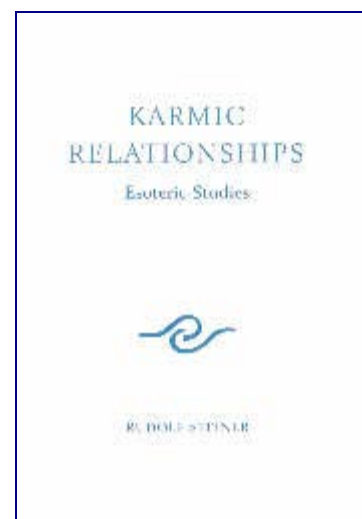


Site Map: [MAIN / A Reader's Journal, Vol. 2 Webpage Printer Ready](#)



**A READER'S JOURNAL**  
**Karmic Relationships, Volume 6, GA# 240**  
by  
**Rudolf Steiner**  
**Esoteric Studies,**  
**Nine Lectures in Berne, Zürich, Stuttgart,**  
**Arnhem, Jan to July 20, 1924**  
Published by The Rudolf Steiner Press in 1997  
A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©1999



*We not only live in our body, we live in our karma. Rudolf Steiner*

~^~

**"May my Guardian Spirit receive this my deed as a root and from it bring forth fruit."**

We are advised by the Editor on page 3 that, "Readers familiar with the contents of Vols. I to V will find repetitions in certain of the following lectures." As I read this book I found that the repeated material was not at all needlessly repetitious, but that it provided welcome reinforcement of and expansion on the content of previous lectures.

The above prayer from page 55 Steiner suggests as a remedy for a "humanity that has become sadly thoughtless" about the function of the Angeloi or Angels. This seems especially true for many individuals with their Guardian Angels. I offer this prayer to my Guardian Angel as I write this review, and I offer the review to you as a completed deed.

Whatever the roots of this review in the iron will of necessity from my past, I make this step forward into the future in freedom. As we learn in the early chapters, we look back to the Moon to our necessity and will while we look forward to the Sun from whence comes the help of our Angeloi in guiding our future steps.

A human being is composed of four bodies: physical, etheric, astral, and Ego. Consider a man: his physical body is composed of what he has around him in the *visible* external world, and his etheric body is composed of what he has around him in the *invisible* external world. And both of these visible and invisible worlds lie about him in the present moment of his life.

**[page 9] On the other hand, everything that he bears within him in his astral body and Ego in his present earthly existence, he owes entirely to what he experienced in the past, in earlier lives on Earth.**

At this point one would do well to ask, if I'm all composed of material from the present and the past, have I no future? From whence does my future come? To understand this rightly one must understand that what endures in human beings between death and birth are the spiritual beings we call souls, and what endures in the Cosmos, in the celestial bodies, are also spiritual beings. Two sets of spiritual beings in the Cosmos are particularly important to us as human beings: those of the Moon, and those of the Sun. Those of the Moon are responsible for our past, and those of the Sun are responsible for guiding us into the future. From our past, governed by the Moon beings, we are given our individuality, our will, our iron necessity

of karmic working-out. In our present, the Sun beings, particularly our Angeloi, work with us and guide us in freedom to our future.

If these concepts seem strange to you (And they will if you are new to Anthroposophy, the science of the whole human being.), consider this: If you walked through a Shopping Mall every night, would you expect that your daily life the next day might be influenced by the things you saw, the things you heard, and by the things you purchased to take home with you? Especially if you went every night to the same Mall. If during the day, you went to school and listened to a teacher who suggested ways of dealing with situations in your life, would your life when you left that school be different than it would have been if you had skipped school? By going to school, would you not likely disregard some of the counsel of the teacher and apply some of the other counsel of the teacher in your life?

