

PDF note

- Some slides in the presentation are complex and involve many parts which come and go.
- Hence I have split the complex slides into parts so that the overall purpose of each slide becomes clearer.
- Some comments have also been introduced to make the PDF clearer to follow.

PYTHAGOREAN WISDOM IN TURKISH MAKAMS MEŞK IN THE LAST CENTURY

Half a lifetime's learning in
the Meşk tradition of Turkey

Self-discovery through music

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

FIRST SUBJECT

Meşk

or

**Master – Pupil
Tradition**

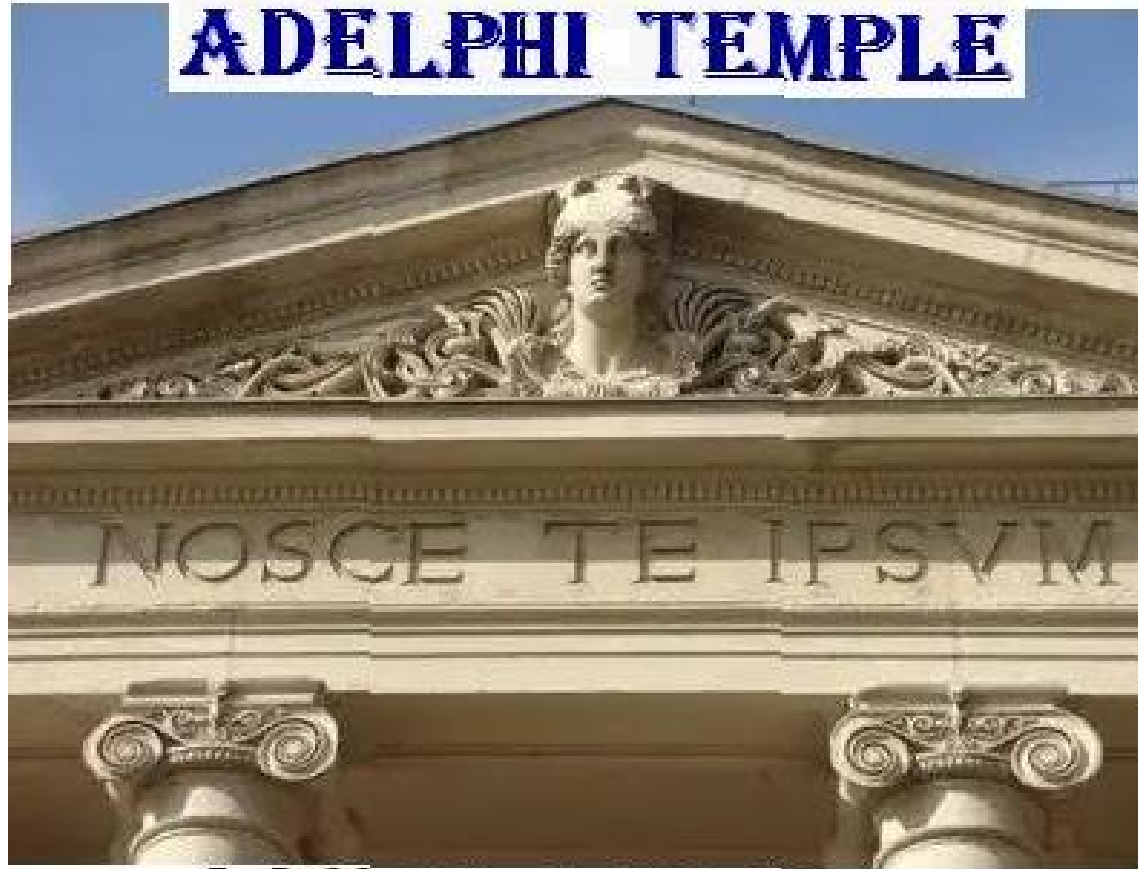
What is Meşk in Music?

Meşk is a face to face system for ensuring that musicians emulate their master's skills and knowledge in the art of music.

It requires no books. Its aim is for the student to discover his / herself through discipline.

The eternal question, "Who am I?"

What is Meşk in Music?



KNOW THYSELF

My teacher Necdet Yaşar

Master of the Makam system

Master of the tanbur.

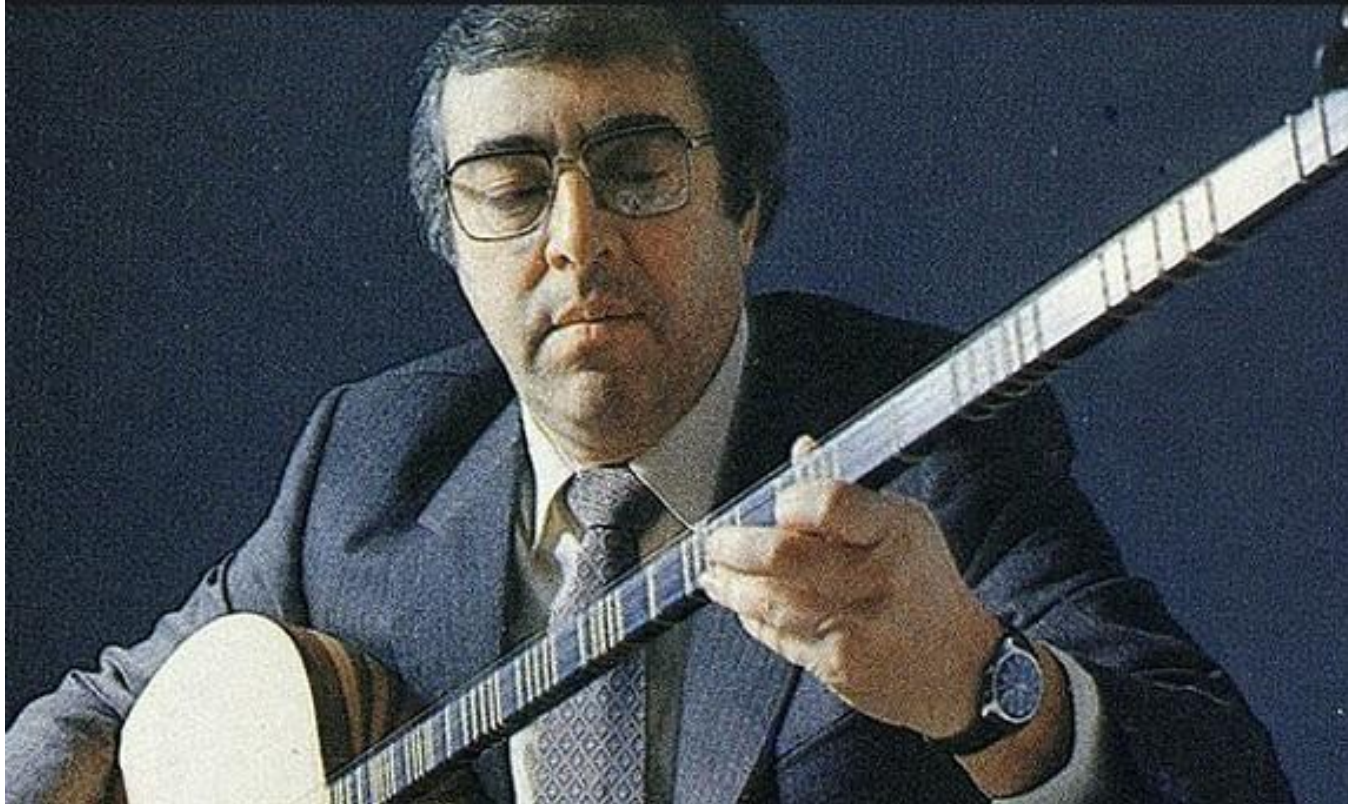
Played often at Konya Mevlevi
gatherings 17th December

Master in the art of Taksim

Was taught through Meşk system

A man who knew himself.

My teacher Necdet Yaşar



Taught me and my daughter , **face to face**
74 Makams (musical modes) over 8 years.

SECOND SUBJECT

ORIGINS OF
EASTERN MUSIC
INCLUDING TURKISH
MUSIC

RAUF YEKTA BEY



1871 - 1935

RAUF YEKTA BEY

- Turkish Mevlevi musicologist & neyzen.
- From his 1921 book “La Musique Turk”
- “--- Farabi, a Muslim Scholar, grounded Eastern music in Greek theory.----”
- “--The Pythagoreans originated the basic division of the octave as 2:1, 3:2, 4:3, 5:4 etc. For them everything was numbers; even the construction of the Universe.---”

Many centuries ago - a great teacher
From an ancient line of gurus.
After 40 years of travel and study.
Discovered his **True Self**
Using **mathematics** and **music**.
Founded an ashram community.
Taught vegetarianism & reincarnation
and a contemplative life
Trained disciples in sacred knowledge;
uniting the human soul with the Divine.

