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Palenville, N

Report on the Music Meeting

Several people had been feeling concern about different things in our music. Ethan was one of these. For some time he has wondered about the "freedom" coming in to open us up to different kinds of music which we have avoided in the past. He was not able to have peace. Clapping on the off-beat was something he liked at first, but when he saw people swaying in a certain way while they clapped, his peace was disturbed. He also noticed that we were leaning more towards having a rock and roll sound in our music. He also noticed how a certain gifted child was pushed to the foreground while playing his instrument and encouraged to "move around and get into it." Several other children noticed what was happening and Ethan felt that the gifted child was being thrust into the spotlight and made into a *star*. He called this meeting after writing a letter to Yoneq and ha-emeq and receiving a swift response from Nun. Several music leaders gathered to discuss the issues raised by Ethan's concern and the response from Nun.

This meeting was an example of how we must function together in music as well as every other area. We have been looking to Nun as a sort of mythical character who would solve our musical problems, but our Father wants spiritual music leaders to come to one mind through discussion. Without discussion we will tend to have private feelings, opinions, and principles based on something that we have done or something that "Yoneq said" in certain isolated situations.

Such music meetings are crucial because music has the potential of making us go off in all 12 tribes and destroying everything that we have done, unless we are His select arrow that flies straight. We cannot afford to miss the mark. So there is great responsibility and accountability for musicians as well as those who rule over them.

There is no gain without pain. We cannot let ourselves get discouraged in the area of music, but we must wait on Him. Our Father has promised that if we are willing to do His will,

he will reveal Himself to us and will lead us. This revelation is vital to our life. He will not reveal Himself to us in every area but music and then hide Himself in this one area.

A key to having the right focus, especially with our children who are learning musical instruments, is the phrase, "We can't have David's harp until we have David's heart." Children and youth must know that it is an awesome responsibility to have something in your hands that can reach right into someone's soul. Ha-emeq saw this at a Paul McCartney concert. This man's music and his words touched people intimately. But if he could reach into a person's soul, how much more should we as priests be able to do so.

One issue was what kind of use to make of classical music. Much of the orchestral music which is commonly called *classical* gets its vitality from traditional folk melodies which the composers would adapt and embellish for their own glory. What we refer to as *classical* music is not just a musical style, but the spirit of elitism, perfectionism, and strife that saturates the high-brow musicians of today. This is the reason for the caution expressed regarding gleaning from classical music.

We discussed the question of whether orchestration is something that we need. Obviously, in the festivals to come, hundreds of musicians will not be able to play together without someone with a gift arranging their parts. Chets Barur said that he learned things about arranging parts by listening to certain classical pieces. But others wondered if we needed to learn such complex orchestration from classical composers, or if it would be better to start off simple, teaching a few musicians to play in harmony and then, as we increase in skill, also increase in complexity. We definitely want to avoid individual musicians calling attention to themselves by displaying their highly-developed skills. There is an unclean spirit about playing solos in the world. They say, "Take it away," and the featured musician goes for all the glory he can grab by seeing how many notes he can cram into the space of time he's got, rivalling all the others in originality and complexity.

We want to develop in the area of music, but it seems that we get to a certain point and it peters out and other things take precedence. Is this because we drop the ball, because the evil

one opposes us, or because our Father is holding us back? In every area of our life we have spurts of development and increase. We have seen this over and over again in Judah. An individual clan or industry or ministry or even the tribe could have developed rapidly and thoroughly, like a squash. But our Father had other ideas. At just the right time, He changes things around, moves people on, or starts something new somewhere else, and things that we are full of vision for don't develop as fast as we think they should. But what He is building is a nation, not a ministry or an industry. The vision for having a music conservatory is that as we make a little progress in music we will have a means to pass it on to all the clans. There will be a place where we can keep the fire going and send the coals out to get it going in other places.

It should never be that any disciple would be frustrated with how the leaders in his location are handling the music. This is one of the chief qualifications for being a musician — that we always support the local government. We are there to serve. If Chets Barur comes to Boston, he will be sensitive to "where they're at." He will not complain impatiently about how far behind him they are and he will not go ahead without them. In the same way, local musicians and shepherds as well will recognize the grace in visiting musicians and draw on it. Its like the way leaders behave when they visit other communities. They don't assert their authority over the local leaders, but they also don't get attitudes about differences they see and withdraw. Instead, they have fellowship and submissively communicate their concerns.

Anyone who is aloof or alienated from music leaders cannot be filled with the Spirit. If you respect the local music leader, then he will have confidence to listen to you and you will have liberty to express your heart because you are supporting authority and are loyal to the anointing. Our children and young disciples must understand that playing music has everything to do with how they support authority. They may think that the grass is greener in another community, but they will always have a hard time wherever they go if they don't have David's heart. Any other kind of heart will be quick to pick up on differences and cry, "Double standard!" — always to their own advantage.

