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A READER'S JOURNAL

Angels — Selected Lectures

by

Rudolf Steiner

Ten Lectures between 1912 and 1924

Published by Rudolf Steiner Press/UK in
1998

A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2000

In this book are collected ten lectures that Steiner gave on angels and the angelic realms of the Third Hierarchy. For an introduction to the hierarchies above us



humans this is as good a collection of Steiner's writings on the subject as I have found. The other two that I have read and reviewed are [Spiritual Hierarchies and the Physical World](#) and [Spiritual Beings in the Heavenly Bodies and in the Kingdoms of Nature](#). In the former review you will find my [Table of Evolution](#) which includes only the Third Hierarchy: Angels, Archangels, and Archai. In the latter review you will find my [Spiritual Hierarchies Table](#) which includes the Third, Second, and First Hierarchies. Note especially Column 4 (Earth) in that Table which describes our current position relative to the hierarchies. As you read down, you will be able to note the names that Steiner gave to beings or Spirits at each level. There are the Spirits of Twilight, Fire, Personality, Form, Movement, Wisdom, Will, Harmony, and Love. If you plan to read this book on Angels, it will help you to print out this table to have available as Steiner uses different names for them. E.g., he refers in one place to Spirits of Will and in another place to the same beings as Thrones. In this book, he makes explicit his reasons for assigning the "Spirits of" names as he did, which, in the maze of confusion that a newbie will encounter, is a helpful mnemonic. The classical names of Thrones, Cherubim, Seraphim, et al, are useful for cross-reference purposes when reading the Bible and other theological exegeses.

Before the ninth century, humans and even philosophers still knew by direct experience of the existence of the spiritual hierarchies. In the Introduction to this book, Wolf-Ulrich Klünker quotes a philosopher from that time, Johannes Scotus Erigena:

[page 1] 'It is not without reason that we may believe and recognise that the incarnation of the Word of God is of as much service to the Angels as it is to man. To man it brought salvation and self-regeneration, to the Angels understanding and knowledge.'

To the materialistic scientists of today, of which I claimed to be one for most of my adult life until encountering Steiner, such words seem to be utterly devoid of meaning. Rightly understood, they who make such a claim are in charge of lives that are utterly devoid of meaning. Or rather, they have given up control of their lives to the waves of materialism and are foundering out of sight of the beach, up until now. By definition angels are beings without a material existence, and for those scientists to insist that all reality have a material existence is to, in effect, condemn themselves, their very souls, to death. But, all is not lost, the Sun is coming up, and with the rays of Christ's light flooding their souls, they are given a new chance in every moment to rise above the heavy seas of materialism and reach the safety and security of the shore of reality.

Three centuries after Erigena, Alanus ab Insulis said:

[page 2] 'Tradition has it that in time to come belief will be superseded by knowledge, by

certain perception. Understanding will no longer be obscure and indistinct as it is in our time.'

Klünker says that this clearly implies that Alanus knew that humans were on a track to becoming Angels who are founts of understanding and knowledge. If you will look at the [Table of Evolution](#), you will find that in Column 5. Jupiter, our human bodies will have evolved into angelic bodies. Two hundred years after Alanus, Thomas Aquinas said, "To man is promised nothing less than equality with the Angels." (Page 3) Before Mendeleev's time chemistry foundered in a morass of half-truths and practical formulas, but there was no consistency that could bridge the magic of alchemy and the science of chemistry. What Mendeleev did was to build a Table of the Elements which for the first time gave a coherent order to the chemical elements. One could for the first time understand why sodium had such an affinity to chlorine and why certain elements were so similar to others, only heavier. Keep the [Table of Evolution](#) handy as your own bridge spanning the chasm from materialist science to a spiritual science that embodies both physical and spiritual aspects of being. One may find materialist scientists that ridicule the spiritual believers and spiritual believers that denigrate the efforts of the scientists, but only in Rudolf Steiner can one find someone who has bridged that abyss separating materialism and spiritualism by the creation of a spiritual science that blends the insights of both into one coherent picture, not as a doctrine or an assertion of a truth, but as an illumination of a path. (Page 9) And if one accepts the premise that there are beings in existence that are non-material, one can proceed with the rest of this review.

