

Importance of Naad yoga for reducing the stress

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Abstract

In the 21st century industrial revolution takes place tremendously and because of this the human lifestyle is widely changed. This has also increased stress during this period and has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 epidemic. Humans are using various natural measures to relieve this daily stress from day to day life. One of the important practices is Naad Yoga, an elixir used to relieve stress for a long time in India. Naad Yoga technique used to relax your body and mind; one should change their behavior and thoughts. The Naad Yoga is the method by concentrating on one object, where object is 'Naad', so when we practice Naad yoga, we should completely get into that situation and experience the whole world into that particular sound. The benefits of practicing the Naad Yoga is that you can experience the silence, peace and calming effect after completing your practice and increase your spiritual capacity of understanding the materialistic things in a true sense by reducing the stress. This review gives brief idea about Naad Yoga, its history, practice methods, and its benefits in current Covid-19 stressful pandemic situations.

Key Words: Naad Yoga, Yoga, music, Classical music, Mental stress, Covid-19

Research Paper

Introduction

In today's stressful life, we often endure everything without saying anything. The sounds of those things are constantly revolving in the mind. We don't think about that voice (Naad) in our mind. We have to deal with a lot of wrong things, because of the voice, that is not noticed. To recognise and focus on the body and on that sound, we should understand that 'what is Naad?', 'what is yoga?', 'why it is important?', and 'the importance of Naad yoga in our life'.

The below verse (Sholka) is written in Sanskrit language.

नकारंप्राणमानानंदकारमनलंविदुः ।

जातःप्राणाग्निंसंयोगाल्तेन

नादः अभिधीयते^[1]

The meaning of above Shloka :- 'Nakara' (नकार) is referred to air (वायू) and 'Dakara' (दकार) is referred to

fire (अग्नी). By the aggregation of Air and Fire, sound or Naad is produced. According to Sanskrit literature if we break the word 'Naad' the 'Naad' means sea of consciousness and 'da' means force. Naad is called as 'Movement of energy', the sound which we can understand and experience, is Naad. It consists of various sound vibrations. These all vibrations and sounds are influencing our behaviour, thoughts, state of body-mind and overall personality. When we are stressed or depressed, we cannot bear heavy sound vibrations, loud music etc. At that time, we need to be silent, calm and in a peaceful state of mind. Hence, the silent music, soothing talks with a special person can be helpful in that situation. The reason for this is the vibrations, which we receive from surrounding environment and affects on our body parts including mind. The different types of sound (Naad) is explained below.

Swar and Kolahala

Sangeet-Ratnakara it is musicological text written by Sarngadeva in Sanskrit language during the 13th century. According to Sangeet-Ratnakara there are 2 types of sound, the first is 'Swar' and another is 'Kolahala'. Swar is the Naad which is soothing and makes our body calm. It creates peace within the body and mind hence it is also sometime called as 'hygienic sound'. It gives the experience of stability, steadiness and you feel comfortable in the Naad of swar. It is also used in the music, in mantra chanting, japa, psalms etc. because when swar (musical notes) is produced, positive vibrations are produced, our emotions are attached to that sound vibrations. Kolahala is the Naad, which basically a loud sound and it creates negative impact on our body and mind. It disturbs our behaviour, thoughts and sometimes routine. For example, if there is a quarrel in a very loud voice, then the sound of that quarrel worsens the whole physical and mental condition. The voice which not supports the balance of physical and mental state, that voice is Kolahala. We can sometime call it as 'unhygienic sound' as it makes you feel uncomfortable, unstable, unsteady and sometimes angry.^[2]

Aahat and Anahat

Aahat Naad is the sound which is produced by the friction of any two or more objects. This Naad is clearly heard by our ears and produced by a specific reason. For example, sound produced by our speech, honking of vehicles, cooking sound, sound of air-water- fire, music, etc.

The Anahat Naad is produced without any friction. The earlier sages were worshipping Anahat Naad. The ancient sages, who had merged their minds in this huge sea of unexpressed Consciousness, they realised that the universe is a vibrational play of different waves with different wavelengths. By the intuitional powers, they came to understand a subtle science of sound that affects the rhythms of creation – without any mechanical apparatus. The mind, in the process of being attracted towards the sound vibrations, loses the awareness of the external materialistic world. For example, when we close our both ears, then the sound which we hear, that is Anahat Naad. The Anahat Naad do not have any relation with the music. This sound is considered as a saviour.

There are 3 main Swaras i.e Udatta, Anudatta and Swarita. We are using only 3 notes of music from all the 12 Swaras (Base-Lower-Higher) with a permutation-combination of that 3 swaras. The frequencies of these

3 Swaras, are interlocking into each other and that frequencies forces on our brain wave to slows down and become stable, steady and calm. The permutation-combination and vibrations which are created by these 3 swaras are beneficial to activate our mind and calms the thoughts process in a positive way. When you go in a repetitive manner, which is called as 'japa' that is a technology or a science. When you chant for a longer time with focus and full concentration, you can experience the unconsciousness of physical, mental and spiritual body. At that time, you are not even aware that you are chanting. The whole process becomes 'conscious to unconsciousness'. Your voice is chanting but body and mind are not aware that you are chanting. You go into a different transe (in a 'theta' state of brain. When theta waves are active, you are in a healing state). You are beyond from any outer sensory modes. When you concentrate on your internal world, you go in a deep meditative mode. You can experience the power of that divine supreme soul, the God!^[3]

According to 'Patanjal Yoga Sutra' which is written by Maharshi Patanjali,

“ईश्वरप्रनिधानाद्वा।” (पा.यो.सु. १.२३)

'Ishwarpraidhana' is one of the ways to connect with the divine power and achieve the main goal of life, i.e. Samadhi'.

