

The Calendar of the Soul as a Path of Self-Knowledge through Feeling



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The present essay revisits some insights that emerged in embryo some five years ago. At the time I looked at the correspondences between the parts of the Calendar of the Soul and the three practices indicated in the Foundation Stone Meditation, namely Spirit Recollection, Spirit Mindfulness and Spirit Beholding.

Briefly, to start with, I can say that the time of spring and summer, echoing the human being's original participation in the spirit, the time of excarnation of the year is the one through which the human being receives inspiration from the spiritual world and works out of more unconscious impulses. What is received serves to consolidate and strengthen "selfhood power." In this attempt he is guided first by the force of memory (from verse 46), then by the ascending of the power of boding/intuition (from verse 7). This is reflected in the Foundation Stone meditation's first panel which speaks of Spirit Recollection—the path in which we direct our will through our thinking, leading us to "truly living."

In the second part of the Calendar, fall to winter, the human being passes on to the condition that Owen Barfield would qualify as "conscious participation," rather than the original participation of the earlier part of the year. She becomes a conscious contributor to the spiritual world and can be qualified as a co-creator, having eventually crossed the threshold to the spiritual world (especially around verses 44 and 45). This is the gesture of the practice of Spirit Beholding that we find in the third verse of the Foundation Stone Meditation. Here we find thinking (from verse 28) strengthened and refined through the rise of the will, which precedes it (from verse 24). The whole fall-winter interval forms the polarity to Spirit Recollection.

The contrast between the two parts of the year is encapsulated in the polarity boding/intuition—thinking that divides the year in two. Thinking ascends soon after Michaelmas, exactly as the power of boding/intuition wanes, and the contrary happens soon after Easter. But what exactly is this boding/intuition and what function does it play in the course of the year? This has been expanded upon in the work of Karl König, and from the present research.

König indicates that the word *ahnung* first appeared in the German language in the form of the verb *ahnen* toward the end of the 11th century in Middle High German. It meant "to have a dark premonition."

In its evolution the word—which appears in the translation of König's essays as "boding"—acquired a series of connotations, such as "an awareness of conditions and circumstances that are not clearly

apprehended."¹ It denotes something that grows in the consciousness until it can be expressed with more clarity. With this growth, boding eventually delivers an understanding of the place and deeper meaning of events in our biography.

That this concept is somehow challenging to translate in English can be seen by the amount of terms in which it appears in the translations. This is also partly due to the fact that the term evolves during the course of the year. An example: as we have boding in the English language, so do we have foreboding with a slightly different meaning.

Among terms used in the translations we find *intimation, divining or heart's divining, expectation, inner voice, presentiment, intuition, awareness stirring in the heart, feeling dimly hinting, inner prompting*.² To these I could add the expression *heart sensing*, which I have encountered in Coen van Houten's work with Destiny Learning. In more than one way, boding corresponds to the modern sense of the colloquial word *intuition* (to be distinguished from true Intuition, which follows Imagination and Inspiration) used in the Pusch translation. In this essay I will from now on refer to intuition or intuition/boding.

What is said above is only part of the whole. When we come closer to each part of the year, we see that neither Spirit Recollection, nor Spirit Beholding are expressed in their pure form. We could say they are enlarged. Let us see how.

The Calendar of the Soul in Relation to the Practices of the Foundation Stone Meditation

It was obvious to ask myself where I would find the gesture of Spirit Mindfulness of the second stanza of the Foundation Stone Meditation. While at a closer look it cannot be seen in any specific part of the Calendar, we can say that it is present everywhere and in so doing gives a special coloring to and modifies the nature and tenor of both Spirit Recollection and Spirit Beholding of the two halves of the Calendar.³ This is not too surprising for

¹ Karl König, *The Calendar of the Soul: A Commentary*, 195.

² Rudolf Steiner, *The Calendar of the Soul by Rudolf Steiner with Translations by Daisy Aldan, John F. Gardner, Isabel Grieve, Brigitte Knaack, Ernst Lehrs and Ruth and Hans Pusch and a Paraphrase by Owen Barfield*.

³ See Luigi Morelli, *Exploring Themes in the Calendar of the Soul*, Appendix 6: The Calendar of the Soul in Relation to the Practices of the Foundation Stone Meditation.

what is after all the practice of the middle, of the heart, which mediates between the pole of the will and the pole of thinking.

In the realm of heart and lungs the Calendar of the Soul brings balance between Self and cosmos through the harmonizing influence of the Christ being. In effect, the second panel of the Foundation Stone Meditation is the only one of the first three stanzas in which there is mention of Christ. And we are told that the practice of Spirit Mindfulness takes us “through the rhythms of time into the feeling of our own soul being” and does so “in balance of the soul.” The whole of the Calendar is a matter of seasonal rhythms and their integration, involving balance, as we will see below.

As previously said, the soul faculties supporting us during spring and summer are those of memory (from verse 46) and intuition (from verse 7). Memory “enkindles light” and “invigorates our inward sight” at a time in which the soul forces tend to separate. Intuition counters the dispersal of the Self caused by “the world’s enticing light” and by the power of thought “losing itself” in the senses’ glory. At a time where we tend to excarnate and lose ourselves in a dream consciousness, memory and intuition hold us back with an inwardly directed attention.

