

BEAUTIFUL MATH

It's 1929.

Berlin's buzzing with excitement. Everyone's talking about this kid prodigy. Why all the hype? Because he plays the violin with the passion and proficiency of a mature master, and he's only 13. Tonight Yehudi Menuhin makes his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic.

As Yehudi masterfully renders complex pieces by Brahms, Beethoven, and Bach, the crowd repeatedly oscillates between silent awe and frenzied applause. And all too soon, it's over. Taking his final bow, Yehudi walks off the stage.

But then a middle-aged man with crazy hair spontaneously leaps from his seat and races to the boy's dressing room, embraces him with affection, and exclaims, "Now I know there is a God in heaven."

The middle-aged man?

None other than Albert Einstein!

Fascinating, isn't it, that Einstein would make an intuitive connection between the beauty of music and the existence of God? Right there, in that moment, immersed in the wonder of music, he wondered if some sort of infinitely intelligent mind might be behind this rationally ordered art form.

Einstein is regarded as one of the most brilliant scientific minds ever to grace planet earth. Many of us are unaware, however, of Einstein's love affair with music. "If I were not a physicist," he once said, "I would probably be a musician." He would often work out equations in his head . . . get this . . . while playing Mozart on his violin. "I often think in music," he said. "I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music." In fact, music played an important part in Einstein's scientific discoveries. Describing his theory of relativity, he said, "My new discovery is the result of musical perception."

How cool is that?!

On the surface, $E=mc^2$ just looks like a dry equation. But to Einstein it was grand and gorgeous, even musical. The closer we look, the more clearly we see that the math behind the laws of physics reveals ingeniously constructed expressions of emotional beauty. And music gave Einstein access to that beauty.

How many of us would regard math as beautiful? And yet every song that ravishes our hearts is mathematical. Music is, after all, emotionally rendered math.

BEAUTIFUL MATH CONTINUED

Einstein once said, “The greatest scientists are artists as well.” What he was getting at is the fact that the physical universe isn’t just math to be figured out with the mind, it’s also art to be appreciated with the heart.

Interestingly, the Bible describes creation in mathematical terms. God said to Job:

“Where were you when I created the earth?

Tell me, since you know so much!

Who decided on its size? Certainly you’ll know that!

Who came up with the blueprints and measurements?”

Here we encounter a God who essentially says He’s the artistic engineer of the world. He lays claim to physics as the product of His mind. If we press back the popular scientific prejudice against the existence of God, we might observe that our universe displays the work of an Artistic Mathematician—infinately intelligent and emotionally wild with love.

It should come as no surprise to us, then, that this God who claims to be the source of the math that composes our universe also claims to be a singer. The Bible says,

“He will rejoice over you with gladness,

He will quiet you with His love,

He will rejoice over you with singing.”

“The greatest
scientists are
artists as well.”

The astounding thing is what, or rather who, God sings about. Did you catch it? He sings of His love for you and me. To know that such a magnificently beautiful Supreme Being made the universe is nothing short of breathtaking.

If the universe were all mathematics and no music, it might make sense to believe that we’re alone, that life has no meaning, and that love is merely a powerful illusion. But there is music, and it thrills our hearts with the wonderful sense that we are not alone, that our longing for love has an ultimate source, and that we sing because God sings over us.

Einstein did admit at times that he couldn’t believe in the popular misconception of God as One who micromanages the universe. However, there were other times when he could not help but wonder with an open mind if some sort of infinite intelligence might be behind it all. When beautiful music filled his ears and thrilled his heart, he enthusiastically exclaimed, “Now I know there is a God in heaven.”

Did Einstein speak the truth in that moment of bright epiphany?

I for one find that believing in this God satisfies both my heart and my mind.

What about you?