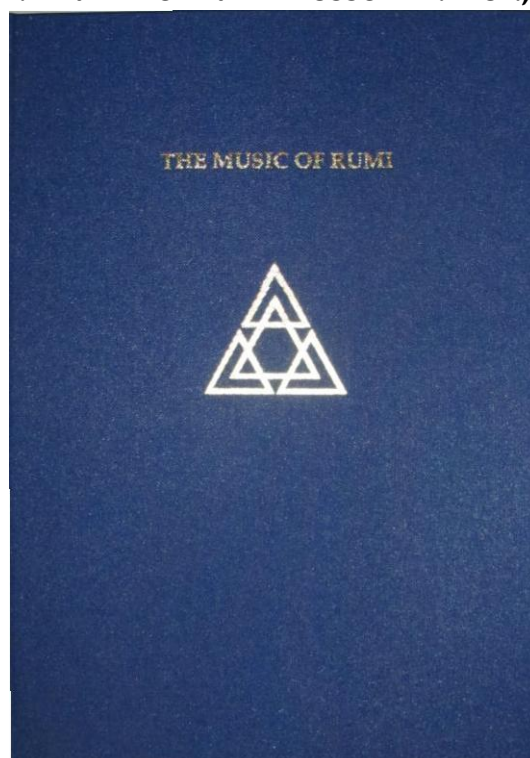


PYTHAGOREAN – SUFI MUSIC BOOK

(Free copy of The Music of Rumi)

By Dr. Alan Wenham-Prosser D.Prof., MA.



A4 age resistant paper with hardback cover – 232 pages

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Introduction

This paper offers both inside information on the above book and a free copy to the first 50 people who request one. Published in 2012 after completion of my doctorate in the philosophy of music at Middlesex University in the UK; the book has been provided across the world to the USA, Australia, Turkey and most European countries. There are at least 50 copies remaining with the publisher and it has been agreed to provide these with the only price to be paid is for the costs of the packaging and postage. **RRP was UK £65**

If you would like a copy please provide the following information to the publishers; Saraswati Society at saraswati.soc@btinternet.com

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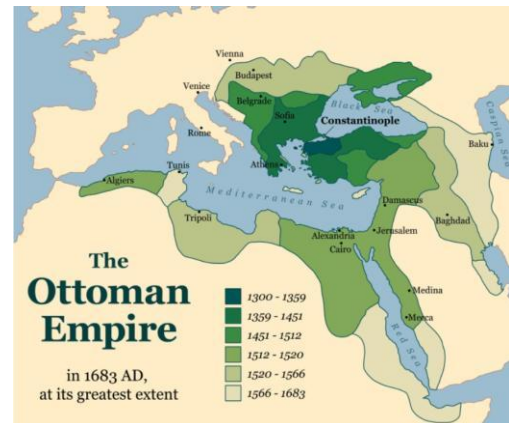
You will be quoted a price to cover costs and an invoice will be sent to you through the global PayPal system. No PayPal account needed. The amount to pay will be in UK£.

This book is of great value to anyone studying any art or any music of any genre.

An Overview of the Book's Purpose

Prior to the 20th century, the Ottoman Empire had spread across the Middle Eastern area of the globe; and including parts of North Africa and some parts of Eastern Europe. During their search for the best examples of culture, the Ottoman Sultans had collected knowledge of the ancient music which had been used throughout the Middle East. This music system had its origins in Pythagorean theory.

The Sultans had collected many examples of arts and ancient cultural heritage for use in their many exquisite palaces in their capital Istanbul. They wanted the best of everything. This included the best music system of the ancient Makams.



The value and unique nature of this music was ignored in the 1920's by Kemal Ataturk, who had only one main desire – to change Turkey from its Eastern culture into a typical European country with Western culture. This included radical reforms of dress, language and music. He did not know then that European music had already been corrupted away from its natural tones, into the use of the artificial tones of the tempered idea of mathematical division of sound vibrations.

