

Littleness

It has seemed to me, that my life has expanded beyond me in ways I did not expect. Seeing within myself something of little worth, I sought to be directed by those that knew more than myself.

Perhaps you think the same. Realise this. This littleness within you, this is great.

Do you think that what is given to you was given by some great King who directs millions to their death? Consider, even, he is the same as you. This littleness is distributed to each of us, I would say almost, in equal measure.

Suppose it were the case, it may well be, that some future age I, this little one, were thought great. Then consider this. Some teacher comes before you and says, you must listen to what we teach of him. Ignore them. Perhaps I think they teach not what I say, but the greatness of themselves. Look then at me, and find me within yourself.

Consider also this. There are many men in history with great projects. They may be Nebuchadnezzar, Einstein or Hitler. It was not my intention to be one of these, but at first to understand, and then through this understanding to give something to you. But I cannot avoid, if in any way I have found the truth, that people will say his intention was to aggrandise himself.

Consider yourself. I am, the history of time must soon reveal, nothing more, and you are greater than me. To make a joke, Beethoven is no longer composing, he is decomposing, so you are already well capable of producing music greater than he is. Do not be confined by fetters of your own making. If you love music, do not be told you cannot play the violin because you are extremely bad at it. Who is telling you your will, this other person, or you yourself? Even if nobody will listen to your violent scratchings on your instrument, and move away, even if you do not like what you produce yourself, if you have the idea within yourself that you would like to play, consider this. You may succeed.

If you are 90 and think you are too old to do anything other than recount the past, and you will soon die, and it were when you were young you had the thought, even the great ambition, to play the violin, but people told you that this was impossible and your playing was inferior, then take it up again. It may be you have no income to do this. Ask around.

Perhaps someone has an old violin they no longer want, and will give it to you. Be bold. Take it. Perhaps you are too frail even to play. Consider that you may have the strength. Perhaps you realise when you begin to play it that people who told you in your youth that you were a load of rubbish were correct. Continue. Perhaps you are so old that you are no longer able to learn. It will take longer. Have you within you the urge to play the violin? Then people around you will say: this is amazing, a 90 year old has taken up the violin; it is very bad, but it is so amazing that they will listen. Then, having an audience, you will be encouraged.

You will find a room with nobody in, so you can practice, and so other people are not offended by the horrible sounds you produce. Perhaps finding that room in the Rest Home where you are at is difficult. Ask the staff if they can find somewhere you can practice. Have the thought, that at the age of 92 you will give a concert, and it will be beautiful. So to do that you must practice, and another important thing to remember is to put your teeth in at the start of the day. After a week you realise it has become a little better. People visit, and maybe they offer help.

Even if they don't, continue. You have your own resource. Get someone from the Rest Home to buy you a piece of music you like. Maybe it is no longer available being so long ago. Perhaps they bring you something similar, or maybe not. Can you play when your eyesight is not as good as it was? Never mind, invent the music for yourself.

This is what great composers do. Eventually, they do not copy, and sometimes they do not copy from the beginning, working it out all for themselves. Those of the latter type are often thought the best. So you are in their position. You cannot read the music in front of you because of your eyesight, but you can still play. Never mind, play something yourself, and see what it sounds like. Maybe it sounds like something you have never heard before. Perhaps it is good. The violin still does not sound right, but this is very modern. A lot of music is like that. There is a specialist audience that listens to this sort of stuff, and it is a lot wider than you think. Admittedly the music is not what you want, but the mistakes are, sort of, interesting. This is partly what music is about. Integrate your mistakes together to produce a sound which, sort of, goes together, or maybe it does not. You are experimenting.

In fact, despite your age, you are learning. Then people come along and say: Who on Earth is this person? He is 91 and is producing music that I have never heard of before. He is one of the great performers and composers of our age. Come along, we must listen to him. But you will know that you are still yourself, and you must have to remember to put your teeth in place in the morning.