

Note on the use of the Soul Calendar in the Southern Hemisphere

Rudolf Steiner's two prefaces to his Soul Calendar show that his weekly verses were completely oriented towards the finer moods of nature in the course of the year. They even lead beyond the purely physical sense-perceptions. In his first preface he refers to "light" and "warmth" in connection with the half-years of summer and winter. But in his second preface he only writes about "life" in the course of the year, i.e. something supernatural, purely ethereal: *"The course of the year has its own life. The human soul can sense this life. If the soul allows itself to be effected by what speaks variously out of the life of the year from week to week, only then will it really find itself through such participation."*¹

Thus, the weekly verses of the Soul Calendar are clearly not oriented to the church year and the Christian holidays, but to nature. The fact that Rudolf Steiner has given four of his weekly verses titles including terms related to church celebrations may be irritating for many readers in this respect. These are the titles "Oster-Stimmung" (Easter-Atmosphere), "Johannes-Stimmung" (John-Atmosphere), "Michaeli-Stimmung" (Michaelmas-Atmosphere) and "Weihe-Nacht-Stimmung" (Consecration-Night Atmosphere), which he preceded the weekly verses no. 1, 12, 26 and 38. As a rule, this is interpreted as if Rudolf Steiner had written "Ostern" (Easter), "Johanni" (St. John's Day), "Michaeli" (Michaelmas) and "Weihnachten" (Christmas), thus giving these weekly verses the names of Christian celebrations. On closer inspection, however, it turns out that in all four cases he speaks only of an "atmosphere" or a mood that we feel, sense, perceive on these days in nature. The fact that we additionally celebrate the mentioned church holidays on these days or in the period of the respective week is ultimately based on the fact that the holidays themselves are oriented towards the underlying atmosphere or mood in nature. In pre-Christian periods already there were special annual festivals at those days or weeks.

It is therefore important to note that Rudolf Steiner did not call the so-called Easter verse "Ostern" (Easter), but "Oster-Stimmung" (Easter-Atmosphere). He did not even write "Osterstimmung" in one word, which would have been quite possible according to German spelling, but he emphasized the word "Stimmung" (atmosphere, mood) by using a hyphen. Similarly, Rudolf Steiner did not give the opposite Michaelmas verse the title "Michaeli" (Michaelmas), but "Michaeli-Stimmung" (Michaelmas-Atmosphere), in order to point out the mood prevailing at that time behind the outward appearance of nature.

To the verse regarding the week beginning with St. John's Day he did not even give the title "Johanni-Stimmung" (St. John's Atmosphere), but "Johannes-Stimmung" (John's-Atmosphere), and to the Christmas verse not the title "Weihnachts-Stimmung" (Christmas-Atmosphere), but "Weihe-Nacht-Stimmung" (Consecration-Night Atmosphere). The reason for this might be that both at St. John's Day and at Christmas the natural mood behind the outer appearance is a reflection of experiences that a human soul can make when entering the Budhi Plane, be it as a "deceased" between two incarnations or as an advanced initiate already in his life on earth. In ancient mysteries, such an initiate was given the nickname "John".

*"John had to develop up to Budhi to comprehend what was revealed as the Christ Jesus. The other three evangelists were not so highly developed. John gives the highest, he was an awakened, a raised one. **John is the name of all who are raised.** This is a generic name, and the Raising of Lazarus in the Gospel of John is nothing more than the description of this Awakening."*²

¹ See more in the chapter „Reflection of the Human Incarnation Cycle in the Annual Rhythm of Nature“ (after the chapter on the 41st weekly verse) in the book „The Anthroposophical Soul Calendar and the Incarnation Cycle of Man“.

² Rudolf Steiner, GA 94 „Kosmogonie“ (Cosmogony), Munich, Lecture of 28 October 1906 - See also “The Anthroposophical Soul Calendar and the Incarnation Cycle of Man”, Chapter “Christ and the Human Being” (after the Chapter on the 39th weekly verse).

What such a person can experience with regard to the *exterior* when entering the Budhi Plane is described in the 12th weekly verse, which has therefore been titled "John-Atmosphere". What such a person can experience with regard to his *interior* - because even in the higher worlds, the soul alternates between external and internal experiences – this describes the 38th weekly verse, which deals with the "consecration" of the person who has become John as a "Consecration-Night Atmosphere". These two experiences are reflected in the days immediately after the summer or winter solstice in the finer moods of nature on earth.

