

Contemporary Mystic Christianity **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

The Harp of David

At certain critical periods in the evolution of the human race, a magical music has been brought to earth by some high Initiate. The beautiful legends of Greece tell of Orpheus who by the music of his lyre stilled the stormy waves and the raging winds, soothed tormented hearts and minds, and eventually brought the insensate back to life (Eurydice, his beloved). The Old Testament presents us with a similar musician-teacher in the person of David, the sweet and illumined singer o' Israel, who by the power of his magic harp soothed the madness of Saul.

Among the many rabbinical legends which, though in no sense historical yet deserve serious consideration by reason of their genuine expression of spiritual truths, there is one which tells us of this harp of David. We read that it was made of the skin of that ram which God sent to Abraham to sacrifice in place of his son Isaac. David hung the harp in the window, and at midnight when zephyrs from north, east, south and west fanned its sensitive strings, it gave forth heavenly music. It was then that David would awaken, study the Torah, and write his beautiful poems to its celestial accompaniment.

There is an inner meaning to this legend, involving many hidden truths. David's lyre was within himself. Through sacrifice and purity, his soul was lifted up into the Kingdom of Light (Shekinah), or into the inner realms of nature, which are pervaded by rhythms and harmonies even as the winds move through the atmosphere of the physical world. The soul itself is part of this rhythmic structure, this network of sound, in which the universe hangs "like apples of gold in a filigree of silver."

Pythagoras said that man's nature is purified when he listens to solemn songs sung to the accompaniment of the lyre. What is said of the lyre is true of the harp of David also, which was really a kind of lyre, or possibly, a lute, the kimor.

Before there was a Temple, before there was a Tabernacle, rhythm was. It was bodied forth in dance and in music, and David's work, which laid the foundation for the liturgical Mysteries of Solomon's Temple, is primarily to be understood through the Songs associated with his name, whether or not he composed them, for they bear his keynote.

We no longer have descriptions of the ancient dances of Israel; we do not know what manner of dance it was which David danced before the Ark. Yet it is of importance to us to know that he did so dance, and in many of the Psalms we

can still discern something of the ancient dance rhythms among the more obvious songs and chants.

Rhythm has a special correlation with the breath, and all that the breathing exercises of Oriental occultists seek to achieve can be achieved through musical rhythms alone, especially when correlated with the dance, for the dancing body is the very personification of rhythm, making music visible and tangible in three dimensions. In the Desire World the streams of rhythm are the basis of consciousness; they form patterns which are visible in light and color, and are audible as sound. There are twelve primary patterns, corresponding to the twelve signs of the Zodiac, and one day we shall know that there are likewise twelve planets sounding twelve keynotes. Such are the rhythms we feel flowing through the Psalms, which are truly hymns of Initiation, and which raise tremendously the body rhythms and accelerate consciousness, making possible a contact with the interior worlds.

Because King David pioneered in the work of organizing the music of his people, he has become the patron saint of both music and lyric poetry. The Hebrews called poets and singers Meshorer, which means "elevators of the people." Under David's patronage, the ancient songs of Israel were gathered together, choirs were organized, and in many of the Psalms one hears the thunder of the antiphonal chants;

in others the soul-sweet murmurs of the harp, or the stirring blast of trumpets calling to action.

Fragments of Israelitish songs are also preserved in the Pentateuch: the Red Sea Victory Song is an allegorical representation of certain steps of spiritual Illumination, in which we are able to discover how Moses led the men in the music processions and Miriam led the women, and through all the hours of the "mystic night" they sang unitedly their hymns of praise and thanksgiving.

In his valuable book, *Bible and Spade*, (*Bible and Spade*. Rev. John P. Peters, Charles Scribners Sons, New York, 1922. the author, Rev. John P.) Peters, calls attention to the new light which has been thrown on the Hebrew Psalter by archaeological discoveries in Palestine, and presents some fascinating material of his own which may be familiar to some of our readers. He comments on the fact, which we repeatedly emphasize in our esoteric interpretations, that the Psalms do not necessarily illustrate historic events, being in many instances liturgies used in Temple services. He points out also the striking similarity to ancient Sumerian liturgies which have come down to us by way of Babylonia and Assyria. When we say "Temple services", however, this does not mean merely the Temple of Solomon. We have already shown that there were other temples and shrines in Palestine before the Royal Temple

was built on Mt. Moriah; and that, moreover, this Temple did not supplant the subsidiary temples and shrines in other parts of the land. In each of these pre-Solomonic temples distinctive liturgies developed, and the Rev. Peters gives a fascinating account of his own discovery that the Psalms of the Sons of Korah (Psalms 42 to 49 and 84 to 89) are derived from the old Temple of Dan. Some of these ancient songs, when transported to Jerusalem for use in the Temple there, were left much in their original condition; others were adapted to the new Jerusalem setting. The author shows how in the 84th Psalm the "stage directions" for the sacred processional were inserted bodily into the Psalm by translators who thought them a part of the Psalm itself, and how they were then forced to give an extremely free rendition of the Psalm in order to make it intelligible.

