

JACOB'S LADDER
THE ASCENT THROUGH THE PLANETARY SPHERES
STRUCTURE & MUSIC

Music for the Prayer Sequence: all pieces by Franz Schubert

Glory be to the Father / Glory be to the Mother:
Moments musicaux, op.94 no.2 in A^b major {74-91}

Our Father:
"Andante sostenuto" (C# major) from the B^b major piano sonata, D960 {1-42}

Our Mother:
"Andantino" from the A major piano sonata, D959 {1-68}

Lady of All Peoples:
From the second movement (A major) of the B^b major piano sonata, D960 {43-67/8}, close with the first chord of {68}

Ave Maria:
Ave Maria, "Andante quasi adagio" – omitting molto espressivo{4}

Text 1: Life after Death

Music: Moon, Beethoven, 1st movement "Moonlight Sonata" in C# minor, op.27, no.2,
Adagio sostenuto

Text 2: Moon Sphere

Music: Mercury, Beethoven, 4th movement from piano sonata no.18 in E^b major, op.31,3
Presto con fuoco. Play this to bring out more the mercurial quality rather than the martial.

Text 3: Mercury Sphere

Music: Venus, Beethoven, 2nd movement (A^b major) from piano sonata no.8 in C minor,
op.13, *Adagio cantabile.*
{1-36} (stop on beat 1), then cut to {58} (start on beat 2) and play to end.

Text 4: Venus Sphere

Music: Sun, Beethoven, Symphony no.6 "Pastorale" in F major, op.68. 2nd movement in
B^b major, *Andante molto mosso.*
Piano transcription: F. Liszt. "Scene at the stream". {1-40}

Text 5: Sun Sphere

Music: Mars, Beethoven, from the 3rd and 4th movements of the "Waldstein Sonata",
op.53, Rondo, *Allegretto moderato, Prestissimo. Omitting the Rondo {1-61},
Play {62-402} but omitting the two repetitions of the Rondo.*

Text 6: Mars Sphere

[Turn page to continue]

Music: Jupiter, *Beethoven, 1st movement from the "Pastoral Sonata", op. 28*
Allegro. {1-256}

Text 7: Jupiter Sphere

Music: Saturn, *Beethoven, from the 2nd movement of piano sonata no.7 in D major,*
op.10,3, Largo e mesto. {30 - end}

Text 8: Saturn Sphere

Music for the Prayer Sequence [continued]: all pieces by Franz Schubert

Hail to Thee, O Lamb of God:

"Andante" (D major) from the A major piano sonata, D 120 {1-15}+{60-75}

Glory be to the Father / Glory be to the Mother:

Moments musicaux, op.94 no.2 in Ab major {74-91}

Our Father:

"Andante sostenuto" (C# major) from the Bb major piano sonata, D960 {90-138}

Our Mother:

"Andantino" from the A major piano sonata, D959 {159-202}

CONCERNING THE MUSIC: It is also possible to celebrate Jacob's Ladder without the music for the prayer sequence at the start and at the close. Instead, one piece of music can be chosen as an introductory piece, for example: Beethoven: from the 1st movement of piano sonata no.31 in A^b major, op.110, Allegretto moderato;(B + C + B arranged by Marcia from the 1st movement with closing chords from the 4th movement).

And one piece can be chosen as a closing piece, for example: Beethoven, Symphony no.3 "Eroica" in E^b major, op.55. 2nd movement, Adagio assai. Piano transcription: Otto Singer. Start {70} and end prior to the start of the fugue.



Note: The pages of text are labeled (Reading 1, Reading 2, etc.) in the order of reading. All pages of the text are numbered sequentially. Print the longer readings on the front and back of one page to minimize paper shuffling and confusion. Collect all pages from the Readers at the end of the celebration for safe keeping.

JACOB'S LADDER

Prayer Sequence
Reading 1

Life After Death

Physical death is our spiritual birth. At death we arise from the corpse; we do not die. We divest ourselves of the physical body and we are completely transformed. We tear ourselves away from earthly life and we begin to exist in the wide spaces of the universe – first in the world of the elements of earth, water, air, and fire. We become one with the world of the elements, making the transition from personal life to world existence.

In passing through death and becoming one with the universe, we then behold that the widths of space are filled with cosmic thoughts. The whole cosmos is teeming with cosmic thoughts, living and weaving in the expanse of space. We see clouds of thoughts, the universal world intelligence. There we see the record of our earthly life, inscribed in the cosmic intelligence. We see our life in a great tableau of images surrounding us, and beyond our life tableau, as it dissolves into the cosmic ether, emerge the spiritual hierarchies:

Angels, Archangels, and Archai: in the weaving of the ether you receive our web of destiny.

