



OUR DAILY BREAD
Resources for Spiritual Questers

Reflections on Swedenborg and Music

Rev. Wilma Wake

swedenborgiancommunity.org



February 2017

Readings:

Psalm 98:1-9

*O sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvellous things.*

*His right hand and his holy arm
have gained him victory.*

*The Lord has made known his victory;
he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.
He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.*

*All the ends of the earth have seen
the victory of our God.*

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises.*

*Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody.*

*With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.*

*Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who live in it.*

*Let the floods clap their hands;
let the hills sing together for joy*

at the presence of the Lord.¹

¹ *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Exodus 15:19-21

When the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his chariot drivers went into the sea, the Lord brought back the waters of the sea upon them; but the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground. Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them:

'Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously;

horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.²

Emanuel Swedenborg, *Secrets of Heaven* §8336

And Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand' means ascribing glory to the Lord from the good of faith. 'And all the women went out after her' means every good of truth. 'With timbrels and with dances' means praise from joy and gladness. 'And responded to them' means a reciprocation. 'Sing to Jehovah' means that glory belongs to the Lord alone. 'For He has highly exalted [Himself]' means that He has displayed His Divinity within His Humanity. 'The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea' means that as a result simply of His presence falsities in faith and evils in life cast themselves into hell.³

² Ibid.

³ Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Arcana Coelestia*. West Chester: Swedenborg Foundation, 1998. Print.

Do you view music as a way to connect with God, to inspire, to renew? Let's consider how music can awaken your soul -- into singing and dancing with God!

Dancing has always been a form of worship in some religious traditions. In today's reading from the Bible, we are reminded that after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, Miriam spontaneously took a tambourine; singing and dancing as the women followed.

Swedenborg talked of the life in heaven as filled with music, concerts, and singing. He said that music originated in the heavens before coming to the natural world. Music can be an experience of wholeness and connection: with each other and with God. When we share music, we may be singing [sharing sacred breath together], listening [using our ears and hearing to connect with our emotions], and moving our whole body with the music. Our body itself becomes an instrument to connect with the Divine.

We can experience God and share Divine Love in many ways through the use of music. Consider all of these forms of worship through music:

- Listening to music
- Writing music
- Playing music
- Incorporating music into other arts
- Singing
- Dancing
- Moving to music
- Moving without music...

When you write music, play an instrument, sing or dance for others, you are helping others experience the Divine. When you sing or dance with others, you are sharing the Divine together. Playing instruments, singing, and dancing together all involve ways of finding a common wholeness in God. You can have private time with God through your dancing and singing. Dance with God! Allow your soul to be refreshed in music and movement.

“Having every one of them harps, signifies confession of the Lord's Divine Human from spiritual truths. It is known that confessions of Jehovah were made in the temple at Jerusalem by singing, and at the same time by instruments of music which corresponded; the instruments were principally trumpets and timbrels, and psalteries and harps; the trumpets and timbrels corresponded to celestial goods and truths, and the psalteries and harps to spiritual goods and truths; the correspondences were with their sounds. What celestial good and truth is, and what spiritual good and truth, may be seen in the work concerning Heaven and Hell. That "harps" signify confessions of the Lord from spiritual truths, may appear from these passages: Confess to Jehovah with the harp, sing unto Him with the psaltery of ten strings (Ps. 33:2). I will confess to Thee on the harp, O God, my God (Ps. 43:4). I will confess to Thee on the instrument of the psaltery, I will sing unto Thee with the harp, O Thou Holy One of Israel (Ps. 71:22). Arouse me psaltery and harp, I will confess Thee among the nations, O Lord (Ps. 57:8, 9; 108:2-4). Answer to Jehovah by confession, play on the harp to our God (Ps. 147:7).”⁴

-Swedenborg, *Apocalypse Revealed* §276

Dear Lord, help us use music and dance to express our love for You, each other, and the world around us. Open our hearts to the deep expressions of feeling in music and dance, that are often beyond words.

Amen.

⁴ Swedenborg, Emanuel. *Apocalypse Revealed*. West Chester: Swedenborg Foundation, 1997. Print