

Appendix 13

Lent to Easter to Whitsun in the Calendar of the Soul

This time interval of the year covers exactly the intervals between two 'warning verses'; between 46 and 7, the ones that mark the Ahrimanic temptation on one hand and the Luciferic temptation on the other. The time preceding Easter is an echo of the ministry of Christ, His service to the Earth and to the human being. After Easter we follow His becoming the spirit of the Earth and the effort of the human being to make this reality her own.

Before Easter we are reminded that a God walked the Earth, who could perceive the reality of its fallen nature and fully penetrate a physical body for the purpose to bring transformation to what was dying. A being who could see and understand like no other human being became cocreator through the unique cosmic forces operating in Him. The more the ministry progressed the more He inwardly united Himself with the whole of the Earth. During this time of the year the human being, likewise, strives to unite himself consciously with the macrocosm and to take his place in the order of the cosmos as a rising new hierarchy.

After Easter the Earth was transformed. A divine being had fully penetrated the core of its being and set a seed from which a new Earth-Sun will evolve. This process started with the descent to the Underworld and the Resurrection, then continued with the Ascension, the permeation of the whole etheric sphere with the being of Christ. Those who were closest to the Christ being experienced a loss and took refuge and strength in the memory of the ministry of their master. They had to surrender to the spirit and trust that it was working in them and that it would lead them to the transformation that finally took place at Whitsun. The Christ was present anew and each one could feel it in accord with his own individuality.

Before Easter the human being naturally tends to expand together with Nature which comes out of the winter hibernation. This natural feeling of expansion will not automatically lead us to the Christ being unless we seek Him. And this is what we have done with the Calendar of the Soul with the transformation of our thinking, which renders possible the conscious recognition of the realm of cosmic life and the maya of sense perceptions alone. In wanting to become co-creators we free the elemental beings from their enchantment in Nature. Lent acquires a completely different meaning when the human being strives to reunite what normally is kept separate, the light of thinking within, with the creative life forces without.

After Easter the sphere of cosmic life grows further and the power of thinking retreats. Just as the Christ being receded from the consciousness of the disciples, so do we feel bereft of the vibrancy of the power of thinking as

spring progresses. We can continue to expand into cosmic light and cosmic warmth toward the Whitsun event only if we appeal to other powers within the soul: memory and intuition/boding.

Warning Verse 46: the beginning of Lent (Ash Wednesday) falls quite appropriately during warning verse 46, with the realization of the coming pull of the senses and the natural result of growing into the dimension of the spirit. As we transform our consciousness through thinking toward Imagination, the forces of the soul which previously operated in unison now tend to separate from each other. On the other hand we will tend to be pulled here and there by the stimulation of the senses. The Ahrimanic temptation thus comes both from within and from without.

Carnival/Mardi Gras was the time of the year in pre-Christian times when the soul was able to contact the elemental beings of Nature. The human being has lost the capacity of entering in communion with the forces of Nature, consequently the celebrations have lost their authenticity and joy. Rather, abandoning ourselves to external stimuli accentuates the soul's tendency toward the split of its forces. What replaces the external practices of renunciation of Lent is the conscious transformation required from our soul forces. On one hand lies the ultimate steps in the transformation of thinking, which is the one that most of all soul forces reminds us of our state of separation from the spirit, but can also achieve its reconnection. On the other hand, memory will reinforce our inner sight before the senses call our attention outwards.

Verse 47: memory allied with the power of thinking can match the power of cosmic life drawing nearer to us. Two processes go hand in hand; the acting of the formative forces in Nature and their transformation within the human being in the force of thinking. What grows within recognizes what is taking place outwardly. Memory activates our nostalgia for wholeness; it will help us recapture our original connection to the spirit at the time before the Fall.

Verse 48: thinking elevated to cosmic thinking offers us a clear direction and a connection between head and heart that flows into the force of love. It is the culmination of the soul's effort during the wintertime of the year. Spiritualized thinking prepares the human being to be co-creator, to become the tenth hierarchy. And through the awakening of love we can prepare ourselves to the momentous events of Easter week.

Verse 49: this is a verse of balance as well, not between head and heart but between inner and outer, between cosmic life and clarity of thought. Clarity of thought and cosmic life emerge from the nights of cosmic darkness. Cosmic life is not yet recognized; it is felt and it awakens hope. Memory, called for in verse 46, plays its first role in inviting us to recollect the growth of the power of thought "through nights of cosmic darkness."

As the forces of growth have been active but hidden through the cosmic night, so has the power of thought been maturing to come to fruition. Both of them emerge, as it were, to the light of cosmic day. And everything about the expectation points to this beginning being the Easter event, in effect commemorating the beginning of a new Earth.