When the directions for processional are removed the remainder of the Psalm is clear and understandable, and we know, moreover, where the processional started and the direction of its march until it reached the Temple. He concludes by saying that he demonstrated his discovery to a Jewish scholar, a Dominican archaeologist, and several Bible students in Jerusalem, making the processional in full form, and, he adds, "I believe that everyone who tried it was convinced, and when he reads that Psalm will always in memory make that pilgrimage and see, as he does so, the old temple choir and hear the old temple chant."

However, it will be perfectly plain to the student that any of the Psalms antedate not only the Temple of Solomon but the existence of any permanent structure whatever, and all of the Psalms are therefore not meant for use in a Temple service but rather for private devotions or for use in Assemblies, as was necessary later in the Exile and Dispersion.

Ancient truths will be rediscovered in the New Age, and the New Age psychology will include a study of the occult effects of music upon mind and body. Its use as a protection against evil, discarnate entities will become known, as, for example, the sounding of chimes at midnight in medieval cathedrals as a protection against evil spirits, which at that "witching hour" were believed to be most active. The power of music to aid in prophetic inspirations and as a healing agent was also known in medieval centuries, and the vowels of any language, being so pre-eminently the carriers of harmony (it is impossible to sing consonants alone), have long been recognized as of special efficacy. In Greece the seven vowels were chanted in the Mystery rituals, because it was understood that they sounded forth the keynotes of the seven planetary Spirits before the Throne of God. Since every human being is keyed to one of the planets, it was, thus possible for the Temple Priest to teach the neophyte how to attune himself to his own "parent star" and thereby draw on the spiritual

fount of his being. The moral force of music rests on the correspondences existing between its tonal patterns and those of the Ideal World.

The most profound truths connected with the Mysteries hidden in that supreme and sacred ceremonial, The Last Supper, are based upon the use of the vibratory power of the universe, in which the Christ figures as the Sun and the Disciples as the twelve constellations (or Four Seasons). This is the key to all nature music.

Cyprian, bishop of Antioch in the third century, was at the age of fifteen initiated into the Grecian Mysteries on Olympus. He states that he was taught the meaning of musical notes and sounds, and beheld visions of tree trunks and herbs of divine potency. During his forty days on the Mount he witnessed the succession of seasons and the changing spirits that determined their phenomena. He heard the chorus of warring daimones chanting in nature, and saw the phalanx attending each god and goddess. Here is a hint of what the New Age will rediscover in the field of esoteric music.

The magic of music works upon the latent centers or vortices in the aura of the neophyte, which are stirred into activity. There are seven of them as we have already shown, and each of the seven has its own keynote corresponding to the tones of the musical scale and to the

seven vowels. It is by means of the powers centered in the vowel sounds that the Archangelic Race Spirits control their peoples or nations and weld them into a composite whole. The repeated sounding of these seven notes arouse the seven centers in the body and cause them to radiate the diamond glitter of the astral light, by which the soul becomes sensitized.

This power of music to stir the soul is verified by common experience. Everyone knows the arousing effect of patriotic and martial music, though less sensitive to the soothing or inspiring effect of sacred music. Even among the religious-minded, it is not generally recognized that the Masses of the early Church were composed for the specific purpose of furthering spiritual Illumination. Their rhythms work just as powerfully now as in the early centuries of Christianity. If they seem not to have this power, it is only because the modern Christian, unlike the early devotees, does not bring to them the proper spirit of dedication. We know that the Mass is often called the Morning Sacrifice; and in this it agrees with some of the Temple practices of Israel. It was the custom of the Temple servers to greet each dawn with song. At the first parting of the clouds at twilight, the crier on duty would call out, "Arise ye priests to your work, and ye Levites to your songs."

There can be no question of the power which music has to affect every organ of the body, the low tones vibrating to the organs and functions below the diaphragm and the higher tones affecting those above the diaphragm. Modern research has proved that music from stringed instruments such as the harp or zither are most efficacious in cases of mental disorders; hence the use of the harp by David in soothing the madness of Saul is now justified scientifically.