Klünker says "thinking which attains to the sphere of the Angels must always be self-aware." To achieve this self-awareness, paradoxically, it seems that we had to go through a period in which we lost our perception of and dependence upon the Angels. During that period we managed to achieve a level of freedom and independence for ourselves. With that newfound freedom in hand, we are poised now at the edge of that abyss, ready to step across the chasm separating material and spiritual reality by becoming self-aware with our organs of thinking from now on. Again, Klünker's words in the Introduction:

[page 10] Rudolf Steiner's perception of the hierarchies comes to us at a moment in the development of human thinking when it begins to be possible once more to gain access to the reality of the sphere of the Angels.

"Why bother trying to gain access to the reality of angels, anyway?" Inquiring minds want to know. In his *Occult Science* Steiner points out how the hierarchies are involved in the creation of the various bodies of us humans, our physical, etheric, astral, and I bodies. Do you think that they created all these intermeshed bodies and then turned them loose? Said goodbye and hopped the first train? It sounds ludicrous to have to mention it, but those hierarchies are still around. Learning to access the realm of the Angels is our first step into understanding the reality that surrounds us that is ignored by the materialistic sciences of our day, up until now. These bodies that we rely on to be fully human were created by the hierarchies, rightly understood.

[page 19] The hierarchies have not only been involved in their creation - they are still active in them. People who think the human being to be merely a combination of bones, blood, flesh, and so on, which is the view held in modern science, physiology, biology or anatomy, do not understand his true nature.

So what is the job of the Angels currently with humans? Steiner says they are working on our astral bodies to create images of what the Spirits of Form (Exusiai or Elohim) intend for us to achieve in this Earth evolution. (Page 21, 22) Those Angels won't be finished until "no human being shall find peace in the enjoyment of happiness if others around him are unhappy." How will we know that we achieved this stage of human development? Among other things, all churches will shut down. Wyman Tidwell told me once that a boss's job was to work himself out of a job. While that might seem scary at first, if you contemplate what that really means, it says that his subordinates have learned independence enmeshed with the directed goals of the organization. The boss can now move to a new job. In line with the Peter Principle someone who is less competent will be appointed as boss, and the process of development out of a job will begin

again in earnest. Here's how Steiner sees the evolution of the church as humans evolve:

[page 23] The church, if it understands itself rightly, must consider it to be its sole aim to render itself superfluous on the physical plane as the whole of life becomes an expression of the realm that lies beyond the senses. Such, at least, is the reason behind the work of the Angels - to bestow complete religious freedom on humanity.

To achieve their goal, Angels will strive during this spiritual soul age to engender full consciousness of the Angels at work on our astral bodies. For this reason Steiner also calls this the Consciousness Soul Age and dates it as starting in the fifteenth and lasting till the thirty-fifth century. So we are all spiritual soul newbies and learning our way around, attempting to bootstrap ourselves into a new level of understanding of our place in the only universe that matters, the one that surrounds us. To help us, Steiner says that the Angels will show humanity three things:

[page 25] Firstly, it will be shown that their own genuine interest will enable people to understand the deeper side of human nature.

[page 26] The second event will be that the Angel irrefutably shows the human being that apart from all else the Christ impulse means complete religious freedom for humanity and that the only true Christianity is one that makes absolute religious freedom possible.

[page 26] The third event will be that we gain irrefutable insight into the spiritual nature of the world.

I might add that by using the word "irrefutable" Steiner can only mean the kind of evidence of our direct experience that began in the fifteenth century to be the only acceptable means of doing science. Steiner was a person who in his time had this kind of irrefutable evidence from his senses, and he has shared that with us. The good news is that this "lonely affliction" of his, his atavistic clairvoyance, will soon infect the rest of humanity and make possible the completion of this third goal of the Angels.

If this scenario sounds too sunny and bright, let's throw a little clouds and cold rain on the parade.

[page 26] But luciferic spirits seek to divert human beings concerning insight into the work of the Angels. They do this by curbing free will. They try to cloud our understanding of the exercise of our free will.

And next follows the place where Steiner tells us that Lucifer wants us all to be goody-two-shoes, full of goodness and light, but doing so automatically with no free will. Like the fanatic cult around the corner just took over the world! No one can be bad anymore, and all we have to do is give up this *illusion* of free will. And put money in the collection plate, of course. Maybe sell a few roses on street corners in our spare time. Now, why in the world would luciferic spirits want to keep us from having free will? Because they never achieved it themselves. They are trying to sell us an inferior product, but are all enthused because it's the best product that they have. Buy now! You'll never get a better chance! Ever heard those words before from a salesman? I have.

