

DREAM, SLEEP, MEMORY, AND SELF-ENGENDERED WILL

Enlivened Remembrance

In the spring and summer part of the year the soul tends to excarnate under the pull of the senses. This is what the Calendar warns us about first in the threshold verses 46 and 7. In the first we are told that "the world is threatening to stun the inborn forces of my soul"; in the second that "My Self is threatening to fly forth lured strongly by the world's enticing light." What we must do is clearly specified in verse 7 itself: "Come forth, prophetic feeling [boding], take up with strength your rightful task: replace in me the power of thought which in the senses' glory would gladly lose itself." What threatens the human being is what we could call the "dream." In verse 8 we are told that "the senses' might . . . presses down my power of thinking into a dreamlike dullness" and that "must human thinking in quiet dream-life rest content."

The danger of sinking into a dream consciousness is brought forth again in verses 8, 14, and 15. It culminates in verse 15, just after the beginning of the summer descending phase, in enchanted weaving enveloping the human being in order to let the divine "bestow the strength which in its narrow bounds my I is powerless to give itself." This last sentence indicates clearly what is the purpose of "dreaming" and surrendering: to let the spirit world lend us strength. We awaken immediately from the dream when we are asked to "bear in inward keeping spirit bounty" in verse 16. In verse 19 this effort goes a step further in the will with the intention to "encompass now with memory what I've newly got."

Even before the specific verse 19, the act of remembering is pointed at indirectly. In verse 17 the soul recognizes that godly power announced in verse 10 as the cosmic Word. Guided by this recognition and memory, however dim, verse 18 echoes the stern command of verse 16 "of bearing in inward keeping spirit bounty" by strengthening the striving to take responsibility for our lives and strengthening ourselves in view of the end of summer.

The awakening from the dream requires an effort of the will, and that takes the form of memory. This is the equivalent of the effort we need to apply in the morning when we want to remember a significant dream. Here we are trying to recapture a midsummer night's dream, so to speak. And 19 comes just before the "warning" verse 20 in which we are asked to feel our life's

reality in conjunction with the world's existence: to fully awaken to ourselves.

The danger lies in the light and warmth of cosmic light and cosmic warmth retreating and the soul not being able to strengthen awareness of Self. Memory plays an important role in the strengthening of the Self. Therefore a look at the power of memory shall highlight its key role.

In rising from the forming of mental images to that of memories, we have to push our inner activity into a deeper part of our being, into the etheric body. The store of images remains in the etheric body and is not allowed to rise into the physical body. This means that something lives in our body that does not and cannot influence the physical body. This is like a seed that does not unfold its powers in this life.

When the spiritual world starts to open up for us, or when we come to the gate of death, the soul lives first in that part which has not touched the physical body. In Steiner's words, "The power of memory may be said to be the very beginning of a spiritual element in us. . . . the store of memories in the inner life marks the first stage of transition from things that are bound to the senses and the brain, to something that is pure inner life and spirit."¹ The memories become objective reality around us, and looking at them the spiritual investigator perceives powers of a still higher kind from which arise Imaginations. These are the same powers of the soul that bring about the dissolution of the images a few days after death. Herein lies the importance of exerting our faculty of memory at the end of summer, just like we do at the end of our lives on earth.

Self-Engendered Will

Where do we find the counterpart to the condition of dream in the fall-winter part of the year? We see it before and after Michaelmas, roughly between verses 23 and 30. The interval is preceded by the awakening to the self: "selfhood's power" in 21; "the human self" in 22, and immediately after by the important turning point of the "soul life becomes aware of Self" (24).

The first mention of the theme of sleeping/waking is found in verse 23: "in distances around me I can see the autumn's winter sleep" (23). After "soul life becomes aware of Self" (24) the theme of awakening enters in: "toward sleep is urging all creation, but inmost soul must stay awake and carry wakefully sun's glowing into the winter's icy flowing" (25). The verses are immediately followed by the awakening to the Self (26, 27) and the rising of

¹ Rudolf Steiner: *The Inner Nature of Man*, lectures of April 8, 1914.

the role of thinking in the soul (28 to 30). When “flourish in the sunlight of my soul ripened fruits of thinking” the I is able to “perceive now joyfully the autumn’s spirit-waking” (30). The external state of sleep is countered by the soul’s ability to stay fully awake in thinking.