But the Word (1 Cor 11:19) says there will be differences among us in order to show who is approved. It will be evident by the fruit they bear who has grace. The most outstanding thing about Yoneq is his humility, how he strains his whole being to hear from everyone. David heard our Father through Shaul even though Shaul was rejected. This is what it means to have David's heart. This is the heart that is humble, totally supporting and submitting to authority.

So if we think that God is not causing music to develop fast enough to keep up with us individually, then we might be entertaining an elitist spirit. An amazing thing about the way our Father causes music to develop is that He gets people other than the *elite* (those already recognized as being highly skilled) involved in singing and playing instruments. His Spirit makes music accessible to people. The elitist, perfectionist spirit quenches people, because it projects an aura about mastering an instrument that makes the poor in spirit feel like it is beyond their reach. But it does not require years of being totally devoted to an instrument for our music to be acceptable to our Father. What He wants is for our music to be clean and holy, inviting others to participate, but with respect, not loosely (grabbing an instrument and jamming without self-judgement).

One example of looseness is the use of taped music. Some musicians think that their skill entitles them to listen to classical music, etc., for the purpose of *learning*. This causes others to wonder what the difference is between listening to that kind of music and listening to rock and roll. Another example of looseness is a tendency in some to experiment with harmonies in a way that brings attention to their own voice. We have to sense what is appropriate. We learned that not having a sense of propriety disqualifies us from being leaders in music or any other realm. It may be appropriate to add exotic vocal embellishments and spice up the rhythm on certain kinds of songs, i.e., evangelistic songs and some exhortative body songs, but such things tend to distract from worshipping our Master and ascending to the throne, even to the point of disrespect. If we don't have this sense of propriety, we will be in one kind of principle or another. We will either be coldly restrictive of musical creativity, or else loosely inclusive of any spirit that gives a good feeling. Developing musicians need warm shepherding by those who

know what is appropriate, who allow room for growth and development but who are not afraid to frankly speak the truth when they sense anyone pushing at the boundaries of our Father's lovingkindness. Meetings like this one where we can discuss issues will help music leaders to have confidence in these areas.

The example was given of how we sing *Every Breath I Take*. It was not written with all of the embellishments with which it is currently sung (high falsetto harmonies — "Who-oh" — faster tempo, swing rhythm, funky bass line, etc.). Some songs do need to be spiced up and there's nothing wrong (in itself) with clapping on the off-beat or moving your body a little bit, but we have to be careful. For example, the way a person plays the bass really affects the tone and spirit of a song. Bass players serve best when they play a good, simple, solid beat, not fancy. But we have a tendency to flock, in sheeplike fashion, to whatever is the *latest thing*. So if someone adds an embellishment to the bass line on an evangelistic song or a dance tune, and it is appropriate and adds grace, we suddenly see embellishments cropping up in every song.

So we need to be cautious, especially with our worship songs. Worship is the ultimate challenge to musicians. No one can *stick out*. But the music must be powerful enough to lead us to adore our Creator.

There is a tension between having room to develop and having order. This is why there must be much communication in every area in which we are developing. Those who have a sense of propriety must keep a pulse on those who are making innovations and seeking for how our Father wants us to change, but rulers must be careful not to stifle. On the other hand, the spirits of prophets are always subject to other prophets. If "spiritual freedom" is given to naturally-minded people, then we all wind up going off. We don't want to hem people in where they cannot express what is in their soul, but the immature may be quick to say, "I want to be like so-and-so and do what he does," because they envy his position, which is free from outward restraint. The carnally minded don't realize the inward restraint which is upon those they perceive as having *liberty*.

It was said that our youth desire life and freedom to express what is in their soul, but there is a responsibility that goes with such freedom. We must know that what is in our soul is from our Father. We definitely don't want to have the "cut loose" spirit, but youth especially will be frustrated if they sense a vacuum in leadership or a tendency towards rote and form in their community. One community was embarrassed when a Christian visitor remarked about how dead their gathering seemed to him, but another community was equally embarrassed when some of the less mature members "cut loose" and "really jammed, man!"

Human beings crave stimulation. If our music and our sharing is not fresh we soon become dissatisfied and start looking for something. The woman of folly and the woman of wisdom in Proverbs 9 both say the same thing: "Whoever is naive (those who lack experience) let him turn in here..." Wisdom and folly both offer stimulation. Wisdom calls us to consecrate ourselves to our Master, love Him with all of our hearts, and pour out everything that is in us to him, being quick to hear what is pleasing to Him by listening to His voice in our brothers. Folly calls us to add external trappings to our music and worship from other sources (other spirits) in order to make our experience of worship more exciting for us. The end results may look similar to those lacking discernment, but the ultimate end of the narrow and broad roads are vastly different.

Elisheva Gebar's music is powerful in its simplicity and sincerity and is very stimulating, but she did not learn to write such music by trying to be like successful song-writers in the world. Malachi is lively and exhortative and moves when he plays music, but he doesn't turn into Elvis Presley. He is still Malachi. We have to be especially careful when we see people's freedom to express themselves causing them to become something other than who they are. We must also be careful to encourage them when they *are* being who they truly are. Hakam told Chets Barur several years ago in response to his question about why we don't just play the world's music, "I believe that our God is going to give you something greater."

