

Sounding Bowls

Opening Hearts Across the World

by Tobias Kaye: Designer and sole maker worldwide

Meditation and Sounding Bowls

Sounding Bowls are a wonderful tool for meditation. Their resonant qualities can be used for deepening, and their own sound can give rise to sublime insights. In this sheet I hope to give some pointers. I cannot begin to write about this without confessing that I am not the world's greatest meditator. During my nearly thirty years of working at it I have had good times and hard times, occasional flashes of rich insight and other times of barren ground.

Meditation with Sounding Bowls is full of potential. Because each one is a story in itself the ebb and flow of it's making are redolent in its substance. You may choose one of the images from the history of their genesis such as sound being wrestled into form and emerging again from form asking to be heard¹; such as the point of division in the tree when choice becomes a matter of survival²; or the myth of Apollo and the tortoise³. Some, when holding the bowl meditate on the life of the tree, it's progress through the seasons, the rise and fall of the sap, the coming into being of leaf, flower and fruit and their passing on⁴. Aboriginal sculptors sometimes speak of their work as the tree dreaming⁵. After it's work is done, how does the tree feel to be made into something by human hands, what does it dream of becoming?

Sound is the obvious subject. One can meditate on one Note, asking where does Sound come from? Great inner quiet is needed for this: seek the quiet by filling your attention with the note as it sounds: As the note dies away, the space held by the note can slowly become a gateway through which the source of the note can be sensed. (the string is the carrier of the note, not the source, like the gases of the candle-wax are the carrier of the flame) From this source the note flowed into the sense world. From this source can also flow purity of tone (intention) into a seeking soul. As the space of the bowl has been filled with pure sound so the space of the soul can be filled with pure intention, flowing from the same source, beyond the self.

In this space from which the note is no longer audible one's sense of self can expand so that one is no longer

occupied by it, time, space and thought no longer intrude. One is breathed in that moment by the Infinite; one becomes part of That which creates the world.

The source through which music comes into the world can also be the source through which social harmony can come into the world. Not that each person must play the same note, rather that in listening to the note of others each knows where her/his own note fits and sounds the self in harmony with the selves of others.

Each one of us is an expression of the Spirit Self that we truly are, (sometimes called "the True I Am") that which recreates itself in life after life seeking to grow in Love and Wisdom. Any true form of meditation opens the ways between the Spirit Self and what we normally experience as who we are. Such an opening can lead to our life taking wings as well as problems we had previously buried coming up to be addressed.

Using two strings one can focus on the space between notes, in harmony or in dis-harmony it is the interval that creates the quality or direction the meditation will take. "The Space Between" is one way of describing the path of creation, a gateway to the Source-of-All-Being. Microcosmically the space between sub atomic particles creates the structure of all matter. Macrocosmically the space between humanity and the Creator (or the daily self and the Spirit Self) is what inspires human striving. On the middle plane, all of human life is about the space between "one man and his brother", John Donne's "*Send not to know for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee. No man is an island entire unto himself, but at most a promontory unto the sea.*"

Adjusting the interval of a two string Sounding Bowl can access the view of the infinite through different areas of the soul. The fifth, or major and minor thirds give distinct feelings, as do all intervals within the western scales, which are based originally on the spaces between the planets. Disharmony can also be used to find the source of a given sorrow, that understanding may be gained.

Using three strings on a Sounding Bowl one can deepen one's feeling for our full humanity: We express ourselves in the world through thinking, feeling and action; Even as our body has three parts: head, trunk and limbs. The Rosicrucian wisdom, deepest of European esoteric streams sees our relationship with the trinity as "born out of the Father, dying in the Son, resurrected through the Spirit". The threefold God is not just a Christian idea, the Goddess of ancient times was also manifold, with dominant divisions being White, Red and Black, (creation destruction and transformation). Analyses of the 100 names of God in the Koran reveals three principle groups with similar roles. Using three strings one can also create two intervals and explore such as minor and major moods.

The resonant response of the curve of larger bowls, typically the 9 string size and upwards, can be so rich that it guides all one's own sounds into one's ears like a whispered secret. In paying attention to this one can track the source of what flows less consciously from one, and come to a deeper understanding of ones every day self.

A client who bought a 10 string Sounding Bowl of particularly deep proportions told me that she found the whole sky reflected in the space of the inner curve. By sounding her voice into the inner space she felt the world open up within so that the stars, normally only visible at night, became apparent in the dome of the Sounding Bowl; A kind of Isis experience.

After stringing one of my early Sounding Bowls I was seeking the best tuning for it and began to work with the notes naturally present in the resonant response of the inner curve. Damping the strings I sounded notes with my voice sliding up and down the scale until a particular response was heard, then tuning one of the strings to this note, damping the strings again and seeking another, different response, also by sounding the note(s) chosen and listening for the overtones. Like the comment above I felt as though I were singing into the whole starry universe. Bit by bit I built up a scale slightly different to our normal well-tempered scale and having some strange yet wonderful harmonies within it.

As I built this up, listening very intently I could feel words rising up to meet the notes and began to find the tune that went with the words. Slowly the words built into these two lines.

Hear in the Word the True I Am Sing the Song of the Spheres

For me these words suggest that our true being can be found best in the way in which we use our creativity in the world, as well as in our higher selves, which is indissolubly linked with the creator principle "Logos"; Also that we should seek to work in harmony with the order of the universe and its creator beings. It seems to me that these words reflect the mission of the being who stands behind the Sounding Bowls.

I have now written out two specific tonal meditations both aimed at bringing our specific gifts deeper in so that the world may receive what we came to give. Available on request.

In all cases a Sounding Bowl can be used as a vessel of beauty, and like an image of the Holy Grail become an icon for opening ones own soul to bringing beauty, harmony and healing into the world.



- 1, See history
- 2, See the article, Creativity between the Poles of Existence
- 3, See the article on Meditation on the Website: www.Sounding-Bowls.com or ask for a copy.
- 4, see Meditating on Trees also from me,
- 5, see Dreamtime Creating available on request.

Rudolf Steiner recommended the sequence b, a, e, d as a meditation. A tone theme that brings us through the pain and into the fullness of incarnate life. Full description on request.

If you would like more details on any other of these themes I would be happy to mention sources or expand a description.

If you would like a type or style of Sounding Bowl not on the price list please speak to me for a reasonable quote.

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