

# Fulfilling the Pythagorean Agenda ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 What is the origin of the word civilization?  
00:00:07 At the beginning of Western civilization,  
00:00:10 there was, back in the 6th century BC in Greece, was Pythagoras.  
00:00:16 And Pythagoras had a remarkable notion.  
00:00:21 A notion that somehow the nature of the material world  
00:00:26 and the nature of the inner world of thought, emotion, and spirit  
00:00:35 and the nature of number were somehow linked.  
00:00:40 And if you could figure that out,  
00:00:42 then you would have a complete model  
00:00:48 that would cover all the needs of humanity.  
00:00:54 One of the problems, there were, as I look upon it, three problems.  
00:01:00 One is his notion of the nature of number was too limited.  
00:01:07 Essentially, it was positive whole integers.  
00:01:10 The second is that they didn't have the experimental method to explore nature.  
00:01:17 That only developed with Galileo, Francis Bacon, Newton,  
00:01:22 and his optics, for example, and then subsequent researchers, scientists.  
00:01:29 And the other thing ancient Greeks lacked was methods of developing  
00:01:37 enough concentration power systematically to explore the nature of the inner world.  
00:01:45 So they didn't know how to make experiments to explore the nature of the outer world.  
00:01:50 And they didn't have the technology of high concentration that India did have  
00:01:57 that you need in order to explore the inner world.  
00:02:01 And they didn't have an adequate concept of number in order to model either one.  
00:02:10 But I think that we now are in a position to fulfill the Pythagorean agenda  
00:02:18 because we now have a notion of number that's broad enough.  
00:02:23 Both the outer dance and the inner dance can be modeled with our present number system  
00:02:33 because it has enough contrasts built in to explore the different flavors  
00:02:40 of expansion and contraction.  
00:02:42 The West has discovered the concentration methods from the East.  
00:02:47 We have the experimental method for looking at the outside nature.  
00:02:54 There's a teaching in Mahayana Buddhism that all beings have the Buddha

nature.

00:03:06 The Greek word for nature, the thing that Pythagoras and Western civilization

00:03:13 from his time on wanted to study, the word was physis,

00:03:18 and that's given us the word physics, for example.

00:03:21 Physics is the study of the nature of things.

00:03:24 I think that the confluence of the empirical method,

00:03:33 the focus techniques from the East, empirical means experimental method,

00:03:41 and the ability to mathematically model the results of experiments on the outside,

00:03:50 and now in this century we'll start to model the results of experiments

00:03:55 on the inside mathematically, we'll be able to achieve the Pythagorean agenda.

00:04:03 As a result of that, it's easy for me to imagine that there could be,

00:04:14 I don't say this will happen because who knows,

00:04:17 I just say it's not hard for me to imagine that the human condition

00:04:25 in the next century could change rapidly and globally and dramatically for the better.

00:04:38 I think that every one of us that follows this path has a little role, perhaps,

00:04:49 in what could be one of the most important events in all of history.