Exusiai, Dynamis, and Kyriotetes: in the astral feeling of the cosmos the just consequences of our earthly life pass into you.

Thrones, Cherubim, and Seraphim: the just elaboration of our earthly life is resurrected in you as your deeds of being.

Our karma is shaped and fashioned by the spiritual hierarchies working within us during the life after death. They are the architects and shapers of an entirely different world order, a world order belonging to the soul, to the moral sphere of life. Countless divine beings take part in the shaping of our karma. Our destiny is an affair of the gods, elaborated during the life after death on the journey through the planetary spheres. Our soul journey, ascending through the ranks of the spiritual hierarchies from one planetary sphere to the next, is an ascent of Jacob's ladder, the rungs of which are the planetary spheres.



JACOB'S LADDER

Music

Reading 2

IN THE SPHERE OF THE MOON

No longer living on the Earth, we expand to the realm of the Moon. In the Moon sphere we live through the experience of our preceding earthly life in reverse, through an existence that flows backwards, beginning with the day of death, passing then to the day before that, and so on through the whole of our life, in the direction from death to birth. We live backwards through the nights – the periods of sleep – not through the days. And the experience is infinitely intense, permeated with the substance of the great primeval Teachers, who are the first beings we encounter in the cosmos after death. They infuse reality into our existence in the Moon sphere, and out of the experiences we undergo, the first seed of our future karma is formed, as we resolve to make compensation for what we have done.

If we have done something wrong to someone, we experience what this other person had felt as a result of the wrongdoing, and we form the resolve to put it right in the future. Through our communion with the Moon beings, the primeval Teachers, we receive the stamp of individuality in the life after death and we form the resolve to fulfill our karma. The Moon beings keep the records of the whole past of humanity and of every individual human being. And they pronounce stern judgment, a cosmic verdict, upon the value of good or bad actions for the universe.

In this backward journey, which lasts for one third of the length of earthly life, karma is prepared. The Moon beings inscribe into the cosmic ether every experience they share with us. After leaving the Moon sphere we then pass along the journey of ascent through the planetary spheres, and when on the return journey we come back once more into the Moon sphere, we find everything inscribed there.

Having shared these experiences with the Moon beings, we also come into contact with the hierarchy of beings indwelling the Moon sphere, the Angels or Spirits of Life. We turn to the Angels when we give any thought to the future. For the Angels guide us from one earthly life to the next, and it is from the Moon sphere that they guide us. Under the influence of the Angels our moral weaknesses are removed. All moral blemishes are removed in the Moon sphere. We undergo purification, laying aside our moral failings – those attributes which are unfit for the cosmos. The spiritual effects of our negative karma remain behind in the Moon sphere. The cosmos provides that when we leave the Moon sphere, our negative karma stays behind, to wait until we enter again into the Moon sphere on our path of return into our next incarnation. And we bear it all with us into our next life on earth.



JACOB'S LADDER

Music

Reading 3

IN THE SPHERE OF MERCURY

We pass beyond the Moon sphere, expanding to enter the sphere of Mercury. Here we are in communion with the beings belonging to the hierarchy of Archangels, the Spirits of Fire. All moral blemish has been removed in the Moon sphere, but not the outcome of illness undergone during our previous earthly life. The spiritual effects of whatever has befallen us in the shape of illness can only be removed in the sphere of Mercury. Here we are purified of the spiritual counterparts of our physical weaknesses and infirmities, of our tendencies to illness, and also of the effects of illnesses that we suffered on earth. In the Mercury sphere our souls are purged of the inner effects of those processes that came to expression in illness during life on earth. These effects are obliterated under the influence of the Archangels, and in our souls we become completely healthy. Here in the sphere of Mercury we experience the departure of the spiritual effects of illness. We see how they are absorbed by the Mercury beings, the Archangels.

In the Mercury sphere our moral disposition of soul creates the bridges and connections with other beings and human souls. Through an immoral conception of life we deprive ourselves of forces of attraction in the Mercury sphere. Whether we are isolated or sociable spirits is determined by our moral disposition of soul. If we have a moral attitude of soul, we are not enclosed in our own shell, and we are able to make contact with other beings and human souls, so that we are able to work fruitfully for the progress of evolution and of the whole world. Lack of morality makes us into hermits, isolated spirits, and the effect of our immoral deeds is a torment. Our morality, the development of love and compassion, enables us in the Mercury sphere to find the loved ones with whom we long to be together.

In the Mercury sphere we gain a wide sweep of vision for many facts and relationships. This is a seed for the gift of intelligence in our next earthly incarnation. The Mercury sphere is the realm of soul light.



