

The man was a master craftsman of violins, and knew that it took time and patience to create a high-quality musical instrument. He used special tools, ensuring that they were properly sharpened, to slowly and steadily shape the pieces that formed the resonance cavities of his current projects. He scraped out or sanded the material until he obtained the sound characteristics he desired. He chose the types of wood for the top, back, internal blocks, rib, and neck with great care, and obtained the best glue to hold them together. Similarly, the varnish was composed from his own carefully developed recipe. It was as much an art as a science to bring out the acoustic harmonics that would give the instrument a pleasing, but unique sound. The craftsman spent time each day to improve the quality of that sound.

As he planed different pieces, creating little curls of wood, he was thoughtful about the physical principles that were involved in his craft. He also thought about a spiritual parallel, knowing that he had to remove unwanted things to keep his own life from “sounding” badly. His soul had its own characteristic sound – a personal soul song.

He considered that we all have this special inner music, and it resonates in a way that corresponds to the makeup of the core of our being. It plays continually, whether we are aware of it or not. The volume is turned up very loud at times, and very soft at others. Sometimes it has a hard, driving beat, but it can change to a slow, dirge-like tempo. These melodic elements vary in accordance to the type of activity we are involved in. The craftsman thought about the nature of his own song, and hoped that it was in tune with the Great Goodness of God.

He felt his song always bubbling up within him, like a gas under pressure that needed release. It never seemed to end, always building on the previous stanzas and stretching out in front of him. It was as if the old proverb was stated a different way, “Those who have a song always wish to sing<sup>1</sup>.” He had also heard that most of us go to our grave with our music still inside of us<sup>2</sup>, and he did not want to be like that. The craftsman knew that we all need to release that song which expresses our true beliefs. But he didn’t know if his song was part of one unique song, or a sacred pattern that he followed in his own way.

While waiting for the glue to dry on one instrument, he installed the strings on another. As he began to tighten them, he thought about a parallel with the tension that exists in our lives. We tend to think of tension as something bad, but it is simply part of the fundamental nature of the instrument, and life, itself. Without that tension, there is no sound. Tension is acceptable, because it sets the levels by which the instrument is tuned. It produces the frequencies or energy levels, and the strength of the impact on the strings drives the intensity. The complexity of the tuning process is compounded by the fact that there are multiple strings that must be tuned together in harmony, with one common pitch used as the anchor.

As he plucked at the strings, he considered the fact that when we are tuned properly, the events that strum at our lives cause vibrations that can create beautiful music. Each instrument that the craftsman made had its own unique character, or personality, just as we do even as we are tensioned to be in tune with the Master. And as God’s instruments, we fall into the infinite breadth of His being.

It is as though we are an atom or molecule that is endlessly moving – it is never completely still. A real shock in life kicks, or excites, us to another energy level. This state is temporary, though, and eventually decays back to normal. In terms of the instrument, shocks in life are like key changes or other shifts in melody or style of music. They should not be evaluated as “right” or “wrong” in and of themselves, but just the response of the instrument. If it is well tuned, the product is exhilarating.

Just as the craftsman struggled to create the perfect instrument, he realized that it is impossible on his own to have perfect resonance with God. We fall short<sup>3</sup> as a perfect spiritual sounding board, but the feeling of even getting close to that resonance is supremely thrilling and energizing. Perfection can only come later when we transcend this physical life.

Becoming one with God is the goal of a truly spiritual person. We may become close, and feel a sense of oneness even though we can never match Him perfectly. It is as has been said, “God is easy to please, but hard to satisfy<sup>4</sup>.” As the craftsman thought about this, he considered the mathematical idea of perfect resonance. He realized that it essentially involves division by zero – a quotient where the denominator must become exactly zero. And this can only be accomplished if we realize that compared to God we are nothing.

With that thought, he began to play one of his own melodies, one that was representative of his soul song. He became totally immersed in the experience, moving in synchronization to the music. He became one with his instrument; there was complete integration of heart, soul, mind, and body. When he was done,

he was still for a moment, soaking it all back in. Then in satisfaction, he declared the instrument, and himself, ready for use.

1. Those who wish to sing always find a song. Proverb
2. Most of us go to our grave with our music still inside of us. Unknown
3. Romans 3:23
4. George MacDonald

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