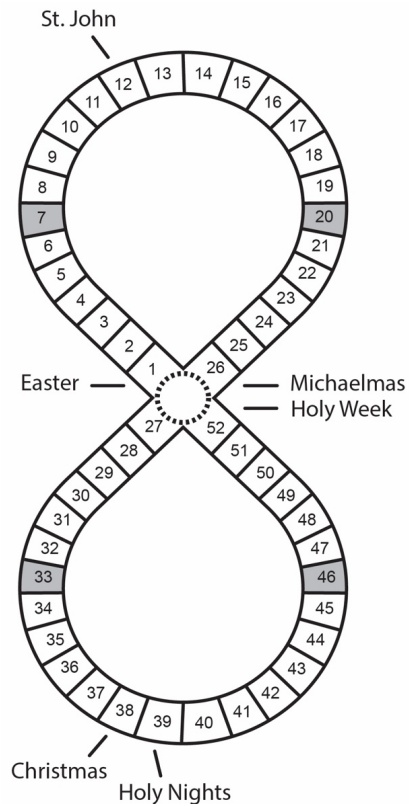


Appendix 9

THE PATHS OF RECONNECTION AND INITIATION IN THE CALENDAR OF THE SOUL

The following essay builds on the realization that the Calendar of the Soul offers complementary gestures during the two halves of the year. The halves we are considering here are not exactly those of the seasons, but those centered on the verses of cross 7 that divide the year according to quadrants centered on equinoxes and solstices and their corresponding cardinal festivals: Easter, St. John, Michaelmas, and Christmas.



During the time of Easter and St. John, the soul reconnects with the forces of the cosmos and inwardly has an experience similar in degree to reconnecting to its origin. Around Michaelmas the individual undergoes a twofold complementary movement. On one hand, she loses the external supports of cosmos and nature; on the other, she can nurture and transform what nature and cosmos have bestowed upon her. In fact, facing the inner abyss and undergoing initiation is rendered possible because the cosmos has generously bestowed forces beforehand.

We will start the year at Easter and divide the two halves of the year in a time of reconnection—verses 46 to 19—and a time of initiation—verses 20 to 45.

The Time of Reconnection

During the Easter mid-season quadrant, the soul gets herself prepared to return to the place of innocence of its spiritual origin before the Fall. The spirit birth of verses 44 and 45 has signaled a completion of a cycle of conscious human growth in the spirit, as we will see below when we turn to the time of initiation. In verse 48 human thinking becomes cosmic thinking, capable of generating love. The spirit birth has brought the human being from the innocence of what Barfield calls original consciousness and Steiner nature-consciousness to the newly acquired innocence of participatory consciousness or attained self-consciousness. Now the cycle starts again.

Verse 46: Having been filled with the spirit, we return to the rising time of spring as beggars for the spirit. The forces of the soul can go asunder unless we reconnect with the forces of our cosmic origin and strengthen memory of our paradisaal being.

Verse 47: The soul prepares itself to receive the gifts of the sphere of cosmic life in the coming “joy of growth.” The already present cosmic life precedes what will manifest as growth, and the newly emerging thinking prepares us to receive it.

Verse 48: Whereas in verse 14 cosmic thinking approached us from the cosmos in sense appearance, the present cosmic thinking could be called “human/cosmic thinking,” the achievement of human co-creation. When it pours itself out in the world, it becomes objective love with a power equal in nature, though not in degree, to the love of the hierarchies. In this we are helped by the power of the light streaming from world-wide heights.

Verse 49: Thinking discerns in the force of cosmic life a power akin to its own, just as perceptive feeling does in relation to the floods of light in verse 4, the complementary to 49. The sun quality of verse 48 is here continued in the rays of hope turning to the approaching cosmic day.

Verse 50: With the achievement of spirit birth and cosmic thinking as a new human faculty, the joy of growth can speak to the human being, no longer veiled by the illusion of sense perception. It recognizes and rewards the human being who has risen to her task as co-creator and becomes revelation. Here is a newly attained state of innocence. The theme will reappear transformed in verse 3.

Verse 51: With the growth of sense stimulations, the human being is reminded not to be content with external impressions, but with the spirit that operates and is present within them.