Memory and intuition are the forces through which we can practice Spirit Recollection (or Spirit Remembering) that we practice “in depths of soul” and through which we “live in the limbs.” While memory looks backward, intuition directs us forward. The two place us in the world of the soul, the microcosm, through which we connect with the forces at play in our biography, the forces that have their origin in our karmic history, in our previous incarnations. Through Spirit Recollection our “own I comes into being in the I of God”—from which we descended into the streams of incarnations—so that we can “truly live.” In spring and summer we have to summon strength of soul to respond to the challenge of entrusting ourselves to the cosmos without fully, consciously knowing.

The Spirit Recollection to which the Calendar points, however, is richer and more nuanced than its general term indicates. It is woven through and through by the gesture of Spirit Mindfulness. The human being plunges into a microcosmic reality, thoroughly colored by cosmic events; she weaves the inwardly-directed activity with awareness of the larger forces of Nature and cosmos. Personal biography is enlarged in the direction of cosmic human evolution and given a larger meaning. The following examples give us a taste of this larger activity and awareness:

- Verse 3: mindful of its primal state the growing human I
- Verse 5: the soul’s true being is widened into worldwide life

- Verse 6: there has arisen from its narrow limits my Self
- Verse 8: Godly being desires union with my soul
- Verse 10: there has perceived you now a godly being
- Verse 18: can I expand my soul that it unites itself with cosmic Word
(all the verses are taken from the Ruth and Ruth Pusch translation)

Spirit Mindfulness is present in the interrelationships of an inwardly directed consciousness with macrocosmic happenings. What weaves between above and below is directed by memory and intuition toward the attainment of "selfhood power."

The transition into fall and winter is marked by the turning points of verses 20 and 33. Both of them are concerned with the relationship between Self and world. In verse 20 we summon the emergence of the Self in the awareness of our deep connection with and dependence upon world and cosmos. Until now our attention was directed inwardly toward the attainment of a strong Self. Now we realize that our "life's reality" depends upon the "world's reality." Our attention is directed outwardly to restore balance.

In fall and winter the soul runs the risk of separating itself off from the cosmos, in turning inward without resisting the tendency to sleep impressed upon it by external Nature. To resist this pull the call of verse 20 is then followed by verse 33 in which we realize that not only do we need to forge a strong connection to the world's reality, but so does world evolution itself need our human consciousness to reach beyond daily awareness to deeper cognition and participation in the world's evolving. The human being can add himself to the world-ordering, can become a co-creator. This is the deeper dimension of the cosmic gifts received in spring and summer, now fostering the "summer of the soul."

Two soul forces join hands, just like they did during the earlier time of the year. These are the "idea-filled will," or Michaelic will (from verse 24) and the power of thinking (from verse 28), which "thrives in the sunlight of the soul." The two forces form that activity that the Foundation Stone Meditation calls Spirit Beholding. Contrary to Spirit Recollection the soul is now turned outwards, not towards its origins (as in retracing back its previous incarnations) but toward its evolutionary future.

During the cold time of the year the Calendar calls us to counter the natural tendency to fall asleep and turn our attention inward. This can be done through two subsequent movements: through seeking to attain first a "sense of Self" and then the "spirit birth," or unfolding of our Spirit Self (Manas). This needs to be attained through the will-imbued transformation

of our everyday thinking into Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition. This overall transformation lends weight to human participatory consciousness, through which we fulfill the promise of verse 33: I "feel at last the world's reality" which needs "the communion of my soul" and needs "to recreate itself in souls."

The practice of Spirit Beholding calls us to live "in the resting head" which "reveals ... world thoughts" bestowing on us "world-being light" out of "the eternal aims of gods." The crowning achievement it offers us is to "truly think from the ground of the human spirit" and let us expand into the macrocosm. Under the signature of Spirit Mindfulness pervading the whole Calendar, however, it becomes something more. It weaves between soul and world and encompasses the dimension of human destiny and the realm of the will as we see in the following examples:

- Verse 32: my inmost being I feel charged with power to turn with clearer insight toward the weaving of life's destiny.
- Verse 34: this shall, awakening, pour forth cosmic forces into the outer actions of my life
- Verse 41: the soul thus shapes itself in human loving and in human working

In concluding we can see that there's nothing mechanical in the correspondence between the verses of the Calendar of the Soul and the first three stanzas of the Foundation Stone Meditation. We find the gestures of Spirit Recollection (first stanza of the Foundation Stone Meditation) during spring and summer and of Spirit Beholding (third stanza) in fall and winter, integrated and mediated through the gesture of Spirit Mindfulness (second stanza), which altogether gives the Calendar the stamp of a path of self-knowledge through feeling as we will see shortly.

More can be gleaned from the second stanza of the Foundation Stone Meditation in relation to our theme. In Spirit Mindfulness we are trying to balance in the realm of feeling what pulls us on one hand toward Lucifer and on the other toward Ahriman. Christ lives in the middle and in the realm of the heart, where the two adversaries want to counter His impulse. In this regard the structure of the Calendar itself pays attention to the element of balance between the adversaries. During spring and summer, particularly in verses 7 and 20 (both part of Cross 7) the Luciferic temptation is

addressed; in fall and winter the verses 33 and 46 of Cross 7 address the Ahrimanic temptation.⁴

In weaving between Self and macrocosm we truly feel. True rhythm, the stanza emphasizes, is what gives us balance. In the yearly rhythm of meditation with the Calendar what we feel changes in relation to external rhythms. In these rhythms the lung unites us to the light, air and warmth of cosmos; the blood, as the carrier of the I, with our metabolism and our will.

