

THE SEQUENCE OF THE VERSES: THEMES AND TRANSITIONS

When entering the Calendar of the Soul as a novice, and even after a number of years, the varieties of themes and their interlacing hid the perception of continuity for much of the parts of the year. Only progressively did I see that this continuity appears either in larger theme sequences or in subtle pointers from one verse to the next. This appendix will refer to these two helpers for those who enter the Calendar anew, or have little experience of it.

Spring

The first verse announces thinking reaching to the realm of cosmic life (spirit life) and dimly binding man's being to it. The second verse immediately follows by showing that thinking has completed its task and that it is "losing self-confines." Verse 2 has announced that the human being must find the fruit of soul within. It is through the ultimate effort of enlivened remembrance that the human being does this, in calling forth memory of its primeval paradisiacal state in the World-All and renouncing fetters of selfhood. The latter will become a theme from verses 3 to 6. The human being can now unite to this World All through the power of perceptive feeling that merges with the light of spring in verse 4. The theme of light forms the thread in verse 5 through the experience of resurrection from "narrow selfhood's inner power." And this resurrection forms the gate for the perception of the Self in verse 6. Verse 7 puts what seems a halt to this progression indicating that this Self can, yes, expand, but is thus risking losing itself in the "enticing light." Intuition is announced as the important future faculty of soul and as a theme that rises from verses 7 to 10.

In the next three verses the theme of intuition plays out in full force. Verse 8 restates the rise of the power of the senses and their threat for the soul, adding that thinking must recede to dreamlike dullness. Intuition asks the individual to forget the narrow will of self and lose itself in light in verse 9. In verse 10 intuition points the way to the goal of this forgetting and losing: let a godly being speak in the soul, inaugurating the theme of cosmic Word, implicit or explicit, in verses 10 to 13. It is this godly being that speaks in the next verse and asks the soul to lose itself to find itself in the cosmic I. The theme of losing itself in cosmic light and cosmic warmth is continued in verse 12 of St. John; in verse 13 cosmic Word reveals itself explicitly and speaks

offering the soul assurance that it can find itself in its true spiritual home, in the realm from where flame the words of truth.

Summer

That something important has occurred in this surrendering of the soul during spring is made clear by the emergence of the theme of selfhood in verses 14 to 16. The letting go of narrow boundaries of self gives way to the receiving of selfhood power. In verse 14 the reference to surrendering appears in negative with "dreamlike thinking seemed to daze and rob me of myself." Here the act of surrender is seen from the perspective of the lower ego as a loss. But the word "seemed" renders it clear that it is only a relative, apparent loss. In reality it is something that will serve the Self. Verse 15 already shows that this is not a loss but a process that takes time and trust on the part of the soul. The spirit world's enchanted weaving is surrounding the soul to let selfhood power emerge from a state of dormancy. Awakening from this state requires that the soul treasure and awaken to the realization of what it has been given by the spirit so that the gifts may bring forth the fruits of selfhood (verse 16). The gifts are maturing in the depths of soul, and in verse 17 we are asked to look at our inmost soul from where the cosmic Word can ring forth so that the Self be enriched by it. Aware of the presence of cosmic Word, the soul summons the strength to expand and purify itself in verse 18. The theme of selfhood power that was in the background of verses 17 and 18 reemerges in verse 19 and continues in 20 and 21. Enriched by the cosmic Word, our conscious effort to enliven its presence in our soul renders possible the emergence from the dream of summer. It enlivens the memory of what the soul has gone through in verse 19. This awakening is also providential in relation to the following, warning verse (20). We cannot just rest on what has been going on within the soul. We need to connect our ripened ego to the higher self by energetically turning to the world around us; from the dream of summer to the awakening call of Micha-el that is coming to us in the autumn air.

The threat to the Self that verse 20 has warned us about is averted in a gesture complementary to verse 7. The Self is, not surprisingly, felt as strange power, coming as it is from the realm of cosmic Self (21). Whereas the risk of spring was that of losing oneself in the external light, now the light becomes light of soul to nurture the human self out of the cosmic Self in verse 22. With the coming of autumn the gift of the summer light becomes light of soul, further nourishing the human Self. The light withdraws further from the

external world to announce the summer of the soul in verse 23. In the same verse the theme of autumn-winter sleep is announced with the corresponding need to awaken. In verse 24 sleep is countered by strong inner activity; the theme is continued through to verse 26. The recognition of the Self at the center of the soul goes hand in hand with the rousing activity of Self-engendered will in verse 24. The light and activity inwardly generated now allow the soul to strengthen the Self and contrast the sleep of creation with the wakefulness of the soul in 25. The all-will Micha-el verse of 26 brings the cosmic life that has manifested in summer nature into the will and brings the Self to fathom the coming of Spirit Self in winter.