This fact was also unknown to me, the author of the above book. I had fallen deeply in love with the best of European classical music. That of Mozart, Vivaldi and other great masters of western music. I was a great lover of classical music. Yet when listening to that music as a young man, I was completely unaware that I was hearing something very different to what those composers had intended – or had themselves heard when their compositions were performed. I could not imagine more beautiful sounds than those of the delightful compositions which these composers had provided. In my mind they were clearly musical geniuses. How much more delightful it might sound with natural tones.

It was in the year 1976 that I first heard an old recording (maybe 1950s) of the Sufi ceremony music called Pençgah (pronounced Penchgah); recorded in Konya during the Sufi ceremony of the Whirling Dervishes. My life was instantly transformed. I instinctively knew then that this music was far superior to any thing I had previously heard, or had previously praised so highly. From that day began my endeavour to find out sources of the music and how to play it. This opened; as we say; a “can of worms”; because I was to discover that the music system was at the point of death.

There is much more about this journey, and the reasons for the death sentence of the Sufi music, in the various chapters of the book. But to cut a long story short – I discovered the last few remaining masters of the original (uncorrupted) system of the music living in Istanbul. They all agreed to pass their knowledge on to me and to train me in the art of playing the music on the various instruments. The most eminent of these Turkish masters, Necdet Yaşar (pronounced Nejdetyashar) – told me in 1982 that the original music was almost dead in Turkey and that it was unlikely to survive there; mainly due to political pressures. He asked me to do something to preserve the teaching he had given me and my children, in the UK in a way that it might survive. In 1983 we started the charity called “The Traditional Turkish Art Music Society of Great Britain” with Necdet Yaşar agreeing to be its President. Later the charity was renamed Saraswati Society.

Later when I met a professor at Middlesex University and told him about the music. He said I should preserve all the knowledge into doctorate and a book.

The Outcome of the Above Study and Teaching

After several years of work, guided by Middlesex University, establishing the range and value of all that I had been taught, it was put into a Masters Degree – in Ottoman Art Music, in 1998. After that I was invited to undertake the task of a full explanation and research of the Makam system and its origins into a proposed book; which would also form the work of the Doctorate dissertation. Thus in 2011, after a stringent peer review of the book, I was awarded the Doctorate in the Philosophy of Music by Middlesex University; who described the book as “The World Authority” on the Makam subject. To which I replied that it was those who took the trouble to teach me, who are the World Authority of the subject, not the author of the book. Without all those wonderful teachers I would have been left fumbling in the dark. Those teachers have all passed away; but their knowledge and teaching has not passed away; as Ataturk may have wanted.

The outcome of more than 40 years of study and practise of the music can be heard on a you-tube video at [Penchgah Mevlevi Ayin - YouTube](#) where my family group have recorded the above mentioned Sufi ceremony composition called Pençgah Ayin. There listeners will have the added delight of hearing my daughter Tansy playing her improvisations on the Ney (reed flute) at points 7:30 and 42:28 on the video. She is the only known lady to play the Turkish Mansur Ney. She is a great inspiration to me.

Some Contents of the Book

Those chapters in red on this list have had extracts taken from the book for this paper.

CHAPTERS

PART ONE - THE HUMAN NEED FOR MUSIC

- 1 **INTRODUCTION TO PART ONE**
- 2 **THE BALANCE OF KNOWLEDGE AND DEVOTION**
- 3 **MELODY AS DIVINE ART**
- 4 **WHAT KIND OF ARTIST IS THE HUMAN BEING?**
- 5 THE THREE QUALITIES OF NATURE
- 6 **WHAT KIND OF ART IS MUSIC?**

PART TWO - PYTHAGOREAN MUSIC

- 7 INTRODUCTION TO PART TWO
- 8 **PHILOSOPHY BEHIND PYTHAGOREAN MUSIC**
- 9 MISCONCEPTIONS
- 10 INTERVALS AND COMMAS
- 11 **ORIGIN OF MELODIC INTERVAL SYSTEM**
- 12 **BASIC PRIME COLOURS OF MELODY**
- 13 NOTATION SYSTEMS
- 14 MAKAM AND TAKSIM
- 15 RHYTHM

PART THREE - MEVLEVI MUSIC

- 16 INTRODUCTION TO PART THREE
- 17 THE WAY OF THE MEVLEVI
- 18 MUSIC AND THE SEMA
- 19 **SUMMARY OF THE RETURN PATH THROUGH MELODY**

There a comprehensive list of Appendices and an Addenda which cover a wide range of the issues and parameters, common to the full understanding of the subject; see page 12.