Now what about old Ahriman? Surely the ahrimanic spirits won't stand still while the Angels work us into freedom? No way. But just what are they up to? Simple - they are attempting to get us to "smother our spirituality."

[page 27] They want to teach people that they are really only a perfectly developed animal. Ahriman is in truth the great teacher of materialistic Darwinism.

Lucifer wants us to do it the old way (the goody-two-shoes way) and Ahriman wants us to do it the technologically advanced way using the best of modern technology to sate our senses with stimulation so

much that the spiritual world stays away from our door, never enters our mind. Rather than the moral automatons of Lucifer, we become the automatic amoral beings of Ahriman. Either way we remain unfree and in a stultified development that is a reflection of Lucifer and Ahriman's own condition. Only by transcending the temptations that the two faces of the Devil, Lucifer and Ahriman, are exhorting us to embrace, do we stand a chance to be free and accept the three gifts, the three events, that the Angels have planned for us.

How have we become so beguiled by materialistic theories that we have lost the truth of our co-existence with the hierarchies? It wasn't that way during the Graeco-Latin times for the simple reason that atavistic clairvoyance produced images of the spiritual world that were more powerful than what anyone thought. Beginning with the fifteenth century, this reality of images began to fade and suddenly ahrimanic spirits could utilize human thoughts to infuse ideas about their evolutionary relationship to animals, for example.

[page 28] Only now do we live in an age when a scientific theory may be deliberately used to deprive us of our divine nature and all experience of divine nature. This is only possible in the age of spiritual soul. The ahrimanic spirits therefore seek to spread teachings among humanity that obscure man's divine origin.

In the 21st Century we have reached a stage of development where we humans can begin to participate consciously with the Angels, and if we do not participate consciously, we will do so during sleep while the Angels work on our physical and etheric bodies. In this brief passage Steiner summarizes three possible outcomes for us. Read it and determine for yourself if these things are coming to pass some 80 years after Steiner wrote them. Think of such new endeavors as Special Olympics, participation in which is supposed to indicate a lack of prejudice and broadmindedness, or, think of what passes for modern art, such as installation pieces with elephant dung as a prominent feature.

[page 32] People would delight in the instinctive broadening of their knowledge of certain processes and substances; they would gain a certain satisfaction in the pursuit of sexual aberrations, regarding them as evidence of an advanced development of more than human qualities, lack of prejudice and broad-mindedness. In some respects ugliness would be considered beauty and beauty ugliness.

In Lecture 2. The Three Encounters, Steiner tells us that the three future stages of development of us humans will be Spirit-Self, Life-Spirit, and Spirit-Man in three stages of post-Earth evolution, namely Jupiter, Venus, and Vulcan. The first encounter with our Spirit-Self occurs during the cycle of the day, the second with our Life-Spirit during the cycle of the year, and the third with our Spirit-Man during the cycle of our lifetime. These three meetings are described in detailed in my review of [Cosmic and Human Metamorphoses](#). Considered in another way, they are, firstly, the diurnal meetings with our Genius; secondly, our annual meeting with our Life-Spirit which depends on the nearness of Christ during the period between Christmas and Easter; and, thirdly, our once in a lifetime meeting with our Spirit-Man or Father-Principle sometime between our 28th and 42nd year. What is important is that the Third Hierarchy is involved in each of these encounters as a mediator for us. Our meeting with our Genius is mediated by an Angel, with Christ by an Archangel, and with the Father by an Archai.

In Lecture 3, Steiner takes us into the depths of what it means to be a human as opposed to being an animal. What are the three things that distinguish us humans from animals? We can walk upright, we can talk, and we can think, and we acquire these normally in that order, we learn to walk, then we learn to talk, and then we learn to think. There is a common expression for when someone talks too much without any signs of action, "You can talk the talk, but can you walk the walk?" In our speech our connection with the Archangelic realms during sleep shows itself, and in our walking, our connection with our I as mediated during sleep by the Archai shows itself. Steiner points out that one can perceive a child's previous life on Earth by observing the child as it learns to walk.

[page 63] You will remember my saying in earlier lectures that the soul aspect of one life

on Earth comes to fruition in the physical aspect of the next life, the spiritual aspect of one life on Earth in the soul aspect of the next life. That is the situation I have been talking about today.