The second stanza presents us two unique themes not present elsewhere in the three stanzas: what I would call the "historical" and the "geographic" dimensions. We can notice the repetition of the word "world" in "I of the world" and "surging deeds of world evolving." These deeds are the ones through which the Calendar points to the meta-historical or cosmic events, such as the deed of Golgotha, the time before the Fall, the conquest of the Self, the reappearance of Christ in the etheric, etc.

The second aspect is that of Earth geography, to what is fired from the East and formed in the West. This points to the cosmic/human 'history' of Jesus Christ and His human collaborators in relation to the fate of the Earth itself; the light that was born in the East spreads to the West. We are called to participate in feeling in this historical turning point as in the present "surging deed" of the Christ's reappearance on the etheric.

The Spirits of Light (Second Hierarchy) to which the second stanza relates, operate between the Spirits of Strength (First Hierarchy) and the Spirits of Soul (Third Hierarchy). The Spirits of Strength presided to creation; here the Gods remind us of our cosmic origins. The third stanza points to the human beings aspiring to co-create, and the Spirits of Soul (Third Hierarchy), closest to the human realm, are those helping us to entreat the divine. In between are the spirits of light, firing and forming the human I as a reflection of the Christ I in the realm of Earth.

The Calendar of The Soul as a Path of Self-Knowledge through Feeling

It was only recently that my first insight into the feeling quality of the work with the Calendar was strengthened through a closer look at something I

⁴ For more detail see Appendix 30, *Overcoming the Luciferic and Ahrimanic Temptations Throughout the Year with the Calendar of the Soul*, available at millenniumculmination.net.

had missed at first reading. It appears in fact in Steiner's preface to the first edition of the Calendar of the Soul. In his words: "... the human spirit can be experienced in the context of the changing moods of the year from week to week and the soul's weaving can be found in images gained through impressions of the course of the year. *The aim is self-knowledge through feeling.* Through the verses expressing the characteristic mood of the respective week, this '*feeling self knowledge*' can experience the time-less cycle of soul life in relation to time. It needs to be clearly stated that the intention is to create potential for a path of self knowledge." (emphasis added)⁵ Similar things have been said by Karl König in his extensive work with the Calendar: "Each single verse of the Soul Calendar contains not only a spiritual content which can be grasped intellectually but a *powerful and substantial emotion, a strong feeling that changes from week to week.* It is *more important to carry this feeling* in its ever-changing form through the year, than to connect oneself with the intellectual content of the verses—though this is necessary to achieve that feeling." (emphasis added).⁶ König himself has worked at strengthening this feeling, quite appropriately, through the medium of art. His images of the weekly verses of the Calendar of the Soul allow us to imaginatively deepen our connection with the "*powerful and substantial emotion, a strong feeling that changes from week to week.*"⁷

We will now turn to the qualities of the verses of the Calendar of the Soul and the qualities we find in the overall daily meditation with the Calendar itself. The overarching call to a dialogue with the forces of the macrocosm is daunting in more than one way. The first level lies in the difficulty of relating both to a verse and to the Calendar as a whole. In my experience the work with the verses strengthened my connection with the whole, and once I had a feeling understanding of the whole I could connect more strongly with the singular verse. Already here we can notice a circular process, so to speak.

⁵ Rudolf Steiner, *Preface to the First Edition* [of the Calendar of the Soul]" in Rudolf Steiner, *The Anthroposophical Calendar of the Soul*, Translation by Richard Steel.

⁶ Karl König, *The Calendar of the Soul: A Commentary*, 80–81.

⁷ Karl König, Richard Steel editor, *An Inner Journey Through the Year: Soul Images and The Calendar of the Soul*. What König points to in relation to the Calendar of the Soul, which applies to his own artistic work, matches what Rudolf Steiner expresses in relation to the Representative of Humanity's sculptural group and how it has to be experienced: "But this has to be felt in an artistic way. It must not be merely thought of intellectually in some weird and wonderful way. But it has to be felt.... it is essential that entirely out of the feelings—that is, excluding the intellect altogether—for that is meant to be only the means of reaching feeling, people shall be urged to look towards the east and be able to say: "That is You [Christ being]."" (lecture of December 13, 1919 in *Mysteries of Light, of Space, and of the Earth*).

At each week of the year we are asked to connect to vast forces at play that cannot be fully experienced, rather felt and fathomed. And since there's only one week to relate to them, here too we see a circular/spiral process at play. Each time we are offered the opportunity to glimpse something more, to live it more fully and to integrate it more clearly within the whole. It requires wakefulness and presence of mind. The next, exact recurring constellation will only emerge in a year's time, and with it the opportunity to deepen our connection with the specific forces at play in macrocosm and soul. The feeling and cyclical qualities go hand in hand.

