

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC AND MOVEMENT IN WORSHIP - A DANCE OF PRAYER

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Recent studies in scripture suggest that the words for “rejoice” and “dance” are the same words in Aramaic. Aramaic was the language most commonly spoken in Israel during the time of Jesus. (See Endnote 1) It is a known fact that dance was an integral part of Hebrew culture. In Zephaniah 3:17 it says “The Lord your God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing”. The word that is translated “he will joy” is the term *yagil* and the literal translation of this is “God dances with joy over us”. From the times of the first Messianic community, dance was described as an experience of heavenly joy, an act of encountering and adoring the divinity of God. God created the world with a dance-like joy and we mortals are to respond with a joyful dance. In Ancient Israel David used dance to unite his community and train his soldiers. Israel’s symbol of joy was dance. Sacred dance is widely acknowledged as an important historical dimension of ancient biblical worship.



Scholars maintain that the Hebrew word *Khag* means “festival”, which originally denoted a sacred circle dance performed around an altar in the sanctuary. The essence and nature of festival and dance was intertwined with dancing in joyful celebration. It was and is a means of worship. The Seven Festivals of the Lord then would have had dance as part of its ceremony.

In Judges: 21:19-23 young maidens go up to Shiloh each year for the Lord’s feast to dance in dances before the Lord. Both in biblical and later Jewish traditions dance was the primary manner of celebrating deliverance. In Exodus 15:20 Miriam the prophetess commanded the women of her time to thank God for making them victorious over their Egyptian enemies. In 1 Samuel 10:5 Saul is caught up in the spirit of prophesying and was changed into another man. In verses 5-7 the prophets used dance in order to become vessels for the Word of the Lord, allowing themselves to be overcome by the Spirit of God so that the Lord might speak to the people through them. Dance was a means for the prophets to ready themselves to receive the Word. In 2 Samuel 6:14 King David is famous for leading a community of Israel in dancing and singing. David would dance after his victories. In Psalms 30:2 David recounts an experience of forgiveness that grew into a desire to dance in joy. In Psalms 149:3 and 150:4 David commands the people to praise the Lord in dance. There was a daily procession with song and dance around the altar in the temple and both David and Solomon participated in it. The Testament of Job also refers to this sacred prayer circle with dance. It is referred to as the Hymn of the Creation of the Heavens.

In Jeremiah 31:4 and 13, Jeremiah foresaw the restoration of song and dance as part of the future redemption of Israel - the manifestation of the relationship between the Lord and his people. “Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry.”

Round dances through all ages of time and all locations display striking similarities. All round dances, or circle dances had their beginnings in one of the first sacred rites of this world given to and practiced by our first parents, namely the ancient prayer circle. Many consider that circle to be the oldest known dance formation in the history of the world and is an important symbol in dance representing the sacred realm, the sacred circle where great powers are loosed and the ordinary world is locked out. The circle delineates sacred space where Deity visits.

Frederick Huchel in his book – “The Cosmic Ring Dance of the Angels”, states: In examining what can be reconstructed as the liturgy of the First Temple, and its apparent restoration in early Christianity, no loss can be more significant or more poignant

than the loss of the sacred choral ring dance of prayer, which was seen to mirror the cosmic circle dance of the concourses of angels, in their concentric heavenly spheres – a dance which had the effect of opening up a conduit from the Holy of Holies, up through the planetary spheres, to unfold a view of God Most High upon his celestial throne, in the highest heaven, as chronicled in the experiences of such ancient prophets as Isaiah, Ezekiel and the Apostle John on Patmos. He adds “The dance in combination with mighty prayer, joined heaven and earth; its purpose to generate power, energy, a force-field as it were, and begin a motion (like that of the heavens) that would “spin-up” a vortex which would open up like a whirlpool, and become a hollow pillar, a conduit, the ancient axis mundi”.