In the summer the soul risks entering a state of dream and losing self-connection. In the fall another threat engulfs the soul: not that of dream, but of sleep. Awakening of the self and rising of the faculty of thinking go hand in hand. It is through these that the cold time of the year can present the opportunity to awaken to self and clear cognition, to cast light into the darkness through our thinking; to be awake at the time of outer sleep, to project outward our inner warmth at the time of greatest cold. Something similar to verse 19 appears in verse 46, which is almost its opposite. But here something more is at play, because 46 is also a threshold verse, which sets the tone for the whole of the Spring Equinox quadrant.

In winter we can ultimately reach the stage of co-creators and contribute consciously to the world of creation. At the end of the Winter Solstice quadrant (verse 46) memory is called forth to gather, not all the fruits bestowed by the spirit world, but those produced by the human being. We do not just “encompass now with memory” (verse 19) but call forth memory and strength of will. Let us see how the stage is set.

Verses 43 to 45 form a crescendo of the light of thinking and warmth of heart: “inner fire” (43); “soul clarity,” “spirit-birth,” and “creative will of my own thinking” (44); “light of thinking” (45). What we are facing is not due to lack of inner preparation; rather, it is the onslaught of a new presence and force. It is what shines behind the life and tone ethers: cosmic life that will enter in full swing at the time of Easter.

After the warning verse, thinking is called to reach yet another stage: strength of thought well-armed by powers divine (47); certainty of cosmic thinking that “awakens love” (48); clarity of thought (49). These develop in parallel with the growing power of cosmic life that was not mentioned before 46: joy of growth (47, 50); force of cosmic life (49).

We must let go of too formed a sense of self when cosmic life challenges us to live in depths of soul. When we remember again our efforts through the winter, in 49 it is clear that these can be attributed to our clarity of thought “recalling its own spirit growth through nights of cosmic darkness.” In verse 49, which reminds us of the importance of verse 46, memory allows us to hold this perspective. Memory, looking backward, offers us confidence in what is

to come. The content of memory relates to the past; the exertion of memory opens doors for the future, and this is visible in the following verses.

The faculty of memory is a power of "inner sight" as specified in verse 46, which once cultivated, allows us to reach seership. After the passing of winter, the soul can loosen its identification with what it has conquered of the Self, while memory calls forth other powers when the faculties of the soul risk separating from each other under the pull of the senses. Through the strengthening of memory the experience of the winter will remain as a seed to guide us through the spring and summer, when the power of thinking will gradually ebb.

We strengthen the power of memory through the daily practice of the *rückschau*. As another example, this power of memory can also be cultivated as a conscious exercise in relation to a deceased loved one by recalling common experiences, and eventually it can lead us to an encounter with her in the spirit.

The Disciples cultivated the power of memory after the Resurrection in order to enliven their store of experiences with Christ and to find Him again in the sphere of the etheric. They brought back to enlivened memory His words and deeds. This force of recollection brought Him back among them, as in the Emmaus experience. From memory arose revelation; His words and deeds acquired new meaning. And these events occurred just after the time of the year of which we are talking here, after the changes brought about by the historical Resurrection.

The enhanced faculty of recollection will allow us to develop organs of perception for the spiritual, which will strengthen the voice of conscience and give us guidance for the present and the future. Through this enhanced remembrance we call our angel and other spiritual beings to our help. Here lies its importance at the end of the Winter Solstice quadrant.

Memory continues to play an important part both in looking backward to the winter part of the year and in exerting itself to prepare the transition to spring. The first role, as we saw, appears in verse 49. After thinking sings its swan song in verses 1 and 2 ("the power of thought gives up its separate being") memory plays a role preparing to the challenges of the spring in verse 3, just as verse 46 announced.

Thus to the World-All speaks,
In self-forgetfulness

And mindful of its primal state,
The growing human I:
In you, if I can free myself
From fetters of my selfhood,
I fathom my essential being.

