

Resonance

Mechanical resonance: the tendency of a mechanical system to absorb more energy when the frequency of its oscillations matches the system's natural frequency of vibration (its resonance frequency or resonant frequency) than it does at other frequencies.[\[1\]](#)

It was a concept introduced to me by my 10th grade physics teacher, a fuzzy old hippie with Bob Marley and Einstein posters covering his classroom in place of the traditional “motivating” ones. To demonstrate the concept, he showed us a video of a bridge made of concrete and steel being destroyed by nothing more than the wind. What started as a mere sway grew into a pattern that matched the natural frequency of the bridge. This meant that the bridge could at long last hit its maximum vibration, like the perfect strum on a guitar string. Of course this also meant that the bridge destroyed itself. Never in my life did I find destruction so beautiful, so fully part of the universe.

That night I went home and prayed to Shiva, the great God of destruction. I prayed until I slept, but even when I slept I dreamt of him. My prayers had become sincere, they were all around me. There was no longer a difference between prayer, sleep, and meditation. My mother came home hours later and found me on the floor. Believing I had a severe fever, she put me to bed, and it was there I stayed for days. In my visions I saw destruction. The world was collapsing all around me. It was like watching over-sensationalized cable news after a tragedy. Earthquakes, fires, storms, wrecking balls, sledge hammers, even scissors, cut, thrashed, and destroyed. Nature and man together took the world apart in my mind, over and over again.

After a few days, my mother had had enough. She practically carried me to the dinner table and put food in my mouth. The sweetest, saltiest or spiciest things she could find covered the table. I ate mechanically, images still flashing in my eyes. But with each new spice they faded. Finally she handed me the small silver shaker that was once a Saturday tradition. I shook lightly and held it under my nose. I held my breath then took one huge whiff in. The old familiar smell of cloves crawled into me, filling me, waking me, shaking me into human form. I looked my worried mother in the eye to tell her I had returned. She understood and started cleaning up, busying herself with housework rather than trying to understand what had just happened. I took the cloves to my room and mixed the smell with fruity spring incense. The time for meditation was over; my physical being was back, and I danced in the scent to rejoice.

Not all of high school was so turbulent for me. Most of the time I was a normal kid, worrying about decent grades and what boys thought of me. I loved physics for what it had shown me, for I found my visions to be a treasure, not a nightmare. Having truly experienced destruction, I set out to study creation. I started volunteering on construction sites, learning what it meant to build, to create. I learned the craft, the materials, the math, the everything, but still didn't understand. I was not creating the wood I built with; I didn't know how it got there and I didn't understand what I was doing.

The summer before I left for engineering school that changed. My quest to understand creation was fulfilled. It started on site. There was a new volunteer, Enrique. He was much smaller than most of the guys I dated at the time, not much taller than I was. But when we touched, I quivered.

It wasn't long until I found myself in the back of Enrique's car. It was a small car, cramped even, as cars always seem to be. It was never clear to me why Hollywood seemed to think they were a worthy place for lovemaking in the first place, but that night I didn't care. Enrique seemed not to notice the constraints of the vehicle and worked with them, not around them. Our rocking started out gently, slowly, but got more and more intense. It got faster and harder, but it didn't hurt. Rather it felt like it was lifting me up and down, like small waves of the ocean. To this day, I do not know how long I was in that car. Time stood still: we only existed in three dimensions, not four. Time was all eternity, and all eternity was right then. Enrique and I had found our mechanical resonance point, the point where the waves we made were constructive and made waves of their own.

When I got home that night, I knew there was no need to try and start a meditation; it was already all around me. I kneeled on the floor of my room and did not move until morning. I had been visited by the creator, and he was everywhere. By the morning light I whispered my last "Hari Brahma" as my mother walked in. She looked horrified, thinking it was another of my fevers. I stood and looked her in the eye.

"I'm pregnant," I said, and left the house. Having spent the night watching the world being created, I wanted to admire the results. Every leaf, every blade of grass, every ant, was magnificent. It had all been created in my visions, every part. There was no color, no sound, no smell, I couldn't understand, I couldn't love. It was blindingly beautiful, and I felt at peace with each part of it.

I came home that night to find my mother a wreck and humored her by taking every pregnancy test she could buy at the drug store. They all came back negative. It takes at least a week, I told her, but that just confused her.

"How do you know?" she begged. But there was nothing to say; we just had to wait and see. I was tempted to tell her it was an immaculate conception, but I didn't want to upset her anymore than I had with the rest of my life. She wasn't too keen on my "Hindu phase" as she called it, and I didn't want her to think I was turning Christian next. It did, however, feel like an immaculate conception, as if Enrique and I had not made this baby, but rather it was Brahma himself.

In September, I packed my things and left for school, baby in womb. My parents cried and begged to help, but I didn't need them, and neither did this child. This child had been created by the world, and he had a home wherever I took him. We found a little apartment off campus and that spring he was born big and healthy and I named him Hashem. He was my night and my day throughout engineering school. Having the company of good conversation was nothing compared to the company of his steady breaths and warm aura. I kept my head in my books, but it was no longer the math and science I had thought it was. I was learning how humans interact with their world and the equations they have derived to explain the divine; how they create, preserve and destroy.