The Place of Feeling in the Verses of the Calendar

The path that we are asked to follow in the First Class through thinking, is, we could say, lived in feeling in the Calendar of the Soul. In the First Class the mantras are offered for us to have in thought an exact experience of what it means to cross the threshold and live on the other side of it after Lesson 7. In the Calendar of the Soul the forces that stream from the cosmos in the spring and summer live and work in the soul in fall and winter, leading us to a crossing of the threshold, for example quite clearly expressed in the verses of the "spirit birth" (44 and 45).⁸

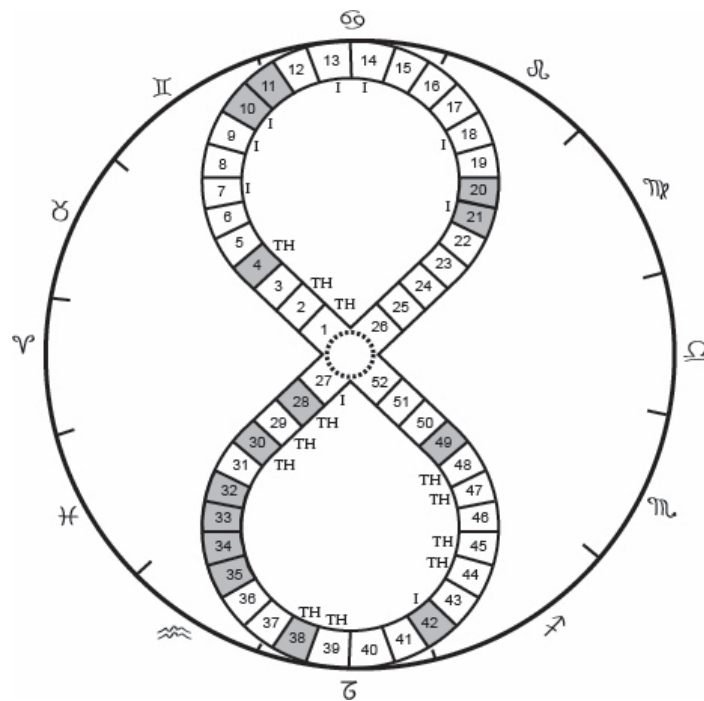


Figure 1: Verses in which references to feeling appear, in relation to verses that reference thinking and intuition

⁸ See Luigi Morelli, Appendix 18: *Sense of Self and Spirit Birth*, available at <https://millenniumculmination.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/cos-appendix-18-sense-of-self-and-spirit-birth.pdf>

If we divide the verses according to the intervals marked by the warning verses of cross 7 we can notice this alternation. Roughly in verses 46 to 20 we see described the rising of the ethers in the macrocosm and their call to the human soul. This is what we have an opportunity to sense at the corresponding times. We start from the realm of cosmic life, of which here are some examples:

Verse 47: there will arise out of the world's great womb ... the joy of growth

Verse 50: I [the joy of growth] carry into you my life from its enchanted bondage

Soon after we enter the stage in which we are called to feel the immediacy of the spiritual world following the Easter event:

Verse 2: spirit worlds discover again their human offspring who germinates in them

Continuing with a sense of expansion we enter the realm of cosmic light, eventually in conjunction with the realm of cosmic life:

Verse 4: thus speaks perceptive feeling as in the sun illumined world it merges with the floods of light

Verse 5: within the light that out of spirit depths weaves germinating power into space and manifests the Gods' creative work ... the soul's true being is widened into worldwide life

When the expansion continues we touch onto further horizons but not in a linear way, rather in an overlapping and rhythmic fashion. We reach the realms of cosmic light, cosmic warmth, cosmic I, cosmic thinking, cosmic Word. The following are just some indicative lines:

Verse 9: the cosmic warmth that heralds summer's glory fills all my soul and spirit.

Verse 11: The human I can lose itself and find itself within the cosmic I.

Verse 12: to take wing from my Self and trustingly to seek myself in cosmic light and cosmic warmth.

Verse 14: there draws near in sense appearance cosmic thinking.

Verse 15: enchanted weaving of spirit within outer glory... has enwrapped myself.

Verse 17: thus speaks the cosmic Word ...: imbue your spirit depths with my wide world horizons.

In the dialogue between macrocosm and microcosm that follows in the interval between verses 20 and 46, we are now asked to feel inwardly what has been experienced outwardly during the earlier time of the year in the often-poignant images of an inner landscape. Here life, light and warmth are inwardly borne and metamorphosed. A central theme becomes the "summer of the soul," an expression that acquires many variants. Below are some indicative lines of various verses:

Verse 22: the light from worldwide spaces... transformed to light of soul it shines now into spirit depths.

Verse 23: the summer that is spent has given itself to me.

Verse 25: inmost soul must stay awake and carry wakefully sun's glowing into the winter's icy flowing.

Verse 26: O Nature, your maternal life I bear within the essence of my will.

Verse 27: as gift of summer sun a seed ... as germinating force of soul

Verse 28: carry wakefully sun's glowing into the winter's icy flowing

Verse 29: my summer heritage, my autumn solace and my winter hope

Verse 30: sunlight of my soul ... autumn's spirit waking summer of the soul.

In powerful images the ethers are reborn in the human soul; the forces of the cosmos are inwardly transformed in the Michaelic will, the radiance of thinking and the warmth of heart and love. Finally, we return to the anticipation of the external cosmic life to renew the cycle of the year:

Verse 37: carry spirit light into world winter night ... that shining seeds of soul take root in grounds of worlds ...

