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Ita Wegman



on the work of the  
**ARCHANGEL  
MICHAEL**

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Why is it that the hearts of those who have a sense for spiritual things beat more quickly whenever the name of Michael is uttered? Such people feel in the depths of their hearts that Michael is a Being who has performed a deed without the fulfillment of which humanity must have proceeded further and further along a path leading to the edge of an abyss. Just as Christ performed a deed through which He gained the victory over death, so Michael, by another deed, has made it possible for man to save himself from complete hardening in material existence. When we find old pictures representing Michael warring with the dragon, we must recognize in this dragon that influence which seeks to drive man into earthly hardness and rigidity. It is this influence with which Michael does battle. In him, therefore, there is no element of hardness, only goodness, beneficence and infinite mobility.

This hardening process which is to be observed in the course of evolution, and from which Michael seeks to guard humanity, is due to the fact that the world to which man belongs is less and less permeated with the forces of the Gods. They, the divine-spiritual Beings, have now withdrawn from the visible world of sense. For this reason the world has come to be described as it is by modern physics. Because man believes this 'god-forsaken' world to be the only one, he falls a victim to that hardening process of which mention has been made. Michael is the Being who will not forsake man and leave him to go his way in this hardened, materialised world. Whereas the other divine Powers withdrew from man, Michael has followed him as a faithful companion, regarding it as his task to free man from the entanglement of matter, and to guide his capacity for knowledge in such a way that it becomes once more a knowledge of the Spirit. Just as Christ, the sublime Sun-Being, united Himself with the earth at the moment of the Mystery of Golgotha in order that He might give to the earth the possibility of a future, spiritualised existence, so it is the mission of Michael to illumine the forces of knowledge in man. Michael brings to human knowledge that illumination which makes it possible truly to understand the deed of Christ, and the Guardian of the Mystery Schools throughout the ages.

By means of his spiritual investigations, Rudolf Steiner was able to trace the development of these Mysteries back into a time preceding the so-called Ice Age, in a region which from earliest antiquity has been known as Atlantis. In his *Occult Science*, Rudolf Steiner describes the Sun-Oracle in Atlantis as being the chief centre for the teaching of the Mystery-wisdom; and from this point there radiated outwards the forces for all the cultural development of later times. To this Sun-Oracle the Planetary Oracles were attached, the Inspirers of which were Mercury, Mars, Jupiter and the other Gods still described in Greek mythology.

When in the course of long periods of time the continent which once stretched over the region we now know as the Atlantic Ocean was gradually submerged — a fact recognised today by geology — a great part of humanity wandered towards the East under the guidance of the Leader of the Atlantean Sun-Oracle. While this migration was taking place the

terrestrial globe was undergoing a hardening process and gradually assumed that configuration which today forms the face of the earth. A hardening process also took place in the organisation of man and was carried so far that from this time onwards, bony remains of the human form could be preserved throughout the ages. The fact that no bones belonging to the human skeleton and dating back to still earlier times are to be discovered, but that animal skeletons only have remained, is a proof that the animals were involved in this hardening process earlier than man. In the course of his wanderings towards the East, man developed, in conjunction with the Indo-Germanic language, the first rudiments of thought. At the same time there arose the beginnings of sense-perception; man began to turn his attention to the visible world of sense. Traces of paintings dating from the Ice Age which are to be found on the walls of caves in France and Spain are wonderful documents bearing witness to the education of humanity for sense-perception, an education undertaken by great Teachers of humanity who were able to lead the way by anticipating in themselves the normal progress of evolution.

At this point it may be well to say something on the subject of the development of human thoughts. In his book *Die Ratsel der Philosophie* [**Riddles of Philosophy**], Rudolf Steiner depicts the gradual development of modern thinking from a picture-consciousness such as is expressed in the mythologies of antiquity. This picture-consciousness was at its height in Atlantean times, and by its means it was possible for man to have direct intercourse with divine-spiritual Beings. Through the entire period of oriental culture, right up to the time of Homer, the Gods themselves appeared among the priests as they offered their sacrifices or were absorbed in prayer. The Gods gave to man all the heavenly gifts which were theirs to bestow. It was possible at that time to enter into real connection with the Sun and Moon, with Saturn and the other planets, and the religious ceremonies were arranged in such a way as to be in harmony with the planets as they revolved in their different orbits. The ceremonies varied according to the season of the year, and according to the place at which they were performed. Very different were the experiences of man on the mountain-top to his experiences in the depths of the earth; different again his experiences by the sea-shore, or far inland, away from the sound of the sea. In those times people knew: it is the Gods who bring to man the gift of thought. The peoples who developed in the valleys of the Indus and the Ganges experienced their connection with the Divine differently from those people who were exposed to the ruder climate of the Iranian plateaux. Protected by mighty, heavenward-towering mountain ranges, and surrounded by a rich and fertile countryside, it was possible in India for a people to develop who were filled with love for every living creature and who turned their gaze *inwards*, just as, somewhat later, the Persian people directed, not only their gaze but also their deeds, *outwards* into the world.

We have in an Indian document the earthly reflection, the mirrored picture of that great battle in Heaven which Michael fought with his

adversaries. This document is the Bhagavad-Gita, and it forms the subject of two lecture-courses delivered by Rudolf Steiner. This battle in Heaven is the mythological representation of an event which actually took place. Rudolf Steiner explains the existence of those starry fragments known to modern astronomy as the planetoids revolving within the sphere of Mars, by saying that they are the cosmic witnesses of this mighty combat. They are in very truth connected with that battle between the heavenly hosts which was known to the ancients by the most diverse names, and the medieval designations of which are bound up with a tradition attributed to Dionysos the Areopagite.

