

The Clarion

September 1, 2021



by Peggy Heubel

Where shall we begin? The depth and breath of chanting extend as far back as when humans first began to walk the earth...it is surmised. History, whether eastern or western, provides evidence of structured ceremonial chanting as far back as historical records go and the inference strongly suggests that at some point all ancient people chanted for many reasons. The original monotonal vocalizations were pagan, of course, which would have included all of the natural events of ordinary life and shamanistic practices: work, droning treks into the unknown, soothing babies along with gentle pats; and most certainly would have long existed as an accompaniment to drumming. It has been suggested that the ancient practice of staccato chanting and drumming arose in association with the beat of the heart and that connectivity with the heart is the basis of mystical effects as chanting developed throughout the ages. Based upon increasing understanding of these effects and how they were initiated, ritual and ceremony grew and remains one of the mystical counterpoints to today's abject materiality, which kills the soul of human kind. Even though church ritualism descended in a direct line from shamanistic pagans, subsequent renegade "hierophants of the Pagan Mysteries" and from initiated Gnostics and Neo-Platonists, the secrets have been lost. Yet, they have, nevertheless, been preserved by those who would not and could not compromise.



Chanting is not a prayer, but is a mystical sentence in which the law of Occult causation (meaning "hidden" because beyond discovery by the five senses) connects itself with, and depends upon, the will (-power) and the acts of its singer or singers. It is a succession of sounds, and when its string of words and sentences is pronounced "correctly", some chants produce an instantaneous and very wonder-filled effect. In its esoteric sense it contains the *Vâch* (the "mystic speech"), which resides in the chant or rather in its sounds, since it is the result of vibratory energy in etheric (and higher) matter that its effects are produced

—either by a repetitive sound or certain specific utterances of words and/or syllables.

Modern science looks at the entire existence of energy reverberations and various levels of vibrations. Where there is a particular vibration, a sound is there. From an esoteric perspective, these are effects (actions) and it has been stated that the entire existence of a certain type of sound, or even a complex and complicated amalgamation of sounds, can become a key to opening different life-dimensions and experiences. There are certain sounds that have been identified that could be major keys and in Hinduism, Om (AUM) is one of them as is AMEN: "so be it" as affirming God's truth; God's "word" in Christianity. At the beginning of the Universe, Om is said to be the cosmic sound that initiated the activity of creation. "This sacred syllable is not just one sound but three." In Christianity, Amen affirms and sustains the work of the sacred three-in-one—referring to the concept of TRINITY in many religions and esoteric and metaphysical philosophies. This particular power key comprises three syllables: 'a', 'u', 'm', indicating the continuity of past, present, and future and is the sound—the basis—of all collective dimensional sound manifestations and differentiations. One version or another, one language or another, has its roots in religious practice even if those roots arose out of natural paganism.

Let us turn our attention for a moment to paganism and what that word means. For the vast majority of human time there was no such religion as paganism. It might be less confusing to say that the "pagans" (a Christian invention) had no religion at all in the sense "modern" religions attribute to the term. So-called pagans had "no tradition of discourse" about ritual or religious matters, no *organized* system of beliefs to which they were asked to commit themselves, no authority-structure peculiar within their local area...and above all, no commitment to a particular group of people or set of ideas other than within familial and political contexts.

Alan G. Cameron in his *The Last Pagans of Rome*, wrote, “If this is the right view of pagan life, it follows that we should look on paganism quite simply as a fairly recent religion invented in the course of the second to third centuries AD, in order to explain pagan competition and interaction with Christians, Jews and others.” The “religion” (defined as the conscious attempt at the mystical “rebinding of the soul” to God) of the so-called pagan, of the heathen, was of LIFE itself in all its manifestations as the human naturally lived it during those ages—human life sharing one spirit with all other life—life expressing itself within nature’s myriad forms including the human. The “spirit within all things” was seen as the energy and power of the Sun God: spirit, nature, gods and goddesses as part of everyday existence; all weakened and some destroyed as a result of empirical materiality and its focus on what is only seen and experienced by the five senses.

