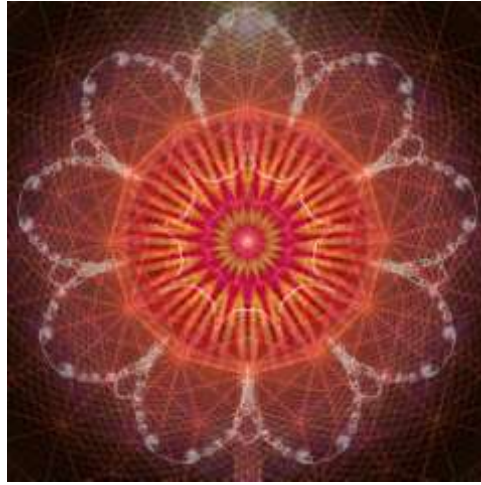


Summer 2015, Volume 11, Number 2



The Esoteric Quarterly

*An independent publication dedicated to the trans-disciplinary investigation
of the esoteric spiritual tradition.*

**Esoteric philosophy and its applications
to individual and group service and
the expansion of human consciousness.**



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The Esoteric Quarterly

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The Esoteric Quarterly

Contents

Volume 11, Number 2. Summer 2015

FEATURES

Editorial	4
Publication Policies	5
Letters to the Editor	6
Poems of the Quarter	7
“Quivering” and “Home,” by Heidi Rose Robbins	
Pictures of the Quarter	9
“Vivid,” “Dawn on the Golden Lake and “Three Steps to Shambhalla,” by Gianfranco Caldarelli	
Quotes of the Quarter	12
Advertising	14

ARTICLES

St. Paul’s Second Epistle to the Thessalonians: An Esoteric Commentary, by Zachary F. Lansdowne	19
Musical Harmony, Mathematics, and Esotericism, by Celeste Jameson and John F. Nash	45

SHORT PAPERS

The Sonata of the Master Musician, by William Meader	73
Beauty, by Dorje Jinpa	77

THE THREE SPIRITUAL FESTIVALS

The Festival of Easter: Resurrection and the Dynamic of Harmlessness, by Martin Vieweg	81
The Festival of Wesak: Distributing Wesak Energies Harmlessly, by Dorothy I. Riddle	86
The Festival of Goodwill: Goodwill and Group Harmlessness, by Miguel Malagrecia	91

BOOK REVIEW

The Inner Dimensions of Life: Volume 1- Esoteric Philosophy, by Niels Brønsted	96
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The mission of the *Esoteric Quarterly* is to provide a forum for the exploration of esoteric philosophy and its applications. Full-length articles and student papers are solicited pertaining to both eastern and western esoteric traditions. We also encourage feedback from readers. Comments of general interest will be published as Letters to the Editor. All communications should be sent to: editor@esotericquarterly.com.

Inner Wisdom & Power in the Bible, Mathematics, Music and the Arts

The acquisition of wisdom and power require substantial effort, to which few people are pledged. Although true wisdom and power are uncommon, and involve an exceptional level of spiritual maturity or Self-development, the sources of inspiration and spiritual power are many. The contemplation of sacred texts and scriptures, for example, can reveal multi-layered descriptions of the spiritual realities within us and in the world beyond. Music, as Peter Bolland writes in *The Wisdom of Music*, “is one of the most powerful and mysterious of the art forms.” It opens a “window to a world beyond the walls of our conceptual mind.” Likewise, music and mathematics have long been recognized as abstract symbolic languages which can communicate spiritual ideals and beauty. Beauty also has a hidden wisdom and power that allows for the direct and immediate connection with the very arcanum of Life. These ideas are demonstrated further in the articles that follow.

The first article in this issue, by Zachary Lansdowne, provides a commentary on *St. Paul’s Second Epistle to the Thessalonians*. The article focuses on the first 12 verses of 2nd Thessalonians—verses that have long puzzled scholars and which have given rise to intense eschatological speculation. Orthodox Christian interpretations view these verses as pertaining to such themes as Faith, the Great Apostasy, the Anti-Christ and the End Times. Lansdowne’s article takes the Theosophical view that Paul was one among a circle of initiates whose words reveal an inner wisdom which was intentionally veiled from the spiritually immature. His allegorical interpretation and analyses of the characters and events in these twelve verses show that they encode a hidden esoteric doctrine concerned with the “Upward Way” and the unfoldment of consciousness.

Our second article explores *Musical Harmony, Mathematics, and Esotericism*. The article, by Celeste Jamerson and John Nash investigates the symbiosis between mathematics and music in addition to their deep esoteric significance. The first part of the article explains the basics of musical theory and concepts in its discussion of sound, pitch and tuning. Next the authors’ examine Pythagorean tuning and the evolution of just intonation. Music, mathematics, and the esoteric associations of just intonation are also discussed. The article concludes with an examination of the Theosophical teachings on music dealing with such themes as music and service, and music, color and the Devas, in an effort to help humanity understand its musical heritage and prepare it for a time when it can be entrusted with the true creative power of sound.

William Meader continues the discussion of sound and music in a short piece titled *The Sonata of the Master Musician*, in which he sees “every entity within creation as a musical composition in the making.” The article touches upon the role of sound and music” from both a practical and metaphysical perspective, i.e., as a great force in support of human betterment and spiritual evolution.

Dorje Jinpa contributes a short paper on the immense power and significance of Beauty. The paper commences by touching upon the catastrophic results of humanity’s degraded ability to recognize, appreciate and create beauty. The author’s primary focus, however, concerns the psychological and spiritual benefits of beauty as well as the idea of beauty as a universal principle related to “Truth” and the “Eternal Pattern.” In addition to calling “for a radical new art that reaffirms beauty as the golden mean for the creative manifestation of evolution in form,” the author reminds us

that beauty is a yard stick for measuring one's progress on the spiritual path.

As well as the articles and short papers in this issue we offer three inspirational talks, courtesy of *The School for Esoteric Studies* focused on the Festivals of Easter, Wesak and Goodwill. Also included is a book review for *The Inner Dimensions of Life: Vol. 1-Esoteric Philosophy*, by Niels Brønsted, whose comprehensive work on esoteric philosophy serves as a rich and synthetic resource tool.

We also draw your attention to our *Poems of the Quarter*. The two poems featured here—*Quivering* and *Home*—are from Heidi Rose Robbins, whose first book of poetry, *This Beckoning Ceaseless Beauty*, was released to enthusiastic reviews in 2013. Of the book, author Danielle LaPorte, (The Firestarter Sessions) wrote, “These poems make me want to live more fully, deeply... Heidi Rose Robbins notices the beauty of life.” In addition to her work as a poet, Heidi has supported many men and women through life transitions as an esoteric astrologer and as the leader of Radiant Life retreats, in which she teaches women how to live more fully expressive and courageously loving lives. She's a founding member of The Hello Love Experiment (hellolove.us), a radical on-going project of naming, embodying, and realizing love in the world. Learn more about her poetry, retreats and grounded approach to astrology at www.heidirose.com.

Our *Pictures of the Quarter* continue with the theme of “Beauty.” The three featured works: *Vivid*, *Dawn on the Golden Lake* and *Three Steps to Shambhalla*, are from the prize winning Italian painter, Gianfranco Caldarelli. Born in Rome in 1960, Caldarelli undertook his studies in science and spent nearly thirty years teaching and working in the field of communication and commercial art before focusing seriously on his own painting. His spiritual and philosophical search eventually led to his involvement with Agni Yoga and the *Community of Living Ethics of Città della Pieve*. Caldarelli describes his function, his “yoga as an artist,” as the effort to humbly reflect Beauty's wishes. These wishes can be defined simply as the creation of a link

between Heaven and Earth. His refined aesthetic vision also concerns “the uncontainable attraction toward light” so strikingly depicted in his paintings. For additional information on the life and spiritually transformative works of the artist, we encourage you to visit his website at www.gianfrancocaldarelli.eu.

Donna M. Brown
Editor-in-Chief

Publication Policies

Articles are selected for publication in the *Esoteric Quarterly* because we believe they represent a sincere search for truth, support the service mission to which we aspire, and/or contribute to the expansion of human consciousness.

Publication of an article does not necessarily imply that the Editorial Board agrees with the views expressed. Nor do we have the means to verify all facts stated in published articles.

We encourage critical thinking and analysis from a wide range of perspectives and traditions. We discourage dogmatism or any view that characterizes any tradition as having greater truth than a competing system.

Neither will we allow our journal to be used as a platform for attacks on individuals, groups, institutions, or nations. This policy applies to articles and features as well as to letters to the editor. In turn, we understand that the author of an article may not necessarily agree with the views, attitudes, or values expressed by a referenced source. Indeed, serious scholarship sometimes requires reference to work that an author finds abhorrent. We will not reject an article for publication simply on the grounds that it contains a reference to an objectionable source.

An issue of concern in all online journals is potential volatility of content. Conceivably, articles could be modified after the publication date because authors changed their minds about what had been written. Accordingly, we wish to make our policy clear: We reserve the right to correct minor typographical errors, but we will not make any substantive alteration to an article after it “goes to press.”

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

The article by Mr. Lansdowne, which appeared in the Spring, 2015 issue, is extremely well written and obviously extensively researched. Nevertheless, I have a factual correction.

Twice in the article,¹ Mr. Lansdowne cites sources that indicate that “Cedercrans calls her work” the “New Thoughtform Presentation of the Wisdom,” “NTFPW,” or more simply “the Wisdom.”

This is only partly correct.

From the perspective of both Lucille's materials, and the oral tradition associated with them, her written works are "an" expression of the version of the Ageless Wisdom that has been formulated for and is being made available to the humanity of this Aquarian Age. This is made clear in the first two pages of the text of Lucille's foundational work, *The Nature of the Soul*.

“In recognition of, and cooperation with this activity of the Soul, a New Thought-Form Presentation of The Wisdom has been created and placed in availability for those who seek it. It can be contacted as an abstraction via the activity of meditation, and must then be translated into a concrete form by the one who meditates.

This series of instructions is *an interpretation of that new thought-form*, and has been written in an effort to aid man in the search for his Soul.”²

The specific “series of instructions” referred to is *The Nature of The Soul*, but this is equally

true of all of Lucille's written works, such as *Introduction to The Path of Initiation*, *Creative Thinking*, and *The Soul and Its instrument*.

That New Thought-form Presentation of The Wisdom appears to have been formulated, by Masters M., D.K., and R., on Wesak of 1946, at the same time that they formed what Lucille's materials call the Ashram of Synthesis or Synthetic Ashram.

This definition of The Wisdom is a vital distinction. We are told that the Ageless Wisdom is always available, to the humanity of every time and place, in a form of expression that is appropriate to the humanity of that time and place. According to this definition, “The New Thought-form Presentation of The Wisdom,” “N.T.F.P.W.,” and “The Wisdom,” refer to the expression of the Ageless Wisdom designed for the Humanity of this Aquarian Age.

Blessings,
Glen Knappe
GKnappe22@gmail.com

¹ Zachary F. Lansdowne, “Cedercrans’ Writings compared to Bailey’s Technique of Integration for the Seventh Ray,” *The Esoteric Quarterly*, Spring, 2015, 40 and 41.

² Lucille Cedercrans, *The Nature of The Soul* (Roseville, MN, Wisdom Impressions Publishers, LLC, Third edition, 2011) 3-4, Italics added.

Poems of the Quarter by Heidi Rose Robbins

Quivering

If we but make friends
with the quivering,
the subtle and not so subtle
shaking of the body
and all its parts,
letting go
of what we've held onto
long enough,

If we but soften our grasp
on who we have always been,
to make room for
what can be
knowing not
what may appear,
knowing only
the quivering,

(And I ask,
Is not some part of us
always dying?)

(And I ask,
Are we not everyday
in some small way
reborn?)

Then, just as the
wild animal shakes
off the fear of attack,
we too can shake
off the fears that
want to eat us whole.

We can walk
barefoot in the woods
with a quiver of arrows,
cautious of what
still wants to ensnare us,
but alive with the
light emanating
from our newly
trodden path.

Are we not path makers?
So we are.
Are we not path finders?

So we are.

Do arrows not quiver
before they are loosed into the world?
Then so must we.

Finally,
we are archer and arrow
at once
sprung into the wind
carried swiftly,
silently,
precisely
to our
very
heart,
pierced and present.

Home

When it was done,
when words were spoken that cannot be unsaid,
the silence kissed my eyes and mouth
and whispered into the caves of my heart.

All my life
I heard the joyous music
In a village just around the bend.
Thought the music was
wild, and free and insistent,
and thought my heart
stirred from the strains I could dimly hear,
I never chose to go.

There was work to be done
after all.

But after all
When there was nothing left to do
but walk
in the blazes of the sun
from all that was familiar

I opened my eyes
freshly kissed
and in wordless wonder
followed this
beckoning, ceaseless beauty
Home.

Pictures of the Quarter by Gianfranco Caldarelli



Vivid, oil on canvas | 60 x 100 cm



Dawn on the Golden Lake,
oil on canvas and gold foil | 70 x 120 cm



Three Steps to Shambhalla
oil on canvas and gold foil | 70 x 120 cm

Quotes of the Quarter

The worship of the dead-letter in the Bible is but one more form of *idolatry*, nothing better. A fundamental dogma of faith cannot exist under a double-faced Janus form. “Justification” by *Christ* cannot be achieved at one’s choice and fancy, *either* by “faith” or by “works” and James, therefore (ii.,25), contradicting Paul (*Heb.* xi., 31), and *vice versa*, one of them must be wrong. Hence, the Bible is *not* the “Word of God,” but contains at best the words of fallible men and *imperfect* teachers. Yet read *esoterically*, it does contain, if not the *whole* truth, still, “*nothing but the truth*,” under whatever allegorical garb.

Helena P. Blavatsky, “The Esoteric Character of the Gospels,” *Studies in Occultism: A Collection of Articles from Lucifer* (Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press), 7.

As long as the mind confines itself to the sense of the letter [of the Bible] alone one cannot possibly see that its contents embody matters that are spiritual and celestial.

Emanuel Swedenborg, *Arcana Caelestia* (Heavenly Secrets) Vol. 1 (West Chester, PA: Swedenborg Foundation, 1998), 145.

In every religious tradition, sacred scriptures have been seen as the repository for an intentionally complex and rich revelation behind the complexity of the written text. Even classical poetic texts were treated in this manner by subsequent philosophers and critics, who would quote directly from those texts and then add an interpretation whose logic or intention was not readily apparent from the plain meaning of the quoted text. All such systems of exposition, whether from the religious or philosophical tradition, were based on the assumption that communication is not limited to plain prose. Metaphor, simile, parable, allegory, proverb, synecdoche, paradigm, rhetoric, fable and poetry, would all be impossible forms of communication were

we strictly to limit ourselves to plain meaning of the words we use. These highly valued forms of communication have in common the assumption that communication happens simultaneously on more than one level... To grasp levels beyond the plain and immediately accessible (the “sensible”), the creative mind of the hearer must have already been filled with a repertoire of symbols and associations, many of which are cultural bound, and some of which are limited to hearers already privy to carefully guarded philosophical and religious mysteries.

Philip L. Culbertson, *A Word Fitly Spoken: Context, Transmission, and Adoption of the Parables of Jesus* (New York: SUNY, 1995), 39-40.

Paul is the only one who had any apprehension of the real esoteric significance of the Christ Myth in its cosmic aspects, while at the same time he was obliged to base his teachings principally on the exoteric beliefs of his hearers which centred round the personal Jesus.

William Kingsland, *The Gnosis or Ancient Wisdom in the Christian Scriptures* (reprint 1937: London, ENG; Bradford & Dickens, 1956), 171.

Music is a moral law. It gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, a charm to sadness, and life to everything. It is the essence of order, and leads to all that is good, just and beautiful, of which it is the invisible, but nevertheless dazzling, passionate, and eternal form.

Plato, *Wordsworth Dictionary of Musical Quotations* (Hertfordshire, ENG: Wordsworth Editions, Ltd, 1991), 45.

Musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the

inward places of the soul; on which they mightily fasten, imparting grace, and making the soul of him who is rightly educated graceful, or of him who is ill-educated ungraceful; and also because he who has received this education of the inner being will most shrewdly perceive omissions or faults in art and nature, and with a true taste, while he praises and rejoices over and receives into his soul the good, and becomes noble and good, he will justly blame and hate the bad, now in the days of his youth, even before he is able to know the reason why; and when reason comes he will recognize and salute the friend with whom his education has made him long familiar.

Plato, "The Republic," *The Essential Plato*, translated by Benjamin Jowett (Camp Hill, PA: Book of the Month Club, Book, 1999), 257.

It has been observed that mathematics is the most abstract of the sciences, music the most abstract of the arts. Mathematics attempts to understand conceptual and logical truth and appreciates the intrinsic beauty of such. Music evokes mood and emotion by the audio medium of tones and rhythms without appealing to circumstantial means of eliciting such innate human reactions. Therefore it is not surprising that the symbiosis of the two disciplines is an age old story. The Greek mathematician Pythagoras noted the integral relationships between frequencies of musical tones in a consonant interval; the 18th century musician J. S. Bach studied the mathematical problem of finding a practical way to tune keyboard instruments.

David Wright, *Mathematics and Music* (Providence, RI: American Mathematical Society, 2009), ix.

In antiquity, musical symbolism and mathematics were recognized spiritual languages that often were used to communicate fundamental spiritual ideas. In modern times, the symbolic importance of music and mathematics has been forgotten; for this reason, scholars have long been mystified by crucial passages that deal with numbers in the great works of early, music and art.

Ernest G. McClain, *The Myth of Invariance* (London: Shambhala, 1978), endpaper.

Beauty is the magnet of the new world and love is its portal of entry.

Call from The Mountain: Messages to Disciples from the Heart of Kanchenjunga, Message 9

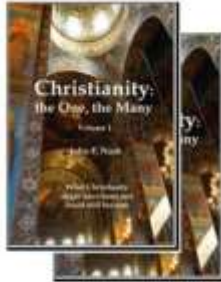
<http://www.callfromthemountain.net>.

The sense of the reality of the etheric body is strengthened by the experience of Beauty. When truth and truthfulness enter the realm of real experience, we are, in a sense, living rightly in the physical body. A highly developed sense of beauty gives us a right relation to the etheric body of formative forces. Whereas Truth is connected with the physical body, Beauty is connected with the etheric body.... A genuine feeling for beauty forges a link that binds us here, in earthly life itself, once again with pre-earthly existence. We ought never to undervalue the significance of beauty in education and in outer culture. A civilization that is filled with ugly machines, with chimneys and smoke, and dispenses with beauty, is a world that makes no efforts to forge a link between man and pre-earthly existence; indeed, it tears him asunder. Not by way of analogy, but in very truth we may say: A purely industrial city is a fitting abode for the demonic beings who would like to make man forget his pre-earthly existence in the realm of spirit.

Rudolf Steiner, *Truth, Beauty and Goodness* (Spring Valley, NY: St. George Publications, 1986).

The soul which has seen most of truth shall come to birth as a philosopher, a lover of beauty, or fervent musician. (Phaedrus, 248) And one who is properly educated in music would perceive,... and take delight in beautiful (music), and take it into his soul to foster its growth. (The Republic, III, 402).

Plato, *The Essential Plato*, translated by Benjamin Jowett (Camp Hill, PA: Book of the Month Club, Book, 1999), 248,402.



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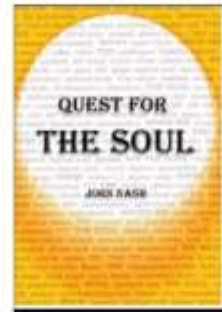
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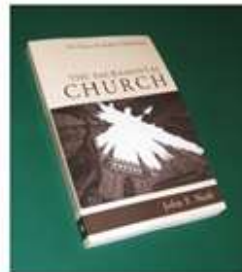
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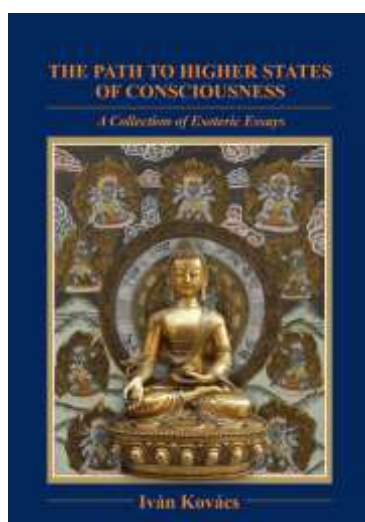
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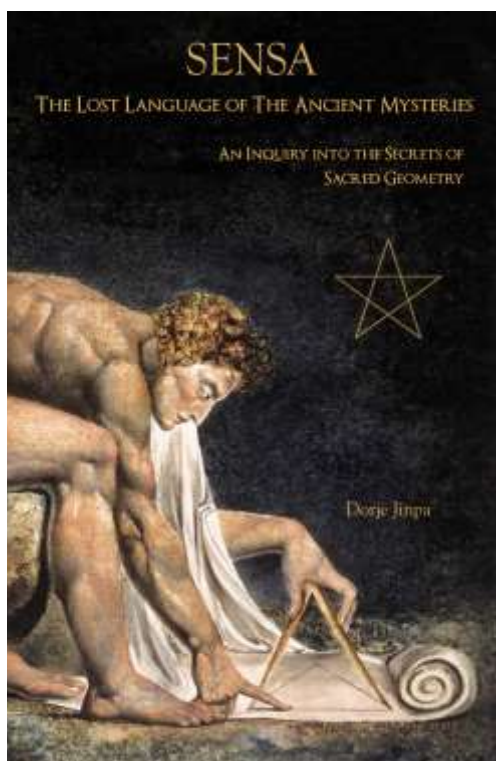
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SENSA

THE LOST LANGUAGE OF THE ANCIENT MYSTERIES

AN INQUIRY INTO THE SECRETS OF ARCHETYPAL SYMBOLISM

Dorje Jinpa



The languages of the world have been created almost entirely in response to the material world and are therefore rarely applicable to the higher dimensions of metaphysical or non-physical reality. When mystic seers wish to accurately describe their vision of the higher worlds they must do so symbolically, in the language of analogy, using symbols to represent higher corresponding truths. The symbols used by initiates in *Sensa*, the secret Language of the Sun, are derived from those archetypal images that naturally reflect higher truths, laws and principles.

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St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians: An Esoteric Commentary

Zachary F. Lansdowne

Summary

St. Paul's *Second Epistle to the Thessalonians*, often written 2 Thessalonians, is a canonical book of the New Testament. This article focusses on only twelve verses, 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12, whose meaning has puzzled scholars for centuries. Paul said that he knew divine wisdom but was reluctant to share it with people who were not ready to receive it, so perhaps these puzzling verses have a significance that was intended to be hidden from those who were not spiritually mature. This article provides an argument in support of the following claim: when the characters and events in these twelve verses are interpreted in an allegorical way, they yield an esoteric or inner wisdom teaching concerned with the unfoldment of consciousness. Moreover, the inferred teaching is included in Alice Bailey's modern theosophical writings, which supports Helena Blavatsky's claim that the ancient esoteric doctrine can be found in modern Theosophy.

Introduction

Helena Blavatsky (1831–1891), founder of the Theosophical Society, makes a key distinction: "Every ancient religious, or rather philosophical cult consisted of an esoteric or secret teaching, and an exoteric (outward public) worship."¹ Alice Bailey (1880 – 1949), a member of the Theosophical Society before leaving it to pursue her own activities, says that contemporary Christianity has lost its esoteric teaching:

We know much of the exoteric teaching. Orthodox and theological Christianity is founded on it, as are all the orthodox formulations of the great religions. When, however, the inner wisdom teaching is forgotten and the esoteric side is ignored, then

the spirit and the living experimental experience disappear. We have been occupied with the details of the outer form of the faith, and have sadly forgotten the inner meaning which carries life and salvation to the individual and also to humanity. We have been busy fighting over the non-essentials of traditional interpretation and have omitted to teach the secret and the technique of the Christian life.²

Is it possible to restore Christianity's lost esoteric teaching? This article attempts to unveil an esoteric teaching that lies hidden in 2 Thessalonians. St. Paul, an influential exponent of early Christianity, is traditionally regarded as the author of this epistle, because it begins, "Paul and Silvanus and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians" (2 Thessalonians 1:1), and ends, "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write" (2 Thessalonians 3:17).³

This article focusses on only twelve verses, 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12, rather than on the epistle as a whole. Paul did not compose these twelve verses in a lucid way, however, as shown by the fact that they have puzzled scholars for centuries. For example, St. Augustine (354 – 430), one of the foremost theologians of early Christianity, wrote the following

About the Author

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about these verses: "I admit that the meaning of this completely escapes me."⁴ Professor Leon Morris gives a contemporary assessment: "This is an extraordinarily difficult passage, not made any easier by the fact that its subject matter is not dealt with elsewhere."⁵ Professor Beverly Gaventa provides another contemporary assessment:

Readers of the New Testament stumbling for the first time into the middle of 2 Thessalonians may be forgiven if they feel like Alice tumbling down a dark hole into Wonderland. The residents of this Wonderland are new and mysterious, their relationship to one another unclear, and the stranger responds with a sense of disorientation.⁶

The number of interpretations evoked by a biblical text seems to be directly proportional to its degree of obscurity. If the meaning of a text were clear, then the only interpretation evoked by it would be its obvious meaning. On the other hand, Dr. Gary Demarest notes the following: "The passage before us, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, is undoubtedly one of the most difficult in all of Paul's writings. It has given rise to more speculative and diverse interpretations than any other section of Paul's letters."⁷ If one of the available interpretations were convincing, then contemporary scholars would refrain from saying that the passage is "extraordinarily difficult." Therefore, our conclusion is that none of the available interpretations is convincing.

When encountering 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, we have three courses of action: first, accept one of the many interpretations that have been concocted; second, consider the passage as unworthy of serious consideration, because it does not seem to speak directly to the most important issues of life; or third, study the text carefully in search of hidden wisdom. Let us reject the first course of action, because of the earlier conclusion that none of the available interpretations is convincing. Instead let us consider the second course of action and ask this question: are Paul's instructions worthy of serious consideration?

The Great Initiate

St. Paul (c. 5 – c. 67), known also as Paul the Apostle, taught the gospel of Christ to the first-century world. He is generally considered to be one of the most important figures in the growth of early Christianity: he founded several churches in Asia Minor and Europe, fourteen of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament have traditionally been attributed to him, and approximately half of the *Acts of the Apostles* treats his life and works.

Paul is highly regarded by writers in the theological tradition:

Blavatsky writes, "There was but one apostle of Jesus worthy of that name, and that was Paul,"⁸ "Paul was the only one of the apostles who had understood the secret ideas underlying the teachings of Jesus, although he had never met him,"⁹ "the cautious hints of Paul have all the true esoteric meaning,"¹⁰ and "Paul was undeniably an Initiate."¹¹

Bailey refers to "the great initiate, St. Paul,"¹² and says, "I would suggest that there has never been a better description of the nature of love than that given by the initiate Paul, even though the translation of his words is faulty at times. Study those passages in the *New Testament* in which he defines love."¹³

Here, the term *initiate* is used in the sense of one possessed of divine wisdom. Blavatsky also writes:

Paul declares that: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise *master-builder*, I have laid the foundation." [1 Corinthians 3:10] This expression, *master-builder*, used only *once* in the whole *Bible*, and by Paul, may be considered as a whole revelation ... Therefore, when Paul entitles himself a "master-builder," he is using a word pre-eminently kabalistic, theurgic and masonic, and one which no other apostle uses. He thus declares himself an *adept*, having the right to *initiate* others.¹⁴

Thus Paul is thought to have possessed divine wisdom and the right to initiate others into it. In 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, he distinguishes between exoteric and esoteric knowledge:

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

In other words, Paul taught his new converts an exoteric teaching, which is represented by milk, rather than an esoteric teaching, which is represented by solid food. Yet Paul, in 1 Corinthians 2:6-7, says that he does convey divine wisdom to those who are spiritually mature:

Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God predestined before the ages to our glory.

According to these quotations, Paul knew divine wisdom but was reluctant to share it with students who were not ready to receive it. Thus he may have inserted divine wisdom into his epistles in a veiled way, with the intention that it would be understood only by those who were spiritually mature.

Students may be inclined to skip over 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, because these obscure verses, which have been likened to "tumbling down a dark hole into Wonderland," do not seem to speak directly to the most important issues of life. On the other hand, commentators on Paul mention "his usual clarity,"¹⁵ so the unusual obscurity of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 may indicate the presence of Paul's veiled wisdom. Put differently, Paul may have intentionally made the passage obscure by veiling, or concealing, his wisdom. If Paul did veil his wisdom, then the unveiled version of his wisdom would be expected to speak directly to the most important issues of life. Thus let us reject the second course of action, which is to consider the passage as unworthy of serious consideration, and instead proceed with the third course of action: study Paul's text carefully in search of hidden wisdom.

Method of Interpretation

If 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 contained hidden wisdom that biblical translators do not understand, then the translators might incorporate their misunderstandings into their translations. Thus, when searching for a possible esoteric teaching that lies hidden in the text, it is prudent to use a literal English translation that avoids interpreting passages for the reader.

This article uses the New American Standard Bible (NASB), which is an English translation of the Bible that was updated in 1995. Many scholars regard it as the most literally translated of the available modern English Bible translations. For example, Dr. Paige Patterson, President of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, states, "The New American Standard Bible is the most accurate translation of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures available."¹⁶ Henry Neufeld, a linguist, provides an assessment using the criterion of formal equivalence, which is how close a translation is to the words and forms of the source language:

In the work I have done checking just how close to formal-equivalency each version is, the NASB has consistently been closest to a word-for-word translation. Since it is impossible to translate every word and form with a single word and form in English, this is a relative rating. I find that the readability suffers because of this excessive formality. On the other hand, it is likely that if we lost the Greek New Testament it could be reproduced by translating the NASB back into Greek.¹⁷

Professor J. Dwight Pentecost gives this definition: "The literal method of interpretation is that method that gives to each word the same exact basic meaning it would have in normal, ordinary, customary usage, whether employed in writing, speaking or thinking."¹⁸ In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, the characters and events are described by words that in their literal, or customary, usage refer to external phenomena, so the literal method of interpretation assigns external identifications to these words. *Eschatology* is the part of theology concerned with what are believed to be the final events of his-

tory, sometimes called the “end times.” When commentators on 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12 use the literal method of interpretation, they regard these verses as presenting Christian eschatology, and so they devise predictions of external events that will happen to everyone during the end times.

Throughout the centuries, virtually all prominent commentators on 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12 have used the literal method of interpretation.¹⁹ These commentators have concocted many speculative and diverse interpretations by assigning various external identifications to the passage’s ambiguous words. The literal method of interpretation appears to have *failed*, however, because of the earlier conclusion that it has not yielded a convincing interpretation. Consequently, let us consider another method of interpretation.

