



David Playing the Harp by Jan de Bray 1670

From Your Mouth To God's Ears

Psalm 150: 6

***Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens.
Praise him for surpassing greatness, praise him with the clash
of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let
everything that has breath praise the LORD.***



Dear Opal,

Do you recall ever awakening just prior to dawn when mornings first light began its opening reel using gentle steps by softly dancing with the shadows on the walls surrounding your bed? Then, opening your sleepy eyes accompanied by thoughts of how your day would unfold, your thinking process was brought to a halt by the soft gentle notes of a tiny bird outside your window singing with all its might?

Totally mesmerized, as you listened intently to the sweet serenade that resembled a gentle whisper, you were suddenly acutely aware to whom the bird was singing; that being his Creator? Thus, totally drawn into the moment, did you become cognizant that God had used a tiny bird's song as a reminder of how mankind should begin each day of their earthly journey; that being in joyful praise straight from their *lips to his ears?*

Having witnessed many times the vocalization of a tiny feathered friend delivering a royal proclamation that a new day had dawned, perhaps the usual was nothing short of extraordinary; a common event that was rich in meaning, one that was worthy of deeper contemplation.

First, it is important to note that daybreak was announced through a musical rendition performed by a tiny warbler that could easily be overlooked; a proclamation of great importance which was executed through song.

Opal, does it make you wonder about the significance of music as it relates to man's ability to connect to God? Is there more to music than just entertainment? Maltbie D. Babcock who wrote the lyrics for "This Is My Father's World" in 1901 must have thought so because of the following words in one verse:

*"This is my Father's world
The birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white
Declare their maker's praise."*



Additionally, in an article called "How Music Affects the Brain" writer Jacob Berkowitz stated that neuroscientist, Robert Zatorre, pointed to Dr. Wilder Penfield (Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital) the institutes founder, who, over the course of hundreds of brain surgeries to relieve patients' debilitating seizures from 1934 to 1961 learned that his patients clearly had music hard-wired into their brains, with even the correct rhythm and timing. In Dr. Penfield's post-surgery notes, the title of the song each patient had heard during surgery was recorded. Also, Lola Cuddy, a music psychology pioneer stated that Dr. Penfield's probing discoveries indicated that **"MUSIC IS REPRESENTED ALL THROUGH THE BRAIN, THERE'S NO MUSIC CENTRE"**.

Also, dramatist Christopher Fry agreed by stating, "Oh, the fabulous wings unused, folded in the heart. Music allows us to spread our wings, even when they may be protecting tender, vulnerable places."

Maureen McCarthy Draper's statement in her book "The Nature of Music" spoke volumes with these words about the significance of music upon the lives of God's creation: *"Beautiful music is the promise of happiness, a doorway through which we can enter the fullness of our being."*

After exploring music's significance to a greater depth, it was amazing to discover its importance to the people living during Bible times in all forms of celebrations as well as for religious observances. Actually, it was well established in Egypt as early as 3,000 BC.

Consequently, when you focus on Psalms, a book in the Bible that would probably be rated among the very favorite of creation because it demonstrates the longings, sorrows, and disappointments of individual worshipers clearly expressed openly from their lips to God's ears, it can be defined as an invitation directly from our King that he wants to be intimately involved in all aspects of our lives, both good and bad. In other words, it lets one realize that others have gone through trials, doubts, fears, and joys just like us. King David was certainly known for both playing, singing, and dancing to music during times of joy and sorry, wasn't he?

In fact, there is a saying found in Jewish literature that states, "Silence is better than speech but song is better than silence." Music was so highly regarded by the Israelites that singing became an important part of their Temple worship;

actually, to the point that it dominated the service because of not only being a great instructional vehicle, but allowed the soul of each person to move closer to God.

Certainly, this belief can be observed by noting the Jewish worshipers rocking back and forth when reciting blessings or reading from the Torah; a movement that is labeled as shuckeling, a Yiddish word that means to “shake”. Proverbs 20:27 states, “The soul of man is like a candle of G-d.” The candle’s flame constantly sways and flickers as it attempts to tear free of its wick and ascend on high. **Our soul is also engaged in a constant effort to escape the corporeality of this mundane world and cleave to its G-dly source.** (Menachem Posner, “The Swaying Candle”)

Opal, when researching the importance of music to the Jewish people, it was very touching to hear a story that showed its impact on the brain by providing a powerful solution during a crisis situation after WWII; made possible only because parents had sung blessings to their children at bedtime.