Now back to chanting. Chanting is an attempt to invoke religious effects into a religious service through deliberate and purposeful ritual and ceremony. When rightly sung, it effectively helps to energize the service with each religion’s intentionality, i.e., the power of the mind and voice to DO something. In the Liberal Catholic Church, it is the building of a spiritual power-edifice for effective transmission of divine effects through the sacrament of the *Holy Eucharist*. While it is not strictly necessary to “sing” (chant) any liturgy, chanting increases sympathetic effects, i.e., attracting higher mystical vibratory responses, and thus adds power to the process—especially if sung (or pronounced) with devotion and attention. There are requirements that add to effectiveness not only in chanting (such as in Gregorian chanting) but in meditative mantric chanting and first above all others is to have full and complete faith that the practice will achieve the intended goals. This allows all of the positive physical forces involved to *actually* harmonize with the intellectual (mind) and emotional (heart) forces. While chanting can be performed by any individual, chanting in a sacred context has the power to change one’s life completely, and within a particular right vibrational atmosphere can purify the mind and calm the senses. There are things to consider and keep in mind, though.

1. Know the purpose behind it. People chant for a lot of reasons. While some chant to attain God

while some for spiritual significance. Some of the people use it for the purpose of meditation while other people do it to improve concentration. No matter whatever the reason is for chanting, the important thing is to perform it with intention and in the correct way.

2. Right Pronunciation. Chanting should be performed by using correct and coherent words. The incorrect pronunciation can do a lot of damage rather than good. The local expert can provide the right pronunciation or the internet can help.

3. Remain Constant. A lot of chanting, particularly if in the form of a mantra, need to be chanted for a particular number of times to become more powerful and also potent.

4. Get or Take Help from an Expert. Ask. Attain knowledge and information from a *practicing* expert as a guide...and, only then, begin.

5. Keep Eyes Closed. Chanting can be performed with opened eyes but will have more impact and better concentration if closed, and will also assist vibrations of

that specific chant to be felt throughout body. A state of light trance can be manifested because it assists in relaxing the body in order that the finer, more spiritual, vibrations can be experienced.

6. Visualize Something. Whenever you are chanting mantras, visualize the deity (God, Jesus Christ, angelic helpers, a particular saint, Shiva/Shakti, Krishna, etc.) to whom the chant is addressed.

7. Chant slowly and as loudly as the congregation needs to hear or

loudly enough for the individual practitioner to hear. Most of the people chant loudly, which isn’t the ideal. Chanting mechanically, i.e., without devotion, intention (will power), and without concentration *does not* produce. Feel the words and their actual meaning and *know* that actual effects will follow your call.

<https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/images/252/25267.jpg.htm>



8. Create the Right Place and the Right Pace. Even though chants can be performed anywhere, a right space can be assigned. Consecrated churches are “a right space”. But if practiced privately in a home, a routine area for chanting should be assigned as would be done for meditation. Ideally, this particular space needs to be partially open as well as facing the rising sun or the East, if possible. Don’t change the space if used for frequent spiritual practice—an electro-magnetic influence has been built that assists in easier expression of spiritual, positive, influences as in a consecrated church.

9. Maintain Regularity. See #8, above.

10. Keep a Calm Mind. It doesn’t make any sense if the mind is pre-occupied with any work, personal responsibilities, worries, or with chanting “correctly”. It is fundamentally important to concentrate only on the chanting and the object or intention of the chant—nothing else. It should be set aside as *the* time to establish formal contact with the spiritual world beyond.



While this article is meant to reveal only the skeleton or an outline of chanting, it is important to remember that all our verbalizations (our plain words house with knowledgeable devotion and intention) can, and does, have similar effects. Spiritual musical instrumentation is an accompaniment to, enrichment of, and an enhancement of the spoken or choral word. It can help elevate, but is no substitution for, the congregational voice.

It was Pope Gregory I (Saint Gregory the Great) who instituted chanting in the Roman Catholic Church during his papacy circa 590-604AD. His western feast day is this month on 3 September. The importance Gregory placed on the Eucharist defined the medieval church and was carried forward to this day in many respects. It is significant to note that Pope Gregory made many, many changes to the Mass, some of which remain today. One of these changes was to codify, standardize, and make obligatory the liturgical use of chanting. Before Gregory’s tenure, the mystical power of the chant was widely known and

used in medieval churches but was underdeveloped and was not consistently formatted for use with Roman liturgy. It is for this reason that the “Gregorian” chant bears Pope Gregory’s name.

