



The Sounds of Silence

by Jill Mattson

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In snow country, winter brings a season of soft, deep, and wonder-filled silence. The snow absorbs sounds, creating silence that feels juicy, thick, and almost “holy”. Think to the Christmas carol, *Silent Night*.

Yet, many find comfort with constant noise. The TV endlessly talks. Lawnmowers, traffic, and more... continually add noise. We are used to constant sound-chatter. Do we escape silence to avoid feeling alone or vulnerable? Do we hide from our

feelings and innermost thoughts? To a screaming mind, silence is unbearable, but silence has gifts for us to explore.

A Hindu Master, Sri Ganapathi Sachchidananda Swamiji, reflects that in silence, there are no quarrels. Silence lies beyond the realm of judgment. Silence is peace. True silence occurs when the mind is still. In silence, there are no questions. Creativity begins with silence. True friends communicate best in silence.

Spiritual leaders have long revered silence:

- “Silence is the altar of God.”¹
- “Be still and know that I am God.”²
- “When we go into the inner chamber and shut the door to every sound that comes from a life without, then the voice of God will speak to our soul.”³

How ironic, the deepest silence is full of a world of sounds (that we don't hear with our ears). Mystics profess that as one journey towards enlightenment, a series of subtle, internal sounds may be heard in silence. People have declared to hear in silence:

- Pounding of the surf of the sea
- Humming of bees
- Tinkling of soft bells
- The ringing of sweet bells
- Chirping of crickets
- Babbling water of a brook
- Rumbling of thunder
- The roaring of a lion
- Blowing of a conch shell
- Gong of a big drum
- Strings of a harp
- The tone of a flute
- Sound of bagpipes
- Absence of all sound⁴

¹ Paramahansa Yogananda

² Old Testament, Bible.

³ Hazrat Inayat Kan. Music of Life, Omega Publishing: New Lebanon, N.Y., 1983.

⁴ Van Dyke, Deborah. Traveling the Sacred Sound Current, Sound Current Music: Bowan Island, B.C. Canada, 2001, pg. 147.

The Bible also refers to this inner hearing: “And I heard the voice from heaven. Like the sound of many waters, like the sound of loud thunder, the voice I heard was like the sounds of harpers playing on their harps.”⁵

Focused inner listening reveals a subtle chorus of internal sounds. The ability to perceive these subtle inner sounds can be developed. How do you hear the “jewels” of silence? Focus attention on a sound that is nearby. Next, adjust your hearing to listen to a sound that is far away. Continue changing your listening focus, going back and forth. This eventually creates a high-pitched sound, similar to a ringing sound in our ears. (Tinnitus is not a common condition. Tinnitus usually results from inner ear damage. The little “sounds of silence” could be confused with tinnitus. With tinnitus, someone hears the same pitch, volume, and quality of sound all the time.)

Another way to access “silence” sounds is to plug your ears and then listen carefully to subtle internal sounds. Find whatever means works best to block out extraneous sounds, such as using earplugs or placing a pillow over the ears. Alternatively, imagine that each sound you hear can be locked in an imaginary bag that completely muffles the sound. One by one put the sound of traffic, the refrigerator, an airplane flying overhead, and so on into the sound tight bag. Let all these sounds go and then listen for the sound that comes from within yourself.

Many sit quietly in meditation for quite some time before they perceive these subtle sounds. As they focus on slight sounds, they first hear their nervous or circulatory systems, heartbeat, or other internal sounds. Internal sounds may be mechanical sounding, like a ringing in your ears, the white noise on TV or it could sound like nature, ...such as the ocean, crickets or rain. As you focus on internal sounds, they become louder. Close your eyes, and move into the sounds with your feelings. Allow the sound to come around you, like a cloak. Sound is invasive and let it in!

At first, listen, you may hear one sound, but with additional concentration notice that the tone is comprised of a multitude of softer and shorter frequencies. Just like a white light can be divided into a rainbow of frequencies, internal sounds divide into softer component pitches.

⁵ Bible. Revelations 14:2.

Over time your internal sounds morph. What begins sounding like a cricket may end up ten minutes later resembling the sound of the ocean. I went through many months that I only heard crickets, and then suddenly, my internal sounds were similar to the howling of the wind.

I loved playing with these sounds. I often replicated an internal sound, increasing the volume of my inner hearing, and this also provided me with a sense of balance. Singing an octave below the pitch grounded me, giving me a feeling of solidity and power. Humming the octave above appeared to increase my intuition and connection to spirit.

Many sages credit the proper use of sound with great wisdom. It offers profound spiritual growth and puts pilgrims on the spiritual fast-track. Below are quotes from a variety of spiritual disciplines, reflecting on the power of sound and our hearing abilities.

“My Soul counseled me to listen for voices that rise neither from the tongue nor the throat. Before that day I heard but dully, But now I have learned to listen to silence. To hear its choirs singing the songs of ages. Chanting the hymns of space, and disclosing the secrets of eternity.” (Kahlil Gibran)

“While information and knowledge, the fruits of pursuing the light, provide relative peace and spiritual progress, they pale in comparison to the higher God attributes of truth, love, wisdom and freedom and power which the awakened Sound Current imbued within the sincere seeker of truth... These attributes are enlivened by bathing in the audible LifeStream.”⁶ (Sikh Guru Nanak)

The winter sings to us in silence. These songs enhance our wonder, spiritual wisdom and abilities to listen to the still small voice and the huge world of inner sounds that we all possess within.

~ Jill Mattson | [CLICK FOR: Jill's Wings of Light](#)

⁶ Sikh Guru Nanak