

# Thoughts on Mysticism and the Voice

Bisan Toron



I often wonder at the range of emotion engendered by our relationship with our voice, from giddy delight to deep shame. Or interestingly, there might be a neutral attitude toward one's voice, or even a total removal from knowing it at all, so that one never takes the time to consciously feel its nuances, leaving that to the experts and approaching it only as a means to an end: communication, usually of a verbal kind. Perhaps something in us understands the power of our voice to bear witness, to answer the call, and perhaps most shattering of all, to call forth.

To sing "on the breath" means that voice and breath ride as one movement; the voice becomes an amplification of breath, no longer withheld from it (or from one's truth). The process of "voicing" has the potential for bridging the chasm between our inner movements and what actually comes out of the mouth as expression. The mystical dimension of sound does not lie in the finished bridge, but in the ongoing bridging – the active intent of revealing ourselves in each changing moment: an active, ongoing 'yes.' Where voice and mysticism meet is in the churning toward transparency. And toward is enough. Toward is what we are.

Providing there is the will and the listening required to do so, everyone can experience their voice as a portal into the eternal: the bare moment lived through the transparent voice. The question becomes, 'is the sound as free as it can be?' 'Whatever the tone characteristic, is it present to its fullest capacity?' 'How do I need to be to fully support physically and imaginatively this moment in sound?' One's entire presence is placed at the service of the freedom of this one tone.

And herein lies the possibility of spinning mystery around like a bath of vibration in the mouth and body. Mysticism of sound is play. Perhaps it's the sort of play that requires

years of practice, but mostly it only needs a willingness to open into the quotidian moment and to allow it to live through one's voice. One tends to the bubble of this moment through the sound gestures that pierce it.

Technique is for the support and "holding" of that moment: freeing tensions that create closure, knowing and feeling the form of a vowel before singing it (another miracle: can it be that the sound impulse begins within?) and quitting it at the height of its openness, where it can continue to thrive and dissolve into the air. It's a type of poetic dignity, this art of opening to receive an inhalation, spinning the vibration in your body, and releasing it, with a giving intention. And then there's the potential of losing track of giver and receiver.

I love the thought that "mysticism" of sound (or of anything) is not a polished concept that is outside the realm of myself, with all my wounds and incompleteness. Perhaps the mystical dimension of sound arises in the authentic utterance of a moment that thrives on the understanding of things as unfinished: the shape of the sound morphing as each becoming moment.

What I find astoundingly beautiful is that the potential miracle of sound springs from the decision to abundantly feel in oneself an impulse and the desire to make oneself known. This is what makes a sound resonate in undeniable clarity: one sees the sound. And then the sound somehow sees itself.