FROM CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO PART ONE

This book is written with the assumed approach of the existence of a Creator and of an eternal Soul within the human being, two concepts which are the subject of much debate in modern times and are not believed by many people. The approach of accepting the existence of both a Creator and an eternal soul, I have found helpful in assisting the transplantation of the understanding contained in the oral traditions and associated writings from many centuries ago, which are the basis of this book. Therefore, those readers who are not accustomed to such a framework of belief, may need to temporarily assume a suitable approach during the time of reading this book.

I firmly believe that music is a discovery rather than an invention. When I first read the opening verses of the *Mathnavi* of Rumi and heard how it describes the process connected with the journey of inner return, I understood why Mevlevi (Pythagorean) music felt to me as if it was an inherent part of my life. Hearing of this return journey in that poetry, it was clear to me that Mevlana (Rumi) knew about the general condition of all human beings which makes it difficult to experience the peace within our own Soul. Through studying Vedanta philosophy I came to know that this was caused by denial or forgetting the simplicity and purity of my own Soul. From this I began to understand that Mevlevi music would help me on that return journey. So I feel gratitude towards such people as Pythagoras and Rumi, who in their own time have ensured that their kind of music could retain the deeper function of healing the inner sickness of separation from the Self within.

FROM CHAPTER TWO

THE BALANCE OF KNOWLEDGE AND DEVOTION

Introduction

There is a difference between the way in which people of the East view matters of science and art and the way the view of these things has developed in the West, especially during the 20th century. Whereas our education system in the West tends to channel students in the direction of either art or science, the traditional view of the East was to blend these two subjects into a single entity. These two subjects are in many ways linked to knowledge and devotion.

The over-emphasis on either knowledge or on devotion in any sphere of human endeavour, may bring about an imbalance in the way things work. Hence, science developing along the lines of being purely theoretical or with knowledge based thinking, may become remote from practicalities, dry and bereft of feelings. Whereas, art which dwells too much on the devotional or emotional aspects, could become sentimental, bizarre or fanatic. Readers will be able to observe within their own community and across the world, examples of science and art which may display these characteristics.

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---- These two aspects, either the pair called “knowledge and devotion” or the two types of naturally occurring intervals mentioned above, are strongly connected with the numbers two and three. These should not be thought of as numerical quantities but rather as powerful controlling principles. The principle of two is philosophically described as the basis of the creation itself. It is the power of duality and as such it keeps the universe running, through the idea that there is a world and a cause of that world. The principle of three is the way back to unity, the concept of “three in one”. Ancient scriptures say that the creation was begun in this order (two then three), after which the human Soul was embedded into it. Hence we can understand that the way back to the source for the human being was not needed until the creation had been made with the human

soul as part of it. The principle of two alone creates a line with a single dimension with two directions or views. Whereas the principle of three creates a triangle with an inherent unity.

The power of these two numbers as principles and their interaction in the world was known in ancient times. It has been expressed in the form of multiples creating a sequence. From two we get the sequence 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32 etc. and from three we get 1, 3, 9, 27, 81 etc. Both of these numerical sequences begin with one. We will see the effect of these two basic principles as the matters in this book unfold themselves. They are only mentioned here so that, as they appear in various places in later chapters, readers will perhaps remember that they are firstly principles and secondly quantities; and that as principles they relate to knowledge and devotion respectively.

FROM CHAPTER THREE

MELODY AS DIVINE ART

Introduction

One of the ways in which the concept of melody being divine occurs throughout history is the various references to "*Music of the Spheres*". It was this basis upon which Pythagoras described a Divine revelation which he had in respect of music. However, as will become evident, I believe his description of that revelation was put into a language which the people of his time would recognise. Hence, it should be taken to be a parable of his experience which otherwise could not be described easily with words.

