

# THE LAST ADDRESS

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# THE LAST ADDRESS

BY RUDOLF STEINER

Given in Dornach on September 28, 1924

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

It has not been possible for me to speak to you on the last two days. But today—the day when the Michael mood of dedication must pour its light into all our hearts—I did not want to let pass without speaking to you at least a few words. That I am able to do so is due entirely to the loving and devoted care of our friend Dr. Ita Wegman. And so I hope that I will still be able to say today what I desire particularly to say to you on the occasion of this festival.

In recent months we have frequently spoken, my dear friends, of the instreaming of the Michael-Power into the spiritual events of man's life on earth. And it will be one of the more beautiful results that can follow from our anthroposophical understanding of times and seasons, if we are really able to add to the other festivals of the year a rightly ordered Michael Festival. That however will only be possible when the might and power of the Michael Thoughts, of which today men have no more than a dim feeling, has taken hold in a number of human souls who will then be able to create the right human starting-point for such a festival.

What we can do at present is to awaken, in this Michael time, the Michael mood in our souls by giving ourselves up to thoughts that will prepare the way for a future Michael Festival. And such thoughts are especially stirred to activity within us when we turn

our gaze upon all that we have seen taking place—partly on earth, partly in super-sensible worlds—through long periods of time, in preparation for all that can now be accomplished for human evolution in the course of this present century by souls who in full sincerity feel themselves drawn to the Michael stream.

That you yourselves, my dear friends, in so far as you truly and honestly incline to the Anthroposophical Movement, belong to these souls—this I have endeavoured to make clear to you in the lectures of the last weeks and especially also in the lectures where I spoke to you directly of the karma of the Anthroposophical Society. We can however carry these considerations a little further, and that is what I want to do today.

Let us now bring before our souls beings who are intimately connected, and will always be intimately connected, with the Michael stream, in the sense in which we have described it here. Let us direct our gaze to beings who in at least two successive incarnations made a powerful impression on great numbers of their fellow-men, beings who, however, only show themselves in their true unity when we recognize them as successive incarnations of one and the same being.

When we look back into olden times, we see rise up before us within the traditions of Judaism the prophetic figure of Elijah. We know what significance the prophet Elijah had for the people of the Old Testament, and therewith for all mankind; we know how he set before them the goal and destiny of their existence. And we have shown how in the course of time the being who was present in Elijah appeared again at the very most important moment of human evolution, appeared again so that Christ Jesus Himself could give him the Initiation he was to receive for the evolution of mankind. For the being of Elijah appeared again in Lazarus-John—who are in truth one and the same figure, as you will have understood from my book *Christianity as Mystical Fact*.

And further we saw that this being appears once more in that world painter who let his artistic power unfold in marvellous depths of tenderness, as it moved hovering over the Mystery of

Golgotha. And we saw how the deeply Christian impulse that lives in Raphael, as it were impelling into colour and form the very nature and being of Christianity itself—we saw how this impulse rose again in the poet Novalis. In the poet Novalis stands revealed in wondrously beautiful words what Raphael had placed before mankind in colours and forms of rarest loveliness. We see, thus following one another in time, beings who are brought together into a unity when incarnation is understood.

We know [for I have often spoken with you of these things] how, when man has gone through the gate of death, he enters the world of the stars. What we are accustomed to call “stars” in the external, physical sense are no more than the outer sign and symbol of spiritual worlds which look down upon us and take their share and part in all the deeds of the evolution of mankind.

We know that man passes through the Moon sphere and through the spheres of Mercury and Venus, through the spheres of the Sun and of Mars, and of Jupiter and Saturn. And we know that when, together with the beings of these spheres and together too with other human souls who have also departed from the life on Earth, he has elaborated his karma, he then turns back again to earthly existence.