Throughout the ages humanity has striven to portray in mighty images this battle between the higher and the lower Powers. One finds these images in the story of Michael fighting with the dragon, and again in that of Mithras vanquishing the bull. All these images represent the overcoming of a *lower* by a *higher* power. Michael works as this higher power; in the lower power we have to do, not only with the dragon, but also with a being who offers himself as a willing sacrifice, and who follows the path of evil without himself being evil. This Being who chooses the lower path as a sacrifice is the 'Preparer of the Way,' one who made ready the way for Christ as He descended, stage by stage, into earthly existence. He is the angel whom Christ sent out before Him, and who later bore the name of Elias. Michael is the archangel who overshadows this angel. All that takes place on earth through the activity of personalities inspired by Elias, contains within it also the ruling force of Michael. There are, therefore, two Michael streams: the first is directly connected with Michael, the Sun-Spirit, himself; the second is guided by Elias. The relation between the two is such that they may be thought of as being, in a sense, the Sun-stream and the Moon-stream; yet both are under the influence of Michael. The Indian and the Persian civilisations bear much the same relation to one another. The Zarathustrian culture of Persia is directly connected with the Sun. The Sun God Ormuzd conquers the dark Ahriman. Preceding and preparing the way for this Sun-stream, we have the civilisation of India with its more lunar characteristics, and its cult of Soma (the Moon). During the Indian epoch man's life of thought was such that the thoughts themselves were perceived by him as being permeated with soul and spirit, having a real existence in that region in which man lived with his ego. This region is the etheric world, which can also be spoken of as the collective weaving and working of the planets within the Moon sphere. In the epoch of Persian civilisation man experienced a change in his relationship to the world of thought. Thought, in its essential nature, was for him still ensouled and filled with life; and yet he felt that this concrete spiritual essence was gradually being withdrawn from him. Out of experiences such as these arose his picture of the world — a picture wherein the primeval Gods seemed to be engaged in battle.

Michael experienced this change in the thought-life of mankind as his own destiny. In ancient India he experienced the transference of his Sun-Kingdom, with its tributary planets, from the realm of space into the

course of time. The culture of the seven Rishis consisted in the gradual unfolding *in time* of all that had been revealed by the Planetary Oracles of Atlantis as they existed side by side in space, of all that had come about through the spatial, geographical distribution of humanity over the face of the earth. Thus India became, as it were, the birthplace of time, for it was in India that the different epochs of culture first became sequential, preceding and following one another in time. India was the cradle of all the later civilisations. That Being who throughout the ages has been able to bestow strong and powerful life-forces upon man, was perceived by the Indian consciousness in the figure of Indra, an earlier form of Michael. Indra became Michael when illuminated by the light of Christ. The preparation for this illumination, however, went out from Persia. Ormuzd, surrounded by His servants, is a glorious prefigurement of Christ with His Apostles. Michael works through the teaching of Zarathustra as a herald, proclaiming what in later times became the knowledge and understanding of Christ. Nevertheless Michael does not appear in Persia as a God revered and worshipped in any particular cult. He sends out the radiance of his light, concealing himself, the whole behind its glory. In pre-Christian times Michael appeared as a divine figure in definite form only to the *night* consciousness of man; and so the 'day'-peoples, such as the Persians, whose consciousness was directed more to the world of the senses, knew something of the clear radiance of Michael's wisdom-filled kingdom, but felt no urge to worship the divine figure of Michael himself in any special cult. It is true that in very early Indo-Germanic times Mithras was known as the God of Light among the other Gods; but it was only much later that the Mithras Mysteries were joined to the Persian, occupying the central place among the other cults. The Mithras Mysteries really belong to that state of religious culture in which the worship of the bull originated. In the figure of Mithras the later Persian people beheld a prophetic picture of a future stage of evolution. In the Mithras Mysteries there was represented, as an impulse towards the future, the picture of man raising himself out of the entanglement of matter and thus becoming Mithras, the vanquisher of the bull, a true Michael.

The souls of those who belonged to the Babylonian civilisation entered into all that reveals itself to man when, during his sleeping life, he is united with the spiritual world. The activity of Michael, who was then worshipped under the name of Marduk, was portrayed by Babylonian culture in a great and wonderful picture. Rudolf Steiner has given us a concrete idea of what was felt and experienced by the humanity of that epoch. When, during sleep, man passed into the realm which we today experience as darkness, he felt himself united with a living being to whom he gave the name of Tiamat. He felt himself to be more intimately connected with this being Tiamat than with the world of mineral, plant and animal. This world, the world of waking consciousness, he called Apsu. Evolution had at that time reached a point when man had gradually to tear himself away from this living-together with the daemonic influences of the night, and to experience the wisdom in clear, waking

consciousness. At this point of evolution, Marduk-Michael came as a mighty helper to the side of man. He, the Son of Wisdom, wrestled with the dragon of sleep, cleft him asunder; and out of the demons of Tiamat, out of the warp and woof of their skin, there arose the Above and the Below, the sparkling world of the stars and, from out of the dark depths, the budding life of the earth. Through this deed of Michael, which was known in the Mystery Schools of Chaldea, and of which man experienced the reflection when in meditation he exerted the strongest forces of his soul, humanity gradually attained to full waking-day consciousness. Michael is thus the Leader of man, guiding him on from one stage of consciousness to another.

Two streams of evolution go out from Chaldea. The one leads into the history of the Jewish people, who, under Abraham, from Ur in Chaldea, set out on their wanderings. The history of the Jewish people is the history of the preparation of the earthly body of Christ through the successive generations and is intimately connected with the impulse of the 'I am' which worked in the blood from generation to generation. Michael, as the 'Countenance of Jehovah,' appears in this stream of evolution. The second stream that went out from Chaldea is more obscure, because it developed along purely spiritual paths. It leads from Chaldea to Greece.