The ancient sacred dance, whether known as the circle-dance, the ring-dance, the choros or the prayer circle is well attested in the early Christian sources. It is found in all cultures around the world. Dancing had its origin in the temple and the circle dance is a simulation of the dance of the angels in heaven, more specifically the orders of angels which guard the heavenly spheres, as they move in their concentric circles, wheels within wheels. The ring dance is considered as the original religious dance and was meant to preserve or renew the cosmic order. As we dance below, the angels dance above.

Clement of Alexandria declared that if you are inducted into the Christian mysteries, then you must perform a ring-dance around the altar, with the sacrament, not only with the other novitiates but also with the angels. For they are present and participate in the mystery. Where did the angels dance? In heaven – it is a cosmic dance. The ring dance of the angels encircles him (Jesus Christ). Dance was performed in a circle around the altar to reflect the motions of the cosmos. The dance of the cosmos has been traced back to ancient Egypt and as Nibley stated, the Egyptians’ constant preoccupation of endlessly repeated rites was to achieve unlimited, everlasting stability. It was by the operation of the spirit alone that things could be effectively preserved from annihilation. The rites of the temple were necessary to keep chaos at bay and preserve order. Three things are missing in our temple worship today: fragrance; dance and music. All were present anciently.

The practice of the sacred circle-dance as a vehicle for prayer is well-known in the old texts. Hugh Nibley stated the “The Hymn of the Dance referred to in the Acts of John believed it to be the hymn of the Lord which he recited in secret to his disciples and afterwards ascended the mountain”. The Acts of John was written around 120 AD, and describes a ring dance or prayer circle that Jesus Christ performed with his apostles during the Last Supper. Nibley further states that the further we go back the more prominent becomes the rite in the church. The dance was performed in a circle around the altar to reflect the motions of the cosmos. There is no stirring above until there is a stirring below. The text reads: “‘Before I am delivered to them, let us sing a hymn to the Father and so go to meet what lies before us.’ So he commanded us to make a circle, holding one another’s hands, and he himself stood in the middle. He said, ‘Respond Amen to me.’” This call-and-response song and accompanying round dance are thought to have been used in the liturgy of some of the early Gnostic communities. The dance rituals were meant to preserve or renew the cosmic order. The ring dance of the angels encircles Jesus, singing his glory in Heaven and proclaiming peace on earth. With the creation of the universe came into being the sacred circle dance. The objective of the Circle Dance of Prayer was to open up a conduit, not only through space, but also through time and take the participants from the veil of the temple up through the heavens and back to the first day of creation, from the throne atop the sacred ark to the celestial throne of God surrounded by numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising where the Sons of God shouted for joy and the morning stars sang together (1 Nephi 1:8). Jesus is the Lord of the Dance.

In D&C 136:28 it says, if thou art merry, praise the Lord with singing, with music, with dancing, and with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. According to a journal entry by Heber C. Kimball, “Pres. Young called the attention of the whole company, and gave them a message that this temple (Nauvoo) was a holy place, and that when we danced we danced unto the Lord, and that no person would be allowed to come on to this floor, and afterwards mingle with the wicked. He strongly impressed upon the mind of those present the impropriety of mingling again with the wicked after having come in here, and taken upon them

the covenants". D&C 25:12 "For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads."

## Music in Israelite Worship

During the exodus Miriam the prophetess, taking her tambourine, led the women in song and dance, celebrating the Lord's triumph over the Egyptians (Exod. 15:20-21). Miriam was the first woman in scripture to be referred to as a prophetess. She led the women in instruction as well as dance. She was revered as a leader who communicated directly with God. After the Red Sea was parted, she led the women in a dance of joy and thanksgiving. The leadership of that day included three family members ..... Moses, Aaron and Miriam.



Miriam led the Israelite women into a circle formation. Her desire was to lead them in song and dance for the purpose of connecting to the Creator and connecting to one another. She led with a desire for them to connect with God directly and did so through dance and singing. The circle formation of dance was critical, for it is believed in Jewish tradition that demonic forces cannot penetrate a circle. So we know that a circle represents unity, safety and purpose. From Avraham Gileadi's research regarding the Story of Miriam, Jewish sources give us more insight into the importance of Miriam and Dance. In Micah 6:4 we read "I brought you up out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam". After the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea, Miriam and the women took up instruments, as they danced and sang a Song of Redemption. The righteous women of that generation were so sure God would bring them safely out of Egypt that they brought their instruments with them, filled with confidence that they would be signing a song of victory.

