

## Appendix 24

### **The Michaelic Challenge in the Calendar of the Soul: The Marriage of Life and Light, Willing and Thinking**

The Calendar of the Soul can help us understand the challenge of the Michaelic call of the autumn, and to fathom the nature of the Michaelmas festival. To accomplish this we will look at verses 20 to 33, which extend on either side of Michaelmas (verse 26). The verses 20 and 33 belong to cross 7 (verses 7, 20, 33, 46). Unique in the structure of the Calendar of the Soul, these verses are placed equidistantly from each other. They define what I have called "mid-season quadrants," since they cover the second half of spring / first half of summer, second half of summer / first half of fall, etc.<sup>1</sup>

The weeks between the two warning verses (of cross 7), framing the time of transition of summer into fall, engage the meditator in a dialogue and cooperation between life and light on one hand, and the life-imbued will and the Sun-radiance of thinking on the other. When the dimming call of the senses would naturally incline the human being to rest or sleep, Michael calls us to awaken and summon our will and interest toward our fellow human being, the environment and the cosmos. To counter the waning of natural forces the human being "must oppose nature-consciousness with the force of self-consciousness."<sup>2</sup>

The first call to awaken emanates from verse 20:

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.

The challenge of Michaelmas thus begins by first turning our gaze outward and become aware of how the human being is dependent upon the cosmos for her own development. On the other hand by the end of the Michaelmas

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<sup>1</sup> See Luigi Morelli, *Exploring Themes of the Calendar of the Soul*, Chapter 7: The Mid-season Quadrants in Review, available at <https://www.millenniumculmination.net/exploring-themes-in-the-calendar-of-the-soul.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Four Seasons and the Archangels*, "The Michael Imagination," October 5, 1923.

season this must become something more, the desire to be Michael's disciples in serving the Christ, the spirit of the Earth, and become with Him positive forces and agents for the further evolution of the cosmos.

I feel at last the world's reality  
Which, lacking the communion of my soul,  
Would in itself be frosty, empty life,  
And showing itself powerless  
To recreate itself in souls,  
Would in itself find only death.

### **The Verses Leading to Michaelmas**

Let us look at this evolution verse by verse, focusing on the deeds of cosmic life and cosmic light in relation to the larger process that involves Michael and his opponent, Ahriman.

During the height of summer Ahriman wants to draw the human being into a state of half-conscious sleep and dream. This is countered in the cosmos with the meteor showers and their cosmic iron, a healing force sent by the gods to strengthen the human being against the Ahrimanic temptation. The microcosmic correspondence of this is the action of iron in the blood in waging war against fear and anxiety. It is as if in the blood "my life is full of shooting-stars, miniature shooting-stars."<sup>3</sup> After verse 21 the light undergoes a transformation. Before the external dimming of the fall, especially in verse 23, the light from world-wide spaces turns into a light of soul (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

In verse 23 we become aware that Nature's life and the stimulation of the senses withdraw. This is a verse of pralaya and dissolution. It is our farewell to the summer, reminding us that "in the time when external nature is dying, [the human being] must oppose nature-consciousness with the force

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<sup>3</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Four Seasons and the Archangels*, "The Michael Imagination," October 5, 1923.

of self-consciousness."<sup>4</sup> Henceforth, the plentiful gifts of the summer will live in the soul, where it is distilled and transformed.

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.

The self-engendered will coming from the darkness of the soul, is what allows the human being to confront external darkness, cold and tendency to fall sleep. "The Festival of strong will—that is how we should conceive of the Michael Festival."<sup>5</sup>

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.

Life and light are gathered once more in verse 25. One becomes the imperative to "stay awake," the other "inner light." Together they impel the human being to "carry wakefully sun's glowing into the winter's icy flowing."

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.

At Michaelmas we find a concentrated will verse, we could say the consecration of the Michaelic sword at the service of the Self. Michaelmas

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Four Seasons and the Archangels*, "The Michael Imagination," October 5, 1923.

must become "a festival of inner strength and initiative, a festival for the commemoration of selfless self-consciousness."<sup>6</sup>

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.

At the end of this succession of fourteen verses, cosmic life of the Calendar has been truly transformed into the Michaelic will, and the sphere of cosmic light has begun the metamorphosis into the radiance of thinking, which will continue throughout the winter. Within this time interval we also see announced a new relationship to the Self. We will return to it in the last part of this essay.