So the four verses mentioned do not refer primarily to the Christian celebrations, but to the seasonal moods in nature underlying them. It was in this sense that Rudolf Steiner gave the hint:

*"Now the human soul feels also: When in the north the soul of the Earth moves out to the stars [i.e. at St. John's Day] and to a certain extent appears to the spiritual view like a comet tail which extends out to heaven, on the other side the soul of the Earth withdraws into the Earth, and it is Christmas. And again vice versa, when the soul of the Earth withdraws here, on the other side the comet's tail extends out into the cosmos. That happens at the same time."*³

Here, Rudolf Steiner does not say that in the Southern hemisphere the clerical Christmas should be celebrated when in the Northern hemisphere is St. John's Day. But he expressly says that at this time in the Southern hemisphere, behind the outer appearance of nature, there is a Christmas mood at because the sun has completed its winter solstice then.

The historical Christian events of Easter, St. John's Day, Michaelmas and Christmas all took place in the Northern hemisphere, and it is no coincidence that they took place precisely at those times of the year when the external moods in nature corresponded to the inner meaning of these celebrations. They are therefore both celebrations of historical remembrance and celebrations of Christian experience of nature. If about two thousand years ago the events had taken place in the Southern hemisphere, everything would have had to happen half a year later, because only then would it have been in harmony with nature. But the historical facts happened on fixed dates and in this way have meaning for the whole earth. So an Easter of historical commemoration should be celebrated by all people on both hemispheres at the same time.

But Easter is a movable holiday. It is calculated according to the cosmic constellations of the sun and moon, i.e. according to conditions in the outer nature. This shows that it is much more than just a celebration of historical commemoration. It is also a celebration of experiencing the work of Christ in nature throughout the year. According to Rudolf Steiner, this very aspect is of special importance for the preparation of people for the future experience of the etheric Christ. Thus he answered Friedrich Rittelmeyer's question "*what one could do to prepare oneself for Damascus-like Christ events* [for the seeing of the etheric Christ as it was first granted to the Apostle Paul before Damascus]" with the words: "*This is only possible when one experiences Christ in the course of the year.*"⁴

For the Southern hemisphere this gives rise to the task of supplementing every "celebration of historical remembrance" with a "celebration of Christian experience of nature", albeit at intervals of half a year. In addition to Rudolf Steiner's lectures on "Experiencing the Course of the Year in Four Cosmic Imaginations" (GA 229), in which he speaks about the material, spiritual and mental changes in the course of the year, the Soul Calendar with its 52 weekly verses is particularly suitable as a basis for establishing such new "celebrations of Christian experience of nature" in the Southern hemisphere. There, in March/April, Easter could be celebrated as a "celebration of historical commemoration" (at the same time as the people in the Northern hemisphere), but without using the Soul Calendar. And since at this time in the Southern nature an autumnal mood is already noticeable, the diagonal verse of

³ GA 226 "Menschenwesen, Menschenschicksal und Welt-Entwicklung" (Man's being, his destiny and world-evolution), Kristiania (Oslo), Lecture of 21 May 1923

⁴ "Unveröffentlichte Gespräche mit Dr. Steiner" (Unpublished conversations with Dr. Steiner), written by Friedrich Rittelmeyer. They were finally published by Urachhaus under the title "Meine Gespräche mit Rudolf Steiner" (My conversations with Rudolf Steiner)

the 1st weekly verse could be used as a basis for an "autumnal celebration of Christian experience of nature", i.e. the 27th weekly verse, which is exactly half a year or 6 months away from the 1st weekly verse. This would result in the following procedure for the four major annual celebrations in the southern hemisphere:

Date	Celebration of historical commemoration (simultaneous with the Northern Hemisphere)	Celebration of Christian experience of nature (according to the annual course of nature in the Southern hemisphere)
30 March – 6 April	Holy Week	26th weekly verse (Michaelmas-Atmosphere)
7 – 13 April	Easter	27th weekly verse (week after Michaelmas)
22 – 28 December	St. John's Day	38th weekly verse (Consecration-Night-Atmosphere)
29 Sept. – 5 Oct.	Michaelmas	52nd weekly verse
6 – 12 October	week after Michaelmas	1st weekly verse (Easter-Atmosphere)
24 – 30 June	Christmas	12th weekly verse (John-Atmosphere)

To find the appropriate weekly verses for the Southern hemisphere, one only needs to add 26 to the verses' numbers given by Rudolf Steiner or, if the numbers are greater than 26, to subtract 26. Another approach would be to cross out the names of the months in all the weekly verses and write the names of those months, which are exactly half a year away. By doing so, the period of the 1st weekly verse "7 - 13 April" is turned into "7 - 13 October" (see figure below). In the same way in the 27th weekly verse "6 - 12 October" is turned into "6 - 12 April". Accordingly, this 27th weekly verse can be used in harmony with the beginning autumn mood in nature in the second week of April in the Southern hemisphere, while at the same time Easter is celebrated as a „celebration of historical commemoration“ by the whole world on the same day.