The power of memory once again plays a paradoxical role between past and future. Keeping in mind that the spirit world discovers and seeks itself in the human being (verse 2), the human being answers in verse 3 by "finding the fruit of soul within itself." This finding occurs through an awakening of enlivened memory of the human being's primal state, in effect a distant memory of the primal condition of humanity, that of original participation in which it lived in the World-All; the memory of the time before the Fall. Memory brought to its ultimate power transcends the boundaries of life between birth and death; it is memory of the original human being. It is this memory that is the key to transcending the narrow bounds of self (fetters of selfhood), a recurring theme of the spring. In light of the memory of who we are meant to be and can become anew, we can act out of self-forgetfulness renounce the limits of who we are at present, no matter how hard wrought the achievements reached through the winter trials.

The effort of memory goes on from verse 46 at the end of winter to verse 19 at the end of the midsummer quadrant. It serves as a reminder of the work that the soul has accomplished and of the inner fruits it has gathered through the midwinter. Then memory becomes universal human memory of the archetypal human condition, of its primeval union in the bosom of the Gods. Verse 3 exemplifies this state of soul. Once past verse 7 memory serves a different role; it brings to light those experiences that the soul has lived in a dreamy state. Verse 8 indicates that "human thinking [must] in quiet dream-life rest content." In verse 10 I am offered the indication that I "shall in future know: a godly being now has touched [me]." Verse 14 reminds us that we have lived through the summer as if we had "lost the drive of [our] own being and dreamlike thinking seemed to daze and rob [us] of [our Self]." In verse 15 our own Self has been enwrapped in "enchanted weaving of spirit within outer glory." It is all these experiences, lived beyond the threshold of consciousness, that we are asked to evoke and raise to consciousness in verse 19, so that we can better cultivate the "fruits of selfhood" (16) and selfhood's forces (19).

Self-Engendered Will

The act of remembering and perceiving memory pictures by the ego works from the physical body through the forming of mental images into the soul. The ego brings about a polar gesture in the act of will, in which the soul carries will impulses into the world through the physical body. In the act of will, the ego acts out of the warmth ether and through this unites with the warmth organism. As a result the combustion processes in the metabolism are enhanced.²

The will appears in many ways in the period going from threshold verses 20 to 46 and shortly after in close association with the emergence of the conscious Self after the dream of summer. Let us see how.

In verse 24 "soul life becomes aware of Self" and "self-engendered will" emerges from the "darkness of the soul." Now it wants to exert itself in the world. The Michaelmas verse, all strength of will, is worth being quoted in full once more. Here its link to cosmic life, in the form of Nature's maternal life, is made explicit.

O Nature, your maternal life
I bear within the essence of my will.
And my will's fiery energy
Shall steel my spirit striving,
That sense of self springs forth from it
To hold me in myself.

The power of will gradually appears transformed into will-permeated thinking, starting from verse 28. Here the power of thought "can solve the mysteries of life, and grant fulfilment now to wishes . . . long lamed by hope." The desire to imbue thinking with self-engendered will is further encapsulated in verse 29's "fan the spark of thinking into flame."

The will emerges in pure fashion in verse 31 where mention is given of "forceful will of life" that ultimately create the conditions for "human deeds." This desire to be of service to the world is echoed in 32 where the strength we feel in ourselves is there to "give me to the world" and "turn with clearer insight toward the weaving of life's destiny." Soon after the themes woven so far enhance each other in the desire, not only to serve the world, but to "pour forth cosmic forces into the outer actions of my life" (34). Verses 36 through 40 no doubt bring our self-engendered will through a deep maturation through

² Rudolf Steiner, *Eight Lectures to Doctors*, lecture of January 2nd 1924.

the conscious receiving of the cosmic Word, the maturation of the spirit-birth, and the influence of the Spirit Self.

When willing wants to express itself anew in the world, it is colored by powers of the heart and the soul's yearning for love. In verse 41 the soul wants to "kindle and enflame God-given powers in human life to right activity" and "[shape] itself in human loving and in human working." In the following verses the soul, animated by forces of the heart and imbued with growing love, can withstand cold and darkness to assist in the work of creation, in becoming co-creator. This is the ultimate blossoming of self-engendered will.

