

Appendix 29
From Saint John to Michaelmas
in the Calendar of the Soul

To set the stage for this time of the year let us look back at the transformation that took place shortly before it. In leading to the St. John festival we pledge to sacrifice our lower nature and be reborn, under the guidance of the Archangel Uriel, in order that "I may decrease and He may increase." Uriel, who presides over the cosmic intelligence, invites us to face the abyss and sacrifice our intellectual thinking in order to nurture the seeds and fruits of soul we have gathered in the spring.

Under the sign of Cancer we become willing to die and be reborn—in the language of the Calendar to "lose ourselves in order to find ourselves." Nature's living imaginations approach us "enchanted" in what the Calendar calls the "sense world's glory." Later in the year we will behold them "free of enchantment" (see for example verses 38 and 50).

In summer the soul starts to transform everything that it has received from the cosmos in order to be ready to the shift toward Self-consciousness, marked by the onset of the Michaelmas festival. And in this interval between festivals we will follow a series of interweaving themes that we will differentiate both sides of warning verse 20, its turning point.

The forces of the soul that guide us during this part of the year are memory and intuition/boding ("ahnung"). In keeping with the nature of these forces, but paradoxically—given the normal and widespread perception of summer consciousness—the first part of the interval is the most introverted of the whole Calendar. Two themes already emerge: the narrow bounds of the I give way to the emerging selfhood forces. And this transition is pictured as the forming of new fruits and seeds, ripening in the soul as a result of "gifts divine" (e.g., verse 16). At the core of the first interval lies cosmic Word speaking to the soul and the soul's response to it in verses 17 and 18. Memory reaches its goal in verse 19 just before the closing of the interval.

In the second interval intuition continues to play an important role and memory gives way to the emerging self-engendered will. Selfhood power grows in strength and announces the next step of the acquisition of the "sense of Self" (verse 26). Another two themes reflect the change of the season, that of light and darkness on one hand, sleep and wakefulness on

the other. As the light retreats from Nature, so does it gain inner strength to become "light of soul" (verse 22), which guides us into inner and outer darkneses, foreseeing the challenge of winter. Verse 23 announces both the retreat of the light and the onset of the "autumn's winter-sleep." To the latter the soul replies with the desire to keep awake and with the strengthening of the will.

From St John to Mid-Summer (Verse 20)

Verse 14 encapsulates everything that was achieved by the time of Saint John.

Surrendering to senses' revelation
I lost the drive of my own being,
And dreamlike thinking seemed
To daze and rob me of my self.
Yet quickening there draws near
In sense appearance cosmic thinking.

Up to the time of Saint John the human being who is true to his Michaelic commitment has sacrificed his ordinary thinking and lived in the external imaginations of Nature approaching him in the weaving of sense appearance, in the manifestation of the cosmic intelligence that the Calendar calls "cosmic thinking." He has accepted with trust to surrender and decrease so that the Christ force in him could increase, even when that manifested in a sense of loss and seeming disorientation. Before gathering the divine gifts and recognizing their origin we witness a time of incubation, as it were, in verse 15.

I feel (fühle) enchanted weaving
Of spirit within outer glory.
In dullness of the senses
It has enwrap my being

In order to bestow the strength
Which in its narrow bounds my I
Is powerless to give itself.

The theme of the gladly accepted powerlessness is re-emphasized in this verse, and cosmic thinking, which has approached us, now takes another step. It weaves around our being in what we can only dimly perceive in a state of enchantment. It envelops us to strengthen us. It can do so because of all the willing surrender that has preceded the time of Saint John. In the next verse speaks the voice of intuition, which has constantly remained in the background of our consciousness and will accompany us all through the summer.

To bear in inward keeping spirit bounty
Is stern command of my prophetic feeling [intuition] {Ahnen}
That ripened gifts divine
Maturing in the depths of soul
To selfhood bring their fruits.

What we receive in a state of enchantment now reveals its importance a step further. We know we must treasure it in an attitude of devotion and protect it so that it may grow in the soul to foster the growth of the Self. And it is this conscious decision which allows cosmic Word to reveal itself to the soul immediately after in verse 17.

Thus speaks the cosmic Word
That I by grace through senses' portals
Have led into my innermost soul:
Imbue your spirit depths
With my wide world horizons
To find in future time myself in you.