POWER OF MATHEMATICS

PITHA-GURU= FATHER TEACHER



a great mathematician

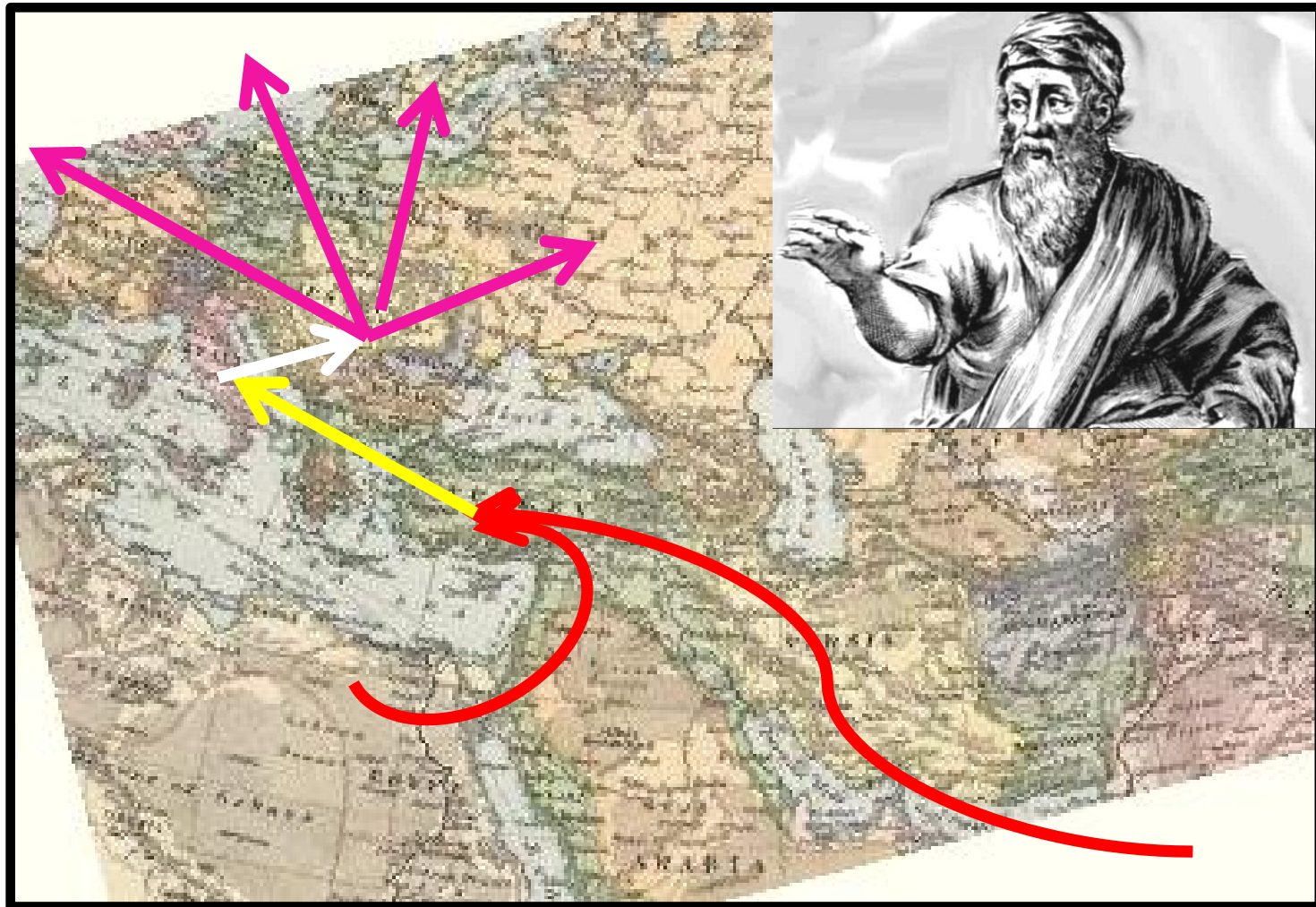
POWER OF MATHEMATICS

PITHA-GURU = PYTHAGORAS



also a great musician
and a great philosopher

JOURNEY OF MUSIC



Pythagoras took music from India and Egypt to Anatolia, then to Italy; then to Greece. After it spread throughout European countries; but became modified and simplified.