October

2nd Week (14 – 20 April)

Into the sensory universe's outer region

...

October

1 Easter-Atmosphere (7 – 13 April)

When from the vastness of the world

...

April

27th Week (6 – 12 October)

Ingress into my being's depths:

...

April

28th Week (13 – 19 October)

I can, revitalized inside,

...

If a person wants to orientate himself to the exact movable date of Easter, he may change in addition the date of the verse. However, this should not be handled too pedantically, since Marie Steiner said on this subject that "the verses are designed internally in such a way that three verses each follow a basic mood, then in turn three comprise the next mood", and also

through Johanna Mücke Rudolf Steiner's statement is handed down that *"the shift would not mean much, as he always kept three stanzas of the weekly verses in the same mood."* It is therefore only important for the Southern hemisphere to start with the 1st weekly verse at the time of the Easter mood in nature, i.e. around 7 - 14 October.

Working with two weekly verses at the same time, e.g. with the 1st weekly verse and additionally with the 27th weekly verse (diagonal verse) opposite in the course of the year, or with the 52nd weekly verse (mirror verse), might not be in Rudolf Steiner's intention, if one reads more closely his two prefaces on the Soul Calendar as well as his statement about St. John's Day and Christmas quoted above. Because then one would work with two opposite moods at the same time. By doing so, it is impossible to sense purely and uninfluenced the movements of the Earth Soul, whereas they should be experienced as fine basic moods and like a great breathing process behind the sense-perceptible changes in the course of the year in nature. From the verse "Easter-Atmosphere" we are to follow the Earth Soul, which is pervaded by the Christ impulse, week by week outwards, and from the verse following "Michael-Atmosphere" inwards. Rudolf Steiner describes this process in great detail and vividly in his lecture on Holy Saturday, March 31, 1923.⁵

Finally, an excerpt from the lecture of the following Easter Sunday, April 1, 1923, in which Rudolf Steiner gives hints on how mankind can achieve a new sense of celebration and create new celebrations:

*"Mankind must reach an esoteric maturity in order to be able to think again not only abstractly but so concretely that it can again create celebrations. Then it will again be able to associate something spiritual **with the sensorial course of appearance.**"*

*Our thoughts all remain abstract. But no matter how great or spiritual our thoughts may be – if they remain abstract, they will not be able to understand life. Today, when mankind is thinking about how to set Easter on some abstract day, no longer according to the constellation of stars, today, when all higher cognition is darkened, when there is no longer any connection between the insight into the moral-spiritual and naturalistic-physical forces, today again the power must awaken in man to be able to associate something spiritual **directly with the sensorial appearance of the world.**"*

*What then was the spiritual power of man to be able to create celebrations during the year according to the course of the annual appearances? It consisted in the original spiritual power. Today, people can continue with celebrations according to the old traditional custom, but mankind must in turn gain the esoteric power to be able to say something into nature on its own initiative according to the natural course. The possibility must be found of grasping the autumnal idea of Michael as the blossoming of the Easter idea. **The Easter idea is the result of the sensorial blossoming.** But mankind must be able to put **the Michael idea as the blossoming of the Easter idea** into the course of the year as the result of the physical withering.*

***People must learn a new to combine the Spiritual with the natural course in their thoughts.** Today, man is not only allowed to make esoteric observations; it is necessary for man today to be able to do esoteric things again as well. But people will only be able to do that if they are able to grasp their thoughts so concretely, so vividly, that they again think not only by withdrawing from all events, but by thinking with the course of events, **thinking in combination with the withering leaves, with the ripening fruits, in such a Michalic way as one was able to think in an Easter way in combination with the flowering plants, with the sprouting plants, with the budding flowers.**"*

*When one will understand **to think in combination with the course of the year**, then those forces will mix in the thoughts, which in turn will let man hold dialogue with the divine spiritual forces, which reveal themselves from the stars. Down from the stars people have drawn the strength to establish celebrations that have inner human validity. People have to establish celebrations by inner esoteric power. Then they will be able to communicate with*

⁵ GA 223 „Der Jahreskreislauf als Atmungsvorgang der Erde und die vier großen Festeszeiten“ (The annual cycle as the breathing process of the earth and the four great celebrational times), Dornach, Lecture of 31 March 1923

wilting and ripening plants, with the dying earth, by finding the right inner celebrational mood for them, and in turn they will be able to communicate with the gods and link human existence to divine existence. The right Easter idea will also be there again, when this Easter idea will be so alive that it can generate the Michaelic idea out of itself."

Here, the Soul Calendar can be a great help to us, if we use it in such a way that we always immerse ourselves only in the current weekly verse, in direct reference to the finer moods behind the external sensorial image of nature prevailing at that time.

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