Verse 50: from this state of balance the human being can receive the blessing of what would otherwise overwhelm him. He can recognize the common origin of the forces of thinking in his soul and the etheric forces in Nature. In fact the reverse is true; the forces of nature, which is to say the elemental beings, feel met and recognized by the human being and can come out of their enchantment in matter. They speak not just to his feelings, but to his ego. The act of co-creation has become an evolutionary reality for the elemental beings. The growth of the soul has served the world. This is parallel to the preparation of the deed of Christ, recognizing the fall of Nature and of the human being, and impressing an upward direction and reconnection.

Verse 51: the struggle begins of holding on to what speaks through the senses, rather than confining oneself to sense impressions themselves. This is the verse of the remembrance of the maya nature of external impressions. The temptation of Palm Sunday echoes in its lines, that of seeing the Christ only as the king who will change things in the physical world, and failing to see His divinity. In effect the soul must experience an inner death through the recognition of the maya of sense impressions before expanding into the sphere of cosmic life. It must yearn for what is reflected at the surface of the eye or all other sense organs.

Verse 52: when it turns away from the maya of sense perceptions as stated in verse 51—the ego connects to the 'life of worlds' (cosmic life). The preparation for Easter implies an active human participation. This is exemplified in the human longing for the sphere of cosmic life which is made accessible through the effort of an enhanced, cosmic memory. The soul actively remembers that it was once part of the spheres of life ether and chemical ether. This is a prerequisite for participating in the sphere of the Risen Christ. Continuing the injunction of verse 51 it turns its gaze not just to the sense impressions, but to what lies beyond them. The sphere of cosmic life is not only felt; it radiates strength into the human being connected to the Christ impulse. Easter cannot be the rejoicing of Nature unless the human being has made his own the reality of "not I but Christ in me." Nature is resurrected in the human being who has a living experience of Christ. And the cosmos fully repays the human being who turns to the Christ impulse. Thus the 'beauty from wide expanses' that meets her is the one that is ever present behind the realm of maya; it can only appear once we perceive beyond the maya of sense perceptions.

The Transition from 52 to 1

From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday the Christ event brings in a momentous transition. The Christ being has been approached through the development of thinking and the approach of cosmic life during winter up to Easter. In verse 52 the human being actively connected to the Christ impulse receives its blessings down to the physical body in the form of new strength. The sphere of cosmic life is what the human being knew in the presence of the Tree of Life before the Fall. The power of memory awakened in verse 46 takes us in the direction of the reality of this cosmic proximity.

At Easter the relationship is inversed. Our power of thinking rises, even though dimly, and expands towards the sphere from which creative thoughts have their origin. It recognizes its kinship with the realm of the Tree of Life. The Tree of Knowledge unites once more briefly with the Tree of Life through the agency of the Christ being. In essence we can say that from now on we live in a faint remembrance of the realm of cosmic life, symbolized by the Tree of Life. This will last through the spring and summer, after which the human being, as it were, strengthens and rebuilds the Tree of Knowledge.

With verses 52 and 1 the human being can experience a reversal of the experience of the Fall. He who can actively participate in the Christ event can help redeem fallen nature, since Christ has entered the life of the Earth, but needs the human being to take on an active role in the Earth's future development. "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." (King James Version) reminds us Saint Paul.

Verse 1: the human being has a taste in thinking of the sphere of the Risen one in the macrocosmic expansion signified here. Verse 1 is the human being's response to what the cosmos offers in verse 52. It brings to clear consciousness what lived in feeling in verse 49 ("I feel the force of cosmic life"). Whereas it was the cosmos that turned to the human being in verse 52, albeit because of his active interest, here it is the human being that makes the effort to rise beyond herself. She does so through loving devotion expressed in gladness and through the force of a redeemed thinking. The human being's essence is united to the sphere of cosmic life through the farthest expansion of her thinking. Thinking, is as it were, offered as the ultimate gift to the cosmos, even though this is also the last thrust of its power. It provides a joyful connection of the whole human being with the Sun sphere of the Christ. It offers us entrance into the realm of cosmic life, into the sphere of the new Earth-Sun.

Verse 2 is the counterpart to verse 51. The verse is clearly articulated in three parts which express a transition. In the first part we are told that thinking can no longer guide the human being as it did in the previous part of the year; in the second the transition itself is articulated which informs

us of the human being's proximity to the spirit that is as if enveloping him. The third part leaves us with what is still missing, which needs to replace the faculty of thinking. We are bereft, as it were, just like the disciples were after the Resurrection. Just as sense impressions alone cannot be trusted (verse 51) thinking alone cannot guide us in the realm of cosmic life. We are growing in spiritual nearness but we don't know it unless we can find a new ground in the soul. The reconnection with the Risen Christ will take place out of the soul's inner strength. The glory of Nature is not enough per se without our connection to the Christ impulse. On one hand we can turn to memory which reconnects us to the world of our origins. On the other we must strengthen another soul faculty as will become apparent in the following verses.

