

KARMIC RELATIONSHIPS VIII

GA 240

Lecture III

21 August 1924, Torquay

During the hour that has become available today I want to speak about certain things which will be easier to understand now that preparation has been made both in the general lecture-course and in the last two lectures to Members. I shall speak this evening about the karma of the Anthroposophical Society and continue this same theme in London during the next few days.

The lectures here have made it clear that in our own epoch the Impulse of the Being known in Christian terminology as the Archangel Michael is responsible for the spiritual guidance of civilised mankind. This particular Rulership – if so it may be called – of the spiritual life began in the seventies of last century and was preceded, as I said, by that of Gabriel. I shall now have something to say about certain aspects of the present Rulership of Michael.

Whenever Michael sends his impulses through the evolution of humanity in the sphere of earthly life, he is the bringer of the Sun-forces, the spiritual forces of the Sun. With this is connected the fact that during their waking consciousness men receive these Sun-forces into their physical and etheric bodies.

The present Rulership of Michael – which began not very long ago and will last from three to four centuries – signifies that the cosmic forces of the Sun penetrate right into the physical and etheric bodies of men. And here we must ask: What kind of forces, what kind of impulses are these cosmic Sun-forces?

Michael is essentially a Sun-Spirit. He is therefore the Spirit whose task in our epoch is to bring about a deeper, more esoteric understanding of the truths of Christianity. Christ came from the Sun. Christ, the Sun-Being, dwelt on the earth in the body of Jesus and has lived since then in super-sensible communion with the world of men. But before the whole Mystery connected with Christ can reveal itself to the soul, mankind must become sufficiently mature and the necessary deepening will to a great extent have to be achieved during the present Age of Michael.

Now whenever the Sun-forces work in upon the earth they are always connected with an impulse which streams into earthly civilisation as an inpouring wave of intellectuality, for in our sphere of existence everything possessed by man and by the

world in general in the way of intellectuality, intelligence, derives from the Sun. The Sun is the source of all intellectual life operating in the service of the Spirit.

Utterance of this truth may evoke a certain inner resistance today, for men do right not to place too high a value upon intellect in its present form. Those who have any real understanding of the spiritual life will not set much store by the intellectuality prevailing in the modern age. It is abstract and formal, it crowds the human mind with ideas and concepts which are utterly remote from living reality, it is cold, dry and barren as compared with the warm, radiant life pulsing alike through the world and through man.

In respect of intelligence, however, this holds good only for the present time, since we are living in a very early period of the Michael Age and what we now possess as intelligence is still only just beginning to unfold in the general consciousness of mankind. In time to come this intelligence will have an altogether different character. In order to realise how the nature of intelligence changes during the course of human evolution, let us recall that in medieval Christian philosophy Thomas Aquinas still speaks of Beings, of "Intelligences" inhabiting the stars. As opposed to the materialistic views prevailing today, we ourselves regard the stars as colonies of spiritual Beings. This seems strange and far-fetched to the ears of a modern man who has not the remotest inkling that when he gazes at the stars he is gazing at Beings related in certain respects with his own life and inhabiting the stars just as we ourselves inhabit the earth.

In the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas speaks of Beings in the stars although he assigns to each star a single Being in the sense that earthly humanity would be regarded as a single unit if the earth were being observed from some distant heavenly body. We ourselves know that the stars are to be conceived as colonies of Beings in the cosmos. Thomas Aquinas does not speak of specific Beings or numbers of Beings inhabiting the stars, but when he refers to the "Intelligences" of the stars this authority of medieval Christian doctrine is continuing a tradition which at that time was already dying away. This is an indication that what is comprised to-day in the term "Intelligence" was once something altogether different.

