

# **Anthroposophy as a Spiritual Path of Knowledge**

by Richard Cooper

**Dedicated to Peter: the Rock of Knowledge on which our lives in Christ shall be built.**

Following on from recent posts, I have put together some hopefully relatable spiritual considerations about our place in history, inspired by recent events and posts, and the apostle Peter. At the end, I have added something from Rudolf Steiner about Oriphiel's age that shall follow Michael's in 2300, and list of the ruling Spirits of Time of spiritual history.

Judith von Halle's work has focussed on a spiritual scientific understanding of the Gospels, the karma of those involved, and how we may raise our spiritual sight of these occult realities. When we understand the time of Christ in spirit, we come to see the role played by those who were then involved, in order to help us understand our present spiritual challenges. But such study also calls forth a wider dimension, for which we now prepare. There are future challenges that we, like them, will be faced with in a future time under the regency of Oriphiel\*.

\* **Oriphiel** (200BC – 150AD), **Anael** (150 – 500AD), **Zachariel** (500 – 850), **Raphael** (850 – 1190), **Samael** (1190 – 1510), **Gabriel** (1510 – 1879), **Michael** (1879 – 2300).

**John 2:10 KJV** *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

Those who feel chosen now are confronted with a preliminary vision of this future time, which explains many of the feelings that some of us have recently had regarding the grave implications for the future of present times. Of course, in empathy for our fellow man, these are present concerns for the short term future, but they also carry important considerations for spiritual history, for our empathy may extend to what will become of present events.

I have here tried to characterise what lives in our feelings in the spirit of empathy for our fellow man, with the following questions. The three questions show how we can raise to consciousness

imaginative thinking of the angel in our astral body, and open ourselves to the inspiration and transformation of Michael in service of Christ.

1. That no human being will experience the peace of happiness himself if others are unhappy. *What is my task in life?*

2. That human beings should be able to perceive the divine principle operating in every other human being. *How shall I work with others?*

3. That human beings should be able to gain irrefutable insight into the reality of the spiritual world. *How can I/we grasp occult realities?*

### **Present and future tasks**

"The reign of Michael will again be replaced by a dark, terrible age, which will begin around the year 2400. Already today, at the same time as Michael, a dark god has taken up his reign: the god Mammon.

For occultism, Mammon is not only the god of money. He is rather the leader of all low, black forces. And his hosts attack not only the souls of men, but also the physical bodies of men, to corrode and ruin them. People talk so much about bacteria today not because they know more about them, but because they have really taken on a very special form today. And in the future they will become rampant in a frightening way. When that black age approaches, fratricidal strife and fratricidal warfare will rage in a horrible way, and the poor bodies of men will languish in a terrible way afflicted by diseases and pestilences. The brand of sin will be imprinted on the bodies of men for everyone to see. Then another archangel will have the rule: Oraphiel. He must come to shake people up, to awaken them to their true destiny through cruel torments. And in order for this to happen in the right way, a small group of people must be prepared today, so that in four to six hundred years in the black age they could spread the esoteric life and lead mankind. Whoever today, under Michael's rule, feels the urge to participate in the spiritual life, is called to serve the archangel Michael and to learn under him, so that he may one day be mature enough to serve the terrible Oraphiel in the right way. A sacrifice is required of those who want to consecrate themselves to a higher life. Only under the condition that one wants to receive the spiritual life and experience the

awakening, if one wants to use oneself, one's will, everything only in the service of mankind for it later.

In four to six hundred years, the small group of people who are being prepared today will serve God Oraphiel, so that mankind will be saved. If in that age such people wanted to take over the spiritual leadership, who have not been prepared to stand firm in all storms and to defy the multitudes of Mammon, they would not be able to serve the Archangel Oraphiel in the right way, and mankind would not be lifted up from its misery. But in order for this to happen, we must work today with all seriousness, so that we can then fulfill our tasks in the right way.

But when the dark powers rage most terribly, even the brightest light shines. Once before Oraphiel has held his dominion. That was at the time when the Christ appeared on earth. At that time, terrible powers of decay and decadence ruled everywhere on earth. And only with cruel means the human race could be shaken up. Oraphiel is called the angel of wrath, who purifies mankind with a strong hand.