Verse 47: there will arise out of the world's great womb ... the joy of growth

We can round off this picture by briefly looking at the place of feeling (the German *fühlen* and derived terms) in the verses of the Calendar. In figure 1 the darkened verses (feeling) are placed in relation to the soul activities of thinking (TH) and what the Calendar calls boding/intuition (the German *ahnung* and similar terms) (I).⁹

During the spring feeling rises for the first time in verse 4 to prepare the role of intuition/boding in verse 7; it announces a future goal that will be

⁹ The following is a short rendering of Chapter 2, heading "Feeling in Relation to Intuition/Boding and Thinking" in *Exploring Themes in the Calendar of the Soul*.

reached in verse 30 (itself part of cross 4), that of uniting "man and world" and of giving warmth to thinking's clarity.

I sense [*föhle*] a kindred nature to my own:
Thus speaks perceptive feeling
As in the sun-illuminated world
It merges with the floods of light;
To thinking's clarity
My feeling would give warmth
And man and world
In unity bind fast.

Feeling follows closely in verses 10 and 11. In 10 this appears as the following:

To summer's radiant heights
The sun in shining majesty ascends;
It takes my human feeling
Into its own wide realms of space.

It is from feeling that intuition is invited to take the strength to recognize the "godly being" [cosmic Word] in future time. In the following verse (11) feeling supports what intuition asks the human I to accomplish, "lose itself and find itself in the cosmic I". Devotion-filled feeling accompanies the soul's intuition of the need to trust losing itself in the cosmic I.

Surrendered to the beauty of the world,
Be stirred with new-enlivened feeling;
The human I can lose itself
And find itself within the cosmic I.

The culmination of intuition's role lies in the need to trust losing itself in the cosmic I. It is the destination and goal of intuition in the summer, from which emerges "selfhood power," the achievement that comes in verse 21. Here intuition (in the form of "expectation") is woven through and through with feeling in upholding the goal of the spring/summer part of the Calendar.

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

In autumn (verse 28), feeling makes its start where intuition wanes and appears in conjunction with thinking, which is just starting to rise as the new sun of the soul:

I feel my being vivified anew
Widen to far horizons of its own
Filled with new force, the 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.

Just as feeling is amplified when intuition concludes its summer journey, so now feeling appears as a confirmation of the expansive power of thinking. Thinking is affirmed with all the attributes of the external Sun, and it ushers in the new promise for the arc of winter time, that of the "summer of the soul." As a result the individual feels enlivened and strengthened with new confidence.

We now witness a crescendo of six feeling-related verses, from 30 to 38, preceding the next mention of thinking's role in 39. Verse 30, as announced earlier, belongs to cross 4. It brings the promise of 4 closer to realization.

There thrive within the sunlight of my soul
The ripened fruits of thinking.
To self-awareness certitude
The flow of feeling is transformed ...

Just as feeling emerged anew with the power of thinking, so does it close a first phase of it in verse 49:

I feel the force of cosmic life:
Thus speaks my clarity of thought,
Recalling its own spirit growth
Through nights of cosmic darkness,
And to the new approach of cosmic day
It turns its inward rays of hope.

Thinking reappears briefly after Easter in verses 1,2 and 4. Here too feeling plays a part and closes the series. During the winter time, and the weeks preceding Easter, the human being acquires an inkling of what it is to achieve the "spirit birth" and to transform thinking to such an extent that it becomes a force for co-creation in the spirit. Through the active participation of the human being in his thinking and of the Christ being in the sphere of cosmic life, we gain a glimpse of the Tree of Knowledge reuniting with the Tree of Life (verses 1 and 2). After this interval feeling

emerges anew and announces its role in relation to thinking in verse 4, which points to the end of the summer (verse 30). Thinking reappears in verses 7 and 8 (of Whitsun) and 14 ("dreamlike thinking"), but simply to confirm its waning in relation to the ascending faculty of intuition/boding.

From the above we can see in yet another way how feeling weaves between the two times of the year and their different tasks, which we can now briefly revisit. When looked at more closely, as has been done by König, we can recognize in boding/intuition a manifestation of the will in the recognition of truth in the soul. Through intuition the will seeks its place in the world at the time in which it would lose itself in the dream of summer. It is the attempt to bring to realization what cannot be clearly apprehended through the light of thinking. It is a striving to experience, rather than know, truth and witness the (re-)birth of the Self within the microcosm of the soul. This is carried out through the calls expressed by the inner and outer voices the soul often hears in the summer and the imperatives which call it to action.¹⁰

In wintertime strengthened thinking gives us a place and standing in the macrocosm. Thinking leads us to freedom, and from there to the affirmation of a human love that makes room for objective, macrocosmic love in the human world. The human is affirmed in its relationship to the cosmos, in its participatory role. The intimations that sound through spring and summer, that intuition strives to apprehend, become clearly expressed in thoughts in the fall and winter. In the same fashion, what we can formulate tentatively in our thinking in fall and winter can be tested and experienced at the opposite time of the year.

It is not surprising that feeling continuously weaves between the two poles of thinking and intuition and the two halves of the year. Feeling in fact initiates, affirms, sustains, and brings to completion both faculties. In this too is confirmed the indication that the Calendar is a path of self-knowledge through feeling.