Verse 52: The next step is to actively seek this "spirit source" (51) by turning to the cosmic life (or "life of worlds"). This entrusting of the soul during the Holy Week brings about an effect even down to the physical body. It renews it by offering it strength of life, uniting "the spirit's being with the life of man."

Verse 1: The soul prepares itself for the Mystery of Easter. While the Sun looks downward to the human being, thinking rises upward to the sphere from which cosmic life has its origin, that of the cosmic formative forces. The living thinking of the human being unites us to the source of living thoughts of the cosmos. In a sense thinking sacrifices itself to carry us into the primeval sphere of human innocence.

Verse 2: This is a natural continuation of verse 51, its complementary. What is true of the sense impressions in 51 is here mirrored in the human being as a whole, though in reverse terms. In spring matter starts rising to spirit and the human being naturally expands: it "germinates in [spirit worlds]." However, he must remember that he cannot find the "fruit of soul" outside of himself, in the spirit worlds, but within himself. The verse subtly announces that the power of memory will be complemented through intuition (verses 7 and 8).

Verse 3: This is the verse that renders explicit the role of memory called forth in 46. The human being who has entrusted herself to the cosmos can reach a new state of innocence through cosmic memory of its paradisaal origin. This is why she can be both "mindful of [her] primal origin" and "self-forgetful" in the desire to overcome the limits of her all-too-human Self and recognize her origin in the sphere of cosmic life brought near by Christ.

Verses 4 and 5: The soul is now drawn to the sphere of cosmic light in a continued movement of expansion. The deepening union is stressed in the words "merging" and "human being and world in unity bind fast" (4). We are fully entering the oneness of nature consciousness. The soul is thus "widened

into world-wide life and resurrected from narrow selfhood's inner power" (5). The movement of union goes together with one of surrender and renunciation. If we want to know our true being, we have to renounce the illusions we have built of ourselves.

Verse 6: The movement of expansion in the light continues and gives us an inkling of the Self as our true being in which the whole world mirrors itself. We find our likeness to the world by apprehending the Self. This can be no more than an inkling because we run the risk of losing ourselves in the light of our primeval origin. We must now actively turn to our home on Earth.

During the time of the Easter quadrant, the soul joyously expands into the sphere of cosmic life. The living Christ reconnects the soul to the realm of its origins. The newly wrought state of purity sought through initiation naturally connects the soul to humanity's early stage of innocence. The soul merges more and more with the light in the same gesture the Apostles pursued at Ascension (verse 6). Therein lies the risk. As the Gospels remind the Apostles, the same Christ that ascends to the Father is the Christ that has remained, the one that ensouls the Earth.

Verse 7: The paradisaal state of humanity before the Fall is brought to a higher stage in the new Earth/Sun, fruit of the Christ's deed on Golgotha and of His reappearance in the sphere of the etheric. Memory of the pre-Fall condition of humankind joins us with the reality of the newly risen Christ sphere that reaches to the human being. Verse 6 gives us both an indication of what's to come and of the danger that the threshold verse 7 fully expands upon. The Christ draws us to the sphere of our cosmic origin. He also wants us to turn to the needs of Earth. Cosmic memory is no longer sufficient. Through intuition we are brought back to ourselves and to the needs of Earth.

After verse 7 we are entering the sphere of the Sun-Earth, that of the etheric Christ, a new sphere historically wrought through human striving to understand and follow the Christ impulse.

Verse 8: Thinking with its outward orientation makes room for intuition and the soul's ability to rest in itself, sense, and respond. In relation to the previous expansion it is a state of involution, leading to a new orientation of the soul.

Verses 9 and 10: Seeking the realms of cosmic light and cosmic warmth, the soul wants to penetrate to the source of its being, the cosmic Word that first was its Life and then its Light (prologue of St. John Gospel).

Verses 10 and 11: The cosmic Word gently touches the soul; it envelops it (10) and gives it direction ("understand these words of wisdom"). The human I intuitively will find itself in the cosmic I (11).

Verse 12: Cosmic life, light, and warmth are now perceived as shining beauty (senses' glory). The world of appearances is redeemed by the Christ impulse, while we are further loosened from fetters of our selfhood.

Verse 13: The cosmic Word speaking in our soul can remind us of our true origin: that as beings of spirit we can find our grounding and true being in the spirit.

