

Giving our Finest

Sanford Baran: As we gather for our Tone of Life meditation this morning it is good to stand together on higher ground and proclaim that all is well. We know this in our hearts even as we observe the ravages of war and other humanly instigated catastrophes causing much misery and suffering throughout the world. From the standpoint of human beings, yes, these are catastrophes and much cause for weeping and the gnashing of teeth. But from the perspective of Being, such turbulence doesn't even register the tiniest of blips on the divine Richter scale.

Indeed, the intricate and wondrous workings of our living planet, Earth, our solar system, our galaxy, the Milky Way, all the way to the farthest reaches of the cosmos—everything is very much proceeding as it should with exquisite precision and rigor, in accordance with the perfection inherent in the one design. Looking at it this way, what's the problem? It's all good.

Now I don't mean to be glib about humankind's currently troubled state of affairs or the particular crisis *du jour* rearing its ugly head, most recently in Eastern Europe. We do, after all, live here and thus are very much connected to the events and circumstances unfolding around us. You would have to be positively numb to not feel the currents of malaise permeating the consciousness of human beings. Okay; we feel it. But the question is what to do about it? Or perhaps more to the point, what *not* to do about it.

This matter of feeling the vibrational currents around us—for many it's a curse, their *bête noir*. And it is a curse if our emotions are constantly pushing us around, distracting us from what really matters, in effect rendering us useless as far as the creative process is concerned. But it turns out this capacity to feel and sense invisible currents, to read the quality and nature of vibration around us, is incredibly useful, and if used properly allows us to fully participate in the expression of creative function. In fact, if we aren't adept at perceiving these vibrational factors with equanimity and from a heavenly perspective, we severely limit ourselves in terms of accomplishing what we've come to do.

As everything *is* connected, it's no surprise that we feel disturbances of various ilk that permeate the collective consciousness of humankind. But just because we feel these doesn't mean that we have to claim these as our own, reinforce them or do battle with them. In my experience it's probably best to simply keep our hands off, acknowledging that these currents are present without jumping to conclusions one way or another. Often there can be a tendency to take these personally, further distorting and misinterpreting what is really going on behind the scenes. So again, it's probably best to just let them be, without reacting to them, resisting them or adding fuel to the fire by expending any of our precious life energy in their direction.

But there are currents that we have the capability of sensing that actually provide valuable direction and insight, to the extent that we perceive these through the lens of a pure heart. Having a pure heart is key, distinguished by an internal stillness devoid of the clamor of the wants, agendas, opinions and judgements of human beings.

Everything we do has the potential of being an act of creation. Every thought, every word, every deed, every interaction, every relationship, every project that we might be involved in, are all outlets for spirit to be expressed and made visible because of our presence, my presence. It all matters. There is nothing that we do in our day-to-day living that is too small for it not to make a difference in terms of contributing to the well-being of the whole.

And not to second guess the creative process, but it is essential to stand on higher ground, with a pure heart and deep sense of humility and ponder how my capacities of expression might be further refined. This allows for an even greater, clearer and more useful spiritual contribution to emerge because of what I do. My capacities of expression somewhat align with the purposes of Being but I wonder, can there be an even finer level of resonance revealed by what I do that is more useful from the standpoint of the whole?

This is where our ability to accurately feel and discern the quality and fineness of our own choices come into play. Everything we do, even within what we might think of as the privacy of our own thoughts and emotions, leaves a vibrational wake in its path, a distinct current, an atmosphere, a spiritual signature. And we each have the facility to feel and sense this current emanating from our own expression. As we closely listen to the quality of this current, its timbre, its color, tonality, its resonance, we can objectively observe how well it fits within the context of the larger tonal tapestry undergirding everything. How well does that expression fit? Might there have been a better choice? And importantly how can these insights aid in the ongoing processes of refinement?

There are a lot of factors to be considered. For example, when playing a piece of music, it's not just a matter of hitting the right notes. Of course, you mostly want to sound the right notes, but that alone does not good music make. If you were to just play note, note, note, note (and my piano teacher has pointed this out to me) there's no flow, no line, no continuity, no dynamics—just a monotonous bunch of disconnected sounds that have barely anything to do with one another. Part of the artistry of creative expression is to allow a gracious flow to come forth in harmony with the other elements at play and resonant with the underlying vibrational flow unfolding in tandem.

It's interesting and fun when I put a radio show together, for example—I first want to select music that's current and fits the overall ambiance of the particular theme or genre of the show that I'm doing. The next step is coming up with a sequence for the various selections I've picked out so there is an overall flow and a sense of movement and direction. You want to take the listener on a

journey, and I find that the order in which the songs are played very much provide the wherewithal for doing this. In preparation for a show, I actually spend quite a bit of time listening to the transitions between the songs. Do they work? Or might a different order work better? This is an example of using one's ears to fine tune and refine a creative work in progress.

Likewise, we use our spiritual ears and our spiritual capacities of perception to keenly listen to and observe our own expressions in progress. With these insights we can make adjustments and refinements as appropriate to allow an increasingly finer quality of radiance to be known through us as individuals and collectively.

I know in my own experience how valuable this capacity of spiritual perception and the realm of feelings are. I love participating in the processes of refinement and am so appreciative of the subtle and not-so-subtle hints that come my way—nudging me to perhaps take a second look. Had I considered this possibility? Maybe in the future I might approach this type of situation slightly differently. From firsthand experience I can tell you that you *can* teach an old dog new tricks!

There's no question that working within the creative process there likely will be some discomfort. It just comes with the territory. Giving birth to that which originates in spirit requires pressure, sometimes great pressure. We're talking about channeling the energy of the cosmos and bringing it to bear in the handling of our day-to-day affairs. Such an endeavor is truly the work of heaven and is indeed a labor of love. But hey... that's why we're here.

I recently ran into these words by Alan Hammond in volume IV, chapter 17 of his series of books, *Our Divine and Cosmic Identity*. The chapter is entitled, "The Language of Love," and I'll read an excerpt for you. Alan starts with this familiar passage from the Bible, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48) He then continues with these comments:

"As we know, human beings have thought that means that we are to live up to some imagined Divine ideal—perfection. But the true meaning of that word, *perfect*, is to do exactly what is required in the situation in which we find ourselves, as best we may, through our human equipment which we understand is not always totally up to par. We simply do the highest that can be done. No matter who we are, where we are, we have not to measure ourselves against anyone else in any way. We can be increasingly confident that we have a part to play in the consciousness, in the body, in the emotional realm that we have, in the very situations in which we find ourselves—to put it simply, to give our finest, and that is perfection."

Yes, giving our finest, *that* is perfection! We know how to do this but also realize that such knowhow is not a static skill. The quality and nature of our knowing in this regard becomes

increasingly finer and more closely aligned with Being as we purposely embrace the processes of refinement.

For me, the words *noble presence* very much capture what is required. A person of noble presence is one who is honorable, decent, honest, has integrity, is humble, is patient, and has empathy and respect for others, among many other fine qualities of character. Here is someone who is indeed giving their finest. Let this be true in my living, in our living.

It is good to be together as we collectively proclaim *all is well*.

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Pre-Service Music

1. *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 645 (Arr. for Mandolin, Cello, and Double Bass)*

Composed by J.S. Bach and performed by Chris Thile, Edgar Meyer & Yo-Yo Ma

2. *Two Dialogues with Postscript: I. Wedding Waltz*

Composed by Valentin Silvestrov and performed by Hélène Grimaud & Camerata Salzburg

Concluding Music

Across The Universe (Arr. Lawson)

Composed by John Lennon & Paul McCartney and performed by Jess Gillam