Bearing this in mind, let us look for a moment at Raphael and see how he passes through the gate of death, and how he enters the realm of the starry worlds, the realm of spiritual evolution, taking with him the power of his art, which already on earth shone with the bright light of the stars. We behold, my dear friends, how Raphael enters the Moon sphere, and we see how he comes into association here with the Spirits who live in the Moon sphere and who are the spiritual Individualities of the great original Leaders of mankind, with whose wisdom Raphael, as Elijah, had been deeply inspired. He meets these Moon Beings, and he meets too all the souls with whom he has lived in earlier stages of Earth-evolution. We see how he unites himself spiritually with the spiritual origin of the Earth, with that World of Being which first made it possible for man to be, and for the Earthly to be impregnated with

the Divine. We behold Raphael as it were completely “at home”, united with those with whom he had most loved to be in the Elijah existence, inasmuch as it was They who at the beginning of Earth existence set the goal for the life on this Earth.

Then we behold him wander through the Mercury sphere where, in association with the great Cosmic Healers, he transforms for his spirituality the power that had been his to create what is so infinitely whole and healthy in colour and line. All that he has painted, whether on canvas or as a fresco on the wall, for the help and comfort as well as for the unending inspiration of such as can understand—all his work that was so radiant with light, showed itself now to him in the great cosmic connection in which it is able to stand when it passes through the Beings of the Mercury sphere.

And thus was he, who on Earth had unfolded so great a love for art, whose soul had been aflame with love for colour and for line, transplanted now into the sphere of Venus, which in turn lovingly bore him across to the Sun, to that Sun existence which lived in all his incarnations so far as they are yet known to us. For it was from the Sun that he, as the prophet Elijah, brought to mankind through the medium of his own people the truths that belong to the goals of existence.

We see how in the Sun sphere he is able to live through over again in a deep and intimate sense—in another way now than when he was on Earth as a companion of Christ Jesus—he is able to live over again what he underwent when, through the Initiation of Christ Jesus, he, Lazarus, became John.

And all that he has painted in shining light for the followers of Christ Jesus,—he now beholds all this pour its rays into the cosmic transformation of the human heart.

And we see further how what he thus had at the foundation of his life penetrates, wisdom-filled, the sphere of Jupiter. In this sphere he is able in wisdom to enter into a relation of understanding with such spirits as Goethe—the spirit, that is, that afterwards became Goethe—as well as also with spirits who had gone astray on other paths, but who nevertheless led over World Being and

World Thought into the realm of the magical. The foundation is laid for his magic idealism in the experience he had of the evolution of the later Eliphas Levi. And we behold too how he partakes in all that was living there in Swedenborg.

And now I must draw your attention to something in the life of Raphael that is of very great significance. A personality who was most deeply devoted to Raphael—Hermann Grimm—set to work four times to write a life of Raphael. His “Life of Michaelangelo” he brought to a beautiful completeness, but he never succeeded in drawing any picture of Raphael’s earthly life that gave him satisfaction. In his own view all he wrote was unfinished and incomplete. The first book he undertook was intended to be a biography. What is it? Nothing but a reproduction of old anecdotes told by Vasari! No biography of Raphael at all, but something altogether different—a description of what Raphael became on Earth after his death, in the respect and recognition of his fellow men. Hermann Grimm relates what people have thought of Raphael—what the Italians, the French, the Germans have thought of Raphael in the course of history through the centuries. What he gives us is a biography of the Raphael Thought as it has lived here on Earth since his death. He finds the way to tell what remains of Raphael in the hearts and minds of men, what lives of him still in their reverence and understanding. But he does not find the possibility to give a picture of the earthly life of Raphael.

After Hermann Grimm has made the attempt four times over, he says: all that one can really do for Raphael as a personality is to write of how one picture passes over into the next, as though it had been painted by a super-sensible being who had simply not touched the Earth at all with his earthly life. The pictures are there, but one can look right away from Raphael who painted the pictures and reproduce the sequence of what is expressed in their inner content.

And so, shortly before his death, Hermann Grimm began to speak once again about Raphael; yet once more he made the attempt to put pen to paper and write about him. This time however

he spoke only of his pictures and not about the earthly personality of Raphael at all.

The truth is, my dear friends, this earthly personality of Raphael was completely yielded up and was only present through what Lazarus-John gave to this soul to be poured out into colour and line for all mankind.

