

Michael in the Ancient Orient

Michael as Indra

He Who, at once after birth, was gifted with power of thinking; He Who, in His spirit-might, protected the Gods; He Who, in breathing, shakes the Universe through the power of His manhood: This, ye people, is Indra.

He Who slew the dragon and let the seven rivers stream on; He Who freed the cows from the dungeon of Vala; He Who, as the invincible warrior, created fire between the stones: This, ye people, is Indra.

He Who made fast the swaying earth; He Who calmed the restless mountains; He Who expanded the sphere of the air; He Who hurled down the Heavens: This, ye people, is Indra.

He Who performed these heroic deeds; He Who subdued the primeval savages; He Who, like unto a winning player, acquires the enemy's riches: This, ye people, is Indra.

He about Whom they ask: Where is He, the mighty One? He of Whom it is said: He destroys the enemy's riches like unto the winner in a dice-game; He in Whom ye believe: This, ye people, is Indra.

He Who invigorates the poor and miserable; He Who hearkens to the singer and prayerful one; He Who helps to press out the Soma juice; He Who joins together the stones of the Soma press: This, ye people, is Indra.

He Whose beckoning makes horses and oxen, warriors and chariots serve Him; He Who created the Sun and the Dawn; He Who lets stream the waters: This, ye people, is Indra.

He Who by the gathering armies is called on; He Who is asked for help by the enemies in opposing camps; He Who is called upon by both the chariot-driver and the warrior: This, ye people, is Indra.

He without Whom there is no victory; He Whom all the warriors implore for help; He Who can master all things; He Who can move the immovable: This, ye people, is Indra.

He Who slays the wicked when they least expect it; He Who forgiveth not the haughtiness of the haughty; He Who slays the demon: This, ye people, is Indra.

He Who, after forty years, found the Sambara (an evil magician and robber) dwelling in the mountains; He Who slew the dragon swollen with power; He Who subdued the demon lying before Him: This, ye people, is Indra.

He Who, in the shape of a bull using seven rains, let the seven rivers stream on; He Who hurled, with His thunderbolt, the heaven-storming Rauhina into the abyss: This, ye people, is Indra.

Heaven and earth bow down before Him; the mountains tremble before His impetuous will; the renowned Soma drinker, Who, with the thunderbolt under His arm, carries the thunderbolt in His hand: This, ye people, is Indra.

He Who helps the one pressing out the Soma; He Who helps the one who brings sacrifices and sings songs of praise; He Who is invigorated by the Brahman (the strength of piety, of prayer, of the Sacred Word), by the Soma and by the sacrifices of humans: This, ye people, is Indra.

Thou Who procurest, if need be with force, great riches for the one pressing out the Soma: Thou art the truthful One. We desire, Oh Indra, to be ever Thy friends and, as righteous men, speak words of Wisdom.

– From the Rigveda

The Bhagavad-Gita as Reflection of Michael's Battle in Heaven

The Bhagavad-Gita describes the battle between two armies. Arjuna talks with his chariot-driver, through whose form Krishna is revealed. Arjuna says: "I cannot fight against those who are related to me through their blood."

Thereupon answers Krishna: "Do not look at that which appears in time. Look at the eternal, which is immortal and remains untouched by death and birth. All mortals must die. That which has been born must also die. Thus, by slaying the mortal, you aid the eternal world order. Ere you slay your relatives, they have already been slain by Me, Who am Eternity. You but perform the outer deed."

Then Krishna reveals Himself to Arjuna as the eternal Being Who is as One in manifold men. This story mirrors the battle in Heaven. For, as Rudolf Steiner has told us, this battle originated in the higher Hierarchies, in the Hierarchy of the Cherubim, for the reason that a part of these Beings wanted to remain in the realm of eternal duration, while another part of these Beings descended into the stream of becoming. This is mirrored by the talk between Krishna and Arjuna. Lucifer's fall was the consequence of the descent of a part of the highest Hierarchies.

