

The Healing Power of Silence by Simon Heather

Inner Sound

All sounds arise from silence. Through chant and meditation we can follow the sound back to its source, silence. At this point the small self merges into the greater self and all fears and worries disappear. If we can be inwardly quiet enough we will become aware of a faint sound that can be heard deep inside the ears and head. This sound is normally concealed by the noise of our incessant mental chatter and external sounds.

This is the mystical sound, sometimes called Primordial Sound. This sound has an uninterrupted continuity about it, a crystal-like vibration that resembles the noise of the ocean with many other high frequency sounds superimposed on it. The more one listens to this sound the louder it will become. We have to be very finely tuned to hear this subtle, ever changing sound.

In the Vedas this sound is called 'Nada' which means 'inner sound' or 'the voice in the silence'. In Nada Yoga, the yoga of sound, the student is encouraged to listen to this sound continuously.

Sat Chit Ananda

The silence at the end of sounding OM is called 'amatra,' which is pure consciousness or Atman. It is the point where we merge with the infinite essence of God. When the chant stops there is absolute silence. At this point the sound of OM continues even though the chanting has stopped.

Through the chanting of a mantra such as OM we can experience the state that is called, 'Sat', 'Chit' 'Ananda,' which means, Truth, Consciousness, Bliss. When our true nature is realised, there is an experience that 'we' exist in everything, there is no feeling of separation, and then a feeling of bliss arises. This is the final stage of meditation when the meditator becomes one with the sound. At this point the mind has become silent. This state is called 'Self Realisation'.

Ramana Maharshi the great Indian Saint said, "When a man knows his true Self for the first time, something else arises from the depths of his being and takes possession of him. That something is behind the mind; it is infinite, divine, and eternal. Some people call it the Kingdom of Heaven, others call it Nirvana, and Hindus call it Liberation; You may give it what name you wish. When this happens a man has not really lost himself; rather he has found Himself." (Swami, N., 1997 - p241).

Paul Brunton

Paul Brunton first visited India in 1930 in a quest to find the truth behind all life. His journey culminated in the publication of the book 'A Search for the Secret India' which appeared in 1934. This book introduced a Western audience to Ramana Maharshi.

Brunton describes his first meeting with Maharshi, whom he found sitting in his usual, calm manner, surrounded by his devotees. Brunton became aware of a silent change taking place in his mind. A great peace penetrated the inner reaches of his being. Suddenly he realised that the intellect created its own problems and then made itself miserable trying to solve them.

He thought, "Does this man, Maharshi, emanate the perfume of spiritual peace as the flower emanates fragrance from its petals?"

Brunton says, "Finally it happens. Thought is extinguished like a snuffed candle. The intellect withdraws into its true ground, that is Consciousness unhindered by thoughts. The brain has passed into a state of complete suspension, as it does in deep sleep, yet there is not the slightest loss of consciousness. I remain perfectly calm and fully aware of who I am and what is occurring. The self still exists, but it is a changed radiant Self." (Swami, N. 1997, p241-251)

Sages

The sages of ancient India say that by constantly speaking we use up our life force energy. They say that a day's silence means a week longer of life and a day's speech means a week less of life. Silence is the remedy for many problems, however a person living in the world cannot practice it continually. We should be aware of our speech and remember that every word we speak can create either joy or suffering.

In India in ancient times there were mystics called Muni. They never spoke. It is said that these mystics lived much longer than we live at the present time; three hundred years or more.

By not speaking the breath is not interrupted; it remains regular and even. The mystics have always given great importance to the breath. Those who have mastered the breath have mastery over their lives; those who have not mastered it are liable to all kinds of disease.

In the present age we have become so fond of speaking that when we are alone in the house we switch on the radio or TV or call our friends.

Silence is the relaxation of mind and body; it is restful and healing. The power of silence is very great, not only for the preservation of energy and vitality, but also morally.

Nowadays activity has increased so much that from morning till evening there is never any rest. Every person should have at least an hour a day in which to be quiet and still.

