be a true human being in physical existence.”

- Dornach, 21 August 1919, GA 293, in *The Study of Man, (Foundations of Human Experience)*, Lecture 1)

The Effects of Sleep

“We can also observe that a child sleeps in a certain way which is different to the one he or she will become after the change of teeth. It is as if the difference is not apparent, but it is there. The child up to his seventh year is in a state of sleep — a state in which its soul is intrinsically within the state of falling asleep and waking — unable to transmit the same forces which he later sends as soul forces because these forces are related to the physical, to the corporeal organism. As a result the child doesn't send sharply outlined concepts into his state of sleep. It sends very few sharply defined concepts and even less outlined imaginations but these indistinct representations have the peculiar ability to encompass the soul spiritual reality in a better way than through sharply defined representations.

“This is something important, the sharper the outlines of our concepts in daily life, the less these concepts are able to enter our sleep condition, understanding realities from there. As a result of this, the child often in fact brings a particular knowledge of spiritual reality out of its sleeping condition. This ceases in the same way as I described in the forces being freed during the change of teeth, sharply outlined concepts now come to the fore and can influence sleep life. These sharply outlined concepts subdue to a certain extent the view on spiritual realities as we live between falling asleep and waking.

“What I have just said can be proved through supersensible sight which develops the power I have often described which can be found in my “Occult Science” and in my book “Knowledge of the Higher Worlds.” When clairvoyant sight attains the power of imagination, when each image appears, as we know, as having a spiritual reality as foundation, then we gradually come to behold spiritual realities amidst the condition of sleeping and waking, and then we can evaluate the difference between a child's sleep before his seventh year and its sleep after turning seven. We can see how to some extent insight is eased regarding what in our imagination we have clarified regarding observation of spiritual realities in whose proximity we are between falling asleep and waking up.”

- Dornach, 7 August 1921, GA 206, “The Development of the Child Up to Puberty” in *Human Soul, World Soul, and World Spirit*

“During the very earliest period, as a tiny child, the human being as it were sleeps his way into the earthly life. You must not think here only of the times when a child is actually and obviously asleep, but of the whole period which cannot, in later life, be remembered by ordinary consciousness. To external observation the child may give the impression of being awake during this period, but what is going on in the child's consciousness does not take a form which can be remembered in later life. When we speak of all that is experienced by the child without his having subsequent memory of it, we are referring to this period during which the human being is ‘sleeping’ his way into earthly life.

“But now, what develops out of this sleeping state at the beginning of man's life on Earth? Three things must be considered if we are to understand the workings of all that the human being brings from his pre-earthly life and proceeds to weave, in the dim consciousness of sleep, into his physical existence. There are three faculties which the human being has to acquire, differently from the animals...

“...The first faculty is learning to *walk*. Man enters the world, the earthly world, as a being who cannot walk, who has to acquire this faculty. The second is *speaking*, and the third, *thinking*.”

- Berne, 6 April 1923, GA 224, in *The Forming of Destiny in Sleeping and Waking*

“Only during earliest childhood, until the child acquires an understanding and his memory begins, the sleep in the child's body appears as something which blossoms and flourishes; but

very soon, and in a way which is clearly evident to the seer, the body begins to wither away soon after it has entered physical life; death is merely the last stage of this process of decadence. Sleep exists in order that the used-up forces may become regenerated. But this regeneration is incomplete. The un-regenerated part which remains behind is always, to a small extent, a cause of death.”

- Tübingen, 16 February 1913 GA 140, in “Anthroposophy as the Quickener between Feeling and Life” in: *Life Between Death and Rebirth*

The Angel in the Sleep of the Child

“Until the seventh year of life whatever echoes in the child's soul during sleep is to a very great extent dependent upon his human environment. The life of feeling, willing and thinking brought to expression in words by the father, mother and other people in the environment and heard by the child — all this echoes in his soul from the time he goes to sleep until he wakes; his soul is given up to what has been laid into the words by the hearts and souls of those around him. During sleep the thoughts and will-impulses which the child experiences through the speech of older people are, however, connected much more intimately with the actual sounds.

“In short, the child's whole being is given over to what he experiences from his environment. This state of things is already less pronounced in the second period of life, from the seventh to the fourteenth year, although it is still undeniably present. At puberty, however, at about the fourteenth year, something very definite begins: what echoes from speech into the sleeping soul tries by its very nature to establish relationship with the spiritual world.

