

Sound based meditations give us a special chance to quiet the mind. Focussing on a sound is a non-verbal activity that blends focus and openness like nothing else. Such activities unclutter the thinking and bring in an active calm, the presence of True Self. What follows here is a guide to entering harmonic sound to become one with creation, the deed of becoming.

Pluck/stroke a note and listen carefully, what can you actually hear? Can you distinguish stages in the notes resonance, the pluck moment, which then changes as the string adjusts to sounding and changes again as the note begins to fade, then final overtones. Also, importantly finding the note within yourself after it has faded from hearing. Each of these stages is part of entering fully into the experience.

Sound the note again, 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 sounds within this note across to another, (not in words, but like a lover looking, calling across a river to the one on the other shore) 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 now goes 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 in the wood, in your own echoing senses? The presence of the sound as an active impression within you is valuable. Somehow this sound has transferred itself from the bowl, the string, the air into your own soul.

Pluck the note again. You are now fully within this note, the spaces between its 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 its 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 a musician may call 'B' or 'F' can come out of... Where?... and dance on the string before fading to... where? The same place?

Such questions can take one into the Nothing, the Deep Silence that lies behind the manifest world. They can also take one out of the meditation into thoughts. If you find yourself thinking and philosophizing it can be best to simply enjoy what you have achieved so far.

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...

... and you may find yourself standing on the portal the threshold between the Silence of All being and the Centre, everyday consciousness. From here one may become 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.

Building a meditative practice on this single process releases wonderful things from the silence we all hold within. More complex meditations with sound are valuable for exploring particular states of soul but this basic process of entering into, falling into the note itself remains the central key to musical self-discovery.

Using two notes stepping up or down creates an interval as well as a movement. If you play the notes you have, or retune your strings to different intervals, (downwards so as not to break them) you can find the feelings within any given pair of notes. If you feel moved by this interval-feeling then exploring this feeling in a meditation can often release hidden tensions within your soul. Techniques for two note meditations are much as above, start with one note, seeking its inner variety then feel how your inner space changes as you strike the second note. Feel the space between these two and then watch in the silence as that space expands within you for as long as you can hold that silence.

Three notes can also be used both as sequence and as chord, plucked together in the same way.

The classic sequence of four notes, known to some as the Tao meditation follows the notes in the pentatonic scale B, A, E, D a falling sequence that can feel like being slipped smoothly into harmony with your physical body. If these notes are not easily available on your bowl you can use any that have the same interval structure. Choose from the pentatonic scale printed on your manual the two notes from the middle sequence, skip the next one down then use the two notes down from there also. Another way to describe this would be: Note, 1tone down, Note, 2.5tones down, Note, 1tone down, Note.