A deep meaning has the narration of the Bible that Christ wields the scourge to cleanse the temple from the changers. At that time, when it was darkest on earth, the Christ appeared as the Savior of mankind. 109 years after Christ's appearance, the reign of Oraphiel was over and was replaced by Anael. Then followed Zachariel, then Raphael. At the time of the Renaissance Samael ruled, from the 16th century until November 1879 Gabriel. Then Michael took over, and around the year 2400 again Oraphiel, the terrible angel of wrath, will take over. And then, as once, the spiritual light will shine brightly and radiantly into the darkness: the Christ will again appear on earth, albeit in a different form than then. To receive Him, to serve Him, to this we are called." (Lit.: GA 266a, p. 283ff)

**\*\*Rudolf Steiner, From Contents of the Esoteric Class, 5 dec 1907, Munich GA0266.**



Rembrandt, **The Denial of Saint Peter**, 1660, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

**Peter's pre-Golgotha deed, transforms into his own destiny post Golgotha.**

Judith von Halle gives an interesting interpretation of the Bible passage about a servant of the high priest. His ear was cut off by the sword of Peter during the arrest of Jesus (Matthew 26:51, Mark 14:47, Luke 22:51 & John 18:10). The servant's name is mentioned as Malchus (John 18:10). Then Jesus touched his ear and healed him (Luke 22:51).

According to Judith von Halle (\*) this story signifies the three stages of human consciousness.

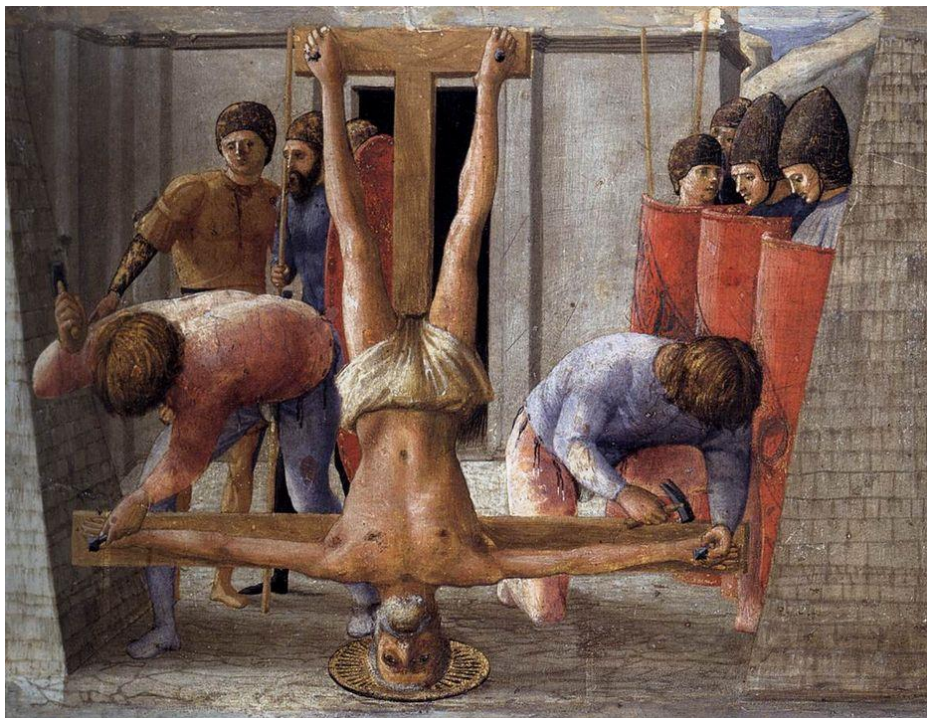
**1. Malchus.** He, the servant, listens only to his priest, a representative of a degenerate, petrified group consciousness.

**2. Malchu.** The ear is the organ of hearing or listening. The Hebrew word corresponding to "hear or listen" is "Shema" beginning with s-sound. "s" is now cut off, he no longer listens, becomes free in a certain sense but rootless at the same time .

**3. Malchut.** Christ healed him by adding something to his organ, not the old "s" , but the next letter "t" (Hebrew tav), thus making him capable of receiving words from The Kingdom (Malchut).

\*Judith von Halle: **Meditation und Seelenprüfungen (Meditation and trials of the soul)**, Verlag für Anthroposophie, 2019."