In very ancient times a man did not produce his thoughts from out of himself; when he thought about the things of the world his thoughts were not the product of his own inner activity. The faculty of thinking, man's own activity in the forming of thoughts, has only fully unfolded since the 15th century, since the entry of the Consciousness or Spiritual Soul into the evolution of humanity. In olden, pre-Christian times it would never have occurred to men to believe that they were producing their own thoughts

out of themselves; they did not feel that they themselves were forming their thoughts but rather that the thoughts were revealed to them from the things of the world. They felt: Intelligence is universal, cosmic; Intelligence is contained within the things of the world; the Intelligence-content, the Thought-content of things is perceived just as colours are perceived; the world is full of Intelligence, pervaded everywhere by Intelligence. In the course of his evolution man has acquired a drop of the Intelligence that is spread over the wide universe. Such was the conception in days of old.



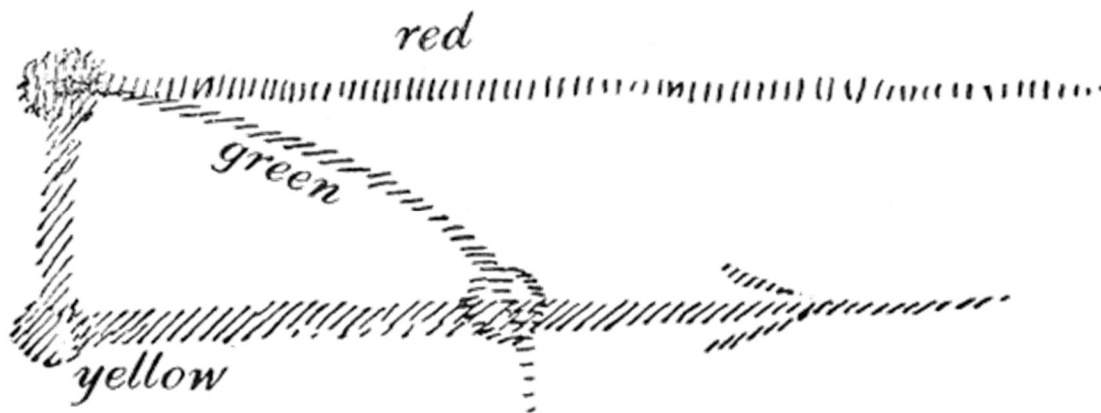
And so man was conscious all the time that his thoughts were revealed to him, inspired into him. He ascribed Intelligence only to the universe, not to himself.

Now throughout the ages, the Regent of this Cosmic Intelligence which, like the light, streams over the whole world, has been the Spirit known by the name of *Michael*. Michael is the Ruler of the Cosmic Intelligence. But after the Mystery of Golgotha something of deep significance took place in that Michael's dominion over the Cosmic Intelligence gradually fell away from him, fell from his grasp. Since the earth began, Michael has administered the Cosmic Intelligence. And in the age of Alexander, of Aristotle, when a man was aware of thoughts, that is to say of the content of Intelligence within him, he did not regard these thoughts as his own, self-made thoughts; he felt that the thoughts were revealed to him through the Michael-Power, although in that pagan epoch this Being was known by a different name. This Thought-content gradually fell away from Michael. And if we look into the spiritual world we see that the descent of the Intelligence from the Sun to the earth is accomplished by about the 8th century A.D. In the 9th century men are already beginning, as the forerunners of those who came later, to unfold their own, personal intelligence;

intelligence begins to take footing within the souls of individual men. And looking down from the Sun to the earth, Michael and his hosts could say: What we have administered through aeons of time has fallen away from us, has streamed downwards and is now to be found within the souls of men on earth.

Such was the mood and feeling prevailing in the Michael-community on the Sun. It was in the age of Alexander and for a few centuries previously that Michael had exercised his former earthly dominion. But at the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, Michael and his own were in the sphere of the Sun and from there they witnessed the departure of Christ from the Sun; they did not, as those who were below, witness His arrival among them on earth. Michael and his hosts witnessed the departure of Christ from the Sun and at the same time they saw that their dominion over the Intelligence was gradually falling from their grasp.

Thus in the periods of evolution after the Mystery of Golgotha, the course of development is as follows. Here we have the stream of spiritual, heavenly life (red) and here the stream of earthly life (yellow). Christ comes to the earth and lives henceforward in union with the earth. Until the 8th or 9th century the Intelligence is gradually sinking down to the earth (green).