While the use of Gregorian chanting during Mass is no longer obligatory, the Roman Catholic Church still officially considers it the music most suitable for worship. During the 20th century, Gregorian chant underwent a musicological and popular resurgence and many new chanting groups have been formed. Gregorian chant music is easily found in music stores and on line. It is interesting to note that modern scientific studies have found that chanting can decrease stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms, as well as increase positive mood, feelings of relaxation and focused attention. While science recognizes its psychological effects, it does not recognize or consider its mystical spiritual benefit

COMING OCTOBER 24th: The Gregorian Chant group, *EXAUDI NOS*, will chant the liturgy at St. Raphael, the Archangel, LCC, and participating with Eucharist celebrant, Bishop William S.H. Downey. All are welcome to attend and listen in, and to participate in Holy Communion, if desired, even without membership in the Church. A luncheon will shortly follow and an open invitation is extended to all. If interested in learning more about Gregorian chanting, the luncheon will provide an opportunity to ask questions. Additionally, The *Exaudi Nos* group invites new inquirers who want to learn this form of chanting. Come; talk to those who know.

For more information on Gregory I:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Gregory_I

More information on Gregorian chanting can be found at:
https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/g/Gregorian_chant.htm

The Importance of Church Participation

By Peggy Heubel

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Those of us who work for the good of our church also work for, and with, you. When attending church services, you are an integral active participant. Our church, as are other churches, is a focus, a center, of religious energy. There is a glorious and majestic interactive give-and-take between Jesus Christ (the head of our Christian Church), the clergy, and the congregation with the help and mediation of ministering angels. Within the atmosphere of the religious service, *all work together* in unity toward the realization of the mystical IDEAL inherent not only within each of us but contributes, also, to the well-being of *all* sentient beings.

The work that is to be done is the building of a spiritual edifice (a thought-form construction) on the finer planes of existence. This edifice is erected using mental, astral (emotional), and etheric matter and, at a later stage of the *Holy Eucharist Service*, the introduction of still higher levels or degrees of energy. The completed shape is reminiscent of a basilica.

This gigantic thought-form is gradually built up during the early stages of the church service ritual, charging it with divine force, and then discharging it; each canticle or recitation contributing its share to this work in addition to the part it bears in the preparation of the hearts and minds of the priest-celebrant and congregants. The exalted directing Angel, chosen to administer the great mass of spiritual eucharistic force, immediately portions it among perhaps a hundred subordinate angels who, at the proper time, “spring forth and seek in all directions” for possibilities of promoting the peace, unity, and wisdom in Christ’s Church which are the prescribed objects of prayer according to the *Liturgy*.

The whole of the “sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist” (Holy Communion) offers an opportunity for a special downpouring of divine force from the highest divine levels and provides a vehicle for the force that enables

Angelic helpers to use it for definite purposes in our physical world. That purposeful down pouring of divine energy through the *Eucharistic* edifice comes in response to the interaction of the congregation, the priest-celebrant, and the Angelic helpers.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the intelligent cooperation of the congregation with the Priest is a most valuable factor in this great work, i.e., the building of a great edifice for the downpouring of divine force. Through this spiritual construction, a magnificent and effective collective thought-form is made by the gathering of people who have joined together in sincerity and devotion by their participation in the Holy Eucharistic Rite— participation that, as a group, consciously gathers together the scattered streams of individual devotion and welds them into one harmonious and mighty current. An angelic being (the supervising and directing Angel) is invoked to oversee this welding and to direct the construction of the edifice that would become the channel for a downpouring response perhaps ten or even a hundred times greater than the response which it would have gained by a single devout person.



St. Raphael the Archangel

Will you join us in our efforts? Our church is open to all individuals whether members of the Liberal Catholic Church or not. The Holy Eucharist (Holy Communion), is open and available to all even without the bonds of membership. You are welcome to attend each Sunday. We would be honored to have you.