So the purpose of government is to cultivate that "something greater" than what the world has to offer. And the purpose of having a conservatory would be to be able to bring musicians

and song-writers together so that they could be stimulated by the gifts who have wisdom, just as an evangelist in the body stimulates others to evangelize. There is a need for musicians to have fellowship, to be able to gather, and just play music together. In this way musicians will learn to work together as a unit, to have what Hushai calls *skill* — the sensitivity and experience that allows musicians to use their abilities and techniques in ways that compliment one another and are appropriate. (In the same way, song-writers will benefit from one another's input.) This is the true meaning of *skill* — not the ability to do "hot licks" on your instrument. Our future of having hundreds of musicians and singers joining together harmonies at our festivals demands this kind of skill. Developing musicians need time to practice so that they can master their instrument and their music will flow effortlessly from their soul.

Particular emphasis was placed on being cautious about adopting musical styles or even tunes from the world. Some may say, "Ha-emeq does it," but she would rather work with tunes written by people in Body. The only reason she used music from another source to accompany the words that were in her heart was that she is not gifted in composing tunes and had no one who was gifted to work with her. So our Father gave her grace for those particular circumstances to extract the precious from the vile.

It has almost become a tradition that brides need to listen to half a dozen tapes by worldly musicians and pick the song that gives them the best feelings to use as a bride's dance or song. But this should not be. In the first place, why do we think that we should be listening to tapes anyway, when every music meeting for the last decade has stressed the exact opposite? We have also apparently forgotten that such things take special grace. Yoneq used to glean things from the writings of Watchman Nee regarding authority. (He doesn't do this any more.) When the young brothers in the Community saw this, they went out and bought their own Watchman Nee books. They just wanted to imitate Yoneq, but he cautioned them strongly, "If you're going to read this stuff, you better make sure you're able to discern it or you will defile the Body." It may be easier to see this in the realm of teachings and ideas, but emotions affect us much more strongly than thoughts. So music has a greater potential for defiling us than mere ideas because

of its powerful effect on our emotions. A person who has the grace to extract the precious from the vile in any area will be very reserved and cautious about it and will not promote other people doing it. Obviously we have gone off in the area of funnelling the music of the world into our weddings. We need to return to the foundation of weddings being a gift from the Body to the wedding couple and let the gifts in the Body function.

For years our vision has been that we would have our own culture. What excites us is when a brother or sister brings forth a song or dance from the spiritual gift that is within them. Then it belongs to us, it is our own, and we can take identity in it. Which would you rather listen to, a song by Tsebiyah or by Rogers and Hammerstein? The description of the Holy City in Rev 21 says that nothing unclean will ever come into the Holy City but that they will bring the glory of the nations into it. We saw that the music of the nations doesn't need to come into the inner court and the throne, but that the music which has glory (the folk music of the hard-working people whose glory has not leaked out of them altogether) can be used in the outer court where we meet the nations. But the most outstanding thing in Rev 21 is that the Holy City has no need to be enlightened from outside. The nations walk by its light, not vice versa. We must encourage the gifted ones in our communities to write songs and use songs we have and not waste time getting songs from other places.

In the writing of songs, we must not be afraid to roll up our sleeves and get to work. Our Father will give us inspiration and put a burden in our hearts, but will not rob us of exercising our creative abilities. We must consider what we make the way our Creator considered and brooded over His creation, and we must be patient. Sometimes we have wonderful words or a wonderful melody, but the other part is lacking. This may be because we need to work together on songs, or it may be that the time for that song has not yet come. In any case, we cannot expect our music to just drop out of the sky. In our experience it has rarely happened this way.

One of the major things we saw at this meeting was our need to have meetings like this. Those who lead in the area of music must have fellowship together. Factions arise from a lack of this kind of fellowship. We will always have opinions being expressed in this most sensitive

area of our life. Sometimes these opinions can be very frustrating to the gifted people who are trying to be submissive, for they will hear diametrically opposed comments from people with differing backgrounds or temperaments about the very same song. For example, "Hey, that's great! We ought to do more things like this!" or, "Brother, this really bothers me because it sounds just like what I used to listen to." The wisdom that is needed to judge such opinions will come forth from the mind developed in meetings such as this.

One such matter was what kind of music is appropriate to play in our "Court of the Gentiles." It became clear that cafe music, for the most part, needs to be background music, not demanding attention. People need a catalyst for conversation, something that sets the atmosphere and puts people at ease. Vocal music and powerful, intense pieces with interwoven harmonies tend to take people's attention away from the meal they came to enjoy with their friends. But this will not necessarily apply in every situation. Sometimes we may want to attract people's attention. That is why musicians always have to be sensitive to the direction of the government in each locality. Those who play music are servants in the Body who are sensitive and easily led. There is no room for the fleshly who reject the checks in their brothers and say, "That's your opinion."

It's amazing how true it is that if we are willing to do His will He will reveal Himself to us. That's the confidence we have to live this life. It's only by revelation of Him that we will ever proceed.