If an esoteric teaching were placed into biblical text, how would it appear? Blavatsky says, “All esoteric truths were given out to the public by the Initiates of the temples *under the guise of allegories*.”²⁰ An *allegory* is a representation of moral or ethical meanings through the actions of fictional characters that serve as symbols. Why were esoteric teachings veiled with allegories during ancient times? One explanation is that esoteric teachings were often suppressed by the orthodox religious community, so such teachings needed to be veiled in order to survive for future generations. For example, Gnosticism, which was an unorthodox variant of Christianity, was suppressed by the early bishops of the Christian church. The discovery of the Nag Hammadi Library in 1945 restored some of the suppressed writings.²¹

In addition, if students were not ready for an esoteric teaching, then veiling the teaching with allegories would protect them from misinterpreting or misapplying it. Bailey makes a similar point: “Much must remain esoteric and veiled. The risks of too much knowledge are far greater than the menace of too little. With knowledge comes responsibility and power—two things for which the race is not yet ready.”²² Moreover, students may become ready for an esoteric teaching by studying and

interpreting the symbols in its veiled presentation, as Bailey also explains:

There are many ways in which the intuition can be drawn into activity, and one of the most useful and potent is the study and interpretation of symbols. Symbols are the outer and visible forms of the inner spiritual realities, and when facility in discovering the reality behind any specific form has been gained, that very fact will indicate the awakening of the intuition.²³

If an esoteric teaching were unveiled, what would be its form and content? Bailey incorporates the adjective “esoteric” within the title of several of her books, so her instructions might serve as examples of an esoteric teaching. She tells her students, “You have reached maturity and should be ready for the next step. That step will be taken when you have transmuted knowledge and theory into wisdom, practice and expression.”²⁴ Based on this example, if an esoteric teaching were unveiled, we would expect it to consist of a series of steps that students could apply when they are ready and that bring about their inner transformation.

Consequently, if an esoteric teaching were hidden in 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12, it might be possible to unveil that teaching by applying these three principles of interpretation:

1. *The verses are symbolic in nature, and every symbol represents an inner experience.* Nothing in the verses places importance on external events.
2. *Students have the experiences depicted by the symbols as they become ready for them.* Nothing in the verses is concerned with predictions of future events that will take place at the same time for everyone.
3. *The stages outlined in the verses refer to steps of inner transformation.* These stages are treated by the literal method of interpretation as leading to the perfection of God’s creation of the world, but they actually lead to the unfolding of a student’s consciousness.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

2 Thessalonians 2:1–12, according to the NASB, is as follows:

1. Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,
2. that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.
3. Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,
4. who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.
5. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?
6. And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.
7. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way.
8. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;
9. *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,
10. and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.
11. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,
12. in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

By applying the three principles of interpretation described earlier, this section attempts to unveil an esoteric teaching that lies hidden in 2

Thessalonians 2:1–12. Each verse is considered separately, and is repeated in italics.

1. *Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him.*

In verse 1, the Greek word *parousia* is translated into English as “coming.” The *Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words* gives this explanation:

The word [*parousia*] was commonly used ... to describe the visit of royalty or of some other important person. Thus, the word signaled an extraordinary “coming.” The New Testament writers used the word to describe Christ’s second coming when He would return to earth in His last and glorious visitation as the King over all.²⁵

John MacArthur, a prolific Christian author, says that “the next phrase, ‘our gathering together,’ ... conveys the idea of all believers meeting together with the Lord Jesus, obviously referring to the rapture of the church as described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.”²⁶ Thus verse 1 seems to be concerned with two external events: the second coming of Jesus and the rapture of the church.

According to the first principle of interpretation, the second coming is actually a symbol that represents an inner experience, so what is that experience? Professor Roger Shepherd reports that the Greek word *parousia* has a double meaning:

The word *Parousia* as a technical term has been developed in two directions: First, the word served as a cult experience for the coming of a hidden divinity, who makes his presence felt by a revelation of his power, or whose presence is celebrated in the cult. Second, it became the official term for a visit of a person of high rank such as kings and emperors visiting a province like Asia Minor and Thessalonica.²⁷

The traditional interpretation of the second coming employs the second meaning of *parousia*, whereas our esoteric commentary employs its first meaning: “the coming of a hidden divinity, who makes his presence felt

by a revelation of his power.” What is that hidden divinity? Blavatsky may have been the first person to introduce to the West the concept of the Masters of the Wisdom.²⁸ These Masters are reputed to be enlightened beings and are sometimes referred to as Adepts, Mahatmas, or Elder Brothers of the Human Race. For a given student, his or her Master could be Jesus, or another Master. In the context of early Christianity, the “coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” signifies the student’s experience that he or she is inwardly receiving the strength of Jesus, who remains hidden but, in Shepherd’s words, “who makes his presence felt by a revelation of his power.” For the purpose of our esoteric commentary, however, this meaning is generalized so that it is the following: the “coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” signifies the student’s experience that he or she is inwardly receiving the strength of a Master like Jesus.

For example, Paul, in Philippians 4:13, is aware of this strengthening effect on himself: “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” In an example taken from the Old Testament, Isaiah 41:10 states, “I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.” Bailey describes the effects of such stimulation: “As the Master works with His disciples and strengthens the life within them and evokes their soul into potency from latency, every form and every atom within their various bodies is equally energised and aided.”²⁹

The Christian doctrine of the rapture asserts that God will take the church out of the world instantaneously. The word “rapture” comes from the Latin word (*rapio*) used in the Latin rendering of 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and is translated into English as “caught up.” Paul’s account in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 is the primary

biblical source for this doctrine: “Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.”

If this account of the rapture is a symbolic representation of an inner experience, what is that experience?

Our esoteric commentary is based on the theosophical notion of the seven worlds of existence. These worlds are often called “planes” and have the following names: 1) divine; 2) monadic; 3) spiritual; 4) intuitional, or buddhic; 5) mental; 6) emotional, or astral; and 7) physical.³⁰ These planes are arranged metaphorically in an upper

and lower manner, so that the divine plane is considered to be the highest plane and the physical plane to be the lowest.

1 Thessalonians 4:17 portrays the rising of people from the earth into the air to meet with the Lord. Bailey uses “earth” as a symbol of the physical plane,³¹ which is the domain of physical sense perception, and writes, “There is a great vibratory sphere, or plane, in the solar system, called in some occult books the intuitional plane ... and its symbol is the air.”³² Thus the rising of people from the earth to the air can be construed to be the shift of their sensitivity from the physical to the intuitional plane.

Our esoteric commentary is also based on the notion of the Monad, which Theosophy regards as the highest aspect of a human being. Bailey says, “The monad expresses the same purpose as it exists, unified in the Mind of God Himself,”³³ so the monadic will is an expression, or reflection, of the divine will. Bailey also speaks of the Monad as a “Lord”: “The Monad is Life, the sustaining force, a Lord of persevering and ceaseless devotion to the pursuit of a seen and determined objective.”³⁴ Consequently, in Paul’s account of the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, the “Lord” can be

“There was but one apostle of Jesus worthy of that name, and that was Paul,” “Paul was the only one of the apostles who had understood the secret ideas underlying the teachings of Jesus, although he had never met him,” “the cautious hints of Paul have all the true esoteric meaning,” and “Paul was undeniably an Initiate.”

construed to be the Monad, which resides on the second, or monadic, plane.

We consider the rapture to be an allegory that represents the building of an inner, or psychological, bridge. This bridge has the Sanskrit name *antahkarana*, for which Bailey provides the following definition: “The path, or bridge, between higher and lower mind, serving as a medium of communication between the two.”³⁵ She also says, “The understanding of the method of building the antahkarana is essential if humanity is to move forward as planned.”³⁶

Paul’s account of the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 can be construed as depicting the three steps needed for building this inner bridge, as shown next:

“Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds.” Paul, in Colossians 3:2, says, “Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.” Bailey describes a similar practice: “If your work has been successful, your original focus will have shifted to intuitional levels ... via the antahkarana.”³⁷ Thus “caught up” refers to shifting attention upward, and “clouds” to higher realities, so the first step could be described in this way: through shifting your attention away from the personalities of other people, set your mind on their higher realities.

“to meet the Lord in the air.” James 4:8 describes God’s reciprocal response to your effort: “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” Bailey gives this description: “As the disciple then creatively works, he finds that there is a reciprocal action on the part of the Presence, the Monad ... He discovers that one span of the bridge (if I might so call it) is being built or pushed forward from the other side of the gulf.”³⁸ Paul, in Romans 12:2, says, “be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is.” If being “transformed by the renewing of your mind” refers to the first step given above, then the reciprocal response is the impartation of “what the will of God is.” Bailey describes the reciprocal response in a similar manner: “the monadic will ... is

gradually transmitted, via the antahkarana, direct to the man upon the physical plane.”³⁹ Thus the second step could be described in this way: through setting your mind on higher realities, evoke the descent of the monadic will from the Monad to the intuitional plane.

“and so we shall always be with the Lord.” Bailey describes the completion of the antahkarana: “Finally, contact between that which the Monad projects and that which the disciple is projecting is made ... The bridge is now built.”⁴⁰ She also describes the outcome: “When it [the antahkarana] is completed, there is a perfect rapport between the monad and its physical plane expression.”⁴¹ Paul, in Galatians 4:6, seems to describe both this completion and outcome: “Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’” Here, “Spirit of His Son” is taken as the monadic will, and “Abba! Father!” as rapport with the Monad. Thus the third step could be described in this way: through merging the upward and downward projections to complete the antahkarana, be in rapport with the Monad.

The esoteric meanings of the second coming and rapture have just been considered, but what is their relationship? Professor Warren Woolsey observes that, in verse 1, both events are governed by the same preposition:

In this case, the announced topic has two aspects which are closely connected because they are governed by the same single preposition (*concerning*). The two aspects are (1) the *coming of ... Christ*; and (2) *our being gathered to him*. This close connection between the two is theologically significant because some Bible teachers have proposed prophetic schemes which separate the so-called “Rapture” (*our being gathered to him*) from His later coming in judgment ... But Paul, on the other hand, seems here to treat both the *coming of [the] Lord Jesus Christ* and *our being gathered to him* as aspects of a single complex event.⁴²

The foregoing quotation uses the New International Version (NIV) translation of verse 1, as

shown by the one-word preposition “concerning” instead of NASB’s three-word preposition “with regard to” given earlier. According to Woolsey’s observation, both the second coming and rapture are “aspects of a single complex event,” so let us combine both referents in our esoteric commentary: the Master strengthens the student’s effort to build the antahkarana. Rule Eleven of Bailey’s fourteen “Rules for Disciples and Initiates” supports this analysis by portraying the same complex event.⁴³

Consequently, verse 1 has the following meaning: Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the Master strengthening your effort to build the antahkarana, which involves projecting the focus of your sensitivity upward into the intuitional plane to meet the downward projection of the monadic will.

2. *that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.*

Traditional commentators regard verse 2 as instructions directed specifically to the ancient church in Thessalonica, so they infer the church’s circumstances from the verse’s content. The first phrase says, “that you not be quickly shaken from your composure.” The commentators infer from the phrase that the church members had been confused by a false teaching regarding verse 1’s traditional meaning, which is the second coming and rapture, so they interpret the phrase as Paul’s warning against believing that confusing teaching.⁴⁴

Instead let us construe verse 2’s first phrase as an instruction that is directed to students of every era and that tells them to avoid confusion regarding verse 1’s esoteric meaning, which is building the antahkarana. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 14:33, says, “for God is not a God of confusion but of peace,” which suggests that anyone can avoid confusion. Confusion results from the failure to understand, so Bailey tells her students, “The work of building the antahkarana must be done with as much conscious understanding as possible.”⁴⁵ Thus the first phrase is interpreted to mean: that you

develop your understanding about the work of building the antahkarana.

The second phrase says, “that you not ... be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us.” Traditional commentators generally take “a spirit” to be a supposed prophecy from the unseen world, perhaps spoken by a member of the church; “a message” to be a quoted oral statement; and “a letter” to be a written communication. The commentators interpret verse 2’s second phrase, which continues verse 1’s sentence, as telling the Thessalonians to disbelieve any public announcement saying that verse 1’s event is happening.⁴⁶

Instead let us construe the second phrase as an instruction directed to students of every era, so it has this implication: there can never be a valid public announcement saying that verse 1’s event is happening, which in turn implies that the event cannot be an external, prominent, collective, or widespread experience. With this construal, the second phrase alludes to the second principle of interpretation, and is given the following meaning: that you realize that each of you attains this experience through becoming inwardly ready.

The third phrase mentions the “day of the Lord,” which is a notion that appears in several places in the Old Testament.⁴⁷ Paul provides his own account in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3:

For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.

Professor Kendall Easley gives the traditional Christian view: “The ‘day of the Lord’ is now seen to be the time associated with Christ’s return, when he will destroy God’s enemies and bring God’s people to glory.”⁴⁸

In keeping with the first principle of interpretation, the “day of the Lord” is a symbol that represents an inner experience. Before that experience can be identified, however, additional concepts need to be introduced. According to Theosophy, every human being has a *personality*, or lower self, which consists of the

mental, emotional, and physical bodies, and also a *Spiritual Triad*, or higher self, which consists of the spiritual will, the intuition or pure reason, and the abstract mind.⁴⁹ The term *personality consciousness* signifies that the center of consciousness is within the personality, and *triadal consciousness* signifies that the center of consciousness is within the Spiritual Triad.

Blavatsky provides this definition: “the initiated adept perceives and discerns the ultimate and actual state of things in nature by means of his spiritual perception, trammelled by none of his physical senses.”⁵⁰ Bailey gives a similar definition: “*Spiritual vision or true perception* ... opens up the world of the intuitional or buddhic plane, and takes its possessor beyond the abstract levels of the mental plane.”⁵¹

Bailey says that the downward transmission of the monadic will yields the following effects:

It might be here affirmed that those healers who have triadal consciousness and can exercise the potency of the monadic life and will, via the Spiritual Triad, will always be successful healers; they will make no mistakes, for they will have accurate spiritual perception.⁵²

An earlier quotation says that use of the antahkarana leads to the downward transmission of the monadic will, so these quotations imply that use of the antahkarana leads to triadal consciousness and then to spiritual perception.

Paul, in Colossians 3:9–11, provides a related statement:

Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—a *renewal* in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

Using the antahkarana seems equivalent to making the shift from “the old self with its *evil* practices,” which denotes personality consciousness, to “the new self who is being re-

newed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him,” which seems to denote triadal consciousness. Blavatsky remarks, “Paul meant by the word Christ ... the abstract ideal of the personal divinity indwelling in man,”⁵³ so the perception that “Christ is all, and in all” appears to be spiritual perception. If Paul’s verses do describe the transformation produced by the antahkarana, then they corroborate the notion that such transformation leads to triadal consciousness and then to spiritual perception.

For two reasons, the activation of spiritual perception is taken as the experience symbolized by the “day of the Lord”:

Spiritual perception is brought about by the potency of the Monad. As mentioned previously, the “Lord” symbolizes the Monad, and the downward transmission of the monadic will activates spiritual perception. Bailey writes, “Only mental control, plus true spiritual perception, will suffice to pierce this illusory astral miasma,”⁵⁴ so spiritual perception is a kind of clarity. Michael Vigo, a dream analyst, says, “To dream of a sunny day, symbolizes clarity and/or pleasantness,”⁵⁵ so spiritual perception, which is the clarity brought about by the potency of the Monad, could be represented by the words, “day of the Lord.”

The activation of spiritual perception conforms to Paul’s characterization of the day of the Lord. Paul says that the day of the Lord follows a period of peace and safety, and that it brings immediate destruction. Similarly, spiritual perception follows the attainment of triadal consciousness, which is a period of peace and safety, and it brings immediate destruction to illusions.

Based on the preceding remarks, verse 2 has the following overall meaning: that you develop your understanding and realize that each of you attains this experience through becoming inwardly ready, with the effect of activating your spiritual perception.

3. *Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction.*

According to the third principle of interpretation, the stages listed in verse 3 are steps of inner transformation. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 3:18, supports this principle by speaking of inner transformation as having definite steps: “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.” Here, “from glory to glory” means from step to step.

Verse 3’s initial clause, “Let no one in any way deceive you,” refers to deception that contradicts the steps of inner transformation listed in the rest of the verse. Perhaps this deception is the advocacy of physical disciplines, because such methods are often attempted but do not bring about inner transformation. Bailey gives this explanation:

These drastic physical disciplines are often attempted today by well-intentioned aspirants; they practice celibacy, strict vegetarianism, relaxation exercises and many kinds of physical exercises, in the hope of bringing the body under control. These forms of discipline would be very good for the undeveloped and the lowest type of human being, but they are not the methods which should be employed by the average man or the practising aspirant.⁵⁶

Paul makes similar comments in Colossians 2:20-23:

why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!” (which all *refer to* things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, *but are* of no value against fleshly indulgence.

As mentioned in Paul’s quotation, “the commandments and teachings of men” may entice students into employing physical disciplines. Thus “let no one in any way deceive you” is given this meaning: let no one entice you into employing physical disciplines.

Regarding the next phrase in the verse, “for it will not come,” Dr. John Phillips gives the following clue: “The Day of the Lord is the subject of this verse (2:3) and the teaching that follows.”⁵⁷ Accordingly, the pronoun “it” refers to the “day of the Lord,” which symbolizes the activation of spiritual perception, so the next phrase is given this meaning: because spiritual perception will not come.

The remainder of verse 3 is interpreted as giving instructions on detached observation. The student must become, in Bailey’s words, “the investigator advanced enough to have reached the stage of a detached observer.”⁵⁸ She also explains what is being investigated: “the task of the disciple is to become consciously aware—like a detached onlooking Observer—of these energies and their expressing qualities as they function within himself.”⁵⁹

Paul also gives instructions on detached observation in several epistles: “But a man must examine himself” (1 Corinthians 11:28); “Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!” (2 Corinthians 13:5); “But each one must examine his own work” (Galatians 6:4); “Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise” (Ephesians 5:15); and “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching” (1 Timothy 4:16).

Verse 3 mentions the “apostasy.” This word is the English translation of the Greek word, *apostasia*, which is a technical term for political revolt or defection.⁶⁰ Acts 21:21 is the only other verse in the New Testament in which this Greek word appears, and it records the accusation that Paul taught the Jews to forsake, or defect from, Moses, because he told them to abandon circumcision and other traditional customs. Professor Edward Bicknell gives the traditional view of the apostasy: “the final catastrophic revolt against the authority of God which in apocalyptic writings is a sign of the end of the world.”⁶¹

Our esoteric commentary is based on distinctions between three forms of delusion: illusion, glamour, and maya. An *illusion* is a distortion of the truth.⁶² Bailey writes, “*The Problem of Glamour* is found when the mental illusion is intensified by desire,”⁶³ and “*Maya* is vital in

character and is a quality of force. It is essentially the energy of the human being as it swings into activity through the subjective influence of the mental illusion or astral glamour or of both in combination.”⁶⁴

According to the first principle of interpretation, “the apostasy comes first” represents an inner experience, so what is that experience? The apostasy symbolizes maya, because maya consists of irrational impulses that forsake, or defect from, proper authority. In Bailey’s words, “the forces ... under the term maya are those uncontrolled energies, those undirected impulses which ... sweep a man into wrong activity and surround him with a whirlpool of effects and of conditions in which he is entirely helpless.”⁶⁵ Thus “the apostasy comes first” is given this meaning: the recognition of maya comes to students as the first step in their practice of detached observation. Bailey corroborates this analysis by describing the same recognition:

One is always in the midst of forces. But maya (as a problem) only becomes so when recognised, and this recognition is not possible in the early stages of evolution. Upon the Path, one begins to watch for and to discover the effects of force; one finds oneself consciously the victim of force currents; one is swept into activity of some kind by uncontrolled forces, and the world of force becomes a consciously sensed reality to the struggling aspirant.⁶⁶

Verse 3 also mentions “the man of lawlessness.” Theologians have given many possible interpretations of this figure, but Professor Karl Donfried, in *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, settles upon the following meaning:

Of the many possible interpretations given in the scholarly literature, one plausible suggestion is that the man of ‘lawlessness’ (or ‘rebellion’) is an eschatological and representational figure who is to be manifested in the future and whose arrival will signify the culmination of the past, present, and future hostile forces standing in opposition to the apostolic ministry of the church, and, thus, of God.⁶⁷

If “the man of lawlessness is revealed” represents an inner experience, what is that experience? Bailey writes, “Human desire has been turned outward to the material plane, thus producing the world of glamour in which we all habitually struggle.”⁶⁸ Accordingly, glamour could be regarded as outward-turned desire, or covetousness, so glamour is lawless in the sense that it violates the commandment, or law, against covetousness (Exodus 20:17; Deuteronomy 5:21). Bailey also writes, “The Law of Acceptance is a divine law and releases from glamour.”⁶⁹ The essence of glamour is a constant urging desire to change outer conditions, so glamour is also lawless in the sense that it ignores the Law of Acceptance. For these reasons, “the man of lawlessness” symbolizes glamour, so “the man of lawlessness is revealed” is given this meaning: the presence of glamour is revealed to students through their practice of detached observation. Bailey also describes this revelation:

One of the problems which confronts the aspirant is the problem of duly recognising glamour when it arises, and of being aware of the glammers which beset his path and the illusions which build a wall between him and the light. It is much that you have recognised that glamour and illusion exist. The majority of people are unaware of their presence. Many good people today see this not; they deify their glammers and regard their illusions as their prized and hard won possessions.⁷⁰

In the NASB translation, the last phrase of verse 3 is “the son of destruction,” which is more clearly rendered in the New Living Translation (NLT) as “the one who brings destruction.” Thus “the son of destruction” symbolizes a destructive nature. According to verse 3, “the man of lawlessness” is revealed to be “the son of destruction.” In other words, by observing their newly revealed glamour in a detached way, students gain the subsequent revelation that it is destructive. Bailey corroborates this analysis by saying that “destruction is appalling,”⁷¹ and by describing the revelation of glamour’s appalling nature:

The individual aspirant ... has begun to transmute his desire into aspiration and to seek—with all the devotion, emotion and longing of which he is capable—for realisation. It is then that he becomes aware of the appalling nature of the glammers in which he automatically and normally walks.⁷²

After the preceding remarks are brought together, verse 3 has the following overall meaning: Let no one entice you into employing physical disciplines, because spiritual perception will not come unless you undergo inner transformation that has these initial steps: recognize your maya, or irrational impulses; next recognize your glamour, or outward-turned desire, that brings about maya; and then recognize the destructiveness of your glamour.

4. *who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.*

Verse 4 provides additional details of “the man of lawlessness,” for which Professor Thomas Constable gives this traditional interpretation:

This man is further described as the adversary of God. He will seek to replace the worship of the true God and all false gods with the worship of himself, and will proclaim himself to be God ... He will set himself up on God’s throne in the inner sanctuary of God’s temple.⁷³

Let us continue with our esoteric commentary. Bailey describes three breeders of glamour:

A deep distrust of one’s reactions to life and circumstance, when such reactions awaken and call forth *criticism, separateness* or *pride*, is of value. The qualities enumerated above are definitely breeders of glamour. They are occultly “the glamorous characteristics.” Ponder on this. If a man can free himself from these three characteristics, he is well on the way to the relinquishing and the dissipation of all glamour.⁷⁴

The three traits of “the man of lawlessness” listed in verse 4 portray Bailey’s three “glamorous characteristics,” as shown next:

“Who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship.”

The first trait portrays separateness, which is the quality or state of causing separation, but Paul, in Philippians 2:3–4, advises against this characteristic: “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

“so that he takes his seat in the temple of God.” Paul, in Romans 14:10, gives this instruction: “But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.” In other words, you are not above another person as his or her judge, but we are all equally under God’s judgment. Accordingly, the “seat in the temple of God” is the seat of judgment, so the second trait depicts criticism.

“displaying himself as being God.” The third trait portrays pride, as shown by the definition given by the *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*: “Pride is rebellion against God because it attributes to oneself the honor and glory due to God alone.”⁷⁵ Paul, in 1 Corinthians 4:7, argues against pride, or boasting, in a series of rhetorical questions: “For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”

Thus verse 4 has this meaning: Next observe in yourselves the three mental characteristics that breed glamour: separateness, criticism, and pride.

5. *Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?*

In verse 5, Paul mentions relevant instruction that he had told the Thessalonians in the past, but he does not explicitly say what that instruction is. It is reasonable to assume that the relevant instruction has just been given in verses 3 and 4, because the adjective “these” can be used to indicate things that are just mentioned.

If one were to use the traditional eschatological approach to interpret the preceding verses, then one would interpret verse 5 to be a reminder that the same eschatological ideas were taught earlier, as Constable illustrates:

This teaching was nothing new to the Thessalonians; Paul had taught them about the day of the Lord when he was with them in Thessalonica. He called on them to recall those lessons.⁷⁶

Let us review the esoteric explanations of the earlier verses. According to verses 3 and 4, the discipline of detached self-observation progressively becomes more inward: the students start by observing maya on the physical, or outer plane; next they observe the glamour, on the inner emotional plane, that produces maya; and then they observe the three characteristics, on the more inward mental plane, that breed glamour. This progressive achievement is consistent with Bailey's statement: "Always in the process of arriving at an understanding of nature, the occultist works inwards from the external form in order to discover the sound which created it, or the aggregate of forces which produced the external shape."⁷⁷

Detached observation is initially only a momentary achievement, so Bailey encourages the subsequent step of making detached observation into a habit:

The essential attitude for you to cultivate is that of the One Who looks on, that of the Beholder, the Perceiver, and the Observer.⁷⁸

Work steadily at the assumption of the position of the Observer, making it a habit of your life.⁷⁹

In verse 5, Paul asks the negative question, "Do you not remember?" As Dr. Ronald Ward notes in his commentary on this verse, "The form of words *expects* the *answer*, 'Yes, we do.'"⁸⁰ Why does Paul repeat the instructions of verses 3 and 4 when he expects that his readers would remember that he had previously told them the same things? According to the first principle of interpretation, verse 5 is symbolic in nature, so Paul's mentioning of deliberate repetition is a symbol. Bailey writes, "It must be remembered that only through much

repetition and frequent focussed effort are these results [of habit and rhythm] attained."⁸¹ Thus Paul's mentioning of deliberate repetition suggests that the hidden meaning of the verse is the step of making detached observation into a habit.

According to the third principle of interpretation, verse 5 represents a step of inner transformation. This principle corroborates the suggested meaning of verse 5, because that meaning follows logically as the next step after verses 3 and 4. Thus, based on both the first and third principles, verse 5 has the following meaning: Remember to practice repeatedly these instructions on taking the position of the Observer, making it a habit of your life.

6. *And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.*

Just as traditional commentators disagree about the identity of "the man of lawlessness," they also disagree about what is restraining him. For example, the *Scofield Study Bible* considers the restrainer to be the Holy Spirit,⁸² but Professor Charles Ryrie reports,

Most commentators identify the restrainer with the Roman Empire of Paul's day, which held back evil by its advanced system of laws, many of which are still basic to legal systems of our day. It is admitted, however, by those who hold this view that the restrainer is not merely the Roman Empire but government in general, since it is only too apparent that the Lawless One did not make his appearance at the end of the Roman Empire.⁸³

Before considering what the restrainer might be from an esoteric perspective, let us introduce the notion of the *causal body*. According to Theosophy, the mental plane comprises seven subplanes that fall into two groups: the lowest four subplanes are the concrete, or form, levels; the highest three subplanes are the abstract, or formless, levels.⁸⁴ The mental body, or lower mind, which is the instrument of concrete thought, resides on the concrete levels of the mental plane; but the causal body, which is an instrument of abstract thought, resides on the abstract levels.⁸⁵

The notion of the causal body seems to be incorporated into Paul's writings, as shown by the following examples:

Bailey mentions "the transference of the polarisation from the Personality ... into the causal body,"⁸⁶ which is consistent with Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15:53: "For this perishable must put on the imperishable."

Bailey says, "The content of the causal body is the accumulation by slow and gradual process of the good in each life,"⁸⁷ which is consistent with Paul's statement in 1 Timothy 6:18-19: "*Instruct them* to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future."

Bailey states, "When the Thinker on his own plane withdraws his attention from his little system within the three worlds and gathers within himself all his forces, then physical plane existence comes to an end and all returns within the causal consciousness."⁸⁸ Paul, in 2 Corinthians 5:1, states: "For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." If "the earthly tent" is the physical body, and "a building from God" is the causal body, then Paul's statement would be similar to Bailey's.

Verse 6's initial phrase, "And you know what restrains him now," is concerned with what restrains glamour, because "him" refers to "the man of lawlessness," which signifies glamour. The phrase claims that students already know about this restraint, perhaps because it is explained elsewhere in an exoteric teaching. For example, let us consider Paul's statement in Colossians 3:12-14:

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these

things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Here, Paul is saying to "put on" compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love, which are all virtues. These

virtues are abstract concepts, so they are put on, or into, the causal body. Bailey corroborates this analysis by mentioning "a lop-sided causal body ... full of great gulfs and gaps where virtues should be,"⁸⁹ which implies that virtues are put into the causal body.

The causal body potentially can direct the personality to apply the accumulated virtues, because, in Bailey's words, "The vehicle which seems of paramount importance can become and should become of secondary importance as it becomes simply the instrument of that which is higher than itself."⁹⁰ The application of a virtue is the practice of moral excellence or righteousness, so it restrains the unrighteous expression of glamour. Thus the causal body, after initiating this sequence, can be regarded as the restrainer of glamour.

Verse 6's final phrase, "so that in his time he will be revealed," means that glamour will eventually be revealed. In verse 3, however, glamour is revealed in the sense of being recognized, so verse 6 must be predicting a different kind of revelation. As Bailey explains, "The revelation vouchsafed is ... the revelation of that which the glamour veils and hides."⁹¹ Accordingly, the final phrase predicts that the restraining of glamour will eventually lead to the revelation of that which glamour veils and hides.

Bailey says that the approach is to add virtue to virtue in a progressive way: "Start with meditation on the virtue most desired, add virtue to virtue in the building of the form of the ideal self until all the virtues have been attempted and the Ego is suddenly contacted."⁹² In this context, the Ego is synonymous with the Spiritual Triad, because Bailey mentions, "flashes of real illumination or intuition from the spiritual Triad or the true threefold Ego itself,"⁹³ so the revelation of that which glamour veils and hides is the revelation of the Spiritual Triad.

Thus verse 6 has this meaning: Restrain glamour by progressively putting virtues into the causal body and then applying those virtues, so that you will eventually contact the Spiritual Triad.

