

## Ayurveda

Ayurveda promotes the use of specific sounds and mantras to transform, balance and heal particular parts of the body, the subtle body and the mind. Sound therapy is utilized primarily for the mano vaha srotas (the channels of the mind) that govern the function of the brain, nervous system and chakras. We receive neurological impulses from the senses that spark feelings, thoughts and emotions through the movement of prana – the life force, the flow of communication between the cells. Since these impulses come to us through time and space, there is the possibility that they may actually distort the truth of what we are experiencing into a manifestation of our past memories, judgments and misperceptions. However, if we bring awareness into the experience with a balanced body, the light of consciousness will allow us to see present circumstances as they truly exist, with clarity and freshness. Immunity is a good example of clear communication between prana, cell and mind.

In Ayurveda, the mind is comprised of the five elements (ether, air, fire, water, earth) and their subtle expressions: sattva (clarity); rajas (activity) and tamas (inertia). Each individual possesses his or her own dosha – or constitution – (vata, pitta, kapha). Vata is composed of ether and air and is more rajasic and less sattvic. Pitta is fire and water, with the potential for more sattva and less rajas. Kapha is water and earth, and is more tamasic, less sattvic.

Unique tones, sounds and vibrations are prescribed to transform discord into harmony based on these qualities of the mind and the elements of the body in need of balancing. Sound consists of ether, which contains the properties of all five elements. Mantras used to balance the different doshas will possess the same qualities required to harmonize the qualities of the particular dosha. Vata is primarily cold, active and sensitive, and those with this dosha will benefit from sounds that are warming, calming, gently rhythmic and soothing. Pitta's qualities of hot, sharp and intense will be harmonized by cooling, beautifully rhythmic and compassionate sounds. Kapha, which is cool, dull and sluggish, will balance with warming, stimulating, fast rhythm and uplifting sounds.

Through prana and vibration, the physical body and mind are connected to the chakra system. Unresolved thought and emotion crystallize, stagnate the pranic flow of intelligence to the chakras, which in turn affect their correlating bodily centers. For instance, if constant vibrations of hate, anger and judgment are attacking the heart, then the anahata heart chakra becomes depleted and depressed. This condition affects the cardiac plexus and may lead to heartache and heart disease. Remedies through sound for the heart chakra and the physical heart are vibrations of love and compassion. Potent bija (seed) mantras associated with each chakra may also be used. The bija 'Yam' when chanted with love and focused on the heart center, will remove the blockages, dissolve the emotional crystallization and support a happy, healthy heart.

The correlation between the chakras, the physical body and the mantras used to bring them back into balance are as follows:

- 1st - Root (Lam)
- 2nd – Sacral (Vam)
- 3rd - Solar Plexus (Ram)
- 4th - Heart (Yam)
- 5th - Throat (Ham)
- 6th - 3rd Eye (Om)
- 7th - Crown (Om/Silence)

## Nada Yoga

In the *Vedic* tradition, sound vibration is known as *Nada*. In the practice of *Nada* Yoga, sound is used not only to restore physical and mental well-being but also as a path to spiritual awakening. *Nada* Yoga divides sound into external sounds, *Ahata*, and internal sounds, *Anahata*.

**External sounds** are perceived through the ears and *Nada* Yoga can be as simple as listening to non-vocal music while gently focusing on the individual notes. You can listen to the different notes within the music of nature; birds singing, rain falling, or the wind through the trees. Or you can chant sacred mantras such as OM or SO HUM (I am), with the focus on each individual letter. The aim is to allow awareness to move inwards.

**Internal sounds** are perceived through the *Anahata* (heart) chakra. Each human body has its own unique sound or vibration, which is sacred to that individual. By regulating the breath, with the attention turned inwards, and closing the ears with the fingers, you can begin to listen in on your own inner sound. Re-aligning with this sound serves to balance your energetic body and ultimately re-connect you with your divine presence. With practice, you can also learn to hear the vibration of the universe, a soft distant OM, sometimes referred to as the Cosmic Hum. Through *Nada* Yoga, it is said that you can remove all impurities in the physiology. It starts with awakening the inner fire through the use of *Bhramari Pranayama* (humming bee breath).

## Humming Bee Breath

- Sit comfortably with your spine erect and close your eyes.

- Close your ears with either your index or middle fingers, or thumbs with fingers placed wide on face.
- Lightly press your lips together and slightly open your teeth.
- Bring the inner gaze into the *Ajna* (sixth) chakra.
- Breathe in through your nose.
- As you exhale, make a smooth, even, humming sound, like the sound of a bumblebee.
- Continue for 3 to 5 minutes feeling the vibration throughout the body.

## Chanting

Chanting has been used in all cultures for thousands of years to uplift the spirit and activate certain archetypal energies within the self. As you think, so you become. Mantras help to keep the mind steady so it can then produce the proper effects.

Choose a simple repetitive chant, one that you can learn easily so you're not always trying to remember it. It can be from any tradition but it should be one you feel comfortable with. Don't worry if you don't understand the meaning completely. First you repeat, and then the effects and meaning comes after.

### Chant OM (A-U-M)

1. Take a deep breath in.
2. As you exhale, chant the sound OM.
3. Feel the "Aaa" sound in your belly, "Uuu" in your chest area, and "Mmm" in your head
4. When you run out of breath, breathe in and repeat the chant.
5. Continue at your own pace for 2 to 3 minutes.

When you chant, you raise the vibration of the whole physiology. Whenever you chant, chant fully. Open your heart, open your throat, chant with your whole body; lose yourself to the chant. Ultimately you are chanting to our own soul—the divinity within you. Rumi said, "I want to sing like the birds, not caring who listens or what they think." This is how you should chant.

## Toning

As everything in the universe is sound or vibration, a disharmony in one of those sounds or a break in the unfolding of the sequence of sounds, leads to discomfort, disease, and a loss of wholeness. For example, if one musician in an orchestra is playing off-key, there is a loss of harmony in the whole piece of music. You can correct that by having a second musician stand next to the first one and play the correct notes. Just by hearing the correct notes, the first musician will automatically begin playing correctly.

Similarly, if there is a disharmony in your physiology, and you know the correct vibration for that area, you can begin to correct the imbalance by chanting or toning that sound. For example, if you have a problem with your eyes, and you know the sound relating to the eyes, you can activate the healing process for that area by chanting that sound (silently or aloud) and directing the vibration into the area of the eyes.

Mantras are the manifestation of the ultimate Spirit. It is said that they are mantra devata, Matrika, the Mother of all, whose substance is the letters and their vibrations. They must be respected, pronounced properly, used with pure intention and utmost care. They are described in a scripture as “words that do not cause distress, truthful, agreeable and salutary.”

Therapeutically, using the qualities of vibrations through sound, instruments and mantras absorb the mind’s incessant thought waves that disrupt a state of silence and peace, increase intelligent communication between the cells and assist one in awakening in the awareness of truth, consciousness and bliss.

### Examples of Toning Sounds for the Body

Mmm	sinuses
Nnn	ears
Eemm	eyes
Lmm	nose
Paam	stomach
Kaa Gaa Gha	throat
Yaa Yu Yi	jaw
Haa	diaphragm
Mam	reproductive organs
Ma	heart
Sssss	Lungs and large intestine
Shhh	Liver and small intestine

Wooo	Kidneys and bladder
UU-AH-EE-MM	Energizing, wakeup
MM-EE-AH-UU	Relaxing, bedtime