What does this have to do with the iron necessity of the Moon beings and the freedom of the Sun beings? At night, or whenever one takes even a short nap, one's spiritual being expands beyond the Moon and leaves the details of one's past in the keeping of the Moon beings, like one must check one's personal books at the checkout desk when one enters a book store, and pick them up again on the way out. Just as when one leaves prison, one must don the same garments one first wore into prison. One cannot expand past the Moon while carrying the karmic baggage of previous lives or this one - one must check it at the Moon Desk. By the time one reaches the Sun, one has left behind all the evil deeds of one's life, and if that amounts to a large portion of one's being, one will be sadly crippled and deformed, as though one had to remove all steel plates from one's skull, all prosthetic devices such as legs and arms, in order to pass through a metal detector at an airport. One expands on to the Sun *sans* these *ersatz* human parts, and only picks them up on the way back home at the Moon Desk. This describes how our night-time work is done on the Moon and the Sun. But the Sun also works through us in our daily lives through the Angeloi that are borne of the rays of the Sun into our daily lives, and by whispering in our ears those thoughts that we carelessly refer to as our own ideas, up until now. These Angels assist us in our sailing into the sometimes treacherous waters of our future. With our iron necessity of will *and* the assistance in freedom by the Angeloi we shape our individual destiny on earth and beyond.

"How can there be beings in the Cosmos?" you might ask. "Surely you can't point to where Christ is in the sky." "How impertinent!" Here is Steiner's very pertinent reply to that question:

**[page 17, 18] Now suppose a human being were standing in front of us and looking at his hands or his arms, his head, his chest, his legs, his feet, we were to ask in each case, 'what is that?', and were told in reply, 'that is something human'. When no distinctions are made but everything is labeled with the generalization 'human', we are without bearings or direction. The same is true if we gaze out into the Cosmos, contemplate the Sun and Moon and the stars and speak of the Divine as a generalization.**

Understanding the deep meaning of this truth is vital for one to make sense of the universe in which one lives. One cannot feel at home in a universe in which the spiritual world exists somewhere else! And yet, even those who purport to believe in the spiritual world today, for the most part, believe in a heaven that exists in some unspecified place in some other dimension or reality. I don't know about you, but that has never felt comfortable to me, the thought that after death I'm going some place I've never been before, a place that exists in some other reality. To talk of the Divine as a generalization, rather than as a spiritual reality to whose physical aspects we point, is childish pap, the stuff of elementary Catechisms, not adult reality. Remember this is a review of one book, and no one review, no one book of Steiner's, is likely to convince you of anything. Only a complete picture of the spiritual and physical universe, one that proves to be consistent with many of your other views, has any chance to do the deed. Only then will you come to understand the truth of such statements as the following:

**[page 25] For nobody understands the Moon who does not understand the element of Necessity in human destiny; nobody understands the Sun who does not understand the element of Freedom in human nature. Such are the interconnections of Necessity and**

## **Freedom.**

To rightly understand the karmic necessity of our life, it would be helpful to imagine a human body planted into its karmic background head-first up to its ears. Like a plant receives water and nutrients from the earth in order to develop and grow, this human body receives thoughts and impulses into its brain from previous lifetimes. Steiner describes the soul of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer who, in an earlier incarnation as a Christian missionary from Italy to England, helped found the Archbishopric of Canterbury and who was subsequently murdered by an Anglo-Saxon chieftain. The poet Meyer came to understand that he once had something to do with Canterbury and wrote a story, *The Saint*, dealing with Thomas Becket, who suffered a similar fate at Canterbury several centuries after Meyer's earlier incarnation. The impulses and urges flowed in his head from the karmic background of Meyer's soul and came to fruition in his story of the murder of Thomas Becket. If this sounds like the popular fad of reincarnation as sensationalized by Dick Sutphen and other contemporary writers of the late 20th Century, read what Steiner says in his own words:

**[page 48] Anthroposophy does not exist in order to expound theories about repeated earthly lives or to give tabulated details of every kind, but to reveal, in all their concrete reality, the spiritual foundations of life.**

We learned in earlier lectures by Steiner that plants, who do not receive help from astral bodies of the higher kingdoms, are not able to produce fertile seeds - these plants would have no ability to reproduce, and therefore no future. The higher kingdoms for plants are animals, humans, and up, all of which have astral bodies. For human beings a similar thing is true, not that we cannot reproduce physically, for we have an astral body already that provides that capability, but that without higher beings than us, such as Angels, we have no future. When two people meet for the first time on earth they both have karmic necessity inscribed into their wills by the Moon, but now, meeting for the first time, the Sun beings, the Angeloi operate in the present moment.

