

How will we become co-workers of the Spirit of the Times?

The spiritual battle at the end of this century creates a bottleneck in the history of all mankind, in which there have never before been so many possibilities for error of judgment in the most essential aspects of this development. How will we find the way to act correctly according to the times? What does "up to date" actually mean? It is quite obvious that in the present cultural situation many different ways of acting according to the times are possible, since many different spirits of the time are fighting simultaneously for predominance and all claim to be "up to date".

The most active spirit of the time in our cultural epoch, and also at the end of this century, is the giver of the impulse for the preparation of the consciousness soul which was especially active in the British folkspirit, out of which it rose, as a general, all encompassing and strong spirit of the times, to the first phase of the age of the consciousness soul. How does this co-creator and co-former of the consciousness (spiritual) soul work? The corporal-instinctive basis of the consciousness soul is being hammered out, with the natural science – technical research methods providing the vehicle; for through these methods, a pure, unattached observation is practiced and its effectiveness is then experienced in practical, economic realities. Unrelated personal wishes are swept away. In this way, the consciousness soul forms an *instinctive* power because it is formed from itself, and thus, carried by that which is capable of flowing in the superpersonal stream of modern developments.

The thoughts form, as dead shadows, the necessary basis for the sufficient objectivity, in which every form of traditional, authoritative spirituality must and can be refused. In this sense, the development of the consciousness soul is thoroughly "up to date" and yet this time spirit creates only the outer, indispensable shell of the consciousness soul. How then, is the essence of the consciousness soul formed?

The present activity of this spirit of the time is working with another spirit, which is strongly colored by the retarded shadow of the third cultural epoch (Egyptian-Chaldean). He gives the efforts a special accent which increases the desire for materialism and a centralised world-encompassing form of state which would extinguish all free spiritual life. One might think that this spirit must work against the already mentioned time spirit who forms the shell of the consciousness soul. Yet because this shell is at first formed instinctively, a co-operation is possible between these two spirits, resulting in a powerful strengthening of their influence.

Even more astounding is when a total co-operation between these two time-spirits takes place in religious circles, where with the exclusion of the path of spiritual knowledge, the consciousness soul is carried, exclusively through feeling and willing, by the authority of a unified extensive community, the church.

Every effort in this direction is to a certain extent, "up to date" when one understands "up to date" to be merely that which works most strongly on the majority of modern man in the foreground of commerce and fashion.

But above and beyond these fields of activity there has been, since 1879, a different spiritual impulse for mankind opening the way to a breakthrough in its activity. It is not an ordinary, "standard" spirit of the time of the cultural epochs. It is a spirit which rhythmically repeats his central impulse for the history of mankind, each time bringing totally different metamorphoses since he is never behind the times and has the responsibility for guiding the next stage in the central path of spiritual knowledge.

It is the Michael-power which now works for the spiritual knowledge, knowledge of the supersensible in the world and in mankind, which must be grasped through the consciousness soul in clear, day-consciousness. In this way, Michael wants to give the instinctively formed and very effective shell of the consciousness soul which is indispensable in its development, a life filled essence of clear and warm spiritual knowledge.

In order to reach this goal, Michael must meet the greatest difficulties and resistance possible, for he is neither able nor willing to work within the instinctive qualities of man. With superior power and strength, he keeps open the spiritual sphere bordering the physical, material sphere, for the realisation mankind's goals.

For the day-consciousness of humanity on earth between birth and death he can only become a truly effective spirit of the time when individual human souls consciously volunteer to be his student and co-worker. For this reason, "up to date" is always at the same time "out of date" in relation to the concept of "up to date" in the fashionable stream of today's majority. Modern in the sense of Michael is only possible through inner, spiritual surplus-activity; an active use of the facilities of thoughtful recognition, in which one does not remain caught in the shell of the consciousness soul through objective observation, rather where one adds, in clear, day-consciousness, the spiritual-supersensible qualities.