Most people do not realize that many of the Israelite prophets were musicians. Saul encountered a band of sanctuary prophets who prophesied accompanied by instruments (1 Sam. 10:5). Isaiah composed songs, including one celebrating the Lord's deliverance of those who trust in him (Isa. 26:1-6). The public regarded Ezekiel as "one who has a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument" (Ezekiel 33:32). Isaiah also raised banners to the Lord (Isa. 13:2) as an official proclamation to our God of our Worship of Him. At Jesus' Triumphal Entry, there were at least three groups of people along the roadside as Jesus rode the colt into Jerusalem. (1) There were the Pharisees, the religious leaders of HIS day plotting to kill HIM, (2) there were the unbelievers; and (3) there were those throwing their cloaks on the road and waving flags, banners, and palm branches to honor the KING of KINGS. There are more than 3 dozen references to banners, flags/ensigns in the bible alone. The following are just a few: Psalms 20:5, 60:4, 74:4; Isa. 5:26, 11:10-12; 13:2; 18:3, 19:6, 30:17, 31:9, 49:22, 59:19, 62:10; Zech. 9:16, Song of Songs 2:4, 6:10; Ex. 2:3, 2:5, 17:15; Jeremiah 4:6, 4:21, 50:2, 51:12, 51:27; Numbers 1:52, 2:2, 2:3, 2:10, 2:18, 2:25, 10:14, 10:18, 10:22, 10:25, 17:8, 20:8, 20:11; Ezek. 20:37, Leviticus 27:32, Matt. 21:8-11 and Rev. 12:5. In Song of Songs 2:4 the banner is an image of festivity, celebration and claiming possession, which is symbolic of JESUS CHRIST claiming possession of His Bride.

David, a musician as well as a warrior, re-established the place of music in the worship of the Lord. Even before the sacrifices had been moved to Jerusalem, he instructed the Levitical musicians to celebrate the ark's journey to Zion (1 Chron. 15:16-24), and appointed Asaph as chief musician in charge of continual thanksgiving and praise (1 Chron. 16:1-7). The description of this activity (1 Chron. 25:1-7) suggests that these musicians led spontaneous and overwhelming outpouring of worship, especially at high moments like the dedication of Solomon's temple (2 Chron 5:11-14). This may be the "new song" to which the Psalms refer (33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 144:9, 149:1). Many of the Psalms may have originated in this pre-temple Davidic worship, centered around the ark of the covenant. In the Mishnah, David made 1,000 lyres and 7,000 harps to atone for Israel. He had Zillzalim (cymbals) for singing, extolling thanksgiving and praising the God of Israel which were handed down to him from Moses, from Sinai, inscribed with the words: "From beneath the legs of the Throne of Glory, sapphire stone, in the likeness of the Throne" (Exodus 24:10). Of utmost importance is the fact that God commanded King David to create the instruments for worship. We know that King David used different wood than was typically used to build lyres. He chose cedar from Lebanon, which was a sturdier wood with additional benefits. It was pervious to insects, rot and saltwater. Combined with its beautiful fragrance, cedar wood made a fine choice for an instrument. We know that King David's son, Solomon, would eventually commission kinnor and nebel construction from almug wood, or red sandalwood. Because the polished almug wood turned the color of garnet, it was more beautiful than King David's instruments. But Solomon's instruments were NOT used in the

placement of the Ark of the Covenant or the dedication of Solomon's temple. The musicians used King David's instruments and here is the result. "All the Levites who were musicians, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and relatives – stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen, and played cymbals, harps and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets. The trumpeters and musicians joined in UNISON to give praise and thanks to the Lord. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang: "He is good; His love endures forever". Then the temple of the Lord was filled with the cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God." (2 Chronicles 5:12-14).