What was experienced in Chaldea as cosmic wisdom revealed in the courses of the stars, appears again in Greece in the experience of the earthly mirror-image of the stars, in the realisation of the budding, sprouting life of the earth. For the Greek was wholly given up to the world of the living. It is true that, for him, thoughts were no longer permeated with soul as they once had been, but they were still imbued with life. The Seven Liberal Arts — as they were designated in the Middle Ages — those Arts which man still felt to be connected with planetary activity, have their origin in the living thinking which spread over into Greece from Asia Minor. Grammar, Rhetoric, Dialectic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, Astronomy — these appear in the Middle Ages as servants of the goddess Natura, who, as Rudolf Steiner has taught us, is the same being who was worshipped in the Greek Mysteries as Persephone. She, the daughter of Demeter, who was ravished by Pluto, is the representative of the soul of man which had been seized by earthly forces, but which, though prisoned in the kingdom of death, has yet remained alive. All that developed later as logic, as learning, is the spiritual picture of the soul-activity of Persephone.

What lived on and later developed into the myth of Persephone, forming the content of the Mysteries of Eleusis, was still a concrete reality in Ephesus in the age preceding that of Plato. In Ephesus, what had formed itself into the upper and the lower world through the deed of Marduk lived on in the souls of those who taught and those who were instructed. What later on became an abstract experience of Natura was in Ephesus still imbued with life and being. Those who in the Mysteries gave themselves up to the study of what we today should call natural science, approached this knowledge along two different paths. Those who followed

the one path experienced all that rose up from the underworld into the innermost part of man, laying hold of the Spiritual as the soul of man, borne onwards by the forces of love, strives to lay hold of the Spirit. On the other path, men experienced the forces which streamed down from the starry spaces, seeking with calm wisdom to transform all that flamed upwards from the underworld. And so through this intimate interchange of soul-forces, there arose a knowledge of nature enriched by the mutual experiences of individuals with one another. Natura-Persephone became one single being, representing both the human soul and nature. The souls of pupils, who although afire with love for the spirit were still seeking with the forces of the underworld, were lifted by the calm wisdom of their Initiate-Teachers to a realm where they could gaze upon those forces in the upper world whereby forms are created from all eternity. This wonderfully intimate and sensitive knowledge which was at the same time a knowledge of nature and a living experience of the forces of the soul, was transformed in the philosophy of Aristotle into the two concepts of Form and Matter. And so the wonderful life of the Mysteries faded away into the dead form of philosophy but only to be carried over into and preserved in another epoch when man was destined to renounce supersensible experience in order to travel for a while along a purely earthly path. As a Guardian at the door of these Mystery-experiences, Aristotle preserved in the sphere of human thought as much of the wisdom as was needed by man for his spiritual sustenance. While this was taking place in the life of human thought, and the instrument thus being prepared for an understanding of the Word made flesh, the body which was to be the vessel for the descending Godhead was being prepared by the Jewish people. They renounced what was developed in such full and perfect measure by the Greeks. The Hebrews produced neither sculpture nor architecture. All their formative forces were concentrated on the shaping of the body which had been the work of generations.

Michael, the 'Countenance of Jehovah,' brought about a complete change in the consciousness of the Hebrew people. After much preparation this change was finally accomplished through the instrumentality of Moses. The story that is told of the Angel of the Lord appearing to Moses in the burning bush on Mount Horeb indicates that Moses, in a vision, and inspired by the angel of the Lord, entered into a state of consciousness in which he was able to experience the Divine. This was the way in which, up to this time, man experienced his ego, embedded in the group-consciousness of his people and permeated with divinity. In this angel there worked the being Elias, the one manifestation of the power of Michael. The other revealed itself on Sinai in thunder and lightning. Moses experienced clairvoyantly in the lightning the entrance into the human head of that wisdom which stands under the direction of Michael. For Moses this was indeed a *clairvoyant* experience; nevertheless the seed was sown which was later to grow away from clairvoyance and to develop into the forces of pure intellect. By means of this intellectual development man was to find himself as an ego in the sphere of reflective thought.

Michael was therefore known as the 'Countenance of Jehovah,' through whom the impulse of the 'I am' enters into evolution. And so under the influence of the leadership of Michael man became more and more intellectual, more firmly established in his experience of earthly personality.

From about the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. until the time of Aristotle and Alexander the Great, Michael's activity was still greater. For during this period of time, humanity was under his direct leadership, without the mediation of any one of the other archangels. Here we have to do with a Michael age.

What has been fostered in certain centres as an intensive spiritual life now spread abroad over a large portion of the earth. Ephesus was one of the most powerful of these spiritual centres and the source of a wisdom which streamed out in all directions. There is, for instance, a definite connection between the Mysteries of Ephesus and Johannine Christianity. The Temple of Ephesus was destroyed by fire in 356 B.C. and this was a sign that the wisdom which had once been concentrated there would from now onwards live only in the souls of those who had received it, and who, working creatively on their spiritual treasure, were to carry it to whatever part of the earth they were led by destiny.