When one performs this combination merely hypothetically then one has, at best, obtained the preparato-

ry, initial step. In the moment where the spiritual-supersensible is so grasped, that the entire human existence lives in this spirituality and one consciously looks down, from the sphere nearest to the physical, upon the physical sphere, may the physical sphere be consciously determined by the spirituality. This step is only possible through the partial transformation of a position of the otherwise self-sufficient, instinctive qualities. Such unconscious, instinctive qualities work both in every automatic, association-filled thinking as well as in every physical, bodily-captured act in one's feeling and willing life. Yet the corresponding sub-consciousness forces are in no way destroyed when partially transformed from their existence below the threshold of consciousness. In a greater sense, they are brought out, filled with light, found, transformed, re-forged, and give the perceptive grasping of the supersensible-spiritual its first full strength to be active and effective. Any thoughtful perception of the supersensible without, at the same time; the overcoming, bringing out, finding, transforming, and freeing of a part of the forces which works in the subconscious, material instinct, which controls the human instinctively, will always lose its force and rapidly fall back into a purely hypothetical task.

Here is the moment where the other spirits of the time take command. They either want to retain the instincts and permit them to control this realm or they want to transform the instincts from power centers other than the free, spiritually perceptive consciousness soul.

Because the other spirits of the times obtain their validity and power in this way and are controlling the foreground of such developments, great obstacles have unfolded to prevent the creation of a modern culture inspired by Michael. The result these obstacles is a stupefied, cloud-filled soul-life and a paralysis of spiritual willpower. Also those who have the truest ability to realise the impulse of Michael on the earth are extensively affected by this stupefaction and paralysis.

How do we conduct ourselves during our youth in relation to this spiritual battle of the present and near future? Is the respective younger generation more capable than the respective older generation in realizing the true impulse of Michael on the earth? One could give, on equally momentous grounds, the answer "yes" or "no" to this question. For especially during the time of youth, there unfolds, out of the pre-natal existence, wonderfully strong and enthusiastically warm spiritual forces which work through the life forces of feeling and willing into the entire soul-life where the unreserved will-power for spiritual perception and the realisation of spiritual knowledge in all areas of life grows especially strong. On the other hand, members of the older generation sometimes tend to have reservations due to bitter life-experiences and thus advocate modest, sober steps which hardly have a possibility of becoming a meaningful, commanding force in true cultural renewal. For this reason, one must look with hope towards the youth.

On the other hand, the youth is a time in which most people find it correct and to be taken for granted, that all impulses, ideas, instincts and wishes rising from the inner man are to be put into action or set in flow; whatever they may be. A harmful word, living on the tongue of a young person must be spoken out, otherwise one feels "hung up" or unnatural. And those youth who do not take such action are considered inhibited, disturbed and in any case, a failure. Most often they consider themselves to be a failure and suffer from their own self-consciousness and reservedness while being jealous of their fresh, impulsively acting friends. Very often they actually are a little sick and unsuccessful. Thus, the majority of youth fall into the fashionable instincts of their time. They do so probably without noticing it, yet at the same time, with a degree of purpose. And here is where the already mentioned opponents of the Michael impulses have a free play. They control, uncontested, this realm of instinct, creating darkened consciousness in the cognitive faculties and paralysing all spiritually directed willpower.

The respective youth sway between the greatest possibilities of becoming spiritual fighters serving Michael or in drastically and unreservedly losing themselves to the so-called "modern" powers.

Also, when considering the individual course of life during the time of youth one finds very often instability and unreliability, within which it is so very difficult to obtain true and steady continuity. How often must one experience an intensive, convincing contact with true, supersensible spirituality. It seems to be clearly found and yet, on the next day lost, as though extinguished, leaving only a fragmentary shadow behind and one must begin the search all over again. At the same time, how strong, illuminating and warm may the spiritual content be when lively grasped and actively realised. It works in the inner-man during one's youth.

But how miserably this may the continued search for a more concrete realisation of the spiritual content be. One feels warm and convinced by eternal truth when experiencing one's self in a community of friends. And one is bitterly disappointed when going through a very necessary fallout with a friend because the friendship can not be pulled out of its dim, instinctive nature.

With good reason one could say that the time of youth is a time when one is least capable of working for and serving the true spirit of the time. For now, this great task must be reserved for the more mature years during which one may gradually achieve the decisive capability of spiritual continuity and penetration in cons-

ciousness.

In reality only a small minority of the older and younger generation may be considered for this task.