7. *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.*

Just as verse 7's initial phrase mentions "the mystery of lawlessness," Bailey mentions "the mystery of illusion and glamour."⁹⁴ Here is the mystery: an illusion is a false appearance of reality, and glamour is an effect of illusion, so neither one actually exists, and yet they somehow can captivate us. Verse 6 depicts the step in which the student uses the causal body to restrain glamour. As verse 7's initial phrase points out, the mystery of glamour is at work during that step, because the effort of restraining glamour treats glamour as though it were a real force that must be restrained.

Paul, in Galatians 3:1, refers to the same mystery: "You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?" Here, the Greek word *baskaino* is translated as "bewitched," but the *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* states that this word could also be rendered as "captivated by the falsehood."⁹⁵ Accordingly, Paul was wondering about how the Galatians were captivated by a falsehood concerning Jesus.

Verse 7's final phrase predicts that the restrainer will be "taken out of the way." Just as traditional commentators disagree about the identity of "the man of lawlessness" and what

is restraining him, they also disagree about why the restrainer will be taken out of the way. For example, if they regard the Holy Spirit as the restrainer, then they try to explain why the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the way. These attempts at explanation, however, draw opposing arguments from other commentators.⁹⁶

"All esoteric truths were given out to the public by the Initiates of the temples under the guise of allegories." An allegory is a representation of moral or ethical meanings through the actions of fictional characters that serve as symbols. Why were esoteric teachings veiled with allegories during ancient times? One explanation is that esoteric teachings were often suppressed by the orthodox religious community, so such teachings needed to be veiled in order to survive for future generations.

What is the meaning of this event from an esoteric perspective? Our interpretation of verse 6 regards the causal body as the restrainer of glamour, so verse 7 indicates the following: the causal body "now restrains" glamour during the current step, but the causal body "is taken out of the way" during the next step. The latter circumstance is an alternative characterization of building the antahkarana, as Bailey explains:

The Master ... has to watch over the work accomplished by the pupil whilst making

the channel between higher and lower mind, whilst he builds and employs this channel (the antahkarana). This channel eventually supersedes the causal body as a means of communication between the higher and the lower.⁹⁷

According to the above quotation, the antahkarana eventually "supersedes" the causal body. In keeping with the second principle of interpretation, the student experiences this internal event when he or she becomes ready to build the antahkarana. The quotation states that the Master supervises the student's effort to build the antahkarana, so it is consistent with the meaning given to verse 1: namely, the Master strengthens this effort by the student.

Let us examine verse 7's middle phrase: "only he who now restrains will do so." As in verse

6, “he who now restrains” denotes the causal body, so the middle phrase becomes “only [the causal body] will do so,” which means that only the causal body will do the restraining of glamour. Thus the causal body is more potent in verse 7 than in verse 6, because its effort in verse 6 also needs the personality’s application of virtues. Why has the causal body become more potent? Here is a clue: verse 6’s final phrase predicts that the Spiritual Triad will eventually be contacted. Accordingly, in verse 6’s initial phrase, the causal body is not yet contacting the Spiritual Triad; but in verse 7’s middle phrase, the causal body is contacting the Spiritual Triad.

Given that verse 7’s middle phrase indicates contact between the causal body and Spiritual Triad, and that verse 7’s final phrase indicates the building of the antahkarana, contact between the causal body and Spiritual Triad appears to be a prerequisite for the subsequent building of the antahkarana. The above quotation corroborates the inferred prerequisite, because it states that “this channel eventually supersedes the causal body as a means of communication between the higher and the lower,” which presupposes the prior use of the causal body as such a means of communication. Here, “the higher” denotes the higher self, which is the Spiritual Triad, and “the lower” denotes the lower self, which is the personality. Elsewhere Bailey describes the inferred prerequisite as “the attainment of that measure of mental control that will permit the wisdom of the Triad to pour down into the physical brain, via the causal.”⁹⁸

Based on the preceding remarks, verse 7 has the following meaning: Realize that the mystery of glamour is at work during your restraint of glamour, because your effort treats glamour as though it were a real force that must be restrained; nevertheless restrain glamour by transmitting the wisdom of the Spiritual Triad through the causal body, until you are ready to supersede that body by building the antahkarana.

8. *Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming.*

Literal translations, such as the NASB used here, incorporate only “Lord” in the rendition of verse 8, but less literal translations may instead incorporate the name “Lord Jesus.”⁹⁹ Constable provides this traditional explanation of the verse:

After the removal of restraint the world will plunge headlong into lawlessness and the man of sin will be revealed. This man’s name is never given in the Bible, but he will be known by his actions. He is the same person referred to in verse 3 ... This powerful person will be destroyed by the mere *breath of the Lord Jesus*. Antichrist may control mankind, but he will be no match for Messiah ... The shining forth of Christ’s presence when He comes to earth will immobilize the Antichrist’s program.¹⁰⁰

In the above quotation, “the man of sin” is how “the man of lawlessness” is rendered by the King James Version (KJV) back in verse 3. Constable assumes that the “Lord” denotes the Lord Jesus, and he regards “the man of sin” as being an external figure who will plunge the external world into lawlessness, but who is suddenly destroyed by the second coming of the Lord Jesus.

Let us continue with our esoteric analysis. According to our earlier commentaries on verses 1, 2, and 3, the “Lord” symbolizes the Monad, building the antahkarana leads to triadal consciousness and spiritual perception, and “that lawless one” signifies glamour. Thus verse 8 indicates that the Monad will eliminate glamour in two steps.

In the first step, the Monad “will slay with the breath of His mouth.” This phrase is related to Psalm 33:6: “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.” Psalm 33:6 incorporates *synonymous parallelism*, which is a commonly used Hebrew rhetorical device, to show that “the word of the LORD” and “the breath of His mouth” are synonymous expressions, as are “heavens” and starry “host.”¹⁰¹ Here, the “LORD,” written entirely with capital letters in the NASB, substitutes for the Hebrew name *YHWH*, which is the proper or personal name of Israel’s God.¹⁰² Consequently, “the breath of

His mouth” is equivalent to *the word of God*. Hebrews 4:12 states, “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” Based on this statement, the word of God is a symbol of spiritual perception, so verse 8’s first step is the destruction of glamour through spiritual perception.

In verse 8’s second step, the Monad will “bring to an end by the appearance of His coming.” The appearance of the Monad comes to those who have triadal consciousness, because they, in Bailey’s words, “can exercise the potency of the monadic life and will, via the Spiritual Triad.”¹⁰³ Thus the second step is the ending of glamour through triadal consciousness.

Bailey corroborates the foregoing analysis by describing the elimination of glamour with the same two steps and in the same order, assuming that triadal consciousness yields what is called “the experience of God”:

The way out, in this particular temptation, is dual: to recognise it for what it is, unreal, simply a glamour which has no true and lasting existence, just a delusion which assails us; and then to rest back upon the experience of God. If for one brief minute we have been in the Presence of God and known it, that is real. If the Presence of God in the human heart has at any moment, for an instant, been a reality, then let us take our stand upon that known and felt experience, refusing to deal with the detail of the glamour of doubt, of emotion, of depression or of blindness in which we may temporarily find ourselves.¹⁰⁴

The above quotation indicates that glamour is revealed in the sense that its unreality is recognized. Two earlier verses are concerned with preliminary kinds of revelation: in verse 3, glamour is revealed in the sense that its presence is recognized; and in verse 6, glamour is revealed in the sense that what it veils and hides is recognized.

Thus verse 8 has this meaning: Then recognize the unreality of glamour, which the Monad destroys through your spiritual perception and

brings to an end through your triadal consciousness.

9. *that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders.*

What is the symbolic meaning of Satan? Revelation 12:9 mentions “the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world,” which shows that the devil and Satan are synonyms. Moreover, Bailey writes, “In these three words—maya, glamour and illusion—we have synonyms for the flesh, the world and the devil,”¹⁰⁵ so Satan is a synonym for illusion.

“The one” in verse 9 refers to “that lawless one” in verse 8, which has been interpreted as glamour. Thus the initial phrase in verse 9, “the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan,” means that the appearance of glamour is in accord with the activity of illusion. Bailey gives a similar account:

You are all working in some measure upon the plane of illusion and of glamour, and for you the world illusion exists and the astral plane is for you a fact. But this I can say: for the initiate members of the Great White Lodge the astral plane does not exist. They do not work on that level of consciousness, for the astral plane is a definite state of awareness even if (from the spiritual angle) it has no true being.¹⁰⁶

Glamour has no true being, so the only power that it seems to have is the power attributed to it by those who believe in it. Yet the last part of verse 9 assigns “all power and signs and false wonders” to glamour. The meaning of this phrase can be inferred by considering another book of the Bible.

Constable writes, “This man [of lawlessness] is also called the ‘beast coming out of the sea’ (Revelation 13:1–10).”¹⁰⁷ Other scholars have also noted that the “man of lawlessness” appears to be equivalent to the “beast coming out of the sea” in the *Book of Revelation*.¹⁰⁸ We actually agree with this equivalence, because an earlier article argues that the “beast coming out of the sea” in Revelation 13:1-10 depicts glamour.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the earlier article pro-

vides the following explanation of Revelation 13:1-3:

1. From a position of detachment, the aspirant studies his emotional nature and learns about glamour, which is the aggregate of his emotional reactions. Glamour controls the seven chakras and the full range of desires. It gives paramount importance to fulfilling desires, and is judgmental in nature.
2. Glamour is also treacherous, blundering, and boastful. Illusion gives glamour its power of deception, controls the personality via glamour, and makes glamour the authority for judging the worth of whatever is perceived.
3. The aspirant realizes that his solar-plexus chakra, under the influence of glamour, seems wounded by the past, but can also feel redeemed by the present. The emotional body, following the lead of glamour, desires external circumstances that engender this feeling of redemption.

After taking into account the significances of “power,” “signs,” and “wonders” that are suggested by Revelation 13:1-3, verse 9 has this meaning: That is, realize that the appearance of glamour is in accord with the activity of illusion, even though it comes with the power to control your personality, the authority to judge the worth of whatever you see in the physical world, and a false feeling of redemption.

10. *and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.*

Woolsey provides a traditional explanation:

Second Thessalonians 2:10 continues the description of the work of Satan through the lawless one and his agents. He is the arch deceiver, and he succeeds among *those who are perishing*. The last phrase reminds of other passages which divide humanity into two categories of persons moving in opposite directions ... Paul does not attribute the destiny of the lost to the inscrutable will of God; verse 10b makes it clear the

persons here described have chosen the path of destruction for themselves.¹¹⁰

Woolsey’s commentary considers verse 10 as dividing “humanity into two categories of persons moving in opposite directions.” According to the third principle of interpretation, this verse is a step of inner transformation, so we interpret it as the step in which the student observes that his or her life is divided into two categories: periods of triadal consciousness alternating with periods of glamour. The student’s effort during this step is to understand the nature of the two categories and why they alternate with each other, as explained next.

The initial words of verse 10, “and with all,” indicate that the verse is a continuation of verse 9’s portrayal of glamour. The next words are “the deception of wickedness,” but what does that phrase mean? Psalm 10:2–3 characterizes a wicked person as being prideful: “In pride the wicked hotly pursue the afflicted ... For the wicked boasts of his heart’s desire.” Paul, in Galatians 6:3, mentions the self-deception of false pride: “For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.” Thus “the deception of wickedness” may mean the self-deception of false pride.

“Perish” is a translation of the Greek word *apollumi*, for which the *Scofield Study Bible* gives this explanation: “In no N.T. [New Testament] instance does it signify cessation of conscious existence or of consciousness. Instead, it indicates here that state of conscious suffering which continues eternally and is the inevitable result of sin.”¹¹¹ Thus “perish” has the meaning of continual suffering. The preposition “for” can mean “at the cost of,” so the phrase, “the deception of wickedness for those who perish,” is given this meaning: the self-deception of false pride at the cost of continual suffering. Paul, in Romans 2:5, expresses a similar idea: “But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself.”

What does “the truth” denote? Professor James Packer, in *The New Bible Dictionary*, explains Paul’s use of the phrase “inner man”:

Inner Man. Paul uses this phrase (*ho esō anthrōpos*, in Romans 7:22; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Ephesians 3:16) to denote the Christian's true self, as seen by God and known (partially) in consciousness. The contrast, implicit if not explicit, is with *ho exō anthrōpos*, 'the outward man' (2 Corinthians 4:16), the same individual as seen by his fellowmen, a being physically alive and active, known (so far as he is known) through his behaviour.¹¹²

Bailey has a similar conception of a human being, because she speaks about "that internal spiritual reality which is his true self."¹¹³ Accordingly, in verse 10, "the truth" is what both Packer and Bailey call the "true self," which in turn is what Paul calls the "inner man" and what this article calls the "Spiritual Triad."

As part of her instructions for building the antahkarana, Bailey describes the step of "Stabilisation," and says, "This is brought about by long patient use of the ... previous processes."¹¹⁴ In other words, the initial achievement of building the antahkarana is only momentary, so the resulting episodes of triadal consciousness and spiritual perception are also only momentary. Just as students need to stabilize their detached observation in verse 5, they also need to stabilize the antahkarana. Until they do so, they have not completed their inner transformation, because they still have periods of glamour in which they have self-deception and thereby suffer.

To stabilize the antahkarana, students need to preserve the attitude of their true self, which is the Spiritual Triad. In particular, they need to adopt that attitude as their ideal pattern and then progressively manifest their ideal pattern in their personality. Such manifestation involves the successive elimination of personality reactions that do not conform to the ideal pattern. Thus, in verse 10, "because they did not receive the love of the truth" is given this meaning: because they did not manifest, or receive in their personality, the fixed determination to express the Spiritual Triad's attitude.

Paul, in 2 Corinthians 4:11, describes a similar process: "For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our

mortal flesh." In other words, students need to die to their personality reactions, so that only the Spiritual Triad's attitude, which is the ideal pattern exemplified by the life of Jesus, may be manifested in their personality.

Verse 10 concludes with the phrase, "so as to be saved." *Salvation* can be defined as preservation or deliverance from destruction, difficulty, or harm. According to the third principle of interpretation, verse 10's salvation denotes a step of inner transformation, so what is that step? Paul, in Philippians 4:11, states, "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am." Paul's contentment indicates salvation from the discontent brought about by glamour's covetousness, destructiveness, and self-deception; and his constant contentment indicates stabilization of the antahkarana. Moreover, Paul says that he "learned" to be constantly content, showing that it is a step of inner transformation. Thus, in verse 10, "to be saved" may signify the stabilization of the antahkarana, because such stabilization is a kind of salvation, a step of inner transformation, and a step that logically follows the current step in which there is instability.

After the foregoing remarks are brought together, verse 10 is given this meaning: Next observe that you still have periods of glamour that bear the self-deception of false pride at the cost of continual suffering, because you did not manifest, or receive in your personality, the fixed determination to express the Spiritual Triad's attitude so as to stabilize the antahkarana.

11. *For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false.*

Dr. David Williams provides the following clue regarding the first phrase: "*For this reason* looks back to the previous verse."¹¹⁵ Thus "*For this reason*" is construed to mean: For the purpose of completing your inner transformation.

Williams also comments on the rest of the verse:

But such a statement presents us with a difficulty. Can it be true of God that he deludes? In discussing a passage like this, we

must recognize that the biblical writers were far less concerned with secondary causes than we are. Such was their belief in the sovereignty of God that they attributed to him directly, rather than to their actual source, a range of activities which, being true to his nature, he could not have done.¹¹⁶

Williams regards verse 11 as making an assertion with which he disagrees: God sends delusions to people so that they will believe what is false. In contrast, we regard verse 11 as making a different assertion: God sends tests to students so that they will confront the delusions that they already have. Bailey gives this explanation:

The next point to be reached, and the next bit of work to be accomplished is pointed out by the Master (either the God within or a man's Master if he is consciously aware of Him) and the reason is given. Then the Teacher stands aside and watches the aspirant achieve. As He watches, He recognises points of crisis, where the application of a test will do one of two things, focalise and disperse any remaining unconquered evil—if that term might here be used—and demonstrate to the disciple both his weakness and his strength.¹¹⁷

Here, the Master sends a test that focalizes the student's "remaining unconquered evil," which consists of remaining illusion, glamour, and maya. Bailey says elsewhere that "God Transcendent is working through the Christ and the Spiritual Hierarchy."¹¹⁸ The Spiritual Hierarchy, which is called the "Kingdom of God" by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 1:5 and in 1 Corinthians 15:50, consists of the Masters of the Wisdom, so Bailey's quotations are consistent with verse 11's assertion that God initiates the depicted activity.

Although the test may have the form of an external circumstance, its purpose is to focalize the student's remaining illusion, glamour, and maya, so "a deluding influence" in verse 11 is that inner experience. The last part of the verse is "so that they will believe what is false." In particular, the test is designed so that the student initially believes it to be an unfortunate

difficulty, because, as Bailey says, "It is ever a hard and bitter test, going to the very roots of his life."¹¹⁹ This belief is false, because, in her words, "Such tests produce an inner unfoldment."¹²⁰

Paul, in Romans 5:3-5, also says that tests, or tribulations, bring about beneficial outcomes:

And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Let us consider a detailed example, because it may be the best way to support our claim that "a deluding influence" in verse 11 represents a test's focalization of illusion, glamour, and maya. The *Book of Job* is a canonical book of the Old Testament. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 3:19, quotes a passage from the *Book of Job* using the usual form of quoting scripture, "For it is written," which shows respect by treating that book as being inspired.

As discussed in an earlier article, the *Book of Job* portrays a test that is imposed in the following manner.¹²¹ The "LORD" authorizes one of the "sons of God" to inflict Job with a horrible skin disease (2:6-7).¹²² Here, the "LORD," written entirely with capital letters, denotes Israel's God; the "sons of God" can be understood as the Masters of the Wisdom; and the skin disease is the imposed test. Thus this account is consistent with the notion that God imposes the test by working through a Master. After receiving the disease, Job says, "Let the day perish on which I was to be born" (3: 3), which shows that he initially believes the disease to be an unfortunate difficulty. He regards the outcasts of his community as vile men, about whom he says, "I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock" (30:1); but the disease transforms him into being like the people whom he disdains, because his outward characteristics have become similar to theirs. Owing to this similarity, the test focalizes Job's remaining illusion, glamour, and maya. Professor Henry Ellison makes a related observation:

“in the poem there is far less allusion to Job’s physical sufferings than has often been assumed. Job is concerned less with his physical pain than with his treatment by his relations, his fellow-townsmen, the mob and finally his friends.”¹²³

Cognitive dissonance is a state of internal conflict and discomfort that occurs when one’s existing belief is contradicted by new evidence. In Job’s case, he has a self-image of being righteous (29:14), but this self-image is contradicted by the new evidence of his skin disease (9:27-28). Leon Festinger, an American social psychologist, states the following principle: “The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance.”¹²⁴ Job initially engages in a lengthy internal argument to reduce his cognitive dissonance: he vigorously defends his self-image of being righteous against his dissonant cognitions, while those dissonant cognitions attack with the same judgments that he had used against the outcasts of his community (chapters 4 through 26). In other words, the judgments that he had made against unrighteous people are now turned against himself. Being unable to reduce his cognitive dissonance through his internal argument (chapter 27), he eventually becomes receptive to divine wisdom (chapters 32 through 37). Job learns that both sides in his internal argument are illusions (32:2-3), that God afflicts in order to teach (36:8-10), and that he needs to give up his judgment of unrighteous people (36:17-18). In this manner the test highlights his remaining delusions and thereby induces his inner unfoldment.

Based on the foregoing remarks, verse 11 has this meaning: For the purpose of completing your inner transformation, the Master focalizes your remaining illusion, glamour, and maya by imposing a test, which you initially believe to be an unfortunate difficulty even though it induces a beneficial outcome.

12. *in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.*

Williams provides this traditional explanation:

God does not delude. Much less does he do so, *so that they will believe the lie*. Notice the definite article, “the lie”—the denial of the truth. Such denial is the work of Satan who blinds “the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:4). But God is sovereign and even this serves his purpose to condemn all *who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness*.¹²⁵

Verse 12 is written with a passive voice: human beings are the subject of the verse and are judged by an unnamed agent. Traditional commentators, such as Williams, assume that the unnamed agent is God and that the judgment is one of condemnation. In fact, many non-literal translations render the Greek verb as “condemned” rather than “judged.”¹²⁶ The interpretation obtained with this assumption, however, is inconsistent with Paul’s portrayal of God’s judgment in his other letters, such as Romans 14:10 or 2 Corinthians 5:10. Professor Lisa Withrow summarizes what Paul says in these other letters: “The statements in these letters do not indicate that those who have died after leading a life not considered faithful or righteous will be sent to eternal damnation; all Paul says is that they, along with everyone, will stand before the judgment seat.”¹²⁷

Verse 12 can be interpreted in a way that is consistent with Paul’s other writings and with the esoteric explanations of the preceding verses: specifically, the unnamed judge in verse 12 is interpreted to be the students being judged, so that the verse portrays their own self-judgment. Put differently, the verse is construed as referring to the discrimination that each student must make to complete the steps of inner transformation. For example, Paul, in 2 Corinthians 4:16, discriminates between his outer and inner selves: “Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.” Bailey gives this explanation: “By learning to discriminate between the true self and the lower personal self he disentangles himself, the light which is in him is seen and he is liberated.”¹²⁸

As in verse 10, “the truth” in verse 12 is interpreted as the true self, which is the Spiritual Triad. This usage is corroborated by Bailey’s preceding quotation, because it mentions “the true self” in the context of discrimination. “The deception of wickedness” in verse 10 is interpreted as the self-deception of false pride, which suggests that “the pleasure of wickedness” in verse 12 is the pleasure of false pride. Paul, in 2 Timothy 3:2–4, predicts, “For men will be ... conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,” so he also associates pride, or conceit, with the love of pleasure.

Consequently, verse 12 is given this meaning: in order that you may discriminate between your lower personal self, which takes pleasure in false pride, and the Spiritual Triad.

Conclusions

This article has attempted to unveil an esoteric teaching that lies hidden in 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12, and its method is to apply three key principles: the verses are symbolic in nature, and every symbol represents an inner experience; students have the experiences depicted by the symbols as they become ready for them; and the stages outlined in the verses refer to steps of inner transformation. The hidden teaching inferred with these principles is summarized as follows:

1. Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the Master strengthening your effort to build the antahkarana, which involves projecting the focus of your sensitivity upward into the intuitional plane to meet the downward projection of the monadic will,
2. that you develop your understanding and realize that each of you attains this experience through becoming inwardly ready, with the effect of activating your spiritual perception.
3. Let no one entice you into employing physical disciplines, because spiritual perception will not come unless you undergo inner transformation that has these initial steps: recognize your maya, or irrational impulses; next recognize your glamour, or outward-turned desire, that brings about

maya; and then recognize the destructiveness of your glamour.

4. Next observe in yourselves the three mental characteristics that breed glamour: separateness, criticism, and pride.
5. Remember to practice repeatedly these instructions on taking the position of the Observer, making it a habit of your life.
6. Restrain glamour by progressively putting virtues into the causal body and then applying those virtues, so that you will eventually contact the Spiritual Triad.
7. Realize that the mystery of glamour is at work during your restraint of glamour, because your effort treats glamour as though it were a real force that must be restrained; nevertheless restrain glamour by transmitting the wisdom of the Spiritual Triad through the causal body, until you are ready to supersede that body by building the antahkarana.
8. Then recognize the unreality of glamour, which the Monad destroys through your spiritual perception and brings to an end through your triadal consciousness.
9. That is, realize that the appearance of glamour is in accord with the activity of illusion, even though it comes with the power to control your personality, the authority to judge the worth of whatever you see in the physical world, and a false feeling of redemption.
10. Next observe that you still have periods of glamour that bear the self-deception of false pride at the cost of continual suffering, because you did not manifest, or receive in your personality, the fixed determination to express the Spiritual Triad’s attitude so as to stabilize the antahkarana.
11. For the purpose of completing your inner transformation, the Master focalizes your remaining illusion, glamour, and maya by imposing a test, which you initially believe to be an unfortunate difficulty even though it induces a beneficial outcome,
12. in order that you may discriminate between your lower personal self, which

takes pleasure in false pride, and the Spiritual Triad.

Paul, in Philippians 3:14, says, “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God.” In other words, Paul is travelling along what is sometimes called the “Upward Way.”¹²⁹ The inferred teaching of 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12 provides instructions for three key milestones along the Upward Way: verses 3, 4, and 5 give instructions on achieving and stabilizing detached observation of the personality; verses 6 and 7 give instructions on restraining glamour with the causal body; and verses 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 give instructions on achieving and stabilizing the antahkara.

If the inferred teaching of 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12 were valid, then it might be the esoteric teaching that Paul taught to people who were spiritually mature, as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 2:6–7. As our commentary has shown, most elements of the inferred teaching can be found as Paul’s own instructions scattered throughout his various epistles. It is as though Paul wanted to hide an esoteric teaching for future generations, but also wanted to provide clues so that his hidden teaching could be unveiled by those generations.

Blavatsky writes, “Theosophy is, then, the archaic *Wisdom-Religion*, the esoteric doctrine once known in every ancient country having claims to civilization.”¹³⁰ Thus she makes a remarkable claim: diverse ancient civilized countries, even though they existed at different places and times, had the same esoteric doctrine—the *Wisdom-Religion*—and that doctrine can be found in modern theosophical teachings. As our commentary has also shown, the inferred teaching can be found in Bailey’s modern theosophical writings, which supports Blavatsky’s claim that the ancient esoteric doctrine can be found in modern Theosophy.

¹ Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Key to Theosophy* (1889; reprint; Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1972), 8.

² Alice A. Bailey, *From Bethlehem to Calvary* (1937; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1989), 6.

³ Unless explicitly mentioned otherwise, the biblical quotations are taken from the 1995 update of the New American Standard Bible (NASB). In a few instances, quotations are taken from the King James Version (KJV) and New Living Translation (NLT).

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⁵ Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), 217.

⁶ Beverly R. Gaventa, *First and Second Thessalonians* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1998), 107.

⁷ Gary W. Demarest, *1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, and Titus* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984), 116.

⁸ Helena P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled* (1877; reprint; Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1976), vol. II, 241.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 574.

¹⁰ Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* (1888; reprint; Pasadena, CA: Theosophical University Press, 1977), vol. II, 515.

¹¹ Helena P. Blavatsky, *Collected Writings* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Society in America, 2002), vol. XIV, 122.

¹² Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. II (1955; reprint. New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1972), 270.

¹³ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. I (1944; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1976), 736.

¹⁴ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, vol. II, 90–91.

¹⁵ Anthony Meredith, *Faith and Fidelity* (Leominster, England: Gracewing, 2000), 96.

¹⁶ “NASB Endorsements,” http://www.discountbible.org/NASB-Endorsements_ep_52.html (accessed January 28, 2015).

¹⁷ Henry E. Neufeld, “Bible Versions Overview,” http://web.archive.org/web/20071208161247/http://energion.com/books/bibles/version_note_s.shtml (accessed February 3, 2014).

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¹⁹ Anthony C. Thiselton, *1 & 2 Thessalonians Through the Centuries* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2011).

²⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. II, 786.

²¹ James M. Robinson (ed.), *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (New York: HarperCollins, 1988).

²² Alice A. Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar* (1922; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1974), 6.

- 23 Alice A. Bailey, *Glamour: A World Problem* (1950; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1973), 6.
- 24 Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. I, 55.
- 25 Eugene E. Carpenter and Phillip W. Comfort, *Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 256.
- 26 John F. MacArthur, *1 & 2 Thessalonians and Titus* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 70.
- 27 Roger E. Shepherd, *Praise God, We Won* (Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press, 2011), 138.
- 28 Blavatsky, "The Theosophical Mahatmas," *Collected Writings*, vol. VII, 241-249.
- 29 Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (1957; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1976), 692.
- 30 Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (1925; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1973), 117.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 82.
- 32 Alice A. Bailey, *The Consciousness of the Atom* (1922; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1973), 131-132.
- 33 Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II (1942; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1981), 4.
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- 110 Woolsey, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 142.
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- 125 Williams, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, 131.

¹²⁶ In 2 Thessalonians 2:12, the NLT, NIV, and NET use “condemned” instead of “judged.” In the NET Bible, the footnote for this verse acknowledges that the literal translation is “judged,” but argues that “in this context the term clearly refers to a judgment of condemnation.” For each of these three Bible versions, the translation for this verse illustrates

the circumstance in which an interpretation is used instead of a literal rendition.

¹²⁷ Lisa R. Withrow, *Immersion Bible Studies—Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), section 6.

¹²⁸ Bailey, *The Light of the Soul*, 357.

¹²⁹ Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 665.

¹³⁰ Blavatsky, *Collected Writings*, vol. II, 89.

Musical Harmony, Mathematics, and Esotericism

Celeste Jamerson and John F. Nash



Angels Playing Music. Detail from the Ghent Altarpiece by Jan and Hubert Van Eyck¹

Summary

This article examines the historical development of musical harmony and explores its mathematical and esoteric underpinnings. Strong connections among music, mathematics and esotericism were recognized in the ancient world, famously by Pythagoras, and continue to be studied today. Although intervals in pitch are no longer defined by integer ratios; musical intervals, scales, and chords are still defined by mathematical relationships.

Increasing numbers of people are becoming aware of the esoteric significance of musical harmony, along with the esoteric dimensions of composition, performance and audition. The growing influence of the Fourth Ray, expected to usher in a new golden age of the arts and greater involvement of the Deva Evolution, will further enhance music's importance and open up new opportunities for service.

Introduction

When man emerged from the animal kingdom by the process of individualization, no doubt he brought with him his ancestors' repertory of sounds to attract mates, delineate territory, build community, and repel enemies. As his emotional and nascent mental facilities evolved, that repertory expanded to include what we could consider music. Singing, along with the use of drums and rudimentary wind and stringed instruments, developed at an early stage in human history.

About the Authors

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A flute, estimated to be 40,000 years old, was discovered in 2008 at a Stone Age site in southern Germany.² The discovery confirms that instrumental music extends back to the earliest migration of anatomically modern human beings into Europe. More importantly, it tells us that the music of the period was relatively sophisticated; the flute's five holes indicate awareness of a musical scale. By the third millennium BCE, both wind and string instruments were in use from Egypt and Mesopotamia to India and China. A musical score dating from the mid-second century BCE, and probably written for a lyre, has been discovered in Syria.

Both traditional religious teachings and the ageless wisdom assert that the universe was created by sound: "In the beginning . . . God said, Let there be light: and there was light."³ The *Book of Job* records that "the morning stars sang together,"⁴ and many cultures saw a connection between planetary motions and music. From very early times, music had a religious dimension. The world's oldest scriptural text, the *Rig Veda*, includes Sanskrit hymns, and the later *Samaveda* offers a much larger collection. Krishna is represented in Hindu artwork playing a flute. Both Apollo and Orpheus played lyres in Greek mythology, as did King David in Judaic tradition. Jewish temple chants evolved into the Byzantine, Ambrosian, Gregorian, and other chants of Christianity.

