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I am not a religious person, in fact, I think that the concept of a supernatural deity is a tempting but probably empty idea. In my job as a writer about Extreme Metal I meet a lot of Satanists, who tell me all about Anton LaVey's ideas of mankind creating his own Heaven and Hell. This sounds flawed to me too, but I do agree that we as sentient animals are in a position to elevate ourselves to a higher plane of consciousness. For me, this is achieved by music of all kinds, from the unearthly magnificence of Bach, to the gleeful malevolence of Slayer.

The ability to transcend corporeal limitations and expand one's mental horizons through the shimmering splendour of recorded sound is a gift to us from our biology and our culture, and for me at least, makes the concept of a spiritual ideology irrelevant. Who needs the straitlaced fervour of church-bound worship, when you'll learn more about the universe by finding a natural viewpoint over the sea or mountains, placing headphones on your ears, and plunging deep into a world of aural beauty?