Rather than floundering in the typical instability and discontinuity, the sincere, questioning youth search, with all their strength, a practical way in which the first contact with the spiritual may lead to a growing together with the spirit through concentration on small, but true realities. What must happen along this path of inner discipline in order that none of the abundance of the sentient soul may be taken away? Something unconscious in one's thinking, feeling and willing, which otherwise sleeps in the instincts is perceived, grasped and transformed into an instrument for the spiritual. This process is at the same time a battle, for the resistance grows against such transformation. The double-ganger (Doppelgänger), who works out of the sub-earthly into the sub-sensible, subconsciousness in all of us does everything possible to make this transformation impossible. He can raise the resistance by sucking into himself every instinctive and egotistical quality.

The great trial is whether one can willingly give to a greater totality, to the whole of humanity that which has been achieved. This is possible once one has realised, that that which is in myself is also to be found outside in nature as an objective, magnificent cosmic relationship. At this moment, one must undergo a decisive trial. For in going this inner path of victory in ones self, where forces are transformed out of unconsciousness into cognitive deeds, we are torn into the intense temptation of abiding within the forces achieved through ourselves. It could lead to increased self-indulgence and one could be convinced that this inner ground is filled with spiritual substance. Yet this may never be the ease for the achieved spirituality would immediately become untrue in such an abodement. This inner world of forces may only form a passage way because man evolves out of the enveloped macrocosms, in truth out of the whole nature. All forces which man comes to know, find, illuminate and transform in his consciousness will first become true when they are guided back to the spirituality in nature. Only when the spiritual in humanity is guided together with the spiritual in nature, can be found the way to the truth. Otherwise, it becomes untrue in its own subjectivity. The unconsciousness in the human soul is also to be found outside of man as hidden natural powers in the sub-earthly realm. These sub-earthly powers continuously push themselves into the unconsciousness of the human soul where we allow them to rule the sensible-bodily instincts.

The main sickness of our present civilisation is rooted in this trial situation. On the one side everything spiritual is becoming exterminated out of our consciousness through the way in which we observe nature. While on the other side all of the subjectivity of our inner-world is being searched out and pampered with, not only in the extreme drug scene, but also in the various farms of "artistic" endeavor as well as in many "religious" groups. The complete separation and alienation from nature is being executed. And the overcoming of this separation is the great trial. Actually one could be of the opinion that surmounting this alienation is the true desire of all humanity. That is true as far as the deepest inner-life of man is concerned. But we are presently striving against each other without even knowing it. We strive against this separation with all of our unconscious forces even though our goal can only be accomplished by overcoming self-love. The unconsciousness in the human soul must be searched for and found, at the same time outside in the terrestrial. This objective path of knowledge which may be found outside of the narrow personal goals builds the basis for a deed which presents itself in the service of the world and human interrelations. It is the present way of the true spirit of the times and is also a way in which Michael who may only under the greatest of difficulties become effective in the culture of the earth.

In a magnificent, simple and penetrating image this path of exercising true inner-discipline, this searching and finding, bringing forward and carrying out, transforming and forging of the spiritual instrument out of the sub-terrestrial (at the same time out of the unconsciousness of the individual soul) and the orientation towards the objective and super-personal altar on which one holds nothing for oneself, but which is found out in nature has been presented by *Rudolf Steiner* at Koberwitz, June 17, 1924 in his course of lectures "*Die Erkenntnis-Aufgabe der Jugend*" (untranslated)

"One said, one forges the sword of Michael. It is concerned however with something else.

It is concerned with the truth that exists in the occult world that that which must be formed as Michael's sword, must be forged in reality and carried on an altar, which may not be seen on the outside, and which lies under the earth, actually under the earth. To meet natural powers under the earth, leads one to understand that Michael's sword must, in being forged, also be carried to an altar which is under the earth. There it must be found by a receptive soul. It depends whether you act with it and in that through your contribution, more and more souls find the sword of Michael. And it is not completed when forged, rather it is completed when it is found; should one have the strength and modest, self-trust as a young person who is karmically called to carry, to search for and to find the sword of Michael."



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www.joergensmit.org is the adress of the website focussed on life and work of Jörgen Smit. Biography, books, lectures, fotos etc., published by Rembert Biemond.