The “godly being” that has accompanied us ever since verse 10 (mirror verse of 17)¹ now speaks in the soul, offering us to permeate it if we can avail ourselves of its inspiration. It is this power that has entered our inner sanctum through the world of the senses to which we have not succumbed passively; rather surrendered to with trust. The seed of cosmic Word will work in the deeper, less conscious, layers of our spirit to fully grow in the “future time” of winter in which it will speak to our conscious spirit, starting with verse 36 of Advent.

In a pattern that we have just seen, verse 18 replies to 17 in relation to cosmic Word as verse 16 replies to 14 and 15 in relation to cosmic thinking. And in both verses speaks clearly the voice of intuition. Now, the human being who awakens wants to actively fashion his own soul as a receptacle for cosmic Word.

Can I expand my soul

That it unites itself

With cosmic Word received as seed?

I sense [I do forebode] {ich ahne} that I must find the strength

To fashion worthily my soul

As fitting raiment for the spirit.

The whole of the effort of expansion and purification of the soul that was ushered in after Easter is brought to completion with the intention to enoble our soul under the inspiration of cosmic Word. Now verse 19 amplifies the intention of verse 16.

In secret to encompass now

With memory what I’ve newly got

¹ What is here called “mirror verse” is the verse of a same cross (cross 10 in this instance) which corresponds to the same half of the year: verses 10 and 17 are both part of the same half or the year, the time of Nature consciousness. In the typical lemniscate representation of the progress of the verses through the year they are disposed symmetrically both sides of the axis that goes from St. John to Christmas.

Shall be my striving's further aim:
Thus, ever strengthening, selfhood's forces
Shall be awakened from within
And growing, give me to myself.

Before the end of this interval and the turning point marked by warning verse 20 the soul that treasured the inner gifts (verse 16) now wants to bring them to fuller consciousness in an ongoing, continuous effort. The verse amplifies verse 16, which was the last to mention selfhood. Memory, which has accomplished the goal it set out for itself in verse 46 (complementary of 20), appears here for the last time. The memory that retraced our cosmic/metahistorical journey through the Fall, Easter, Whitsun and Saint John, now turns completely personal before dissipating. New forces will have to emerge at this turning point.

From Mid-Summer to Michaelmas

Two important steps take place in the next two verses and they are ushered in through the realm of feeling; both verses start with "I feel." At the warning verse 20 the relationship between inner and outer worlds is reversed.

I feel at last my life's reality
Which, severed from the world's existence,
Would in itself obliterate itself
And building only on its own foundation
Would in itself bring death upon itself.

Until now the soul had a deeply introspective attitude, due in part to protecting itself from the stimulation of the senses and the risk of losing itself in a gesture of ecstasy without gaining durable fruits. After we consciously awake through retrospective memory to everything we have received from the time of Easter, something else needs to happen. Our attention will shift outward, toward the world. We are no longer in a position of pure receptivity. We need to turn to the external world consciously, announcing an

exertion of the will. This is important for the emergence of the Self, which the next verse announces with anticipation in the realm of feeling.

I feel strange power, bearing fruit
And gaining strength to give myself to me.
I sense the seed maturing
And expectation [ahnung], light filled, weaving
Within me on my selfhood's power.

Verse 21 reveals what was the mission of intuition/expectation (ahnung)—the cultivation of the inner conditions for the strengthening of the Self. Here is a power that comes as a surprise, in words that are variously translated as “strange”, “foreign” and “unknown.” Here we see the result of the maturation of the “gifts divine” that are now present and active in the ground of the soul as seeds. However, intuition remains active in the soul and will appear once more in verse 27 to bring this process to a close.

We now come to a sequence of four verses touching on the themes of light and darkness, starting from verse 22.

The light from world-wide spaces
Works on within with living power;
Transformed to light of soul
It shines into the spirit depths
To bring to birth the fruits
Whereby out of the self of worlds
The human self in course of time shall ripen.

Come early September (verse 22) the change of the season brings the retreat of the light. Light is now internalized as “light of soul” so that what exists in the world and met us as cosmic I (verse 11) now promises the unfolding of the human self.

There dims in damp autumnal air
The senses' luring magic;
The light's revealing radiance
Is dulled by hazy veils of mist.
In distances around me I can see
The autumn's winter sleep;
The summer's life has yielded
Itself into my keeping.