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Massacio, **The Crucifixion of Saint Peter**, 1426

We would add: when one follows the gestures of the three letters as Judith von Halle lays out in the text above, as formative for this descent through *thinking, feeling* to *willing*, one can then see them in the Massacio painting of the Crucifixion of Saint Peter. Look at the two soldiers on the right (as necessarily petrified and submissive to their role and task, their consciousness has however turn inward). We then see the third soldier, a little further back to the right, with a more rounded hat (as with the man on the left), the consciousness of these two figures is more awake, more questioning, but still in thrall of the scene. It is the consciousness of Peter, upside down, that fully bears the strength of the awakened I: Quite wonderfully Massacio depicts the wooden 'T' centre stage, yet before a structure reminiscent of a stone sephulchre.

Peter thus becomes able of receiving *initiate knowledge*, knowledge of the spiritual, through fully awakening to the *inverse social* reciprocal nature of the path to knowledge. *Inverse-social*, because like Christ, to follow Christ, we have to understand, as Peter has to understand, that the path is followed on the stage of history, in light of the developing consciousness and indeed lack of consciousness of mankind as a whole, as much *social* as it is intensely *individual*. With the stone dark portal Massacio depicts, we see reference made to the full descent into the physical body, outlining how Peter in advance represents this path to Intuitive Knowledge, and its link to the Inner Earth.

After Golgotha, Peter denies Christ three times before the cock crows, firstly before the fire in the night, he hears a group, and denies he knew Christ: Henceforth, he shall be challenged in thinking to identify with mankind as a whole, and stand for Christ in this light. Secondly, a servant girl asks him if he knew Christ, he denies it, and so, he will be challenged to fully transform his character, his soul life, in the light of Christ. Thirdly, Peter is questioned "Didn't I see you with him in the olive grove?" and denies it, – and then the cock crows and he weeps bitterly. Peter's destiny throughout his subsequent incarnations is to awaken from the 'S' to the 'T'. From the *sentimental* feeling life to a fully conscious knowledge of the spiritual world.

Before Golgotha: the verse from the book of Isaiah 22:22 prophesies Christ: "I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades."

After Golgotha: Revelation 3:7 refers here to Christ: "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open." In the middle, Golgotha is *the Turning Point of Time*, and it is decisive for Peter. The Holman Christian Standard Bible highlights this:

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth is *already* bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth is already loosed in heaven."

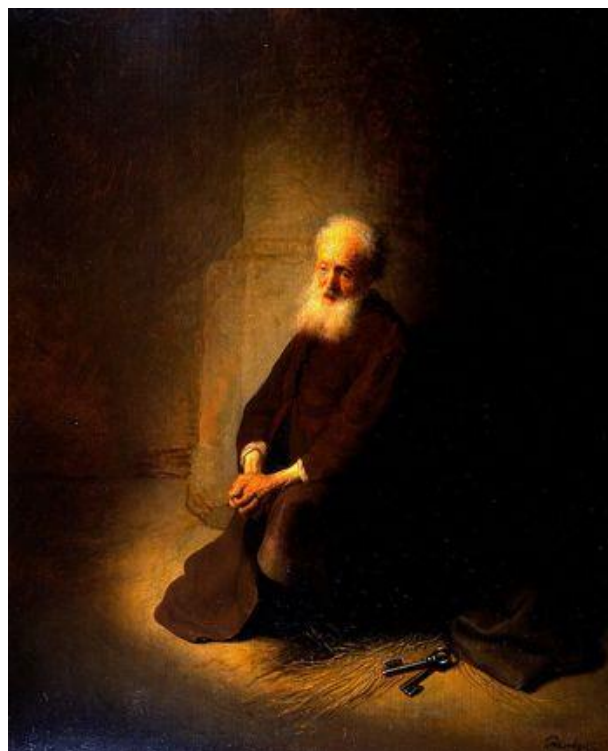
We have to carefully notice the already, as marked in italics. Esoterically understood: Peter is given 'the keys to heaven and hell', not because he *overtly* becomes the first Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, to decide who goes to Heaven or Hell, but because he *himself* has to work *for* these keys in his destiny, through his incarnations, to bring his own karma and destiny *to* Christ, therefore in conscious awareness of Christ through his thinking, feeling and willing. Peter is confronted by



dialectics of power and powerlessness: in order to bring his deeds in line with that of Christ.

The next verse in Revelation, after 3:7, is revealing and significant, for it calls us to recognise our relationship to *Christ* and the spiritual world as determinate of our lives and responsibility, that we not 'deny' *their* place. – Revelations 3:8 "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."