Note that the progression is from spiritual to soul to physical aspects as one progresses from one lifetime to the next. The spiritual aspect is mediated by the Primal Powers, or Archai, as they work on our I during sleep. The soul aspect by the Archangels as they work on our astral body during sleep. But that working is not automatic, that is, without a requirement for participation on our part. What does he mean in the passage below by the phrase "right idealism"? He gives us a hint thus: "We need to have developed a love of humanity in our previous life, a true soul quality."

[page 63] The materialist will say people rest when they sleep. But they do not merely rest. If they develop the *right idealism* [italics added] during their waking hours they take with them into sleep the potential for the astral body to rise to the hierarchy of the Archangels and enter into a relationship with the world of the spirit that allows them to live their life from death to rebirth in the right way. If we do not do so in the right way we will, of course, bring weaknesses into life on Earth. But it will depend on the way we establish a relationship to the Primal Powers, the Archai, how we shape our next life. You see, therefore, that general love of humanity is a creative power.

The most frequent objection to the idea of karma is that it means a lack of freedom because we must go through something in this life that we set up in previous lifetimes, two previous lifetimes according to the above passages, which are required for attributes to filter from our spiritual to soul to physical aspects. But we are in this moment in the moving point of change, King of the World, if you will, leaning into the wind on the prow of our own majestic ship, and able to make changes now that will affect our next two lifetimes. When one looks forward, one can sense the freedom to change one's life and the world in the present moment.

[page 64] For let us assume you consider not this life on Earth but the next but two, and from that life on Earth look back on the present one. Then you will say: It is my karma. But your karma then refers back to this present life on Earth, which is when it evolved. This means that karma is evolving all the time.

We must recognize that the misfortunes that come to us have the vital function of restoring a balance for a weakness in our soul in the past. But for the misfortune, the weakness would have continued, so we must welcome the misfortune as a chance to balance our soul in this lifetime. But there are other events that happen to us in this lifetime that are primary karmic events, ones not connected with a previous lifetime event. When those misfortunes occur, the right attitude is: "If people only had what they wished, the life they led would make them quite weak." It is the effort we make in overcoming obstacles, those unexpected and undesirable happenings, that makes us strong in the next life.

[page 65] If we develop the right strength by coping with obstacles, if we take sufficient love of humanity with us into sleep, the karma woven by the I, which is in touch with the Archai, will be such that things are properly balanced out in the next life.

There may be many things that we don't have control of during this life, but it seems to me that taking a love of humanity to sleep with us is one that, with some effort, anyone has the power to achieve. Instructions and encouragement for doing this will not be found on the nightly television news programs that fill so many minds with distrust and dislike of humanity right at the point before they are ready to go to sleep. This does not augur well for a pleasant next two lifetimes for those who are addicted to nightly news programs, and yet no one who watches the news can claim to be forced to do so. Those are the kinds of decisions that are made freely and have effects on our next two lifetimes and more.

What about our relationship to the other two hierarchies above the Third Hierarchy of the Angels, Archangels, and Archai? In this passage Steiner lays out in general terms that the Second Hierarchy works

moral strength into us and the First Hierarchy takes it out into the world as creativity.

[page 68] Exusiai, Dynamis, and Kyriotetes [Note: 2nd Hierarchy, also known as Powers, Might, and Dominions] bring everything we perceive in our thoughts from sleep into our physical nature as moral strength. The Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones [Note: 1st Hierarchy] then take it out into the world, so that our own moral strengths become creative powers in the world.

In the time between death and a new birth we give up to our Angel our ideal thoughts and feelings, our love for humanity and religious feeling. Our Angel eventually gives over to the Archangel those thoughts and feelings that we brought through the gate of death with us. Steiner points out in the next passage what happens if we died in the state of having only a materialistic point of view.

[page 79] The activity which develops between Angels and Archangels is one that must take place, come what may. But there is a big difference if we are able to be more consciously aware as we follow the transactions between Angels and Archangels as the events take place which I have described, or if we follow them only in a dull, twilight state, which is the state people will know who have had nothing but materialistic awareness.