Men begin to ascribe what they call knowledge, what they unfold in thoughts, to their own, personal intelligence. Michael sees that what he has administered through aeons is now to be found within the souls of men on earth. And in the Michael-community it was realised: During our next rulership (– it was to begin in the last third of the 19th century –) when our impulses are again to pour through earthly civilisation, it is on the earth that we shall have to seek for the Intelligence which has descended from the heavens in order that in the hearts and in the souls of men it may be possible for us again to administer what through aeons we have administered from the Sun, from the cosmos.

And so at this time the Michael-community prepared itself to find again in the hearts of men that which had fallen from its grasp that which under the influence of the Mystery of Golgotha had also been taking the path, albeit a more gradual path, from the heavens to the earth. I will now indicate briefly how Michael and his hosts have striven in order that from this present Michael Age onwards they may once again take hold of the Intelligence that fell away from them in the heavens. Michael who has been striving from the Sun for those on earth who perceive the Spiritual in the cosmos, desires henceforward to establish his citadel in the hearts and in the souls of men on earth. This is to begin in our present age. Christianity is to be guided into a realm of deeper truths inasmuch as understanding of Christ as a Sun Being is to arise within humanity through Michael, the Sun Spirit who has always ruled over the Intelligence, who can now no longer administer it in the cosmos but desires in future time to administer it in and through the hearts of men.

In seeking to discover the origin and source of Intelligence in whatever form it may be revealed, men turn today to the human head, because having descended from the heavens to the earth, the Intelligence weaves within the soul and is made manifest inwardly through the head. It was not always so in times when men strove for Intelligence for the essence of the Intelligence revealing itself from the Cosmos In those earlier epochs men strove for Intelligence *not* by developing the faculties of the head but by seeking for the Inspirations conveyed to them by the cosmic forces An example of how in olden time men sought the Cosmic Intelligence in a way in which it is no longer sought today is to be found when one stands, as we were able to do last Sunday, at that place in Tintagel which was once the site of King Arthur's Castle and where he with his twelve companions exercised a power of far-reaching significance for Europe.

From the accounts contained in historical documents it will not be easy to form a true conception of the tasks and the mission of King Arthur and his Round Table as it is called. But this becomes possible when one stands on the actual site of the castle and gazes with the eye of spirit over the stretch of sea which an intervening cliff seems to divide into two. There, in a comparatively short time, one can perceive a wonderful interplay between the light and the air, but also between the elemental spirits living in light and air. One can see spirit-beings streaming to the earth in the rays of the Sun, one can see them mirrored in the glittering raindrops, one can see that which comes under the sway of earthly gravity appearing in the air as the denser spirit-beings of the air. Again, when the rain ceases and the rays of the Sun stream through the clear air, one perceives the elemental spirits intermingling in quite a different way. There one witnesses how the Sun works in earthly substance – and seeing it all from a place such as this, one is filled with a kind of pagan “piety” – not Christian but pagan piety,

which is something altogether different. Pagan piety is a surrender of heart and feeling to the manifold spiritual beings working in the processes of nature.

Amid the conditions of modern social life it is not, generally speaking, possible for men to give effect to the processes coming to expression in the play of nature-forces. These things can be penetrated only by Initiation-knowledge. But you must understand that every spiritual attainment is dependent upon some essential and fundamental condition.

In the example I gave this morning ¹ to illustrate how the knowledge of material phenomena must be furthered and extended, I spoke of the interweaving, self-harmonising karma of two human beings as a necessary factor. And in the days of King Arthur and those around him, special conditions were required in order that the spirituality so wondrously revealed and borne in by the sea might flow into their mission and their tasks.