Cratylus was a pupil of Heraclitus, and an Initiate of the Ephesian Mystery-wisdom. [see *A Fragment from the History of the Mysteries*, by Ita Wegman.] The principle source of information with regard to him is to be found in the Dialogue of Plato which bears his name. In addition to this there are brief references to Cratylus in the works of Aristotle. Heraclitus spoke of the flux of things in contrast to the world of the eternal. Cratylus made this teaching more profound; for he saw in the eternal nothing static, nothing quiescent, but rather the infinite mobility of the spiritual prototypes of things. Whereas Heraclitus was angered by Homer because the latter described the transitory world, Cratylus was an admirer of Homer. He loved Homer because he found in him an understanding of the contrast between the Eternal Names of things given by the Gods and the arbitrary names given by man. The Gods give to things and beings the names which truly belong to them, and the sounds of which express their essential nature. Herein lies the germ of Plato's philosophy. Plato was a pupil of Cratylus, and he perceived the fundamental Idea lying at the back of things in just the same way as Cratylus perceived their Eternal Names — the names which express their real nature. We therefore see an unbroken spiritual stream flowing from Ephesus through Cratylus to Plato and Aristotle. All these individuals were inspired with the purpose of making the earthly, transient world into an image of the Eternal. In the separate and in the minute they felt the pulse-beat of cosmic space. This is the sign of an age dominated by the influence of Michael.

Aristotle, who knew the secrets of the old Mysteries, gave out much of the Mystery-teaching in his writings, but in such a way that he expressed in the form of *thought* what in earlier times had been direct vision. He was



therefore the first Western thinker. Aristotle was led to make this change — which gradually became the criterion of the whole of Western culture — by a spiritual vision which came to him on the island of Samothrace, a wild, isolated spot rising out of the sea and surrounded by the fury of the storm. Samothrace was a centre of the Mysteries. During the time he was the teacher of Alexander the Great, Aristotle once went to stay on the island, and there came a moment when he turned his spiritual gaze towards the coast of Asia Minor. He then saw in a mighty vision all that had taken place at the time of the burning of Ephesus many years before. The wisdom which had been preserved within the Ephesian Mysteries was then lost to man as earthly knowledge. It was, however, still inscribed in the cosmic ether, and it was from out of the ether that Aristotle was able to read it. From this moment onwards he knew that the cosmic hour had struck when the ancient Mysteries must decay, when the living intercourse between Gods and men must come to an end, when nothing was to remain to man of all that divine splendour, except what was able to flow as a spiritual force into earthly existence from the realms of the Gods. From now on, the splendour of direct spiritual vision was to fade away, and *nature* with her multiplicity of forces was to become the field of human activity. Aristotle realised this. He knew that henceforward human beings must live in separation from the divine Hierarchies; and, inspired by the mighty revelation which had come to him, he founded a cosmic script in which can be read the secrets of the cosmos and of man. In this way Rudolf Steiner explained to us what are known as the Ten Categories of Aristotle. These Ten Categories have never been fully understood or appreciated, for they are more than bare, intellectual concepts. Treated in a living way they lead to a spiritual knowledge of man and his relation to the universe.

In order fully to appreciate the complete change which took place in human consciousness — a change which Aristotle realised when putting forward his Ten Categories — reference must here be made to the teaching given by Rudolf Steiner with regard to the development of the Mysteries. There are four kinds of Mysteries which have succeeded one another in the course of time. The first of these, the so-called Ancient Mysteries, were centres in which the initiated human being, the priest, held direct communion with the Gods. Gods and men stood face to face with one another. So it was in the Oracles of Atlantis; so it was still in that place which in the great Babylonian epic is described as a centre of the Atlantean Mysteries, Xisuthros, whither Gilgamesh directed his steps. Later on, these Mysteries were replaced by Mysteries of another kind, less ancient, lying mid-way, as it were, between those of an earlier and those of a later epoch. In Homer we find the transition leading over into this second epoch of the Mysteries. In Homer's epics Gods and men are closely connected with one another, but the Gods no longer reveal themselves to men in their divine, etheric form. Rather do they take on human form, entering into human beings, out of whom they speak. They appear in the figure of some human being. In Homer's works we continually find man

faced with this problem: — ‘Is he who now speaks with me as a counsellor, a God or a man?’ The Gods made themselves known through the medium of human beings. This was the second stage of the Mysteries. An assumption of *personality*, a revelation through the mouth of man — this was what now took place on the part of the Gods. And so it went on from the time of Homer until that of Aristotle. The Ephesian Mysteries were still of this character. The Goddess Diana who was worshipped in Ephesus revealed herself through the instrumentality of a human being, and speaking through this human being made known the wisdom-teachings of the Gods.

As a result of his experience on the island of Samothrace, Aristotle knew that this form of the Mysteries had come to an end. The Samothracian Mysteries were Mysteries of the third kind. They belonged to the newer Mysteries while still retaining something of the old. In these Mysteries the Gods revealed themselves in what took place by means of magic and alchemy. They revealed themselves in nature-processes also, processes which were of such a kind that, in them, Nature herself, without the aid of man, worked magically as an alchemist. Rudolf Steiner has described what came to pass in the Samothracian Mysteries. The sacred vessels dedicated to the Kabiri contained a substance which was lighted by the priest; and as the sacrificial smoke went up, he spoke into it certain mantric words, thereby giving it form. In that which arose from the combined power of the word and the work of the hands which prepared the burning substance, fleeing forms of the Gods were revealed. The priest came into touch with the Gods by means of speech. Here, Rudolf Steiner told us, is the origin of Greek plastic art. Before the sculptor gave shape to marble, the priest created plastic forms from out of the sacrificial smoke by means of the spoken word. The Delphic Oracle was in many respects based on similar principles but here the working of nature-forces outside the sphere of man came into play. Nature herself prepared the vapour which rose up out of the clefts of the rocks and swept like a Plutonic dragon through the valley. Apollo shot this dragon with his golden arrow. Pythia, enthroned on a lofty tripod high above the sulphurous vapour, in a state of dream-clairvoyance, spoke certain words into the smoke which the priest of Apollo translated into wonderful verse.

