

Rudolf Steiner, *The Law of Destiny* (Munich - May 30, 1907)

You will realize, therefore, that your lives are guided by Powers of which you yourselves are not aware.... The various members of man's nature are all the time actually permeated and filled by other beings, and many of the exercises given by an initiated teacher are for the purpose of driving out these beings in order that a man may become more and more free.

The beings who permeate the astral body and make it unfree are known as "Demons." Your astral body is always interpenetrated by demons and the beings you yourselves generate through your true or false thoughts are of such a nature that they gradually grow into demons. There are good demons, generated by good thoughts; but bad thoughts, above all those that are untruthful, generate demoniacal forms of the most terrible and frightful kind, and these interlard the astral body – if I may so express it....

Demons created by populations of liars reside in the astral plane that are able to express themselves in a constitutional tendency to epidemics.

Thus there is a certain species of bacilli who are the carriers of infectious diseases; these beings are the progeny of the lies told by human beings; they are nothing else than physically embodied demons generated by lies.

You will remember that religious documents express these truths. When the Bible speaks of the driving-out of demons, this is not an abstraction but is to be taken literally. Christ Jesus healed those who were possessed of demons; He drove the demons out of the astral body. This is an actual process and the passage is to be taken literally. The wise man Socrates also speaks of his "Daimon" which worked in his astral body. This was a good demon; such beings are not always evil.

There are, however, terrible and corrupt demonic beings. All demons that are born of lying work in such a way as to throw man back in his development....

The individual human being, membered as he is within mankind as a whole, has an effect upon the whole world according to whether he speaks the truth or lies; for beings created by truth or by lies produce quite different effects. Demons created by populations of liars reside in the astral plane that are able to express themselves in a constitutional tendency to epidemics. Thus there is a certain species of bacilli who are the carriers of infectious diseases; these beings are the progeny of the lies told by human beings; they are nothing else than physically embodied demons generated by lies.

You see therefore that lies and untruths of earlier ages appear in world-karma as a definite host of beings. A passage in Faust indicates how much deep truth is contained in myths and sagas. You will find there a connection between vermin and lies in the role played by rats and mice in connection with Mephistopheles, the Spirit of Lies. Legends have often preserved wonderful indications of the connection between the spiritual world and the physical world.