Obviously, David's instruments didn't create the Glory of the Lord. God's glory, His presence, came in response to the worship created for Him. God gave King David clear instructions on how to worship Him. David's style of worship was obedient to God: intimate, relational, festive and in 4-hour shifts, 24 hours a day. This created worship that was in Spirit and Truth. King Solomon (David's son) followed those instructions to the letter. Hundreds of years after King David's death, King Jehoida, King Hezekiah, King Josiah, and the Levites NEVER changed, altered or deviated from the Davidic style of worship (2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah). The last king of Judah was King Zedekiah, who did what was evil in the sight of the Lord (2 King 24:19). However, he managed to do at least one thing that was remarkable. He helped hide some of King David's articles of worship just prior to the destruction of Solomon's temple in "Ein Zidkyah", a location unknown to this day. Here is a list of just a few of the instruments that will remain hidden until an appropriate time: King David's 1,000 lyres (kinnor); 7000 harps (nebel) and the cymbals (zizalim) handed down to King David From Moses of Sinai (Mishnah 9).

These were the same instruments used for the placement of the Ark of the Covenant and the dedication of Solomon's Temple. King Zedekiah feared these instruments were falling into the hands of the Chaldeans and he didn't want pagans using them. But more importantly, King David created these instruments by strictly adhering to God's command. King David had these instruments made for the worship of Messiah. No one will find them until they are needed again.

In the temple, music functioned as a "sacrifice of praise," an offering of song to accompany the offering of sacrifice. Under the Judean rulers, the performance of music became regulated and standardized. The titles of 55 Psalms refer to the music director, with instructions for performance on various instruments or using certain tunes. This psalmody remained a feature of Israelite and Jewish worship. After the exile, Ezra recruited more than 200 Levites for service in the sanctuary (Ezra 8:18-20). First-century Jewish sources indicate that the choir of Herod's temple consisted of at least twelve adult male singers, with no upper limit. Singers served between the ages of thirty and fifty, after a five-year training period. The sources also describe the instruments in use at that time.

Music also functioned as a protection against evil. In (1 Samuel 16:18-23) we see David, still a youth but already renown as a warrior, sitting before the king with his harp. Whenever an evil spirit was upon Saul, David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the evil spirit would depart from him.

After the Babylonian exile, most Jews lived in the Dispersion (areas outside of the land of Israel) and could not participate in temple worship. Therefore the synagogue arose for prayer and the study of the Scriptures. The Psalms continued to be sung, and other portions of the Scriptures as well as prayers were chanted according to a developing system of "modes." Such Jewish music influenced the worship of the early church.

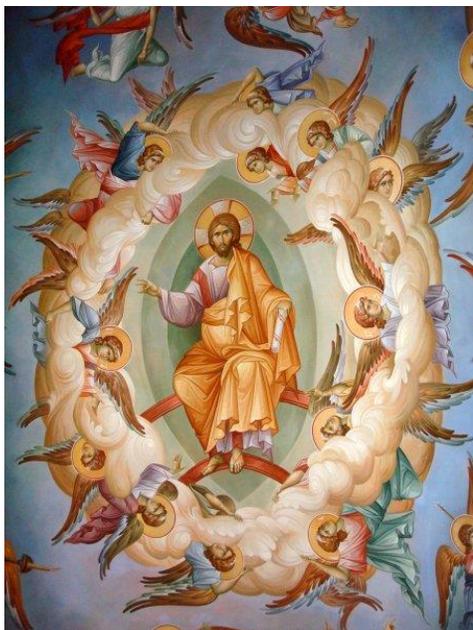
Israelite worship music was both vocal and instrumental; the sanctuary orchestra contributed to the celebration of Israel's covenant with the Lord. Its instruments fall into the same general classes with which we are familiar — percussion, winds (pipes) and strings. Horns, trumpets, cymbals, harps and lyres were used when the ark was brought to Mount Zion, and

their continued use is reflected in their mention in the Psalms. The sanctuary instruments were not solo instruments, but sounded simultaneously to call the assembly to worship (Psa. 98:6). Strings and pipes, if used, probably played the modalities (tune elements) in the psalm being sung, with perhaps distinctive patterns of ornamentation. Horns, trumpets and cymbals added to the festive joy by creating a larger sound. The *selah* of the Psalms may have been an instrumental interlude, or a "lifting up" of sound by both singers and instrumentalists. Tambourines, usually played by women, are mentioned in connection with dancing at Israelite festivals (Psa. 68:25), but were not used in the sanctuary where only men served as priests and musicians.