Before fading in the external world the light has entered the soul. Verse 23 that anticipates the fall is a verse of pralaya under three aspects, the lessening of the call of the senses, the dimming of the light and the setting in of winter-sleep. What takes the place of this emptiness is simply the "summer's life." Everything that we have gathered through spring and early summer is now active in the soul. The power of the light is now transformed and lives as "light of soul" (22). In it we recognize what will take the place of memory.

Unceasingly itself creating
Soul life becomes aware of self;
The cosmic spirit, striving on,
Renews itself by self-cognition,
And from the darkness of the soul
Creates the fruit of self-engendered will.

The Self that was seen as foreign or strange (21) is brought to the awareness of the soul to generate self-cognition. The light, operating within, guides us through the inner darkness to give birth to the Michaelic courage manifested in self-engendered will, a will that has been purified from self-serving purposes during spring and early summer through the curbing of

the lower self. The theme of the Michaelic will is amplified in the next two verses while the thread of light and darkness is brought to a close.

I can belong now to myself
And shining spread my inner light
Into the dark of space and time.
Toward sleep is urging all creation,
But inmost soul must stay awake
And carry wakefully sun's glowing
Into the winter's icy flowing.

The verse 25, like others of cross 2, formulates a mild warning. The sleep of outer nature must be contrasted by an attitude of alertness and presence. The self-engendered will must help us carry the summer's life into the "winter's icy flowing."

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 Michaelmas verse clearly sums up everything that the summer has legated. The maternal life of Nature—the strength of the internalized ethers (cosmic life, cosmic light and cosmic warmth)—now graces the soul and tempers it. The sphere of cosmic life that emerged in verses 52 and 1 of the Holy Week and of Easter is now reflected in verse 26 of the same cross 1. What lived as cosmic life is now metamorphosed in the will's fiery energy in a verse that is all will. The Self, perceived with clarity in verse 24, is now striving to come under the guidance of the Spirit Self; this is what is expressed in the yearning for the "sense of Self."

What follows serves as confirmation of the ending of a cycle. The self that was only sensed as “selfhood power” is now becoming a goal in the “sense of Self.” For this to happen two interrelated events need to take place in succession.

When to my being’s depths I penetrate,
There stirs expectant longing [yearning in me, boding well] {ahnungsvolles}
That self-observing, I may find myself
As gift of summer sun, a seed
That warming lives in autumn mood
As germinating force of soul.

Intuition, which fathomed the rise of the Self, can now confirm that its goal has been reached—that the Self is solidly implanted and growing like a seed in the summer of the soul. That intuition’s role is coming to an end is made all the more clear in the next verse in which thinking takes its place to act as the new “soul’s sun power.” The Self is now turned completely outward to grow under the tutelage of the self-engendered will and the radiance of thinking.

I can, in newly quickened inner life,
Sense wide horizons in my self.
The force and radiance of my thought—
Coming from soul’s sun power—
Can solve the mysteries of life,
And grant fulfilment now to wishes
Whose wings have long been lamed by hope.

In reaching the end of this interval, cosmic thinking (verse 14) coming to us from the environment of the senses gives way to the sun-radiance of inwardly generated thought.

Reviewing the whole period in question we can recognize the broad tendencies of its two halves and the nature of the change that takes place in between. During the time preceding verse 20, the soul collects itself to foster the growth of fruits and seeds it has gathered in the spring and up to the time of Saint John. The soul treasures and recollects its blessings. Central to this period is the recognition of cosmic Word speaking in the soul and prompting a call to expand and purify itself, to make itself worthy of the presence.

The threshold verse 20 asks for a change of orientation, for the recognition of "the world's existence" as a precondition for not "obliterating itself" and "bringing death upon itself." This will mark a shift from receptivity to activity, marked by the waning of memory and the progressive emergence of the self-engendered will.

In the second part of the interval the stage is set for autumn and the retreat of the power of the senses. What would give rise to the tendency to slow down and sleep must be actively resisted by the soul by waking up and turning its attention outwardly. We arrive at the time of Michaelmas fired up by the emerging power of the Self and the recognition of the ascendance of the power of thinking that will guide us into fall and winter. Intuition retreats just as thinking ascends to temper the Michaelic sword.