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The last word here, should go to Sufi Inayat Khan: --(*my comments in brackets*)

"Music inspires not only the Soul of the great musician, but every infant which, the instant it comes into the world, begins to move its little arms and legs with the rhythm of music. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that music is the language of beauty; of the one who every living Soul has loved. And when one realises this and recognises the perfection of all beauty as God, our beloved, one understands why the music we experience in art and in the whole universe should be called the Divine art. (My view is that this does not relate to tempered scales and the use of polyphony)

Many in the world take music as a source of amusement, a pastime, and to many music is an art and a musician and entertainer. Yet no one has lived in this world and has thought and felt, (referring to the combination of knowledge and devotion) who has not considered music as the most sacred of all arts, for the fact is that what the art of painting cannot clearly suggest, poetry explains in words; but that which even a poet finds difficult to express in poetry is expressed in music. By this I do not only say that music is superior to art (painting or drawing) and poetry, but in point of fact music excels religion; for music raises the Soul of man even higher than the so-called external forms of religion (belief systems).

By this it must not be understood that music can take the place of religion; for every Soul is not necessarily tuned to that pitch where it can really benefit by music, nor is every music necessarily so high that it will exalt a person who hears it more than religion will do. However for those who follow the path of the inner cult, music is essential for their spiritual development. The reason is that the Soul who is seeking for that is in search of the formless God. (Visual) Art no doubt is most elevating but at the same time it contains form; poetry has words, names, suggestive of form; it is only music which has beauty, power, charm and at the same time can raise the Soul beyond form."

FROM CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT KIND OF ARTIST IS THE HUMAN BEING?

*"An artist is not a special kind of man,
but rather Man is a special kind of artist." William Blake.*

Introduction

Ever since I was a young boy I became interested in various forms of art. I made attempts at poetry, oil painting and various other things which were creative, in order to try and express something from within me. But I always seemed to have a difficulty in getting what I felt was inside me to the world outside. And so that I might express myself through art in a better way, I became very interested in what art really was and whether I could find out where it originated in me. After a lifetime of dealing with the subject of artistic expression there is inevitably some aspects of my discoveries in this book.

There is however, a difficulty when explaining the results from many years of discoveries with the words of language alone. So later I will put forward a diagrammatic framework to help understand the way in which I now see these things. This is to help clarify what I have discovered about how it all works for me in a practical way. I find that diagrams can portray in a succinct way, what may otherwise take many words to explain and perhaps with less risk of misunderstanding.

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The Various Ways of Being Human

With all the education that I received at school, at Technical College and at University, I was never given any teaching or idea that the way to understand things could be affected by the level of my being. Or indeed, there was no indication whatsoever that different people may have levels of being which varied from one to another. There may have been a mention that the human form was a higher **level of being** than other animals. All the remaining teaching or training which was received, aimed at increasing the level of my knowledge but not the level of my being. So at school we were encouraged to raise our level of knowledge and to compete with each other on the grounds of knowledge alone. I do not remember any teacher suggesting that we should make efforts to become more awake or more aware of the world around. Neither were there, at my school, any classes which gave me any method for becoming more aware of the world around me. I only encountered the idea of levels of being when looking outside the Western approach to education. I discovered that for thousands of years it has been a well understood fact that humans have a range of different levels of being available to them.

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Here is rather a long quote about levels of being, from a lecture given by G.I. Gurdjieff in the early part of the 20th century. This had a range of effects on me when I first read it:-

(..... = non-relevant text omitted for clarity)

"There are two lines along which man's development proceeds, the line of knowledge and the line of being., people understand what knowledge means. And they understand the possibility of different levels of knowledge. They understand that knowledge may be lesser or greater, that is to say, of one quality or of another quality. But they do not understand this in relation to being,,take for instance the being of a mineral and a plant. It is a different being. The being of a plant and of an animal is again a different being. The being of an animal and of a man is a different being. But the being of two different people can differ from one another more than the being of a mineral and of an animal. This is exactly what people do not understand."