I continued to get visits from Shiva and Brahma, but I did not know why. Eventually it became a battle for my attention. And sometimes it just seemed to be a battle. To clear my head, I indulged in human comforts, food, drinks and mothering. The more I grounded my physical side, the easier it was to ignore my spiritual side.

Upon graduation, Hashem and I went to a Buddhist monastery in Wisconsin. Hidden away in the frozen woods, I found us a safe place of quiet. I thought I was going there to continue my journey, but I found little for myself at the monastery. Hashem, on the other hand, seemed to find home. After about a year, it was time for me to continue my

journey, but Hashem insisted on staying and the monks gladly took in this young child with the eyes of a wise man. With a heavy heart, I packed my things and went to Nepal.

I started by traveling to temples and meditating. I hiked up mountains and through the depths of valleys. I prayed to Brahma and Shiva and was mocked by them. I spoke to priests of every faith as I made my way down to India. Some told me to talk to the Dalai Lama, others gave me useless proverbs, but I found no answers. After awhile, I began to be talked about. I was becoming a legend and the rumors started getting back to me. Some called me an angel, others referred to me as the lost engineer, and some even thought I was the messiah. But the children called me Vishnu, the preserver.

One night on the train to Calcutta, I was greeted by a blind beggar. I had no money but shared my tea with him. He never looked away from me.

“How do you always know where I am?” I asked.

“Your confusion gives you away!” he cackled back.

“My confusion, what confusion is that?”

“What confusion she says? What confusion? Ha! Your confusion could confuse the wisest of men. You are so busy looking, you cannot see.”

“This from a blind man...”

“Ah... A blind man can see his mouth!”

“Great, another useless proverb. What does that even mean?”

He smiled up his wrinkled face. “You and all the priests get so caught up in your questions. Sometimes the answer is a warm bowl of rice, sometimes it’s not. But what do I know, I am the common man. The common man does not ask the questions, does not create the wars. The common man only avoids fighting them for other people. The common man does not want to build the Taj Mahal; the common man only avoids getting his land toppled in the process. The world is a turbulent place, full of floods and droughts, summer heats and winter wastelands. If you can find shelter from the storm, a warm bed, a good meal, that is all you need: a break from the storm. It is the big secret only the common man knows. It is a truth those priests can never understand.”

I stared at him but could not speak. I let him finish the tea and offered him blankets to sleep. He laughed and refused, “No one on this train will need a blanket tonight, not with you on here.” And he was right, I slept that night deeper than I had in a long time. I wasn’t, at long last, visited by Brahma or Shiva, I wasn’t visited by anyone. I just slept.

When I arrived in Calcutta, I spent many days exploring the slums. When I needed refuge, I worked in orphanages, helping with the children and doing repairs on the rundown facilities. After awhile, the thought of going to see the Dalai Lama had fermented in my head. At first I thought I had just spent too much time around Buddhists, but it soon became clear that other forces were pulling me. Slowly, I hitchhiked to Dharamsala, to the temple where he was living. I thought I might have some trouble getting close to him, or might have to wait in some line to touch his hand, but when I arrived they had clearly been waiting for me.

I talked for days and he listened. I often questioned why I was there. He was, no doubt, an enlightened man, yet he was not my master. And why was he spending his time focusing on my journey? What was there about it that was so different? On the third day, he spoke cheerfully, “If you are waiting for me to give you a prophesy, I don’t have one.”

“I don’t need one,” I replied, “I think I know what I am.”

“Oh?”

"I..." I hesitated, "I believe I am Vishnu." Vishnu came out as a whisper, it seemed forbidden. He nodded calmly.

"That does seem to be the form you have taken."

"Form?"

"Form is not something I emphasize. What's in a form? You are a great spirit. Your aura could warm the world if you let it. The form you chose makes little difference."

"But I didn't choose Vishnu, Vishnu chose me. And Brahma and Shiva are all around me."

Now he looked slightly surprised, eyebrows raised. "Ah, so Brahma and Shiva have taken form again, have they? Well in that case, you better do your part."

"And what's that?" I asked.

"That you already know. You are Vishnu, the preserver. Go," he said. "Preserve." I stared at him blankly, blinked a few times, then just left.

For one year I did not speak. I sought refuge in temples and libraries. I became obsessed again with mechanical resonance, the point that can be used to create or destroy, that can bring down the tallest of buildings, or make the most beautiful music. I had to read it all again now that I knew I was Vishnu. Brahma and Shiva used vibrations to create and destroy the world, but I had to use it to bring order, to bring peace. For the ordinary man was not concerned with living or dying, but when he sat on the beach, his heartbeat matched the slap of the waves on the shore. And I knew people did not fight because they hated, or because they were angry. Every man was the ordinary man, and every man needs his chance at the beach.

Now that my year of silence is over, I am finally ready for my real journey to begin. I will set out first for Tibet; my job there has been long awaiting me. The turbulence is greater than in most places, and peace there would resonate throughout the world.

I know that Brahma and Shiva will no longer visit my dreams, and that I will bow to no God before me. I shall meet them I'm sure, time and again, in the battles or in the mountains, but now as their equal.

Sometimes I think about what would have happened if I had never left home; if I had raised Hashem in a simple home. But I know we are not all meant for simplicity. I am Vishnu, preserver of life, carrier of peace. I do what I must, and I have no regrets. And when the earth rumbles under my feet, it is not my place to ignore it.

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Wikipedia, 2009