ST. RAPHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL, LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

Future of Esoterics: Illuminating Consciousness 6

Mysticism meets Mysterianism

By Barbara Penninton

Consciousness...is the phenomenon whereby the universe's existence is made known.

Sir Roger Penrose, Nobel Laureate in Physics

Consciousness is a mysterious, magnificent, yet illusory feature of reality that has been honored by spiritual seekers and studied by perplexed philosopher and researchers and spiritual scholars throughout all of human history. While modern scientists for the most part ridiculed efforts to study intangible, immaterial, illusory consciousness, that tough stance is transforming in extraordinarily amazing ways.

The earliest investigators into the deep principles of nature were considered sacred scientists. For them, spirituality and sacred science were one. This view described beautifully by Kabir:

BETWEEN
the poles of
the conscious
and the
unconscious,
there has the
mind made a
swing:
Thereon hang
all beings and
all worlds,
and that
swing never
ceases its sway.
Millions of beings are there:
the sun and the moon in their courses are
there:
Millions of ages pass, and the swing goes on.
All swing! the sky and the earth and the air and
the water;
and the Lord Himself taking form:
And the sight of this has made Kabîr a servant.

Thousands of years ago, a new approach to science emerged that let go of sacred, spiritual ties and established a new discipline that valued reason, logic and an objective rationale. For centuries, these Western scientists ridiculed the concept of consciousness as a pervasive, ridiculous illusion. It certainly was not worthy of the rigorous purview of

science. A philosopher, Owen Flanagan, labeled this strict view "Mysterianism."

Abandoned by modern scientists and rigorous researchers, the elegant, glorious wonders of consciousness belonged only to mystics, seekers, philosophers, and perhaps the occasional visit of a brave researcher. The divorce was long and painful; even now we are healing from the rift.

Yet recently something extraordinary, almost unbelievable has happened! Suddenly in a surprising set of circumstances, consciousness is now popular and even , unbelievably, desirable.



Scientists and philosophers are now in a passionate search the region and discover discernible principles and powers of consciousness. In the region between Mysticism and Mysterianism a new frontier of exploration is opening in a wondrous way.

For the first time in history the calm, introspective field of consciousness is now inhabited by a group of elite scientists vying for first place in a high-stakes, super-competitive global contest to reveal the properties and principles of consciousness. This is not the quiet speculation of gentlemen investigators, but is a multi-million dollar challenge involving the most sophisticated scientists with excellent research facilities and extensive resources.

An intense focus on consciousness could be a breakthrough for science and possibly a perceptual opening for esotericists. Scientists and esotericists are in the same field now, but are lighting up different regions. Yet it's possible that some great synergy will occur with this infusion of passionate scientific energy in the ancient mystical study of consciousness.

Metaphysics and Physics

In the parameters of the Templeton competition, consciousness is studied primarily through brain activity. For metaphysicians consciousness is realized most powerfully at the level of the soul.

Metaphysicians might be horrified by the prospect of scientists looking deep into brain structure as the seat of consciousness.

Although some investigators might recognize the significance of brain activity for consciousness, perhaps the true treasures of consciousness are best realized on the Buddhist level of the soul.

Spiritual seekers know that a vibrant, loving embrace by higher consciousness is real and transformative.

Truth may be revealed in sacred images, poignant messages and simple realizations. This process of attuning to higher consciousness involves releasing contact with the physical world, quieting the mind, encouraging the brain to shift into soft, rhythmic patterns, and rise to a glorious beneficent oneness of all that is.

Madame Blavatsky describes the essential oneness of consciousness with a musical metaphor: Perhaps the whole effect is achieved in somewhat the same way that the unique sound of a musical chord is created by combining different tones, each of which can be distinguished by a trained ear. The experience of listening to music is the best analogy I can think of, because the differences between the subtle fields are essentially harmonic in nature. Each dimension of consciousness has its range of frequencies, and plays a particular part in the total orchestration of a human being.

Well, that's it. We share, of course, the rich elegance of consciousness with all beings.

Each one of us has a choice in contemplating consciousness. In the expression of this choice, sometimes scientists sound truly like mystics.