And so these later Mysteries were concerned with the vanquishing of a dragon by means of the harmonising power of Apollo. They were, however, fraught with a certain danger, for they were more liable to decadence than the earlier Mysteries. Only where Apollo really conquered, where the Plutonic dragon was actually transformed by the power of the Sun-Word, only in such centres did the Mysteries retain their purity and their cosmic justification. To shape them thus was one of the deeds of Michael and with this deed Aristotle was connected. In his Categories he created the form which was to preserve throughout this third epoch of the Mysteries what the divine Hierarchies had bestowed upon humanity as a gift. But because the Hierarchies now began to withdraw more and more from a world which, as their creation, displayed an ever-increasing dearth of Spirit,

Aristotle no longer gives in his *Categories* a living picture of spiritual Beings and the revelation of these Beings, but he uses a working terminology which conceals profound esoteric knowledge.

Throughout the Middle Ages and right on into modern times, only dead concepts were formed with regard to the *Categories*. Rudolf Steiner has filled these concepts with life. Aristotle speaks of 'Relation.' Rudolf Steiner describes quite concretely, out of his spiritual experience, how spiritual Beings are active in the universe, and how they enter into relation with one another. He also describes how in the events of the present day impulses which arose in far-off times are working themselves out. The relations between events in the present, past and future are thus revealed, and a wonderful picture arises of all that is included in the Category 'Relation.' Another of the Aristotelian Categories is 'Quantity,' which embraces everything connected with measure, number and weight. The man whose soul-forces are perfectly harmonised has realised in his own being what measure, number and weight can give to his thinking, feeling and willing. He has discovered his own particular tone in the Music of the Spheres. What is characterised as 'Quality' appears in Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy — in its application to the human being — in such a way that the latter reveals the existence not only of physical, but also of supersensible forces which stream into him from the planets, the fixed stars or the farthest limits of universal space, and which are called by Rudolf Steiner the etheric, astral and Ego forces.

'Space' is the 'placing,' the 'position' of things in the cosmos. In an all-embracing cosmology Rudolf Steiner also describes everything by nature spatial in its gradual process of 'becoming.' The anthroposophical picture of the world includes in the concept 'Time,' the sequence of one thing after another, the cosmological conditions of successive periods of earthly evolution with their corresponding geological changes and cultural epochs. Time shows itself to be discontinuous, that is to say, interrupted, whenever the world-process withdraws from the sphere of outward appearance into its pure spiritual essence, a stage of being which belongs to the sphere of eternal duration. This passing of the world-process through different regions is what is comprised by the Category 'Position.' 'Position' is not meant here in a spatial sense alone, but the word describes on which of the cosmic planes, that is to say, in which terrestrial or celestial spheres anything takes place. What Rudolf Steiner calls the etheric world, or spirit land, belongs to this Category. 'Doing' is everything which reveals the working of the Spirit and consequently includes the whole progress of evolution. 'Suffering' is everything which hinders this evolution. All that can be characterised as Luciferic or Ahrimanic activity comes under the Category of 'Suffering.' Destiny [Karma] is also connected with this Doing and Suffering. 'Substance' is that which has independent existence; it is the definitely concrete, for instance, the individualised human being. 'Substance' is therefore not merely matter, such as silver or gold and their transmutations, but a definite, cosmologically conditioned state of matter such as is present here and now. And yet the Category

‘Substance’ includes the soul-and-spirit of man after death, with all the varying stages of transformation. Force and matter are not separate in the higher worlds, so that one can use the word ‘force’ for ‘substance’ and ‘substance’ for ‘force.’ ‘Behaviour’ is that manifestation of a being through which he reveals his aura, his soul-vestment; he manifests his soul-nature outwardly, without deviating either to the side of Lucifer or to the side of Ahriman. It is the manifestation of the soul in a state of perfect balance, and therefore includes everything connected with the Christ. What has been said in no way claims to be a comprehensive survey of the teaching of the Categories, for this teaching is so rich, so inexhaustible, that if we live with it, we begin to recognise that all the wisdom of the world is contained within it potentially and can be drawn upon by those who are able to master it.

When the Mystery of Golgotha took place, Michael and his hosts were in the sphere of the Sun. Not all human beings are incarnated on the earth at the same time; and we know from Rudolf Steiner that precisely those souls who had lived on earth during the *preceding* Michael Age were not then in incarnation. The souls belonging to the *other* Michael stream were on the earth. Their leader, as has already been observed, was the Being Elias, the angel whom the Lord sends out before Him. This being was re-incarnated as John the Baptist.

In the spiritual heights, Michael was the Guardian of the Mysteries. In the life of Christ on earth there was manifested openly before the eyes of all men the content of what in olden times had taken place in the inmost sanctuary of the Mysteries. What hitherto had been a purely mystical truth was now revealed as an historical event. And this mystical truth, that is to say, the content of earlier spiritual vision, became an outer, historical fact. This opening up of the Mysteries brought about a decisive change in the destiny of Michael. Hitherto Michael was a Being who revealed himself during the experiences of this night-consciousness. It was only to this night-consciousness that he manifested his full power and strength. Now the Mysteries were made public. The curtain which concealed the holiest sanctuary of Jehovah was rent. Up to this time Michael had been the ‘Countenance of Jehovah.’ Now he became the ‘Servant of Christ.’ Before the coming of Christ the Divine-Prophetic Principle spoke to man during the experiences of the night. Now man had to tread a different path of knowledge. He had to learn to live with the Divine in his waking-day consciousness, not in the dreams of the night. It was Michael who helped to make this change possible. But from now onwards he himself required a greater strength. Before the Mystery of Golgotha he was the leading Spirit of the Hebrew people. Through the Mystery of Golgotha he became a Spirit whose task lies outside the limitations of a definite community or race. This is shown in the tendency which immediately made its appearance in Christianity, the tendency to turn to the Greeks and the heathen and to take them into consideration equally with the Jews. The work of St. Paul shows this very strongly. A cosmopolitan impulse appeared in the place of the old dependence on

Jehovah. The forces of the Sun became active and permeated the darkness. Although this was no Michael Age — Oriphiel, the Spirit of dark Saturn, having then the leadership — the descent of the Sun-Spirit to the earth had such an effect that all peoples, albeit under the dominion of Oriphiel, unfolded a cosmopolitan activity associated with the influence of Michael. Thus it was possible for Christianity to be spread abroad in the most wonderful way, although this happened largely below the surface, and the significance of what took place was for the most part unnoticed by the humanity of that time. The Moon Age of Jehovah passed over into the Sun Age of Christ.