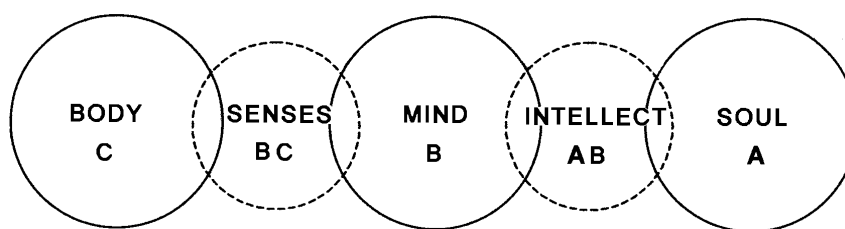
The concept of plants and animals as beings with experiences like our own was a fascinating idea to me. Also understanding that people could be so very different within themselves and the

way they viewed and interpreted the world they experienced, might explain many things. The quote continues :-

"And they do not understand that knowledge depends on being. Not only do they not understand this latter but they definitely do not wish to understand it. And especially in Western culture it is considered that a man may possess great knowledge, for example he may be an able scientist, make discoveries, advance science and at the same time he may be, and has the right to be, a petty, egoistic, cavilling, mean, envious, vain, naïve, and absent-minded man., and yet it is his being. And people think that his knowledge does not depend on his being. People of Western culture put great value on the level of a man's knowledge but they do not value the level of a man's being, and are not ashamed of the low-level of their own being. They do not even understand what it means. And they do not understand that the man's knowledge depends on the level of his being."

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Now we can develop this **triadic principle** further to include the number five. Quite simply if we take the three above to be **A** , **B** and **C** , as individual Soul, mind and body respectively, then apply the Pythagorean "*Law of Mean Terms*" to the pair **A** and **B** and also to the pair **B** and **C**. This would add another two to the original three aspects to make five. The emergence of the two additional areas to make five enables a link between the pairs to become possible. What are these other two? The one between body and mind is the vitality or the breath or the five physical senses. This links the otherwise dead physical matter of the body to give it breath and make it perceivable by the mind and to convey intentions within the mind into the world. The one between the mind and Soul is the intellect, memory or reasoning power. This enables the mind to be perceived by the Soul and also allows the Soul, in a limited sense, to be comprehended by the mind.



THE FIVE-FOLD NATURE OF THE HUMAN

Diagram 4.4

FROM CHAPTER SIX

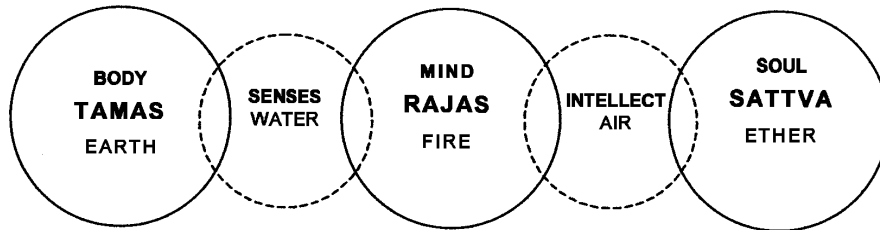
What Kind of Art is Music

For Rumi, his family and followers music was an essential factor in this process. Dr. S. El-Kholy discusses this in the context of Sufi mysticism (tasawwuf) in her very thorough dissertation entitled "*The Function of Music in Islamic culture,*" from which I quote (my comments in brackets) :-

*"A definition of **tasawwuf** (Sufi mysticism) is a complicated matter, since it is neither a religious sect nor a dogmatic system. It could be described perhaps as a journey or a spiritual pilgrimage where the traveller advances towards communion with God, through slow and difficult stages of asceticism and rigid moral discipline. That spiritual religion of the heart has fully recognised the tremendous spiritual power of music in helping the mind and Soul to concentrate on the idea of God, and in inducing the ecstatic state (wajd) and leading to the passing away from self (fana) which is the ultimate hope and desire of every pledged (Pythagorean) Sufi."*

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Diagram 4.4 in Chapter 4, page 38, displayed the principle of five degrees of increasing subtlety starting from the body and moving in the direction of the Soul. Vedanta superimposes onto this concept the five basic elements. These elements described in Vedanta, starting from the grossest, are :- earth, water, fire, air and ether. The superimposition is shown in diagram 6.1. The link between senses and water here, is due to each of the five sense organs requiring water for their proper function.