Naturally, in order to promote spiritual exaltation, music must itself be of an exalting nature. Not every type of music, so-called, will produce the desired effect. Martial rhythm stimulates to action in the physical realm. It belongs to the music of the objective world, whereas spiritual work requires first of all repose, the quiet of the mind, in order that consciousness may be liberated from its identification with material form. Like the white lotus floating on a still pool, so must the soul-power expand upon reposeful harmonies.

In the stillness and peace of the mind, the flowers bloom in the soul according to a rhythm embodied in them. Knowing this, it is readily understandable why the Psalms have been called the perfect flowers of religious song! indeed we realize that the really important office of the Psalms is not in their intellectual content but in the subtle rhythms which we experience by singing and chanting

them. It is the rhythm which plays upon the seven flower centers and causes them to open to the Spiritual Sun. Thus the Hierophant of the Mysteries, in chanting the seven sounds for the neophyte, prolonged that one which vibrated the particular flower whose opening was desired, passing rapidly over the others, until the purposed result was achieved.

These seven flowers may also be called the Musical Lights of the soul. Their location and significance, briefly stated, are as follows:

All seven of the Musical Lights lie along the spinal cord; that is, to the spiritual vision they appear to lie there, but they are not physical; they are etheric and astral, and serve as conductors of the vital essence which flows through them into the nerve plexuses which they interpenetrate.

The first of these vital points is situated at the base of the spine; its color is red. Here the serpentine kundalini sleeps. Blackish-red at first, the slumbering fire awakens and assumes a brighter and lighter hue, until at last it is a pure and luminous ruby. This marks the beginning of psychic perception.

The second center is the solar plexus. Its corresponding etheric center is known as "the Sun of the stomach." Its color is reddish orange, which is later transmuted and

modified by soft green light. This indicates the early degree of true clairvoyance. The third, or hypogastric plexus, correlates to the spleen, which is like a miniature Sun, radiating golden light. Its awakening bestows the gift of healing. In the early stages of its development there is seen light blended with its gold, but the later development is pure gold.

The fourth is the cardiac plexus over the heart, emitting a soft yellow radiance, which in the higher stages of transmutation becomes tinged with an ethereal blue, and reveals memories of past life cycles. When the latent love principle has been awakened to a dynamic love-Power, this center is a lustrous giant golden rose.

The fifth center is the pharyngeal plexus located in the throat just over the larynx. Its color is azure blue, glittering with silver sparkles.

Its development recovers the use of the Lost Word, or creative power of speech.

The sixth, or cavernous plexus, is situated in the head between the eyebrows. It emits kaleidoscopic color patterns of indescribable beauty, whose primary tones are rose, yellow, blue and purple. Its functioning brings continuous consciousness, interrupted neither by sleep nor death.

The seventh plexus is near the top of the head. It is the crown of regeneration and emits an effulgent white light. Its development brings liberation from the wheel of birth and death.

The lifting of the fire force within the neophyte along the etheric spine, and the unfoldment of its several blossoms, is in perfect accompaniment to the tones of the musical scale. Rudolf Steiner, the eminent Rosicrucian occultist, refers to this process as "the wonder of the octave experience," and the late Dr. George S. Arundale, the Theosophical writer, says, "The kundalini is music as it is color. It is a rainbow as it is a perfect song."

This is the seven-stringed harp of David, made from the skin of the Lamb sent from God, by whose sacrifice the world is redeemed. The ram signifies Aries, the head of the Macrocosmic Man, and within the human brain there are seven cavities or ventricles, each sounding its own note and emanating its own individual color. These cavities are filled with the life essence which ascends by way of the etheric spine and the seven Roses or Lotuses, and correlate therewith. Physiologically these seven brain centers are known as the Olfactory, the Lateral, the Third, the Fourth, the Cavernous Ventricles, and the Pineal and Pituitary Glands.

A kabbalistic legend has it that David finished his life work upon the Earth plane on the Sabbath Day, at which time his son Solomon summoned hosts of Angels to stand guard over his body, protecting it with their outstretched pinions. This was not the end of David's glory and grandeur, for in the heavenly realms as formerly on Earth, he stands among the first. At the head of the angelic choirs he intones wondrously beautiful Psalms, ever chanting: "The Lord reigns forever and ever." To which Metatron, Captain of the Universe, and his choirs reply, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts."

— ***Corinne Heline***