The Calendar offers us mighty imaginations that challenge a direct experience and our daily awareness. They sound rather like invitations to an open mind and heart. We can expect them to deepen before eventually becoming a content of more direct experience. Eventually, feeling invites us into a different level of reality. It can turn into an objective soul faculty that connects us to the rhythms of the soul in relation to the cosmos, rather than

¹⁰ See Luigi Morelli, *Exploring Themes in the Calendar of the Soul*, Chapter 4: Summer Solstice Themes, heading: "Intuition and Voices in the Midsummer Quadrant," available at <https://millenniumculmination.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/exploring-themes-in-the-calendar-of-the-soul.pdf>

the feelings we associate with our biography of personal joys and sorrows. The two will naturally continue alongside, though the continued practice with the verses can help us shift more and more from the subjective to the objective level.

We can now close our explorations by turning to the nature of feeling, which we can recognize pictorially in the lessons of the First Class at the time before and immediately after we cross the threshold.

Cosmic Life That Becomes Human Soul Life

Lessons 7 and 8 of the First Class of the School of Spiritual Science offer key insights in apprehending the nature of the soul forces on one side and the other of the threshold. In lesson 7, before crossing the threshold we are asked to "Feel the heart's cosmic pulse." This allows us to experience the heart's rhythm under a new light, not just as the result of physiological processes, but as the counterart of the cosmic rhythm which has supported creation not just for thousands of years but for aeons. We can experience this cosmic rhythm as the music of the spheres.

In crossing the threshold, further in the mantra, we are told:

And feeling provides you with
Thinking's germinal-waking cosmic-life.
You live in the shining [or "beauty of appearance"].

Summing up the above Steiner indicates that through the heart feeling creates a bridge between sensory and spiritual worlds.

In Lesson 8 we move a step further on the other side of the threshold. Through feeling flows in and out of the heart something that originates in the cosmos. We are rendered able to sense a cosmic life, which can become "human soul-life."

See in feeling's psychic weaving
How in the twilight of dreams
Life streams in from cosmic distance;
Let in sleep through the tranquil heart
Human feelings drift away:
Cosmic spirit life becomes
Man's true force of being. (emphasis added)

Here the verse speaks of this trading of qualities of feeling, which requires the balance of equanimity ("the tranquil heart"). Human subjective feeling that we let "drift away" in sleep can make room for objective feeling. This

being said we must still keep in mind that "Feelings are not as conscious as thinking is. They are as conscious as the pictures in dreams. Thus feeling is a waking dream." Nevertheless, within these limits the Calendar can be considered a path of self-knowledge through feeling, a path to "truly feel."¹¹

How to Deepen the Feeling Experience: Practical Steps

Powerful, objective feelings support us through the specific times of the year and verses of the Calendar. Here we will just offer some inklings about the general, sweeping themes of the year, and first of all about the contrast between the expansive and contractive halves of the year.

In spring and summer the soul expands into the cosmic spheres or ethers. It resists the tendency to lose itself in the dream state (see verses 7 and 8) by strengthening its capacity to listen/intuit, by purifying its lower self, by trusting and surrendering itself to the higher spheres (cosmic I, cosmic Word, cosmic thinking, etc.).

In fall and winter the soul seeks a polar opposite attitude. It resists Nature's going to sleep and pushing the human being to do the same. Here it is wakefulness, alertness, clear discrimination, ability to consciously sacrifice, desire to co-create that are called forth. We may experience, according to our temperament and character, that one part of the year challenges us more than the other. Getting in touch with the contrasting feelings of the year becomes then a call to the strengthening and integration of our soul forces. It turns into a path of self-knowledge.

Coming down a step closer to the verses we can look at the month intervals through the so-called "Virtues" about which Steiner has given very short indications.¹² An overview appears in figure 2.

We can offer here just two examples of the above: the intervals 51 to 2 and 25 to 28, highlighting the polarity between Easter and Michaelmas. Around Easter (verses 51 to 2) we are asked to experience that devotion can become force of sacrifice, and that we have to struggle against lack of

¹¹ What Steiner says about the life of feelings in *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* can serve us as a guideline here: "For the universe as a whole my feelings can be of value only if, as percepts of myself, they enter into connection with a concept, and in this roundabout way become links in the cosmos. ... True individuality belongs to him whose feelings reach up to the farthest possible extent into the region of the ideal." (Chapter VII. Human Individuality). Undoubtedly the Calendar of the Soul helps us in this direction.

¹² For an overview of the virtues see Herbert Witzmann, *The Virtues: Contemplations*.

concern, spring fever (busyness). Devotion to cosmic life and beauty, openness to the cosmos offer the soul an opportunity for rebirth. They allow us to recognize the deed of Christ and to actively unite with His impulse.

