

Naad Yoga - The Yoga of Sound

Ancient scriptures say that the ability to hear is the most powerful of all the five senses. In the cycle of birth and death, it is the first one to appear and the last one to disappear. Naad Yoga uses sound, tone, rhythm, singing and listening in order to awaken the consciousness.

Any time we speak, chant or make a sound, we start a new vibration. To create vibrations that elevate is the goal of Naad Yoga.

Chanting is an easy tool because you can chant anywhere, out loud or silently and change your state of being. When we chant sacred mantras our tongue touches the roof of the mouth in a very specific manner. This creates a chain reaction resulting in changes in the brain. When the chemistry of the brain is balanced our state of mind and outlook on life improves dramatically.

Everything has a particular vibratory frequency. Every thought, every word and every emotion we have defines our vibration. We create our world based upon that vibration. Sound is an incredibly powerful vibration. By utilising mantra, we can create vibrations that have a positive effect on our lives.

Mantras are specific sound syllables that create healing vibrations. Mantra allow us to tune in to different levels of consciousness. This is the Science of Naad Yoga. Naad is the essence of all sound. It is a basis for all languages. All languages comes from one common source or sound current.

The science of Naad Yoga works through the movement of the tongue in the mouth. There are 84 meridian points located in the roof of the mouth. The movement of the tongue stimulates these meridian points and therefore stimulates the secretion of chemical messengers.

We alter our consciousness by changing the chemical composition of the brain. In the science of Naad, there are three key elements that enhance the experience. Rhythm, projection and pronunciation. Maintaining a precise rhythm of the mantra as well as maintaining the correct number of beats with the mantra is crucial to its effectiveness. For example, many mantras are chanted in eight beats.

Any mantra chanted with eight beats is called an Ashtang Mantra. When you chant, you connect with the purity of your soul. Proper pronunciation ensures that you are using the correct pressure on the meridian points.

Mantras vibrate the tiny Quantum particles that act as blueprints for constructing larger energy patterns. A Bija Mantra is a seed mantra. That is planted in the subconscious. 'Sat Nam' is a Bija Mantra. This "quantum mantra" cuts through the ego and helps you experience your true nature.

'Sat Nam' is a very special sound a primal sound. Each primal sound is created in a particular part of the mouth. When we form a word and we speak it, we utilise the 84 meridian points on the roof of the mouth to stimulate the hypothalamus to change the chemistry of the brain.

Not every combination of sounds or words will create patterns of healing or wholeness. Chanting 'Sat Nam' creates patterns that are a perfect weave of rhythm, sound, tone, focus and meaning that act as DNA information for the spirit. These are sounds that align us with our soul.

In yogic philosophy there are said to be 72,000 nadis (energy channels) flowing through our body. They form our subtle nervous system. Mantra works on these subtle energies. Mantra directs the flow of 'prana' to wherever it is needed in the body.

Swami Mayatitananda says, "The 72,000 nadis or channels that exist in the body are all sensitive to sound, and function through vibrations".

He says, "Good sounds increase the vitality of these nadis. Pranas that flow through them also become more charged with vigour. When the pranas are healthy and filled with vitality, they stimulate healthy tissue and organ activity. Vital prana and harmonious sound work together hand in hand. They travel through the mind like a great wave, revitalising the brain cells and inspiring the mind to produce clear, fluent, harmonious thoughts."

Yogi Bhajan says, "The tongue stimulates those meridian points, and they in turn stimulate the hypothalamus which makes the pineal gland radiate. When the pineal gland radiates, it creates an impulse, the entire glandular system secretes and a human being attains bliss".

Russill Paul says, "The ear is the first organ to develop in the foetus and the last organ to stop functioning during the process of death,"

He says, "The difference between a poorly pronounced mantra and a correctly pronounced one is comparable to the difference between a movie and real life: the former can only simulate an effect; the latter is the real thing," "Sanskrit, because of its complex consonants, stimulates an enormous quantity of energy in the body and in the spiritual nervous system."

Dr Dharma Singh Khalsa

Dr Dharma Singh Khalsa is a graduate of Creighton University School of Medicine in Omaha, Nebraska. He is also a graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles Medical Acupuncture for Physicians Program and has studied mind/body medicine at Harvard Medical School's Mind/Body Medical Institute.

In 1978, he started practicing Kundalini Yoga with Yogi Bhajan, and in 1981 embraced the Sikh lifestyle replete with full beard and turban.

Dr Khalsa grew up with asthma. An uncle, an esteemed cardiologist, prescribed a series of breathing exercises for him which helped immensely. Even so, his lungs remained weak, and he was prone to bronchitis and even bronchial spasm in his early adulthood. When, however, he began to practice Kundalin Yoga with a strong focus on breathing exercises, his vulnerability to lung problems ended.

