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Music of the Spheres

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applied mathematical activities by trying to meet bodily needs, and subsequently develop them to meet spiritual needs. Actually bodily needs and spiritual needs are inextricably linked, and neither is prior to the other. In primitive societies, where people make their living by hunting and gathering, these are not merely utilitarian pursuits, but spiritual activities—expressions of humanity’s place in the universe. If human needs in the large sense are being met, this will always be the case. People won’t work effectively merely to feed themselves—If people are left to have their own way, work will always be at the same time an expression of human spirituality. Also, it probably isn’t possible to subsist bodily if one’s only goal is to get food, warmth, and shelter. Just as a tennis player has to follow through in order to hit the ball effectively, people have to embed their pursuit of bodily requirements in an infinitely richer context in order to be able to meet them at all. Without the larger spiritual context, there’s really no point in meeting bodily

needs, and without meeting the bodily needs, there’s no possibility of the larger spiritual context, so it doesn’t make sense to say that one is prior to the other. So in the end there is no difference between pure mathematics and applied mathematics. Both are activities pursued for their own sake, or rather for the sake of living a fully human life.

REFERENCES

¹ Kline, Morris. *Mathematics: The Loss of Certainty*. Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1980.

² Shahrokhi, F., Sykora, O., Székely, L.A., Vrt’o, I. “The Crossing Number of a Graph on a Compact 2-manifold.” *Adv. Math.* 123(1996), 105-119.

³ Matt. 4:4

⁴ “Bread and Roses.” Words by James Oppenheimer, music by Caroline Kohsleet. In: *Little Red Songbook* (36e). International Workers of the World Press. Ypsilanti, 1997.

Music of the Spheres

Lawrence Mark Lesser

Today was a rainbow day
 Horizon leaned the right way
 Tonight in moonlight
 We sleep beneath the stars we sight
 Ohhhh, it’s amazing
 By the sea, star-gazing
 My guiding inspiration all through the years
 Has been music and the music of the spheres.

Tides are getting strong
 I get my guitar to sing you a song
 The notes that bring peace
 Are numbers from Ancient Greece
 Ohhhh, hear a pattern
 In the path of Saturn
 I marvel at the harmonies that caress our ears
 Sweet music and the music of the spheres

I end my simple tune
 While stars twinkle ‘round the moon
 Like vibrating strings
 We resonate with all these things
 Ohhhh, chords and notes,
 Words and hopes,
 Spinning in the myst’ry of why we cry our tears
 For music and the music of the spheres