



MERCAN DEDE

DJ AND PRODUCER

The first line of "The Mesnevi", a famous book by the Sufi Mystic Rumi from the 13th Century, starts with the line:

*"Listen, to the reed and the tale it tells,
how it sings and cries of separation."*

This separation between physical manifestation, what we simply call "life", and what we try to understand through science using our mind, and understand through spirituality using our heart, and our original source, where we come from, disappears once we chose the "sound" as a pure learning and communication tool.

At first, this communication is nothing to do with the outside world. It is about finding our own path towards our own heart. Spirituality is simply a process of self discovery, or to use a more musical term; "tuning" our selves towards our true, pure, and real selves. Without tuning ourselves with the harmonious essence of existence there is no way we can tune our life with exterior existence.

This is exactly why, no matter what your instrument, percussion, voice,

guitar, string, or horn, the very first action of music starts with tuning. Not necessarily tuning in a specific methodical way, but rather tuning with our own way. In the Middle East, they tune their frame drums by setting up a huge camp fire and placing the frame drums around that fire. In New York, they use digital tools to be sure certain parameters are met for tuning. Technologically, it seems to be a very different way of tuning, and yet the reason and end result of tuning is all the same; first creating harmonic balance between our instruments and our selves and once we accomplish this, to connect with others.

This seems to mean an attempt to use sound, whichever form it might be, to fill the gap between our pure essence and what we call the "life" we are experiencing. It is a process of turning the satellites from outer space to inner space where the core of our existence fantastically moves as eternal wave functions.

I used to think that music is a universal language, more and more I feel it is beyond that, it is an existential language. In Eastern traditions of music such as in Turkey and India, we have developed techniques that have positive, immediate, and definite effects. With technology we even can even register, record, and analyze these effects scientifically. The results directly support the power of music in spiritual teachings for thousands of years all around the world.

By playing certain maqams (musical modes) or ragas in different times of the day in different types of environments, we can change human emotions, feelings, and biochemistry. We can record every single element just as if we were recording flight data from a plane. For example, performing nihavend maqam (mode) around noon has a direct effect on blood circulation, muscular relaxation on abdominal parts of body, and can create a natural flow of serotonin. This is our main biochemical friend that gives us the feeling of happiness or well-being. When we perform this maqam with the right instruments, surroundings, and most importantly, with the right intentions, we can raise the feeling of peace and strength.

There are incredible amounts of research in this field done in both shamanic and Sufi traditions. The sound has a magic power, and if used wisely, it has a potential to be the key for ourselves and the universe. This is

why I believe music is not the architecture of reality but the anatomy of the invisible. With political, environmental, and social suffering, and chaos spreading in unimaginable scale throughout the world, I humbly believe the "sound" may be the last but yet most powerful tool left for us to bring kindness, understanding, and peace first to our own heart and then to the universe. And we will use it, because that's what we are made of and that's what we were made for.