“It is a very remarkable process. Until the seventh year of life, during sleep too, the child will still be in full accord with whatever he has heard from those around him; to a certain extent this is also the case from his seventh to his fourteenth year, only during that period he is in closer contact with the actual soul-life of those in his environment, whereas until his seventh year he is concerned more with the external aspect of life. But after the fourteenth year, after the onset of puberty, it begins to be necessary for the soul during sleep to bring the echoes of speech into relation with Beings of the spiritual world. This is a remarkable fact. In everyday life man is not conscious of it but in sleep it becomes necessary for the life of soul to let what is spoken on Earth echo in such a way that the Archangeloi in their world may take pleasure in these echoes of speech.

“It may be said with truth that it is necessary for the human being to establish relations with the Archangeloi through the components of speech which remain with him during sleep as echoes of earthly speech.”

- Dornach, 11 March, 1923, GA 222, in *The Driving Force of Spiritual Powers in World History*

“It is wonderful to see how — up to the time when they have been nibbled at by materialism — children upon sleeping move immediately as if on wings toward their Angelic Being, how united they become during sleep with the Angelic Beings. Thus we may say that we seek during sleep — but only through idealism, through spiritualizing the realm of thoughts — those worlds out of which we have evolved in order to learn to think here as human beings together with human beings.”

- Prague, 28 April 1923, GA 224, in *The Waking of the Human Soul and the Forming of Destiny*, Lecture I

“That which pertains to man's waking life as forces which call forth the movements out of his will is nurtured, between going to sleep and awaking, by beings belonging to the hierarchy of the Archai.

“By comprehending the manner in which the hierarchical beings above the human kingdom — Angels, Archangels, Archai — approach the ego and astral body, approach the entire human being during sleep, we can also understand how the little child masters the three activities of walking, speaking, and thinking. We recognize how it is the work of the Archai that brings to the little child, as he masters the dynamics of life, as he masters the faculty of walking and handling objects, what the human being has experienced, between death and a new birth, by coming into contact with spirit and soul beings. Now, the counterpart of these experiences comes forth with the learning to walk of the little child. It is the Archai, the primeval powers, who transmit to the child that learns how to walk the counterpart of all the spiritual movements emanating, between death and a new birth, from spirit and soul beings.

“And it is the Archangels that transmit what the human being experiences, between death and a new birth, by means of revelation; they are at work when the child masters speech. And the Angels carry down the forces developed by the human being when, out of the whole world ether, he gathered the substance for his etheric body. The angels, bringing down these forces,

mold their counterparts within the thought-organs, which are plastically formed in order that the child may learn thinking by means of language.”

- Oslo, 18 May 1923, GA 226, in *Man's Being, His Destiny and World Evolution*, Lecture II

The Forming of Destiny in Sleep

“Consider that the things thought by man in his ordinary waking state are mostly concerned with outer matters. These outer things thought by us remain fixed, by means of our soul-life's ordinary content, in our memory. All this, however, represents only the surface of our soul-life. Beyond this thought-level lies a soul-life of much greater profoundness. Whatever we experience during the waking state as our thinking, we experience in the etheric body, the formative-force body. All that happens at a deeper level in the astral body and the ego can be experienced only by consciously penetrating the events passed through by the astral body and the ego when they have separated themselves from the physical and etheric bodies and fallen asleep. Then the future karma is being spun.

“In the day-time, this future karma is veiled to us by the outward thoughts contained in the etheric body. In the depth of the soul, however, it is being woven together, also during the day, with that which dwells in unconscious, sleeping will as the karma emerging from the past. Hence the karma of the human being can be accurately divulged.

“Here we find several interesting facts. The age of the human being's earliest childhood is especially revealing for the observation of karmic connections. The resolutions of children appear to us as utterly arbitrary; and yet they are not at all arbitrary. It is indeed true that the child's actions imitate what goes on in the child's surroundings. I have indicated in my public lecture how the child, completely at one with his sense-organism, inwardly experiences every gesture, every movement made by the people around him. But he experiences every gesture, every movement, in its moral significance. Hence a child who is confronted with a choleric father experiences the immoral element connected with a choleric temperament. And the child experiences, through the subtlest movements of the people around him, the thoughts that these people harbor. Hence we should never permit ourselves to have impure, immoral thoughts in a child's presence and say: Such thoughts are permissible, because the child knows nothing about them. This is not true. Whenever we think, our nerve-fibers are always vibrating in one way or another. And this vibration is perceived by the child, especially during his earliest years. The child is a subtle observer and imitator of his surroundings.