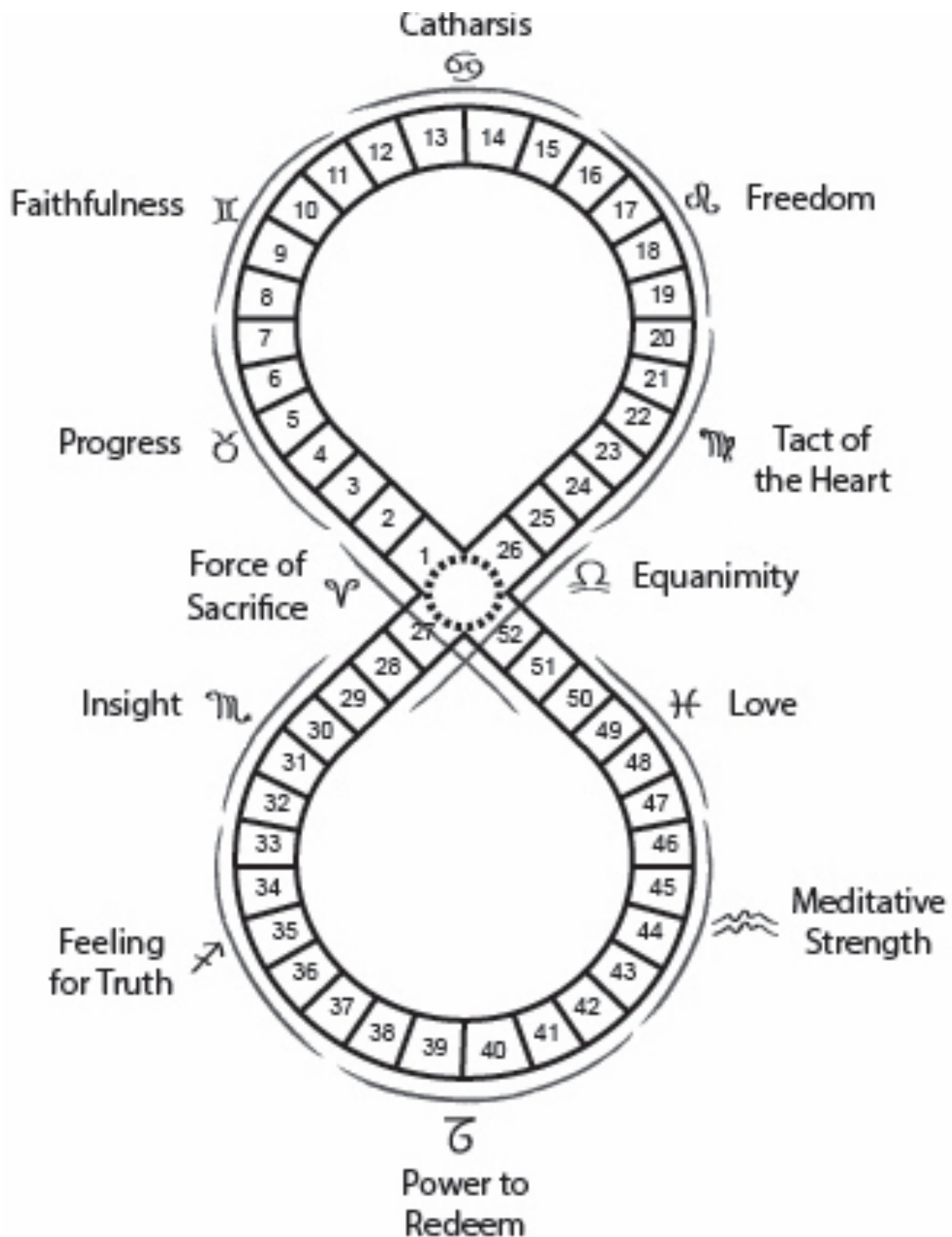


Figure 2: the Calendar of the Soul and the Virtues relating to the zodiacal signs.

The very active virtue above, leading to force of sacrifice, is contrasted at the opposite time of the year with the more receptive virtue of Michaelmas: (verses 25 to 28 of September 21 to October 21). Here we are told that contentment leads to equanimity, acting against dissatisfaction and the tendency to complain. The self that emerges in 26 and in 27 becomes a germinating force of soul which gives way in 28 to the first mention of the radiance of thought, the force that assures equanimity. This is the very Michaelic quality needed in entering the yearly time of darkness and the external darkness of civilization.

Let us get even closer to the experience of feeling through a single verse. The week immediately following the Michaelmas series corresponds to verse 29, spoken under the sign of Libra.¹³ A look at this one will focus us on what it is possible to feel at this specific time of the year.

To fan the spark of thinking into flame
By my own strong endeavor,
To read life's inner meaning
Out of the cosmic spirit's fount of strength:
This is my summer heritage,
My autumn solace, and my winter hope.

In verse 29 will and thinking express themselves in complementary ways. When directed to thinking the will has a quality of focusing and intensifying; it is that which can become sense-free, spiritual human activity. In the other instance strength directs us to our destiny and here thinking plays a different role. When directed to the will it acquires a quality of objective recollection, a tool for assessment. When the two poles are integrated, feeling emerges quite naturally as a bridge between the two.

The work with the Calendar can be strengthened in yet other ways. We can make recourse to art and to group work. Art is in effect part and parcel of the strength of the Calendar. Meditating through the year with the verses awakens us to their inherent poetry. Many things that Steiner has expressed in prosaic, objective spiritual scientific terms in most of his work acquire new nuances in the verses. The life ether acquires different coloring through the end of winter and beginning of summer: it goes from "the joy of growth" (47, 50) to "life of worlds" (52) to "germinating power" (5). At Michaelmas it is evoked as "maternal life" (26). The "beauty" that "wells from wide expanses" (52) becomes "beauty of the world" (11) and "radiant

¹³ See *Working Together on a Verse*, available at <https://millenniumculmination.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/working-together-on-a-verse.pdf>

beauty" (12), or in its fullest expression "enchanted weaving of spirit within outer glory" (15), to say nothing of expressions like "the spirit child in my soul's core" or "the heavenly fruit of hope" of the Christmas verse.