Such was the life of this being. And it was so, that this Raphael life could only be, as it were, absolved in another life of thirty years—in Novalis. And so we see Raphael die young, Novalis die young—one being, who came forth from Elijah-John, appearing before mankind in two different forms, preparing through art and through poetry the true Michael mood of soul, sent down by the Michael stream as messenger to men on Earth.

And now we behold the wonderful artistic power of Raphael come to life again in Novalis in poetry that stirs and enraptures the hearts of men. All that through Raphael was given to human eyes to see,—of this could human hearts drink deep, when it came again in Novalis.

When we consider the life of Novalis, what an echo we find there of the Raphael life for which Hermann Grimm had so fine an understanding! His beloved dies in her youth. He is himself still young. What is he going to do with his life now that she has died? He tells us himself. He says that his life on Earth will be henceforth to “die after her”, to follow her on the way of death. He wants to pass over already now into the super-sensible, to lead again the Raphael life, not touching the Earth, but living out in poetry his magic idealism. He would fain not let himself be touched by Earth life.

When we read the “Fragments” of Novalis, and give ourselves up to the life that flows so abundantly in them, we can discover the secret of the deep impression they make on us. Whatever we have before us in immediate sense-reality, whatever the eye can see and recognise as beautiful—all this, through the magic idealism that lives in the soul of Novalis, appears in his poetry with a well-nigh heavenly splendour. The meanest and simplest material



thing—with the magic idealism of his poetry he can make it live again in all its spiritual light and glory.

And so we see in Novalis a radiant and splendid forerunner of that Michael stream which is now to lead you all, my dear friends, while you live; and then, after you have gone through the gate of death, you will find in the spiritual super-sensible worlds all those others—among them also the being of whom I have been speaking to you today—all those with whom you are to prepare the work that shall be accomplished at the end of the century, and that shall lead mankind past the great crisis in which it is involved.

This work is: to let the Michael Power and the Michael Will penetrate the whole of life. The Michael Power and the Michael Will are none other than the Christ Will and the Christ Power, going before in order to implant in the right way into the Earth the Power of the Christ. If this Michael Power is able verily to overcome all that is of the demon and the dragon [and you will know what that is], if you all, who have in this way received in the light Michael Thought, have indeed received it with true and faithful heart and with tender love, and will endeavour to go forward from the Michael mood of this year, until not only is the Michael Thought revealed in your soul, but you are able also to make the Michael Thought live in your deeds in all its strength and all its power—if this is so, then will you be true servants of the Michael Thought, worthy helpers of what has now to enter Earth-evolution through Anthroposophy, and take its place there in the meaning of Michael.

If, in the near future, in four times twelve human beings, the Michael Thought becomes fully alive—four times twelve human beings, that is, who are recognised not by themselves but by the Leadership of the Goetheanum in Dornach—if in four times twelve such human beings, leaders arise having the mood of soul that belongs to the Michael festival, then we can look up to the light that through the Michael stream and the Michael activity will be shed abroad in the future among mankind.

Because this is so, my dear friends, I have made the effort today

to rise up and speak to you, if only in these few short words. My strength is not sufficient for more today. May the words so speak to your soul that you receive the Michael Thought in the sense of what a faithful follower of Michael may feel when, clothed in the light rays of the Sun, Michael appears and points us to that which must now take place. For it must even be so that this Michael garment, this garment of Light, shall become the Words of the Worlds, which can transform the Logos of the Worlds into the Logos of Mankind. Therefore let my words to you today be these:

Springing from powers of the sun,  
Luminous, world-blessing  
Spirit-powers, to be Michael's garment of rays  
You are foreordained by the thinking of gods.

He, the Christ-proclaimer, reveals in you—  
Mankind sustaining—holy cosmic will;  
You, the bright world-ether beings,  
Bear the Christ-Word to human beings.

So Christ's herald appears  
To waiting, thirsting souls;  
To them, your word of light streams forth  
In the world-age of spirit-man.

You, students of spirit-knowledge,  
Take Michael's wise directing,  
Take the word of love of the will of worlds  
Into your soul's high aims—actively.