Consciousness is never experienced in the plural, only in the singular. Not only has none of us ever experienced more than one consciousness, but there is also no trace of circumstantial evidence of this ever happening anywhere in the world. If I say that there

cannot be more than one consciousness in the same mind, this seems a blunt tautology—we are quite unable to imagine the contrary.
Erwin Schrödinger

Accelerating
Research in
Consciousness

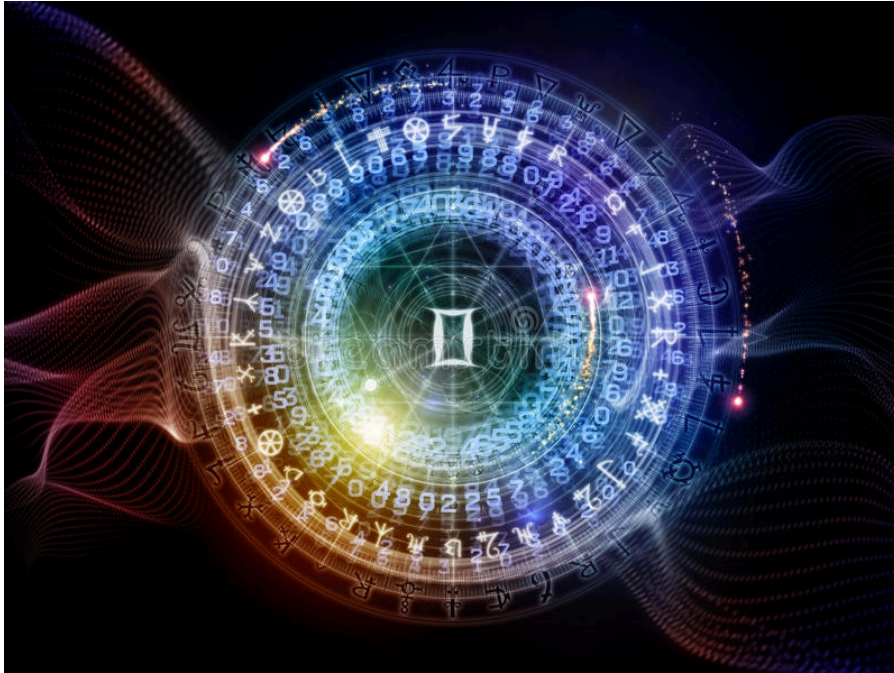
Will the grand conundrum of consciousness be decided by a global contest? Sara Reardon writing for “Scientific

American,” in October 2019 describes the focus of the contest:

‘Outlandish’ competition seeks the brain’s source of consciousness

Brain scientists can watch neurons fire and communicate. They can map how brain regions light up during sensation, decision-making, and speech. What they can't explain is how all this activity gives rise to consciousness.

Now, the Templeton World Charity Foundation (TWCF), a nonprofit best known for funding research at the intersection of science and religion, hopes to narrow the debate with experiments that directly pit theories of consciousness against each other.



Templeton leader, Porgietier, explains this huge investment: “We see consciousness as a big concept that needs to be solved before one can expect to solve other big problems in society.” This three-year, 20 million dollar project, entitled Accelerating Research in Consciousness (ARC), is framed as an adversarial collaboration with two approaches. In the contest, some scientists will focus on the “first order” theories of consciousness and others on “higher order” theories.

Biyu Jade He of the ARC project explains the two-level structure:

Consciousness is one of the most familiar phenomenon in nature, but it is also one of the least understood. In first order theories, visual consciousness involves a sensory representation of the external world with a basis in the physical cortex. In the higher order theories, visual consciousness involves a higher order representation of a sensory representation with a neural basis in the prefrontal cortex.



In an article for Cerebrum magazine, Brenda Patoine questions whether the key to consciousness might be found in the folds of the cerebrum?

Can the simple unfettered state of “being conscious” be localized in the brain, its properties deconstructed to precisely timed patterns of neural firing?

Templeton uses “adversarial collaboration,” to settle some fundamental questions about how, when, and where the brain processes subjective awareness of ourselves and the world around us. The two theoretical models are in stark contrast to one another: their definitions and assumptions of what constitutes consciousness differ and their whole approach to the subject is fundamentally different. What they have in common is that they both study the neural correlates of consciousness.