I worked as an engineer and computer programmer in a large chemical complex. Our process computers measured the status of the chemical plants via instruments installed in all the key places in the process and allowed operators to start up, control, and shutdown the plant safely. For most operations, the operators did not have to leave the control room to operate the plant. But for any unexpected occurrence, the operators would make a personal inspection. There are materialistic scientists today who would like call our brain the origin and source of all of our thinking. That's equivalent to the chemical operators believing that only the control room existed and they could not inspect the plant except by staying in the control room and reading their instruments of the status of the plant. Whether thinking is dependent on the brain or independent of it while using it for many operations is a clear choice to Steiner.

[page 108] Under certain circumstances, without having to undergo any further training, we can experience this ordinary power of thought as something that is free of the body. This ordinary power of thinking which every human soul can have within it today has two faces, like Janus. Either it is dependent on the brain, making our thoughts aware only of what can be mirrored in the brain and nervous system, in which case it is relatively passive, sine it seeks support from the instrument of the brain. Or it can free itself. Without any meditative activity, merely by pulling itself together inwardly so as to become aware of its true nature, by extricating itself from the support of the brain, it becomes a more active kind of thinking.

He thus outlines passive thinking and active thinking. Active thinkers are the ones who are most apt to take up spiritual research, and passive thinkers those who are most apt to conduct materialistic scientific research. What is it to be a passive thinker?

[page 163] Modern science can be said to be like someone who denies that the man in the cart is guiding the horses and who will only admit that the horses are drawing the man in the cart.

Steiner makes on page 164 the important point that we cannot say "we must" in regards to human conduct or else all moral significance is lost. "We shall" is the realm of a moral decision to do something which is optional - without the option there can be no sense of morality. This would be unnecessary to point out, except that distinction between "you must" and "you shall" has been lost today, due mostly to the field of psychology exactly as predicted by Steiner over 80 years ago.

[page 164] Terrible prospects open up if we look at what has begun to develop, for example in the field of criminal psychology. The tendency is not to ask whether someone has overstepped a 'you shall', but to try and prove that the person was driven to some destructive act out of a necessity of inherent nature. Strange attempts are on the increase to define crime merely as a particular case of illness. All this arises from a certain materialistic lack of clarity in our times regarding the distinction between 'you shall' and 'you must'.

In the next passage Steiner tells us that it is possible to discern a person's morality by examining the vaporous breath that is emitted upon exhalation. Does anyone have direct experience of this phenomenon? I will take it as an unanswered question for myself and begin to observe the vaporous breath of others. Since that vaporous breath is visible more of the year in the colder climes, I wonder if that means that morality is more directly observable in the temperate regions than the equatorial regions of the Earth.

[page 165] A person's moral or immoral behavior can be seen in the vaporous breath, and the breath of a person who is morally inclined is quite different from the breath of a person who is inclined to immorality.

The importance of our breath may not be clear to the materialistic minded, but it is of crucial importance if we look back where we came from or forward to our future existence as a Jupiter human being.

[page 166] In a sense we ourselves owe our existence to the exhalation of the Angels on the Old Moon . . . Jupiter human beings of the future will evolve out of what we breathe out today. . . But Jupiter human beings can only arise from the kind of breath that owes its existence to actions that obey the 'you shall', and which are therefore moral actions. . . . This gives morality, the expression of 'you shall', a very real value, an existential value. Our human conduct is intensely determined by what we are able to learn through the science of the spirit, especially as we truly perceive secrets connected with the cosmos.

The type of morality, if the expression 'you shall' is difficult for the 21st Century mind to decipher, that Steiner is referring to, is the same as that taught by Andrew J. Galambos in his landmark course in morality called V50, an introductory course in Volitional Science that he first gave in 1968 in Los Angeles. Since then tens of thousands of people around the world have taken the tape version of the course V50T. With the release of the book form of the course in 1999, thousands and millions more will have access to the material, and will have a chance to discover for themselves the true essence of morality and how living morality from the power point of freedom will enhance their individual lives and those of others far into the future.

In one of the greatest paradoxes of modern times, the most materialistic scientist of the modern age, Andrew Joseph Galambos, has come up with an understanding of freedom and morality that will appeal to the modern human being and create a moral person out of a formerly immoral one. With the implementation on an individual basis of the ideas enconced in V50T and its book form, [*Sic Itur Ad Astra*](#), the wholesale moving back to a moral 'you shall' of freedom from 'you must' of coercion can proceed. If you would like to catch this new wave of freedom and morality, read this book of Galambos. If you would like to find out for yourself how Steiner came to the conclusions outlined in this short review, acquire and read this book on Angels.

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