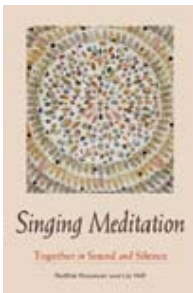


Music as Meditation

A trio of practical guides for combining sound with silence

by Lisa Dembkowski



Review of *Singing Meditation: Together in Sound and Silence* by Ruthie Rosauer and Liz Hill
Skinner House Books, 97 pages, \$12.00



plus a companion songbook, *Let Joy Fill Your Heart: Songs for Singing Meditation, Volume 1* Ed. by Helen Gierke and Ruthie Rosauer
www.singingmeditation.com, 66 pages, \$15.00



and a companion CD, *Ephemerata: Songs for Singing Meditation*
www.singingmeditation.com, 14 cuts, \$15.00

For those looking to enhance spiritual growth, the beauties of sound and silence are brought together in a new practice called singing meditation. In their book, *Singing Meditation: Together in Sound and Silence*, Ruthie Rosauer and Liz Hill describe the origin, scope, and implementation of singing meditation.

Also available is a supplemental songbook, *Let Joy Fill Your Heart: Songs for Singing Meditation*, edited by Rosauer and Dr. Helen Gierke, minister of music at First Congregational Church of Cape Coral, Fla.; and a music CD, *Ephemerata: Songs for Singing Meditation*, with 14 songs to illustrate the simplicity and the beauty of meditative singing.

In their book, Rosauer and Hill explain the traditions from which the practice of singing meditation has emerged and supply the reader with practical information and tools for launching a singing meditation group in the local church or community.

Sound and silence have been used as meditative tools throughout history, and nearly every faith community incorporates one or both of these methods to achieve a closer encounter with the Divine. Singing meditation joins sound with silence in the hope that participants will experience a heightened level of inspiration and fulfillment.

Rosauer and Hill recommend particular songs and chants for use in singing meditation. The music is simple and can be learned easily by both experienced and inexperienced singers. The authors write that “singing meditation helps people reclaim their singing voices by encouraging singers of all abilities to dive into the river of sound and trust in the community of voices for support.”

Songs included in the book represent Christian, Jewish, and Hindu traditions, and the method is well-suited for an interfaith gathering. The supplemental songbook by Gierke and Rosauer also includes songs from a variety of categories, including Eastern religions, earth-centered, interfaith, and non-traditional music, with helpful notes about the songs.

At each session, singing is interspersed with periods of silence lasting from two to five minutes. Although the singing component brings great enjoyment, Rosauer and Hill caution against moving through the periods of silence too quickly. The quiet periods, they say, are “an invitation to follow your heart into the empty spaces. Don’t get caught up on technique. Just be still.”

Helpful to those considering starting a singing meditation group is the CD, *Ephemerata: Songs for Singing Meditation*. Additional instruction, and information about scheduling workshops, is available at www.singingmeditation.com.

In its fullest form, singing meditation gathers people from a variety of faith traditions for support, contemplation, and spiritual growth. Rosauer, Hill, and Gierke have created resources to assist those wishing to explore and implement this new type of ministry.



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