

DISCUSSIONS.

12th June, 1924.

QUESTION: Should the dilution be continued in arithmetical progression?

ANSWER: Certain experiments must be made in this connection. The probability is that as the area increases, larger quantities of water and proportionately fewer cowhorns will be required. So that with a comparatively small number of the latter it is possible to fertilise large areas. We had twenty-five cow-horns and these served for a fairly large garden. We took one horn to half a bucket of water. Then we began again with a whole bucket to two horns. For the remaining area which was somewhat larger we took seven horns to seven buckets.

QUESTION; In stirring the manure for large areas can one use a mechanical stirrer or is this not permitted?

ANSWER: Here, of course, it is a question either of adhering strictly to stirring by hand, or else of gradually slipping into all kinds of substitutes. There is no doubt that stirring by hand is something quite different from mechanical stirring. From a mechanistic point of view this would not be conceded, but just consider all the delicate movements, even the sensations that are imparted by the hand, and ask yourselves whether this could be conveyed into the mixture by a mere machine. Not many people believe in this difference, and yet it has been noted in medicine. Believe me, it is not immaterial whether a medical remedy has been prepared by hand or not. Man imparts something to the things he handles and works upon. I hold this to be particularly true of the Ritter remedies with which some of you are acquainted. As you know, some people are loud in their praises of these remedies while others declare that they have no particular effect. They certainly do produce an effect, but I am firmly convinced that if these medicines were marketed generally in the usual way they would lose something essential from their effect, because it matters very much that the doctor should be in possession of them and hand them directly to the patient. When the act of giving the medicine takes place within this limited circle, the doctor brings to it a certain enthusiasm. Now, you will tell me that enthusiasm carries no weight. True it cannot be weighed. But it vibrates into the remedy. Light acts strongly upon these remedies. Why should not enthusiasm work upon them? The Ritter remedies are particularly powerful in this way. Enthusiasm can do wonders. If, however, the thing is done merely then the effect will gradually wear off. This is the difference between what emanates from the human hand (and a very great deal emanates from the human hand) and what comes out of a machine. Besides, one could come to find so much enjoyment in stirring this cow horn mixture that after a time one would cease to think about machines for mixing. It should come to be a light and pleasant job for a Sunday afternoon instead of dessert and if you have invited plenty of friends you will get the most splendid results.

QUESTION: The distribution of half a bucket of water over an area of a third of an acre will surely be a little difficult. If the number of cow-horns is increased, the difficulty of handling will be increased not in the same ratio but at a greater rate. This will make the distribution more difficult. Is it permitted to add more water or should the ratio of half a bucket to each cowhorn be retained? Must you take half a bucketful for an area of a third of an acre?

ANSWER: It is possible to do this. But then I think the method of stirring would have to be changed. After stirring one cowhorn in half a bucket of water, you can dilute the mixture with more water, but then you must stir again. I think, however, it would be better to calculate how much less than one cow-hornful is needed for half a bucket of water. The great thing is that the ingredients should be thoroughly mixed, and for this it is not enough simply to pour the mixture into more water. If the mixture is still thick and has not been thoroughly stirred into the water, no real interpenetration can take place. In the case you mention I think it would be better to mix the half bucket of water with less than one cow-hornful.

In the reading these discussions it is often commented that the attendees did not ask the 'real' questions of Dr Steiner. So much was left unanswered, yet we have had the privilege of reading and rereading these lectures many times over many years. While the attendees had it raw and no doubt had little appreciation what was being said to them. Like many people who read the course today they focused on the few pages giving specific instruction about the preparations and leave the rest aside.

The role of Human intention

In this question RS is voicing what many people today are realising, that the role of Human intention in the biodynamic remedies and homeopathic substances in general is a large part of the mix. While he is emphasising the importance of the human intention, he also does not limit people use of stirring machines, which today we see is very evident in the modern commercial practice of Biodynamics.