**[page 56] The Angeloi intervene and lead the individuals concerned to further stages. The forces of Sun existence are now operating, so that within a man's inmost being, Sun and Moon together weave his destiny. This can be clearly visualized by thoughtful perception of the course of human life.**

The words of the old popular song goes, "I've got the Sun in the morning, and the Moon at night." In those two spiritual gates of the Sun and Moon are woven the warp and the woof of our lives in necessity and freedom.

If you have read Carlos Castaneda's various tales of his interactions with his teacher, Don Juan Matus, a Yaqui Indian Initiate, the following quotes from Steiner will make a lot of sense. The Initiate, Steiner says, hears what the Angeloi of another person is saying.

**[page 60, 61] This gives a certain character to the intercourse between an Initiate and ordinary men. He takes into himself what the Angelos wishes to say to the person who has come into his ken; he transforms himself as it were into the Angelos of this person and what he can say to the latter is therefore more intimate than it is for ordinary consciousness. . . . It might have happened then that a sage, confronting twenty other persons, would have been described quite differently by each of them.**

If you will remember the tale of the blind men and the elephant, how one discovered a snake, one a tree trunk, one a flat leaf, and one a wall, you will come to understand that the Initiate becomes a different person for each person because of the link established with the person's Angelos.

An Initiate can see shadowy pictures of our past lives behind us as they view us. But if it is our first meeting in any lifetime, no such pictures appear. Instead they will see the beings who come down in the rays of the Sun, the Angeloi, who are weaving the future into our I-organization which becomes the basis

of our future karma. (page 75, 76 paraphrase)

In the period immediately following death one proceeds through a review of one's life backwards. Elsewhere Steiner says this process lasts for about one-third of a person's life, equal to the time one spends sleeping, but on page 103, he makes it explicit that one lives backwards through the *nights* of one's life, in the same amount of time one spent sleeping. As one lives through one of these nights, one reviews the wrongs one has done to others during the previous day, but with two dramatic differences: 1) it is as if one is transposed into the other person, experiencing what the other person felt as a result of the wrong one has done to the other person, and 2) the intensity of the experience is very much greater. This is an experience that one is protected from experiencing every night by the Guardian of the Threshold, with the result that one only experiences them in the initial period between death and a new birth, known in the East as by the name, Kamaloka.

As one expands upon death, one first reaches the orbit or sphere of the Moon, then the orbit of Mercury (what we now call Venus), then Venus (now Mercury), and only then do we reach the Sun. (See ARJ: [Life Between Death and Rebirth](#) by Rudolf Steiner.) We learned earlier that we leave behind any evil when we pass through the Moon sphere, and on page 107 we learn that we leave behind any illnesses when we pass through the Mercury sphere.

**[page 107, 108] Therefore it is the case that true medicine can only be mastered when one is able to perceive how the dead are freed from illnesses in the Mercury sphere. . . . The God Mercury taught men the art of medicine of which Hippocrates, later on, still preserved a tradition.**

Each of these planetary spheres are reflected in one's life from birth to death, beginning with the Moon period from birth until seven years old, and followed by the Mercury period from age seven till 14 years old, during which time humans are their healthiest due to the influence of Mercury. In the next period it is Venus whose influence dominates, and that period from ages 14 to 21 is the time of our greatest sexuality. Then comes the Sun period from age 21 until 42 at which time Mars takes over for seven years, then Jupiter at 49 for seven more years until Saturn begins at 56 and ends at 63. "But to behold the secrets of the worlds in their *interconnections*, one must have passed the age of sixty-three." (Editor's italics, quoted from page 175.) Steiner turned 63 in February, 1924, and shortly thereafter he began the series of lectures in this book. Now you may understand that he speaks with personal knowledge of the following truth in this lecture given in June, 1924:

**[page 113, 114] Truth to tell, even an Initiate cannot see the circumstances of life between death and a new birth in which Saturn plays a part, until he has passed the sixty-third year of his life. . . . So you will realize why it is that I am only now speaking of matters connected with the Saturn existence. . . . In the consciousness of the Beings on Saturn there is only Past; there is no Present at all. . . . They are never aware of what they do out of an immediate resolve of the Present, but they perceive it only when it has become the Past.**

Here he refers specifically to Schiller, who "lived in the spiritual world with a majestic vision in retrospect of all the Past that was connected with his own karma." From his past arose Schiller's ideas of the Future. One cannot find this information in any of Steiner's writings prior to this time for the simple reason that he had not yet reached the age of 63.

Many years ago I designed an acronym, EAT-O-TWIST, to remind me that Everything Always Turns Out The Way It's Supposed To. It means a lot of different things depending on exactly how one interprets the words, but at the basis, it means that the events in the physical, external world are preceded by preparatory events in the spiritual, internal world. Sometimes it's the supposing that one does ahead of time in the form of planning. Sometimes it's the supposing one does ahead of time in the form of fear. Fear at its roots is a form of supposing that things will happen badly to one. The more energy that goes

into supposing the greater the probability of the supposed event's arriving. "The thing I have greatly feared has come upon me." Another way of understanding "supposed to" is to take the meaning of karmic working out. Again that supposing is done ahead of time, between death and a new birth. Here's how Steiner confirms my insights about EAT-O-TWIST:

**[page 123] Now everything that happens here in the physical world is foreshadowed in spiritual worlds. Nothing happens in the physical world that has not been prepared for spiritually.**

In the 12th Century an incredible convergence of teachers came together in the School of Chartres. They formed the Platonic stream that was able through genuine Inspiration "to perceive the descent of the Christ to Earth and to glimpse His work on the Earth" (page 128). Speaking to a small circle of pupils at the Chartres School Alanus ab Insulis said prophetically that men from the Aristotelian stream will come to place the Sun instead of the Earth at the center of the cosmic system and our picture of the world will become arid. He was talking of Giordano Bruno, several hundred years before Bruno was born. He said that men will come to calculate the exact positions of the heavenly bodies and view them as mere accumulations of burning gases or cold rock. Here's his prediction about the 20th Century:

**[page 130] We must come to an understanding with the Aristotelians who bring to humanity the intellect which must then be spiritualized so that in the twentieth century it may shine forth in a new and spiritual form among men.**

Alanus ab Insulis brought his deep Platonic insights to the Cistercian order when, late in life, he put on their robes. The Dominicans followed with their Aristotelian stream and from the 13th Century onward they took over the spiritual leadership in Europe. With this prologue we can now follow what Steiner tells us of the destiny of the Anthroposophical Movement:

**[page 136] For over the Anthroposophical Movement a destiny hovers: many of those in the Anthroposophical Society to-day will have to come down again to the Earth before, and at the end of the twentieth century, but united then, with those who were either the actual leaders in the School of Chartres or were pupils at Chartres. And so, if civilization is not to fall into utter decadence, before the end of the twentieth century the Platonists of Chartres and the Aristotelians who came later will have to be working together on the Earth.**

In the late 19th Century, about 1870, the Spiritual or Consciousness Soul Age epoch began. Simultaneously the rulership of Michael began. There are seven Archangels whose influence pours forth onto the Earth at all times, but every three hundred years or so ( $2160 \div 7$ , to be exact), a different Archangel maintains a stronger leadership than the others. Gabriel ceded his deeply physical leadership to the spiritual leadership of Michael in 1879.

