



# DIMITRI EHRLICH

In order to discuss the spiritual significance of music, we would first need to come to some brief agreement about what the word “*spirituality*” means. According to what I have been taught, “*spiritual practice*” is anything that brings us closer to freedom from ignorance about who we are and how we exist. Can music, by itself, liberate us from our unconscious habits and addictions? It may be unpopular to say so, but I don’t think so. However, according to the Buddha, music can have tremendous power as a tool on the spiritual path: sounds, whether musical or not, can serve as powerful examples of impermanence. The Buddha also used the example of tuning a lute or guitar as an example of how one should maintain the mind in meditation, neither too tight nor too loose. Music may also play a more subtle role in spiritual practice, by providing a sense of spaciousness, or temporary freedom from the everyday habits of ego-grasping. The most beautiful or moving music, like any other great art, may serve to express or elucidate certain spiritual principles. Still, I am not certain that listening to music is inherently a spiritual experience, in the sense of eradicating the mixture of fear, confusion, and ignorance that is the root of suffering.



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