

That has been some silence. But have we really been silent? We were not talking, no one made a sound, and scientifically silence is the absence of sound, or relatively very low vibrations of sound. So, were we really silent? Superficially, yes, but when we look at that silence more closely, we realize that there was a lot going on in and outside us, so much so that what we have just experienced as silence was not silence in a deep sense. So what was going on? What is the purpose of noise on the outside?

Maybe, in our minds, we traveled home to attend to some chore, or maybe we even traveled great distances to the other side of this earth. Looking into someone's eyes immediately starts a conversation, talking without making a sound. Is that what silence is?

Silence can at times be more disturbing than noise, probably even irritating or scary, because it reveals the complicated mechanisms of our thought patterns. Only through silence are we able to realize how our mind jumps from one thought to another, not being able to settle on one thought for a long period of time. That jumping about reveals the restlessness of the mind. It brings to surface our weakness in concentration. Therefore silence is a good thing because it is the great gate through which we are able to see our true behavior of mind, and thereby to hold the mind still so that it's able to dwell on one thought for a longer while, whatever other thoughts may arise. Mental stillness gives us power because, when we are able to dwell on one thought for a long time, then we are able to understand completely the subject of that thought, thoroughly covering the subject of the thought and thereby mastering it. This is the quality of concentration.

Fear of silence results when the mind gives rise to fearful thoughts brought about by uncertainty or unfamiliarity with silence. Basically, that is fear of the unknown. But silence is the source from which everything springs forth, the beginning of existence and awareness.

Most people today suffer unconsciously from a fear of silence, common symptoms of which are the following: when someone enters a house, immediately switching on a TV or radio; humming or singing when alone; or if young people lose their ear phones, having a mild panic attack — so grave is this disorder that they will spend all the money they left to buy a new pair of earphones. Another symptom is feeling so uneasy in a crowd of people that