One of the many things that we may be thankful to for Judith von Halle is that she has pointed out the challenge of the Sun Demon. The first sightings of this Hale-Bopp comet occurred around 1998, shortly before the attacks on 911 and the following 'War on Terror'. 1998 is a renewed appearance of that impulse that returns in 666-year intervals through history. The previous 666-year period of takes us back to the time of the persecution of the Templars, around 1332. In this regard, Judith von Halle has written further of the Templar Order of Knights, and the destiny of the apostle Peter as reincarnated Grand Master in Jacques de Molay. Rembrandt's 1631 painting is of the Apostle Peter, but it is also a preview of the far darker incarceration Peter will later face in his incarnation as Jacques de Molay.



"The spiritual background of the denial scene requires a comprehensive esoteric reflection, which would lead too far at this point. But at least a hint should be given here as to the direction in which research is needed to gain a closer insight into the meaning of this mystery picture: Before the first denial, in the darkness of the night, the gatekeeper approaches Peter and asks him if he too is a disciple of Jesus Christ. Peter denies and falls into the first of his inner abysses, into the abyss of the world of thought. Denial in thought, in that thinking which belongs to the world of the senses, is not difficult for him. And so, the first denial goes easily and quickly over his lips. During the second question, Peter warms himself by the fire that is lit in the forecourt of the house. The second question now speaks to his world of sensations. And again, he denied with an oath: "I do not know the man." With this oath, a perjury, Peter plunges into the abyss of his sentient world. But the denial of Christ in his emotional world is much more difficult for him. But when he is asked a third time and is made aware that he has been seen in the garden together with the Lord, he has to act with all his might against his higher will, that father-divine will which has shaped and permeates his entire bodily life. "Then he began to curse and swear: "I do not know man". Peter in this way falls into the third abyss, the abyss of the will."

Judith von Halle, **The Templers, Band II, Verlag für Anthroposophie**, 2013.





### **The *Butterfly Meditation* (German 'Falter Meditation')**

Catch the butterfly  
Send it to icy heights  
Where the world dreams prevail  
If it becomes a bird for you  
Then you have done half of the work  
Dive the bird  
In the depths of the sea

#### **(I A O U E)**

Where the will of the world is at work.  
If the bird drowns  
Then you still have to do something  
Burn the bird's body/ Purifying it in the fire  
Then consume the ashes  
And you are  
The light in the darkness of the world

"Rudolf Steiner's notes the formula "I A O U E", which gives a vocal reference to Steiner's teaching on hierarchies. On Steiner's note sheet, archive number 5852, this formula is executed as a meditation in its own right, which is presented there as a preparation for the Falter Meditation (my note: *In German 'falter' actually refers to a larger-winged moth*):

**I** I Still myself  
**A** You open to the world that says much  
**O** The angels come, and give the hands  
**U** The second hierarchy follows, flows around you with light  
**E** The first hierarchy comes and burns you in fire.

Edith Maryon's notes refer to the imagination of the butterfly that becomes a bird. It is about thinking, and the butterfly is the image of the thought. The bird would thus be equated with centred, meditatively free consciousness, which goes through a sacral process up to the formation of will. Moreover, in Maryon's notes, the mantram addresses the pendulum swing between "*democracy with fellow human beings*" and the tragic, lonely "*aristocracy of thought*".

Other notes of participants of the esoteric hours in the context of the Falter Meditation describe the esoteric quality that Rudolf Steiner tried to convey here. The described processes, which Steiner addressed, transforms *thinking* in this process, into an inner organ of *touch*:

" The head is like a fruit, the heart like a shining chalice. We are to experience our head as self-luminous up to the heart. We are to experience our thinking as an etheric organ, which reaches out to everything it is supposed to grasp. The occultist differs from the non-occultist in that he is aware of this organ as radiating in the etheric. We are to experience ourselves like a snail that stretches out its antenna horns. Thinking must become a kind of subtle *pawing and tasting* ! "

**Judith von Halle:** provides analysis of the Butterfly Meditation and the Temple Legend, and in Part II. Trials of Souls at the Abyss: The Threefold Denial of the Disciple Peter.

**Part I:** The Butterfly Meditation, a Meditation of the Will, was given by Rudolf Steiner in 1923 in a critical historical situation, after the burning of the First Goetheanum.