The traditions pointing to Michael as the one who brought about Lucifer's fall prove that Michael transforms the evil connected with this fall into good. He does so by transforming, in the head of man, the light of Lucifer into the wisdom-light through which men—and with them all other creatures and beings—can find again the path to eternity.

Michael as Mithras

Ahura Mazda spake to Zarathustra: “When I created Mithras, who possesses wide fields, I created him to be as venerable, as praiseworthy as Myself: Ahura Mazda.

“Him, the powerful Yazata, the mighty Mithras towering above all creatures, I shall worship Him Who owns wide fields, Who knows the right sayings, Who is eloquent, Who has a thousand ears, Who is fair, Who has ten thousand eyes, Who stands on a broad rampart, Who is mighty and sleepless and vigilant.

“Mithras we worship: Him Who owns wide fields, the vigilant one, Whose dwelling is as wide as the earth. It is built within matter. It is spacious, exposed to no needs, radiant, and offering shelter all around. Eight helpers of Mithras are dwelling as his spies on all the mountains, on all the ramparts. ...

“Mithras, the owner of wide fields, drives around raising His arms for the sake of safety. He guides His fair chariot, able to withstand all dangers and encrested with golden ornaments, to the radiant House of Praise. The chariot is drawn by four white steeds which are immortal and enjoy the nourishment of the spirit. Their front hoofs are fashioned of gold, their hind ones of silver.” ...

Then are enumerated the hosts accompanying Mithras at the right and left as he descends. The story goes on: In the chariot of Mithras, who owns wide fields, there are a thousand bows. ... Moving through the air, they fly on the head of the Devas.

In the chariot of Mithras, who owns wide fields, there are a thousand arrows, golden-pointed, furnished with vulture feathers, set with barbs, beautifully fashioned. ... Moving through the air, they fly on the heads of the Devas.

(The same is said of spears, axes, daggers, clubs, and clubs with a hundred studs.)

Sorely afraid is the evil-doing Anra Mainyav [Ahriman]. (The same is said of other evil beings.)

Let us in no wise expose ourselves to the blows of Mithras, who owns wide fields, waxing furious. Mayest thou not, O Mithras, wax furious and send blows against us, thou, who art the most valiant of the Yazata and ownest wide fields. ...

– From the Avesta

Mithras, Revealing the Sacred Names

Mayest thou bestow grace upon me, providence and destiny, when I am writing down the first transmitted Mysteries. I am writing them down for my child, Immortality, the Mystic worthy of this our might, which the great God Helios Mithras has given to me at the hands of his Archangel, so that I, an eagle, may enter Heaven and envisage all.

(Then it is said of Mithras:) O Lord, Who hast closed with the spirit-breath the fiery keys of Heaven, thou two-bodied One, reigning over the fire, the light's creator and guardian, breathing fire, invigorated by fire, spirit-radiant, fire-rejoicing, radiantly beauteous, light-dweller, flame-whirler, light-creating, fire-planting, fire-enraged, lightning-swept, light-glorified, light-expanded, light-supporting, star-conqueror: Reveal to me ... the names that have not been known to mortal nature; the names never pronounced by a human tongue in lucid language, never pronounced by a human sound, or a human voice. Reveal to me the eternally living and revered names.

– From a Mithras Liturgy

Michael as Marduk

When Heaven on high had not yet been named,
And the depth of the earth was known by no name—
When Apsu, who made them, and Tiamat Mummu
Still into oneness their waters were merging—
When no field was there and no reed was rustling,
When no name was sounded, and no fate fulfilled,
Then arose from the depth the gods and their rule.

The unending spans of the ages were dwindling
And from the lower the upper broke loose.
Then Anu and Inlil were joined in threefoldness
With Ea as third.
Then Marduk the glorious, the shaper of fate,
Of Ea and Damkina was he born.
His gleaming body rays into the depth,
To the grief of the darkness, the enemy of light.