The Easy and the Hard Problems of Consciousness

The question posed in some circles is whether the contest will address essential issues of consciousness. David Chalmers, a mathematician and philosopher, asserts that there are “easy questions” of consciousness and “hard questions” of consciousness. The easy questions are involved in studying the brain and finding correlates. In an interview for Scientific American with John Hogan, Chalmers describes the hard problem:

“I think there is some true story about why there is consciousness in the universe. There is some basic set

of laws

or something that explains it as well as it can be explained....

Whether we are going to be in a position to come up with that really great story is a further question.”

Chalmers suggests that consciousness is the key to our sense of meaning. “What gives life even the potential for meaning in the first place is, I guess, consciousness. It takes somehow all this activity in the

brain or body and turns it into meaning, like water into wine.”

The scientists participating in the ARC project are proposing that consciousness is a factor of brain activity. They may be still within what David Chalmers called the easy question with perhaps insights that have implications for the “hard problem.”

Complications with Brain Correlates of Consciousness

One set of research discoveries is perhaps casting doubt that the “hard problem” will be resolved through brain correlates alone. There is increasing research findings that there are mental powers that do not have brain correlates. The higher self, perhaps, operates with capacities beyond what the brain can determine.

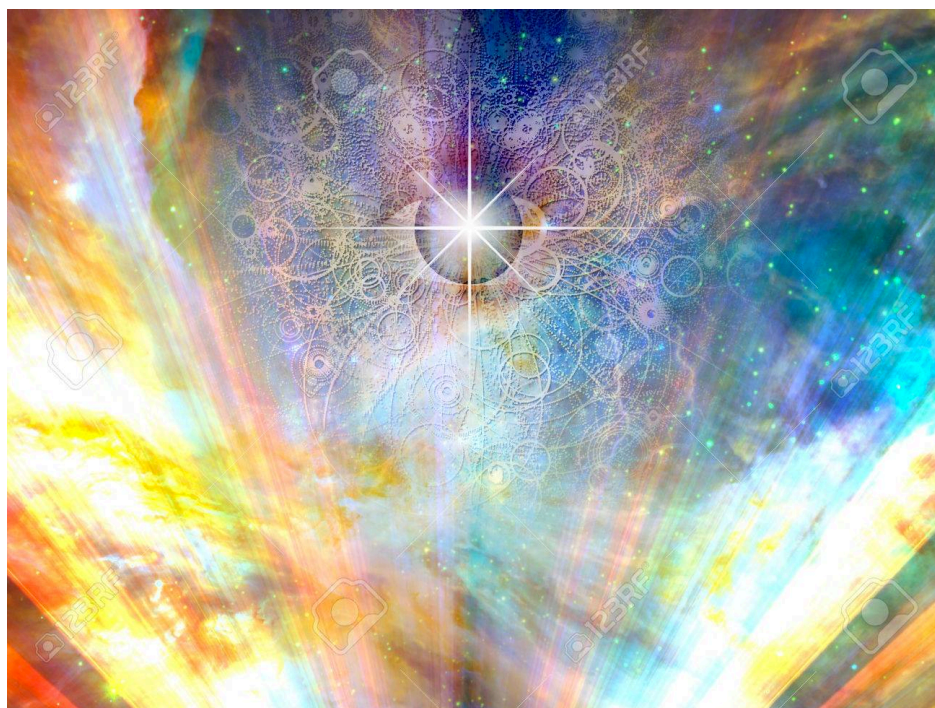
An article with the lead author Joseph E. LeDoux (PNAS 2020) describes the dilemma:

Consciousness is currently a thriving area of research in psychology and neuroscience...

Particularly important and our focus here is research in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s involving three groups of patients—amnesia, split brain, and

blindsight. Across all three groups, a similar pattern of results was found—the patients could respond appropriately to stimuli that they denied seeing (or in the case of amnesiacs, having seen before). These studies paved the way for the current wave of research on consciousness. The field is, in fact, still grappling with the implications of the findings showing that the ability to consciously know and report the identity of a visual stimulus can be dissociated in the brain from the mechanisms that underlie the ability to behave in a meaningful way to the same stimulus.