As the sphere of cosmic life grows closer in coming to Spring and Easter, the power of thought acquires new brilliance and becomes cosmic thinking, the ultimate will-imbued thinking that connects us directly to cosmic thoughts at work in the macrocosm. This is particularly visible in verses 44, 45, 47, and 48. In the last verse it is cosmic thinking that allows to "awaken love" no longer just in myself, but "in human hearts." What was previously "human loving" (verse 41) is now objective, cosmic love.

As the realm of cosmic life expresses itself anew in "joy of growth," the will expresses itself in a purer way as desire to "renew its strength" (51), bring "life-strength into human bodies" (52), or in "spirit worlds . . . [germinate]" (2).

Let us recapture the journey of self-engendered will. We see it first expressed as the desire to awaken the self and express itself in deeds. This mingles with the effort to metamorphose and spiritualize human thinking. In conjunction with the work of cosmic Word and the Self being touched by the Spirit Self, the soul awakens in the heart and so does the will. The light of will-imbued thinking is deepened and transformed into the power of love. As cosmic life approaches in the wake of the Christ's being at Easter, thinking recedes not without offering its last fruits and strengthening the human being to receive the impulse of growth in nature. Self-engendered will, strengthened and purified, can now receive the Christ impulse in a state of genuine soul innocence.

Mental Images and Actions

Judgments that we make lie at the beginning of and evolve into mental images. A mental image of the concept "tree" embodies a great number of smaller images (living and growing being, trunk, crown of foliage, upward striving nature, etc.). The overall mental image and the mental images that

build it are all derived from judgments. When the human being evolves and acquires a discerning and precise thinking, "the judgment corresponds to the mental image and thereby gains clearer outlines. As an image it is projected to the border between soul and world [and placed in front of the I]."³ Judging itself takes place in the soul. In the forming of an image, something dynamic in the world comes to rest in the soul; an event or being becomes an image. As to the activity of the forming of mental images, Zeylmans van Emmichoven has this to say: "Forming of mental images is indeed a condensation into images, but it occurs when the soul directs itself to the spirit."⁴

The higher the maturity we reach, the higher the array of mental images that lives in our soul. And the more the individual strives toward self-development, the more the images will evolve. In mental images there is an element of feeling; we form varying degrees of attachment to the images. And they are also associated with an element of desire; the images cause a deeper or shallower degree of satisfaction. The more we exert ourselves intellectually and spiritually, the more satiated will we be. The soul needs mental images like the body needs nourishment. It wants to acquire new mental images or improve existing ones.

Among and above all images there is a central one that arises from the core of the soul without any connection with anything else: the image of the "I." All other images in the soul are closely connected to this image.

The activity of the soul in summer, in the fullness of nature-consciousness, does in effect lead to the awakening of the powers of selfhood, and the activity of remembering at the end of summer anchors it (see verses 20 and 21). The whole movement is perfected and brought into full consciousness during the fall and winter, the time of self-consciousness, through the desire of the soul to act in the world through sacrifice. During the summer pole of the calendar, the will is as if directed inwardly through intuition; during the winter pole, it works itself outwardly through thinking. Devotion to the spirit and acceptance of inner powerlessness in summer becomes sacrifice and love in the winter time of the year.

³ F. W. Zeylmans van Emmichoven, *The Anthroposophical Understanding of the Human Soul*, 43.

⁴ F. W. Zeylmans van Emmichoven, *The Anthroposophical Understanding of the Human Soul*, 44.

Powerlessness and Sacrifice

In the summer pole of the year memory works hand in hand with intuition. The letting go of the first quarter of the year (verses 1 to 13) means reaching a place of powerlessness, or rather apparent powerlessness. In utter trust we give ourselves to cosmic light and cosmic warmth, to the realm of the First Hierarchy and to the cosmic Word. New directions will emerge of which the human being knows nothing in his daily consciousness; he can only intuit. We literally trust that something better than what our consciousness can fathom will meet us if we follow the dictates of our conscience through intuition. In this context memory is something more than what we apprehend normally; it becomes enlivened remembrance. Perceived powerlessness leads us to the receiving of cosmic thinking, the cosmic intelligence of the hierarchies working in unison. It becomes the avenue for letting go and letting come, for a new way of being in the world. The second part of the summer (verses 14 to 26) crystallizes the new evolutionary possibilities; it gives them direction and strength.