Verse 14: The human being has become active but in a purely listening and receptive mode. Such is the challenge of this receptivity that it can fool the soul itself with the impression of having "lost the drive of [its] own being" and "daze and rob me of myself." The trust of listening to the inner voice is rewarded by the approaching of cosmic thinking through which we can reconnect to the deeper directions of our being, exactly the ones from which we feared being estranged.

Verses 15 and 16: It is important to have a recognition of the success of this receptive mode of being before entrusting oneself a step further, before becoming the chrysalis acted upon by the "enchanted weaving of spirit within outer glory." The weaving is a reminder of the combined activity of the hierarchies, the cosmic intelligence approaching us in cosmic thinking. After we have both recognized cosmic thinking and radiant beauty, we can trust that the Self will receive its strength from these not so longer hidden forces. In verse 16 the soul emphatically reaffirms its trust in the inner process of growth. It does so in a resolute and reverential mood: "to bear in inward keeping spirit bounty is stern command."

Verse 17: What was felt and sensed reaches now its climax: the cosmic Word that enveloped us all along has made its home in our soul and speaks therein. It encourages us to deepen the mutual relationship so that it can reappear and speak through us in the heart of winter.

Verses 18 and 19: Now the soul wants to bring to fruition what has been received as a gift. The first step is for it to expand and purify (18). The second is to review and treasure all that the summer has brought to fruition, trusting that having sacrificed our lower ego, a new power of Self will emerge purified from our protracted inner activity (19).

What came to us outwardly in the Easter quadrant was the result of the striving for initiation carried out in the winter. To this could follow a period of

expansion in which the soul is refreshed by the memory of its true being before the Fall, by the blessings of cosmic life, cosmic light, and warmth. This is the time of primeval innocence, a reconnection of our true being through cosmic memory.

Once all of this is brought to a culmination, the soul needs to turn inward. The St John quadrant is one of great inner activity, hidden though it may be because we are called to surrender, trust, and receive, which are seldom recognized as activity. The Christ being that called us outward in the Easter quadrant now draws our attention inward to the cultivation, not of our primeval being, but of our future one. To this effect we reconnect to cosmic thinking and cosmic Word. If the Easter quadrant was one pointing to Christ of our origin, the summer one points to Christ of our destination; from our paradisaical being before the Fall through the Christ Mystery of Golgotha to the new Christ-permeated Earth and the Mystery of Christ's reappearance in the etheric. We are turned to our future Self and to the needs of Earth. From these spring the germ of our true Self that will lead us into the time of Michaelmas.

The St. John quadrant ends a period of gestation of the gifts of the spirit. What the human being has received from the cosmos is what he can now inwardly transform, elaborate, and contribute anew to earthly evolution.

The Time of Initiation

Nature's magical essence, its "shining beauty," has sustained the human being in the summer. Now nature retreats and the human being realizes he cannot find an answer to the fundamental question "Who Am I?" in the external world. The cosmic Word has approached him from within and commanded, "O human being know thyself." This is the basic command for the time that starts at the inception of the Michaelmas quadrant.

Verse 20: The individual can say "I feel at last my life's reality," which needs to connect to the world's reality, but starting from the Self. The Self that is emerging can now grant that connection which the spiritual world bestowed on the human being during the time of spring and summer. During spring and summer the human being surrendered to the spheres of cosmic life, light, and warmth. Now the human being has to bring them back to the world out of himself. This is the call that he meets at the threshold of the Lower Guardian.

Verse 21: Now is ushered in the recognition of our own maturing individuality; light surrounds this ripening seed.

Verses 22-23: The light that blesses us from the macrocosm becomes a light of soul shining into the depths of the spirit; the shining beauty of the world that nourished us in spring and summer retreats. The external world no longer

supports us. We find ourselves alone, but with the certainty of the emerging Self.

Verse 24: When we become aware of Self, we also realize the need for self-cognition and for generating our own strength of will.

Verse 25: I come to the abyss, the dark of space and time, at which the Guardian approaches me. And in the calendar he appears as Michael, who leads to Christ. With his help I can "carry Sun's glowing into the winter's icy flowing." The true Self illumines the darkness of space and time.

Verse 26: Michael is the one who alone can show us the path to Christ. It is neither the power of the senses (which has waned in verse 23) nor the power of our sense-bound thinking that can rescue us now, but only our spirit striving, which directs us to our Spirit Self (sense of Self).

