

“No one is free, even the birds are chained to the sky” Bob Dylan

We seem to have become obsessed with freedom without actually being able to clearly define it. Of course there is “license” which is basically having the legal ability to realize, up to a certain point, one’s desires. This is an important albeit severely limited freedom which is inevitably qualified by the rights and the freedom of others, by that which we refer to as the “common good”. Various people have differing opinions about what constitutes the common good but in the end the only practical definition of the common good is a complex issue which involves many layers of democratic process in order to be workable. This however is a particularly thorny issue which constitutes another discussion. Beyond this aspect of “freedom” though there are many other dimensions, some of which bring into question not only whether such a concept is indeed relevant to our existence, but even whether such a thing as freedom actually exists. Very often the analogy of a bird in flight is used as a metaphor for freedom but, as Bob Dylan’s song so starkly and eloquently says, the bird is “chained” to the sky. The bird does not choose to be there, it is there because it is its nature to be there, and like all other beings, it cannot escape from its nature even if it were to so desire. In the case of the bird, it cannot even desire to deviate from its nature it is simply in accordance with it without even the illusion of choice. There is however, in our case, an illusion, produced by our modality of perception, which puts us before what we see to be a multitude of possible “choices” and possibilities. In reality these choices are made in accordance with our ability or lack thereof to act in alignment/harmony with our nature. The “choice” is merely a reflection of our state of accordance/non-accordance with our nature, a nature which is given to us by a power/entity/presence which defies definition and naming but which is the source of all that is. Each person perceives this according to their state of alignment with their given nature. For us there is no absolute truth in such a matter, only relative. For this reason religions which unfortunately frequently insist on conformity inevitably fail their adherents. Each one of us is a unique universe and yet we are all one. Our nature is both our “master” and our “servant” it is not the place of others to assume or accept such a role. We can however all assist one another on our unique “journeys” to find accordance and harmony.

Music is a very powerful and important tool which can bring us into harmony with our nature if we so allow it. Its effect is immediate, with enormous transformative power which can bring us into a state of perfect internal “alignment”. It can also in other instances and when misused cast us into states of internal dissonance from which escape can be extremely difficult. In our modern world, music is frequently misunderstood and its sacred power is often neglected or even abused. In reality music can do for us whatever we ask of it. If all that we ask of it is merely to entertain us and help us to “kill time” as we say, then it will indeed do that and no more. This however is very little to ask of such a powerful medium as music. We can also ask of it to take us beyond the boundaries of our very selves. This too it can do, but in order for it to do this, we must actively ask this of it and afford it our pure attention and devotion thus enabling it to afford us such a marvelous gift. The music which can open such dimensions for us does not need to be grandiose, complex and awe-inspiring. On the contrary, very often it is something quite simple, maybe even apparently “unimpressive”, which will take us beyond ourselves and to a realm of experience which we cannot ordinarily imagine. All of us, at some time in our lives, have experienced this, it is not some esoteric mystery to be experienced by the “select initiated few”. Every time even a single musical passage causes the hair on the nape of your neck or your arms to stand on end, music is granting you one of its greatest gifts. It is giving you the gift of that which is beyond even beauty which is truth, your truth no less.

Our actions, our mode of experience and our presence constitute the sum total of our being. Everything else is ultimately an obstinate illusion. Music can fine tune and align these into a harmony which reveals our true nature.