The classical study of musical intervals customarily is attributed to the Greek philosopher Pythagoras of Samos (c.570–c.495 BCE). Many of the underlying concepts were known earlier in Egypt, India and China,⁵ but Pythagoras seems to have had profound insights into the nature and structure of music. Sadly, he left no written records, and we depend for knowledge of his achievements on the testimony of later writers. Pythagoras' work was recorded, interpreted and embellished by Plato (c.427–c.348 BCE), Nicomachus (c.60–c.120 CE), and many others. The Syrian Neoplatonist Iamblichus (c.245–c.325 CE), one of several who wrote biographies of Pythagoras, believed he was a god. Pythagorean harmonics was a school of music, mathematics and phi-

losophy that evolved over a period of more than a millennium.

Pythagorean harmonics was built upon the recognition that certain musical intervals were more aesthetically pleasing than others, and that the favored intervals correlated with numerical ratios and geometric shapes. The same correlations resonated with, or were encoded into, the proportions of Greek temples and Gothic cathedrals. Those musical intervals and proportions were more than mere human conventions; they were believed to be part of divine revelation.

According to the intent of composers and performers, and according to its inherent quality, music can either stimulate or calm emotion. Importantly, it can send the mind soaring to high states of consciousness. Esoteric teachings recognize the effects of sound and music on human consciousness. The teachings also recognize music's ability to sweep devic beings into action. An order of music devas, the *Gandharvas*, is mentioned in Hindu and trans-Himalayan teachings. The Pseudo-Dionysius spoke of "choirs of angels," and Christian art frequently depicts angels playing musical instruments, a famous example being the fifteenth-century Ghent altarpiece by Jan and Hubert van Eyck, shown at the beginning of this article.

The topic of musical harmony, mathematics and esotericism is a vast one, and the present article is intended to explore some basic relationships. The first section, following this introduction, summarizes modern western music theory to establish the framework of terminology and concepts needed for the subsequent discussions in this article and forthcoming articles.

The second section is devoted to Pythagorean harmonics and the evolution of tuning systems in which musical intervals were defined by integer frequency ratios. In turn it discusses the eventual abandonment of such systems, because of their inherent weaknesses, and the acceptance of equal temperament, which is now the standard in western music. The third section explores the mathematical and esoteric

associations of Pythagorean tuning and its derivatives, and notions of the harmony (or music) of the spheres.

A fourth section briefly explores modern esoteric teachings as they enhance our understanding of musical harmony. It also identifies the role of music in service. These various topics will be explored in greater detail in future articles that will focus on the relationship between music and color, and on music and the work of the Deva Evolution. The concluding section summarizes what has been learned herein and points to areas where further research is in progress or needed.

Mathematics plays an essential role in the discussion of music and esotericism. To achieve its objectives, this article makes use of mathematical concepts covered in typical high-school curricula. Today, mathematics has come to be regarded as a purely utilitarian discipline. Worse, our culture applauds otherwise-intelligent people who profess total ignorance of mathematics. We should remember that mathematics was once considered part of divine revelation and was taught in the mystery schools. Sacred mathematics remains an important area of esoteric philosophy.

Music, and the arts in general, are the special province of the Fourth Ray Ashram, headed by the Master Serapis. "At present," we are told, "He is giving most of His time and attention to the work of the deva, or angel evolution, until their agency helps to make possible the great revelation in the world of music and painting which lies immediately ahead."⁶ All devas, we understand, are swept into activity by sound, but the Gandharvas' special mission is to work through music.

The great composers and musicians are believed to have been—or are now—senior disciples or initiates in the Fourth Ray ashram.⁷ Opportunities on a large scale exist for aspirants and disciples to participate in the ashram's work, even just by simply listening to music of appropriate kinds and allowing it to speak to them on a soul level.

Sound, Pitch and Tuning

Sound consists of longitudinal waves of compression and rarefaction propagating through the air from a sound-producing source. A close analogy is the propagation of ripples on the surface of a pond. A musical sound—as distinct, say, from the sound of a pounding hammer—has a definite frequency, or *pitch*, and the length of the sound wave is inversely proportional to that frequency. High notes have higher frequencies and shorter wavelengths; low notes have lower frequencies and longer wavelengths.⁸

In 1955 the International Standards Organization defined the note A above middle C—conventionally referred to as A4—to be a sound wave of 440 cycles per second, or 440 Hertz (Hz).⁹ This standard is referred to as concert pitch in Western music. A tuning fork at the pitch of A 440 is used as a reference to determine pitch and to tune instruments. A sound of 440 Hz has a wavelength of about 30 inches, or 76 cm. A3, one octave lower, has a frequency of 220 Hz and a wavelength of 60 inches. A5, one octave higher than A4, has a frequency of 880 Hz and a wavelength of 15 inches.

A standard has utilitarian value, but the choice of frequency has changed over time and is still not universally accepted. Baroque pitch varied considerably, depending on geographic and other factors. But generally, it was lower than modern concert pitch, and today's musicians playing Baroque music often choose a standard of A4 = 415 Hz. Scientific pitch, proposed in 1713 by French physicist Joseph Sauveur and briefly favored by composer Giuseppe Verdi, assigned a frequency of 256, or 2⁸, Hz to middle C (C4), whereupon A4 acquired a frequency of 430.54 Hz.¹⁰ Some esotericists, musicians, and even acoustic scientists claim that A4 = 432 Hz is more harmonious with the natural order, resonates with the heart chakra, and has a variety of other desirable properties.

Most people cannot hear frequencies lower than about 20 Hz, or above 20,000 Hz (20

kHz). The corresponding wavelengths are about 55 feet (16.7 meters) and 0.66 inches (1.67 cm), respectively. Music normally is composed of sounds within that audible range: equivalent to ten octaves.¹¹ A standard piano has a range of seven octaves.

Sound Production

Air can be induced to oscillate in a device with no moving parts. For example, it vibrates when blown over the lip of a flute. More commonly the oscillation is triggered by a vibrating object, such as a singer's vocal cords, a trumpet player's lips, the reed in a clarinet, a violin string, or the cone of an audio speaker.

In many musical instruments, the sound waves are amplified or modulated by internal resonance. For example, a standing, or stationary, wave forms in an organ pipe. If the pipe is open at one end, the longest sustainable wave is twice the length of the pipe; a wave of that length resonates and is amplified, while most other wavelengths are suppressed. An organ pipe is tuned to produce a particular pitch; so multiple pipes are needed to produce a range of notes. The longest pipe may be 64 feet (roughly 20 meters), while the shortest may be on the order of one inch (2.5 centimeters).

A recorder consists of a single tube, but it can produce a range of notes, by opening or closing air holes with the finger tips to alter its effective length. In other wind instruments the active length is altered by keys or valves. In a trombone the length of the tube is physically extended or shortened.

A vibrating string emits sound whose longest wavelength is the length of the string.¹² Pianos have many strings, each tuned to a particular note. A violin has only four strings, but their lengths can be shortened to produce higher notes, and the range of four octaves can be achieved by a skillful performer. String players change the pitch of their instruments by stopping off sections of the strings with one hand, while bowing or plucking the strings with the other.

In voice, the pitch is determined by the frequency of the opening and the closing of the vocal cords (more correctly named vocal folds,

as this is their true shape), allowing air to pass between the folds to create sound waves of the desired frequency. At the pitch of A4, the vocal folds would be opening and closing 440 times per second. Needless to say, the frequency of these muscular movements is performed in response to signals from the brain and the nervous system falling mostly beneath the level of consciousness, due to the speed at which they are performed.

A tuning fork is designed to produce sound of a single frequency. When a note is sounded on a musical instrument, however, or when someone sings a note, the result is a richer sound consisting of a *fundamental frequency* and a set of higher frequencies referred to as *overtones*.

The fundamental frequency and its integer multiples: 1, 2, 3, 4 ..., make up the *harmonic series* based on the given fundamental. The first harmonic is the fundamental itself; the second harmonic is twice the fundamental frequency; the third harmonic is three times the fundamental frequency; and so forth. The harmonic series will be discussed in more detail later.

The fundamental, or first harmonic, is the lowest frequency that can be produced under the particular conditions. It is determined, for example, by the length of an organ pipe or piano string. Most types of musical instruments are designed to produce overtones that belong to the harmonic series. But percussion instruments—and defective instruments of other kinds—can produce *inharmonic* overtones: frequencies that are not integer multiples of the fundamental. Bells are particularly rich in inharmonic overtones.

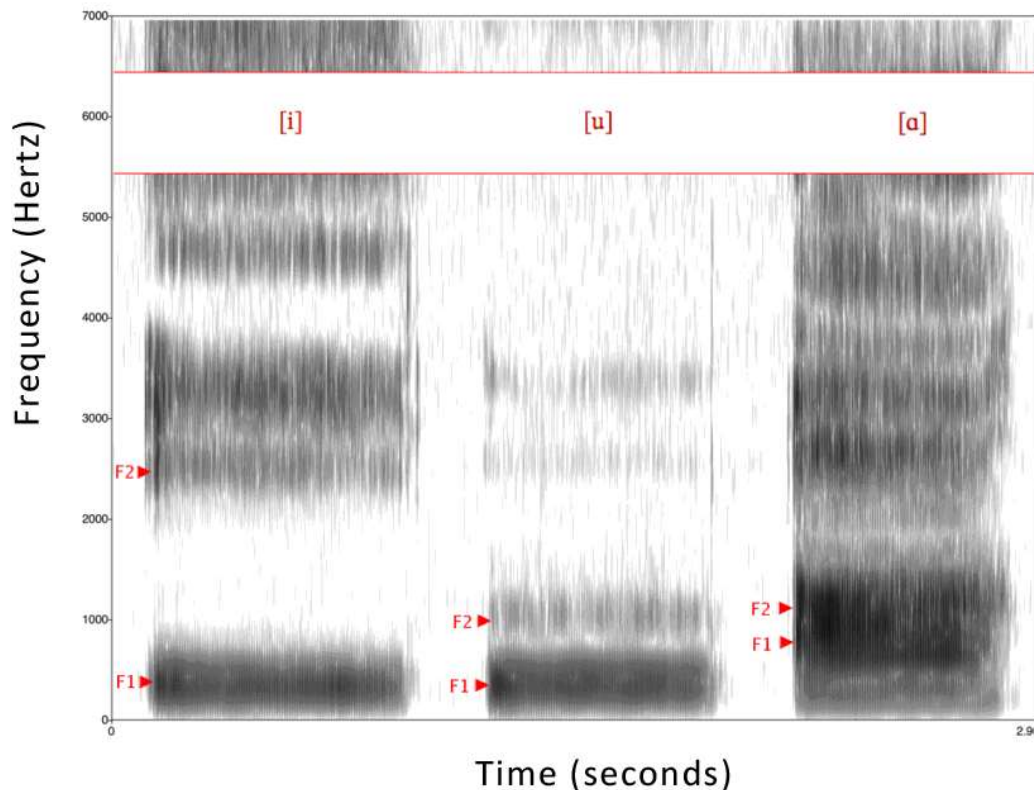
Conventionally, overtones—that is, *harmonic* overtones—are numbered beginning with the second harmonic: the first *overtone* is the second harmonic; the second overtone is the third harmonic, and so on. Whereas the harmonic series—a theoretical construct—is infinite, a musical instrument or voice produces a limited number of perceptible overtones. The higher overtones tend to be weaker than the lower, but certain overtones may be particularly strong, and their relative strengths give an instrument

or voice its characteristic sound quality, tone color, or timbre. They also help the listener identify differences among individual voices or even among instruments of the same type, such as violins of different instrument makers.

Regions of relatively strong harmonics are known as *formants*. In human speech and singing, they determine the vowels being heard. The strength of formants and harmonics can be plotted on a spectrogram. Figure 1 shows a spectrogram of the vowels [i] (as in “meet”), [u] (as in “moon”) and [a] (as in “father”). The

brackets indicate that these are symbols in the International Phonetic Alphabet, or IPA. The vertical axis indicates pitch or frequency in Hertz. The horizontal axis indicates duration in seconds of the vowels as pronounced by the speaker. Darkness indicates amplitude or volume. The first formant is indicated by F1 and the second, which is higher, is indicated by F2. We can see, for example, that while [i] and [u] both have a relatively low first formant, the second formant of [i] is much higher than that of [u], giving it a brighter sound.

Figure 1. Spectral Analysis of the Vowels [i], [u] and [a]¹³



Sound waves can also be amplified or modulated by resonance within the performance space. The medieval cathedrals and college chapels were designed, not only with the liturgy and religious symbolism in mind, but also to help amplify and sustain the sounds of singers and musical instruments. *Reverberation*, the time taken for a sound to die away after its creation, is an important acoustic factor in large spaces; reverberation times in large cathedrals can be as long as five seconds. Rever-

beration is a serious problem for speech, forcing preachers to pause after every few words to allow the sound waves to decay. But it was used to great effect by choirs and instrumentalists in the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Italian composer Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643) famously wrote music to exploit the acoustics of St Mark’s Cathedral, Venice.

The sound produced by musical instruments or by gifted singers, in an appropriate perfor-

mance space, is assumed to have aesthetic value: it is pleasing to the listener. That assumption lies at the heart of *music*, as distinct from *noise*, which might be created by a jackhammer or tornado. Ultimately, though, the distinction between music and noise is subjective and cultural; even within a culture people may disagree in their judgments.

Notes, Intervals and Scales

The basic building block of music is the *note*. A note has several characteristics, including pitch, duration, volume (“loudness”), and timbre.

In modern western music, notes are discrete frequencies that lie on a *scale*. The seven white notes on a piano are designated A through G, whereupon the next octave begins with another A, and the sequence is repeated. The five black notes produce sharps (#) or flats (b). The black note between A and B, for instance, can be viewed as either A# or Bb. There is no black note between B and C, or between E and F. Western music offers a basic seven-note, *diatonic*, scale, which, through the use of sharps and flats, can be expanded to a twelve-note, *chromatic*, scale.

The relation between two notes is referred to as an *interval*. Within an octave, intervals range from the unison, which is the same note, to the octave (eighth). Larger intervals are possible as well, such as the ninth, which is an octave plus a second. In figuring intervals, both the upper and the lower notes are counted, so the interval between adjacent notes is generally referred to as a second, for example. Important intervals, with respect to our later discussion, are the third, fourth, fifth and octave. The fourth and fifth are inversions of each other. For example, the interval between C and G is a fifth, while that between G and the next higher C is a fourth. Intervals may be *melodic* (“horizontal”): one note is played after the other, or *harmonic* (“vertical”): the notes are played simultaneously, one on top of the other.¹⁴

In modern western music the intervals between adjacent notes of the scale are either *whole tones* (whole steps) or *semitones* (half steps).¹⁵ For example, the interval between A and B, or

F and G, is a whole tone, while the interval between B and C, or between E and F, is a semitone. No black note appears between B and C, or between E and F, because there is no room for it in the progression of frequencies. Some contemporary compositions contain *microtones*, but western music generally does not admit intervals less than a semitone.

Every octave, as we move up the musical scale, represents a doubling in frequency. The assignment of frequencies to notes within the octave is referred to as *tuning*. Various tuning systems have been used in the past, and some of those will be discussed later. The system in general use today is called *equal temperament*. It assigns an equal frequency ratio to each of the twelve semitones in the octave: a ratio of $2^{1/12}$, or approximately 1.059.¹⁶ A whole tone is two semitones, so its frequency ratio is $2^{1/12} \times 2^{1/12} = 2^{1/6}$, or approximately 1.122.¹⁷

A fourth is equivalent to a frequency ratio of $2^{5/12}$, or approximately 1.335, and the fifth a ratio of $2^{7/12}$, or approximately 1.498. The two ratios are very close to 4/3 and 3/2, respectively. We shall see later that the fourth and fifth were once *defined* by those frequency ratios.

Musicians and music theorists prefer to focus on the exponents (the powers of 2) rather than the ratios. They multiply the exponent by 1,200 to produce a value in *cents*. A semitone becomes $1/12 \times 1200 = 100$ cents; a whole tone becomes 200 cents, a fourth 500 cents, a fifth 700 cents, and an octave 1,200 cents. Most people can judge aurally a difference of twenty-five cents between two consecutive notes, and a few—like good piano tuners—can discern differences of five cents. A small difference between notes played simultaneously can easily be discerned because of the *beat* created; for instance, pitches of 440 Hz and 480 Hz produce a beat of $480 - 440 = 40$ Hz. The creation of unpleasant beats is a major reason why close musical intervals, like a second, sound discordant.

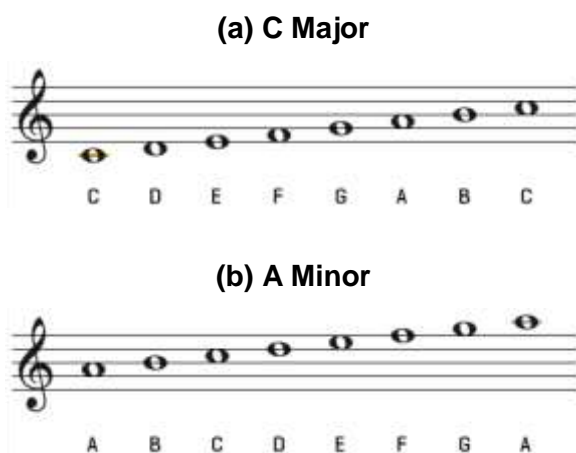
Converting from frequency ratios to cents involves a logarithmic transformation,¹⁸ but the linearity of the values in cents—or, for that matter, the linearity of a piano keyboard—should not obscure the underlying reality that

musical intervals are determined by frequency *ratios*. Nor should the even hundreds: 100, 200, and so forth, convey the impression that equal-temperament tuning is *a priori* the “correct” one. It is purely a convention, and the relative strengths and weaknesses of different tuning systems will be discussed later in the article.

Apart from the fourth, fifth and octave, which are normally “perfect,” unless raised (augmented) or lowered (diminished), intervals are usually characterized as major or minor. For example, a major third extends over two whole tones, or 400 cents;¹⁹ a minor third extends over one whole tone plus a semitone, or 300 cents. A major seventh corresponds to 1,100 cents, and a minor seventh to 1,000 cents.

The major scale can be represented by the white notes on a piano, starting with C. The *natural* minor scale—as distinct from its variants the harmonic and melodic minor scales—can be represented by the white notes beginning with A (Figure 2).²⁰ The major and natural minor scales each contain two semitones, but they occupy different positions within the octave. In a major scale the semitones lie between the third and fourth notes (E and F), and between the seventh and eighth notes (B and C). In the natural minor scale they lie between the second and third notes (B and C), and between the fifth and sixth notes (E and F).

Figure 2. Major and Natural Minor Scales



One does not always play the major scale starting on C, however, or the minor scale starting on A. A composer may choose a different key, or a performer may transpose an existing composition. The beginning note of a scale is called the *tonic*. Conceivably, it could be any note—white or black—on the keyboard, though certain choices are more common than others. For a given tonic, *sharps* or *flats* are introduced to preserve the proper pattern of whole tones and semitones in the corresponding scale. For example, a G-major scale requires F# to provide the semitone between the seventh and eighth notes of the scale. F# is the black note between the F and G white keys on a piano. The C-minor scale requires three flats: A \flat , B \flat and E \flat : the black notes between G and A, A and B, and D and E, respectively.

A key signature identifies sharps or flats to be observed throughout the piece, or until a new key signature is provided. Two examples are shown in Figure 3, one involving sharps and the other flats. It will be shown later that key signatures form a pattern illustrated by the Circle of Fifths. The key signature defines the key in which the piece or section is set. A pitch may be raised or lowered by the insertion of “accidentals,” which are observed only in the measure, or bar, in which they occur. Accidentals provide compositional variety by temporarily departing from the prevailing key signature. They may take the form of a sharp, flat, or a *natural* (\natural) which negates a previously established sharp or flat.²¹

Figure 3. Key Signatures



The major and minor scales are just two of the seven possible scales that can be generated by playing a sequence of adjacent white notes on a piano. For instance, the Phrygian mode can be represented by playing the white notes starting on E; its semitones lie between the first two notes and between the fifth and sixth notes

of the scale. Ancient philosopher–musicians such as Pythagoras and Plato heard in the various modes distinctive qualities: amorous, warlike, lethargic, energetic, and so forth. Medieval church music could also be in different modes, but western classical music eventually settled on the major and minor modes, or scales, as the most pleasing and essentially abandoned use of the other modes.

Music theorists speak of scale *degrees*, which are notes measured relative to the tonic, regardless of the scale’s key. The first degree is the tonic itself, and the second through seventh degrees are successive intervals above the tonic. The degrees have names, some of the most common being the *mediant*, the third degree; the *subdominant*, the fourth degree; and the *dominant*, the fifth degree.

Notes can also be designated, regardless of key, by the pedagogical system of *solfège*, or *solfeggio*. For example, the major scale is designated by the syllables: Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti (or Si), and finally Do in the next octave. Some authorities trace the solfège system

back to the eighth-century Gregorian Chant *Ut queant laxis*, or “Hymn to St John the Baptist.”²² Two versions of the solfège system are in use. In the Movable Do system, common in the United States, “Do” designates the first note of the scale in any major key, with the other syllables following in succession. In the Fixed Do system, Do always refers to the note C, regardless of the key; Re always refers to the note D, Mi to E, and so forth.

Harmonic Series

Harmonics are integer multiples: 1, 2, 3, ... of the fundamental frequency. Harmonics form a mathematical pattern known as the *harmonic series*. The first sixteen harmonics, beginning two octaves below middle C, are shown in Figure 4. By convention the fundamental pitch is referred to as the first harmonic. The second, fourth, eighth, and sixteenth harmonics are successive octaves of the fundamental. Notes one or more octaves apart resonate closely with one another. We speak of *octave equivalency*, which means that all As are, in a sense, the same note; all Bs are the same; and so forth.

Figure 4. Harmonic Series Based on C



Other harmonics lie within the octaves, and the pitches get progressively closer together as the series progresses. Some of them closely approximate notes on the modern musical scale. For example, the third harmonic—a major fifth above the second harmonic—is very close to G below middle C in the modern musical scale. By contrast the seventh, eleventh and fourteenth harmonics only roughly approximate notes on the modern musical scale and would

sound noticeably discordant if played together with their nearest piano notes.²³

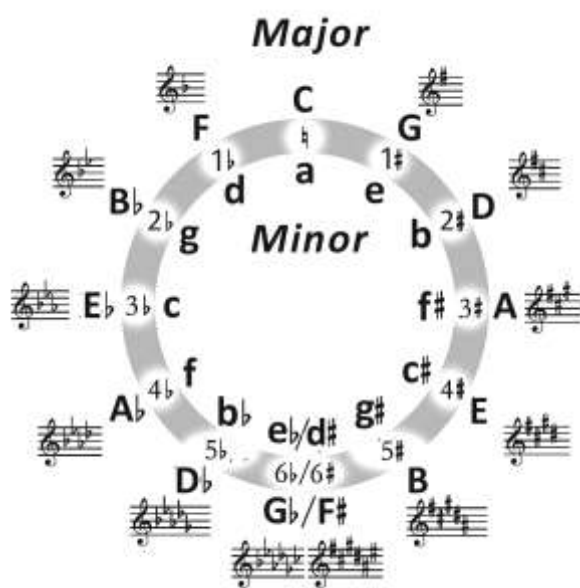
The relationship between the harmonic series and musical scales is an issue to be discussed later in this article. Suffice it to say, at this point, that the modern western musical scales—major and minor—resulted from a long process of evolution and represent a compromise among conflicting aesthetic, practical,

and other factors. In times past people felt strongly that other musical scales were superior, or even had divine sanction. The modern scales have imperfections, but they allow multiple instruments to play together without excessive discordance, and they allow compositions to be transposed to different keys without excessive distortion.

Circle of Fifths

The interval of a fifth is of the greatest importance in music theory, and successive transpositions of a fifth reveal an interesting pattern in the key signatures (Figure 5).²⁴ This pattern is known as the Circle of Fifths.

Figure 5. Circle of Fifths Showing the Key Signatures of their Respective Major and Minor Scales.



The C-major scale requires no sharps or flats; it can be played on the white notes of a piano. G is a fifth above C, and the G-major scale requires one sharp (F#). D is a fifth above G, and the D-major scale requires two sharps (F# and C#). Further transpositions add more sharps, until one reaches the scale of F# major, which requires six sharps (F#, C#, G#, D#, A# and E#). Moving in the opposite direction, F is a fifth below C, and an F-major scale requires one flat (Bb). Bb is a fifth below F, and a Bb-

major scale requires two flats (Bb and Eb). Again, successive transpositions add more flats, until one reaches Gb major, which requires six flats (Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb and Cb). F# and Gb are, of course, the same note, and the F#-major scale and the Gb-major scale are played with the same notes on the piano. Twelve major scales can be constructed, each beginning on a particular white or black note on a piano, within the span of an octave. These scales and their respective key signatures are displayed around the outside of the circle shown in Figure 5.

Minor scales transposed by successive fifths yield a similar result, and these are shown on the inside of the circle in Figure 5 (to distinguish them in the figure, minor keys are designated by lower-case letters). The A-minor scale needs no sharps or flats, so A lies at the top of the circle. E is a fifth above A, and the E-minor scale requires an F#. Correspondingly, D is a fifth below A, and the D-minor scale requires a Bb. Twelve minor scales can be constructed. The scale of D#-minor, with six sharps—or equivalently Eb-minor, with six flats—lies at the bottom of the circle.

Chords

In the medieval church, Gregorian chant was sung in unison. Or, singers might sing an octave apart, invoking the principle of octave equivalency, in which notes of the same letter name are said to share the same fundamental quality.

In due course, liturgical chant began to incorporate *organum*, or a second line of harmony at an interval of a perfect fifth or a perfect fourth from the main pitch. It may be seen that these intervals correspond to the distance between the second and third harmonics and between the third and fourth harmonics of the harmonic series given above. Eventually, as tempered tuning became more common, the harmonies of western classical music began to incorporate the major and minor third.

Some instruments, like a flute, can only play one note at a time. Others, like a piano, can play chords, consisting of multiple notes, and combinations of instruments can obviously do the same. Chords introduce harmony to the

composition to produce a pleasing—or sometimes disturbing—psychological effect.

Chords are most often based on intervals of thirds and fifths, or their respective inversions, the sixths and the fourths. The most basic chord is the triad, composed of three notes. The simplest triad consists of the *root*—the note on which the chord is built²⁵—and the third and fifth above it—or equivalently, two successive thirds. A major triad consists of a minor third stacked top of a major third to

create a perfect fifth between the top and bottom notes. In a minor triad, a major third is stacked on top of a minor third, also resulting in a perfect fifth between the top and bottom notes of the triad. A diminished triad consists of two minor thirds stacked on top of one another, creating an interval of a diminished fifth between the root and the fifth of the chord. In an augmented triad, two major thirds are stacked on top of one another to create an interval of an augmented fifth between the bottom and top notes (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Triads Built on the Root of C



In practice, some of the notes of the triad are often doubled, especially in music written in four-part choral or instrumental textures. Compositions commonly end on a tonic triad with the root in the bottom and top voices. Psychologically, this arrangement has a satisfying sense of finality. By contrast, psychological tension or anticipation can be evoked by slight modification. For example, if an interval of a seventh above the root is included in the chord, a dissonance results, and the beat between the seventh and the root's second harmonic creates a sense of incompleteness, as the listener waits for the chord to be resolved to a more consonant harmony.

Chords can be built on any degree of the scale, and each has its own tonal function in western music. A chord built on the tonic is known, appropriately, as the *tonic* chord and serves as a home base for pieces written in that key. Usually, a piece will begin and end on a tonic triad. The dominant chord, built on the fifth note of the scale, tends to be the second most important in a composition and provides an important “pull” against the tonic. The subdominant chord, built on the fourth note, can serve as a bridge between the tonic and the

dominant chords. The chords built on the other notes on the scale also serve important functions.

Musical Scales Based on Integer Ratios

For many centuries the intervals in musical scales were defined, not by fractional powers of 2, as in modern equal temperament, but by the ratios of *integers*, or whole numbers. Moreover, it was believed that the integers should be small, though that ideal was hard to achieve. Pythagoras created a tuning system in which the ratios were restricted to integer powers of 2 and 3, such as $3/2$, $4/3$ and $9/8$. Later tuning systems admitted ratios such as $5/4$ and $5/3$.

Pythagorean Concepts of Music

Pythagoras famously experimented with a monochord (Figure 7) to investigate the pitch of tones generated by vibrating strings. A moveable bridge isolated a portion of the stretched string to change its active length and corresponding pitch. The original monochord may have had, as its name implies, a single string, but a fifteenth-century CE manuscript

shows Pythagoras using an instrument with six strings.²⁶ Multiple strings enable the user to sound both melodic and harmonic intervals.

Figure 7. Monochord with Three Strings²⁷



Since the bridge could be set at any arbitrary position along the string, an unlimited number of intervals could be created. But Pythagoras identified those that seemed the most aesthetically pleasing. They represented Order, emerging from the Chaos of infinite possibility. Reducing the active length of the string by one-half raised the pitch by an octave, reducing it to one-quarter of its original length raised the pitch by two octaves. The octave resonated closely with the original note; in some sense it was the same note.

Two other significant intervals were produced when the vibrating string was two-thirds and three-fourths of its original length. We know those intervals as the perfect fifth and perfect fourth, respectively. Small numbers evidently produced the purest sounds, and Pythagoras' favored sounds were produced when the monochord string was divided into fractions

formed from the first three natural numbers: 1, 2, 3, together with multiples like $2 \times 2 = 4$, $3 \times 3 = 9$.

Pythagoras lacked the technology to measure frequency, but he correctly inferred that it varied inversely with string length. The frequency ratios corresponding to the fourth, fifth and octave—obtained when the string length was divided in the ratios $3/4$, $2/3$, and $1/2$, respectively—were $4/3$, $3/2$, and $2/1$ (or simply 2).

The tonic, fourth, fifth and octave provided a rudimentary musical scale. The frequency ratios: 1, $4/3$, $3/2$ and 2, could be converted to integers by assigning the tonic a value of 6, whereupon the frequencies would be proportional to 6, 8, 9 and 12. Table 1 shows the scale in the key of C. C' denotes the octave above C.²⁸

Table 1. Pythagorean Four-Note Scale

Note	C	F	G	C'
Frequency ratio	1	$4/3$	$3/2$	2
Frequency number	6	8	9	12

Pythagoras' rudimentary scale was too limited to produce meaningful music; four more notes were needed to produce a seven-note, diatonic, scale. To generate a C-major scale: D, E, A, and B must be created. Each note would correspond to a particular frequency ratio, and Pythagoras insisted that these ratios must be formed from the numbers: 1, 2 and 3, together with their powers: $2^2 = 4$, $2^3 = 8$, $3^2 = 9$, $3^3 = 27$, and so forth. Moreover, the numbers must be as small as possible to guarantee purity of sound.

