



The Activity of Michael and the Future of Humanity

by

Rudolf Steiner

How does man stand today in his present stage of evolution with respect to Michael and his hosts?

Man is surrounded today by a world which was once of a wholly divine-spiritual nature — divine-spiritual being of which he also was a member. Thus at that time the world belonging to man was a world of divine-spiritual being. But this was no longer so in a later stage of evolution. The world had then become a cosmic manifestation of the Divine Spiritual; the Divine Being hovered behind the manifestation. Nevertheless, the Divine-Spiritual lived and moved in all that was thus manifested. A world of stars was already there, in the light and movement of which the Divine-Spiritual lived and moved and manifested itself. One may say that at that time, in the position or movement of a star, the activity of the Divine and Spiritual was directly evident.

And in all this — in the working of the Divine Spirit in the Cosmos, and in the life of man resulting from this divine activity — Michael was as yet in his own element — unhindered, unresisted. The adjustment of the relation between the Divine and the Human was in his hands.

But other ages dawned. The world of the stars ceased to be a direct and present manifestation of Divine-Spiritual activity. The constellations lived and moved, maintaining what the Divine activity had been in them in the past. The Divine-Spiritual dwelt in the Cosmos in manifestation no longer, but in the manner of its working only. There was now a certain distinct separation between the Divine Spiritual and the cosmic World. Michael, by virtue of his own nature,

adhered to the Divine-Spiritual and endeavored to keep mankind as closely as possible in touch with it. This he continued to do, more and more. His will was to preserve man from living too intensely in a world which represents only the Working of the Divine and Spiritual — which is not the real Being, nor its Manifestation.

It is a deep source of satisfaction to Michael that through man himself he has succeeded in keeping the world of the stars in direct union with the Divine and Spiritual. For when man, having fulfilled his life between death and a new birth, enters on the way to a new Earth-life, in his descent he seeks to establish a harmony between the course of the stars and his coming life on Earth. In olden times this harmony existed as a matter of course, because the Divine-Spiritual was active in the stars, where human life too had its source. But today, when the course of the stars is only a continuing of the manner in which the Divine-Spiritual worked in the past, this harmony could not exist unless man sought it. Man brings his divine-spiritual portion — which he has preserved from the past — into relation with the stars, which now only bear their divine-spiritual nature within them as an after-working from an earlier time.

In this way there comes into man's relation to the world something of the Divine, which corresponds to former ages and yet appears in these later times. That this is so is the deed of Michael. And this deed gives him such deep satisfaction that in it he finds a portion of his very life, a portion of his sun-like, living energy.

But at the present time, when Michael directs his spiritual eyes to the Earth, he sees another fact as well — very different from the above. During his physical life between birth and death, man has a world around him in which even the Working of the Divine-Spiritual no longer appears directly, but only something which has remained over as its result; — we may describe it by saying it is only the accomplished Work of the Divine-Spiritual. This accomplished Work, in all its forms, is essentially of a Divine and Spiritual kind. To human vision the Divine is manifested in the forms and in the processes of Nature; but it is no longer indwelling as a living principle. Nature is this divinely accomplished work of God; Nature everywhere around us is an image of the Divine Working.

In this world of sun-like Divine glory, but no longer livingly Divine, man dwells. Yet as a result of Michael's working upon him, man has maintained his connection with the essential Being of the Divine and Spiritual. He lives as a being permeated by God in a world that is no longer permeated by God. Into this

world that has become empty of God, man will carry what is in him — what his being has become in this present age.

Humanity will evolve into a new world-evolution. The Divine and Spiritual from which man originates can become the cosmically expanding Human Being, radiating with a new light through the Cosmos which now exists only as an image of the Divine and Spiritual.

The Divine Being which will thus shine forth through Humanity will no longer be the same Divine Being which was once the Cosmos. In its passage through Humanity the Divine-Spiritual will come to a realization of Being which it could not manifest before.

The Ahrimanic Powers try to prevent evolution from taking the course here described. It is not their will that the original Divine-Spiritual Powers should illumine the Universe in its further course. They want the cosmic intellectuality which they themselves have absorbed to radiate through the whole of the new Cosmos, and in this intellectualized and Ahrimanized Cosmos they want man to live on.

Were he to live such a life, man would lose Christ. For Christ came into the world with an Intellectuality that is still of the very same essence as once lived in the Divine Spiritual, when the Divine-Spiritual in its own Being still informed the Cosmos. But if at the present time we speak in such a manner that our thoughts can also be the thoughts of Christ, we set over against the Ahrimanic Powers something which can save us from succumbing to them.

To understand the meaning of Michael's mission in the Cosmos is to be able to speak in this way. In the present time we must be able to speak of Nature in the way demanded by the evolutionary stage of the Consciousness Soul or Spiritual Soul. We must be able to receive into ourselves the purely natural-scientific way of thinking. But we ought also to learn to feel and speak about Nature in a way that is according to Christ. We ought to learn the Christ-Language — not only about redemption from Nature, about the soul and things Divine — but about the things of the Cosmos.

When with inward, heartfelt feeling we realize the mission and the deeds of Michael and those belonging to him, when we enter into all that they are in our midst, then we shall be able to maintain our human connection with the Divine and Spiritual origin, and understand how to cultivate the Christ Language about the Cosmos. For to understand Michael is to find the way in our time to the Logos, as lived by Christ here on Earth and among men.

Anthroposophy truly values what the natural-scientific way of thinking has learned to say about the world during the last four or five centuries. But in addition to this language, it speaks another — about the nature of man, about his evolution and that of the Cosmos; for it would fain speak the language of Christ and Michael.

If both these languages are spoken, it will not be possible for evolution to be broken off or to pass over to Ahriman before the original Divine-Spiritual is found. To speak only in the natural-scientific way corresponds to the separation of intellectuality from the original Divine and Spiritual. This can indeed lead over into the Ahrimanic realm if Michael's mission remains unobserved. But it will not do so if, through the power of Michael's example, the intellect which has become free finds itself again in the original cosmic intellectuality, which has separated from man and become objective to him. For that cosmic intellectuality lies in the original source of man, and it appeared in Christ in full reality of being within the sphere of humanity, after it had left man for a time so that he might unfold his freedom.

From *Letters to Members, Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts*, written by Rudolf Steiner in 1924 and 1925. Here are Leading Thoughts 112–114, and 115–117.