## Worship Music in the New Testament

The worship of the emerging Christian movement did not produce new forms of music, but shared the characteristics described above, many of which are still found in the music of historic liturgies. Clearly, the worship life of the early church included psalms and other forms of song.

The New Testament mentions worship music in several places. The gospel story begins with a hymn of praise on the lips of the heavenly host, "Glory to God in the highest" (Luke 2:14). Reading the lesson from Isaiah in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke 4:16-20), Jesus probably intoned it according to the custom of the time. The Gospels record that Jesus and his disciples sang a hymn after the Last Supper (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26), probably the "Great Hallel" (Psalms 113-118) of the Passover tradition. Luke records that Paul and Silas were singing hymns in prison at Philippi when an earthquake occurred at midnight, the time of their release (Acts 16:25). Paul urges the Christians of Ephesus and Colossae to give thanks to God in "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Describing the assembly of the church of Corinth, he remarks that "everyone has a psalm" (1Cor. 14:26) which must blend with the contributions of other worshipers in an orderly service. Perhaps "psalms" were the biblical psalms, while "hymns" could have been Christian music in praise of Christ and "spiritual songs" more spontaneous worship expressions. Revel. 14:3 "And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth".



Musical expression of Christian worship reaches its New Testament climax in the hymns of the Revelation to John. In John's vision, acts of praise before God's throne accompany the dramatic unfolding of events on earth. These hymns glorify the Creator (4:11), proclaim the worth of the Lamb (5:9-10; 5:12), extol both the Father and the Son (5:13; 7:10; 7:12), celebrate God's triumph over the enemies of his people (11:16; 11:17-18; 12:10-12; 19:1-3; 19:6-8), and proclaim his justice (15:3-4; 16:5-7). Additional songs celebrate the defeat of the unfaithful city, persecutor of the saints (chapter 18). This pageant of praise is initiated by four living creatures drawn from the vision of Ezekiel, singing words derived from Isaiah's vision in the temple (Rev. 4:8). It expands to include the elders of the covenant people, the hosts of heaven, and eventually every creature. Perhaps these hymns reflect the actual worship practice of the church near the end of the first century. If so, the Revelation offers a window not only into the judgments of God in the earth but also into the development of Christian liturgy and hymnody.

Luke quotes several hymns in the beginning chapters of his Gospel. In addition to the *Gloria in Excelsis* mentioned above, he includes the *Magnificat* or Song of Mary (1:46-55), the *Benedictus* or Song of Zechariah (1:67-79) and the *Nunc Dimittis* or Song of Simeon (2:29-32). Although spoken by several figures in the story of Jesus' birth, these hymns came to be used in Christian worship at an early period. Paul quotes what may have been another song, "Awake, O sleeper," in Eph. 5:14. Scholars have suggested that other passages in Paul's letters are based on primitive Christian hymns in praise of Christ, such as Philippians 2:6-11, Colossians 1:15-20 and 1 Timothy 3:16. Such hymns may have been composed to reinforce Christian

teaching about the nature of Jesus' Messiahship. The *Hosanna* hymn of the crowds at Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:9, based on Psa. 118:26) became part of the historic Christian eucharistic celebration.