The additional notes can be created in alternative ways. One method observes that the fourth (F) and fifth (G) are a whole tone apart, and their frequencies are in the ratio $9/8$. So, working from C to D and E, and from G to A and B, successive whole tones can be created by multiplying the frequencies by $9/8$. The resulting diatonic scale is shown in Table 2. Intervals in

cents are shown for comparison with the modern musical scale. We recall that the whole

tone in the modern scale is 200 cents, and the semitone is 100 cents.

Table 2. Pythagorean Diatonic Scale

Note	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C'
Frequency ratio	1	9/8	$(9/8)^2 = 81/64$	4/3	3/2	$3/2 \times 9/8 = 27/16$	$3/2 \times (9/8)^2 = 243/128$	2
Frequency number	6	6.75	7.59375	8	9	10.125	11.390625	12
Interval in cents	-	204	408	498	702	906	1,110	1,200
Modern scale	-	200	400	500	700	900	1,100	1,200

The alternative method is to multiply the frequency of the tonic by successive powers of $3/2$ to generate the series of fifths. For example, the fifth above C is G, with a frequency ratio of $3/2$. A fifth above G is D'—that is the D above C'—with a frequency ratio of $(3/2)^2$, or $9/4$. Continuation of the process yields the

notes shown in Table 3. C'' is two octaves above C, and E'' and B'' are the respective notes in the octave beginning with C''. When the notes are mapped onto the reference octave, by dividing the ratios by appropriate powers of 2 (octave equivalency), the scale is identical to the one shown in Table 2.

Table 3. Successive Fifths

Frequency ratio	Actual note	Divisor	Adjusted ratio	Note mapped to reference octave
1	C	1	1	C
$3/2$	G	1	$3/2$	G
$(3/2)^2 = 9/4$	D'	2	$9/8$	D
$(3/2)^3 = 27/8$	A'	2	$27/16$	A
$(3/2)^4 = 81/16$	E''	4	$81/64$	E
$(3/2)^5 = 243/32$	B''	4	$243/128$	B

The frequency ratios in the Pythagorean diatonic scale are still all powers of 2 and 3, but the original simplicity has been lost. In order to make the frequency numbers all integers, C would now have to be assigned a value of $2^7 \times 3 = 384$, instead of 6. The ideal of small integers could no longer be realized.

The interval between E and F corresponds to a frequency ratio of $2^8/3^5 = 256/243$, or approximately 1.0535. This interval was termed a *lemma*, literally “left over.” An equal lemma occurs between B and C'. Such lemmas were later identified as semitones, but they are only 90 cents—smaller than the modern semitone of

100 cents. By contrast, the whole tones are 204 cents, slightly larger than the modern whole tone. The modern fourth and fifth are within two cents of their Pythagorean counterparts.

A complementary scale can be constructed by working backward from C' to B and A, and from F to E and D, successively multiplying the frequencies by 8/9; or, alternatively, by creating the series of descending fifths, starting with C'. The result resembles the natural minor scale, except that a semitone, or half step, lies between the first and second notes of the scale, rather than between the second and third. It contains the notes D \flat , E \flat , A \flat and B \flat . The lemmas, or semitones, lie between C and D \flat , and between G and A \flat .

Combining the two scales yields eleven of the twelve notes needed to form a chromatic scale. Only F \sharp , or G \flat , in the very middle of the scale, is missing. The interval between the tonic and this note is referred to as the *tritone*. One way to find the tritone is to multiply the frequency of F, or divide that of G, by the Pythagorean *lemma*, of 256/243. Unfortunately, this method yields distinct pitches for F \sharp and G \flat ; their frequencies are $3^{12}/2^{19}$, or about 23.5 cents, apart—well within the range of auditory discernment.²⁹ Although traditionally a very dissonant interval needing careful resolution, the tritone was featured thematically by Bernstein in *West Side Story* and by Benjamin Britten in his *War Requiem*.³⁰

Another problem, acknowledged by Pythagoras himself, is that the series of fifths cannot generate the octave; no nonzero power of 3 can ever equal a power of 2. A “close encounter” is obtained by twelve fifths, which exceed seven

octaves by a ratio of $3^{12}/2^{19}$, or 23.5 cents, precisely the same interval that plagued the tritone. It is referred to as the *Pythagorean*, or *diatonic comma*.³¹ The comma was of little practical concern, since musicians largely confined themselves to a single octave: a comfortable range for a human voice.

The irreconcilability of the series of fifths and octaves was theoretically worrisome, however, and threatened belief in the divine endorsement of integer ratios in music.

Other problems were of a practical nature. The semitone, with a frequency ratio of 256/243, or an interval of 90 cents, was too small. And the major third of 408 cents was too large, causing the triad chord, CEG, to sound discordant. Composers and musicians steered clear of the major third until

the Renaissance, when tempered scales began to appear.³²

Evolution of the Musical Scale

While the Pythagorean scale was imbued with great mathematical and—as we shall see—esoteric significance, it had inherent weaknesses that prompted efforts to improve upon or replace it. Musicians were loathe to abandon the principle that small-integer frequency ratios produced the most pleasing intervals. A solution was to increase the range of acceptable integers beyond powers of 2 and 3.

As early as the second century CE, Claudius Ptolemy proposed that 5 be included. This was an important number since the fifth harmonic, transposed to the reference octave, creates the major third, with a ratio of 5/4. Ptolemy's proposal received little attention until Bartolomé Ramos de Pareja (c.1440–1522) reintroduced

Pythagorean harmonics was built upon the recognition that certain musical intervals were more aesthetically pleasing than others, and that the favored intervals correlated with numerical ratios and geometric shapes. The same correlations resonated with, or were encoded into, the proportions of Greek temples and Gothic cathedrals. Those musical intervals and proportions were more than mere human conventions; they were believed to be part of divine revelation.

it and offered what we now call *just intonation* tuning.³³ Ramos used the ratio 5/4 to generate

the major thirds, from C to E, from F to A, and from G to B (Table 4).

Table 4. Just Intonation Tuning

Note	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C'
Frequency ratio	1	9/8	5/4	4/3	3/2	$\frac{4}{3} \times \frac{5}{4} = \frac{5}{3}$	$\frac{3}{2} \times \frac{5}{4} = \frac{15}{8}$	2
Frequency number	6	6.75	7.5	8	9	10	11.25	12
Cents	-	204	386	498	702	884	1,088	1,200
Modern scale	-	200	400	500	700	900	1,100	1,200

Just intonation gave musical scales new life. Not only did it preserve the rule of small integers, some were smaller than those required in Pythagorean tuning. For example, the major sixth from C to the A above is a frequency ratio of 5/3, compared with the Pythagorean ratio of 27/16. The major seventh is 15/8, instead of 243/128. The frequency numbers in Table 4 can all be made into integers if the tonic is assigned a value of 24, compared with the 384 needed in the Pythagorean major scale.

Musicians welcomed just intonation tuning because of the improvement to the major third, and chords involving thirds and fifths, such as CDF, became esthetically feasible for the first time. Yet other chords were unsatisfactory. For example, the fifth from D to A has a frequency ratio of 40/27, or 680 cents, compared with the fifth from C to G, with a ratio of 3/2, or 702 cents. Transposition from one key to another remained problematic.

A century after Bartolomé Ramos, astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) conducted monochord experiments to extend the range of integer ratios still farther. He reproduced Pythagoras' results and confirmed the Ptolemy/Ramos frequency ratios of 5/4 for the major third and 5/3 for the major sixth. Kepler also proposed a ratio of 6/5 for the minor third—D# or Eb on a C major scale—and 8/5 for the augmented fifth, or minor sixth: G# or A b. But those pitches were too high—316 and 814 cents, respectively—reducing the semitones between them and the next-higher notes to only 70 cents. Kepler's contribution to tun-

ing was minimal. We shall see, however, that he suggested interesting correspondences between musical scales and planetary motions.

The problems could have been overcome by incorporating ratios of larger and larger integers. But that ran counter to the core Pythagorean principle that pure intervals demanded small integers. Instead, by the seventeenth century, musicians were seeking more pragmatic solutions. One solution was to increase the number of pitches in an octave, to allow musicians to choose which version of a note to play. Keyboards were designed with as many as thirty-two keys to the octave.³⁴ Another solution was to *temper* offending ratios, essentially multiplying their frequency ratios by “fudge factors” to avoid dissonance. All forms of temperament met with strong opposition from classical purists. Preachers across Europe took to their pulpits to condemn musicians and musicologists for violating the divinely ordained principle of integer ratios.

The “final solution” was the equal temperament system described earlier in this article. It abandoned the reliance on integer ratios, assigning instead a frequency ratio of $2^{1/12}$, or 100 cents, to every semitone in the musical scale. Equal temperament even compromised the perfect fourth and fifth, albeit by only two cents. The use of fractional powers of 2 might seem like a modern innovation, but Greek mathematician Archytas (428–347 BCE) proposed that the major third be defined by the cube-root of 2, that is $2^{1/3}$ or precisely 400

cents.³⁵ Archytas' proposal anticipated equal temperament by more than two millennia.

Music, Mathematics and Esotericism

Pythagoras taught that arithmetic was “number in itself,” music was “number in time” (or “music in motion”), geometry was “number in space,” and astronomy was “number in time and space.” The four topics became the *quadrivium* of classical education. The emphasis on numbers did not imply a fixation with counting; rather, numbers were believed to be divine entities. Numbers were for Pythagoras what *Forms* were for Plato, and Hebrew letters for the Kabbalists. They were aspects of divine revelation, and, with them, music, geometry, and the patterns of planetary motion.

Pythagoras is said to have used music to bring about positive change in the lives of his pupils. Certain melodies were used to offset an excess of emotions or states of being such as anger, sorrow, lethargy or combativeness. Appropriate melodies were played upon going to sleep at night and awakening in the morning. Pythagoras was even said to be able to heal certain diseases of the body by means of music. This healing and uplifting power of music was connected to Pythagoras' understanding and use of the mathematical laws of music which enabled him to reproduce an earthly version of the “music of the spheres.”³⁶ For him, music was a kind of sympathetic magic.

Mathematical and Esoteric Properties of Musical Scales

The numbers appearing in the Pythagorean musical scales are replete with mathematical and esoteric significance. The numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, which form the basis of the rudimentary four-note scale, are found in the geometric figure known as the *tetraktys* (Figure 8).

The frequency numbers: 6, 8, 9, 12, in the rudimentary musical scale, have the property that 8 is the harmonic mean of 6 and 12, and 9 is their arithmetic mean: $8 = 2 \times (6 \times 12)/(6 + 12)$, $9 = (6 + 12)/2$.³⁷ *Harmonic mean* is part of the standard mathematical vocabulary, but

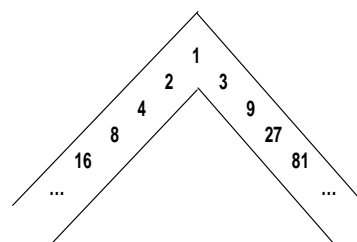
its origins clearly lie in musical analogies. The tritone in the equal-temperament musical scale is the geometric mean of 6 and 12, and also of 8 and 9: $\sqrt{(6 \times 12)} = \sqrt{(8 \times 9)} = 8.485\dots$, equivalent to precisely 600 cents.³⁸

Figure 8. Tetraktys



All the frequency ratios in the Pythagorean diatonic scale are powers of 2 and 3 (even 1 is the *zeroth* power). They can be arranged in a geometric figure known as the Pythagorean Lambda—so named because of its resemblance to the Greek letter Λ (Figure 9). The powers of 2 are shown in the left-hand leg, and the powers of 3 in the right-hand leg.

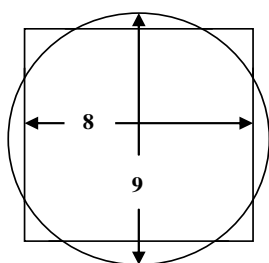
Figure 9. Pythagorean Lambda



The numbers 2 and 3 were believed to be the first emanations from the divine Unity. If 1 represented the unmanifest spirit, 2 represented its first manifestation, and 3 the resulting new creation. Odd numbers, which reached out into new realms of manifestation, were deemed to be masculine, while even numbers, which restored harmony and balance, were feminine. Two signified the first feminine energy and 3 the first masculine energy. The Pythagorean scale represented harmony between spirit and matter, heaven and earth, the masculine and the feminine.

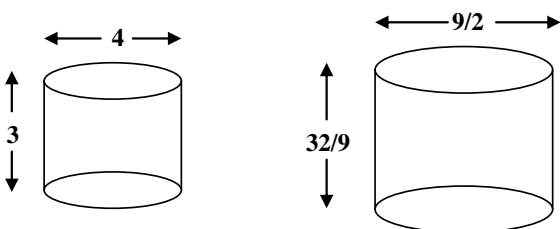
The Pythagorean whole tone has a frequency ratio of $9/8$. This ratio was significant to the Greeks because of its relevance to the problem of “squaring the circle”: constructing a square with the same area as a given circle (Figure 10). We now know that the ratio of the diameter of the circle to the side of the square is $2/\pi^{1/2}$, or 1.12838... For comparison, $9/8 = 1.125$, a difference of only 0.5 percent.

Figure 10. “Squaring the Circle”



A surprising geometric result, with relevance to the Pythagorean diatonic scale, was known to the ancient Egyptians. It involves two barrels. The smaller barrel has a height of 3 units and a diameter of 4 units; the larger one has a height of $32/9$ and a diameter of $9/2$ (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Two Barrels



The following ratios emerge, all with musical significance:

- Ratio of the diameter to the height of the small barrel = $4/3$, the perfect fourth; for example, the interval between C and F, or between G and C'.

- Ratio of the surface areas of the two barrels = $4/3$, again a perfect fourth.
- Ratio of the volumes of the two barrels = $3/2$, a perfect fifth; for example, the interval between C and G.
- Ratio of the diameters of two barrels = $9/8$, a whole tone; for example, the interval between F and G.
- Ratio of the diameter to the height of the large barrel = $81/64$, a major third; for example, the interval between C and E.
- Ratio of the heights of the two barrels = $32/27$, a minor third; for example, the interval between E and G.

Seven, the number of notes in the diatonic scale (excluding the octave), had great significance in ancient times. Importantly for Pythagoras, it was equal to $2 + 2 + 3$, his favored integers. Seven combinations can be formed from three elements: if the elements are denoted by X, Y and Z, the possible combinations are: X, Y, Z, XY, XZ, YZ and XYZ. It was the virgin number, the number of creation. Seven, the *heptad*, was sacred to the planet Venus and the Goddess Athena. Orpheus' lyre allegedly had seven strings. There were seven vowels in the Greek alphabet; seven days in the week; and seven planets, including the Sun and Moon.³⁹ Seven is the largest, single-digit prime number.

Plato greatly admired Pythagoras, and he embraced the notion that the musical scale was an analogy (*analogia*) of the created universe. In his dialogue *Timaeus*, Plato asserted that God created the “body of the universe” from the elements Fire and Earth. Normally “it is not possible to combine two things properly without a third to act as a bond to hold them together.”⁴⁰ In an interesting subtlety, however, this particular bond required *two* intervening elements, Air and Water, since the universe was “solid.” The four elements were related by the formula: “fire was to air as air to water, and air was to water as water to earth.”⁴¹

That formula can be interpreted mathematically as a pair of simultaneous equations, which can be solved to determine the corresponding musical intervals.⁴² If Earth is assigned the value 1, and Fire 2, to delineate the octave, Water and Air turn out to be—not $4/3$ and $3/2$, the ratios of the perfect fourth and fifth, as one might have hoped—but $2^{1/3}$ and $2^{2/3}$, respectively. These latter values, equivalent to 400 and 800 cents, correspond precisely to the major third and minor sixth in the modern musical scale. Plato's major third is the same as Archytas,' mentioned earlier, while his minor sixth of 800 cents provides another ancient precedent for equal temperament.

With the adoption of just intonation, the fundamental set of numbers was now 1, 2, 3, and 5. No longer could the numbers be equated to Unity and its first two manifestations: the female and the male; nor could the numbers be found from Pythagoras' Lambda. Nevertheless, 5 had important properties, even to Pythagoreans. It is the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle whose other sides are 3 and 4, one of very few in which all the sides are integers. Furthermore, the area of the triangle is 6, the frequency number assigned to the tonic. For Aristotle, 5 signified "marriage."⁴³

Extension of the basic number set still did not solve all the practical problems, and musicians turned to tempered musical scales. Temperament met not only with religious objections, but also with objections from the esoteric community. Fabre d'Olivet (1767-1825), esotericist and minor composer, wrote that equal temperament robbed music of its expressive and spiritual power. D'Olivet referred to the ancient Greeks who believed that music had miraculous power over the mind, body and

emotions. It was plain that modern music did not possess this miraculous power. While some writers concluded that these claims must have been exaggerated, D'Olivet wrote that the loss of music's ability to work miracles was due to the adoption of the system of equal temperament and the ensuing distortion of the pure intervals used by Pythagoras and the ancients in their music.⁴⁴

While equal temperament has made possible much of the great music in the classical western tradition, it is not universally popular. Some musicians claim that it is inappropriate for the performance of music of earlier periods and that it obscures the differences between the various major and minor keys, each of which is said to have its own character. Some purists still complain that the temperament of the Pythagorean fourth

and fifth, albeit by only 2 cents, is not only detectable but toxic.

Now that equal temperament has become almost universal in the West, fewer opportunities arise to discover new arithmetic and geometric correspondences. But our pattern-seeking instincts have not gone away. Much has been made of the configuration of keys on the piano keyboard. For instance, it has been noticed that each octave includes one white note, D, between the two black notes C# and E♭; a series of three adjacent black notes: F#, A♭ and B♭; a total of five black notes; eight white notes; and thirteen notes in the chromatic scale (including the repeated tonic). The numbers: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 and 13 are the first six numbers in the Fibonacci series, in which numerologists find profound meaning.⁴⁵

The soul on its tiny scale can create "the new man" by the power also of sound, and a musical rhythm can usefully be imposed upon the personality life by the disciple. . . . Let love and light and music enter more definitely into your daily life. . . . give your mind the opportunity, through the massed sound of music, to break down the personality-imposed barriers between the free flow of soul life and you.

Harmony of the Spheres

The music, or harmony, of the spheres fascinated many people in antiquity. It was said that Pythagoras could actually hear it, but most of his followers were content to interpret the celestial harmony as something mathematically elegant or satisfying. If—to revisit the quadrivium—music was “number in time,” and astronomy was “number in time and space,” it was reasonable to assume that the geometric motion of the planets created music.

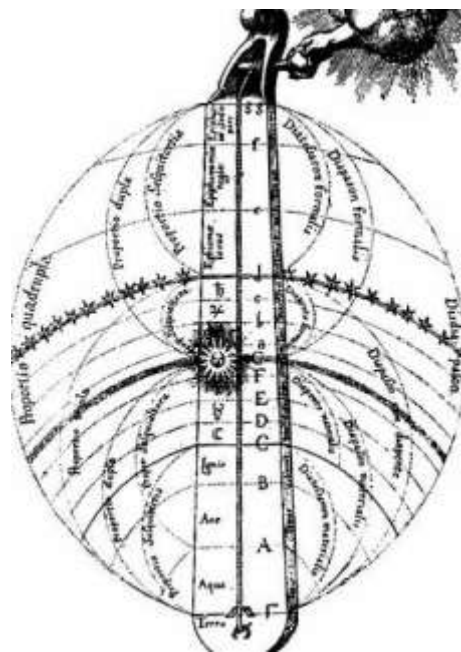
Several attempts were made to associate the planets with notes on a musical scale, though the results were not always consistent. For example, Plato assigned tones to the planets in an ascending scale, reflecting their perceived distances from a stationary Earth. From the Moon to Saturn, the most distant planet known at the time, was a major seventh; the octave was assigned to the sphere of the fixed stars. Five centuries later, Nicomachus took the opposite view, assigning the planets to a descending scale, reflecting their relative velocities. He assigned a high note to the Moon, which moved fastest, and a low note to the slow Saturn; the immovable stars comprised the tonic.⁴⁶

Pythagorean concepts of music passed into Neoplatonism and, in due course, into Hermeticism: an amalgam of astrology, alchemy, and ceremonial magic. Christian Hermeticist Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486–1535) described a variety of magic rituals, each with appropriate words of power and planetary correspondences. Invocation of the planets could include musical tones and intervals. Agrippa related the Sun to the octave or double octave, Mercury to the perfect fourth, and Jupiter to the perfect fifth.⁴⁷

Robert Fludd (1574–1637) conceived of a divine monochord extending from Earth to Heaven and spanning a double octave (Figure 12). The monochord, expressing the harmony of the spheres, was tuned by the very hand of God. The first through fourth musical intervals correspond to the four elements, Earth, Water, Air and Fire, respectively. The planets, Moon through Saturn, occupy the next seven intervals; the Sun is the octave, lying at the midpoint between Earth and Heaven. The fixed

stars occupy the fifth of the second octave.⁴⁸ Fludd’s cosmological model was still geocentric, even though the work of Nicolaus Copernicus and Galileo Galilei was already well-known.

Figure 12. Robert Fludd’s Celestial Monochord



Fludd’s contemporary, astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), carried music theory and its esoteric associations into the heliocentric age. And whereas Fludd and others approached the harmony of the spheres metaphorically, Kepler studied it analytically. Kepler’s *Harmonices Mundi* (1619) covers much ground, but it includes his greatest contribution to astronomy: the discovery that planetary orbits are elliptic rather than circular—another blow to classical purists who affirmed the divinity of the circle.

Kepler discovered that, for certain planets, the ratios of their maximum and minimum angular velocities—at perihelion and aphelion, respectively—approximate harmonic ratios. The greater the eccentricity of the orbit, the greater the ratio. For instance, Mercury has a high eccentricity, and its ratio is 12/5, corresponding to an octave plus a minor third. By contrast,

Venus's orbit is nearly circular, and its ratio is only 25/24—no more than a “comma.” Ratios

for the planets known in Kepler's time are listed in Table 5.⁴⁹

Table 5. Kepler's Planetary Musical Intervals

Planet	Eccentricity	Velocity Ratio	Musical Interval	Choir Section
Venus	0.007	25/24	Comma	Alto
Earth	0.017	16/15	Semitone	Alto
Jupiter	0.048	6/5	Minor third	Bass
Saturn	0.054	5/4	Major third	Bass
Mars	0.093	3/2	Fifth	Tenor
Mercury	0.206	12/5	Octave + minor third	Soprano

A planet's velocity varies as it orbits the sun, and Kepler imagined the planets “singing” ascending and descending scales within their ranges. Mercury's range was more than one octave, whereas Earth's was a mere semitone, and Venus' a single note. Kepler suggested that the celestial choir consisted of a tenor (Mars), two basses (Saturn and Jupiter), a soprano (Mercury), and two altos (Venus and Earth).⁵⁰ More-recently discovered planets presumably have swelled the choir's ranks. Neptune (eccentricity 0.009) has joined the alto section; Pluto (0.249), is a new soprano; Uranus (0.047) is a new bass; and Ceres (0.076) may be a baritone. Kepler acknowledged that the celestial choir rarely sang in perfect harmony; perhaps it did so only once, at the moment of creation.⁵¹

It has been known since antiquity that planetary motions exhibit mutual resonance, and the concept became clearer after it was recognized that the planets orbit a central sun. For example, Earth makes nearly two revolutions about the Sun, while Mars make one complete revolution. A ratio of 2 might suggest that their relative motions correspond to a musical octave. Saturn's orbital period is twenty-nine years, compared with Jupiter's twelve years, a ratio of nearly 5/2, an octave plus a major third. The closest resonance is between Earth and Venus. Eight revolutions of Earth and thirteen revolutions of Venus differ by less than one day. Unfortunately, the ratio of 13/8 does not correspond closely to a note on the musical

scale—it is 40 cents, nearly a quarter of a tone, above a major sixth. No exact resonances exist in the Solar System, and attempts to identify musically relevant patterns have met with little success.

More promising is the Titius-Bode Law, named for German astronomers Johann Titius (1729–1796) and Johann Bode (1747–1826). The law hypothesizes that the planets' maximum distance from the Sun—at aphelion—are proportional to $4 + n$, where $n = 0, 3, 6, 12, 24, 48 \dots$. Thus Mercury's maximum orbital radius is proportional to 4, Venus' to 7, Earth's to 10, Mars' to 16, and so forth. Division by 10 yields the distances in conventional Astronomical Units. Each of the outer planets is nearly twice as far away as its predecessor, like musical octaves. The Titius-Bode Law was a good fit for the planets known at the end of the eighteenth century; moreover, it correctly predicted the orbits of Ceres and Uranus, before they were discovered. But it failed to predict the orbits of Neptune and Pluto.⁵²

Music and Modern Esoteric Teachings

Systems of tuning based on integer ratios may have been abandoned. Yet the number 2 retains its significance as the frequency ratio of the octave. It signifies duality, but it also calls to mind the Second Aspect of Deity, Love-Wisdom. The Second Aspect is the form-building aspect of divinity.

Pythagoras is believed to have been a previous incarnation of the Master Koot Hoomi, who now heads the great Second Ray ashram in the Planetary Hierarchy.⁵³ According to Theosophist Charles Leadbeater, Koot Hoomi is an accomplished musician, owning a musical instrument that can be played as either a piano or a three-manual organ. The instrument, used to communicate with the Gandharvas, creates “combinations of sound never to be heard on the physical plane.”⁵⁴

Music and Creation

The great esoteric teachers all spoke of the role of sound in the creation of the universe. Helena Blavatsky spoke of the Buddhist deity Kwan-Yin, “the Divine Voice,” who called forth “the Universe out of Chaos and the Seven Elements.” Kwan-Yin, she added, dwells in “the ‘melodious heaven of Sound.’”⁵⁵ Elsewhere, Blavatsky commented that “sound and rhythm are closely related to the four Elements of the Ancients.”⁵⁶

Within the Master Koot Hoomi’s ashram, several other masters head subsidiary Second Ray ashrams, among them the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul, who dictated the books of Alice Bailey. Like Pythagoras and Plato, the Tibetan invoked the musical analogy to describe creation: “God created by the power of sound, and the ‘music of the spheres’ holds all life in being (note that phrase).”⁵⁷ Torkom Saraydarian, one of his senior disciples, explained in more detail:

Sound is the source of all that exists in the Universe. Each atom, each form on any level is composed of sound. The Ageless Wisdom teaches that all communication between created forms is based on sound, sound that is audible and sound that is inaudible. Sound manifests also as light and as energy. . . . [T]he continuity of sound brought into existence seven Cosmic Planes. Each Plane is becoming an octave with seven notes.⁵⁸

We are told that there are seven cosmic planes. The lowest, the cosmic “physical plane,” is divided into the seven *systemic planes* of our Solar System. In turn, each systemic plane is

divided into seven systemic subplanes, for a total of forty-nine levels of reality in which, to quote *Acts* 17:28, we denizens of the Solar System, live and move and have our being. Saraydarian commented: “These forty-nine planes of Creation are seven octaves, the various combinations of which are the Existence. The Creator is a Composer.”⁵⁹

Within the planes and subplanes certain musical correspondences are valid, including resonances among “notes” an octave apart. For example, resonance exists between the fourth etheric subplane—counting from above—and the fourth systemic plane, the buddhic plane. Resonances also exist among the first, *atomic*, subplanes of each plane.

The Logos is both triune and septenary: manifesting in the three aspects of Will, Love-Wisdom, and Active Intelligence, and also manifesting through the seven rays, which “color” the whole of creation.⁶⁰ “From the One who is seven goes forth a word. That word reverberates along the line of fiery essence.”⁶¹ There are, we understand, seven sacred planets in the solar system.⁶² Likewise, Man, made in the image of God, is both triune and septenary. Man consists of monad, soul and personality. He also has seven vehicles, or “bodies,” and seven major chakras.

Theosophists Harriette and Homer Curtiss urged that “all occult students form some definite idea of the true meanings and relations of sound, number, color and form, for they stand at the foundation of occult training. . . . For everything in Nature has its voice which speaks in tones so positive that it cannot mislead, if we open our ears to it.”⁶³ The various elements of the human constitution resonate to, and are influenced by, musical tones and chords. The Curtisses commented on the “key-note of the personality”:

That which is called the keynote of any personality is never one musical tone, but a combination of tones, a chord. There are many ways of finding this chord, but the surest way is by listening in the Silence, first asking for guidance, and striving to harmonize yourself with the Divine that is within you, . . . then endeavoring to silence

all other activities of your mind and listen for the answer.⁶⁴

Djwhal Khul's teachings of the subject reveal significant similarities to Plato's discourses on the relationships among body, soul, and spirit.⁶⁵ The Tibetan did not require the soul and personality to occupy precise mathematical fractions of the distance between spirit and body, but he did relate them to musical intervals. Moreover, man's spiritual evolution involves the gradual establishment of harmony:

At first, there is dissonance and discord... and a fight between the Higher and the Lower. But as time progresses, and later with the aid of the Master, harmony of color and tone is produced (a synonymous matter), until eventually you will have the basic note of matter, the major third of the aligned Personality, the dominant fifth of the [soul], followed by the full chord of the Monad or Spirit.⁶⁶

It is interesting that the Tibetan mentioned the major third, which, under Pythagorean, and even just intonation tuning, caused problems because of discord with the tonic-dominant combination. As noted, eventually the problems were solved by tonal temperament. Although temperament was widely condemned as an affront to divine integer ratios, perhaps it helped fight the prevailing "dissonance and discord."