This interplay between the sunlit air and the rippling, foam-crested waves continues to this day; over the sea and the rocky cliffs at this place, nature is still quick with spirit. But to take hold of the spirit-forces working there in nature would have been beyond the power of *one* individual alone. A group of men was necessary, one of whom felt himself as the representative of the Sun at the centre, and whose twelve companions were trained in such a way that in temperament, disposition and manner of acting, all of them together formed a twelve-fold whole – twelve individual men grouped as the Zodiacal constellations are grouped around the Sun. Such was the Round Table: King Arthur at the centre, surrounded by the Twelve, above each of whom a Zodiacal symbol was displayed, indicating the particular cosmic influence with which he was associated. Civilising forces went out from this place to Europe. It was here that King Arthur and his Twelve Knights drew into themselves from the Sun the strength wherewith to set forth on their mighty expeditions through Europe in order to battle with the wild, demonic powers of old still dominating large masses of the population, and drive them out of men. Under the guidance and direction of King Arthur, these Twelve were battling for outer civilisation.

To understand what the Twelve felt about themselves and their mission, it must be remembered that in olden time men did not claim a personal intelligence of their own. They did not say: I form my thoughts, my Intelligence-filled thoughts, myself. They experienced Intelligence as *revealed* Intelligence, and they sought for the revelations by forming themselves into a group like the one I have described, a group of twelve or thirteen. There they imbibed the Intelligence which enabled them to give direction and definition to the impulses needed for civilisation. And they too felt that their deeds

were performed in the service of the Power known in Christian-Hebraic terminology as Michael. The whole configuration of this castle at Tintagel indicates that the Twelve under the direction of King Arthur were essentially a Michael-community, belonging to the age when Michael still administered the Cosmic Intelligence.

This was actually the community which worked longer than any other to ensure that Michael should retain his dominion over the Cosmic Intelligence. At the ruins of King Arthur's Castle today, the Akasha Chronicle still preserves the picture of the stones falling from those once mighty gates, and these falling stones become an image of the Cosmic Intelligence falling, sinking away from the hands of Michael into the minds and hearts of men.

At another place this Arthur-Michael stream has its polaric contrast: the Grail stream of which the Parsifal Legend tells.² This other stream comes into being at a place where a more inward form of Christianity had taken refuge. In the Grail stream too we have the Twelve around the One but account is everywhere taken of the fact that the Intelligence, the Intelligence-filled thoughts, no longer flow as Revelations from the heavens to the earth; what has now streamed downward seems, in face of earthly thoughts, to be like the "pure fool" – Parsifal. It is realised here that the Intelligence must now be sought within the earthly sphere alone.

There in the North stands King Arthur's castle where men still turn to the Cosmic Intelligence and where they strive to instil the Intelligence belonging to the universe into civilisation on earth. And further to the South stands that other castle, the Grail castle, where the Intelligence is no longer drawn from the heavens but where it is realised that what is wisdom before men is foolishness before God and what is wisdom before God is foolishness before men. The impulse proceeding from this other castle in the South strives to penetrate the Intelligence that is now no longer the *Cosmic* Intelligence.

And so in olden times, lasting on into the age when the Mystery of Golgotha takes place over in Asia, we find in the Arthur stream the intense striving to ensure Michael's dominion over the Intelligence, and in the Grail stream going out from Spain, the striving in which account is taken of the fact that the Intelligence must in future be found on earth, since it no longer flows down from the heavens. The import of what I have just described to you breathes through the whole legend of the Grail. Study of these two streams brings to light the great problem arising from the historical situation at that time. Men are confronted with the after-workings of the Arthur-principle and the after-workings of the Grail principle. The problem is: How does Michael himself, not a human being like Parsifal, but Michael himself, find the path

leading from his Arthurian knights who strive to ensure his cosmic sovereignty, to his Grail knights who strive to prepare the way for him into the hearts and minds of men in order that therein he may again take hold of the Intelligence? And now the great problem of our own age takes definition: How shall the Michael Rulership bring about a deeper understanding of Christianity? Overwhelmingly this problem confronts us, marked by the contrast of the two castles: the one of which the ruins are to be seen to this day at Tintagel, and that other castle which will not easily be seen by human eyes, since in the spiritual realm it is surrounded, as it were, by a trackless forest, sixty leagues deep on every hand. Between these two castles looms the great question: How can Michael become the giver of the impulse which will lead to a deeper understanding of the truths of Christianity?