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Music

Reading 4

IN THE SPHERE OF VENUS

After leaving the Mercury sphere, we enter the sphere of Venus, the realm of active soul force. The beings who inhabit this sphere are far more remote from earthly existence than the Mercury beings, the Archangels. In the sphere of Venus we are in communion with the beings belonging to the hierarchy of the Archai, the Primal Forces. In this sphere the element of purest love prevails. It is this cosmic love that permeates us in the Venus sphere.

In the Venus sphere we become aware of our incompleteness as soul-spiritual beings. For on passing into the sphere of Venus we enter into a new element.

The whole of our earthly life depended upon our having thoughts. In the Moon sphere thoughts were still an important factor. For the judgment that we underwent there, the judgment of the Moon beings, was based upon how good or bad deeds have arisen from our thoughts. And during our sojourn in the Mercury sphere, the beings there judged our illnesses according to our thoughts. In making the transition from the Mercury to the Venus sphere, the boundary of thought is crossed in passing into the sphere of Venus, which is ruled by love. In the Venus sphere love takes the place of wisdom. We enter the region of love. We are able to pass into the next sphere, the Sun sphere, only when love leads us out of the realm of wisdom into the sphere of the Sun.

As in the Moon sphere and in the Mercury sphere, our disposition during earthly life affects also our life in the Venus sphere. If religion – the link between the transitory and the eternal – had been important in our earthly life, we readily enter into community with other beings and human souls in the sphere of Venus. Through an irreligious disposition of soul we deprive ourselves of forces of attraction in the Venus sphere. A lack of religious inclination condemns us to loneliness. The more religious the disposition of soul we had in earthly life, the more social we become in the sphere of Venus.



JACOB'S LADDER

Music

Reading 5

IN THE SPHERE OF THE SUN

After leaving the Venus sphere, we feel ourselves expanding ever more and more into cosmic realms and we enter the sphere of the Sun. Here dwell the spiritual beings of the second hierarchy: the Exusiai, Dynamis, and Kyriotetes – Spirits of Form, Spirits of Movement, and Spirits of Wisdom. Here they have their abode, sending their own essence and power through all creation. In the Sun sphere which enshrines the second hierarchy – the Exusiai, Dynamis, and Kyriotetes – a kindly, gracious welcome is extended to all the good intentions and purposes that we harbored in our life on earth. Whatever lived in our souls with any nuance of goodness is received into the Sun sphere with graciousness. But evil is utterly rejected; it cannot enter the Sun sphere.

The only laws prevailing in the sphere of the Sun are those which give effect to the karmic consequences of the Good, when the mighty powers of the Sun beings are all around and within us, working to the end that our karma shall take effect in the next earthly life. Here we are focused on our moral qualities only, for everything negative is cast off in the Moon, Mercury, and Venus spheres, so that only the Good enters the Sun sphere.

In the sphere of the Sun everything moral has the power of coming to realization in an appropriate way. Goodness produces phenomena that bring blessing, whereas evil brings the opposite. Every good intention begins to be a reality perceived by the Exusiai, Dynamis, and Kyriotetes. We are regarded by these Sun beings according to the way we are able to think, feel, and experience the Good. In the Sun sphere, through our community with the Exusiai, Dynamis, and Kyriotetes, goodness is a reality – shining, radiant goodness.

In the Sun sphere we experience the Moon, Mercury, and Venus as our limbs. The Sun sphere itself, with all the Sun beings, is our heart and lungs. Our organ of intelligence and reason, the head, is represented by Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn.

During our existence in the Sun sphere, in union with the Exusiai, Dynamis, and Kyriotetes, we are engaged in the preparation of the moral side of karma, the moral qualities which will be present in our next life on earth. In the sphere of the Sun everything is spirit, pure spirit. This work in the Sun sphere for the elaboration of the next earthly life is infinitely grander than anything on the earth.



JACOB'S LADDER

Music

Reading 6

IN THE SPHERE OF MARS

After leaving the Sun sphere, we feel ourselves expanding ever more and more and we enter the sphere of Mars. Here dwell the spiritual beings of the first hierarchy: the Thrones, the Spirits of Will. Everything here in the Mars sphere is “word”. The Mars beings are “word beings”. They are formed of waves of sounds and tones. Their whole nature consists of words. We experience the Mars beings, the Thrones, when we hear with ears of the spirit. In the Mars sphere our interests become more and more cosmic. We gather from this point onward the experiences that reach us from the cosmos as the harmony of the spheres. We perceive everything as sounding forth out of the cosmic surroundings – a world of harmonies.

Arriving in the Mars sphere, the Sun sphere is now below us, and we look out into the widths of universal space. We experience the vastness of universal space through the harmony of the spheres, a spiritual music that in this sphere of Mars resounds archetypally as orchestral music.