Verse 27: Warmth returns to the inner world together with the light, present both in summer sun and in the form of a seed warming.

Verse 28: Now the light and power that the Guardian and Michael call forth in order to be able to embark on the inner work is that of my awakened thinking.

Verse 29: The power of ordinary intellect and the senses' might cannot accompany us across the threshold, but rather their redeemed forms: the spark of thinking and the cosmic spirit's fount of strength.

Verse 30: Feeling (self-awareness certitude), thinking (ripened fruits of thinking), and willing (autumn's spirit waking) have to harmonize with each other on the other side of the threshold.

Verses 31 and 32: What we wrestle from the abyss is what gives us renewed strength and presence in the world: "forceful will of life ... to ripen into human deeds" (31) and "gain strength to give me to the world ... insight into the weaving of life's destiny." (Verse 32 is an echo of 29.)

The strong inner resolve of verses 24 to 27 becomes resolute presence in the world from 28 to 32. From verse 28 both thinking and feeling add their strengths to the Michaelic will. The strengthened human being is now ready to turn to the needs of the world.

Verses 33-34: If verse 20 announces our encounter with the lower Guardian of the Threshold, verse 33 leads us to the Higher Guardian. What we have conquered for ourselves could yield fruits for ourselves alone. But this would

mean that the world's reality would "only be frosty, empty life" and, if it cannot be created anew in the human soul, "would in itself find only death." The exalted and onerous task of co-creation is announced in this verse. To this follows the revealing possibility of pouring "forth cosmic forces into the outer actions of my life" in verse 34.

Verse 35: Confirmation comes that a new stage has been attained. The soul now feels at home within the cosmic Self. It has reached the stage of Spirit Self in communion with Christ.

Verses 36-37: Here the human being's Spirit Self can work with the cosmic Word in sacrificial reverence for the furtherance of world evolution. As the Greater Guardian requires, this must be done in a sacrificial, joyful mood (36). When this is accepted, the cosmic Word works in the world through the human agency, "transfiguring all life." What better way to hear that the human being is becoming a co-creator.

Verse 38: The gesture of the previous verses is here continued. The spirit child within has the same urge as in verse 37 to rejoice and reach "into farthest worlds." This is the spirit birth at first just felt in the soul. It will be known more consciously in verse 44 and 45.

Verse 39: Once spirit revelation is reached, the power of thinking can further be transformed. Through it we can pour into the world the power of the Spirit Self.

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Verse 40: Through the power of the cosmic Word, Spirit Self and Self are here in dialogue. The first can cleanse all "vain delusions" of the Self through the "fiery power of the cosmic Word."

Verse 41: The soul turns to the world armed with sacrificial zeal. It will further cleanse itself in "human loving and in human working." External activity is only truly a blessing to the world when it is imbued by the forces of the cosmic Word acting within.

Verse 42: A turn is here indicated. The further progress of the soul isn't just a linear process in the Calendar of the Soul. Winter interplays with the coming stimulation of cosmic life of the spring, which it wants to anticipate. Thinking is that Sun-light of the soul which illuminates the external darkness.

Verse 43: Transformed thinking that pours the human being's activity into the world transforms the heart, already touched at Christmas (verse 38). Now warmth of heart adds itself to clarity of thinking to counter cold and darkness.

Verses 44-45: These verses mark the turning point of the spirit birth of initiation. No wonder this has been reached in heart first (Christmas), head (transformed thinking), and then both. In the spirit birth, thinking unites head and heart. In the heart it is the "creative will" (44); in the head the "light of thinking" (45).

Cross 7: Trials and Temptations

There is another hidden symmetry between the two parts of the calendar that appears through the verses of cross 7.

The tests of fall and winter call us to the meetings with the Lower and the Higher Guardians respectively. Around verse 20 the call to "feel at last my life's reality" sounds out from Michael. It places us at the abyss of existence—"the dark of space and time" of verse 25 in front of the Lower Guardian. Our striving leads us to the integration of thinking, feeling, and will before verse 33, where the call of the Higher Guardian resounds. What we have achieved for ourselves is no longer sufficient. We can respond to the call of the macrocosm, eager to connect to and find itself re-created in the human soul. The Christ, which is present behind the Higher Guardian of the Threshold, calls us to freely offer ourselves in sacrifice for the furtherance of world evolution.