Dr. Khalsa spearheaded a research study of SPECT Scans Before and After Kirtan Kriya on healthy subjects, in conjunction with the Amen Clinic (ICI, Irvine, California). The subjects showed a dramatic improvement in their brain's function after performing the practice. One of the most dramatic results was an increase in positive activity in their frontal lobes, signifying an increase in their ability to pay attention, focus, and concentrate.

Dr Khalsa also took part in a study on Kirtan Kriya and SPECT Scans in Subjects with Memory Loss. This study, which was completed in 2008, showed that memory loss was reversed and well-being enhanced by the Kirtan Kriya meditation practice.

Dr. Khalsa recently took part in a similar study at the University of Pennsylvania, published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease (Volume 20:2. April 2010).

Dr Dharma Singh Khalsa says, “Yogic mantras stimulate the secretions of the pituitary gland, which is located only millimetres from the palate. These secretions strengthen our immune and neurological systems, protecting us from disease and negative emotions”.

He says that chanting has been found to reduce the production of stress hormones and increase the production of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers.

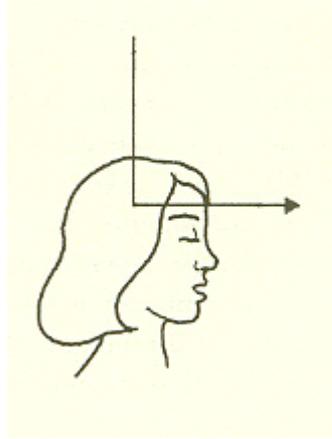
Dr Khalsa says, “The sounds produced by the meditations have certain correlation to acupuncture. There are 84 meridians points in the roof of the mouth which are touched by the tongue and vibrated by the sounds. Certain permutations send signals to the command centres of the brain — the hypothalamus, and the pituitary, primarily, and also to the pineal gland. These centres can then orchestrate a healing response and send out packets of information in the form of neurotransmitters and chemicals, in the brain and throughout the body”.

When we chant we stimulate the energy centres of the mouth (64 in the hard palate and 20 in the soft palate) with the tongue.

Chanting calms the mind and the emotions and has an effect on the body. Chanting a mantra can slow the heart beat and calms the nervous system. According to Dr Khalsa, chanting mantras stimulates the vagus nerve, situated near the jaw that services the heart, lungs, intestinal tract, and back muscles.

Kirtan Kriya

Kirtan Kriya (pron. Keertun Kreea) is a type of meditation from the Kundalini yoga tradition, which has been practiced for thousands of years. This meditation involves chanting the sounds, Saa Taa Naa Maa along with repetitive finger movements, or mudras. This non-religious practice can be adapted to several lengths, but practicing it for just 12 minutes a day has been shown to reduce stress levels and increase activity in areas of the brain that are central to memory.



In Sanskrit, a kirtan is a song, and kriya refers to a specific set of movements. Kriyas are used to help bring the body, mind and emotions into balance to enable healing.

The mantra ‘Sat Nam’ that is repeated while practising Kirtan Kriya -

Saa means birth or infinity

Taa means life

Naa means death or completion

Maa means rebirth

It is believed that the placement of the tongue on the roof of the mouth while making these sounds stimulates 84 acupuncture points on the upper palate. This causes a beneficial bio-chemical transformation in the brain. In addition, Western research has revealed that utilising the fingertip position in conjunction with the sounds enhances blood flow to particular areas in the motor-sensory part of the brain.

Clinical research has shown that practising Kirtan Kriya for just 12 minutes a day can improve cognition and activate parts of the brain that are central to memory. The Alzheimer's Research and Prevention Foundation believes that the various parts of Kirtan Kriya are each vital to the whole, and recommends practising it in the traditional way to fully reap the benefits of the exercise.

How do you practice Kirtan Kriya?

Repeat the ‘Saa Taa Naa Maa’ mantra while sitting with your spine straight. Your focus of concentration is the L form (see illustration at right), while your eyes are closed. With each syllable, imagine the sound flowing in through the top of your head and out the middle of your forehead (your third eye point).

When chanting ‘Saa Taa Naa Maa’ the tongue touches the roof of the mouth behind the upper teeth.

For two minutes, chant in your normal voice.

For the next two minutes, chant in a whisper.

For the next four minutes, say the sound silently to yourself.

Then reverse the order, whispering for two minutes, and then out loud for two minutes, for a total of twelve minutes.

To come out of the exercise, inhale very deeply, stretch your hands above your head, and then bring them down slowly in a sweeping motion as you exhale. The mudras, or finger positions, are very important in this kriya (see illustration below).



On Saa, touch the index fingers of each hand to your thumbs.
On Taa, touch your middle fingers to your thumbs.
On Naa, touch your ring fingers to your thumbs.
On Maa, touch your little fingers to your thumbs.

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