## NATIVE AMERICANS



Does it not make sense, now that we know many of the Native Americans have Israelite blood flowing through them, that their Circle of Life Dance, Hoop Dance, and Fire Dance, among other dances originated in Israel's temple worship? The fire being the altar of sacrifice (burnt offering), the flames symbolizing the Glory of God, the smoke symbolizing the prayers ascending to heaven (peace offering), and the circle symbolic of the Angels dancing and singing around the throne of God and the cosmic spheres. Dances have always been significant in the lives of Native Americans. Many dances played a vital role in religious rituals and other ceremonies; while others were held to guarantee the success of hunts, harvests, giving thanks, and other celebrations. In the early stages of thought, the dance was inseparable from the song or chant. Now, the songs are usually sung by the men who play the accompanying instruments. If the dancers move in a circle, the instruments are placed in the center of the circle; otherwise they are in a row at one side. The dances are many; but each has its name, its steps and movements, and its special songs; each has its history, and usually its symbolism, though much of this latter has been lost in civilization and self-consciousness. There are dances for men and women together; and other dances in which men and women dance by themselves; still others in which individuals dance alone. There are cosmic dances, and dances in costumes that disguise the persons taking part. The Hopi Indians deeply and firmly believe that what they do is a sacred charge given to them by the Creator, who gave to them both the responsibility and the means to generate, through their rituals, the sacred energy to "heal" or undo the damage done to the earth – pollution and corruption – by the people of all other nations and to keep the earth's poles from flying out of balance. They are the guardians of the earth. Through their rituals, they stave off the apocalypse, the utter destruction of the earth and all mankind. But we also are of the lineage of Israel and it is in our blood to worship our God through song and dance - we only need to rekindle that memory in our DNA.

In Eben Alexander's book "Map of Heaven" (a neurosurgeon who had a NDE – pgs.116-117) he states: "I looked down .... And they were doing something that was analogous to what those perpetually blooming flowers were doing ... they were dancing. Like music, dance is an ancient activity, its origins going deep into the very beginnings of human life on the planet. And like every primary human activity, it reflects the primary cosmic reality – that of the worlds above from which we come. When people dance, they are acting from that part of themselves that knows and remembers where it comes from and where it's going. That knows this world is not the end. That's why people dance at weddings – that early ceremony in which the union of two people evokes the larger union of heaven and earth. If the flower is perhaps the most heavenly object we have here on earth, dancing is perhaps the most heavenly activity. And both point to the same truth: the larger life we hope for is real. Dancing, like singing, is temporal. You can't have dancing or music without time. In the world I entered during my days in coma, there was music and there was dancing. So again, there was time or rather, the deep time of those worlds. It was a richer, more spacious kind of time than we experience here on earth. The Christian Philosopher Thomas Aquinas had a word for this time –above-time that I encountered. He called it "aeveternity" – the time of the angels. He did not believe this was an abstract state, but rather a very real and very active one. This is a kind of time in which flowers bloom and bloom again. And where the music and dancing never stop."

In Howard Storm's NDE he was taught in heaven that "there are beings so holy and wholly (complete – they have become so whole) that there is no longer any doubt or any blemish or shadow or hesitancy - they are ready and eager to be one with God, to be in communion with God. People don't come to that easily, but it is the desire of all beings to come to Christ. People are invited to participate with God in the ongoing act of creation. The way they participate is by bringing your own uniqueness and personality and life experience to God. The analogy that I was taught is like they become part of the song of creation, they become part of the heavenly choir. God is the conductor of the song of creation. The song of creation is the creation ... we are being sung (over) by God and the heavenly choir and if they were to cease the song of creation there would be no physical universe, no time, no space. It is your own uniqueness, your own self that becomes a voice in the choir with the creation. The universe is a vibratory state and space and time are created by the song of creation. It is our origin and our source. We come

into this world for a variety of experiences and somehow we think we are separate and apart but we are all connected. What we get to experience in this life is both separateness and interconnectedness. Angels and Jesus always refer to God as The One. The most profound prayer of the Jewish faith proclaims that God is One.”