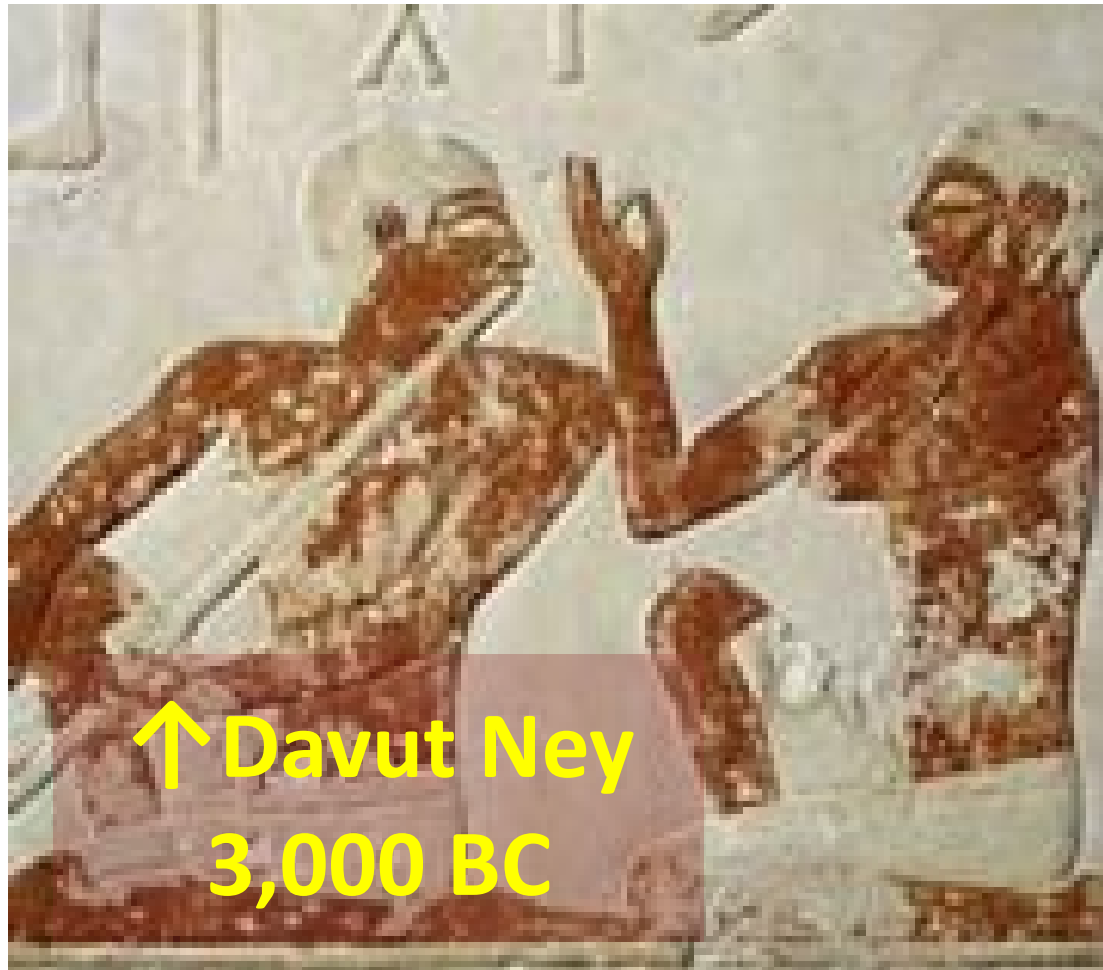
JOURNEY OF MUSIC



↑ Tanbur like
instrument
1,350 BC

Egyptian wall painting,

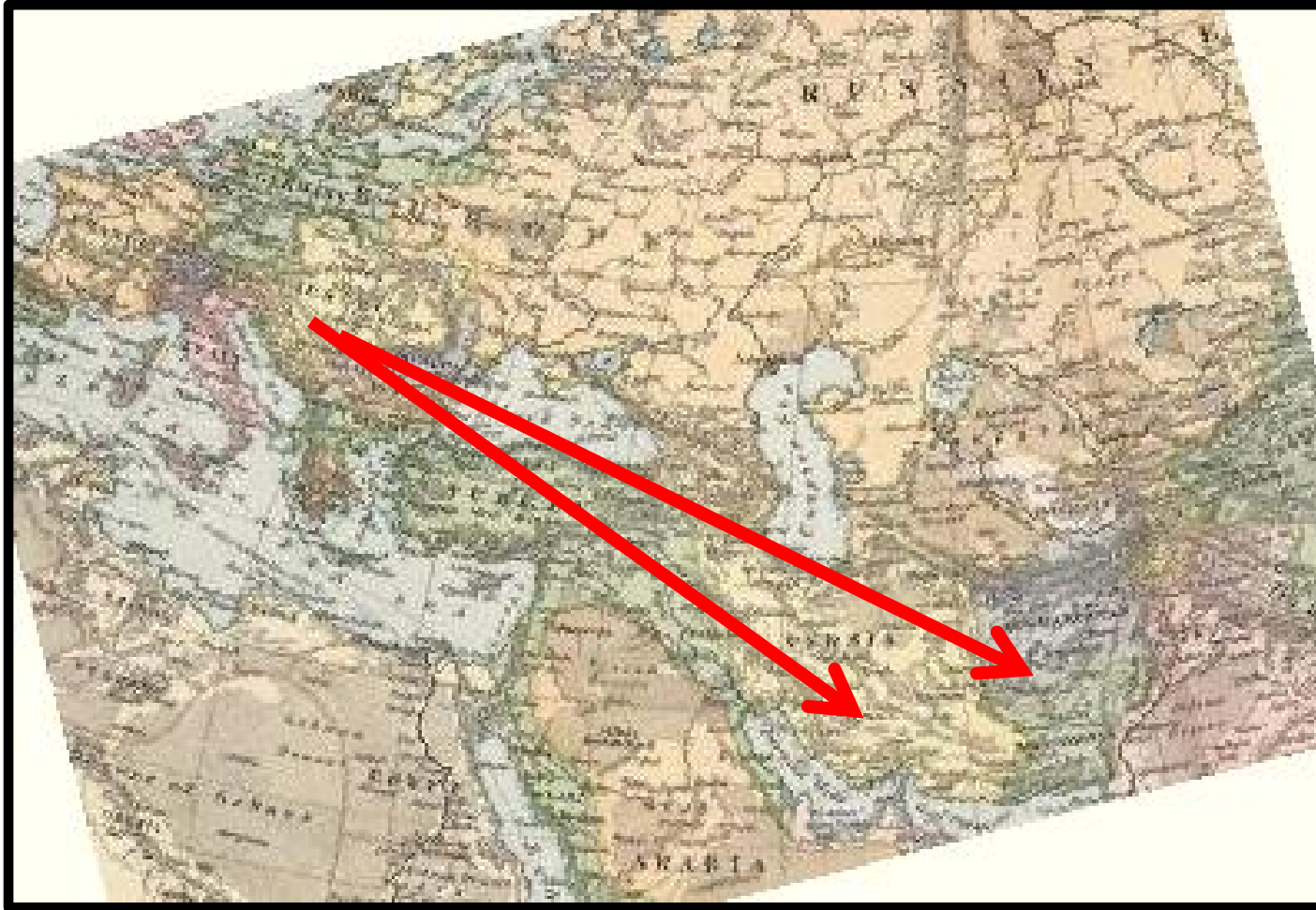
JOURNEY OF MUSIC



↑ Davut Ney
3,000 BC

Egyptian wall painting,

JOURNEY OF MUSIC



Due to the effect of the Greek Empire the Greek music theory travelled to the Middle East.

JOURNEY OF MUSIC

Al Kindi : Al Farabi : Ibn Sina : Safi al Din
Seljuk Seljuk Seljuk Mohgul



Great men who translated Greek theory into Arabic scripts and continued the meşk system in their music schools.

JOURNEY OF MUSIC



During Timurid and Ottoman times the music system came to mainland Turkey..

PYTHAGORAS' VISION OF MUSIC

from - - "Music, Mysticism and Magic" by J. Godwin

"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." = Makam

Angel = Indian Goddess Saraswati

**Saraswati is
the Goddess
of both
devotion
&
knowledge**

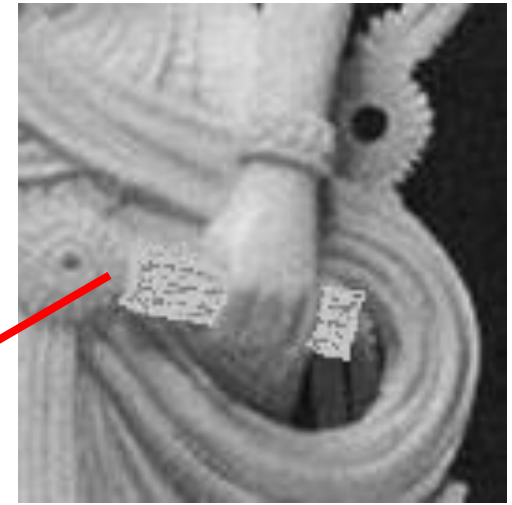


**This means
both art and
science are
made into
one thing.**

**Music is this
kind of art.**



**Prayer
beads
indicate
devotion.**



**Scripture
scroll
indicates
knowledge**

**Joining of
left and
right hands
on the vina.**



**This
indicates
that music
combines
science and
art**



In the Yoga Vasistha it
says – Saraswati is the
wisdom that shines in
the hearts of all.
She is the intelligence
of all.
She is the Self of all.



Human beings, vegetables,
or cosmic dust, we all
dance to the mysterious
tune, played in the distance
by an invisible flute player.

Einstein

We rarely hear the
inner music, but even so we
are all dancing to it.

Rumi

PYTHAGORAS' DISCOVERIES

Pythagoras treated men and
women as equals
But are they equal?
In one thing they are not.

PYTHAGORAS' DISCOVERIES

If you ask a man and a woman
to imitate a musical note
There's one octave = 2:1
between their pitches.

**Hence the octave 2:1 is the
first natural harmony**

THIRD SUBJECT

ORIGINS OF
MUSIC

+

BEAUTY IN
MATHEMATICS

BEAUTY IN MATHEMATICS

HOW THEY ALL FIT INSIDE EACH OTHER

RATIOS

2:1 = twice the vibrations

3:2 = $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the vibrations

4:3 = $1\frac{1}{3}$ times the vibrations

5:4 = $1\frac{1}{4}$; 3:1 = 3 times etc.

Commas

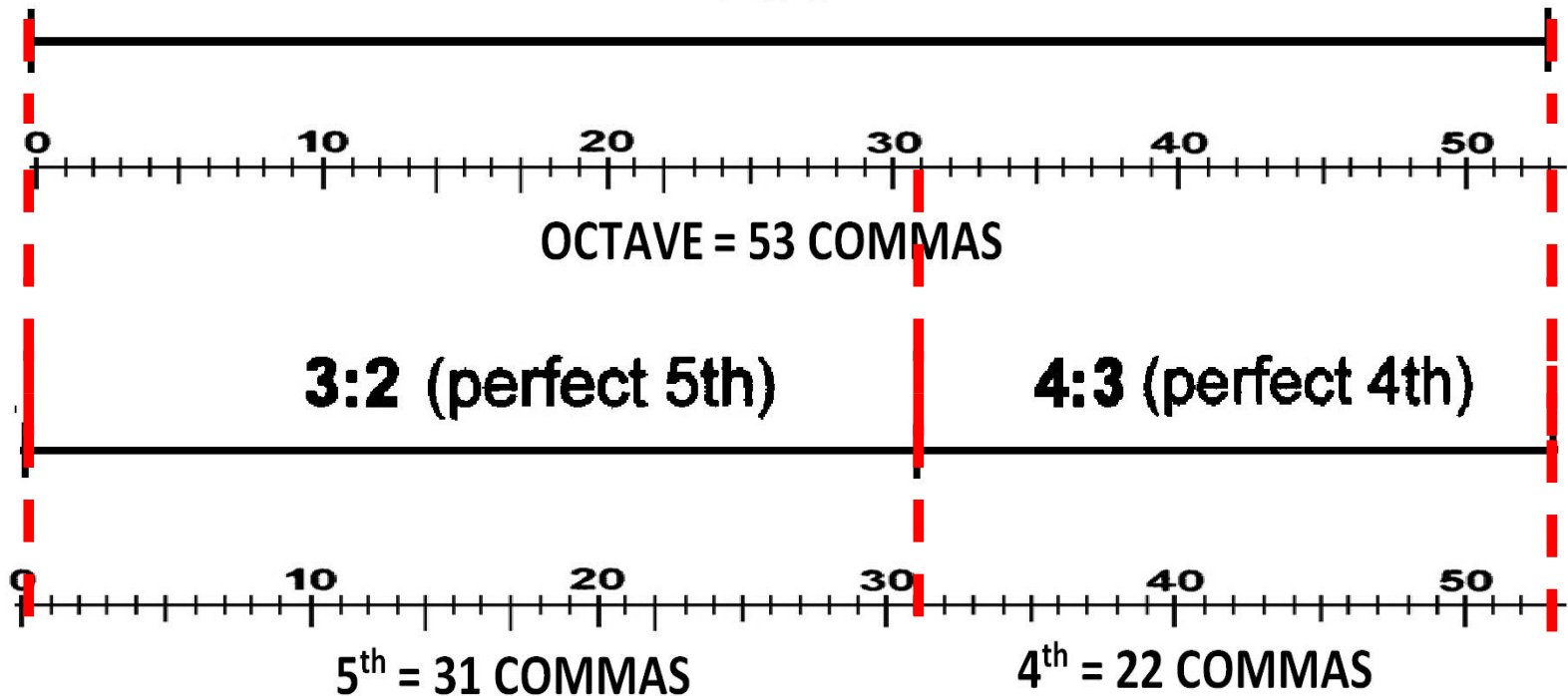
To avoid the use of ratios commas are used.