**[page 144] Michael is the Archangel who in his rulership has paramountly to do with the powers of the intelligence in mankind, the spiritual evolution and culture of mankind.**

**[page 146, 147] Michael is not the Spirit who, if I may put it so, cultivates intellectuality *per se*; the spirituality he bestows strives to bring enlightenment to mankind in the form of ideas, of thoughts - but ideas and thoughts that grasp the spiritual. His wish is that man shall be a free being, but one who discerns in his concepts, in his thoughts, what comes to him as revelation from the spiritual worlds.**

When the Nominalists came on the scene to aver, "Concepts and ideas are merely names, they have no reality," it was the Realists of the Dominican Order that countered this Ahrimanic attempt to subvert Michael's teachings by claiming equally strongly, "Ideas and thoughts are spiritual realities contained within the phenomena of the world, they are not merely nominal." (Quotes from page 155)

In his final lecture, given in Arnhem, on July 20, 1924, exactly 16 years before my birth, Steiner tells us of a spiritual School of Michael in which the pupils were being prepared by Michael for their incarnation in the 20th Century during which they were to help foster the Michaelic teachings in opposition to the Ahrimanic forces that will be prevalent. With the advent of the Internet in the last 15 years of this waning 20th Century we have seen a dramatic increase in the power of the printed word. Never has the power of the printed word increased so dramatically since the invention of the printing press itself by Gutenberg in 1456. With a website, a single person at a personal computer anywhere in the world can publish fliers that can be viewed by half the people in the world within minutes. What does all this mean? To find out, let's take a look at a secret that Steiner shares with us in this lecture.

**[page 171, 172] This is the secret that must be touched upon. - A human being whose task it is to proclaim the Michael wisdom feels that in a certain respect he is following the right course when he tries to put into words, when he wrestles to find the terminology to express, what is, in very truth, the wisdom of Michael. Such a one feels, too, that he is further justified when with his own hand he writes down this wisdom; for then the flow of the spiritual is directly connected with him and stream, as it were, into the forms of what he is writing, into what he is doing.**

When one's writing is duplicated in the form of books or websites, "when it comes before the eyes of men as printed letters, it becomes an Ahrimanic spiritual power" (page 172) The real teaching must be done face to face, using texts only as an aid to memory, Michael told his pupils as he prepared them for the world that we are living in as I pen these words. Steiner is not saying "Away with all the anthroposophical books!" but rather he's exhorting us "to ennoble the art of printing through our reverence to Michael wisdom." When are we most apt to find Ahrimanic spirits attacking the wisdom of Michael? When a "diminution or lowering of the consciousness takes place in human beings." (Quotes from page 173) He cites as one example the events that precipitated World War I. In retrospect it seems to me that we have survived the possibility of a world catastrophe in this 20th Century only by the raising of consciousness so that the many small wars did not ever turn into another world-wide war since 1945.

Steiner conjures up a picture for us of Michael standing in our hearts with his foot covering the Ahrimanic books of our age, which books are the unspiritualized products of the Serpent that Michael crushed underfoot in an earlier age. Steiner speaks in this lecture to our hearts that we may hear and be ever vigilant to the new Serpent as it appears in intellectualized form in the writers of our time that have been schooled by Ahriman. Where will we find such an author?

**[page 178] He will write in all domains: in philosophy, in poetry, in the sphere of the drama and the epic; in medicine, law, sociology. Ahriman will write in all these domains.**

One can expect that such writing will be very popular, will be found on all the best-seller lists, and will make a lot of money for the authors. Contrast that with the effort it takes to find Rudolf Steiner books. I found one copy in a metaphysical bookstore some twelve years ago and it was a transcript of some lectures that made no sense at all to me at the time. Somehow I persisted until I discovered the essence of what Steiner was communicating and became determined to locate a source of his books. That source is the Anthroposophical Press in Hudson, New York. The forces of Ahriman are gigantic in comparison to Michael, and yet, like David facing Goliath, we must not quaver nor shake in our resolve to bring the Ahrimanic giant crashing to his back, and when that happens, it will be Michael's victory that we will rejoice over.

Remember **EAT-O-TWIST!** — it never breaks.

~~~~~

To Obtain your own Copy of this Reviewed Book, Click on SteinerBooks Logo below and order a copy of this book.