Whenever a transition takes place from the Moon activity to a condition in which the forces of the Sun are working most strongly, Raphael, the Spirit of Mercury, makes his appearance. His influence is clearly to be seen at the time of the Mystery of Golgotha. The ancients endowed him with a staff, around which were coiled white and black snakes, symbols of the constantly interchanging ebb and flow of nightly experiences with waking-day consciousness.

Thus Raphael plays his part in the tremendous change which took place in the consciousness of the different people who, living in a epoch ruled by Oriphiel, sought to free themselves from the darkness of night and to turn to the spiritual Sun. This is why the history of the three centuries after the Mystery of Golgotha so often depicts Michael as a healer. Raphael is the Guardian of the Art of Healing; and just as Christ worked as a Healer, so also did Michael.

A shrine was dedicated to him as a Healer in the neighbourhood of Ephesus: Chonai. Legend tells us that this shrine was built by a man from Laodicea whose daughter was cured there by the waters of a spring possessed of miraculous properties. This spring had its source at the very spot at which, some little time earlier, John and Philip had proclaimed to the people that Michael would make himself manifest. Joseph of Arimathea also, who is traditionally represented with the chalice and the knotted staff, appears as a metamorphosis of the pre-Christian Asclepius. The Greek God of Healing carried in one hand the snake-entwined staff and in the other a chalice. Through the event of Golgotha the snake was changed into the dove which hovers over the chalice. And this chalice, overshadowed by the wings of the dove and filled with the blood of Christ, is closely bound up with the legend of the Holy Grail, which originated at a time when Raphael was the leading Spirit of the age. Thus Raphael appears united with Michael's new activity. The Rosicrucians of the Middle Ages were aware of this Raphael-Mystery. Hence one finds Rosicrucian works of art which represent Mercury as a chalice into which Sun and Moon pour their gold and silver light.

Because the mighty Event of Golgotha had become part of human history, something had taken place which every human soul must learn to understand. Christ passed through the Mystery of Golgotha for the sake of all men. Not every human soul, however, experienced the Mystery of

Golgotha while physically incarnated on the earth. There were many who at the time of Christ were living in the spiritual world between their last death and the new birth awaiting them in the future. According to the spiritual investigation of Rudolf Steiner there were among those souls those who in their previous life on earth had been the contemporaries of Aristotle, and who had accepted his teaching. These human beings had therefore to wait for a following incarnation before they could learn to understand Christianity in its *earthly* form. During the 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. very many of those souls who had lived at the time of Aristotle descended to earth once more. In the meantime, evolution on the earth had developed along certain lines. The cultural life of this epoch was concentrated chiefly in the Southern part of Europe and in certain regions of Northern Africa. The people who lived in these regions, and who were more or less influenced by the after-effects of Greek philosophy, still experienced thought as something received by man either as tradition or as direct revelation from a spiritual world. The experience of thoughts as the creation of man himself made its appearance later, and was not present in the man of these Southern regions until about the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. It was only at the time of the migration of the Northern peoples, when the Germanic people forced their way Southwards, that certain human beings appeared who bore in their souls a predisposition which was to lead to the experiencing of thought as the product of individual effort. And even then this manner of experiencing thought slumbered beneath the surface, covered over by Graeco-Roman civilisation, until in the 11<sup>th</sup> century it forged a path for itself. Here again we have to do with a change in human consciousness. Passive receptivity of thought gave way to an *active* thinking. A passive experience of thought is an echo of the passive, dreamy mood of soul which belonged to pre-Christian times. Activity of thought is an awakening to all that Michael has striven to gain for humanity since the Mystery of Golgotha. When in the course of the 9<sup>th</sup> century the contemporaries of Aristotle descended once again to earthly life, they met with an attitude of soul which rendered it possible for certain individuals here and there still to experience thought as a gift of the Gods. In this incarnation during the 9<sup>th</sup> century it was possible for a soul who in the previous earthly life had been completely absorbed in the pursuit of wisdom, to progress by renouncing wisdom during that earthly life, and leading instead a life of piety and devotion. We must picture to ourselves a human being of this type, one who had previously given himself up entirely to philosophic thoughts, and who now transmuted this same power of thought into inwardness and with this attitude of soul experienced and contemplated the world around him. It was as though wisdom, born again in the individualised human soul, underwent a transformation and became love. — These souls became Christians. All this took place in regions where the Northern peoples encountered those from the South who still bore within themselves the culture of olden times. Here, in the midst of wide stretches of forest which at that time still covered the Western part of Europe, Irish Christianity proclaimed its own special message. This took place, not in the large settlements, but in the

solitude of natural surroundings, in woods and in caves. Thus the wisdom of antiquity — permeated with love and with the devotion to nature that is born of an open-hearted Christianity — was transformed as the years went on into the wonderful flower of Scholasticism. What thus took place in human souls as an intimate transformation of the life of thought is the result of the activity of Michael. He led human beings away from the ancient wisdom towards freedom, to the free activity of individual thought, in order that in the future, out of their own strength, they might once again find their way back to the Divine. The legends which arose between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries depict Michael as the Guardian of this will-activity in thinking, as the Being who wrought an immense change in the life of human thought. For crystal clarity and perfection of form, the quality of thought revealed by the Scholastics of the 13<sup>th</sup> century has never been surpassed.