Verse 3: the first response to the experience of bereavement comes from memory, just as it did for the disciples who recollected the life and ministry of Christ. Here it means something of human cosmic memory. While we are bereft we can cling to the certainty of our cosmic origin, within the all-encompassing Eternal Feminine.¹ From the experience of the previous week we now know we were once united with the realm of cosmic life in our existence before the Fall; through our Christ consciousness we can evoke a living experience of this state of consciousness. It manifests in us as newly gained innocence and the yearning to grow beyond ourselves.

Verse 4: the soul remembers its kinship with the light, and moves towards it through feeling. We witness a further expansion into the cosmic spheres/ethers, accompanied with a desire to surrender. The feeling of paradisaical union can thus continue, but the tendency toward dissolution must be kept in check. The warmth we want to contribute to the light is no doubt a reflection of the warmth we experience in the light. Warmth and light become interconnected. The experience of union becomes a resolve of bringing closer the human being to the world, to raise what is experienced yet unconsciously to full consciousness in the future through the power of thinking. With this verse a theme of yearning toward the future sets in.

Verse 5: the Easter resurrection continues as the soul's desire to escape the ego which cannot say "Not I, but Christ in me." The expansion is accompanied by the enhancement of the motive of surrender that first arose in verse 3. The soul that has reunited with the spheres of cosmic life and cosmic light can now accompany the deeds of the light through the depths and out into the rising of Nature. It can fully resurrect and help resurrect Nature. The soul takes on the resolve to die to its still narrow, confining lower ego and find its true being in the life of the cosmos.

¹ Rudolf Steiner, *Metamorphosis of the Soul* (GA 58), lecture "The Mission of Reverence," 28 October 1909.

Verse 6: naturally the growing desire becomes something more: a fathoming of our eternal Self, which corresponds to the movement of expansion of the Transfiguration of Christ. Just as in verse 3 the soul meets with the Eternal Feminine of its origins, here it fathoms the Eternal Masculine of its destination, a Self in which microcosm and macrocosm are united and reflect each other.² However, this is an ideal Self, one that would have existed if the Luciferic temptation had not taken place.

The historical event of Ascension is mirrored in the modern human soul. Whereas the disciples could fall to the illusion that Christ had left the Earth and returned to the heavens, now the Luciferic temptation appears of thinking we can leave our lower ego behind and continue to rise and expand. Heights and depths must be bridged just as they were at Christ's Ascension. Verse 6 is a book-end to verses 2 and 3. Just as the soul looks at its cosmic past and remembers its origin and makes itself at home in the realm of cosmic life, so now does it set its goal of awakening to the full power of the Self, which will emerge at the end of the summer as we approach warning verse 20. The movement of the verses spanning from Easter to Ascension, though centered on cosmic memory, also have a prophetic quality. They set the goal.

Warning Verse 7: soon after this lightning flash revelation of the magnitude of the Self a correction needs to occur, otherwise we fall into the Luciferic temptation. We may see the Christ of the cosmic spheres but we lose sight of the Christ as the spirit of the Earth; we may be enamored of the magnitude of the Self, but lose sight of our earthly Ego. Thinking can no longer help us, nor memory alone. We need to have a compass of the inner world and this is the faculty of boding/intuition. Through this soul power an inner dialogue will take place, which truly holds us in ourselves. The voice of conscience will respond to the calls of the cosmos and of human nature and harmonize them.

Verse 8: Whitsun arrives and this means that the human being has to give himself in trust to something new that will achieve the transformation started with Easter. Having overcome the Luciferic temptation we now have through memory and intuition the soul faculties we need to surrender ourselves without losing ourselves; it isn't a simple renunciation. Surrender becomes a meaningful act of supreme trust; it only yields its fruits in light of all the transformations we have undergone from Easter to the present. Verse 8 of Pentecost mirrors verse 6. Pentecost is the festival of those souls who have strengthened their Self, even if this is a reality that still hovers above us, which the verse reminds us of when it speaks of "quiet dream-life." Even in this state of dream the fire of the Spirit can become fire in our soul. Memory, which had a quality of cosmic memory so far, will turn into

² Rudolf Steiner, *Metamorphosis of the Soul* (GA 58), lecture "The Mission of Reverence," 28 October 1909.

a more personal/individual memory from verse 8 to verse 19, at the gate of another threshold verse.

To conclude, the Ahrimanic and Luciferic temptations alternate through the year, offering us in their overcoming intimations of the human being's cosmic origin and cosmic past on one hand, destination and cosmic future on the other. The soul breathes in what it can receive from the cosmos to strengthen the Self and offers it back to the Earth.