More and more studies of the “easy” problem are noting that the mind can respond faster and in a different way than the physical correlates in the brain can record. Is it possible that at least in some functions consciousness does not require a brain.



The mysteries of consciousness are powerful enough to inspire the whole of humanity. Scientists are making an increasingly potent contribution and the new global contest is likely to ignite new observations and theories.

We are entering into a new age in the evolution of humanity that requires cooperation of mystics and scientists. The amazing, even miraculous alchemy of intuiting, predicting and proving powerful principles of

of consciousness will lift us into an elevated kingdom of humanity.

We have new neighbors in the field of consciousness. We might be initially suspicious. The rift that took place thousands of years ago is still raw and painful.

Yet, it's vital for humanity and the well-being of our earth that we nourish this new tender growth taking place in the common ground of consciousness.

We have the abiding inspiration of Yogananda:

I am the wave of consciousness
thinking itself separated
from the sea of cosmic consciousness.
I am the ocean of spirit
that has become the wave of human life.

Paramahansa Yogananda

NEW ADVENTURE: *Timaeus* by Plato BEGINNING ON SEPTEMBER 26 at 1:00 pm (Zoom)

Blavatsky on Plato: Surviving the shock of time, what can this wisdom be but divine and eternal?

Ralph Waldo Emerson: Out of Plato come all things that are written and debated among men of thought...He was so broad in his philosophy, European and Asiatic, was in his doctrine, and to culture and contemplation he added the nature and qualities of a poet.

The Hermetic Study Group since its inception five years ago, has been on a quest to reveal brilliant strands of truth within the “Golden Thread” of spiritual evolution. The founder of the group, Father Eddie Gonzales, encouraged fearlessness in approaching the grand theosophical texts of the world. We started with the *Corpus Hermetica*, have recently contemplated passages in *The Gospel of Thomas*, and are ready to dive into Plato’s *Timaeus*. (An additional session of the *Gospel of Thomas* will be facilitated by David Rames on Sept 12 at 1 pm.)

The *Timaeus* presents a cosmology, a conceptual framework for ideal forms, and a profound description of the connection of the human soul with the World Soul. It offers a blueprint for creating the divine human through wisdom, intelligence and healthy reason. New evidence suggests that Plato arranged profound Pythagorean harmonies as supporting rhythms in the *Timaeus*.

Primary Text: *Timaeus and Critias*, Plato, Penguin Classics (ISBN 9798500236524)

Supplemental Works: Proclus, *Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus*

The Musical Structure of Plato’s Dialogues, J. B. Kennedy, Routledge, 2011

Contact: Barbara Pennington, bapenn@aol.com



Come Chant With Us

1. *Virgo Dei Genetrix, quem totus non capit orbis:
In tua se clausit viscera factus homo*
2. *Vera fides Geniti purgavit crimina mundi,
Et tibi virginitas inviolata manet*
3. *Te matrem pietatis, opem te clamitat orbis:
Subvenias famulis, O benedicta, tuis.*
4. *Gloria magna Patri, compar sit gloria Nato,
Spiritu Sancto gloria magna Deo.*
Amen.



Translation:

1. O Virgin Mother of God,
He whom the Whole world does not contain,
enclosed Himself in thy womb,
being made man.
2. True faith in thy begotten son
Has cast out the sins of the world,
And for thee virginity
Remains inviolate.
3. Thou art the Mother of divine love,
Thou the aiding power the world cries out to,
Come in aid, O blessed one,
To thy servants.
4. Great glory be to the Father,
Equal glory to the Son,
Great glory to God the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

If you are interested in joining us in chanting Gregorian chants, contact Howard Curtis at (510) 524-8720 or email howardmcurtis@gmail.com. Or call Melanie Spiller at (415) 821-5757. We would love to have you! As Snoopy will tell you, experience is not necessary. You can catch on after a few times. Weather and AQI permitting, we meet masked 6 feet apart in back yards, at BART Stations, and on Zoom. We meet on Tuesday evenings.