FROM CHAPTER EIGHT

The Philosophy Behind Pythagorean Music

There is no doubt that the Sufis in early times based their use and understanding of music on the Pythagorean model, and that this continued into recent centuries. The strength and the importance of this for the Mevlevi and their direct influence on Ottoman art music is now well documented.

In relation to the ancient tradition in music Gurdjieff speaks of his own experience:-

" --- ideas of the octave have been handed down from teacher to pupil, from one school to another. In very remote times one of these schools found that it was possible to apply this formula to music. In this way was obtained the seven tone musical scale which was known in the most distant antiquity, then forgotten, and then discovered or 'found' again."

Gurdjieff discusses what he calls the law of octaves at great length. Then in a further application to music he states the following:-

*"In order better to understand the significance of the law of octaves it is necessary to have a clear idea of another property of vibrations, namely the so-called inner vibrations. This means that within vibrations other vibrations proceed, and that every octave can be resolved into a greater number of **inner octaves**. Each note of any octave can be regarded as an octave on another plane; each note of these inner octaves again contains a whole octave and so on ---"*

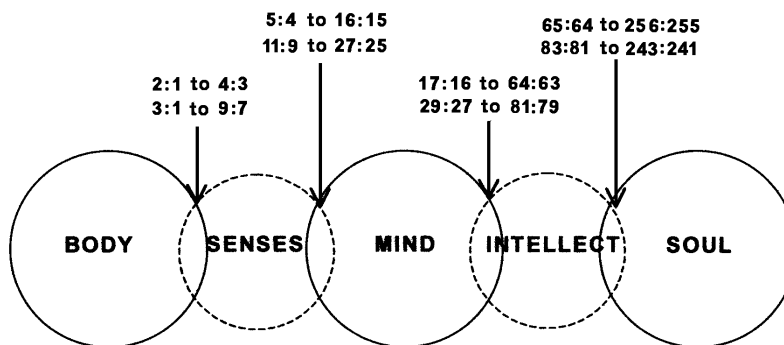
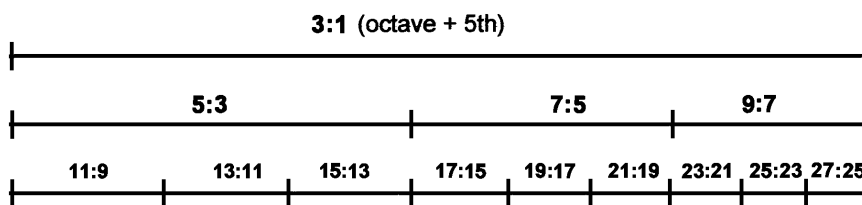
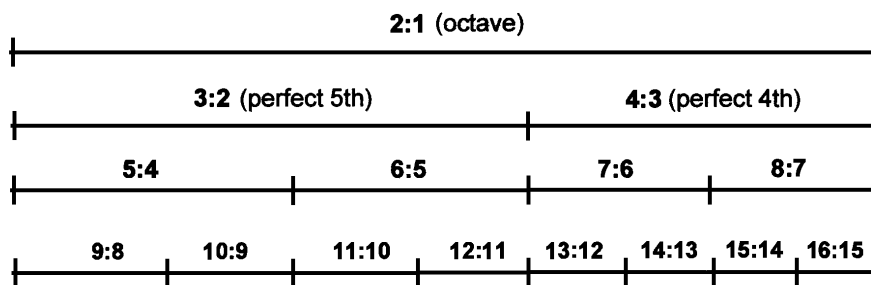
FROM CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Origin of the Melodic Interval System

The Divine Experience of Pythagoras

"Pythagoras related that his Soul rose as far as the higher world. Due to the purity of his being and to the divinatory power of his heart, he heard the melodies of the Spheres and the sonorities produced by the movements of the heavenly bodies; at the same time he became aware of the discreet resonance of the voices of their Angels. Afterwards he returned to his material body. As a result of what he had heard he determined the musical relationships and perfected the science of music."