This role of Human intention I believe can become more to the fore in Biodynamics, than we presently see. The trick is having the right intention, or thinking the right thoughts. My own experiments have shown me, that I can achieve a similar result from the imagination of the application of a specific homeopathic BD remedy, as if I had physically sprayed it. A key to this success though, is that in my imaging I am empowering the balancing of the spiritual body imbalance, that has allowed the problem to arise in the first place. The physical spraying of a remedy, is simply the substantiation of this intention, through anchoring it more firmly in the physical realm, by using substances that do the same thing.

Further Dilution

In this answer as in one later we are told that if further dilution was to be done, as in larger amounts it should be done through a process of repeated stirrings. In short RS was indicating that larger amounts should be done by serial dilution as done in the potentising process of homeopathy. This practice to date has not been widely carried out. The Garuda Biodynamic Institute is one of the few Biodynamic organisations to develop this suggestion, following on from the work of E & L Kolisko.

QUESTION; If the liquid still contains solid parts. could it be strained so as to be more readily distributed with a spray?

ANSWER: I do not think that will be found to be necessary. If properly stirred the mixture will be more or less milky and there will be no need to trouble about the presence in it of any solid particle. It can easily be sprayed. Plain cow manure is the best but I do not think one need bother to strain it. The chances are that solid particles that may be present will do no harm and may even do good, since as the result of the concentration and subsequent dilution what works is not the substance itself, but its dynamic radiation. You need not fear that because of a solid particle in the mixture your potato plants will bear long halms with nothing on them.

QUESTION; I was only thinking about the use of the spraying apparatus.

ANSWER: Yes, it can be strained. It will do no harm. One could contrive a filter on the spray.

QUESTION; Should the substance taken from the horn be weighed in order to get at the right proportion? Is the bucket you speak of a Swiss pail or a litre measure?

ANSWER: I took a Swiss milking-pail. The whole experiment was carried out with just whatever one had before one at the moment. It should now be worked out in relation to weights and measures.

QUESTION; Can the horns be used several times, or must they always come from freshly slaughtered animals?

ANSWER: We did not put this to the test, but my impression is that they could be used three or four times in succession, but that after that they would not work so well. It is just possible that under certain circumstances if the horns, after being used for three or four years, were placed for a time in a cow-stable they might serve for another year; But I do not know, how-ever, how many cow-horns one may have at one's disposal on a farm, so I can make no definite pronouncement on the question.

QUESTION: Where can one procure the cow-horns? Should they come from districts in Eastern or in Central Europe?

ANSWER: It does not matter where they come from so long as they are fresh and are not taken from the waste dump. The curious fact remains, however, that - paradoxical though it may sound - life on the western part of the globe is quite different from life on the Eastern part. Life in Europe, Africa and Asia is not the same as life in America. It may therefore be that in certain circumstances, the horns of American cattle need dif-ferent treatment in order to be effective. The mixture made in these horns might have to be somewhat thicker, more condensed. The best of all is to take horns from the district in which one is working. There is a powerful relation between the forces in the horns taken from a district and the other forces at work in this district. The forces of foreign horns might work against the things in the home soil. It must also be borne in mind that cows which supply the horns very often do not originally come from the district in question. But this difficulty can be got over. If the cow has fed on a particular soil for three or four years,i.e, has lived in it, it belongs to that soil unless it originally came from the West.

QUESTION; How old should the horns be? Should they come from an old or from a young animal? i.e. approximately 9 litres - 2 gallons.

ANSWER: This is a matter which will have to be tested, but my impression is that the best horns are those taken from an animal midway between youth and old age.

QUESTION: How big should the horns be?

ANSWER; (Dr. Steiner drew the size on the black-board.) About*12 to 16 inches, i.e. the usual size in cattle from the Allgau district.

QUESTION: Does it matter whether the horn is taken from a castrated ox (bullock) or from a male or female animal?

ANSWER: It is highly probable that with an ox's horn the method would not work at all and that with a bull the effect would be relatively weak. That is why I have always spoken of cows* horns and a cow is generally a

QUESTION: What is the best time for sowing cereals?