The creative process of sound, which brought the universe into being, is ongoing. Moreover, it is mirrored on a smaller scale in the lives of disciples:

It might be of value here if students realized that every good speaker is doing a most occult work. A good lecturer (for instance) is one who is doing work that is analogous on a small scale to that done by the solar Logos. . . . He constructs the form, and then when it is constructed, he finishes up by playing the part of the first Person of the Trinity putting his Spirit, vitality and force into it so that it is a vibrant, living manifestation. When a lecturer or speaker of any kind can accomplish that, he can always hold his audience and his audience will always learn from him; they will recognize

that which the thought form is intended to convey.⁶⁷

Music, Color, and the Devas

Blavatsky reminded us "that every sound in the visible world awakens its corresponding sound in the invisible realms, and arouses to action some force or other on the Occult side of Nature. Moreover, every sound corresponds to a color and a number."⁶⁸

Theosophist Geoffrey Hodson, who conducted joint research with organist Gordon Kingsley, clairvoyantly saw color and forms on the mental and astral planes when certain pieces of music were played. Some of Hodson's impressions were painted by artists and reproduced along with descriptions in his book *Music Forms*.⁶⁹ Hodson observed that "each note, when sounded or sung, produces in addition to wide-ranging effects, a typical form in super physical matter. These forms are colored by the way the sound is produced, and the size of the form is decided by the length of time in which a note is sounded or sung."⁷⁰ Kingsley commented on the key and principal theme in Bach's C-Sharp Minor Prelude:

The minor key always tends to produce a drooping form in contradistinction to the major with its upraised, turreted tendencies. In addition, we have the theme itself as well as the various melodies of the composition repetitions of the theme, all of which move downward. . . . However, the effect upon the hearer is not one of gloom, but of an inward searching, quite in keeping with the mystical character of the key of C sharp minor.⁷¹

In a similar vein, Austrian esotericist Rudolph Steiner declared:

Musical creations . . . must be generated anew again and again. They flow onward in the surge and swell of their harmonies and melodies, a reflection of the soul, which in its incarnations must always experience itself anew in the onward-flowing stream of time. Just as the human soul is an evolving entity, so its reflection here on earth is a flowing one.⁷²

On another occasion, Steiner observed that “on earth, we can speak and sing only by means of air, and in the air formations of the tone element we have an earthly reflection of a soul-spiritual element. This soul-spiritual element of tone belongs in reality to the super-sensible world, and what lives here in the air is basically the body of tone.”⁷³

Helena Blavatsky gave teachings on sound and color to special advanced classes. The material was compiled into a “third volume” of her magnum opus, *The Secret Doctrine*. Blavatsky provided tables of correspondences among

notes of the scale (which she designated by the *solfège* syllables: Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La and Si), numbers, colors, planets, the days of the week, metals, and the human principles in Theosophy. Like Nicomachus, she assigned the Moon to the major seventh, but otherwise her planetary correspondences differed from earlier ones.

Blavatsky’s correspondences are summarized in Table 6.⁷⁴ Based on her planetary correspondences, and to some extent the colors, we also may theorize correspondences with the Seven Rays. These are shown in Table 7.

Table 6. Musical Correspondences from Blavatsky

Number	Degree or Pitch	Color	Planet	Day of the Week	Metal	Human Principle
1	Do	Red	Mars	Tuesday	Iron	Kāma Rūpa, the Seat of Animal Life
2	Re	Orange	Sun (or Vulcan, an undiscovered inter-Mercurial planet)	Sunday	Gold	Prāna, or Life Principle
3	Mi	Yellow	Mercury	Wednesday	Mercury	Buddhi, or Spiritual Soul
4	Fa	Green	Saturn	Saturday	Lead	Lower Manas, or Animal Soul
5	Sol	Blue	Jupiter	Thursday	Tin	Auric Envelope
6	La	Indigo or Dark Blue	Venus	Friday	Copper	Higher Manas, Spiritual Intelligence
7	Si (or Ti)	Violet	The Moon	Monday	Silver	Chhāyā, Shadow or Double

It is possible to design meditations that take advantage of these correspondences in order to be in harmony with the energy of the day and/or the ruling planets of the current ruling astrological sign. For example, a meditation at the full moon of Pisces, ruled by Jupiter, may

include a visualization of the color blue and an intonation of the Sacred Word on the note G. The same procedures might be followed for a meditation on Thursday, ruled by the planet Jupiter.

Table 7. Implied Ray Correspondences for Musical Pitches

Degree or Pitch	Ray	Degree or Pitch	Ray
Do	Ray 6	Sol	Ray 2
Re	Ray 1	La	Ray 5
Mi	Ray 4	Si (or Ti)	Ray 7
Fa	Ray 3		

The effectiveness of chanting depends on the purity of the vowels sounded. In this regard, an understanding of the formants—the patterns of harmonics in the voice—may be especially important. The reader is referred to the discussion of formants earlier in this article.

The correspondences presented above are open to differences of opinion and interpretation. The subject of color, and doubtless music as well, is subject to occult “blinds,” or a substitution of imprecise or incorrect knowledge to protect the inexperienced student, or perhaps to make him or her think things out in an effort to resolve the apparent contradictions. For example, in Tables 6 and 7, Blavatsky equates the note G with the color blue. In the following passage on the passing out of the Sixth Ray and the coming in of the Seventh Ray, however, the Tibetan Master seems to equate the note G with violet and the Seventh Ray of Ceremonial Magic. He also associates the color blue with the Sixth Ray of Devotion:

The blue ray of devotion passes now into the violet of what we term the ceremonial ray. What do these words mean? Simply that the great Musician of the universe is moving the keys, is sounding another note and thus bringing in another turn of the wheel, and swinging into the arc of manifestation the ray of violet, the great note G.⁷⁵

In his clairvoyant investigations, Hodson observed that the devas were involved with the performance of music and the generation of music forms. Esotericist and composer Cyril

Scott wrote that certain composers, such as Richard Wagner, César Franck, and Alexander Scriabin were particularly influenced by the deva evolution. According to Scott, music in the future will be used “to bring people into yet closer touch with the Devas,” and that people “will be enabled to partake of the benefic influence of these beings while attending concerts at which by the appropriate type of sound they have been invoked.”⁷⁶

Much more can be said about music, color, the rays, and the deva evolution. These topics will be explored in detail in future articles. The present comments are included to indicate the direction the larger research program is heading.

Music and Service

The composition and performance of music can be great acts of service. Music has the potential to bring about transformative effects at physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels. Music’s ability to heal maladies of body and soul was known in many ancient cultures and, as noted, is said to have been employed by Pythagoras. Today, music therapy is an important element of complementary medicine. The long tradition of sacred music affirms trust in its efficacy in raising human consciousness.

Virtuoso performance can, of course, express music’s highest excellence. But to sing in a choir or play in an orchestra or band—even of less obvious quality—is group service, expressing harmony in multiple senses of the word. The Tibetan Master emphasized the beneficial effects of music:

The soul on its tiny scale can create “the new man” by the power also of sound, and a musical rhythm can usefully be imposed upon the personality life by the disciple. . . . Let love and light and music enter more definitely into your daily life. Spurn not this practical suggestion, but give your mind the opportunity, through the massed sound of music, to break down the personality-imposed barriers between the free flow of soul life and you.⁷⁷

Moreover, he looked forward to a time when music will play a more specific role: “In time to come the value of the combination of music,

chanting, and rhythmic movement will be comprehended, and it will be utilized for the achieving of certain results. Groups of people will gather together to study the creative effects, or the purificatory efficacy of ordered sound joined to movement and unity.”⁷⁸ The potential for human service is impressive. In the future, we are told, man will rediscover some of the powers of music to alter matter. One of these powers

will grow out of the study of sound and the effect of sound and will put into man’s hands a tremendous instrument in the world of creation. Through the use of sound the scientist of the future will bring about his results; through sound, a new field of discovery will open up; the sound which every form in all kingdoms of nature gives forth will be studied and known and changes will be brought about and new forms developed through its medium. One hint only may I give here and that is, that the release of energy in the atom is linked to this new coming science of sound.⁷⁹

Sound can also be destructive in intent, helping to break up forms that have outlived their usefulness. Sound plays an all-important role when individuals with Fourth Ray souls approach the fourth initiation: “When the egoic note is sounded in harmony with other egos, the result is the shattering of the causal body, dissociation from the lower and the attainment of perfection.”⁸⁰

Conclusions

This article has examined music theory and practice, from antiquity to the present, to identify the mathematical underpinnings of musical harmony and to explore their esoteric significance. Vibration and rhythm are built into the very fabric of reality. For its part, mathematics has succeeded in modeling the physical universe to a degree that amazes scientists. For example, Hungarian mathematical physicist Eugene Wigner exclaimed: “It is difficult to avoid the impression that a miracle confronts us here.”⁸¹ In many areas mathematics transcends the physical, and for many people, including many mathematicians, it merges

into mysticism. Mathematics may be considered a branch of esotericism in its own right.

Not surprisingly, the relationship between music and mathematics, and their mutual relationship with esotericism, are subjects of profound importance. To study these subjects is of intrinsic value, as well as enhancing the experience of musical composition, performance and audition.

As the Pythagoreans—a term that should include the Samian’s predecessors and successors—were well aware, music and number are closely correlated. To a lesser but still important extent musical intervals have geometric correlations. While the vision of usable musical scales defined solely by integer ratios was never realized, many of the mathematical correlations survive.

The most important number in music theory is obviously 2; each octave in the ascending musical scale represents a doubling of frequency. Within the octave, frequency ratios based on 2, 3, and possibly 5 have been abandoned, but in their place we have fractional powers of 2 and cents, their linearized logarithmic transforms. “Two,” the *duad*, is the first emanation from the primeval Unity; it is the feminine principle which, together with the primeval masculine, makes possible the emergence of complexity and infinite potential. Importantly, the Second Aspect of Deity is the form-building aspect, perhaps mirroring the role of sound in creation.

The natural numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4... define the harmonic series. In addition to the duad, two numbers of great importance in music are 7 and 12: the number of notes in the diatonic and chromatic scales, respectively. Seven, or 3 + 4, and the largest prime less than 10, has always been considered a number of major esoteric significance. The *heptad*, “sacred number,” or “virgin number,” was encoded in the seven days of the week, the seven Christian sacraments, and the seven colors of the spectrum. Modern esoteric teachings have added the seven rays, the seven sacred planets, the seven planes, and the seven major chakras. Twelve, or 3 × 4, is also of major esoteric significance. The *duodecad* was encoded in the twelve tribes

of Israel, the twelve disciples of Christ, the twelve months of the year, the twelve signs of the zodiac, and the twelve hours of the day or night. Esoteric teachings have added the twelve Creative Hierarchies.

Defining the major third in the musical scale was challenging and became a critical factor leading to the abandonment of integer ratios and the acceptance of temperament. Yet, even in the modern musical scale, the fourth and fifth remain close to the Pythagorean frequency ratios of $4/3$ and $3/2$, respectively. The chord consisting of the root, major third and fifth is one of the most common in musical composition, and modern esoteric teachings relate the major third to the integrated personality and the fifth to the soul.

Whether Pythagoras could hear the harmony of the spheres, we shall never know. But we do know that sound waves cannot propagate through interplanetary space, so any such harmony must be sought either in mathematical relationships or in extra-physical realms of awareness. As Kepler's work demonstrated, interest in the harmony of the spheres survived the transition from a geocentric to a heliocentric understanding of the Solar System. The notion of planets of a "celestial choir," whose vocal range depended on orbital eccentricity, was an evocative concept—even though it raises many questions. Like Isaac Newton, born twelve years after Kepler's death, Kepler's scientific investigations were overlaid with powerful insights into higher reality.

The spoken word, the sacred AUM, or various forms of celestial music have played critical roles in the creation myths of the world religions. Sound had the ability to produce order out of chaos, and, as the Pythagoreans declared, certain musical intervals had special potency in that regard. Modern science has demonstrated sound's organizing power by Ernst Chladni's sand patterns on a vibrating plate and by the acoustic levitation and manipulation of small objects.⁸² Sound waves may have played a role in the formation of galaxies in the early universe. In the phenomenon of sonoluminescence, sound waves can cause bubbles of liquid to implode and emit bursts of light.

Music has had an enormous impact on human civilization. War cries, work songs, lamentations, hymns of joy or praise, lullabies, music in entertainment, sacred music: the list is almost endless. Music has a profound influence on the human constitution, from the physical, to the emotional and mental levels, and beyond.

Cyril Scott wrote that in the future, the unity of color and sound will be realized, along with its healing and stimulating effects.⁸³ Synesthesia is a rare condition today, but it draws attention to the relationship between music and color, supporting esoteric teachings on the convergence of sound and color on the higher planes. It may also promise an evolutionary future in which much larger numbers of people are so-gifted.

The work of Geoffrey Hodson and others has drawn attention to music's power to attract devic beings, and much of the power of sacred ritual no doubt lies in devic participation. Esoteric teachings alert us to the role that senior disciples in the Fourth Ray Ashram may have played, throughout history, in the composition and performance of music intended to stimulate the unfoldment of human consciousness. We understand that the Fourth Ray will begin to come into manifestation in 2025, and the joint efforts of the Planetary Hierarchy, the Deva Evolution, and enlightened humanity will result in a new golden age of music and the arts.

This article has touched on just a few aspects of the esoteric significance of music. Much more remains to be done, to understand our musical heritage, to encourage relevant discipleship work, and to prepare for the time when humankind is entrusted with "a tremendous instrument in the world of creation."

¹ Online at: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jan_van_Eyck_-_The_Ghent_Altarpiece_-_Angels_Playing_Music_-_WGA07644.jpg. Image from Web Gallery of Art. This is a photographic reproduction of a two-dimensional, public domain work of art. The work of art itself is in the public domain for the following reason:

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- ² James Owen, "Bone Flute Is Oldest Instrument, Study Says," *National Geographic News* (June 24, 2009). Online: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2009/06/090624-bone-flute-oldest-instrument.html>. (Last accessed Jan. 27, 2015.)
 - ³ Genesis 1:1,3, KJV. Emphasis added.
 - ⁴ Job 38:7, KJV.
 - ⁵ See for example Ernest G. McClain, *The Myth of Invariance* (York Beach, ME, Nicholas-Hays, 1976); R. A. Schwaller de Lubicz, *The Temple of Man* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1981.)
 - ⁶ Alice A. Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar* (New York: Lucis: 1922), 60.
 - ⁷ See for example: Celeste Jamerson, *Franz Liszt and the Seven Rays, The Esoteric Quarterly* (Spring 2014), 15; Donna M. Brown, *Richard Wagner: An Esoteric Perspective, The Esoteric Quarterly* (Winter 2015), 55.
 - ⁸ The product of frequency and wavelength is the speed of sound, which increases with temperature. As the temperature increases, a particular note is associated with a progressively shorter wavelength, and musical instruments have to be retuned when moved from one performance environment to another. The wavelengths quoted here correspond to typical room temperature.
 - ⁹ A standard piano keyboard runs from A0 to C8; thus A4 is the fifth A from the bottom of the range.
 - ¹⁰ In scientific pitch, the frequency of every C in the musical scale is an integral power of 2.
 - ¹¹ Ten octaves correspond precisely to a ratio of 2^{10} , or 1,024, in frequency.
 - ¹² The frequency of a vibrating string also depends on the string's tension and its density (mass per unit length).
 - ¹³ Online: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Spectrogram_-iua-.png. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license. Created by en.User:ish ishwar in 2005. (Last accessed March 21, 2015.)
 - ¹⁴ "Harmonic intervals," in this context, refer to the simultaneous sounding of notes, without any implication that the notes belong to the harmonic series, or that they necessary sound "harmonious."
 - ¹⁵ An exception to this is the harmonic minor scale, which contains an augmented second (one and a half steps) between the 6th and 7th scale degrees, or notes of the scale. In the harmonic A-minor scale, these notes would be F and G#. Further explanation of scale degrees is given at the end of this section.
 - ¹⁶ The reader may verify that multiplying 1.059463... (the decimal equivalent of $2^{1/12}$) by itself twelve times produces the value 2. The 1/12th power of 2, $2^{1/12}$, can also be written as $^{12}\sqrt{2}$, the 12th root of 2.
 - ¹⁷ The general rule for multiplying numbers raised to powers is $x^a \times x^b = x^{(a+b)}$.
 - ¹⁸ The transformation: $1200\log_2 r$, where r is the frequency ratio, was proposed in the 1830s by Frenchmen Gaspard de Prony and Robert Bosanquet.
 - ¹⁹ To understand why an interval extending over two notes is called a "third," think of fence posts. Three posts are needed to support two spans of fence.
 - ²⁰ The natural minor scale is also referred to as the Aeolian mode. The variants have different semitone patterns.
 - ²¹ When remote keys and harmonies are accessed, the use of the double flat and the double sharp also occur from time to time.
 - ²² *Liber Usualis* (Tournai, Belgium: Desclee, 1961), 1,504. Each of the first six phrases of the hymn begins on a higher note of the scale, and the second through sixth phrase begin with the syllables mi, fa, sol and la. A recording of the hymn and accompanying score can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-WtmOniiRw>. (Last accessed March 30, 2015.)
 - ²³ Pianos are designed so that strings are struck one-seventh the way along their length to suppress the discordant seventh harmonic.
 - ²⁴ The figure is a modified form of an image provided in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circle_of_fifths.
 - ²⁵ The root characterizes the chord but is not necessarily the lowest of the several pitches. The situation in which one or more pitches lie below the root is referred to as *inversion*.
 - ²⁶ Franchino Gaffurio, *Theoretica Musica*, 1492.
 - ²⁷ This instrument, with a string length of one meter (39.4 inches), was constructed by one of the authors.
 - ²⁸ Primes are used here simply to denote octaves above an arbitrary C on the musical scale. C' is one octave, and C'' two octaves, above the reference C. This notation should not be confused

- with the archaic Helmholtz pitch system, in which primes denoted specific octaves.
- ²⁹ The more practical solution would be to take the geometric mean of the ratios for F and G: $\sqrt[3]{(4/3 \times 3/2)} = 1.414\dots$, or precisely 500 cents. But this result was unacceptable to the Pythagoreans because it could not be expressed as a ratio of integers.
- ³⁰ The authors are indebted to a reviewer for drawing attention to this usage by modern composers.
- ³¹ That the comma occurred after *twelve* fifths and *seven* octaves seems to resonate with the tradition that there are seven notes in the diatonic and twelve in the chromatic scale.
- ³² See for example: Stuart Isacoff, *Temperament* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2001), 97-118.
- ³³ Some authorities apply the term “just intonation” to all tuning systems based on integer ratios. They refer to systems in which 5 is the largest admissible prime number as “five-limit tuning.” Correspondingly, Pythagorean tuning, where 3 is the largest admissible prime number, becomes “three-limit tuning.”
- ³⁴ Isacoff, *Temperament*, 182.
- ³⁵ McClain, *The Myth of Invariance*, 11.
- ³⁶ Dane Rudhyar, *The Magic of Tone and the Art of Music* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 1982), 167-68.
- ³⁷ The same is true of the ratios: 1, 4/3, 3/2, 2. The arithmetic mean of any two numbers a and b is defined as $(a + b)/2$. The harmonic mean is $2ab/(a + b)$, and the geometric mean is $\sqrt[3]{ab}$.
- ³⁸ For an extensive discussion of the arithmetic, harmonic and geometric means of these numbers, and their geometric and numerological significance, see David Fideler, *Jesus Christ: Sun of God* (Wheaton, IL: Quest, 1993), 87-101, 220-223.
- ³⁹ Christianity preserved the sacredness of the heptad in the seven sacraments, seven cardinal virtues, and seven deadly sins. Esoteric teachings preserve it in several correspondences to be discussed shortly.
- ⁴⁰ Plato, *Timaeus* 31C-32C. Desmond Lee (ed.), *Timaeus and Critias* (London: Penguin Classics, 1965), 44.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 31C.
- ⁴² The formula is interpreted as $F/A = A/W$, $A/W = W/E$. Solving for W and A in terms of A and F, we obtain $W = (E^2F)^{1/3}$, $A = (EF^2)^{1/3}$. With $E = 1$, $F = 2$, the end-result is $W = 2^{1/3}$, $A = 2^{2/3}$.
- ⁴³ “Pythagoras,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pythagoras/>. (Last accessed March 14, 2015.)
- ⁴⁴ Fabre d’Olivet, *The Secret Lore of Music*, trans. Joscelyn Godwin from the 1928 Edition of Jean Pinasseau (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 1987).
- ⁴⁵ The Fibonacci (“son of Bonnaci”) series, named for Leonardo Bonacci (c.1170–c.1250), is a series of integers in which each term is the sum of the previous two. The Fibonacci series has strong connections with the spiral configurations found in plant and animal species, and with the Golden Rectangle, encoded in the architecture of many ancient buildings.
- ⁴⁶ Flora R. Levin, *The Manual of Harmonics of Nicomachus the Pythagorean* (Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes), 1994, 47-53.
- ⁴⁷ Henry C. Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (trans. J. Freake), reprint (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn), 1651/2006, book 2, ch 26, 339.
- ⁴⁸ Article on “Robert Fludd.” Online: http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Robert_Fludd.aspx. It will be noted that the string positions of the second octave are incorrect. See the comment in Kenneth S. Guthrie, *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library* (Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes), 1987, 326.
- ⁴⁹ The eccentricity of an ellipse is defined as $\sqrt{1 - b^2/a^2}$, where a and b are the major and minor axes, respectively. The planetary eccentricities listed in Figure 11 are based on modern observations.
- ⁵⁰ The alto lines in many four-part choral works are constrained in range and, in the view of some choristers, tuneless. Kepler evidently had a strong opinion in that regard, assigning to the alto section Venus who could sing only a single note.
- ⁵¹ Johannes Kepler, *Harmonices Mundi* (trans.: Charles G. Watts), 1619/1939, §§5-6, 34-43.
- ⁵² The largest errors, on the order of 5 percent, occur for Mars and Saturn. The law predicts Jupiter’s orbit almost exactly. But Pluto’s orbit is only one-half of the predicted distance.
- ⁵³ Charles W. Leadbeater, *The Masters and the Path* (Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1953), 272. See also Manly P. Hall, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* (Los Angeles: Philosophical Research Society), 1928, 65.
- ⁵⁴ Leadbeater, *The Masters and the Path*, 34-35.
- ⁵⁵ Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I (Los Angeles: Theosophical University Press, 1888), 137.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 307.

- ⁵⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age II* (New York: Lucis, 1955), 699-700. Parenthesis in original.
- ⁵⁸ Torkom Saraydarian, *The Creative Sound* (Cave Creek, AZ: TSG Publishing Foundation, 1999), 33.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 116.
- ⁶⁰ The mathematical result mentioned earlier, that there are seven possible combinations of three elements, can be viewed as a metaphor for the progression of divine manifestation from the trinity to the seven rays.
- ⁶¹ Alice Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, I (New York: Lucis), 1962, 63
- ⁶² Bailey, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, 2.
- ⁶³ Harriette A. & F. Homer Curtiss, *The Voice of Isis* 2/e (Los Angeles: Curtiss Book Co., 1914), 356. The Curtisses founded the Order of Christian Mystics in 1908.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 358.
- ⁶⁵ John F. Nash, "Plato: A Forerunner," *The Beacon* (July/August 2004), 18-24. There is speculation that the Master Djwhal Khul might be the reincarnation of Plato.
- ⁶⁶ Alice A. Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation* (New York: Lucis, 1922), 62. Parenthesis in original.
- ⁶⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (New York: Lucis, 1925), 979.
- ⁶⁸ Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, III (Benares, India: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1897), 451.
- ⁶⁹ Hodson, Geoffrey. *Music Forms: Superphysical Effects of Music Clairvoyantly Observed* (Adyar, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1976), vii.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., 19.
- ⁷¹ Ibid., 21-22.
- ⁷² Rudolf Steiner, lecture, Nov. 12, 1906. Rudolf Steiner Archives. Online: <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA283/English/AP1983/19061112p01.html>. (Last accessed March 17, 2015.)
- ⁷³ Rudolf Steiner, lecture, Dec. 2, 1922. Rudolf Steiner Archives. Online: <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA283/English/AP1983/19221202p01.html>. (Last accessed March 17, 2015.)
- ⁷⁴ Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Esoteric Writings of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky: A Synthesis of Science, Philosophy and Religion* (Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House, 1980), 379 and Diagram II after 360. "Originally published in 1907 as volume 3, Occultism, of The Secret Doctrine."
- ⁷⁵ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, I (New York: Lucis, 1962), 121-122.
- ⁷⁶ Cyril Scott, *Music and Its Secret Influence throughout the Ages* (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2013), 91-97, 113-18, 127-29, and 193. Reprint of 1933 edition with new introduction by Desmond Scott.
- ⁷⁷ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age II*, 700.
- ⁷⁸ Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation*, 196-199.
- ⁷⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (New York: Lucis, 1934), 335.
- ⁸⁰ Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation*, 17.
- ⁸¹ Eugene P. Wigner, (1960). "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Natural Sciences." Richard Courant lecture in mathematical sciences, New York University, May 11, 1959. Reproduced in *Communications on Pure and Applied Mathematics* (Vol. 13, 1960), 1-14.
- ⁸² American Institute of Physics, "Acoustic Levitation Made Simple." Online: <http://www.aip.org/publishing/journal-highlights/acoustic-levitation-made-simple>. (Last accessed March 13, 2015.)
- ⁸³ Scott, *Music and Its Secret Influence*, 194.

The Sonata of the Master Musician

William Meader

Sound gives birth to all that is. It is the power behind existence itself, and the universe is merely its outer effect. At first glance this may seem a strange notion. Yet, within Christian theology we are told that creation came forth in response to the “Word.” In the East we are given to understand that Brahman sang the universe into existence. Both these mythological views hearken to the same notion. That is, that God gave birth to existence through the power of sacred sound. No notion is as important to the understanding of human existence as this idea. If sound is the creative force behind all things, then humanity’s use of it must be examined in this light. It suggests that the words we use and the music we create has far greater implications than normally conceived. The sounds we project into the outer world must eventually be harmonized with the sonata being played by the cosmic symphony and the Master Musician who directs it.

Music is a force that has the power to awaken the heart. When the mind is free from its analytical tendency, the heart is then receptive to the uplifting vibrations concealed within music. Lofty music is a great transmitter of love, and its gate of entrance is the heart chakra within each of us. Indeed, the heart is the place where music (in its highest form) is destined to touch. In our society music most often reaches the masses through the solar plexus — the chakra that gives rise to emotion and desire. This is why music becomes important as a person enters the adolescent phase of life. During that time, one’s emotional nature is becoming increasingly active, and likewise does the solar plexus. The music of one’s youth is therefore laden with emotion. Yet, as one matures (and the soul becomes more influential in his/her life) music will increasingly be felt in the heart, not the solar plexus. Love will then be experienced — a thing quite different than emotion or desire. This is the true destiny of

music, at least when considering its role as a force that facilitates spiritual development. It is through the heart chakra that lofty music is realized, and the heart is the outer representative of the soul hidden deep within.

Sound can be used for both good and ill. This is most easily recognized in the words we use in dialogue with others. Human speech is a means by which we share ideas. It is the art of shaping sounds into words or lyrics that will touch others in some way. The words we speak inevitably create outer effects. When loving and wise, these words (sounds) will have an uplifting effect upon those they touch. Conversely, when motivated by lack of insight or selfish intent, language can be antithetical to the well-being of others, and at times even destructive. Here we see the power of sound as it is conveyed in the spoken word. In truth, this principle is at the heart of the soul’s creative (magical) process. All things in civilization are the product of ideas transmitted through the power of word, song or artistic expression. Other factors, such as intonation, syntax, volume and cadence all contribute to the power of the sounds we convey through language. Wise consideration as to the words we use is therefore well advised. To shape one’s language with wisdom is to conform to the larger rhythm sounding forth within creation. Evolution demands that a lesser sound must eventually harmonize with the greater sound that has given it birth. This is a spiritual principle of great importance.

About the Author

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The same can be said of the music we create. It too represents a “sounding forth” and therefore has either positive or negative effects. When music leads the listener to touch a deep and meaningful aspect of his/her soul, then its power is evolutionary and profound. In such cases, the listener’s soul becomes the agent of the ear. An inner sense of harmony and spiritual depth is then recognized within music. However, music can also be quite destructive. One only needs to witness the nature of much (but not all) popularized music today to see evidence of this. When dissonance and discord is its major theme, it will tend to create disharmonious effects. Please note the word “major” in the previous sentence. Some music will have dissonance as a feature of its expression, but its larger theme is not dissonance, but instead its resolution. When this is case, it can be a powerful creative force in support of the soul and its development. It provides the listener with an inner sense of the drama of evolution. In many ways, spiritual transformation is based on the notion that the personality and soul are slowly evolving their relationship from one of dissonance to one of harmonious rapport. It is a musical interaction occurring over the course of countless lives. Therefore music that highlights (through chord progression) the struggle to achieve harmony out of chaotic discord is symbolically consistent with the drama of evolution itself. It therefore has great value to a human being because it shapes his/her consciousness with a sensed understanding that through crisis a higher harmony will be found.

Looked at with greater depth, esoteric literature suggests that the soul is sounding a note and is doing so for the entire duration of an incarnation. This note represents the soul’s essential quality and nature. In the soul’s long evolutionary journey, its intention is to sound

its note through the personality as a means of serving the outer world. Interestingly, the lower self (personality) is also sounding its own independent note. By this is meant that the human personality has a quality of vibration in and of itself. The differences between people (that are most easily recognized) are largely differences evident in the notes (qualities) that their personalities represent. These notes are vibrational. What we consider a personality trait is simply our interpretation of a unique vibrational tone emitted by that personality.

For many incarnations these two notes (soul

and personality) are discordant. This simply means that the personality is inharmonious with the soul’s downward chant. Indeed, for thousands of lives the soul’s tonal whisper is not even heard by the personality. This is because the personality’s note is so loud that it drowns out the subtle sound that the soul continuously sings. Eventually there will come an incarnation when the music of the soul is inwardly sensed for the first time. When this occurs, the personality recognizes that there is a subtle sound behind what it thought itself to be. This then stages the beginning of the spiritual journey, in that the individual now struggles with the problem of how to bring more of the soul into his/her outer personal life. The spiritual journey has to do with the gradual transformation of the personality (its nature and note) so that it willingly yields to the soul’s creative agenda. It is the process, slow and laborious, of blending these two tones so that their dissonance is transformed into harmony and therefore beauty. This transformation involves an adjustment of the personality so that its note begins to resonate with the soul’s chanted tone. This is why living a conscious spiritual life can be so difficult. It involves a tuning up of the lower self, a thing that the personality inherently resists. In some

In truth, every entity within creation is a musical composition in the making, and a human being is no exception. The soul within each of us is sounding its sacred and eternal note. When the personality is willing to “change its tune” so as to resonate to that sacred note, the soul can truly shine forth within one’s life.

cases it may actually require a change of key. Woven into the fabric of spiritual evolution is the fact that soulful harmony must be earned, and this, through the lessons learned as one struggles through dissonance. When this is fully achieved (and held) enlightenment is sure reward.

Within the Esoteric Tradition it is said that someday humanity will discover the means to use sound and music as part of the art of healing. Already it is clear that certain music can have a soothing effect on the human nervous system, which invariably is helpful in the healing process. Music is an amazing tool that can help reduce a person's stress level. In this regard it is often used to facilitate various relaxation and meditation techniques. In the future, the therapeutic implications of music will be understood more fully from a spiritual perspective. The note of the soul will be realized as having a tremendous relationship to a person's health and well-being, both physically and psychologically considered. The nature of death, and the uses of sound in support of the death process, will also be better understood in time. For example, certain sounds presented within the death chamber will facilitate the departure of the soul from its containment within the human body. These sounds will have much relationship to the note of the soul, as well as the tone that is being orchestrated by the Larger Life that the soul is an "instrument" within. Importantly, we are given to understand that the music used at the time of death needs to have a single recurring chord as an overtone that accompanies it. The art of dying is not yet understood within most Western cultures. It is probably accurate to say that we live in a death denying society. Nonetheless, the day will come when our appreciation of death shall be as great as our attachment to life. At that time, death will be understood as an abstracting process of the soul as it yearns to reconnect with the greater melody coming forth from its cosmic birthplace. Music will then be fully understood as a means to support this departure.

