



# DEEPAK RAM

## COMPOSER AND FLUTIST

Many great saints, philosophers, poets, and a myriad of texts have expounded on the inherent spirituality that is the practice of music. From the Vedas to Rumi, one can quote quatrains and stanzas that would fill volumes. However, in this article I will endeavor to describe my own path to music and the glimpses of spirit it afforded me.

The very first time I listened to a recording of Pandit Ravi Shankar and Ustad Alla Rakha, I felt I was experiencing something akin to Godliness. Perhaps this was informed by growing up in a home where ceremonies were routinely performed in front of images of Lord Krishna with His flute and Mother Sarasvati with the veena. And having my first instruments blessed with a ceremony and kept in a dedicated prayer and meditation room.

It was not until many years later that I realized that the sound itself was a spiritual entity, beyond the imagery and ceremony of the music's prevailing culture. The subtleties of each note sung or played on an instrument, and the spaces between them, the silent spaces that are shaped and adorned by the notes, sometimes reveal an eternity, or an entity so powerful and beautiful that is difficult to articulate.

These glimpses come after practicing one Raga for many many years,

when the actual notes are forgotten and small blessings come from each note and phrase. Until the mighty ego comes to the fore, and these Gods that reside in the notes and the spaces disappear.

*"It is a constant search trying to reach something, something you can feel and almost touch, but never hold on to. Music is the only language I know for I believe Nada Brahma –the sound is God" - Pandit Ravi Shankar*

Sometimes when I listen to a single phrase of Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia or John Coltrane, I cannot help but feel and hear the presence of GOD.