ANSWER: The answer to this question will come out when I come to the sowing of crops. The time of sowing, of course, plays a very important part, and very different results are obtained according as to whether it takes place at a lesser or a greater distance of time from the winter months. **If you sow at a short period of time from the winter months you will get crops with great powers of reproduction, if at a longer distance, you will get crops rich in nutritive value.**

QUESTION: Can the cow-horn manure be distributed with sand? Has rain any significance in this connection?

ANSWER; One can certainly use sand. We did not try it, but there is no reason against using it. With regard to the effect of rain, this is something which only further research can establish. We may assume, however, that rain produces no change and may even strengthen the effect of the manure. On the other hand, the forces in the preparations are so highly concentrated that one might easily imagine the impact of a falling raindrop causing them to be dissipated. The action in question is a very delicate one and all this must be taken into account. There is no objection to spreading the cow-manure with the help of sand.

QUESTION: In storing the cow-horns and their contents, how are harmful influences to be kept away?

ANSWER: As a general rule more harm is done by trying to keep harmful influences away than by leaving them alone, take for instance the modern craze for disinfecting, which in all spheres has been carried much too far. In the case of our own medical remedies, for example, it was found that if every possibility of their becoming mildewed were to be averted, methods had to be employed which actually reduced the healing power of the remedies. Now I do not pay much regard to these tiny crusts which people consider harmful. They do not do so very much harm. Instead of combating them with methods of drastic cleanliness, it is much better to leave them alone. We used to cover up the horns with pigs bladders to prevent the earth from getting into them. I do not recommend any special cleaning of the horns. We must remember that dirt is not always "dirt". If you cover your face with a fine coating of gold, the gold will be "dirt". Real dirt on the other hand can sometimes act as a preservative.

QUESTION: Should we take any special measures to strengthen the tendency of the seed to be "driven into chaos"?

ANSWER: One can strengthen it but there is no need to do so, **because if seed formation comes about at all then there is always a maximum of "chaos"**. It therefore does not need to be strengthened. Any necessary strengthening must be done to the manure; but it is not necessary for the seed formation. We could, of course, do something by making the soil more silicious. For it is through silica that the cosmic forces work which have been absorbed into the earth. -"One could do it in this way, but I do not think that it is necessary.

Here is a definite statement that "seed chaos" occurs at seed formation and not at seed germination

QUESTION: How large should the areas be on which the experiment is made? Would it be necessary to do something to preserve the cosmic forces until the new plant comes forth?

ANSWER: For these experiments it is relatively easier to lay down the broad lines to be followed. The actual proportions will have to be worked out in individual cases. In answer to this question I suggest the following experiment. Let us plant two experimental beds with wheat and sainfoin respectively. Then, if silica has been added to the soil, you will be able to observe that the wheat (a plant whose natural and permanent tendency it is to produce seed) is being hampered in its seed formation. In the case of the sainfoin you will also see that the seed formation is either completely suppressed or is retarded. In such "experiments" you can always take the effects on the cereal as the basis for comparison with the corresponding effects on sainfoin as representing leguminous plants. In this way very interesting experiments can be made in seed-formation.

QUESTION: Does it matter how soon the diluted substance is used on the fields?

ANSWER: Indeed it does. The cow-horns can usually be left in the ground till they are wanted, even if this means leaving them all the winter. If, however, they have to be kept on into a part of the summer after they have been there all the winter, we should have to put them into a wooden box padded with peat-moss so as to retain the strong concentration of the substance. But in no circumstances should any dilution of the preparation be kept in hand. The stirring must take place not very long before it is used.

QUESTION: In dealing with winter crops should one use the horns three months after they have been taken out of the ground?

ANSWER: On the whole it is best to leave them in the ground until one uses them. If they are to be used in early Autumn they should be left in the ground till the moment when they are wanted. The manure will not suffer through this.

QUESTION: Is there no danger that in using a very fine spray the atomising of the liquid will cause the loss of the etheric and astral forces?

ANSWER: By no means. These forces are very closely bound up with the liquid and in general it may be said that there is less danger of the spiritual escaping from us than the material.