Relating this experience as described to our model of the human being, shown by the five circles, we can understand that Pythagoras had entered a rare spiritual state, where attachment to body, senses, mind and intellect had been transcended. In this state his Soul (true Self) was in a position to be free from all worldly or mental influences. On his return from that high state he would need the use of a higher intellectual faculty to be able to relate what he had experienced. In



Active Area of Human Perception	Just Intonation Range	Causal Range	Comma Range	European Cents
Sense Organs	2:1 to 4:3	3:1 to 9:7	53 to 22 84 to 19.3	1,200 to 498 1902 to 435
Sense Impressions	5:4 to 16:15	11:9 to 27:25	17 to 4.9 15.3 to 5.9	386 to 112 347 to 133
Creativity	17:16 to 64:63	29: 27 to 81:79	4.6 to 1.2 5.46 to 1.9	105 to 27 124 to 43
Intuition	65:64 to 256:255	83:81 to 243:241	1.2 to 0.3 1.9 to 0.63	27 to 7 42 to 14

Table 11.2

FROM CHAPTER TWELVE

The Prime Colours of Melody

Mathematical Accuracy v Human Sense of Hearing

In addition to the above parameters we need to consider the information we have about the perceptive range of the human sense of hearing. A series of experiments made at USA's Washington university in the 1970s, tested the ears of most of the worlds eminent musicians. Necdet Yaşar's ability was reported to be one of the best at around 3 cents (approx. 0.14 of a comma). This means there is a limit or a point at which the sense of hearing can no longer perceive a difference between two notes and hence, the corresponding intervals.

If we accept this hearing limit as 3 cents or 0.14 of a comma, then we can see from table 11.1 on page 99, that we may just about be able to hear the difference between the intervals 19:18 and 20:19 (4.13 and 3.92 commas). But we would not be able to tell the difference between either of these and the interval 39:37. (4.02 commas).

1. **Rast tetrachord** ratios :- $9:8 + 10:9 + 16:15 = 4:3$
commas $9 + 8 + 5 = 22$

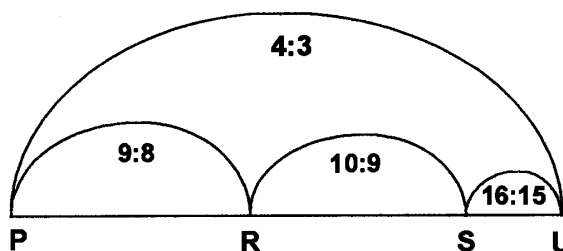


Diagram 12.2

7. **Hijaz tetrachord** ratios:- $15:14 + 7:6 + 16:15 = 4:3$
commas $5 + 12 + 5 = 22$

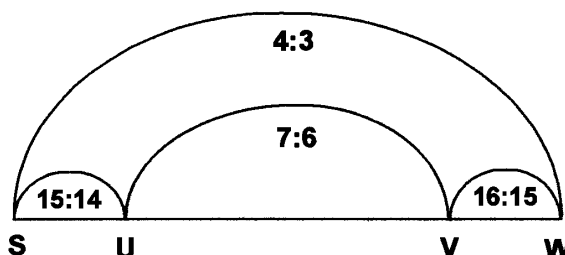


Diagram 12.9

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8. Saba tetrachord (perfect 4th)

ratios:- $25:23 + 7:6 + 39:37 = 2275:1702 \equiv 4:3$
 commas $6\frac{1}{3} + 12 + 4 = 22\frac{1}{3}$

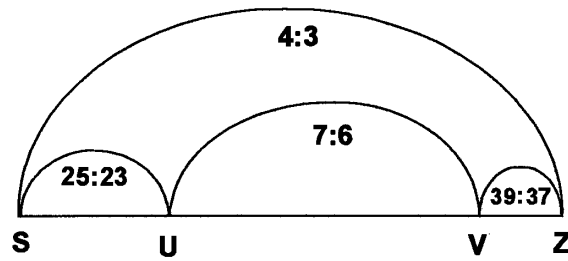


Diagram 12.10

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9. Saba tetrachord (causal fourth)

ratios $10:9 + 16:15 + 25:23 = 800:621 \equiv 9:7$
 commas $8 + 5 + 6\frac{1}{3} = 19\frac{1}{3}$