In the Mars sphere a strongly individualized character begins to be imparted to our karma. In this sphere karma is elaborated in union with the Mars beings, the Thrones, who speak to us of the soul forces underlying the will, which we need in order to bring our will impulses to realization in our next incarnation on the earth. The Mars beings imbue everything with an element of aggressiveness – be it in the domain of physical, soul, or spiritual qualities. To compensate for this, in the sphere of Mars we are able to receive the redeeming influence of the Buddha, a being fully permeated by forces of love and peace, who transferred himself to the Mars sphere. Buddha is the redeemer here. His mission is to inculcate peace and harmony into the aggressive sphere of Mars. He who radiates universal peace and love entered into the aggressive, warlike element to exercise a pacifying influence in the Mars sphere.

In the Mars sphere we also acquire the wonderful gift of speech. For the Mars beings, the Thrones, prepare from out of the cosmos all that belongs to speech and language and place it into our karma. Our artistic skill and fluency in speech are by virtue of our proximity to the majestic “word beings”, the Thrones, in the sphere of Mars.



JACOB'S LADDER

Music

Reading 7

IN THE SPHERE OF JUPITER

After leaving the Mars sphere, we feel ourselves expanding into the cosmic sphere of Jupiter. As we proceed, the harmony of the spheres increases in volume. Here we live into the harmony of the spheres, which comes to expression archetypally in the Jupiter sphere as choral music, becoming increasingly tone, filled with meaning, expressive of its actual being.

The beings of the Jupiter sphere are utterly different from human beings. Wisdom is an integral part of their nature. These beings have wisdom as an intrinsic characteristic. Their thinking, too, is utterly different from human thinking. The Jupiter sphere is pervaded by wisdom as a substantiality, streaming in the atmosphere, rising like mist. The beings who ascend in these clouds of mist of wisdom are the Cherubim, who give shape to the karma of human beings. The Jupiter beings form themselves out of the cosmos, like clouds taking shape. They interpenetrate one another. These beings are wisdom that has become real and actual.

In this world of wisdom-filled beings, the Cherubim, something penetrates into us which weaves throughout this sphere of Jupiter. It is the voice of conscience, which originates in the world of the Cherubim and resounds in the depths of the soul. The experience of the resounding of the voice of conscience is a great and mighty encounter with the world in which conscience weaves, the world of the Jupiter beings, the Cherubim.

Through this encounter in the Jupiter sphere we are released from our bonding into religious communities. Here we are freed from the religion to which we belonged in earthly life, and the forces of conscience are imprinted into us which our soul needs in order to be able to enter into earthly life again in the right way to fulfill our mission in the next life on earth.



JACOB'S LADDER

Music

Reading 8

IN THE SPHERE OF SATURN

After leaving the Jupiter sphere, we feel ourselves expanding into the cosmic sphere of Saturn. In the Saturn sphere full content is bestowed upon the harmony of the spheres as the expression of the cosmic Word out of which everything has been created. In the Word, cosmic order and cosmic wisdom sound forth.

In the Saturn beings – the Seraphim, the Spirits of Love – there is an intense, all-pervading consciousness of the past. This makes a deep and profound impression. The immediate deeds of the Saturn beings, the deeds of the Seraphim, are performed in such a way that these beings are not aware in the immediate present of what is happening to them and through them. However, they know with unerring exactitude what they have done, what they have thought, directly it has happened. The very moment something has happened, it remains, becoming part of eternity, inscribed in an eternal chronicle in the universe.

In the Saturn sphere we are among beings who have no present. They only look back upon the past. In the consciousness of the Saturn beings there is only the past; there is no present at all. Acquaintance with the Seraphim, who draw the past after them like a comet's tail, has an overwhelming effect. What the Saturn beings behold as a vista of past ages of evolution unites with a vista of the past evolution of all beings belonging to the entire planetary system. The consciousness of the Saturn beings is that they gaze back upon the memory of all the beings of the whole planetary system. Everything is inscribed in this faculty of cosmic remembrance, cosmic memory, of the Saturn beings, the Seraphim. In the Saturn sphere our vista of the universe takes on a content of untold majesty and power.

We expand ever further into cosmic space, and as we move out beyond the Saturn sphere our state of consciousness is changed. We enter into a cosmic twilight as the powers of the starry realms work in upon us. They work from all sides, and we receive the forces from the world of stars into our being. We draw from the constellations of the zodiac the forces that we need for the forming of our physical body in our next incarnation on the earth. Then we begin to draw together again, descending through the planetary spheres, contracting and becoming ever smaller until the time comes when we can again unite with earthly existence. Having received the forces of the stars, we contract again and carry the forces of the starry world within us, so that an imprint of the total starry heavens is imprinted into the brain at our birth, at the start of our new life on earth.