QUESTION: How should the cow-horns containing the mineral preparation be treated when they have been in the ground all through the summer?

ANSWER: It will not hurt them to take them out and keep them wherever you like. So long as they have "summered" in the ground, you can even throw them out in a heap anywhere you like, and even let the sun shine on them. This may even do them good.

QUESTION: Should the horns be buried at the spot which is later on to be manured, or can they be buried all together in any other spot?

ANSWER: It will make so little difference that it is not worth considering. The best way is to choose a spot where the soil is fairly good, i.e. not too mineral in content but having some humus, and bury in one place all the horns that will be needed.

QUESTION: What is your opinion of the use of machines in farming? Some people say that machines should not be used.

ANSWER: This is a question which cannot be answered from a purely agricultural standpoint. There can be no doubt that in our present social life, conditions being what they are, to ask whether one should use machines is rather out of date. No farmer nowadays can dispense with machines. Of course, not all the activities on a farm are as akin to the most intimate processes of Nature as is the act of stirring which we have been discussing. And just as it would be impossible to obtain this intimate contact by purely mechanical means, so in other matters too Nature sees to it that where machines are unsuitable, one cannot achieve much with them. In seed formation, for instance, machines cannot help much as this is done by Nature itself. One cannot, of course, do without machines today, but I would point out that in farming there is no need to become "machine mad" and always get the latest machinery. Anyone who does so will probably be far less successful in his farming than if he had gone on using his old machine until it was no longer of any use. These, however, are questions that do not strictly belong only to agriculture.

QUESTION: Can the given quantity of cow horn manure diluted with water be used for half the area for which it was intended?

ANSWER: In that case you will get a growth which is luxuriant, i.e. the same result which I mentioned before in another connection. In the case of potatoes, for example, the growth would become rank, the stems would spread too far and the tubers would remain small; there would be what are generally known as "rank patches", if you apply too much of the substance.

QUESTION: What about plants intended for food where a luxuriant growth is wanted, e.g. spinach?

ANSWER: Even in this case I think we should only use the half bucket of water to one cow-horn. We did so for an area which, as it happened, was used as a vegetable garden. This is the optimum. Where larger areas are put under one plant a much smaller proportion (of horn to water) will be required.

QUESTION: Is it immaterial which sort of manure is used, whether from cows, horses or sheep?

ANSWER: For this particular procedure cow-dung is undoubtedly the best. But it is worth enquiring into the question of the use of horse-dung. If one did use horse-dung one would have to wind some hair from the horse's mane around the horns. The horse has no horns, but the force that resides in its mane could be brought into activity in this way.

QUESTION: Should the spraying be carried out before or after the seed is sown?

ANSWER: The right way is to do it before the sowing of the seed. Actually we are waiting to see what difference it makes, because this year we started rather late and a certain amount was done after the sowing. We shall see, therefore, whether this has any ill-effects. But the obvious thing is to do it before the seed is sown, so as to reach the soil first.

QUESTION: Can the cow-horns used for manure also be used for the mineral preparation?

ANSWER: They can, but not more than three or four times. After that they lose their power.

QUESTION; Does it matter what persons carry out this work, or can it be done by anybody?

ANSWER: That, of course, is a question, though one which will nowadays bring a smile to the lips of many who hear it asked. Let me remind you of the fact that flowers in window-boxes will flourish under the care of some people while with others they wither and die. These are simple facts. These things that are seen to be due to human influence, though they are outwardly inexplicable are yet inwardly clear and transparent. Moreover they will come about as a result of meditation - when the human being prepares himself through his meditative life as I explained yesterday. When we meditate we enter into a new relationship with the nitrogen, the substance which contains the "Imaginations". We enter upon a state in