**Part II:** The second part offers first of all a help for the right understanding of the gospel language. Just how essential this is becomes clear when it is misinterpreted. Other gospel words reveal their occult meaning only to those who understand the imaginative language of mystery, as is made clear by the example of the threefold denial of the disciple Peter, whose trials of soul and initiation experiences are also illuminated by the foundation stone saying and the butterfly meditation.

Rudolf Steiner, – "The Butterfly Meditation - we can say this conclusively - is capable of moving us to artistic deeds in the Goetheanistic-anthroposophical sense. And this is indeed the only way we can 'put aside' the tragedy of the painful abyss that the disciples first had to experience on Ascension Day, to be reconciled to the spirit of Pentecost instead. I believe that today it is a very important task, and it is becoming more and more important for the discerning man to accomplish such an

abyss translation – to bridge the abyss between the spiritual and the sensual world, because until recently, until a few decades ago, humanity could only achieve this bridging in the mystery of the *Eucharist*. For in the Eucharist lies entirely poured into the material substance pure spirituality as the internalized will of the Most High."

Judith von Halle, **Meditation and Soul Tests in Anthroposophy and the Gospels**. p.48,49 Verlag für Anthroposophie, 2019.

**Acts 11:7 KJV: "And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat."**

The following was prompted by questions concerning understanding the *Butterfly Meditation* and the painting of Raphael of Peter's escape from prison, aided by the angel. These themes are all linked. We may also feel some of the deep wisdom of Judith von Halle in concentrating on the Peter Individuality as the 'rock' of knowledge 'on which the Church shall be built'.

With the Butterfly Meditation we are concerned with seven stages: the catching of the butterfly; the sending of it to icy heights; the transformation of the butterfly into a bird; the drowning of the bird in the sea; the burning of the dead bird; the tasting of the ashes; and finally, the arising of spiritual light in the darkness.

We may observe the movement of our thinking and catch the image of the 'butterfly' inwardly, in inner calm. With **Courage for Knowledge**, our inner work on thinking is two-fold in the soul: One part transforms the butterfly into a bird, the other develops the feeling life to remain focused, to drive the butterfly to 'icy heights'.

When we imaginatively drown the bird in the sea, we gain *distance* from our thinking process; and our *feeling for inner work* is thereby intensified. With **Enthusiasm for Knowledge**, we sense the 'unquenching fire' that drives us go beyond intellectual thinking.

In the final stage, we burn the bird to black by holding this *inner will power* in our meditative consciousness. **Creation of Knowledge** occurs when we taste the ashes: by rehearsing and repeating, the *process* is transformed and we see in spirit, – as *light in the darkness*.

In Acts 11, Peter describes his own experience of trance and vision in prayer. It occurs before the description of the imprisonment in Acts 12. When we contemplate the relation to the life of Jacques de Molay the parallels are striking and moving.<sup>i</sup>

Acts 11 KJV And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

In Acts 11, Peter sees in 'light-vision' the great sheet before him; he 'hears the command' to 'Arise Peter, slay and eat.' The command is threefold concerning self knowledge, and has been brought about in inner work, as outlined above. The body of Christ is no longer prepared for exclusively by the Jewish folk, but Peter 'eats with the Gentiles'. His visions of the elemental world and his consequent actions in 'eating' – sharing the gospel *with* the Gentiles – are thus confirmed with the new word of God that he hears in reflection on his actions. This reference to 'rehearsing from the beginning' is a description not only of prayer, but in the more modern sense given by Rudolf Steiner of the observation of the process of thinking, as imaginatively expressed in the Butterfly Meditation.

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i "The cardinals dallied with their duty until 18 March 1314, when, on a scaffold in front of Notre Dame, Jacques de Molay, Templar Grand Master, Geoffroi de Charney Master of Normandy, Hugues de Peraud, Visitor of France, and Godefroi de Gonneville, Master of Aquitaine, were brought forth from the jail in which for nearly seven years they had lain, to receive the sentence agreed upon by the cardinals. (...) That same day, by sunset, a pyre was erected on a small island in the Seine, near the palace garden. There de Molay, de Charney, de Gonneville, and de Peraud were slowly burned to death, refusing all offers of pardon for retraction, and bearing their torment with a composure which won for them the reputation of martyrs among the people, who reverently collected their ashes as relics." ***A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages Vol. III*** by Henry Charles Lea, NY: Hamper & Bros, Franklin Sq. 1888, p. 325. Not in copyright.