The complete change which the Scholasticism of the 13<sup>th</sup> century called forth in humanity was far-reaching in its effects. Just as a tremendous geological upheaval entirely alters the face of the earth, so that where there was previously land there is now water, and where there was once a vast stretch of ocean there now arises a new continent — so with an indescribable force, Scholasticism took hold of the spiritual make-up of humanity, completely changing its contours. Hitherto, myths and allegories had conserved the concepts of philosophy in vivid, pictorial form. These now disappeared and in their stead there gradually developed a finely chiselled, more plastic language, well fitted for the expression of pure thought. The seat of this learning was in the monasteries. Aristotelian philosophy was used for the interpretation of nature and Christianity, and the more pictorial language of Platonism and Neo-Platonism receded into the background. A world of poetry passed away, and gave place to a world of crystal-clear, sharply outlined thought, the transparent, delicate forms of which mirrored in many colours the light of the Spirit. Thus the instrument for the acquisition of spiritual and intellectual knowledge was fashioned and elaborated, until, some centuries later, it was once more completely changed, manifesting itself in the form of the scientific thought of modern times. During these centuries a certain part of humanity, withdrawn into the seclusion of monastic cells, worked at the perfecting of this instrument of knowledge. It is as though these human beings passed through part of the after-death existence before their own death, while they were still living on the earth, and by so doing wrested from the other side certain death-forces which were needed by modern humanity, and which by this means could be carried over into human life. In the Religious Orders of the Middle Ages the soul-forces inherent in every human being were fostered and developed. The Dominicans concentrated especially on the development of clear, rational thinking, while the impulse behind the Cistercians, the impulse felt by the Cistercians to be the living pulse of their Order, was the training of the will. The Franciscans, on the other hand, aimed above all to develop their life of feeling. Each of these Orders, in its own specialised sphere, fostered

and encouraged a life of complete retirement and seclusion. In the case of Thomas Aquinas the miraculous happened; for he, towering far above all his contemporaries, bore in his soul as a living force that lost world of poesy which had been transformed into the magnificent architecture of thought. All this he carried within him, experiencing it fully in the depths of his own spirit, so that, for the sake of human progress, he might be able to give it out again in a new form, a form that was to become the accepted standard of knowledge in future centuries. Joachim of Flore was right when he spoke of this epoch as a time ripe for the revelation of a new and immortal Gospel, a Gospel which had to arise in due course, when the epoch of the Father in pre-Christian times, and of the Son in Christian times, had both passed away. Humanity had not to enter into the third phase, the epoch of the Spirit.

In the meantime, Michael, the Ruler of Intelligence, was making ready all that in future times was to be gathered into one mighty whole. Just as in the 'I am' the forces of thinking, feeling and willing are contained in: I think, I feel, I will — so in the future everything that was unfolded and developed separately in the Religious Orders must be unified and brought together.

It was not, however, the task of the 'I am' to plunge down into the forces of the soul in the way in which this was brought about by the fall of Lucifer. On the contrary, something had now to take place which was in complete opposition to the Luciferic temptation. In the spiritual worlds, what had been differentiated on earth had to be welded together. And this happened while the differentiation of forces on earth continued for a time.

This persistent differentiation is shown not only in the esoteric life of the Religious Orders, but reveals itself also in external history. The cleft between England and France grew wider and wider. This was merely the outward symbol of the gradual development of a new intellectual consciousness, one which, based on self-conscious action, and making use of the forces of thought and observation, was to create a new conception of the universe. The Maid of Orleans is closely concerned in all that took place in this connection. Her mission was to help Michael in his task of building a civilisation based on the Consciousness Soul, a form of consciousness which has to cultivate a thinking freed from the element of sense and an observation devoted to the perception of phenomena *as such*. For this purpose it was necessary that the Roman and Anglo-Saxon peoples should be separated. Thus we see Michael working for unity in the spiritual heights, for differentiation on earth, and in this two-fold activity ushering in the modern age. In the development of a view of the world suited to this modern age, we see a world-picture arising which places the Sun — the abode of Michael — in the centre of the whole scheme.

The cosmopolitan impulse lying behind the voyages of discovery undertaken at this time is a kind of reflection upon earth of what was taking place in the spiritual worlds. The explorers were filled with a courage inspired by Michael while yet belonging to a Mars epoch of



evolution. Samael, the Spirit of Mars, worked in their lower impulses and instincts, but in their cosmopolitan and religious striving they were led by Michael. The search for the mysterious Priest-King John, a search which inspired many a voyage of discovery, is a reflection of the fact that human beings at that time were dimly and subconsciously aware of the working of Michael in the spiritual heights. Michael is the Spirit who carries into later epochs of human evolution the knowledge of the Mysteries of the past, in order that at the present day and in those to come, humanity may be inspired by experiencing anew the divine glory which illuminated those long past ages. Michael is responsible for the urge which stirred the hearts of men at the beginning of the modern age, sending them forth on voyages of discovery and thus uniting them spiritually with the past.

The kingdom of the Priest-King John, whose letters had so far-reaching an effect on world-affairs, must be sought for in the *supersensible* worlds. In the spiritual world alone is to be found that centre which revealed itself on earth by inspiring human beings to cosmopolitan deeds.

History shows how the dark, opposing forces of the enemy worked into the sun-illuminated kingdom of Michael, for greed of gold and self-interest sullied the first pure impulse of the discoverers. Thus our modern age was born at a time when war was being waged between Michael and his adversaries. The invention of the printing press is an example of this, for thereby an impulse was given to humanity capable of furthering spiritual life in a cosmopolitan sense, but capable also of destroying the life of the spirit. Ahriman entered into human culture, and the question was: *How* would humanity respond to his influence?