Now it would not be correct to say that the Knights of King Arthur were not battling for Christ and the real Christ Impulse. It was simply that they bore within them the urge to seek for Christ *in the Sun* and they would not abandon their conviction that the Sun is the fount of Christianity.

Hence their feeling that they were bringing the heavens down to the earth, that their Michael-battles were being waged for Christ Who works from the rays of the Sun. Within the Grail stream the Christ Impulse takes expression in a different way. Men are conscious that the Christ Impulse, having come down to the earth, must hence-forward be carried into effect through the hearts of men. The spiritual Essence of the Sun is now united with earthly evolution – such was their conviction.

I have told you in these lectures of individuals who in the 12th century taught and worked in the School of Chartres, where teachings still inspired by a lofty and sublime spirituality were given forth. I spoke of particular Teachers in the School of Chartres, among them Bernardus Sylvestris, Bernard of Chartres, Alanus ab Insulis – and there were others too, surrounded by a great company of pupils. Remembering what was especially characteristic of these Teachers of Chartres, we may say: In some measure they still preserved within them the old traditions of nature teeming with life and being as opposed to an abstract, material nature. And this was why there still hovered over the School of Chartres elements of that Sun-Christianity which the heroes of Arthur's Round Table, as Knights of Michael, had striven to implant as an impulse in the world.

In a remarkable way this School of Chartres stands midway between the Arthur-principle in the North and the Grail-principle in the South. And like shadows cast by the castle of King Arthur and the castle of the Grail, the super-sensible, invisible impulses made their way, not so much into the actual content of the teachings, as into the

whole attitude and mood-of-soul of the pupils who gathered with glowing enthusiasm in the “lecture halls” – as we should say nowadays – of Chartres. These were times when in the Christianity presented by these Teachers of Chartres, Christ was conceived as the sublime Sun-Spirit Who had appeared in Jesus of Nazareth. So that when these men spoke of the Christ they saw His Impulse working on in earthly evolution in the sense of the Grail-conception, and at the same time they saw in Him the down-pouring Impulse of the Sun.

What is revealed to spiritual observation as the essence, the keynote of the teachings given forth at Chartres cannot be discovered today from surviving literary texts emanating from individual Teachers in the School of Chartres. To the modern student these writings seem scarcely more than glossaries of names. But in the brief sentences interspersed between the countless designations, names, definitions, those who read with spiritual penetration will discern the deep spirituality, the profound insight still possessed by these Teachers of Chartres.

Towards the end of the 12th century they passed through the gate of death into the spiritual world. And there they came together with that other stream which was also linked with the Michael Age of ancient time but in which full account was taken of the central truth of Christianity, namely that the Christ Impulse had come down from the heavens to the earth. In the spiritual world the Teachers of Chartres came into contact with all that the Aristotelians of old had been able, as a result of the expeditions of Alexander to Asia, to achieve in preparation for Christianity. But they also came together with Aristotle and Alexander themselves who were then in the spiritual world.

The impulse of which these two individualities were the bearers could not take effect on the earth at that time because it counted upon an abandonment of the old, nature-inspired Christianity that had still been reflected in the teachings of Chartres where, as in Arthur's Round Table, a pagan Christianity, a pre-Christian Christianity prevailed. In the days of the Teachers of Chartres it was not possible for the Aristotelians, for those who had established and promoted Alexandrianism, to be on the earth. Their time came a little later, from the 13th century onwards.

But in the intervening period something of great significance took place. When the Teachers of Chartres and those who were associated with them had passed through the gate of death into the spiritual world, they came together with souls who were preparing to descend to the physical world and who were eventually led by their karma to the Order paramountly connected with the cultivation of knowledge in the Aristotelian form: the Order of the Dominicans. The men of Chartres came together with these other souls who were preparing to descend.