Fall

Michaelmas brought up the sense of Self as a goal for the season. In verse 27 I'm being asked to look into my being's depths where lies the Self as a gift of the summer sun. The theme of the sun becoming inner sun occupies the verses 27 to 30. In 28 I can feel my being vivified and renewed, and with it the power of thinking, which, like the Self, comes from solar heights. The theme of thinking, overlapping with the inner sun, rises from verses 28 to 30. In verse 29 we are asked to fan its spark into flame with exertion of will so that in 30 the fruits of thinking are supported by the flow of feeling and bring about the "autumn's spirit waking" and "the summer of the soul." The theme of the Sun's power continues through the strengthening of the will in verses 31 and 32. In verse 31 this is expressed as forceful will of life leading to human deeds; in verse 32 the soul acquires inner certainty as to its presence in the world and its karmic relationships. This then naturally leads in verse 33 to the necessity for the soul to realize its responsibility in world's evolution and pledge to become a giver to the world. The world depends on human contribution for its sustenance and for its further evolution.

Verses 34 and 35 respond to the imperative of 33 with a strengthening of the Self. The vow of 33 leads to a newly risen sense of Self in 34, which can now wed the human being to the larger world through deeds in which are poured cosmic forces. The desire to mold self to true existence echoes in the yearning for knowing "being" and "true life" in 35, through which the Self can feel at one with the cosmic Self, with the Christ that is its true, and largest archetype. Verses 36 to 39 invite us into the realm of the cosmic Word, with a crescendo. In verse 36 the cosmic Self of 35 leads us to the cosmic Word residing in our soul and furthering our co-creative spiritual activity through

the power of active sacrifice. Sacrifice becomes ultimately courage in verse 37, leading us to transform the world through the power of the cosmic Word.

To the theme of cosmic Word is now superposed that of heart and warmth from verses 37 to 43. To the awakening of the heart that we first see in 37 in the first winter verse (December 15 to 21) responds the gladness of heart at the birth of the spirit child within at Christmas. The cosmic Word wants to expand in joy out of the confines of our hearts. The spirit-birth of 38 becomes spirit revelation in 39, which affirms the sense of Self out of the thinker's might. The fall quadrant of the year concludes with an affirmation of the light of thinking and warmth of heart that form the receptacle for the sense of Self, for the dialogue between Self and Spirit Self.

Winter

The light of the fall is tinged with warmth of heart for the first time at Christmas (verse 38). Now the light fully gives way to winter warmth. Cosmic warmth of the height of summer is transformed at the opposite time of year into the warmth that we can generate in our hearts through the clarity of thinking and strength of Michaelic will. The first gesture of the cosmic Word within is one of cleansing. The soul can only make room for such resplendent presence if it can "fill the vain delusion of the self" with cosmic Word's power. The love that the I experiences in spirit depths (40) blazes through the soul with an imperative to flow into the world as human loving and working (41). The growth of the power of the heart now turns itself to the cosmos, bringing fulfilment to the imperative of verse 33 in 41 and 42. The warmth of heart of 42 defies the gloom of winter to become a force akin to that of nature, able to anticipate the sense-world's revelation. The forces of the heart are explicitly called upon once more, not just to anticipate the sense world's revelation, but to sustain and strengthen the world of appearances in verse 43.

Verses 44 and 45 remind us of the power of the spirit-birth attained at Christmas, but now the focus changes with the purpose of preparing ourselves to the change that will be apparent in spring. While winter still offers us the experience of cold and darkness, the sphere of cosmic life animates all that is lying under the earth toward its future expression. Verses 44 to 49 bring the power of thinking to a culmination. The power of thought prepares to meet its counterpart in the forces of growth in the world. It equips the soul not to get lost under the stimulus of the senses and to meet these with assurance of its place in the world. The promise to meet the growth of spring with the creative will of thinking in 44 is echoed and enlarged with the light quality of thinking

in 45, which will unite us with the world's becoming. The preparation that thinking has urged in the last two verses is now met as a threat to the forces of the soul in 46; something more is needed to join forces with thinking. That is the power of memory rising from spirit depths as a new source of inner light. We sense that this is a moment of balance between the two quadrants of winter and spring. While thinking is still growing, another faculty is emerging, paving the way to the inner power of intuition of the later spring.

Verses 44 and 45 have announced the awakening of the powers of growth in the womb of the earth. Now thinking affirms itself by seeking and offering the human being a close union with the formative forces in nature, to which it is akin. Verse 47 reminds us of the necessity of being rooted in the growing strength of the power of thought. This strength is then met by the power of the light coming from the heights toward the soul. Thinking can become cosmic thinking that no longer reflects and separates but unites concept with percept and realizes their unity. From this cosmic thinking true freedom emerges that becomes capacity to love (48). Clarity of thought allied with memory's power generates hope in turning to the cosmic day with the gifts gleaned from the winter's cosmic night in 49. The light of winter carried into the spring becomes revelation and liberation in verse 50, with the concurrent expansion of the forces of cosmic life that will reach a climax in 52. Nature seeks itself in the human being. This is the attainment of the vow of verse 33. In verse 51 this powerful, but fleeting, revelation becomes for the human being the vow to seek itself beyond the play of the senses, to remember that it must seek for that part of the sense impressions that eludes normal consciousness, the spirit behind external appearance.

Verse 52 reminds us that with the approaching of the Christ Mystery in outer nature, the spirit seeks the human being just as much as the reverse. What flows from the universe as cosmic life seeks to unite itself with the human body, enriching its life forces. The movement is reversed at the turning point of the year (verse 1), when the Sun speaks to the human being and human thoughts reach to their primal cosmic source from which they will flow renewed throughout the spring and summer.