### **The Verses after Michaelmas**

All of Nature's maternal power (cosmic life), fueling the Michaelic will (verse 26) is gathered in the Self as germinating force of soul, and gift of the summer Sun (verse 27). The summer sun of our soul helps the germinating of the Self.

When to my being's depths I penetrate,  
There stirs expectant longing  
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.

After the strengthening of Self and will, the light of the inner Sun acquires new form in the radiance of thinking. This is a major turning point, the ascending of the new soul power in the course of the year.

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

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

The spark of thinking joins forces with the cosmic spirit's fount of strength to uphold the Self, which can confront the coming winter with confidence (verse 29).

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.

On the other hand thinking and feeling complement each other to lend certainty to the Self. What appeared as a summons and a challenge in verse 25 is now confronted joyfully in verse 30. The sunlight of the soul and the autumn's spirit waking accompany the summer of the soul.

There flourish in the sunlight of my soul  
The ripened fruits of thinking;  
To conscious self-assurance  
The flow of feeling is transformed.  
I can perceive now joyfully  
The autumn's spirit-waking:  
The winter will arouse in me  
The summer of the soul.

We are now approaching verse 33 which calls the human being to her cosmic responsibility as co-creator. Light and life mingle together and strengthen each other. The force of sun-imbued light from the spirit-depths becomes a forceful will of life, eager to engage in human deeds (verse 31).

The light from spirit depths  
Strives to ray outwards, sun-imbued;  
Transformed to forceful will of life  
It shines into the senses' dullness  
To bring to birth the powers  
Whereby creative forces, soul-impelled,  
Shall ripen into human deeds.

The joy of verse 30 is renewed in verse 32, an enhancing of the Michaelic call of verse 26. The human being is now eager to enter in creative relationship with the world and with other human beings, armed with a feeling and insight for the links of destiny in his biography.

I feel my own force, bearing fruit  
And gaining strength to give me to the world.  
My inmost being I feel charged with power  
To turn with clearer insight  
Toward the weaving of life's destiny.

What has been accomplished through the progression of the verses and metamorphosis of cosmic life and cosmic light into the Michaelically-steeled will and the power of thinking is reflected in the strengthening of the Self, to which we can now turn.

### **Acquiring a Sense of Self**

In the first part of the mid-season quadrant (20 to 26) the Self emerges as an object of inquiry on the part of the soul. In verse 21 it is felt as "strange power," (also translated as "foreign power," "power not my own," "unknown force") and this guiding star of the soul is surrounded by the light of expectation. This same Self is felt as a reflection of the Self of worlds, the cosmic Self, in verse 22. And in verse 24 it unites both the effort of Self-cognition and the emergence of the Michaelic will from the darkness of the soul. A qualitative shift is reached in verse 26, which announces the future goal of promoting and strengthening the "sense of Self."

In acquiring a sense of Self we can recognize that our earthly Self, our ego, is but a pale reflection of our higher Self. We may sense that our life is guided by higher intentions than those emanating from our daily-consciousness, that there is a deeper meaning and finality in the threads of our biography and that we can take them in hand with a greater sense of responsibility and awareness. Before we fully embrace our role as co-creators in full spiritual awareness—the attaining of Spirit Self, or "spirit birth" in the language of the Calendar—we can reclaim full agency and responsibility in our lives.

There aren't very strong references to the Self in the verses 27 to 33, but we witness a clear striving to become citizens of Earth, imbued with a sense of responsibility and earnest desire to face the coming winter fully awake and cognizant of the tasks bestowed upon us by our destiny. This leads us in full awareness to the call to "commune with the world's reality" and "recreate [it in] our soul" of verse 33. It is not surprising that the result of this striving is manifested soon after, in verse 34. The sense of Self toward which we aspired in the Michaelmas verse has now become a reality:

In secret inwardly to feel  
How all that I've preserved of old  
Is quickened by new-risen sense of Self:  
This shall, awakening, pour forth cosmic forces  
Into the outer actions of my life  
And growing, mold me into true existence.

Notice that our presence in the world has qualitatively changed when we sense what could be our "true existence." We may fathom it is rendered such because we can now "pour cosmic forces into the outer actions of our lives." Isn't this an expression of the completion of the forging of the Michaelic sword in light of the "festival for the commemoration of selfless self-consciousness"?