which such things can become operative; upon a state in which we confront quite differently the whole world of plant-growth. Such effects are not so obvious today as they were in the past when these things were recognised. For there were times when people knew that by a certain inner attitude they actually fitted them-selves for the care of the growth of plants. Nowadays these delicate and subtle influences are overlooked, the presence of other people disturbs them, as is bound to happen when one is constantly moving about among people who disregard such things, this is why it is so easy to refute their existence. I therefore hesitate to talk freely of such things before a large audience, because they can so easily be refuted on the basis of the present conditions of daily life. **A particularly ticklish question was raised in the discussion we had the other day as to whether parasites could be combated in this way. i.e. by methods of mental concentration and the like. There is no doubt that if one sets about it in the right way one can do such things. The period lying between the middle of January and the middle of February is that in which the forces which have been concentrated inside the earth are most powerfully unfolded. If we were to set this period aside as it were as a festival season and undertook these acts of concentration, then we should be able to bring about such effects.** As I said, it is a ticklish question, but a question which does admit of a positive answer. But this activity must be undertaken in harmony with the whole of Nature. One must realise that it makes all the difference whether an exercise of concentration is carried out in mid-winter or in mid-summer. We get hints of this in many popular sayings. Among the many things, which, as a young man, I proposed to do in my present incarnation, was the writing of a so-called "Peasant Philosophy", which would describe the conception the peasants have of all the things that touch their lives. Such a book could have been a very beautiful work, and could have refuted the charge of stupidity often levelled against the peasant. A wonderful and subtle wisdom would have emerged, a sublime philosophy which, even in the words that it has coined, would bear witness to the most intimate contact with the life of Nature. One is amazed to find how much the peasant knows of what is actually going on in Nature. It is no longer possible today to write such a "Peasant Philosophy" - too much of the real thing has been lost. Forty or fifty years ago this was not so, for in those days there was far more to be learned from the peasantry than from the Universities. Things were different then; one lived with the peasants on the land, and if those who wore broad-brimmed hats, who introduced the present socialistic movement, did come along, they were looked upon as oddities. The younger members of my audience can have no conception of how greatly the world has changed during the last thirty or forty years. So much has been lost of the beautiful folk dialects, and even of the genuine peasant philosophy, which was in a sense a cultural philosophy. Even in the peasants' calendars there were things which one can no longer find in them. Moreover they looked different; there was something homely about them, I remember one, printed on very poor paper but with the signs of the planets done in colors and with a small sweet stuck on the cover, which the owner could lick before he opened the book. This made the book tasty and of course the people used it after one another.

QUESTION: Where large areas are to be manure should one simply go by one's feelings in judging of the number of cow-horns to be used.

ANSWER: I would not recommend this. In such cases one must use one's common sense. My advice would be this. First go by your feelings, and once you have obtained satisfactory results begin to tabulate them in figures which can then be used by other people. I would also advise anyone who has a natural gift for judging by his feelings to do so, but when talking to other people he should not decry the value of the figures he has tabulated. As a matter of fact all these things should be translated into exact calculations. This is really necessary nowadays. We need cow-horns to carry out this work but not "bull-headed" people to advocate the methods. This is just what may easily bring us up against a certain amount of opposition, and I would therefore advise you in this case to adjust yourselves to current thought.

QUESTION; Can quick-lime be used in a compost heap in the proportions usually prescribed?

ANSWER; The old method will have very good results, but requires the following qualification. In sandy soil one needs rather less quick-lime, in marshy ground rather more because of the formation of oxygen.

QUESTION: What about digging up and turning over the compost heap?

ANSWER: This will certainly do it ,no harm. But, of course, after doing so you must cover it up again with a layer of earth. Peat or peat-mould is particularly good as a protection.

QUESTION: What kind of potash is it which can be used during the transition from old methods to the new?

ANSWER: Potash of magnesium (Kali magnesia).

QUESTION; What is the best use which can be made of the manure which is left over after the horns have been filled? Should it be put on the fields in the autumn so as to be there to go through the "winter-experience", or should it be kept till the spring?

ANSWER; I must make it clear that this method of maturing with cow-horns **is not a complete substitute** for ordinary maturing. It must be regarded as an extra which enhances the action of the ordinary manure, which continues to be used as before.