2:1 = octave = 53 commas

BEAUTY IN MATHEMATICS

HOW THEY ALL FIT INSIDE EACH OTHER

2:1

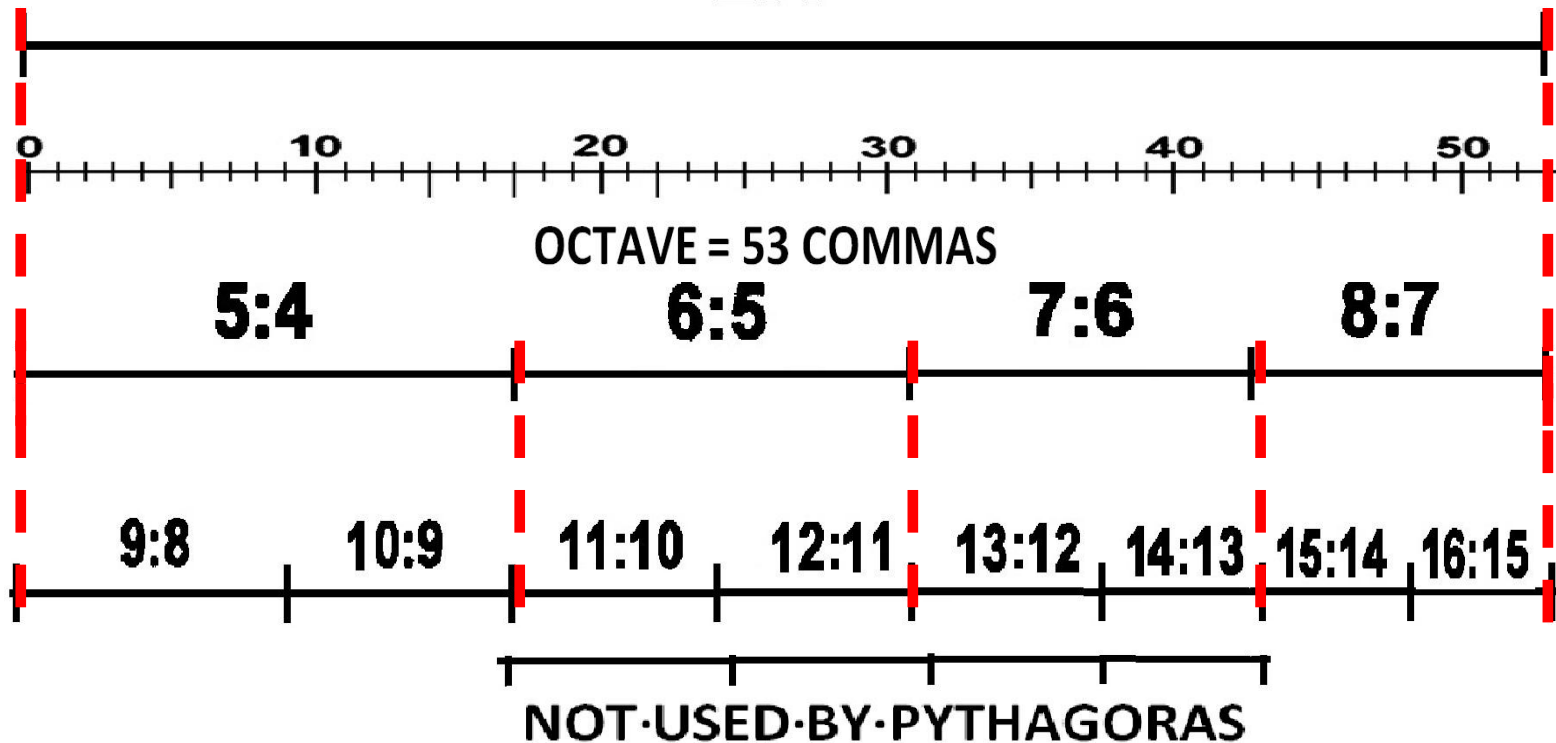


The melody is a single melodic line with no real use of chords. Called Just Intonation
Necdet Yaşar taught with commas, not ratios

BEAUTY IN MATHEMATICS

HOW THEY ALL FIT INSIDE EACH OTHER

2:1

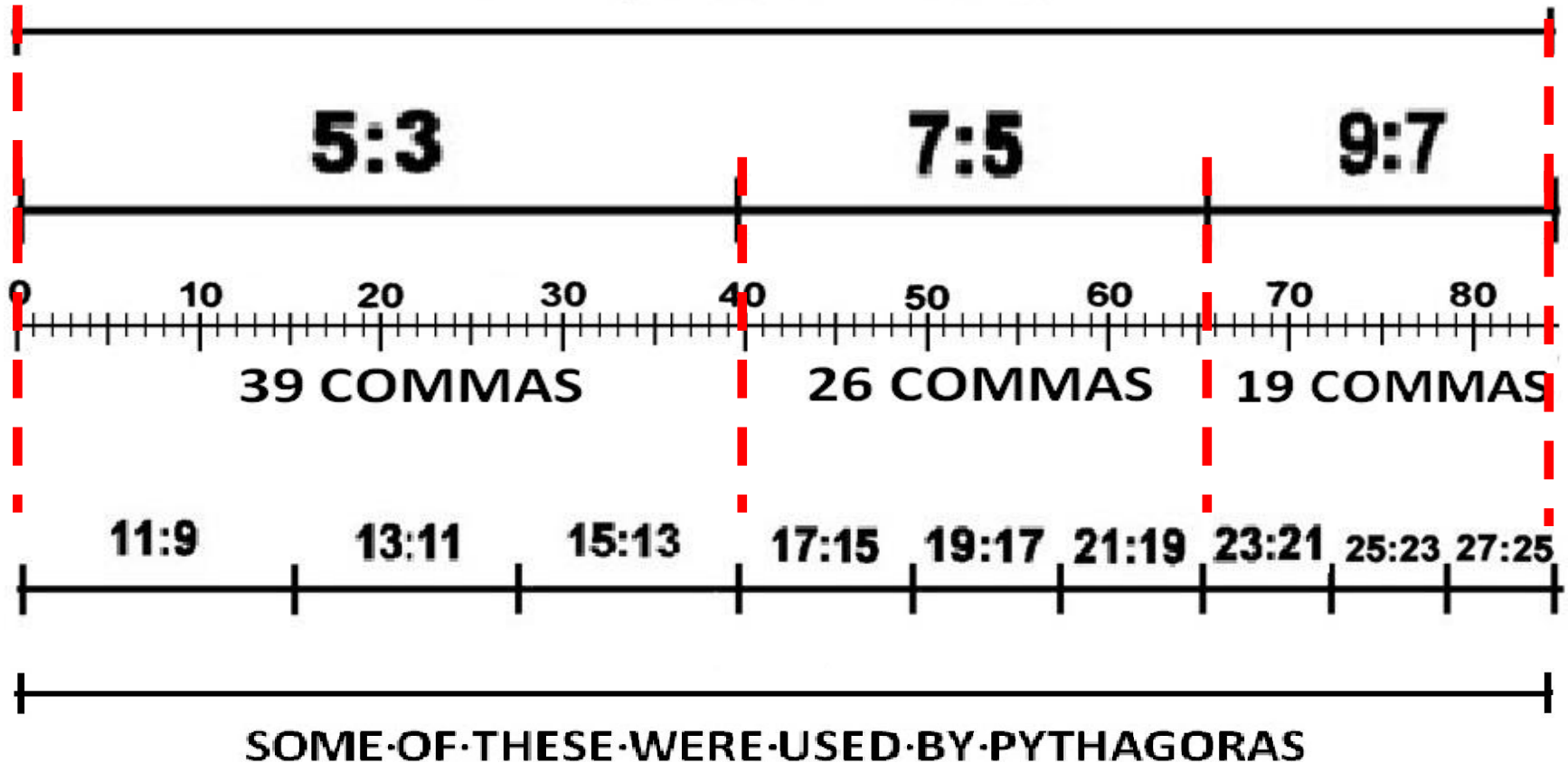


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BEAUTY IN MATHEMATICS

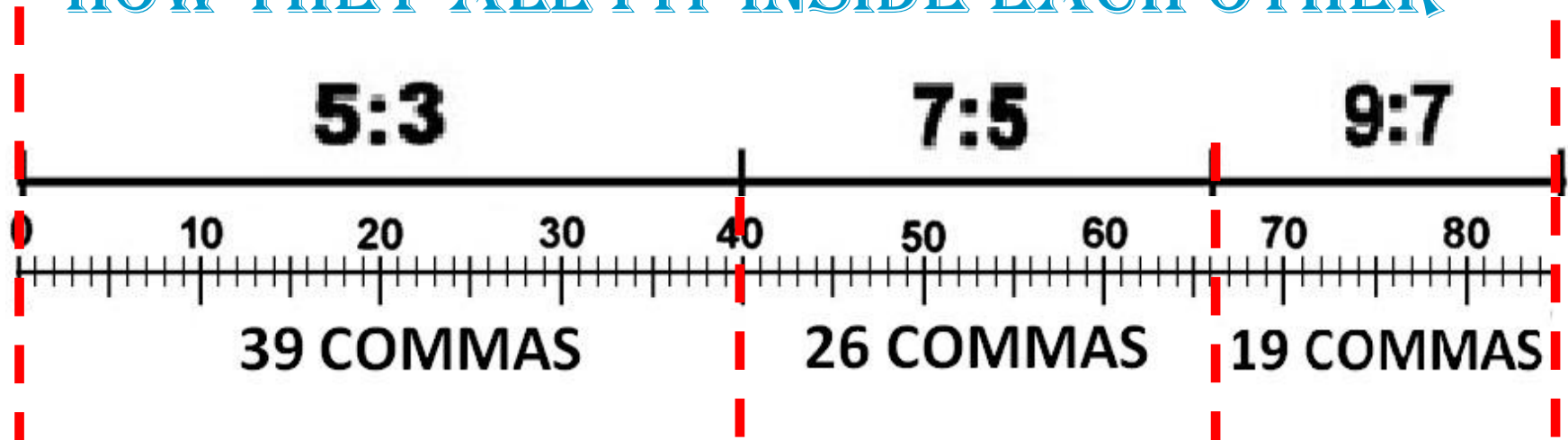
HOW THEY ALL FIT INSIDE EACH OTHER

3:1 (octave + 5th)



BEAUTY IN MATHEMATICS

HOW THEY ALL FIT INSIDE EACH OTHER



I call these Causal intervals.