Thus in the course of the 15<sup>th</sup> century that tremendous change took place out of which our own age was gradually born. A materialistic conception of the world became general, and the cultivation of a spiritual way of life was limited, for the most part to very simple people, who in the seclusion of Rosicrucian retreats preserved in their hearts the continuity of spiritual development. Such works as the *Chymical Marriage* by Valentin Andreae, the significance of which has been pointed out by Rudolf Steiner, give some indication of what was then practised in secret. This Rosicrucian method of developing the forces of soul and spirit, while originating in very early Christian times, had nevertheless developed with developing humanity, and from the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards existed in that particular form which was known, somewhat later, as Rosicrucianism.

Through the age when men were falling into the clutches of doubt on account of the ever-increasing subtlety of thought driven to the point of sophistry — a development to which not only philosophical writings but the records of many a Council bear witness — Rosicrucianism preserved a wonderful faith and inner belief in the reality of a spiritual world behind all physical things. These spiritual experiences arose from forces of inwardness and devotion whereby the soul was still able to acquire knowledge, whereas the rest of the world in the age of the dawning

Consciousness Soul was busy demanding intellectual proof. Although there were only a few who in concealment, maybe, cultivated this union with the supersensible world in heart and soul, they were the channels for an unbroken stream of spiritual life on earth. Unobserved by the eyes of men, the Rosicrucians were able to devote themselves on the one hand to the Spirit and on the other to shut themselves off from their spiritual activities and work in practical life as the needs of the new age demanded, just as other men. The leaders of Rosicrucianism consciously strove to bring about the harmonious interaction of these two aspects of the life of soul which were, to begin with, separate and apart. Michael stood at the side of those who still experienced a spiritual world in living Imaginations and also of those in whom what had once been Imagination lived more in the form of ideas. He lost access to those souls alone who through doubt and the mania for intellectual proof were being cut off from the spiritual world. The marriage of true spiritual experience with a life of pure thought and idea — such is the great ideal of the epoch of the Consciousness Soul. For life in the world of pure thought is of the very nature of the Consciousness Soul and Imagination is one of its higher faculties. In this way Michael works alike in man's life of supersensible experience and in his life of thought and ideation.

In the period from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries it is clearly evident that under the influence of Michael, mankind, looking back at first to the Renaissance and Reformation, was unfolding a strong consciousness of the *present*. Personality came powerfully to the fore. And finally men began to realise an on-coming phase of development brought about by their *own* activity and bearing within it the seeds of the future. This striving for a new ordering of all conditions of human life is revealed in the French Revolution, which was kindled by the inpouring through England into France of the impulse of the Consciousness Soul. But the French Revolution did not achieve all that ought to have been achieved in line with the real purpose of progress. In those times the peoples opened themselves to one another. One people poured its life of soul into another. Anglo-American ideas of freedom flowed into France; French culture into Germany; the East greedily drank in what was working in Germany. A stream of soul-and-spiritual life was thus flowing from West to East, containing within it the impulse which should have passed over the earth as a true ordering of the life of the peoples one with another. A final mighty effort to guide the course of events aright was made through the instrumentality of the Comte de St. Germain, who tried to awaken the French people to the realisation of how they should act in the sense of their great Dead, listening to the voices of those who had crossed the threshold to the spiritual world. His purpose was to create a new social order out of a religious impulse, but his will could not prevail. He played a far more important part in the events of that time than is ascribed to him by historians. And so it came to pass that the mighty spiritual impulse could find for itself no social body. Napoleon appeared on the scenes and with him a stream of ancient Egyptian 'Pharaoh-dom' poured into

European humanity. Impulses arising from the blood began to determine the destinies of nations. Through Napoleon's Egyptian campaign Europe learnt to know the mummies and the Egyptian treasures of art, and soon afterwards — following the discoveries of Champollion — to read Egyptian hieroglyphics. A purely external culture, devoid of soul, tyrannised Europe.

And then, as a protest, there arose Johann Gottlieb Fichte, in whose philosophy of the ego — Christianised and lifted away from old impulses of blood — Jehovah-Michael spoke to man in the language of his soul. Michael was working in Fichte's courageous speeches which, as Rudolf Steiner said, made a nation of the German people who had hitherto been split up in manifold families and branches of stock. Through Fichte and many a poet of genius the enthusiasm of youth was awakened and Napoleon's 'Mummy-State' shattered to fragments. The fruit of Fichte's Michael-like courage was destroyed by the barren panic-politics of Metternich. Central Europe could not fulfill her rightful task and mission which was, by serving the Spirit, to be an example for a true alliance of peoples based on the nobility of manhood.

In his *Speeches to the German Nation*, Fichte had said that there must now come about that for which the unborn were pleading. The prayers of the unborn had worked as a mighty inspiration already in the French Revolution, as a Michael impulse.

Rudolf Steiner has told us that Goethe's fairy-tale of *The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily* is a picture in miniature of the happenings in the spiritual world at that time. The story describes the descent of souls, the crossing of the river of passion at incarnation. It describes the longing in the heart of man who must realise during incarnation that the spiritual world lies on the yonder shore of this river and that only along the path to the life before birth can the seeking human soul be united with the Spirit who gave it birth. But what Goethe bequeathed to mankind in so splendid a form remained mere literature and now, after the Great War, a task is still awaiting fulfilment: the seeking the treading of the path to the spiritual world and the forming of humanity into a true and worthy social body over the whole earth. Michael's aim is to bring about that true knowledge and understanding of Christ which, living itself out in moral action, leads the individual to freedom and the world in its totality to harmony.

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