As has been stated, sound is the foundation for the emergence of the universe and all things

contained within it. The Greek notion of the "music of the spheres" is a reference to the fact that sound forms the matrix of existence itself. Because sound is related to the universe in this way, its attributes should have correlation to the universe as well. This it surely does. An example of this is rhythm. When we are attentive to the rhythm of music, we are participating in the experience of time, and time is a feature foundational to the universe itself. Herein is found a deep clue as to the nature of music and its relationship to the universe as a whole. Metaphysically considered, as God sounded forth the universe, the principle of rhythm immediately emerged and thus time was born.

In this discussion, we have examined sound from both a practical and metaphysical perspective. Music is a great force in support of human betterment and spiritual evolution. Its usefulness as a tool in support of healing cannot be denied. This will be further developed as we each come to a realization of the sacred sound residing deep within ourselves. Through the effective use of music, the human heart awakens and the oneness of humanity is then truly sensed. Love is rooted in this fact. Esoterically understood, love emerges from the ability to sense the inner unity underlying outer diversity. Uplifting music brings us closer to sensing this underlying unity through the opening of the heart. To touch the heart via music is to find the gate that leads to the soul and beyond.

It must be remembered that creation itself is an expression of sound echoing through (and as) time and space. In truth, every entity within creation is a musical composition in the making, and a human being is no exception. The soul within each of us is sounding its sacred and eternal note. When the personality is willing to "change its tune" so as to resonate to that sacred note, the soul can truly shine forth within one's life. When the soul and personality notes are harmonized, a sacred chord is formed. And when that chord is united with the clarion sound of the cosmic symphony, the music of the spheres is truly known. The sonata of the Master Musician is then heard.

Beauty

Dorje Jinpa

One of the greatest catastrophes to befall humanity occurred when it lost its belief in beauty! What makes this catastrophe so great is the fact that no one seems to notice. Art, the one great avenue of culture that could elevate the quality of life, that could help develop and refine the feeling side of our nature, has degenerated into entertainment, fashion, novelty and worse. Art has lost even the idea of beauty. This is due in part to the dogma of materialism, which believes falsely, that because beauty is “in the eyes of the beholder,” it must therefore be an isolated purely subjective phenomenon relating only to the individual. However, we must remember that the deeper aspects of the subjective universe are collective, universal and therefore have a greater reality than the outer so-called “objective” universe. The idea behind what Jung called the “collective sub-conscious,” can also be applied to the collective super-conscious. The academic says that because beauty is subjective it has only make-believe significance. An awakened consciousness understands that beauty is an expression of that great law of harmony and equilibrium that gives order and rhythm to the universe. Beauty is a universal principle. To perceive the beautiful is to perceive a subtle truth. Beauty, therefore, is the direct expression of the spiritual evolution of consciousness.

The Teacher and author of the books on *Agni Yoga* has indicated that whenever we perceive something that is not beautiful we should know that it is a manifestation of that which opposes spiritual evolution. The truer the manifestation of the archetypal pattern, the more beautiful will be its appearance in form. Hence, when our creations conform to the archetypal pattern behind Evolution, they will be beautiful. Likewise, when we attune our consciousness to beauty, so that it fills us with joy and wonder, we are attuning ourselves to that higher truth which lies behind the manifestation of spirit in form. The creation of beauty, therefore, aligns

the artist with those spiritual forces that move all life toward perfection. “If the creative manifestation arises from the Eternal Pattern,” writes Plato, “it will be beautiful. If it arises from an [arbitrarily] created pattern it will not be beautiful.”¹

Perhaps the time is ripe for a radical new art movement, one that will affirm beauty as the golden mean between the evolution of consciousness and the creative manifestation of that evolution in form. When the principles of beauty are accepted once again, as they were during the great Renaissance of Europe, science, art, and the spiritual quest will merge into one immense creative endeavor for the benefit of the world. “We shall not understand art,” says Rudolf Steiner, “as long as we do not sense in it the longing to experience the spiritual through its expression as beauty.”²

According to the Plotinus, one of the most influential philosophers in the ancient world, beauty arises in form when it corresponds in likeness to the divine idea from which it arose. This is why the forms of nature tend to be more beautiful than the forms created by humanity. The creations of nature correspond with the divine archetypal nature while the creations of human beings, for the most part, do not. Plotinus has said, “When a good man sees in a young person a trace of a virtue, as an inner reality that is also within himself, he is delighted. He is delighted because he perceives beauty.”³

Art and beauty are just as necessary to the evolution of consciousness as language. If language is an expression of the mind, then art is an expression of the heart. Heart and mind, which are the two archetypal aspects of the consciousness principle, must evolve in harmony together. The problem is, in contemporary culture, the mind has been given all the emphasis, while the feeling side of the consciousness is all but ignored. This imbalance is largely due to our present education system,

which develops the concrete mind but leaves the education of the feeling nature to the entertainment industry. Thus instead of elevating and fine tuning our feeling consciousness, that it might be directed toward a higher quality of life, we allow this essentially sacred nature to be debased to the point where we can no longer recognize the harm it is causing. We are creating a race of intellectual giants, who are at the same time, emotional cripples. A dangerous combination!

Just as the complete archetypal pattern of an oak tree is contained in its seed, the acorn, so too the archetypal pattern of a perfected human being is contained within the seed of his spirit. It is this divine seed that provides the fiery impulse, direction and rhythm of our evolution. Through the clear heart and the perceptions of a broadened consciousness, we can become aware of these archetypal patterns of perfection within ourselves. The joy that arises during the first stages of illumination is due in part to the glimpse we receive of the indescribable beauty of these patterns. These divine archetypes are not only beautiful, but as Plato has indicated, they are the very essence and standard of beauty!

The more beautiful the appearance in form the more closely will it correspond with spiritual truth. To strive for beauty then, is to move toward those conditions in our physical and psychic world that correspond with the spiritual path. By refining our perception of beauty, we move closer to the joy of realizing that our true identity is identical with the essential nature of all life. "The closest to perfection," says the Teacher, "will be the path of beauty."⁴

Robert Hughes, in his TV special on PBS, *American Visions*, described a particularly beautiful work of art by saying that in it "all opposites unite in poetic synthesis." This statement could have been used, just as accurately, to describe a law of physics or even a

high and very subtle metaphysical truth. Beauty is the perception of the natural creative expression of essential unity. When it is perceived that the essence of natural law is simple

and beautiful we will begin to experience the beauty of higher truth.

Once it is realized that the laws which govern art, and the laws which govern physics, and the laws which govern the natural growth of the spirit, are the same laws, we can begin to apply the discoveries made in one field to any other. This law of universal

analogy is not a new idea. It formed the basis of Hermetic Science, "As above, so below." But for the past 300 years the scientific method of isolating that which is being investigated into smaller and smaller compartments, though seemingly necessary for the advancement of science, has served to hide for a time the underlying synthesis and holistic beauty of natural law.

If poetry is the language of feeling, then the finest poets are speaking the subtle language of the heart. The Zen poet Daito wrote:

When the eyes hear
And the ears see,
No doubt we will cherish
How naturally the rain drips from the eaves.
When our perceptions go beyond what is normally registered by the senses, perhaps we will begin to understand and delight in the beauty of natural law.⁵

Dante, in the opening lines of his *Paradiso* says:

As I looked deeply into the infinite,
I saw the scattered leaves of the universe
Gathered together and bound by love into one volume.⁶

The evolution of consciousness is motivated primarily through the law of attraction. It is through our attraction to the qualities of spirit

that we find the upward way. The spiritual life is attractive to a refined consciousness because it is so beautiful!

Reverence, love, and the realization of beauty are expressions of a fiery heart. A love for higher truth opens the door to clear perception and as understanding dawns, we begin to see just how beautiful these spiritual principles really are. This opens the door to the sacred even wider until we are literally flooded with revelation, the beauty and grandeur of which is beyond description.

Plotinus taught that the inner vision could be awakened by first looking to all that is beautiful and virtuous in life.

Shut your eyes and awaken that pure inner vision, which all men possess yet few make any use of. And what does this inner vision see? When it is first awakened it cannot at first perceive that which is so radiant with light. And so the soul must first be trained by looking to the beauty in the life around him, then to beautiful works, not those that the arts produce, but the work of Goodness itself. Then look to the souls of those who produce good work. And how is this beauty [of souls] to be perceived? By first looking for it within yourself. If you do not see it there, then just as a sculptor cuts away here and polishes there, till it becomes a beautiful statue, so you too must cut away the excess and straighten the crooked and clear away the dark, making it bright and never stop working on your inner statue till the divine glory of virtue shines out through you, until you see self-mastery enthroned upon its holy seat. If you have become this, if you see it clearly and will be at home with yourself in purity, then there is nothing hindering you from becoming one with the essence of everything while yet remaining wholly yourself, nothing but pure light, not measured by dimensions, either large or small or greatly expanded, neither bounded nor unbounded but everywhere immeasurable because greater than all measure and superior to all quality... It is necessary that the perceiver and the thing perceived be

united before true vision can exist.... You must become beautiful and god-like if you wish to see God and Beauty.⁷

"Any feeling can be cultivated,"⁸ says the Teacher. By cultivating a sense of beauty, we can begin to experience a portion of those beautiful truths and spiritual laws that stand behind the laws of nature. Only a heartfelt experience of the beautiful on earth can prepare us to experience the fiery beauty of the spiritual worlds.

The beauty of spiritual truth is so vast that the closer we approach its central mystery the greater is the realization that there will always be more to experience and understand. The nature of beauty cannot, of course, be described in words beyond stating that it is experienced as a profound bliss and that behind all the inner and outer trappings of life, it ever remains at the very core of our being. The awakening heart consciousness experiences joy for it perceives the beauty and grandeur of its spiritual nature. "The bliss of the yogi," says the Teacher, "is ecstasy over beauty."⁹

In the 1950's an American visited a monastery near Mt. Fuji, in Japan, to practice Zen. After several weeks of nearly continuous Zazen meditation, he discovered that the only way he could judge his progress was by looking to see how beautiful Mt. Fuji appeared as he walked through the monastery gardens. Beauty is the best yardstick for measuring one's progress on the path, not intellectual progress, but spiritual progress. To judge our progress by whether or not we can accurately debate the subtle distinctions of a spiritual teaching can be deceptive, for often our understanding is merely intellectual. The perception of beauty is not dependent upon the intellect, but rather upon a refined and expanded heart consciousness. Buckminster Fuller stated it like this, "When I am working on a problem, I never think about beauty, but when I have finished, if the solution is not beautiful, I know it is wrong."¹⁰

For it is "Precisely, the heart," says the Teacher, that "can open the entrance into the Higher Worlds. No special asceticism is needed. Love, labor and beauty are within the reach of all."¹¹

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- ¹ Plato, "Timaeus," *The Essential Plato*, trans; Benjamin Jowett; Intro; Alain De Botton (New York, NY: Book-of -the Month Club, 1999), 1214.
- ² Rudolf Steiner. From a lecture given December 2, 1922, in Dornach.
- ³ Plotinus, "On Beauty," *The Enneads*, I, 6, (Burdett, NY: Larson Publications, 1992)
- ⁴ Helena Roerich, *Fiery World*, III (New York, NY: The Agni Yoga Society, 1935), 23.
- ⁵ Daito, as quoted from *Living with Zen: A Synthesis of the Historical and Practical Aspects of Zen Buddhism* by D. T. Suzuki (Newburyport, MA: RedWheel / Weiser, 2008), 143.

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- ⁶ Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy: Paradise*, my own paraphrase translation.
- ⁷ Plotinus, "On Beauty," *The Enneads*, I, 6,1.
- ⁸ Helena Roerich, *Aum* (New York, NY: The Agni Yoga Society, 1936), 93.
- ⁹ Helena Roerich, *Brotherhood* (New York, NY: The Agni Yoga Society, 1937), 93.
- ¹⁰ Buckminster Fuller, as quoted in *The Universal Book of Mathematics* David J. Darling, by (Hoboken, NY: Wiley, 2004), 34.
- ¹¹ Helena Roerich, *Supermundane IV* (New York, NY: The Agni Yoga Society, 1938), 812.

Festival of Easter

Resurrection and the Dynamic of Harmlessness

Martin Vieweg

This year, as we gather subjectively to celebrate the Festival of Easter, the topic of our Subjective Group Conference is “Ashramic Work and Harmlessness.” Because it is Easter, a time of new birth and new life in nature, our deliberations will begin with the Spirit of Resurrection, that extra-planetary Being¹ Who “will engender anew the vitality needed to implement the trends of the New Age and Who will guide humanity out of the dark cave of death, isolation and selfishness into the light of the new day. It is this resurrection life that will be poured into humanity at Easter time ... if the men and women of goodwill will think clearly, speak forcefully, demand spiritually and implement the inner plans with intelligence.”²

Resurrection is the keynote of nature; death is not. Death is only the ante-chamber of resurrection. Resurrection is the clue to the world of meaning, and is the fundamental theme of all the world religions – past, present and the future. Resurrection of the spirit in humans, in all forms, in all kingdoms, is the objective of the entire evolutionary process and this involves liberation from materialism and selfishness. In that resurrection, evolution and death are only preparatory and familiar stages. The note and message sounded by the Christ when last on Earth was resurrection, but so morbid has been humanity and so enveloped in glamour and illusion, that His death has been permitted to sidestep understanding; consequently, for centuries, the emphasis has been laid upon death, and only on Easter Day or in the cemeteries is the resurrection acclaimed. This must change. It is not helpful to a progressive understanding of the eternal verities to have this condition perpetuated. The Hierarchy is today dedicated to bringing about this change and thus

altering the approach of humanity to the world of the unseen and to the spiritual realities.³

Because we are coming together at the time of the Full Moon in Aries, we need to consider the influence of this sign and the important role it plays in the “life process” that is resurrection. Resurrection is the objective of the great evolutionary process initiated in Aries, which initiates the cycle of manifestation.”⁴ At this festival, we come together to work consciously with the energies of spiritual power and will pouring into the planet from extra-planetary sources—transmitted to Earth through the great sign of Aries.

Aries is a powerful agent of the First Ray of will or power. It plays an initiating role in the evolutionary process; it is “the ‘initiator of the process that leads to progress.’”⁵ It is the initiator of impulses—both the impulse to incarnate and the impulse to return to the originating source.⁶ Aries, the first sign of the zodiac, governs the turning of the wheel, symbolically, in two directions—clockwise and counterclockwise. Metaphorically, it turns the circle of the wheel of life clockwise from Aries to Taurus via Pisces into the world of form; then, with the reversal of its energies, it rotates the wheel counterclockwise, “returning to Spirit”—transforming the wheel of experience into the wheel of expression and discipleship.

The Tibetan describes the clockwise cycle of *ordinary experience* (which takes lifetimes to complete) as the period for building the instrument of expression for the Soul in the world (the threefold personality vehicle). It is a period of *form development* and incubation. This wheel of time, turning clockwise, is called *the ordinary, outgoing wheel of rebirth*. Eventually the incarnating entity begins to register the faint call of the inner life and decides that

the time is right to turn away from “ordinary living” to embrace the “extraordinary” forcing process that prepares the aspirant to become a disciple. It is Aries that “governs the Path of Discipleship ... the Will to return to the Source.”⁷

To be clear, life as an accepted disciple, facing the Angel of the Presence at the threshold to the inner worlds, may be lifetimes away for the one who stands at this *middle stage* of decision — reversing on the wheel. Yet once the decision has been made, the direction of one’s life shifts most definitely from the Outgoing to the Ingoing Path. Having reoriented on the Path and chosen *the esoteric way* back to the Source, ancient ways of living— habits lifetimes old—undergo dramatic change. The longstanding, entrenched pattern of *getting involved in matter* (identifying with form, pinned to the Mutable Cross of ordinary life) gradually gives way —via an interlude of readjustment—preparing the aspirant to mount the Fixed Cross of discipleship, of the Soul, and ultimately the Cardinal Cross of the Risen Christ, ruled in part by Aries.

According to the Tibetan, the fiery Will, which pours through Aries into our solar system (from a star in the Great Bear), is the “will-to-create *that which will express* the will-to-good.”⁸ This will energy is transmitted to our planet via the First Ray planets, Vulcan and Pluto. Over 18 million years ago, its impact on Earth led to the founding of Shamballa, the center where the divine Will is known.

Envisioning this chain of Will energies pouring into the planet evokes an image of Conscious Lives receiving and transmitting the forces of Will and power, stepping down and distributing the creative forces behind evolution. It provides a useful lens or framework through which to view the creative process. It helps us to see each conscious life as an integral part of a living continuum. The great avatar, Christ—the resurrected, living Christ—is one such link in the order of creation. He is a “living link” in a Chain of Lives, an agent of forces greater than Himself. Specifically, He is an emissary of (among others) the Spirit of Peace. We are told that:

Standing as the focal point of the inner Triangle—of the Buddha, of the Spirit of Peace and of the Avatar of Synthesis—the consequent outpouring potency of the Christ will be so great that the distinction between love and hate, between aggression and freedom, and between greed and sharing will be made lucidly clear to the eyes and minds of all people and, therefore, the distinction between good and evil will be made equally clear. The invocative prayer, “From the point of love within the heart of God, let love stream forth into human hearts” will meet with fulfilment. Christ will let loose into the human world the potency and the distinctive energy of intuitive love. The results of the distribution of this energy of love will be twofold:

1. Countless men and women in every land will form themselves into groups for the promotion of goodwill and for the production of right human relations. So great will be their numbers that, from being a small and relatively unimportant minority, they will be the largest and the most influential force in the world. Through them, the New Group of World Servers will be able to work successfully.
2. This active energy of loving understanding will mobilize a tremendous reaction against the potency of hate. To hate, to be separate, and to be exclusive will come to be regarded as the only sin, for it will be recognized that all the sins—as listed and now regarded as wrong—only stem from hate or from its product, the anti-social consciousness....

The power of the hierarchical spiritual impact, focused through Christ and His working disciples, will be so great that the usefulness, the practicality and the naturalness of right human relations will become so evident that world affairs will rapidly be adjusted and the new era of goodwill and of peace on earth will be inaugurated.⁹

The Spirit of Peace is associated with the First Aspect, the energy of Will.¹⁰ It is “an interplanetary Agent of great power Whose cooperation has been promised if all aspirants and disciples can cooperate to break through the shell of separation and hatred that holds our planet in thrall.”¹¹

[The evocation of the Spirit of Peace] will bring to humanity that stimulation and active desire to participate in the expression of goodwill that will render world peace an effective outcome of wise action and the establishment of right human relations.¹²

The hate that is so dominant in the world today will—through the life of the Spirit of Peace, working through the Christ, the Embodiment of divine Loved—be balanced by an expressed goodwill.¹³

As we ponder on this combination of Will energy (the Spirit of Peace and the influence of Aries) and Love energy (the risen Christ), or atma plus buddhi, we experience the unique influence of the Festival of Easter. And this combination lays the groundwork for addressing our focus this year—harmlessness. “The most potent force in the world today is harmlessness. [It is] that positive attitude of mind that thinks no evil [and] harms naught.”¹⁴ All men and women of goodwill, all aspirants and disciples within the New Group of World Servers—all who seek to cooperate with the Spirit of Resurrection—need to develop harmlessness. Harmlessness, based in goodwill, helps to make us truly effective servers in the world.

“Harmlessness ... is not negative, or sweet or kindly activity, as so many believe; it is a state of mind and one that in no way negates firm or even drastic action; it concerns motive and

involves *the determination that the motive behind all activity is goodwill.*”¹⁵ Harmlessness is a positive state of mind, determining the motive of our actions. It is this positive motive force (along with right purpose) that determines the results of actions we (disciples on the Radiant Way of Resurrection) take in the world: “That motive might lead to positive and sometimes disagreeable action or speech, but as harmlessness and goodwill condition the mental approach, nothing can eventuate but good.”¹⁶

Both atma and buddhi, Will and Love, must come to rule in our lives. It is the fusion of these two energies, and their living embodiment in us and through us, that quickens the light within, opens inner sight, and

empowers our creative acts of service in the world. It is the balance of heart and mind that fosters true harmlessness and ultimately eliminates fear. We may (to use a familiar phrase) “rattle the cage” of others at times—upsetting those who are imprisoned by their own thoughts or fears—but, if our motive is truly harmless, only good will result. “A decision can be made ... (and the decision can be right) but the eventuating conditions may not be harmoniously adjusted unless there is a subjective freedom from fear, a heart full of love and that loving understanding that is the truest wisdom. The person who is fearless, wise and loving can do anything, and the effects will be harmless and good producing.”¹⁷

As disciples on the Path, when we express harmlessness, we are tapping into the energy of the Inner Ashram (on buddhic levels) with which we seek to cooperate. We are, by definition, taking a stand in spiritual being, offering ourselves as conduits of the universal energies of the True Self, expressing the Christ within. We might envision the Ingoing Path, which

Envisioning this chain of Will energies pouring into the planet evokes an image of Conscious Lives receiving and transmitting the forces of Will and power, stepping down and distributing the creative forces behind evolution. It provides a useful lens or framework through which to view the creative process. It helps us to see each conscious life as an integral part of a living continuum.

follows the Aries reversal on the wheel, as that section of the Return Path wherein this positive inner motivation is fostered and developed, along with the other qualities of the Soul. It is a time of trial and testing, intended to prepare the pilgrim on the Way for initiation and eventual entry into the Inner Ashram.

As we align with the Christ Self, we are attuning to the One Who “stands upon the mountain top, breathing out love eternal, light supernal and peaceful, silent Will.”¹⁸ At the same time, in the strength of His Presence, we are invoking the Spirit of Resurrection—“the Sun of Righteousness”—present to all who come together in service at this Festival of Easter. It is through the unfoldment of Soul attributes such as harmlessness (woven into the fabric of our being on the battlefield of life over time) that we heighten our capacity to tread the Way of Return. And it is through our meditations and ruminations on these themes at conferences, such as this one, that we can mobilize the collective power of thought to energize and give life to these inner faculties. We join together—*thinking in the heart*—as souls, pooling our energies to “create in the world of thought those living forms that bring light and help and truth to others.”¹⁹ With a single point of focus we thus sound together in silence the affirmation:

May the Power of the one Life pour
through the group of all true servers.
May the Love of the One Soul characterize
the lives of all who seek to aid the Great
Ones.
May we fulfil our part in the One work
through self-forgetfulness, harmlessness
and right speech.

As we join together in heart and mind to take our place in the Chain of Hierarchy, let us remember that we work not alone, and let us affirm together the immense power of group meditation and unified thought. We are part of a great Chain of Being, and we are sounding a unified note. We are working in cooperation with multitudes of coworkers across the globe, gathered together at this high point in the spiritual year. In the presence of the Christ and the Great Ones, at this full moon of Aries—rising

in consciousness like “the sun of righteousness”—we come forth from the plane of mind, open our hearts, and rule in love.

Never before have there been so many [disciples] endeavoring to fit themselves for this function of being “Transmitters of the Purpose...” Never before has there existed such a strong inner integrity and subjective relation between workers in all fields in all parts of the world. For the first time in history [we are part of] a coherent group for the Masters to use.²⁰

Let the Forces of Light bring illumination
to humankind.

Let the Spirit of Peace be spread abroad.
May people of goodwill everywhere meet
in a spirit of cooperation.

May forgiveness on the part of all be the
keynote at this time.

Let power attend the efforts of the Great
Ones.

So let it be and help us to do our part.²¹

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www.esotericstudies.net/festival-talks.html.

¹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1957), 485.

² Ibid., 457-458.

³ Ibid., 469-470.

⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1951), 92.

⁵ Ibid., 304.

⁶ Ibid., 482.

⁷ Ibid., 152.

⁸ Ibid., 619.

⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Reappearance of the Christ* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1948), 111-112.

¹⁰ Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, 164.

¹¹ Ibid., 26.

¹² Ibid., 397.

¹³ Alice A. Bailey, *The Reappearance of the Christ*, 74-75.

¹⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 1* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1936), 159.

¹⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Healing* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1953), 670. *Italics added.*

¹⁶ Ibid., *italics added*.

¹⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, Vol. 2 (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1955), 143-144.

¹⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *The Reappearance of the Christ*, 13.

¹⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, Vol. 2, 313.

²⁰ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1934), 260.

²¹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, 26.

Festival of Wesak

Distributing Wesak Energies Harmlessly

Dorothy I. Riddle

During the period of the Wesak Festival, the two great Avatars—the Buddha and the Christ—help channel the intense divine Will energy that becomes available for our use to us through Shamballa. We spoke last year about the creation of a chalice to hold that Will energy during the “day of safeguarding”: “As channels, we must be prepared to forget ourselves in the service of touching, containing and holding force for the rest of humanity.”¹ This year we will focus on the two “days of distribution” following the Taurus full moon when “the focus of our attention will be steadily turned away from ourselves but also from the inner subjective planes to the outer world, and our efforts will be to pass on, or to pass through, that measure of spiritual energy that may have been contacted.”²

The process of distribution is not simply one of allowing the Will energy to flow through us thoughtlessly and unimpeded. We know that the Shamballa energy can have negative consequences if not stepped down: “The Shamballa force ... is an aspect of the will and intention of the Planetary Logos but its first and primary effect has been to stimulate the will-to-power and the will-to-have of certain great and unspiritual groups.”³ “You can easily appreciate the fact that the evocation of the energy of the Will and its effect upon the unprepared, materialistically minded person might and would prove a disaster. It would simply serve to focus and strengthen the lower self-will, which is the name we give to realized and determined desire. It could then create such a driving force, directed to selfish ends, that the person might become a monster of wickedness.”⁴

We have also been warned that “individuals must be protected by the group from the terrific potencies that emanate from Shamballa. These must be stepped down for them by the

process of distribution so that the impact is not focused in any one or all of their centers but is shared by all the group members. Here is the clue to the significance of group work. One of its major functions, esoterically speaking, is to absorb, share, circulate, and then distribute energy.”⁵ Indeed, we know that overstimulation can result in physical disease⁶ so we need to actively moderate the flow of this potent Will energy.

How then are we to proceed together in the distribution process? What can we do to ensure that this intense spiritual energy has maximum positive results? How can we bring about the harmlessness that “is a *state of mind* and one that in no way negates firm or even drastic action; [to ensure that] it concerns motive and involves the determination that the motive behind all activity is goodwill”⁷?

Stepping Down Will Energy

It is up to us as aspirants and disciples who stand willing to receive and transmit the Shamballa Will energy to ensure the positive results of Wesak for the human family. In working as a group to step down the Will energy abundantly available during the Festival of Wesak, we have a unique opportunity to consciously mirror the four-stage process through which the Will energy of the One Life manifests. That process is described to us as:

1. It knows Itself as *the transcending Will*, the Will that sees the entire process from the point of initiation, but that limits Itself to the gradual expression of that Will on account of the limitations of those aspects of Itself whose consciousness is not that of the Whole....
2. It knows Itself as *the transmitting Will*, working from the point of synthesis,

stepping down the energies distributed, in line with the creative, evolutionary Plan....

3. It knows Itself as *the transforming Will* or that sustained, applied process that brings about the needed mutations and changes through the action of the constant incentive of the Will-to-Good. Yet at the same time It is not identified in any way with the process....
4. It knows Itself as *the transfiguring Will*. This transfiguration is the fulfilment of purpose and the final expression of synthesis brought about by the sustaining Will-to-Good of the transcending, transmitting, transforming Will.⁸

The Tibetan has admonished us:

Students would do well to shift their eyes off the goal of transfiguration (achieved at the third initiation and increasingly present at each previous initiation) and pay more attention to the recognition of that in them which “having pervaded their little universe with a fragment of Itself *remains*.” They will then have anchored their consciousness in the center of transcending power and guaranteed the flow of the will-to-achieve. From that high point in consciousness (imaginatively reached at first and practically achieved later) they would find it useful to work at the process of transmission, knowing themselves to be agents for the transmission of the Will-to-Good of the Transcendent One. They should next pass on to the stage of transformation wherein they would visualize and expect to see developed the needed transformation carried forward in their lives; then—equally expectant—they should believe in the transfiguration of those lives in line with the Will of the Transcendent One, the success of the Transmitting One, and the activity of the Transforming One—all of Whom are but the One, the Monad, the Self. All this is done by the use of the will, conditioning, fulfilling and overcoming.⁹

What can we learn by reflecting on this four-step process? First, we can exercise restraint, knowing that spiritual development occurs

gradually. The transcending Will operates under the Principle of Limitation, or a willingness to restrict Its expression to what we are able to understand. It is a willingness to slow down the energy flow, so to speak, so that its influence matches what we can absorb. We are most effective if we respect where others are in their process. One of the characteristics of the true server is “*a willingness to let others serve as seems best to them*, knowing that the life flowing through the individual server must find its own channels and outlets, and that direction of these currents can be dangerous and prevent the rendering of the intended service [and so we help] others to ‘stand in spiritual being,’ as we ourselves are learning to stand.... This centers around the capacity to stand, not only in spiritual being, but *together with others*, working with them subjectively, telepathically, and synthetically.”¹⁰

Second, we can recognize our particular role in relation to the Plan as “the intelligent, loving intermediary between the higher states of planetary consciousness, the superhuman states and the subhuman kingdoms. Thus [we] will become eventually the planetary savior.”¹¹ A key word here is “loving” in the sense of being compassionate, executing our role as intermediary with humility rather than an exalted sense of importance.

Third, we can focus on our unique role in the unfolding of the Plan – that of modeling and evoking goodwill within the human family so that the Will-to-Good is in turn evoked.