Dancing is primarily a physical and visual means of praising, honoring and thanking God and invoking his presence. There are seven types of dances found in the bible: **(1) Worship** (1 Chron. 29:9-20; Deut. 12:6-7,12) **(2) Praise** (Psalms 150:4 (13 praises); Romans 15:9-11, **(3) Spiritual Warfare** (Psalms 20:1-9; 149:1-9; 2 Chron. 29: 19-23); **(4) Travail** (Jeremiah 31:13, Lament. 5:15; Psalm 20:11); **(5) Prophecy** (1 Samuel 10:5-7; Matt. 11:13-17); **(6) Ceremony** (2 Sam. 6:12-21); and **(7) Celebration** (Ex. 15:20 & 21; Luke 15:22-25; Zeph. 3:14,17; Jeremiah 31:4).

Dance is a life-transforming experience and an expression of praise and worship. It is also a means by which the transforming power of the presence of God can be received by the believer. Through dance, God gives us access to his presence in order to transform us. Like prayer, our voices and dances communicate to the throne of God. As we enter into deep worship, our spirits are humbled in submission to God’s sovereignty. It is interesting to note that there are 7 types of dances listed in scripture as stated above as we know that the number 7 is symbolic of completion. 7 is also associated with the 7 heavens, the 7 planets, the 7 colors of the rainbow, the Menorah, the Constellation of Pleiades (referred to as the 7 Sisters, leading the circle dance of the stars), the 7 spirits before God’s Throne (Isa.11:2) and the 7 handmaidens of Esther. (See Endnote 2)

Movements – spinning/moving to the right invokes blessings; spinning/moving to the left invokes cursing; The Whirling Dervishes of the Middle East, for example, stand between the material and cosmic worlds. Their dance is part of a sacred ceremony in which the dervishes rotate in a precise rhythm. Movement of each dervish represents the earth turning on its axis while orbiting the sun. The purpose of the ritual whirling is for the dervish to empty all distracting thoughts, relinquishing earthly life to be reborn in mystical union with God. While whirling the Dervish opens his folded arms, his right palm held up to receive the blessings of heaven, his left palm facing down to transfer these blessings to earth. Some, including Native Americans, believe this kind of dance, similar to the order of the bees, may have healing qualities for the earth itself. The spinning also creates a feeling of being in a spiral – mimicking the concourses of angels. Stomping feet is done to awake the dead below. Indians believe our ancestors come to help us in our journey and therefore the need to awaken the dead. It is evident that the Mayans believed the Tree of Life, which is depicted in all cultures, has its roots in the underworld, the trunk is the present world we live in and the branches and top is connected to heaven. The Maypole is just one representation of the Tree of Life which is still used in ceremonial dance.

Worship through dance is awe-inspiring as we submit ourselves to our God. There is a spiritual power that comes when one gives praise to our Creator. Even the planets dance to the music of the cosmos. Like prayer, dance and song communicate to the very throne of God. It is an act of encountering and adoring the divinity of God.

**ENDNOTES:** 1. It is helpful to our overall understanding of scripture, if we take into account that the Bible was actually written in *three* different ancient languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Ancient Hebrew was the tongue of the ancient Israelites and the language in which most of the Old Testament was penned. Isaiah 19:18 calls it “the language of Canaan,” while other verses label it “Judean” and “language of the Jews” (2 Kings 18:26; Isaiah 36:11, 13; 2 Chronicles 32:18; Nehemiah 13:24). Ancient Hebrew is a Semitic language that dates back past 1500 B.C. Its alphabet consists of 22 characters. The Hebrew language is considered the language of God because the alphabet combines numbers and symbols to explain the universe, the earth, and our existence. A thorough study of the Hebrew Alphabet Number System reveals that God has imbedded his complete plan for humankind in it. The common letters make up words; each letter also expresses a symbolic concept; and each letter also represents a mathematical value. No other language or alphabet does this. While Hebrew remained the sacred tongue of the Jews, its use as a common spoken language declined after the Jews’ return from exile (538

B.C.). Despite a revival of the language during the Maccabean era, it was eventually all but replaced in everyday usage by Aramaic. Modern Hebrew can trace its ancestry to Biblical Hebrew, but has incorporated many other influences as well. Ancient Aramaic originated among the Arameans in northern Syria and became widely used under the Assyrians. A few passages in the Old Testament were written in Aramaic ([Genesis 31:47](#); [Ezra 4:8-6:18, 7:12-26](#); [Jeremiah 10:11](#)). Aramaic was very popular in the ancient world and was commonly spoken in Jesus' time. Many people assume that the New Testament was written in Hebrew as well, but by the time the gospels were being written, many Jews didn't even speak Hebrew anymore because Rome had conquered Greece, and the influence of Greek culture had saturated the empire. (For more on the Hebrew Alphabet see Joe Sampson's "Written by the Finger of God".)