- These two systems, Just Intonation and Causal form all the notes in the Makam system. Intervals as small as 256:255 or 243:241 pass from being heard to being felt. Here music crosses from knowledge to devotion

FOURTH SUBJECT

PYTHAGORAS'

USE OF HIS

DISCOVERIES

PYTHAGORAS' DISCOVERIES

Just Intonation		Causal	
Ratio	Commas	Ratio	Commas
2:1	53	3:1	84
3:2	31	5:3	39
4:3	22	7:5	26
5:4	17	9:7	19 $\frac{1}{3}$
6:5	14	11:9	15 $\frac{1}{3}$
7:6	12	13:11	13
9:8	9	15:13	11
10:9	8	23:21	7
15:14 $\square$	5	25:23	6 $\frac{1}{3}$
16:15 $\square$	5	27:25	6
19:18 $\square$	4	31:29	5
20:19 $\square$	4	39:37	4
77:76 $\square$	1		

Pythagoras' system was taught by word of mouth only; For centuries.

This is Meşk.

PYTHAGORAS' DISCOVERIES

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2:1	53	3:1	84
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15:14 $\square$	5	25:23	$6\frac{1}{3}$
16:15 $\square$	5	27:25	6
19:18 $\square$	4	31:29	5
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The interval of the middle third = $\frac{1}{2}$ of the perfect 5th is special – more about that later.

PYTHAGORAS' DISCOVERIES

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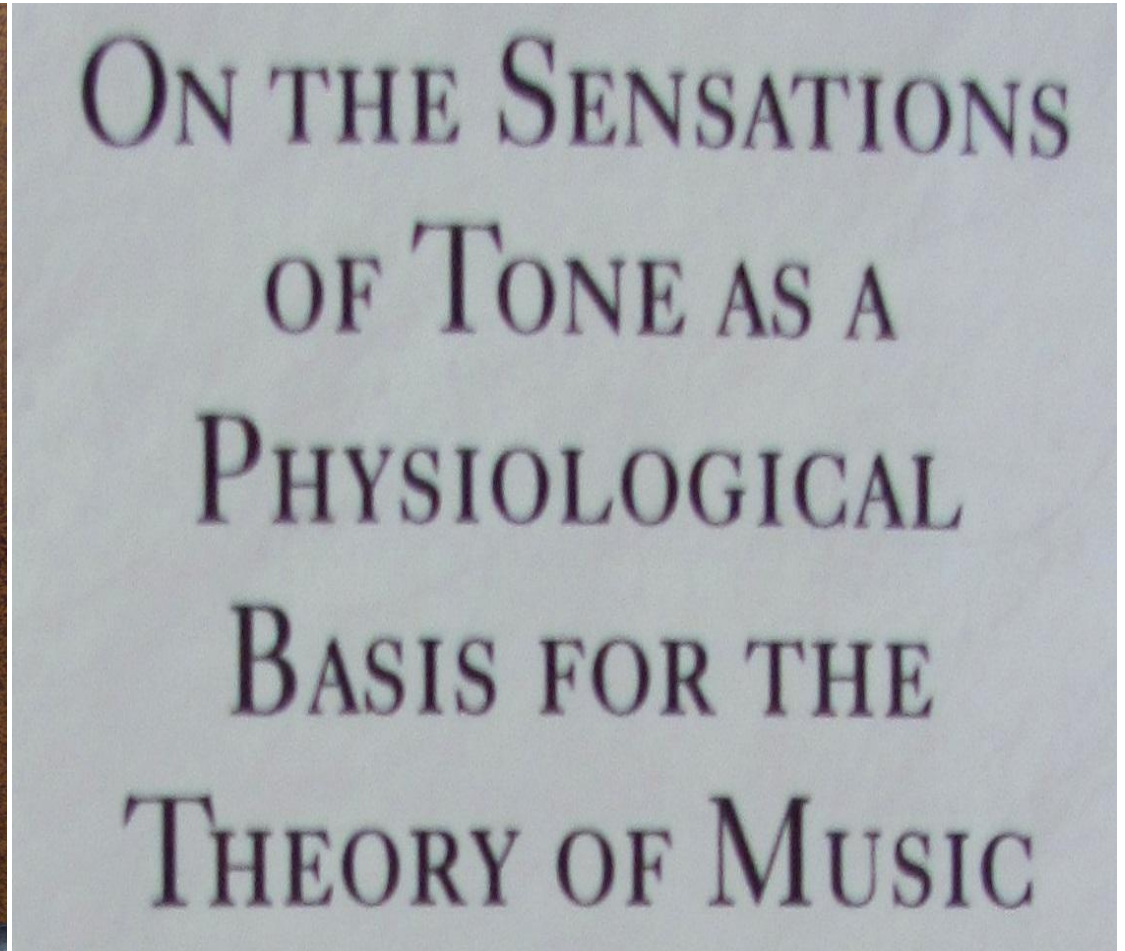
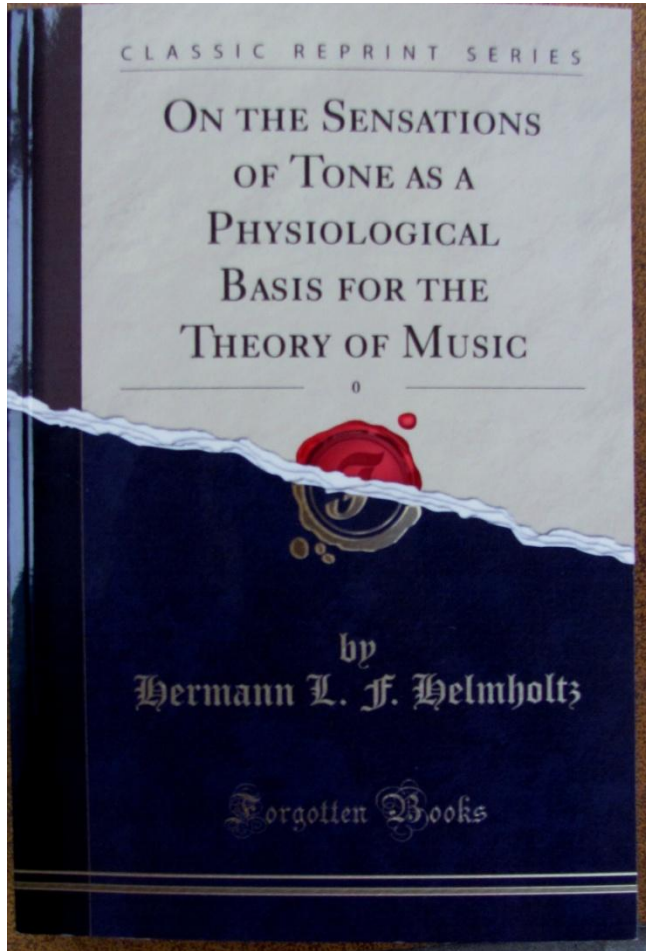
Due to UK academic rules, Meşk proved difficult to be accepted.

The boxed intervals were proved other than by the meşk system, from German discoveries

FIFTH SUBJECT

GERMAN
PHYSIOLOGY
DISCOVERIES

OTHER SOURCES - HELMHOLTZ

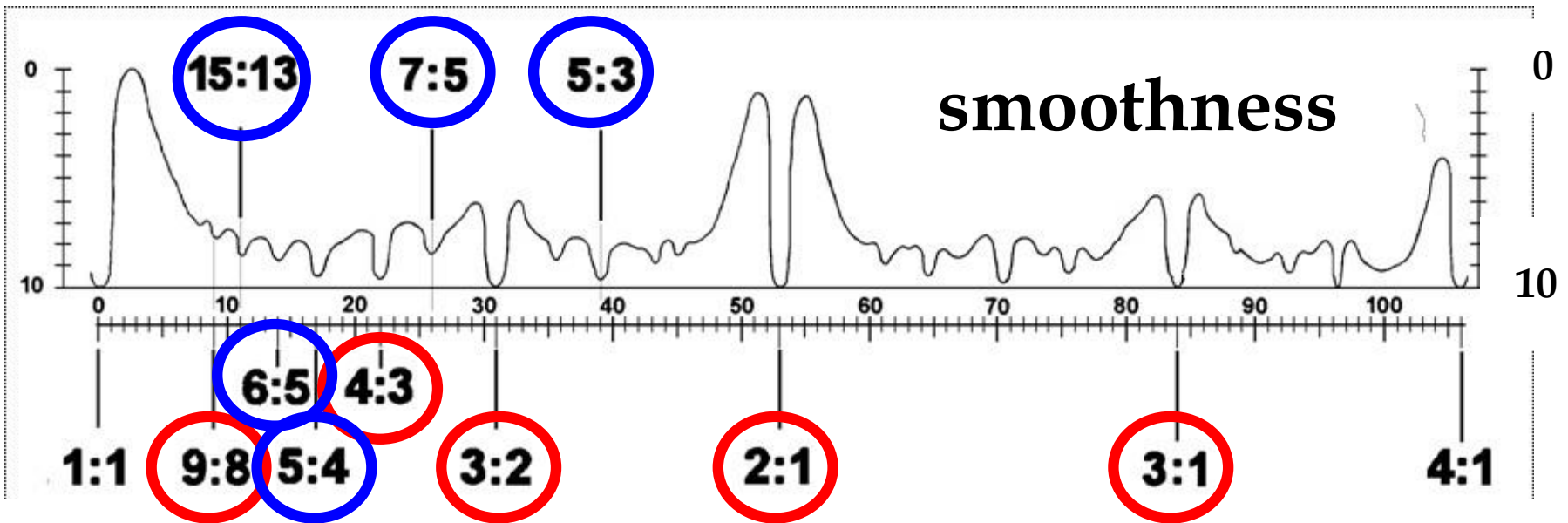
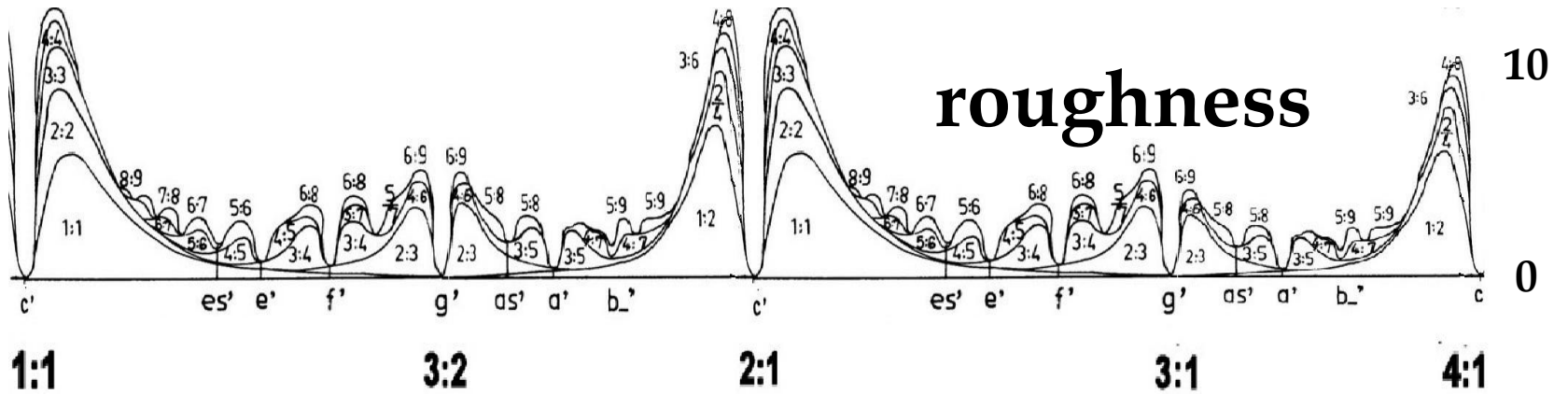