After the silence of speech comes the silence of thought. Sometimes a person is sitting still without speaking, but all the time their thoughts are jumping up and down. The mind may not want the thoughts, but they come all the same.

To still the voice is easy, but to still the mind is much harder. This is why the great sages suggested that we use sound for meditation. Using sound keeps the mind focused until it becomes still.

Fabien Maman

Fabien Maman said that while playing in Japan he began to enjoy the silence at the end of each piece of music. Since the audience did not clap at the end of each piece of music the silence allowed the musicians and the audience to savour the affects of the music.

"That night in Tokyo I experienced the eloquence of silence after music and understood even more clearly that silence is not devoid of sound at all. Rather, silence is full of music." (Maman, F. -1997)

He realised that in a normal performance when the audience claps it dissipates the positive effects of the music.

The Power of Silence in Sound Healing

Silence is an essential part of any sound healing session. The sound created by the sound healer guides the person into the silence where healing takes place. When the person goes into the silence their mind becomes quiet and the body's natural healing mechanism is activated.

When the mind is busy all the time the body can't get enough energy to heal itself. Even when a person is asleep they have busy dreams and may wake feeling exhausted.

Silence helps the person to go within and hear their inner voice. Most of the time our inner wisdom is drowned out by the chattering mind. Most people project all of their energy out of their body into the world so much so that they loose touch with the body's inner wisdom.

Symptoms like tiredness and pain can often be the body's way of trying to get our attention. The body is saying, "listen to me. I have something to tell you". Every symptom that we have is part of a bigger picture. In the silence it is possible for the person to see how they can heal themselves, since all healing comes from within.

Jill

I was treating a woman called Jill who came to see me with a cyst in her uterus. She had wanted to get pregnant but was unable to do so. She didn't know if she should have an operation or treat the cyst with natural methods.

In the healing session she went into the silence where she realised that the cyst was caused by childhood fear and her relationship to her mother. She saw that the cyst was a manifestation of her fear of becoming a woman.

The cyst was telling her that she need to let go of her fear and embrace her female power. After the healing she realised that the cyst was not her enemy any more.

Julia Shaffer – Feedback from Sound Healing Training

"To receive a sound healing was a wonderful gift and opportunity to deepen my own personal healing process. It was the first time I have ever experienced a pure sound healing. I found the two healing sessions I received were very different but they both illustrated to me the power of sound and the deep healing properties that are within the sound."

"I found the healing sessions were very relaxing and although I was listening to the tones it seemed to be that I was able to access a much deeper part within where the sound was almost secondary. I found the sound was absorbed within the body without always the ears having to listen, the sound is felt much deeper within the body's energy field than the physical level."

"The periods of silence were an amazing opportunity to allow a sense of stillness and deep relaxation within the body. I felt the silence with my whole body; it was much more than experiencing just the 'sound of silence'. The silence was the quietest I have memories of for a very long time, it was a deeply felt sense within the whole body. I could feel myself willing it to last for a long time."

"I found the silence was a very important part of the healing to experience as a therapist as it can be difficult as the 'giver' to just sit and hold the silence for another person. I would normally feel that I was not doing enough by just sitting in the silence but as a Buddhist would say inaction is action. Whilst giving a sound healing I found the silence was a meditative opportunity and allowed me to hold the energetic space for the receiver. This is a really lovely gift to be able offer another person but also a gift to oneself."

Conclusion

All sounds arise out of silence and return back to it. Most of the time we are unaware of the silence because our minds are too busy. Silence is like the empty space that is around us in the room, most of the time we don't notice it.

Sacred mantras can be used to help us experience the power of silence by stilling our mind. Sound healing allows us to experience the power of silence. It helps us to connect to our inner self and find healing and inner peace.

Maman, F (1997) - The Role of Music in the 21st Century, Redendo Beach, Calif: Tama-Do Press

Swami, N (1997) - Self Realisation, Tirunnamalai: V.S. Ramanan