At the other end of the year, the preparation lies in consciously letting our sense of self unfold and grow, in developing the Michaelic, and universal, self-engendered will that prepares us to receive the cosmic Word more consciously. What the human being has wrested from the spiritual world generates an overabundance from which the tempered will can now transform the self in thinking, feeling, and willing. Just as in summer the cosmic world pours into us its overabundance of forces, the earth now contracted into itself is waiting for the human being to give of his newly generated inner substance. The earth is calling for the human being to be a co-creator, and the conscious human being will naturally find the strength to sacrifice its personal goals at the altar of world evolution.

We can revisit the earlier example drawn from Steiner's life under this light. It was an epochal decision to accept Karl Julius Schröer's task as his own, and this did not happen overnight. Steiner had already found his natural karmic companions within the circles of the Cistercians.⁵ He expressed how a deep love united him to them. He accepted the utter powerlessness of renouncing the natural links of destiny. This would lead him over time into the utterly karmically foreign milieu of Theosophy in order to develop his new task. He thus renounced for a long spell of time to bring to civilization the new

⁵ See Luigi Morelli, *Karl Julius Schröer and Rudolf Steiner: Anthroposophy and the Teachings of Karma and Reincarnation*, Chapter 1: Karl Julius Schröer's and Rudolf Steiner's Missions.

Christianized teachings of karma and reincarnation. Indeed he had no idea of how and when these would be possible for him again.

To the inwardly active task of letting go and powerlessness corresponded the flip side of the coin of actively taking on something new, of taking on the new task of bringing to the world the legacy of the scientific Goethe that would lead to spiritual science. This was his consciously performed act of sacrifice. Years of his life were devoted to doing what destiny had delegated to the reincarnated Plato.

In a similar fashion we can point to the experience of the Disciples after Easter. In the state of despair and inner powerlessness after the death of their teacher, new soul forces matured through the power of enlightened remembrance. It was in this way that the Christ appeared to many of them in his resurrected body. The experience of Pentecost was the Disciples' experience of resurrection. Later on they were able to take on their mission with a new conviction and zeal. They naturally sacrificed themselves to hostile forces in order serve the new communities and spread the Christ impulse.

When we review the year according to the expressions of the self and the engagement of the will, we can do so returning to the season's quadrants (1 to 13, 14 to 26, 27 to 39, 40 to 52). The turning points become the solstices and equinoxes. During the spring time of the year the soul actively lets go of the attachments of the lower self; we could call this a time of letting go of narrow boundaries of self. It is a time of catharsis and purification. Around the time of St. John the soul has reached what feels like powerlessness from the perspective of the ego; in reality it is an openness to a higher and truer power, to the influx of cosmic Word and cosmic thinking. The whole of summer is a time of allowing the spirit world to work in us, until selfhood power takes root in the soul. The Sun of the summer becomes a sun and summer of the soul from which emerges the sense of Self.

The gesture of spring and summer is mirrored in fall and winter. The fall is a time for strengthening resolve in our will, for imbuing our will selflessly for the good. Christmas is the time of spirit-birth, fruit of a raising to consciousness of the cosmic Word through the instrument of a will-imbued thinking. Cosmic Word takes residence in the soul, but this time more consciously than in the summer. After the spirit-birth, the strengthened resolves of the will become active capacity to sacrifice our personal aims to objective world needs, to joyfully understand, internalize, and embrace new

aims. Through sacrifice we know love in our hearts and spread love in the world.

If in the spring and summer we experience the powerlessness of our daily ego and the need to enrich it from spiritual heights, then in winter to spring, the final sacrifice to accomplish is that of our identification with the fruits of selfhood we have wrested through the cold time of the year. It's not our higher self that we could ever possibly sacrifice; rather our identification with what we have achieved through personal effort. The soul knows that no matter how much it has gained, much work remains to be done. It is ready to start again, each year possibly at a higher level, and let Christ imbue it with fresh energies from cosmic realms at the time of Easter.