The Shamballa energy is ... related to the livingness (through consciousness and form) of humanity; ... it concerns the establishing of right human relations... It is therefore incentive and not impulse; it is realized purpose and not the expression of desire. Desire works from and through the material form *upward*; Will works downward into form, bending form consciously to divine Purpose. The one is invocative and the other is evocative. Desire, when massed and focused, can invoke Will; Will, when evoked, ends desire and becomes an immanent, propulsive, driving force, stabilizing, clarifying, and finally destroying. It is much more than this, but this is all that

we can grasp at this time and all for which we have, as yet, the mechanism of comprehension. It is this Will—aroused by invocation—that must be focused in the light of the Soul and dedicated to the purposes of light, and for the purpose of establishing right human relations.¹²

Our role, then, is to function as a calibrated, continuous source of spiritual energy, much the way a water tap modulates the flow of available water. “The Will is not, as so many believe, a forceful expression of intention; It is not a fixed determination to do thus and so or to make certain things to be. It is fundamentally an expression of the Law of Sacrifice.”¹³

Ensuring an Undistorted Flow of Will Energy

As channels for Will energy, it is particularly important that we operate from a position of goodwill and ensure that our motives are pure and that our own desires or feelings do not influence the stream of energy available to us. One critical quality to continually strengthen is that of detachment. “This is not the detachment of self-protection or of self-immunization or of aloofness, but that Soul detachment that works from Soul levels and—seeing all life in the light that streams from the Soul—regards everything from the standpoint of eternity.”¹⁴

Closely related to the quality of detachment is that of divine indifference. “We need to arrive at a point in group experience wherein we are not so intensely preoccupied with our own development, status and service; we all need to learn to decentralize ourselves so that the work to be done becomes the factor of main importance. When this is the case, then the intense self-interest with some aspect of the personality expression, some weakness of character, some dear objective, or some physical

condition will cease. We will find the cultivation of a ‘divine indifference’... of great assistance in forgetting the little self; this frequently looms so large (from habit) that it shuts out the higher Self; it comes between the disciple and

the Master and prevents contact with co-disciples, thus negating effective service.”¹⁵

Because we work in group formation during the festival period, we need to always keep in mind how powerful united group work can be and exercise particular caution in how we direct the flow of energy.

Any group effort that seeks to impress the mind of any subject (whether an

individual or a group) must be strenuously guarded as to motive and method; any group endeavor that involves a united applied effort to effect changes in the point of view, an outlook on life, or a technique of living must be *utterly selfless*, most wisely and cautiously undertaken, and must be kept free from any personality emphasis, any personality pressure and any mental pressure that is formulated in terms of individual belief, prejudice, dogmatism or ideas....

The moment that there is the least tendency on the part of a group, or of an individual in a group, to force an issue, to bring so much mental pressure to bear that an individual or group is helpless under the impact of other minds, you have what is called “black magic.” Right motive may protect the group from any serious results to themselves, but the effect upon their victims will be definitely serious, rendering them negative and with a weakened will.

The result of all *true* telepathic work and rightly directed effort to “impress” subjects will be to leave them with a strengthened will to right action, an intensified interior

How we embrace our task of distribution during the Festival of Wesak will set the stage for what can be accomplished during the spiritual year. If we position ourselves within our group to step down and distribute Will energy compassionately and harmlessly, we will find that the consequence is joy, “the silence that sounds.”

light, an astral body freer from glamour, and a physical body more vital and purer.¹⁶

Channeling Energy Harmlessly

Finally we have the issue of intention. It is critical that we release all sense that we know best and focus instead on invoking what is best under the Plan. The Tibetan has advised us as follows: "How can this collective impressing go on and yet leave a person free? Because it will be kept clear of all directed will force; all that workers and disciples in my groups will seek to do is to impress certain minds with the outlines or suggestions as to the Plan; these ideas will deal particularly with the concept that separation is a thing of the past and that unity is the goal of the immediate future; that hatred is retroactive and undesirable and that goodwill is the touchstone that will transform the world."¹⁷

The dynamic that controls right intention is *harmlessness* "in speech and also in thought and consequently in action. It is a positive harmlessness, involving constant activity and watchfulness; it is not a negative and fluidic tolerance."¹⁸ The most common manner in which most of us harm others is through criticism, explicit or implicit—that "'sitting in judgment'—and ... idle critical gossip that seems necessary to the average group member [that can] kill the group life and render abortive the efforts that could, if given cooperation and time to develop, prove constructive agencies through which the Hierarchy might work."¹⁹

Being able to function together is critical because we are told: "The Spiritual Hierarchy cannot work through people whose tongues are critical, whose ideas and attitudes are separative and who are violently partisan in their beliefs and comments. This is a statement of fact. I seek to have you train yourselves in such right activity, beginning with your own lives and your personal expression in the world."²⁰

Why is [non-criticism] regarded as so essential a requirement? Because criticism (analysis and, consequently, separateness) is the outstanding characteristic of mental types and also of all coordinated personalities. Because criticism is a potent factor in

swinging mental and emotional substance into activity and so making strong impress upon the brain cells and working out into words. Because in a sudden burst of critical thought, the entire personality can be galvanized into a potent coordination, but of a wrong kind and with disastrous results. Because criticism being a faculty of the lower mind can hurt and wound and no one can proceed upon the Way as long as wounds are made and pain is knowingly given. Because the work of white magic and the carrying out of hierarchical purpose meets with basic hindrances in the relations existing between its workers and disciples. In the pressure of the present opportunity there is no time for criticism to exist between workers.²¹

While we may find it relatively easy to suppress verbal criticism, the more challenging task is to purge our minds of all criticism and unkind thoughts—to maintain a mental posture of goodwill that will not allow for criticism, especially when those around us are being critical. This mental discipline is key to all spiritual work, but is especially important during the Festival of Wesak.

Conclusion

How we embrace our task of distribution during the Festival of Wesak will set the stage for what can be accomplished during the spiritual year. If we position ourselves within our group to step down and distribute Will energy compassionately and harmlessly, we will find that the consequence is joy, "the silence that sounds."²² "This bringing of joy to others in order to produce conditions in which they may better express themselves may have a physical effect as we seek to better their material conditions, or an emotional effect as our presence brings to them peace and uplift, or an intellectual result as we stimulate them to clarity of thought and understanding. But the effect upon ourselves is joy, for our action has been selfless and non-acquisitive, and not dependent upon the aspirant's circumstance or worldly state."²³

In conclusion, let us join together in this great task of distributing the Will energy that be-

comes available to us at Wesak, remembering that “no matter who we are or where we may be placed or what is the nature of our environment, no matter how isolated we may feel or apart from those who may share our spiritual vision, each of us can, on that day and for the period immediately following and preceding it, work and think and act in group formation, and function as a silent distributor of force.”²⁴

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- ¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, Vol. 2 (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1942), 687.
 - ² Ibid., 688.
 - ³ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1951), 520.
 - ⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1957), 346.
 - ⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1960), 68.
 - ⁶ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Healing* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1953), 57.

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- ⁷ Ibid., 670.
 - ⁸ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 616-618.
 - ⁹ Ibid., 618-619.
 - ¹⁰ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, Vol. 2, 131-132.
 - ¹¹ Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, 163.
 - ¹² Ibid., 344-345.
 - ¹³ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, Vol. 2 (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1955), 269.
 - ¹⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, Vol. 1 (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1944), 130.
 - ¹⁵ Ibid., 97.
 - ¹⁶ Alice A. Bailey, *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1950), 39.
 - ¹⁷ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, Vol.1, 65.
 - ¹⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1934), 490.
 - ¹⁹ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, Vol. 2, 618.
 - ²⁰ Ibid., 748.
 - ²¹ Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, 560.
 - ²² Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, Vol. 2, 133.
 - ²³ Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, 370.
 - ²⁴ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, Vol. 2, 687.

Festival of Goodwill

Goodwill and Group Harmlessness

Miguel Malagrec

The Festival of Goodwill that takes place every year during the full moon of Gemini represents a time of intense spiritual work. Gemini, the celestial twins, is a dual sign, and this duality is clearly expressed in the keynotes of this festival. On the one hand, this is the *Festival of Humanity*, a time when we recognize and celebrate the beauty, the good and the truth in human nature. We affirm our intention to foster right human relations and to evoke goodwill from those around us. On the other hand, this is the *Festival of the Christ*, the archetype of the divine in us, the Cosmic Seed that is rooted in our heart, impelling us to move ever forward on the Path. Thus we also celebrate humanity's impetus toward the full expression of our divine nature, aspiring to approach the divine, "seeking conformity to the divine will,"¹ and dedicating ourselves to the expression of goodwill in action.

This is, therefore, "a festival of deep invocation and appeal"; it expresses "a basic aspiration toward fellowship and for human and spiritual unity."² In addition, this is a festival of group service. There is a strong link between this festival and the work carried out by the New Group of World Servers as an intermediary between Humanity and the Hierarchy. The New Group of World Servers is responsible for presenting humanity's appeal to the Hierarchy, receiving the spiritual energies evoked as a result of such an appeal, harnessing them, and finally stepping them down in distribution to the human family and the other kingdoms of nature. As this year's Wesak Festival talk pointed out, learning to step down the impact of the Will energy on Earth is clearly a challenge and an ongoing task for us. It is also an essential effort worth carrying forward through the synthetic activity of all spiritual groups serving worldwide, which could have important consequences for the future of our

planet as some of the recent happenings in the world seem to be indicating.

As time progresses, the impact of the Shamballa force will be more frequent because human beings will develop the power to stand and withstand it. Hitherto it has been too dangerous an energy to apply to humanity, for the results have worked out destructively.... Its work has, therefore, been confined almost entirely to the Spiritual Hierarchy Whose Members are equipped to handle it and to assimilate it correctly and also to use it for the benefit of humanity. Now the experiment is being attempted of permitting humanity to receive it and its impact, free from the mediation of the Spiritual Hierarchy.... Humanity is responding unexpectedly well. There has been much success along this line but the results do not appear with clarity to intelligent human beings because they refuse to see anything except the destructive aspect and the disappearance of the forms to which they have hitherto anchored their emotions, their desire, and their mental perceptions. They fail, as yet, to see the irrefutable evidence of constructive activity and of true creative work. The temple of humanity in the New Age is rising rapidly but its outlines cannot be seen because people are occupied entirely with their individual or national selfish point of view and with their personal or national instincts and impulses.³

The link between this Goodwill Festival and taking responsibility for world service is thus evident, particularly when we consider that the great Avatar known as the Christ is both the Leader of the New Group of World Servers⁴ and the Head of the Spiritual Hierarchy.

We also celebrate the full moon in Gemini as World Invocation Day, a name that signals the

climax of the whole invocation-evocation process carried forward throughout the three Linked Festivals:

Three times a year—at the April, May and June Festivals—there is a united hierarchical meditation led by the Christ; these Festivals are invocative of Shamballa or of that which lies beyond the Nirmanakayas and can only be safely carried forward in united meditation, under directed guidance and the highest possible inspiration. Each Ashram can approach the Nirmanakayas as a group at stated periods for which due preparation is made; only the entire group of Ashrams, the Hierarchy as a whole, can approach Shamballa. The New Group [of World Servers] is invocative to the Hierarchy for purposes of impression and can be impressed by any Ashram through its disciples in that group; thus the great chain of contact and the great channel for the inflow of spiritual energy reaches from Shamballa to humanity.... All this is accomplished through meditation, through invocation and evocation, carried forward in the spirit of worship, which is the fundamental method of spiritual recognition. Thus, creatively, the glory that is hidden in every form is evoked and slowly brought to exoteric manifestation⁵.

Seen in this context, the Aries, Taurus and Gemini full moons are woven into a continuum of great spiritual significance. Rather than being separate festivals, they are three main points of tension within an invocative and evocative planetary endeavor in which the whole spiritual community can engage. Through this arc of spiritual activity, Shamballa energy is contacted, stepped down, qualified, and applied in group service for the greater good. Our individual participation is part of the group approach, and our group work finds its place within the united effort of the One Group, the group of world servers that are learning how to constructively direct spiritual energy toward initiatives that expand and root the spirit of goodwill everywhere on Earth.

As part of the hierarchical network, spiritual groups that are made up of “disciples and initi-

ates at all points of evolutionary development and of all grades and degrees”⁶ can utilize the Festival of Goodwill as an opportunity to work together toward the harmlessness that will bring about evolutionary planetary changes. Harmlessness is the foundation of goodwill, and “the practice of harmlessness can evoke goodwill from others.”⁷ The constant practice of harmlessness “involves harmlessness in speech and also in thought and consequently in action”; it is a positive harmlessness, “involving constant activity and watchfulness,”⁸ not a negative or indiscriminate tolerance.

Harmlessness, Goodwill and Group Service

Learning to work with spiritual energy harmlessly is an essential component of esoteric service. Harmlessness, the Ageless Wisdom teaches, is a state of mind that in no way negates dynamic action and is concerned with the energies animating our resolutions. As we tread the Path, we learn to recognize the qualities and effects of different energies, some of which are of immense power. The most powerful of these energies is Will energy, abundantly available during the Three Linked Festivals. Regarding the three main expressions of the Will, the *Will-to-Be*, the *Will-to-Good* and the *Will-to-Know*,⁹ it is the Will-to-Good that we are learning to work with predominantly during this time.

The Will-to-Good is the basic quality of divine purpose, involving planned activity and a definite goal to be achieved. It necessitates the ability to think in terms of the whole, an appreciation of the next step that humanity must take in the imminent Great Approach (for this must be a reciprocal Approach), an understanding of the lessons of the past, and a vision based not on love or on Soul-sight but on a conviction as to the immediate purpose of Sanat Kumara, as It works it out through the Christ and the planetary Hierarchy. This conviction is based, as far as the Hierarchy is concerned, on pure reason; it is based, as far as humanity is concerned, through its disciples, on intuitive perception, implemented by love and expressed intelligently. Upon this I

would ask you to ponder, and as you ponder, make the needed changes in your personal approach to the problem.¹⁰

This aspect of the Will expresses at the human level as goodwill, which flowers as loving understanding on Earth. “Esoterically speaking, the work of the Hierarchy is to focus the divine Will-to-Good as it affects humanity. The work of spiritually minded individuals is to evoke that Will-to-Good on Earth through as full an expression as possible of goodwill.”¹¹

We can learn to operate as a channel for the Will-to-Good which, stepped down to the world as goodwill, leads to right human relations. “It is absolutely essential that the Will-to-Good be unfolded by the disciples of the world,”¹² so that goodwill can be generated by humanity. “As the purpose of the divine Will (known and understood in the Council Chamber of Shamballa) seeks to influence human will, it is [expressed] in hierarchical terms as the Will-to-Good and in human terms as *goodwill*, as *loving determination* or as a *fixed intention to bring about right human relations*.”¹³ There are three ways that we can begin to unfold the Will-to-Good, and ultimately right human relations, in our esoteric group service:

First, we can develop our ability to identify with the Observer or the One Self by monitoring the motives behind our thoughts, words and deeds. The ability to identify with the higher point of consciousness, the Self or Observer or Soul, is of paramount importance to avoid harm. Clearly, identification with the Higher Self or Soul is something to pursue both as individuals and as groups— i.e., identification with the Group Soul, Its purpose and

service. The final injunction in the Mantra of the New Group of World Servers provides a clear indication of this: “May I fulfill my part in the One Work through self-forgetfulness, harmlessness, and right speech.” Our part is rightly fulfilled when the underlying motive of

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our inner and outer actions is that of loving understanding, not that of imposing our personal agenda. Taking into consideration that goodwill is the lowest aspect of the divine love¹⁴, no action that is based on goodwill, or love esoterically understood, can be harmful; however, any action founded on the desire for personal power or ambition ends up being separative and harmful, not only for our group but for the whole human family. Since esoteric work renders the human mind particular-

ly sensitive to all three aspects of Will energy, we need to exercise extreme caution and impersonality, focusing our mind on the development and expression of goodwill. The practice of harmlessness is inseparable from the mastery of the lower self; it implies a positive attitude, a high point of integration, and the application of the loving will:

The practice of [harmlessness] must be inspired by the motive of intelligent love, which also means dedication to the acquisition and demonstration of truth. To express spiritual harmlessness in the most adverse circumstances requires the Soul strength and the absolute fearlessness that come only with great love and the spirit of wise self-sacrifice.... Unlike hatred, which attacks, destroys, and seeks death, love protects, creates, and seeks life. The [harmless] person carries out the deep-rooted *will* in everyone to live, to extend relationships;

and expresses the love force by which this may be accomplished.¹⁵

Second, we can focus on understanding others. “What we do not understand we naturally depreciate and condemn, and from this critical and negative attitude prejudice, antagonism and even hate easily arise. This occurs among individuals, among nations, among races and even among those who, professing to be religious and spiritual ... should more than others exemplify love and brotherhood.”¹⁶ By contrast, harmlessness leads to the spiritual expression of the Soul in everyday life; it “springs from true understanding.... It emanates from a capacity to enter into the consciousness and to penetrate into the realization of [a person], and when this has been accomplished all is forgiven and all is lost sight of in the desire to aid and to help.”¹⁷ In group and inter-group work, this understanding implies the absence of criticism and the cultivation of serenity. Many times we make the mistake of forcing issues without due attention to the time needed for inner processes to unfold, or we come to incorrect conclusions based on the glamour of unfounded criticism. A healthy remedy is to observe with detachment and cultivate the art of silence that trusts and grants psychic space to others and to the happenings of the time, leaving our group companions free to serve as they feel is appropriate.

This last consideration invites us to ponder on a third and last characteristic that can help unfold harmless group dynamics: We can acknowledge that groups work under specific mandates and that this uniqueness is a strength, not a weakness, of the whole network of group servers. Sociological research has established that many times we apply a double standard regarding love or goodwill. We may feel intensely loving in regard to the *in-group* (those we identify with), while feeling little love or even hatred toward anyone outside our own little universe. Clearly, the application of love, in these cases, is very limited.¹⁸ A harmless approach to group love or goodwill implies a universalistic mind that is open to the other, respecting and appreciating the contribution each group and member can make to the One Work. Openness is an important characteristic

if we are interested in fostering inter-group engagement and right human relations. While inter-group dialogue and broaching sensitive matters might be perceived as a risk to the group project, there is enough empirical evidence to suggest that dialogue leads to harmony, deepens our sense of identity and purpose, and builds long-term alliances.¹⁹

The Results of Learning to Unfold the Will-to-Good

So far we have examined some dynamics characteristic of the process of invocation and group work that are preparatory to the right application of the Will-to-Good to evoke goodwill. Once the Three Linked Festivals have ended, our task is to maintain our focus on group world service so that the energy contacted during the Festivals is dispensed during the remainder of the spiritual year. As the last stanza of the Great Invocation suggests, once light and love (i.e., goodwill) have opened the Way, it is now *the center that we call the human race* that has the opportunity to facilitate the working out of the Plan of Love and Light. Our aim becomes that of directing this energy toward ends and initiatives that will evoke goodwill and the ongoing development of right relations among human beings and between humanity and the other kingdoms on Earth.

In pondering the derivative effects of the Will-to-Good, we need to keep in mind the importance of nurturing effective group collaborations among all the groups of world servers acting in the world, for the enterprise before us requires the synthesis of the strength, qualities and dedication of us all. It is this united, co-creative, collaborative inter-group endeavor that can contain and direct the energy that the Spiritual Hierarchy is ready to release. Such endeavor originates at Soul level—the Soul being Group Conscious—and it will spontaneously manifest outwardly as the inner union is cultivated, thanks to harmlessness.

At the time of the June Full Moon, the Spiritual Hierarchy, under the guidance of the Christ, will let loose this Will-to-Good upon humanity, producing seven great results...:

1. Power will be given to the disciples of the world and the initiates ... so that they can direct efficiently and wisely the coming process of rebuilding.
2. The will-to-love will stimulate the people of goodwill everywhere so that hatred will gradually be overcome and people will seek to live together cooperatively.
3. The will-to-action will lead intelligent people throughout the world to inaugurate those activities that will lay the foundation for a new, better and happier world.
4. The will-to-cooperate will steadily increase also. Humanity will desire and demand right human relations....
5. The will-to-know and to think correctly and creatively will become an outstanding characteristic of the masses. Knowledge is the first step toward wisdom.
6. The will-to-persist ... will become a human characteristic—a sublimation of the basic instinct of self-preservation. This will lead to a persistent belief in the ideals presented by the Hierarchy, and the demonstration of immortality.
7. The will-to-organize will further a building process that will be carried forward under the direct inspiration of the Spiritual Hierarchy. The medium will be the potency of the Will-to-Good of the New Group of World Servers and the responsive goodwill of humankind.²⁰

Let us develop the ability to harness the spiritual energies and direct them purposefully and constructively toward a dedicated goal in a spirit of group love and comprehension.

So let it be and help us do our part.

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- ¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Problems of Humanity* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1946), 164.
 - ² Ibid.
 - ³ Alice A. Bailey, *The Destiny of the Nations* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1949), 18-19.
 - ⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *The Reappearance of the Christ* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1948), 46.
 - ⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, Vol. 2 (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1955), 217-218.
 - ⁶ Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1960), 346.
 - ⁷ Assagioli, R. et al. *The Principle of Goodwill*. In Meditation Group for the New Age, Second Year, Set II (Ojai, CA, Meditation Mount), 14.
 - ⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1934), 490.
 - ⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1950), 182.
 - ¹⁰ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, Vol. 2, 47.
 - ¹¹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1957), 396.
 - ¹² Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 110.
 - ¹³ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, Vol. 2, 172-173.
 - ¹⁴ Bailey, *Problems of Humanity*, 164.
 - ¹⁵ Simon Roof, *Journeys on the Razor-Edged Path* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2007), 123-125.
 - ¹⁶ Roberto Assagioli, *Loving Understanding*. In *Il Loto*, VI, No. 1, 11-160 (Rome: Theosophical Publishing, July 1934).
 - ¹⁷ Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, 318.
 - ¹⁸ Pitirim Sorokin, *The Ways and Power of Love* (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation, 2002)
 - ¹⁹ Biren (Ratnesh) A. Nagda, *Breaking Barriers, Crossing Borders, Building Bridges: Communication Processes in Intergroup Dialogues*. In *Journal of Social Issues*, 2006, 62 (3):553-576.
 - ²⁰ Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, 440-441.

Book Review

The Inner Dimensions of Life: Vol. 1-Esoteric Philosophy, by Niels Brønsted. Denmark: Soul Publishing, 2014. Paperback, 824 pages. List price \$US120.00. Also available at: www.amazon.com.

Niels Brønsted, a lifelong teacher, translator and student of the Ageless Wisdom has earned a respected place in the esoteric community. Brønsted was the founder of *The Theosophical Union in Denmark* in 1979, but is perhaps best known for the creation of *The Esoteric School* in Denmark in 2001, and the subsequent branch schools in Norway, Sweden and Spain. In addition to numerous articles, he is also the author of *Meditation-The Royal Road to the Soul*, a book reviewed by the *Esoteric Quarterly* in Vol.1 No. 2. His latest effort, *The Inner Dimensions of Life*, is a condensed but all-inclusive three-part exposition of *The Esoteric School's* curriculum. The three volume set consists of: *Esoteric Philosophy*, *Esoteric Psychology* and *Esoteric Sociology* and is based primarily on the works of Helena Blavatsky, C. W. Leadbeater, Annie Besant, Geoffrey Hodson, Alice A. Bailey and Lucille Cedercrans. As such, *The Inner Dimensions of Life* represents an impressive work of synthesis that is deepened by the author's own reflections and insights.

The first volume in the series, *Esoteric Philosophy*, explores the fundamental concepts of the esoteric teaching, beginning with an esoteric discussion of the creation account and the formation of the seven planes of matter. This chapter also includes an alternative theory of gravity, the study of the planes as wavelengths or frequency ranges as well as an exploration of occult chemistry. Brønsted follows with an in-depth presentation on the constitution of man. Here, and throughout the book, key concepts are illustrated by numerous diagrams and graphics that create context and enhance retention and understanding.

In the next chapter, Brønsted turns from the fundamental structures of the esoteric teach-

ing in terms of its "spatial" expression to one of the most prevalent distortions of divine truth—the fear of death. Death, as Brønsted views it, is a "vast collective thoughtform," and a kind of "independent entity" that lives off humanity's vital energies and slows down its spiritual development. After touching on the true nature and solution to the problem of death, the author discusses the death process in some detail as well as life on the astral, mental and causal planes. The "future science of death" is also discussed. Included in this chapter is an examination of rebirth, followed by a chapter on karma and evolution from both a macrocosmic and microcosmic perspective.

The chapter immediately succeeding these themes surveys the path of initiation and its effects. Consideration is also given to the arousing of the energy centers from both a technical and psychological perspective; the latter perspective stressing the necessity of integrating the subconscious, conscious, and super conscious levels so that every thoughtform, including those stored in the subconscious mind, is brought to the surface and into association with any newly developed aspects of consciousness.

Next, Brønsted provides a comprehensive account of the path of discipleship in its various stages and the practical application of spiritual qualities in service to the Plan. He also touches upon the plan of evolution in its differing manifestations, beginning with cosmic impulse to its conscious realization in the mind of the disciple.

The Seven Rays in their cosmic, solar, planetary and earthly context are then discussed. In addition to the lucid passages and diagrams on the difficult subject of the source, transmission and expression of cosmic force, Brønsted posits several interesting hypotheses. For example, he lays out three possibilities with regard to the interplay between the major and minor rays, one of which gives the 4th ray a

unique role and placement. Another especially noteworthy section is the material dealing with Rays and the Hierarchy, in which the 7th Ray Ashram is conceived as having temporarily taken over the role and function of the 3rd Ray Ashram as the ruling factor in the development of human civilization. Such a development is said to be due, in part, to the 3rd Ray Ashram's inability to handle the new impulse from Sirius. This information, which is based on the teachings of Lucille Cedercrans, seems to differ in emphasis from the teachings given out by the Tibetan, who states that the 7th Ray Master has assumed responsibility for the 3rd Ray Ashram, (perhaps because it is thought that Master Rakoczy is now functioning as a 3rd Ray Monad), the Ashram which now enfolds the 5th and the 7th Ray Ashrams within its ring pass-not. Although a fuller exposition of the Cedercrans material is dealt with in greater detail in the last three chapters of the book, it is not clear whether this discrepancy is an issue of substance or a matter of vocal expression.

No book on esoteric philosophy would be complete without tackling the awe-inspiring subject of occult cosmology. Here, Brønsted begins by touching upon the solar system in its cosmic context, followed by discussion of the creation and evolution of the solar system and its inner structure. Next, he examines the planets and planetary schemes and includes a number of diagrams that help explain the individual globes, chains and rounds along with the concept of a "life wave." The material in the section is presented with such clarity that students who have typically been stymied by this somewhat complicated subject will come away with a newfound appreciation of the magnitude, proportion and order in the cosmos and our solar and planetary systems.

Continuing with the theme of cosmology, the author examines the evolution of life and consciousness on earth in a chapter on "Esoteric World History." Despite reservations by Alice A. Bailey—which the author examines and counters with a logical argument of his own—Brønsted draws heavily on the clairvoyant accounts of Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater in: *Man: Whence, How and Whither*.

This overview of early life on the planetary chains, the beginnings of initial root races, civilizations and empires up to and including the present, also includes material from Bailey and various other esoteric sources.

The next chapter explores the structure of the inner world government, the arrival of the Kumaras and a more detailed account of the role and function of the "Masters." It includes information on Sanat Kumara and the Buddha that may be called into question by some students. We read, for example, that Sanat Kumara has previously functioned on the 1st aspect, but is now functioning on the 2nd aspect as a result of an impulse from the Solar Logos; that his work on earth is nearly complete and that the Buddha is being made ready to take his place once the earth becomes a sacred planet. Brønsted also offers some fascinating information on the Masters. Of particular note is the esoteric account of the life of Jesus of Nazareth and the writing of the Gospels. This account, based primarily on Geoffrey Hodson's studies of the akashic records, claims that the Jesus of the Gospel was an imaginary person and that the Gospels are a fictional and deliberately constructed narrative designed to preserve the life story and teachings of the original Jesus, who was stoned to death 50 years earlier. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of Hierarchical activity over the last few thousand years leading up to the emergence of the New Group of World Servers and their efforts to prepare the way for the Reappearance of the Christ.

The Inner Dimensions of Life concludes with two more chapters—"The New Evolutionary Impulse" and "The Deva Kingdom." The first of these explores an advanced evolutionary impulse—based on a synthesis of 1st, 2nd and 7th Rays—flowing to our planet from the monadic heart center of the Sirian Logos. This has resulted in the formation of the Ashram of Synthesis and a radical acceleration of development for all life on earth. The structure and responsibilities of the new Ashram and role of each of the aforementioned rays are discussed along with the nature of the new impulse and its effects in bringing about the birth of the Christ consciousness among the masses and

the creation of a new civilization on earth.

One of the effects of this new evolutionary impulse is the widespread recognition of the One Life and a deeper measure of contact and cooperation between the Angels and the Devic kingdom and men. Brønsted's exposition of this theme forms the concluding chapter and one of the most interesting segments of the book. While some of what is presented here will be familiar to esoteric students, aspects of Brønsted's approach to the subject of the Devas might be viewed as controversial in places. For example, most esotericists view the deva and human kingdoms as two parallel evolutions that touch temporarily at two points along the way, i.e., the vegetable and Buddhist level, and which only merge at the Monadic level. Here, however, Brønsted suggested that the devic and human kingdoms are essentially the same because the deva evolution, like all life, must take its course through the human kingdom. Brønsted explains how he believes this misunderstanding arose and supports his assertions with quotes from the Bailey, Blavatsky and Hodson.

The author also introduces us, via the works of Lucille Cedercrans, to *See-La-Aum*, the Devaraja or Deva Lord of the cosmic physical plane and to *Selah*, a superior Angel and extension of See-La-Aum from the Venus scheme, who overshadows the 7 Archangels of the Rays and is connected with healing work in the world, among other things. According to Cedercrans, disciples who are attempting to realize the evolutionary plan must invoke these two Angels.

Following his discussion on the categories of Angels and drawing further on Cedercrans work, Brønsted turns to a "relatively new order of devas"—the "Devas of Synthesis." He explains that "when a group of people circulate the energies of the 1st, 2nd and 7th Ray between them," they create "a synthesis of energies and a harmonious balance between spirit, consciousness and matter." This enables the

group to invoke the devas of synthesis. It also allows them to establish a cooperative bond with a particular deva who assists the creative processes of the group.

The overarching "Deva of Synthesis" is also discussed along with the Solar Angels, the Gayatri, or World Mother. The Deva of Synthesis, as described by Brønsted, is as an "etheric seraph," which is the highest designation of angels in the biblical hierarchy. As such, this deva is said to serve the function of synthesis in relation to a group organism, eventually turning the group personality into a unity who can cooperate with the deva and assist them in realizing some aspect of the evolutionary plan. Brønsted turns next to another great Angel or Devaraja who is said to represent the sum total of the planet's form building deva life. Although the Tibetan maintains that such an individual has never existed in our particular planetary life, other sources maintain that the inflow of the energy of synthesis has purportedly changed the earth in such a way that *Gayatri, the World Mother* can now anchor and vitalize the entire deva nature on the material plane. Included here is a thought-provoking examination of Gayatri's relationship to another angel, who was said to be the Virgin Mary or the Mother of Jesus in a previous incarnation as well as an informative section on the Greater and Lesser Builders and the various Elemental Lives.

Volume 1 of *The Inner Dimensions of Life* is an accessible and highly informative synthesis of esoteric philosophy. Although, the book raises certain questions and is weak on citations and attributions, leaving one to wonder about some of the author's sources, it serves as an excellent teaching tool and a rich resource for a wide range of students interested in a unified approach to the material—one that links ideas from various sources with the author's own, often astute, interpretations.

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