OTHER SOURCES - HELMHOLTZ



- Hermann Helmholtz
- 1821 to 1894
- German Physicist
- Psychologist
- Researched intervals
- Interesting results

OTHER SOURCES - HELMHOLTZ



SIXTH SUBJECT

Meşk &

TANBURI

CEMIL BEY

20th CENTURY MEŞK



1902
Cemil Bey was
an important
part of the
many
centuries of
oral tradition.

TANBURI CEMİL BEY



Cemil's son
Mesut Cemil
followed his
father's path.
Mesut was the
teacher of
Necdet Yaşar.



TANBURI CEMİL BEY



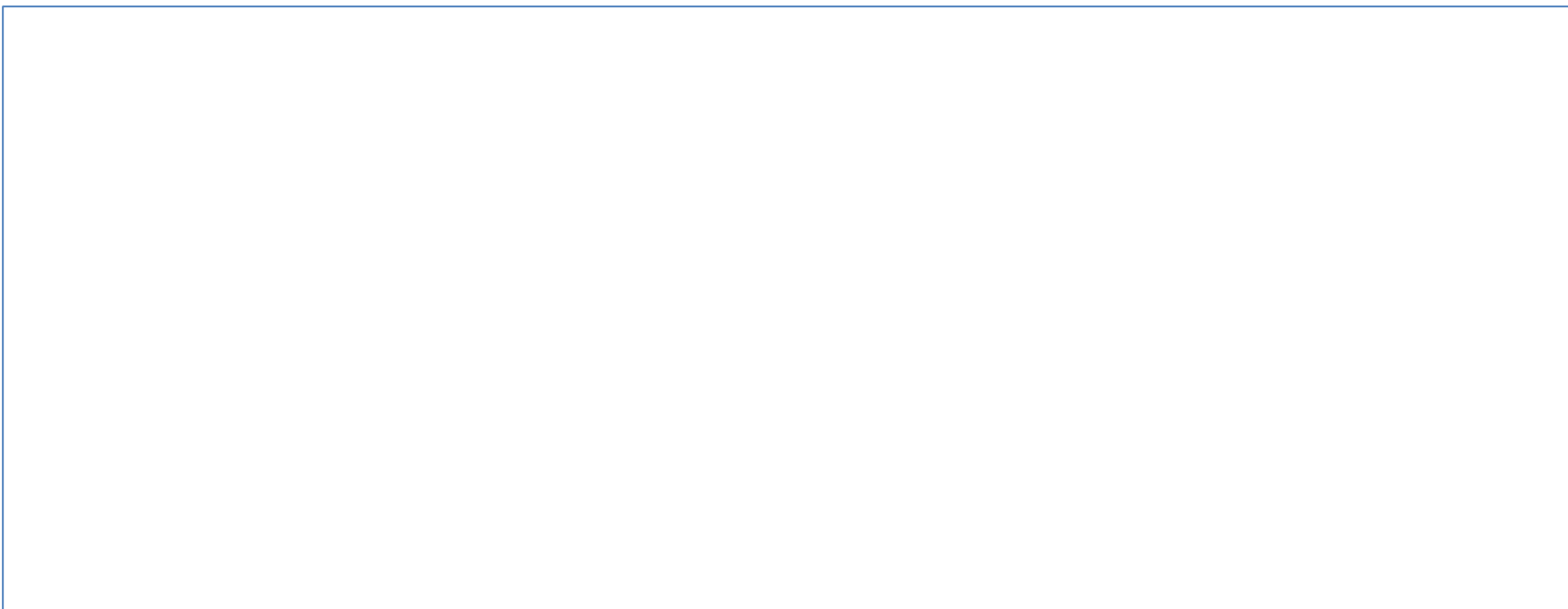
Cemil to Mesut
and to Necdet: is
a part of a meşk
line that goes
back many
centuries across
the Middle East



SEVENTH SUBJECT

TANBUR NECK

EVIDENCE



NECK OF TURKISH TANBUR

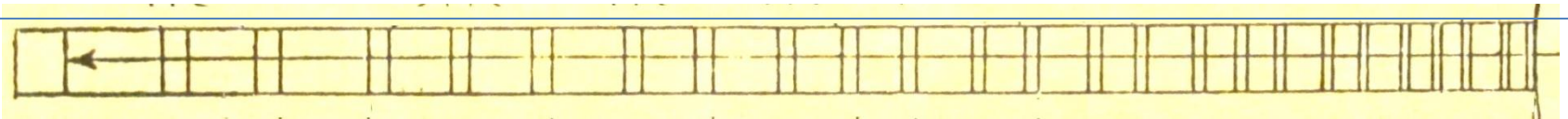
Hence many Pythagorean notes went missing after the 1930's

This was due to the Ezgi/ Arel notation system not able to accommodate all the notes.

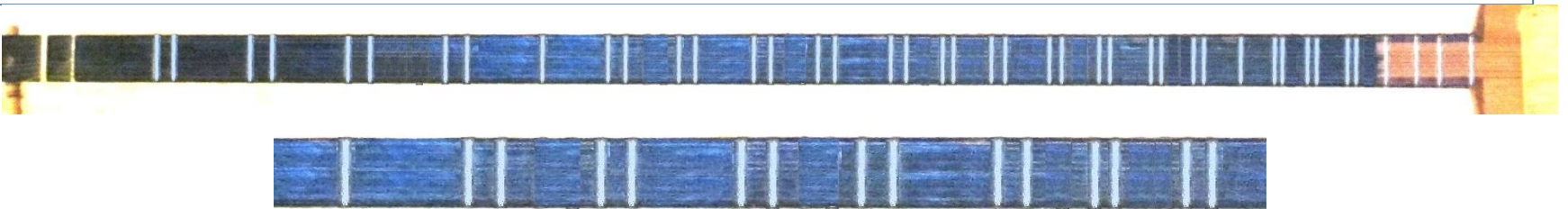
NECK OF TURKISH TANBUR

A researcher from the USA recorded this in 1972 in his doctorate treatise called Makam

The tanbur neck looked like this in 1970s.



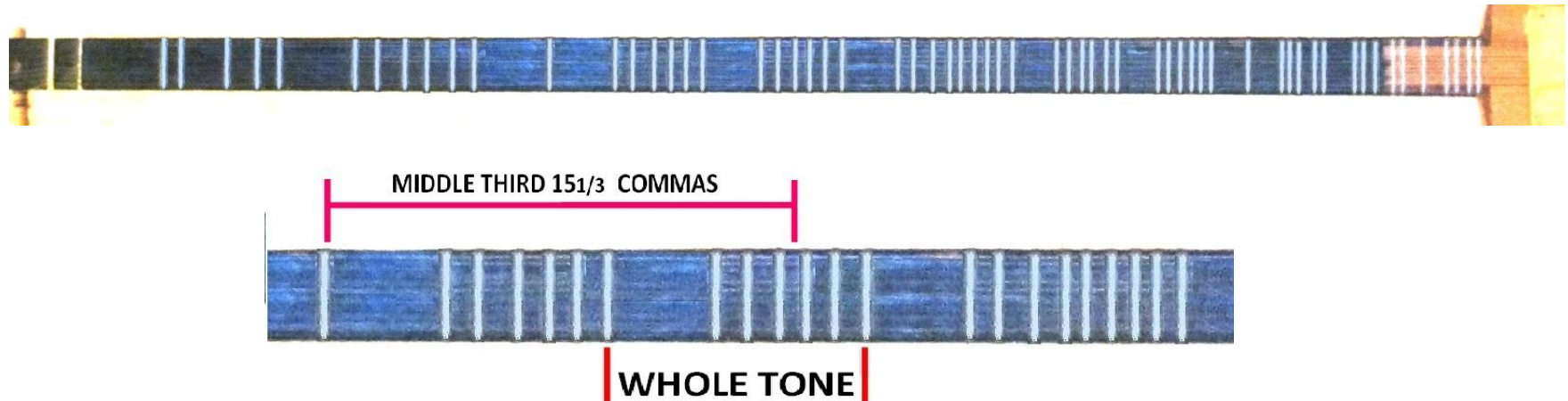
From Karl Signel's book called Makam



NECK OF TURKISH TANBUR

But Necdet Yaşar's tanbur neck
looked like this in the 1970's.