“The strangest and — it might be said — the most interesting fact, in an exalted sense, is the following: The child does not imitate everything, but takes his choice. And this choosing is done in a very complicated manner. Let us assume that the child has before him a hot-headed, choleric father who does many things that are not right. The child, wholly one with his sense-organism, must absorb all these things. Since his eye cannot protect itself, it must perceive what takes place in the child's surroundings.

“What the child absorbs, however, is absorbed only in the waking state. Eventually the child goes to sleep. Children sleep a great deal. And during sleep the child is able to choose: What he wants to absorb is sent out of his soul into his body, his physical organism; what he does not want to absorb is ejected during sleep into the etheric world. Thus the child takes into his bodily organism only those things that have been predestined for him by his destiny, his Karma. The working of destiny is seen with especial vividness in the child's very first years.”

- Oslo, 19 May 1923, GA 226, in *Man's Being, His Destiny and World Evolution*, Lecture IV

The Duration of Sleep

“Now let us take the case of a child whose parents or those in charge did not ensure that it had the relatively long hours of sleep appropriate to its age. The inner being of such a child is incapable of gaining the necessary control over its leg movements. Instead of walking normally, the child will have a floppy gait. In its speech, instead of controlling the sequential flow of words with the forces of the soul, it will let the words fall out of its mouth. The words of the sentences will not cohere. This is quite different from the case of a child who has difficulties in finding the right words. Here an overabundance of speech energy prevents it from getting from one word on to the next. Thus, in the instance mentioned previously, I was referring to the opposite, namely to a lack of the necessary energy. The words, as they follow each other, are not carried along by the flow of the soul; instead, the child waits for the right moment to “click in” the next word. If this reaches extreme proportions, the result is stammering. If one finds a tendency toward stammering in people, especially in their twenties and thirties, one can be sure that as young children they were not given enough sleep.”

- Dornach, 16 April 1923, GA 306, in *Child's Changing Consciousness*, Lecture II

The Holiness of Sleep

“In conclusion, we will today take one feeling, one conception, which may be of great help to our souls. Unfortunately many people in our modern materialistic age find it very difficult to feel what I might call the holiness of sleep. (The materialistic life is being somewhat softened by this period of trial, and not only ought it to remain softened thereby — which can hardly be hoped if materialism remains at its present strength — but it ought even to be enormously and increasingly softened.) It is indeed a curious phenomenon of man's intelligence today that he is entirely devoid of respect for the holiness of sleep. We need only consider how many people who spend the evening hours in purely materialistic ways, go to sleep without developing the realisation — which indeed can never become a living thing in a materialistic mind — that sleep unites us with the Spiritual world, that sleep sends us across into the Spiritual world. (These things are not mentioned by way of blame, nor intended to drive people to asceticism: we must live with the world, but we must at the same time have our eyes open, for only thus can we wrench our bodily nature away from the lower and lift it higher.)

“People should at least become gradually able to develop a feeling which can be expressed somewhat as follows: ‘I am going to sleep; until I wake, my soul will be in the spiritual world. There it will meet with the guiding power of my earth-life, who lives in the spiritual world, and who soars round and surrounds my head. My soul will have the meeting with my genius. The wings of my genius will come in contact with my soul.’

- Berlin, 20 February 1917, GA 175, “The Human Soul and the Universe” in *Cosmic and Human Metamorphoses*, Lecture III.

The Child's Connection to the Spiritual World

“We work on ourselves with a wisdom that is not in us, a wisdom that is more powerful and comprehensive than all the conscious wisdom we acquire later. This higher wisdom works from the spiritual world deep into the body; it enables us to form the brain out of the spirit. We can rightly say, then, that even the wisest person can learn from a child. For the wisdom at work in children does not become part of our consciousness in later life. It is obscured and exchanged for consciousness.

“In the first years of life, however, this higher wisdom functions like a “telephone connection” to the spiritual beings in whose world we find ourselves between death and rebirth. Something from this world still flows into our aura during childhood. As individuals we are then directly

subject to the guidance of the entire spiritual world to which we belong. When we are children — up to the moment of our earliest memory — the spiritual forces from this world flow into us, enabling us to develop our particular relationship to gravity. At the same time, the same forces also form our larynx and shape our brain into living organs for the expression of thought, feeling, and will.”

- *The Spiritual Guidance of the Individual and Humanity*, Lecture 1, GA 15