2. The seven spirits of Isaiah 11:2 include; 1. The spirit of the Lord, 2. The spirit of wisdom, 3. The spirit of understanding, 4. The spirit of counsel, 5. The spirit of might, 6. The spirit of knowledge, and 7. The spirit of the fear of the Lord. They may coincide with the seven colors of the rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet), each color representing not only a different frequency of energy, but a special quality or attribute shared with the heirs of God, including the mighty one called forth to lead in the last days, as presented in Isaiah 11 (see also D&C 113:3-6; 77:9 &14). Scripture reveals that the seven spirits *are* special "tutors" and "governors", not only for the mighty one of the book of Isaiah, but all chosen heirs of God, those of *the covenant*. Such transition from "servants" to "sons" (and daughters) is presented in Galatians 4:1-7. They then possess greater maturity, knowledge, character and power, that they might be more effective in their missions. The seven spirits are symbolized in the seven "eyes of the Lord, which *run to and fro* through the whole earth" observing, tutoring and preparing (Zechariah 4:10). John the Revelator calls them the "seven lamps of fire [the seven candlesticks?] burning before the throne [of God], which are the seven spirits of God" (Revelation 4:5). He later calls them "seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits *sent forth* into all the earth" (Revelation 5:6). This same preparation pattern appears to be evident in the "seven choice handmaidens" who prepared Esther for her entrance into the king's presence in his high court, and her mission to deliver Israel (Esther 2:9). Her purification period, combined with the tutoring of the seven handmaidens, taught her *what* to do, *how* to do it, and *when*. Her three days of fasting and prayer also appear to represent three knocks on the king's door, a pattern for prayer (three per day - ask, seek, knock). Advancing to him, the king finally held out his golden scepter to Esther, meaning she could fully advance, entering his presence to make her request (Esther 5:2). Her efforts eventually led to the temporal salvation of Israel, something the mighty servant in Isaiah 11 also does. They like Moses and others, are "deliverers" of Israel, the Lord's chosen ones, *heirs*. The number 7 is the most common number in scripture, followed by 3. It is connected to full or complete, often in connection with *spiritual completion*, accomplished over a 7 part time period (7 days [week] or 7, 1000-year periods [7 dispensations]). In addition to the 7 colors of the rainbow and the 7 spirits of Isaiah 11, scripture also reveals the 7 Hebrew holy days (Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, Shavout/Pentecost, Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles). There are also 7 heavens (7 planets), 7 parts of the "*whole armor of God*" (loins girt with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, the feet shod with the gospel of peace, taking the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit) [and the word] D&C 27:15-18, and even 7 types of dance in scripture listed above; and the 7 Dancing Sisters of the Pleiades, a Star Cluster found in the right shoulder of the Constellation Taurus the Bull. (The Pleiades is also referred as the "flock of doves" and "swarm of golden bees" - Right Shoulder is symbolic of power.)

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Frederick Huchel – The Cosmic Ring Dance of the Angels

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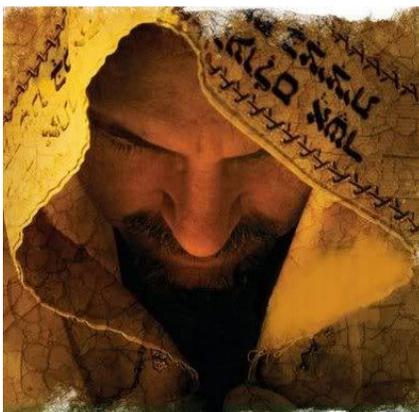
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**KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS  
COME LORD JESUS COME!**