Art was indicated as a natural complement to the Calendar already in its original edition. In effect this included drawings of the zodiac signs by Imma von Eckhardstein, following Steiner's sketches, and five images appearing at different times of the year, which represented the five great epochs of Earth evolution (from Old Saturn to the present). Ever since that time, more and more anthroposophists have felt inclined to offer drawings about the fifty-two verses. Among the most well-known in the English-speaking world are those of Karl König and Anne Stockton.¹⁴ Meditation with the verses can be enhanced by working with the corresponding artistic renditions.

Another avenue to strengthening the connection with the Calendar of the Soul is group work. It has been my experience that working together on a verse on a weekly basis, in person or remotely, strengthens not only the personal commitment to the work and the insights generated, but is also a powerful community building tool.

Coda: The Calendar in Support of the Etheric Heart?

By addressing our life of feelings the Calendar works with the heart, which is the only human organ specifically and repeatedly mentioned in the verses.¹⁵ It is explicitly present most of all during the winter time of the year (in the interval from 37 to 48) and implicitly present as the organ that senses what comes toward it and assesses how to respond during spring and summer; this is where intuition/boding has its seat.

Mirroring the role of the Calendar as the bridge between macrocosm of the ethers and the microcosm of the soul, heart warmth connects the soul spiritual to the etheric-physical human constitution. It bridges sense impressions from the external world with the inner life of memories, feelings, judgments, impulses of will through the ego that manifests most of all in the blood.

¹⁴ See Karl König, Richard Steel editor, *An Inner Journey Through the Year: Soul Images and The Calendar of the Soul* and Anne Stockton, *The Illustrated Calendar of the Soul by Rudolf Steiner*.

¹⁵ Compare the Calendar to the mantra of the lessons of the First Class. In the latter the heart is almost always present in conjunction/contrast to head and limbs.

There is another reason for supporting the work with the Calendar of the Soul as one of the paths to truly feeling which has to do with the occult physiological changes the human being is undergoing at the time of the reappearance of Christ in the etheric.¹⁶ One of these is the present acceleration of the separation of the etheric heart from the physical heart, which started in the year 1710. In Steiner's words:

"... our heart has changed; we no longer bear the same human heart in our chest. *Our physical heart has grown harder, and our etheric heart more mobile. We must find access to our supersensible hearts. We must become conscious of having new hearts that feel and experience the world very differently from our old hearts. ... These [Michael] impulses cannot become reality without flames. But to live and work out of flames of enthusiasm, we ourselves must become the flame. Flame is the only thing that is not consumed by flame. When we feel ourselves becoming flames that cannot be consumed by flames, we can afford to leave our physical hearts behind like empty sacks because we will possess etheric hearts, hearts that understand that humankind is entering a new age and a life of spirituality.*"¹⁷ (emphasis added)

Let us explore the results of the research by Yeshayahu Ben Aharon, addressing specifically the role of the etheric heart. He notices that as much as the etheric heart can strengthen our grounding in the spirit, just as much can the physical dried out heart draw to itself the etheric and astral hearts: "The most important thing is that *the 'I' has now lost its center in the etheric human heart. This is now free, and if the etheric heart system is free this means, of course, that the whole human constitution is completely out of harmony. The heart system brings the lower human nature into balance with the higher. Until now this balance was unconsciously maintained ...*"¹⁸ (emphasis added) Here we find a supplementary reason to strengthen the realm of the heart through work with the Calendar of the Soul.

Having concluded this overview we can return to Steiner's assertion that the Calendar is a "*potential* path to self-knowledge through feeling." More than one hundred years after this claim, maybe it is possible to see a

¹⁶ It is interesting that Steiner underlined that the Calendar of the soul is a *potential* path to self-knowledge through feeling. In his time Steiner was disappointed that the Calendar was not taken up with sufficient interest, leading us to believe that there is much more that could derive from working with it.

¹⁷ Rudolf Steiner, GA 217a lecture of July 20, 1924, The task of youth.

¹⁸ Yeshayahu Ben-Aharon, *The Twilight and Resurrection of Humanity: The History of the Michaelic Movement since the Death of Rudolf Steiner*, 44.

progress in this direction. The pioneer work of Karl König has deepened the experience of the work with the verses in many directions. He has interwoven a clear, exact spiritual scientific understanding of the terms used in the verses in parallel with the course of the year in the festivals and in the literary and poetic expressions of classical German and modern poetry and literature. To these he has added the artistic expressions of the single verses and the medallions for the quartets, which enrich our experience and understanding of the single verses and of the whole of the Calendar.¹⁹ He has in essence brought the potential to realization so that it may be correct to claim that he has rendered the Calendar an *actualized* path to self-knowledge through feeling.

¹⁹ For images of the medallions of the thirteen crosses of the Calendar of the Soul see Karl König, *The Calendar of the Soul: A Commentary*.