Using trivial words of modern speech, I will now describe what then transpired. At the turning-point of the 12th and 13th centuries, at the beginning of the 13th century, a kind of conference took place between the souls who had just arrived in the spiritual world and the souls who were about to descend. And the momentous agreement was reached, that Sun-Christianity as expressed, for example, in the Grail-principle and also in the teachings of Chartres, should now be united with Aristotelianism. Those who descended to earth became the founders of Scholasticism, the spiritual significance of which has never been truly assessed and in which, to begin with, men could only hope to win the day for their view of personal immortality in the Christian sense by advocating it in the most radical, extreme way. The Teachers of Chartres had laid less emphasis upon this principle of the personal immortality of man. They still inclined to the view that having passed through the gate of death the soul returns to the bosom of the Divinity. They spoke far less of personal, individual immortality than did the Dominican Schoolmen.

Many significant happenings were connected with what was here taking place. For example: When one of the Schoolmen had come down from the spiritual world to work for the spread of Christianity in an Aristotelian form, he had not, to begin with, been able fully to grasp the essential import of the Grail-principle. Karma had willed it so. And here lies the reason for the comparatively late appearance of Wolfram von Eschenbach's version of the Grail story. Another soul, who came down to the earth somewhat later than the first, brought with him the impulse that was necessary, and within the Dominican Order deliberations took place between an older and a younger Dominican as to how Aristotelianism might be united with the Christianity which, inspired more by nature and the workings of nature, had prevailed in King Arthur's Round Table.

Then the time came for those individualities who had been teachers in the Dominican Order also to return to the spiritual world. And now the great agreement was reached under the leadership of Michael himself who looking down to the Intelligence that was now on the earth gathered his own around him: spiritual beings belonging to the super-sensible worlds, a great host of elemental spirits, and many, many discarnate human souls who were longing for a renewal of Christianity. It was too early, yet, for this to take effect in the physical world. But a great and mighty super-sensible School was instituted under the leadership of Michael, embracing all those souls in whom the impulses of paganism still echoed on but who were nevertheless longing for Christianity, and those souls who had already lived on the earth during the early centuries of Christendom and who bore Christianity within them in the form it had then assumed. A Michael host gathered together in super-sensible realms, receiving in the spiritual world the teachings which had been imparted by the Michael Teachers in the

old Alexander time, in the time of the Grail tradition and which had also taken effect in impulses like that going out from Arthur's Round Table.

Christian souls of every type and quality felt drawn to this Michael-community where, on the one side, deeply significant teaching was imparted concerning the ancient Mysteries and the spiritual impulses at work in olden days, while, on the other, a vista was opened into the future when' in the last third of the 19th century, Michael would again be working on earth and when all the teachings given forth in this heavenly School under Michael's own leadership in the 15th and 16th centuries, were to be carried down to the earth.

If you seek for the souls who gathered around this School of Michael at that time, preparing for the later period on earth, you will find among them very many who now feel the urge to come to the Anthroposophical Movement. Karma has so guided these souls that in the life between death and a new birth at that time they thronged around Michael, preparing to carry down a Cosmic Christianity again to the earth.

The fact that the karma of very many of the souls who have come into the Anthroposophical Movement with real sincerity is connected with these preliminary conditions and antecedents, makes the Anthroposophical Movement into the true Michael Movement, the Movement that is predestined to bring about the renewal of Christianity. This lies in the karma of the Anthroposophical Movement. It lies, too, in the karma of many individuals who have come with sincerity into that Movement. To carry into the world the Michael Impulse which in this way can be pictured in all its concrete reality, which is betokened by many a sign on the earth today and also comes strikingly to expression in the wonderful play of nature-forces around the ruins of Arthur's castle – this is the task of the Anthroposophical Movement in a very special sense. For in the course of the centuries the Michael Impulse must find its way into the world of men if civilisation is not to perish from the earth.

This was what I wanted to inscribe in your hearts in the lecture for which time was fortunately available today.