No notes missing



NECK OF TURKISH TANBUR

Due to the Meşk system
the Pythagorean notes
were all retained. But not
in the main stream Ezgi /
Arel system.

From a Makam lesson recording

[Necdet] Saba family – when I am going in the descending position, I am sliding – like this Uşşak. 2, 2 ½, 3 commas; Before I play the theory (book) Re flat 4 commas; **[plays]** it is wrong for me; it is not Saba; it can be only a musical joke; not music. **[plays correct interval]**

[Necdet] Saba family – when I

am ...ding
pos ...like
this ...mmas;
Before ...book)
Re f ... it is
wron ...ba; it
can b ...e; not
music. **[plays correct interval]**

EIGHTH SUBJECT

RAUF YEKTA BEY

CONCEPT OF

MOVEMENT & REST

MOVEMENT AND REST

A quote from Rauf Yekta Bey 1922

The movement and rest in music plays a very important role in the expression of Turkish Makams.

The Makam which misses out on this vital double element is no longer a Makam.

MOVEMENT AND REST

A quote from Rauf Yekta Bey 1922

It would be a body without a soul.

A juxtaposition of musical molecules with no link between.

These two elements, **movement and rest**, allow the recognition of each Makam.

Necdet Yaşar

From a recital recording in UK



Nihavent taksim – recital Durham UK
recorded by presenter.

74 Makams taught by Necdet with no notes missing

Acem	Acem Aşîrân	Acem Kurdi	Acem Püselik	Arazbâr	Arazbâr Püselik	Bestenigâr		
Bayatî	Bayatî Arabân	Bayatî Aşîrân	Çârgâh	Dilkeşîde	Dügâh	Evcârâ	Evc	Ferahnâk
Ferahfezâ	Gerdâniye	Gülizâr	Hicaz Group	Hicâzkâr	Hicâz Zîrgüle	Hisâr	Hisâr Püselik	
Hüsseyini	Hüsseyini Aşîrân	Hüzzâm	Irak	Isfahân	Isfahânek	Kürdî	Kürdîli Hicâzkâr	
Karcıgar	Mâhûr	Mâye	Muhayyer	Muhayyer Kürdî	Müstear	Muhayyer Sünbüle		
Nevâ	Nev-eser	Nihâvent	Nihâvent-i-Kebir	Nikrîz	Nîşâbürek	Nîşâbûr	Nühüft	
Püselik Aşîrân	Pençgâh	Pesendîde	Püselik	Rast	Râhatülervâh	Rehâvî	Revnaknümâ	
Rûy-î-Irak	Sabâ	Sabâ Püselik	Sabâ Zemzeme	Sâzkâr	Segâh	Şedd-i-arabân	Şehnâz	
Şehnâz Püselik	Şevk-Efzâ	Şevk-u Tarab	Sultânî Yegâh	Sûz-i dil	Sûz-i dilârâ	Sûzinâk		
Tâhir	Tarz-ı Nevîn	Uşşak	Yegâh	Zîrgüleli Sûzinâk	Zavil			

NINTH SUBJECT

RAUF YEKTA BEY

&

RECOMMENDATION
FOR EUROPE

RAUF YEKTA BEY



- Mevlevi
- Musician
- Musicologist
 - Author
- Researcher
 - Genius

What should Europe do?

Quote from Rauf Yekta Bey. 1922

The various tetrachords and pentachords are like the main colours on an artist's palette.

Combining them he sees many nuances. The same it is for the Turkish musician.

What should Europe do?

Quote from Rauf Yekta Bey. 1922

Combining the tetrachords and pentachords he creates many melodies or many Makams.

Adding modulation and the many Turkish rhythms, he has **immense** melodic resources; **far superior** to that of the European musician.

What should Europe do?

Quote from Rauf Yekta Bey. 1922

Surely European ears can enjoy
more than major and minor
scales? It's time for the West to
create a general theory of music
And enrich their harmonies with
the precious treasure preserved
by the Oriental ancestors.

**TENTH SUBJECT
PRESENTER'S
RECOMMENDATION
FOR TURKEY**

The rich history of Turkish music.

What should Turkey do now?

Turkish music was a stand-alone powerful system of melody; it had the power to uplift the human soul to peace and happiness.

It was melodically far superior to any music found in Europe in the 20th Century.

No need for any intervention from Europe.

The removal of the finer intervals giving the music its magic; was a great tragedy.

The rich history of Turkish music. What should Turkey do now?

Now around the 100 year anniversary of the changes introduced by the Ezgi/Arel system, it is time for Turkey to revive the ancient system.

And show Europe Turkey's great heritage in music. The birth-right of Turkish people. Its melody surpasses that of European music. Let's mark this anniversary by returning to the glory of this past heritage; and teach it to the young musicians of today.

TWELVTH SUBJECT

Meşk

SUMMARY OF ALL SUBJECTS

MASTERY

From Yoga Vasishtha chpt.V. 43

No! Nothing whatsoever is gained with the help of God or guru (teacher) or wealth or other means. But only by self-effort at a complete **mastery** of the **mind**

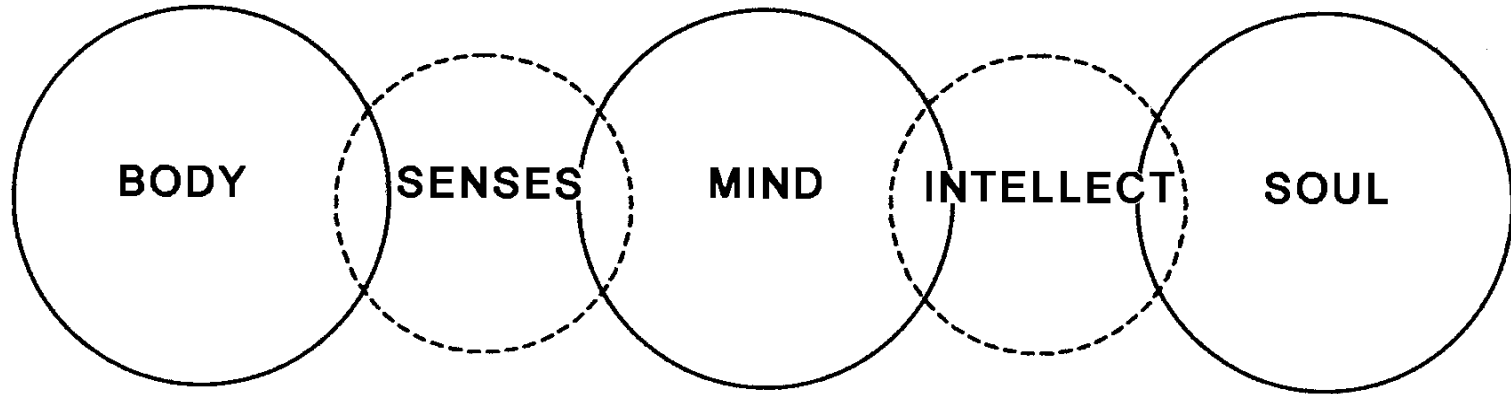
Q. - What is Meşk in Music?

A. - Four stages of mastery.

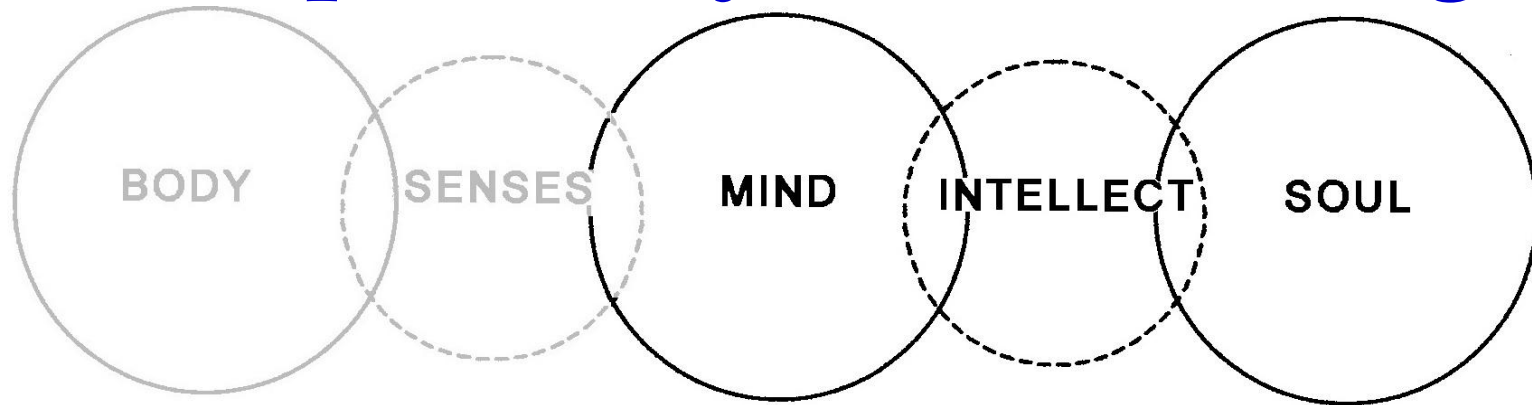
1. **Mastery of the instrument of choice.**
2. **Mastery of the Makam system.**
3. **Mastering communication with others.**
4. **Mastering communication within oneself.**

**These 4 reach deeper at each stage;
and include those before.**

Deeper into what?



