

Sounding Bowls

Opening Hearts Across the World

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B, A, E, D, as a meditation

The role of meditation is to become a seed point for an active calm so that it can grow into the rest of your life. Sound based meditations give us a special chance to simplify the mind, unclutter the thinking and bring in this active calm, the presence of True Self. Thinking is a valuable tool if it walks steadily rather than hopping wildly about. Feelings become focussed like listening and intention finds it's way to fruition. B,A,E,D, is one route towards this, offered by Rudolf Steiner about 90 years ago.

B,A,E,D, is a sequence within the pentatonic scale. If your instrument is tuned to a C pentatonic and does not include these notes you can use A,G,D,C instead. any whole tone pentatonic will have these intervals amongst it's notes. Do ask for guidance if you are not sure how to apply what you have.

From here on this is a meditation, you might find it helpful not even to read this until you have a moment to bring a little inner quiet towards it.

Pluck/stroke a note and listen carefully, what can you actually hear? Go into it deeply, allowing all the different sounds that you hear to become the soul you are in that moment. 'Speak' inwardly the space from one of the implicit sounds within this note across to another, (not in words, but like a lover looking from the shores of an island to the beloved calling sounds from the shores of other island(s). Within you let the spaces of the whole note resound, *become* the spaces between you and everything that you are and are not.

The note is fading now, which sounds within the note fade first? how does that leave you? where are they going to? where did they come from? the heart strings have been plucked, whence goes now the one who plucked them?...

As the sound fades can you find the moment, the point at which it is no longer audible? Can you still hear it? Can you still feel it's presence?

Pluck the note again. You are now fully within this note, the spaces between it's sounds, you are riding on the note, held in it like the image on a soap bubble. Quietly the note fades, still holding you up is the image, the note left within you as the note fades, at that point when you are not sure whether what you hear is the note or it's presence within you, at that point, living in the space between the sounds that make up the note, seeking the source of the sounds, you can become aware of the infinite spaces out of which the sounds emerge. Whence does sound come? how is it that the vibration of a string gives rise to such an inner experience as the note has given you? How is it that what we have called 'B' can come out of... Where?... and dance on the string before fading to... where? The same place?

Such questions can take one out of the meditation into thoughts. If so on the next occasion Begin as before and come on through this way, at the point the sound is fading out of real earshot follow it, follow carefully the space it created as you lived within it...

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... and you may find yourself standing on the portal, aware of the space whence sound comes, whence beauty flows, within which unenclosed vastness our own essential being is to be found shimmering like air in the sunrise. Hold this space, allow the flow that brought the sound to fill your whole being, flooding through you, changing your sorrows into new strength, clearing your spaces for Love to flow through you. Hold this space.....

Ending quietly allow your soul to return to the created world. Touch your body from within or without, finding again the beauty that holds you every day. This has been a complete meditation. Once you feel you have found some relationship with it, once you feel able to let a little of this process grow within you try a two note meditation.

Begin the meditation again. Open the note 'B', go in, find yourself in it's spaces. As it fades, before it has gone sound the next note down, the A. feel how your inner space changes, feel what that movement does within you, feel out into as much of your being as you can find or include in the meditation without losing the centre point, for any changes, any movement that occurs as you move to the second note. No need to name the changes in words, or even create a clear image of them, simply note the change that is occurring.

Maybe on another occasion, or maybe now, before the 'A' has faded sound the E. what happens in you as B, changed to A, now moves into E? Follow and live in as much of what happens as you can. And then, moving on to D do the same.

It is really not necessary to try the whole meditation straight off. Far better to discover as much as you can at each stage, the single note, the single interval, the movement down, the arrival at D.

Once the steps are familiar you may wish to do the whole series at a sitting. It is certainly how the meditation was designed, as a fluid introduction to living more deeply in who we (in our deepest soul) set out to be, as a reminder of the process of coming into being, of incarnating our True self. As a massage for the presence of true mind (Zen beginner's mind) in the moment. Yet, though it is valuable to do the whole meditation as often as you like it is also very valuable to do single steps. Like clearing the path that you walk down, or tidying the space you work, in single step meditations empower the process of the whole.

This is a whole new world. There are two distinct areas of enquiry here:

- ☹ 'Where is the note or interval coming from?' is enquiry into the hidden nature of the manifest world.
- ☹ 'What changes are occurring in me in response?' is enquiry into the inner nature of the self, body soul and spirit.

Ultimately, if you find your way into the very essence of these spaces they become the same source, but finding that far/deep essence can be a life time's enquiry. Initially they are two distinct directions of equal importance, they quickly become mutually fertilising. Begin with such questions as: How can the spaces within this interval be seen, be felt, what can you find as source of this interval, what comes through the space between these notes? Do not seek verbal answers, ignore the mind for now. The more you ignore it the more wonderful and deep seeing it's answers become, but they are still mind answers, accept them as more than possible illustrations on a journey and they become dead ends, cul-de sacs for your enquiry. This is not about learning, it is about becoming.

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