Then is it told how Apsu and Tiamat are grief-stricken and how their son Mummu wants to destroy the light and replace it with darkness. Talking to and fro concerning this venture, Tiamat's helpers mass against the upper gods.

Tiamat, the mother of Hight, arms her warriors with eleven kinds of monsters. Kingu, the fire-god, becomes Tiamat's spouse and, worshipped by all, is enthroned as leader, the tablets of destiny on his breast.

Now Amschar tells the upper gods what has happened. He sends out Anu, his son, that he might calm Tiamat. But when Amu beholds Tiamat's countenance, he returns despondently. Also a second god cannot stand up before Tiamat. Then appears Marduk:

The father's speech by Marduk was heard.
With pounding heart he said unto the father:
Ye gods! What is to become of ye all?
The rebels against you I will try to subdue.
If Tiamat I slay, thus saving your life,
Then destiny's course will I ever ordain,
And with the gods will I share the repast.
May ye joyfully dwell in destiny's halls,
Where my mouth will decree the runes of fate.
And never may be revoked what I say,
For ever abides the word of my mouth.

Then Amshar asks the gods to accept Marduk's offer. He sends the messenger Gaga to Lachmu and Lachamu, telling them to bestow the leadership on Marduk. The gods hear it. First they grieve at Tiamat's fate. But then, coming to the repast of bread and wine, they install Marduk as leader.

And there was he given the throne of his fathers,
His was the decision above all the others
The highest art thou amongst the great gods,
Thy lot is supreme and Amu thy name.
Marduk art thou, the greatest of gods,
Thy lot is supreme and Amu thy name.

From this hour on, thy word shall prevail.
To reward or to chastise falls only to thee.
The word of thy mouth may not be gainsaid:
For thy might supersedes that of all other gods.

Now the destiny of all other gods is given over to Marduk. He shall decide over all their destinies. Whoever confides in Marduk shall be forgiven. Whoever plots evil shall be "of life bereft."

Now the “Creative Word” is transmitted to Marduk. Becoming and dying take place at his command. Then he is appointed with the crown, the scepter, and the ring. He receives an invincible weapon. Protected by this armor, he shall fight against Tiamat.

The lightning flares up in front of his path.
He immerses himself in the glowing blaze.

Marduk has a gigantic net, which he throws over Tiamat. He places four world guardians in the North and South and East and West, so that no part of Tiamat may escape. He calls unto the four winds to carry Tiamat’s blood into the hidden places.

He created the tempest, the storm of the South,
The four winds and the seven, a whirling disaster.
And he lets them loose, the forces the seven,
To beguile and to frighten Tiamat’s heart.
He wards her off, if she venture to follow.
Thus he as the Lord took the storm as his weapon,
The chariot he mounts, whose course begets fear.
Four foaming steeds to the chariot are harnessed.
He drives them relentless, courageous, and fast.

Thus Marduk drives on amidst the tempest, his head illuminated by the strokes of the lightning. He attacks Tiamat, while all the gods look on full of suspense. His blazing eye penetrates Tiamat’s darkness. He beholds the fearful countenance of her spouse. When the latter wavers, Tiamat opens her jaws. Marduk sends the winds and the storm into her gorge. He throws his net over her.

He flings at her the weapon, the whirling,
He divides her body, that she bursts into two.
And so he defeats her and Tiamat slays.
He steps on the body lying there prone.

Then he captures Tiamat’s helpers with his net. Their howling resounds in the four corners of the world. He subdues the eleven kinds of monsters. Then he defeats Kingu and wrests from him the tablets of destiny which he has usurped. He sets his seal upon them and fastens them to his breast. But he crushes Tiamat’s body and crushes her head. He severs her veins and lets the wind carry away her blood. Thus did Marduk divide Tiamat into two parts. Out of the one he made the earth, out of the other the sky.

– After the Babylonian *Song of World Creation* as given by Friedrich Delitzsch