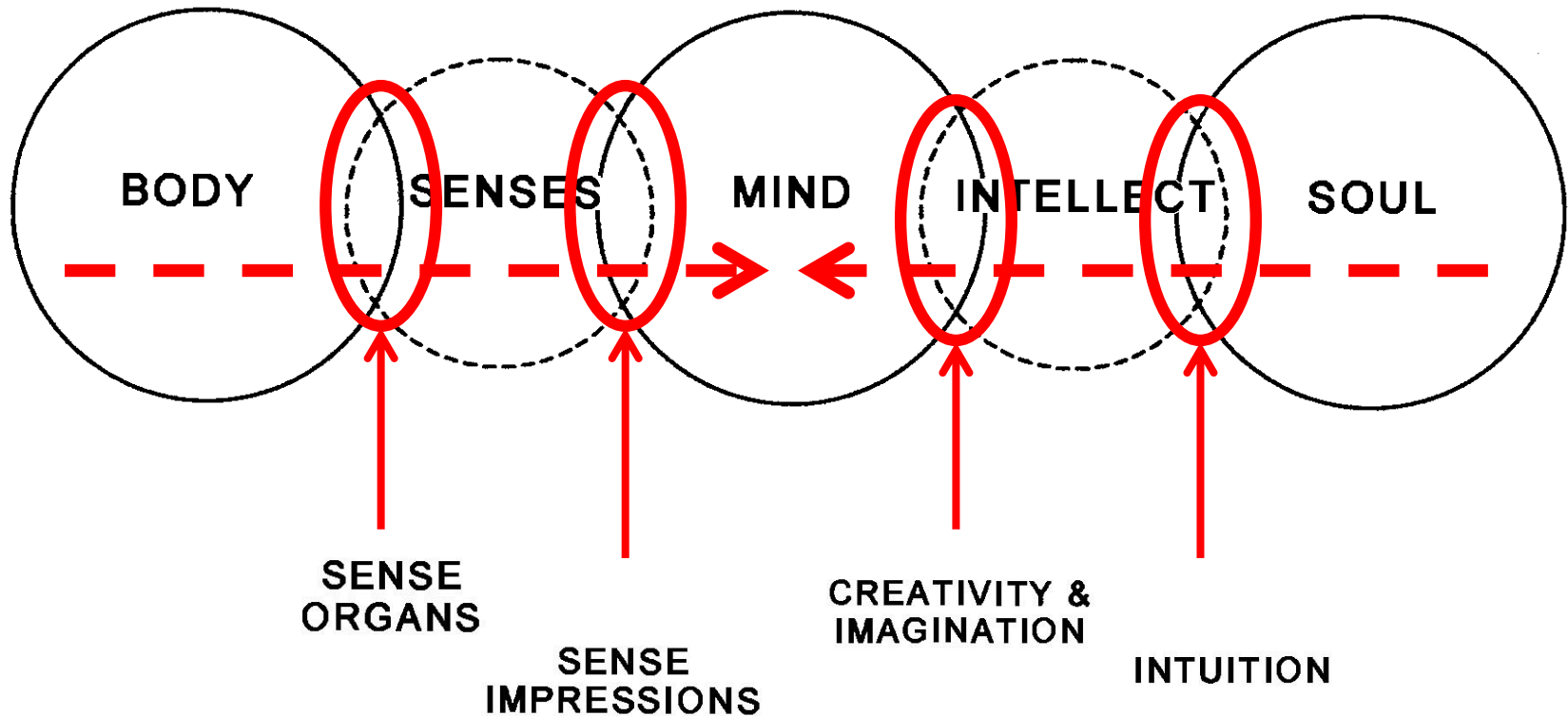
Deeper into your own being.



In sleep, body and senses close.

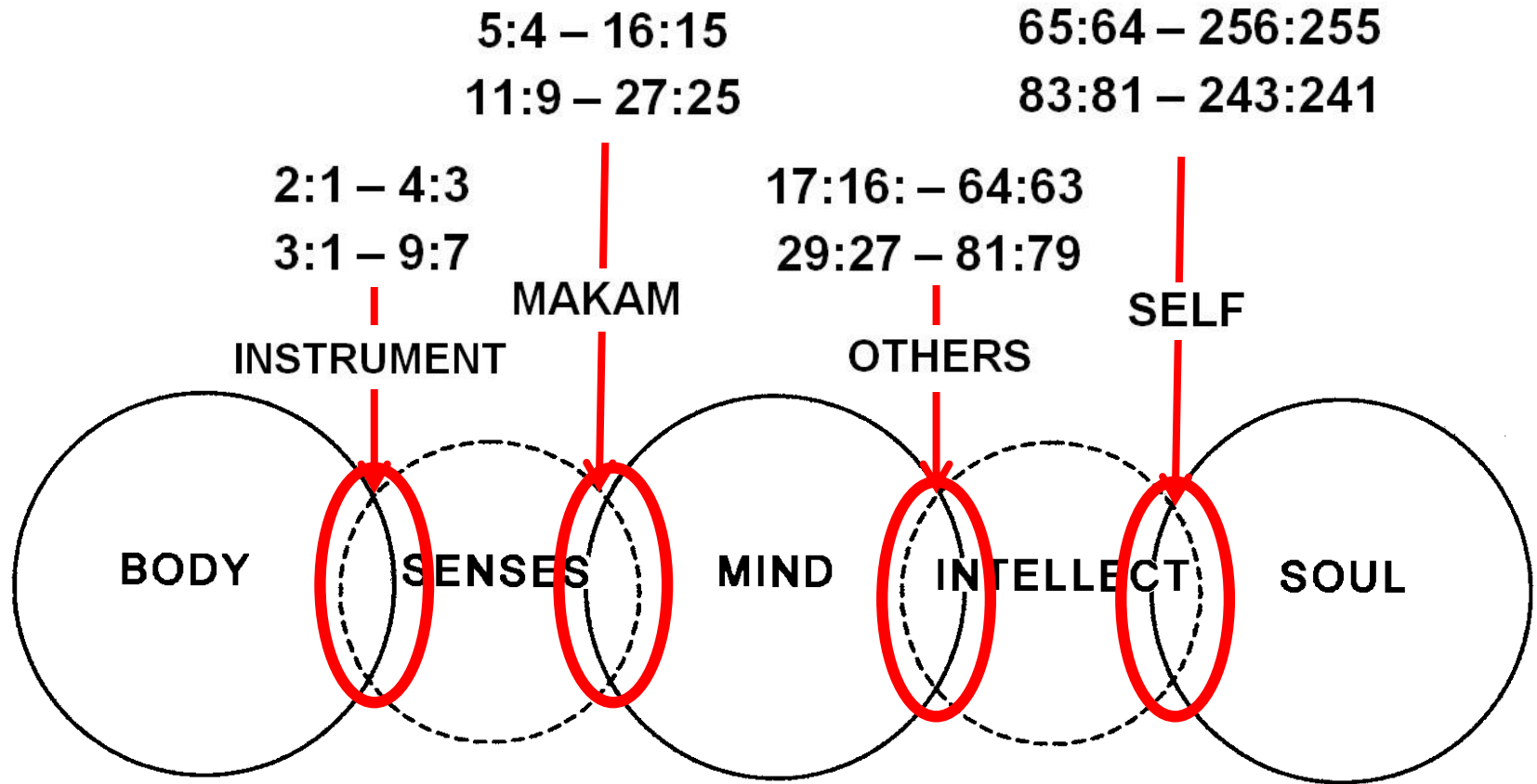
Deeper into your own being.

Remember – “**mastery** of the **mind**.”



The areas which overlap make our experiences

Deeper into your own being.



How all the intervals relate to the four stages of Pythagorean mastery.

THIRTEENTH SUBJECT

One Result of Meşk

THE ROAD TO MASTERY

On my birthday in 1971 magic happened.
A girl was born who became my best friend.

She started to play the ney at age 7.
Studied under Necdet Yaşar from age 9.
Played in mutrip at Galata Tekke age 14
Played on Turkish television at age 15 .
Now you will hear her Karcıgar taksim.

AFTER THIS I CLOSE MY PRESENTATION

The result of Meşk



Daughter Tansy

semazen

neyzen

composer

the result of Meşk

my soul mate

Karcıġar son yrk semai & taksim



**Note :- in the
taksim ; use of
movement & rest
and middle third
intervals**

PRESENTER'S ONLINE PAPERS

Go to - <https://www.academia.edu/>

Followed by these **numbers**

- Pythagorean Sufi Music **144020337/**
- Creativity in music **37095440/**
- Mevlevi Music and Whirling **118215910/**
- Revival of the music system **125957049/**
- <https://www.youtube.com/@dr.alanwenham-prosser/videos> playing Mevlevi Ayinler
 - Contact & MP3's of Necdet's Makam lessons **alanwprosser@gmail.com**

HAPPY READING/ LISTENING