Since simply being a Jew during Hitler’s reign meant imprisonment, torture, and death, parents were compelled to make heartbreaking decisions in order to save the lives of their children. Therefore, to assure their safety, their precious little ones were quietly placed in Catholic institutions as orphans and given different names and identities so those in charge would not recognize them as being Jews.

Given the fact that Jewish people literally wore targets on their person, resulting in millions being killed during the Holocaust, out of love, they had severed their parental relationships with their children even though there was no guarantee of being reunited ever again; a painful and courageous act that must have broken their hearts into jagged brittle pieces. Are you able to picture parents loosening their grip on the hands of their beloved family members with the knowledge that the chances of locating them again were slim at best? And...what about the fear raging like a monster in each child’s heart when he/she called out to mama or papa to hear only deafening silence? Are you able to perceive the pain they endured at night in a room when their heads rested on a pillow stuffed with only fear?

As a result, when the war had ended and surviving parents were desperately trying to locate their children, the challenge was all but insurmountable. Since they had been given new identities for their own protection, accompanied by the passing of time, the search was fraught with challenges, emptiness, and silence. Confusion and fear had wiped away precious memories of childhood.

Therefore, it was nothing short of a miracle when these impossible odds were overcome due to a Rabbi that decided to walk slowly down the hallways outside their rooms singing the blessings the children would have heard at bedtime.

Thus, as his voice hauntingly echoed down the dim corridors, it could only be labeled as a gift from God when doors began to open with voices of little children calling out, "Mama"! "Papa"! In short, the bedtime prayers that had been sung at an earlier age were still deeply engraved on the hard drive of their brains.

Opal, it has been discovered that the brain on music creates such a tremendous response for human beings that nothing else can touch its impact.

A few years ago, when Cheryl Moll, Tim and Melody Trafford, and I used old familiar music selections to engage nursing home residents, the results truly were astounding. Their reactions supported the studies completed regarding music and the brain.

In so doing, it was truly amazing to observe their behavior totally change after hearing favorite familiar hymns. Since these old songs had been stored on the hard drive of their brains, when those lyrics were sung in their presence, it was a common occurrence to see them come to life by singing, clapping, and even dancing. Even those that suffered from a lack of mental acuity responded in a dramatic fashion. One sweet old soul that usually was hard to handle suddenly reached out with tears streaming down her cheeks saying, "Thank you so much! You have been an answer to my prayer today. I have longed to sing praises to God and couldn't. What a blessing! Thank you, Jesus!"

In other words, the importance of worshiping God through music is immeasurable and critically important. Since Scripture states in Psalm 150: 6, ***"Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD,"*** it is paramount to make sure as pastors, music directors or anyone that is responsible for decisions regarding such, to remember that people respond to musical renditions

that were stored on the hard drive of their brain during their early twenties and will be the key that promotes engagement. During a worship service, music literally will allow their soul to journey toward God. The seriousness of withholding tunes that serve as Spiritual food for an individual is a grave offence, indeed. It can be defined as preventing these individuals from connecting directly to God because the greatest desire of the soul of each person is to move toward the Creator; a longing that has been engraved on each individual from birth forward and can never be satisfied until accomplished. Try as we might, there is nothing in this world that will fill the longing inside each person other than the One that formed us with his own hands. Until each individual realizes this, there will be an emptiness in the soul that can never be satisfied. It is through letting our souls soar toward God that we are able to see the depth of our sin and be electrified by the wonder of grace.

Remember, since God hears our sour notes in perfect tune, let us follow the directions given us from Psalm 98:4 that states, *“Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth; Break forth and sing for joy and sing praises!”*

As an ideal closing today, let us center on the beautiful old hymn titled, “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus”. Permit your voice to ring with such jubilant praise for your Heavenly Father that your soul’s longing for his touch will be sated to the full.

From your lips to God’s ears!

Amen!





Helen Howarth Hemmel 1922

**1. O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior,
And life more abundant and free!**

Refrain:

**Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.**

**2. Thro' death into life everlasting,
He passed, and we follow Him there;
O'er us sin no more hath dominion--
For more than conqu'rors we are!**

**3. His Word shall not fail you--He promised;
Believe Him, and all will be well:
Then go to a world that is dying,
His perfect salvation to tell!**



Love,
Colene