The tests of spring and summer allow us to overcome the adversaries. The first one who wants to separate the forces of our soul through the appeal of the senses is Ahriman. When we come to verse 46, what we have achieved through the call of verse 33 is now placed at risk. As the Earth's ethers rise to meet the human soul, the integration of the forces of the soul is tested. To counter this, we turn in verse 46 to the memory of the cosmic past, which reveals us our true origin and being.

When spring approaches summer, we are further pulled out of ourselves by the appeal of cosmic light and cosmic warmth in verse 7. This is the Luciferic temptation of dissolving ourselves in the ethers, which can be countered through the forward-looking faculty of intuition. Here we look at the evolutionary future of Earth, and are reminded that our task is to seek our Self in the earthly domain and remain committed to needs of Earth. Armed with this resolve, we can steel our striving once more through our Michaelic will.

Reviewing the Whole

In winter our spirit striving leads us first to the innocence of the spirit child at Christmas; then memory has led us to the primeval innocence of our true being through the soul's faithfulness to the Christ impulse. In late spring and summer, through intuition we enter the sphere of cosmic Word and the future tasks of Earth. It is no wonder thereby that the two soul faculties bring us to the abyss of existence in the Michaelmas quadrant. The gift of innocence can

recede completely because now we have acquired all the inner strength we need. Nature retreats and no longer offers us the in-streaming forces of the spirit. We have to generate the spirit within, trusting that we carry "nature's maternal life" within ourselves—Michaelmas verse 26—the summer's gifts of the cosmic ethers in our Self-willed striving.

At the end of the summer, we have formulated the resolve of moral striving (e.g., "can I expand my soul" and "fashion it worthily as fitting raiment for the spirit" in verse 18), which will allow the Self and the Self-engendered will to emerge soon after Michaelmas. It is the unnamed being of Michael who now leads us to the Christ through the confrontation at our own abyss as we move into the time of the fall. Fall stands as the opposite of spring; the expanding and renewing connection of our primeval innocence now corresponds the willingness to confront the darkness within and without.

The modern human being can no longer find answers to the riddle of the Self outwardly. Nothing in external nature can answer the deepest calls of the soul. What was received as a gift from the cosmos in the abundance of spring and summer growth now needs to be internalized as self-engendered will, redeemed power of thinking, and warmth of love in order to lead us to the winter's spirit birth.

What unfolds from spring to winter in the Calendar of the Soul is also a recapitulation of Earth's evolution and of the Christ impulse's unfolding in time. Verse 46 reconnects us to the 3rd post-Atlantean sacrifice, the one in which the Christ being worked through an archangelic being to render thinking, feeling, and willing selfless. "St. George who conquers the dragon, or Michael who conquers the dragon, are symbols of the third Christ event, when Christ ensouled himself in an Archangel. It is the dragon, trodden under foot, that has brought thinking, feeling and willing into disorder. All who turn their gaze upon St. George or Michael with the dragon, or some similar episode, perceive in reality, the third Christ event."¹

In verse 7 it is the Self that is under attack, and the temptation is one of foregoing the needs of Earth evolution in a movement of excarnation, a Luciferic pursuit. This is a commemoration of the Mystery of Golgotha, performed by Christ for the salvation of the human ego at the central point of Earth evolution.

We have described two series of events mirroring each other in the spring/summer and in the fall/winter times of the year. The first time these are events brought about by the cosmos; the second time by the human being

¹ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of June 1, 1914, "The Four Sacrifices of Christ."

who follows the Christ impulse. During the warm time of the year, we have a recapitulation of sacrifices of Christ; during the cold time it is the human being who furthers the Christ impulse and the Earth's evolution. In verse 46 the imagination of Michael treading the dragon under foot reconnects us to Christ's third sacrifice in late Atlantean times; verse 7 to the deed at Golgotha in defense of the human ego. In verse 20 Michael approaches us once more, testing the strength of the human being at the abyss of existence. He acts as the Lesser Guardian of the Threshold. He will lead us to the Greater Guardian of the Threshold in verse 33, behind which stands the Christ being.

Every year the calendar invites us to both reconnect to our primeval roots in the sphere of cosmic life, which approaches us as Easter nears, and to undertake the journey of initiation starting around Michaelmas time.