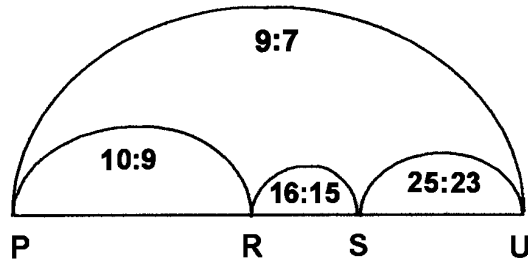


Diagram 12.11

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Table of Tetrachords – prime colours of melody.

TETRACHORD NAME	ASCENDING INTERVALS	COMMAS
1. Rast	$9:8 + 10:9 + 16:15$	$9 + 8 + 5$
2. Ushak	$10:9 + 16:15 + 9:8$	$8 + 5 + 9$
3. Segah	$16:15 + 9:8 + 10:9$	$5 + 9 + 8$
4. Ajem	$9:8 + 9:8 + 39:37$	$9 + 9 + 4$
5. Puselik	$9:8 + 39:37 + 9:8$	$9 + 4 + 9$
6. Kurdi	$39:37 + 9:8 + 9:8$	$4 + 9 + 9$
7. Hijaz	$15:14 + 7:6 + 16:15$	$5 + 12 + 5$
8. Saba	$25:23 + 7:6 + 39:37$	$6\frac{1}{3} + 12 + 4$
9. Saba flat 4th	$10:9 + 16:15 + 25:23$	$8 + 5 + 6\frac{1}{3}$
10. Karjayar	$25:23 + 15:13 + 16:15$	$6\frac{1}{3} + 11 + 5$

Table 12.1

FROM CHAPTER NINETEEN

Summary of the Return Path Through Melody

"Explore thou the channel of the Soul, whence she cometh, and by what means, when hath she become a slave of the body; thou mayst again restore her to the order from which thou didst draw her, by uniting action with 'sacred word' (logos)." (Chaldean Oracles)

A SUMMARY OF THE RETURN PATH

This chapter can be used to preview the book before making a more in depth reading of it. In this case refer to the items in the footnotes to gain some information of what the book says about that item; then return to this chapter to continue the preview.

In accordance with the main tenet behind this book, the purpose of human life is taken to be the return to the source of our existence. This aim, or the process which leads to it, has also been called Self discovery, the Love of God, breaking the cycle of birth and death, the Supreme Goal of Human Life, the Union of the Individual Self with the Universal Self and many other like descriptions. An indication of the method is given in the quotation above taken from the Chaldean Oracles.

In the above quote the term 'sacred word', or logos in the original Greek, relates to refined reason or as I have called it 'experiencing **Sattva**'. The action referred to in the Oracle could be any action which we carry out in our life. If we were to allow all our actions to be Sattvic, or experienced as a duty to the Soul, then our life would be peaceful indeed. We can learn what this state of peace feels like by engaging in Pythagorean music. Therein the action may be filled with Sattva and we can transfer this experience into our normal life through practice.

Note: There are 21 other paragraphs, each detailing the various aspects of the book.

List of Appendices and Addenda

APPENDICES

- 1 THE INTERNAL RELATIONSHIP OF NUMBERS
- 2 TEMPERING OF NATURAL MUSICAL TONES
- 3 TUNING CYCLE FOR TANBUR FRETS
- 4 LIST OF NOTES - COMMAS -AND SIGNS
- 5 LIST OF MNEUM SIGNS
- 6 TETRACHORDS - POSITIONS AND TERENNUMS
- 7 MAKAMS AND THEIR TETRACHORDS
- 8 LIST OF RHYTHMS

ADDENDA

GLOSSARY [READ THIS FIRST AS IF IT WERE A CHAPTER]

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LIST OF TABLES

ABBREVIATIONS

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