“तस्यवाचकःप्रणवः।” (पा.यो.सु.१.२७)

Aum/Om (ॐ) chanting is one of the ways to remain in that deep consciousness, which creates positive thoughts, positive energy vibrations and also helps to be with your inside world, within yourself (soul). 'Aum sound' depends on 'how deep you breathe, the vibrations go deep inside and connect with your 7 main body chakras. It helps to collect the energy and pass it in an upper direction (towards the Sahastrar chakra). Firstly, we have to create a sound of Aum and make the energy flow in the upward direction and as you increase your practice with deep consciousness and consistency, you go inside-within your body-mind and then after, you will just recognize the sound without creating it with your body (only just think that you are chanting) and the energy flow goes upwards.

There is a universe outside our body and also one universe inside our body. We don't even recognize the inner universe. Everybody is a hologram of universe. So, if day and night exists outside, it exists within you. Your body also has a fixed routine like a nature. When you realize the routine of your body, you will find the exact

moto or goal of living. Hence, by the Sadhana of Aum and yoga, you can experience the world within you. After realizing some of the things within you, you slowly and steadily become unaffected by the materialistic world. There is no any effect of materialistic life on your body, mind, behaviour, thoughts, etc. [4-5]

Process of Naad Yoga

There are some objects of Naad, which we use to do the whole process of Naad yoga. We have 'Voice', the physical and mental voice affects on our behaviour and thought process. Hence, we have to control that Naad to achieve stability of body and mind. We have 'Breath', our breathing decides our state of mind. If we are aggressive, stressed, in an anger state of mind, then automatically our breathing rate becomes faster and unstable. But opposite to that, when we are silent, positive and in a good-peaceful state of mind, our breathing changes to simple-silent and slow-steady. At the time of Pranayama, we are consciously controlling our breathing hence automatically we are controlling our thoughts. Hence, achieving the control on breathing is most important thing at the initial stage of practice. [6]

A system, which involves the control and relaxation of body and mind is called as Yoga. The root word of yoga is 'Yuj' which means 'to unite'. Yoga is a traditional, individual science which includes 8 different limbs that can help to achieve the final, special goal i.e., liberation. (यम, नियम, आसन, प्राणायाम, प्रत्याहार, धारणा, ध्यान, समाधि).

In 'Patanjal yoga sutra', 'Maharshipatanjali' says that,

“योगःचित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः” (पा. यो.सु. १.२)

and

“तदाद्रष्टृस्वरूपेवस्थानम्” (पा. यो. सु. १.३) [7]

It means that Chitta is body, mind and intellect (Buddhi) and Nirodha means to control. Yoga controls and repairs the behaviour of body, mind and intellect. Also, by practicing yoga, we can experience the Drashta or Purush in his pure and true state. The realization of real soul in one's self is important to know and then to understand the qualities of that true and pure soul and accordingly continue your true practice i.e., Sadhana for Samadhi.

When we unite both the scientific concepts of Naad and Yoga, the new true form of science is developed, we call it as "Naad yoga". The metaphysical and philosophical system of healing or a form of therapy which is completely based on the sound vibrations and yoga meditation is called as Naad yoga. (Yoga of Sound).

By the spirituality of Indian classical music, we can control behaviour and thoughts, because the breathing is controlled. The Naad or shabda can influence the energy of all the seven main chakras in our body. Both the audible and inaudible sound, i.e. aahat and anahat Naad, has its own effect on our body, mind and spirit. This means that all forms of earthly music, the sounds of space, and even the entire electromagnetic spectrum of frequencies are included within this range of perception. Hence in modern medicine of surgery practices, some special vibrations and frequencies are used as a therapy to some diseases. We receive the audible sound through the vibrations and sound waves. Our body receives that sound through ear. Inside the ear, there is no any oxygen or air. When sound reaches to the ear, earbud gets vibrated and that vibrated sound is converted into electrical impulses. Brain converts it into electrical impulses because there is no air or oxygen in the brain and sound waves cannot travel without air or oxygen in ear. Hence, they are converted from sound vibrations to the electrical impulses. The electrical impulses are carried out by the auditory nerves to the brain and then the brain receive the sound.

Brain has the capacity to record the sound. That recorded sound gets saved into our memory (Smriti). That memory is helpful for you, to handle any future situation by applying the knowledge of that true memory. Memory is stored in a chemical form (atoms and molecules). Naad is not only, which we can hear though our ears, it can be any vibration, which is audible or inaudible. Touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing, these all are Naad. Naad not only affects us, but it becomes and develops us (we are what we touch, we are what we taste/eat, we are what we smell, we are what we sight / see, and we are what we are hear). Hence, "We are Naad" and 'yoga' is not only a healing therapy, it is a lifestyle (ideal lifestyle) which we should follow. Hence, 'Naad yoga' helps us to be healthy, stable and disease free. It heals us within inside and out.

Benefits of Naad Yoga

As said earlier, Naad includes Aahat Naad, which is produced in Indian classical music. The music includes Classical ragas. Raag is a specific science by which we can able to experience different vibrations, energies and energy flows within us. It is a way to understand, experience and create a positive vibrational energy flow. The permutation-combination of different 12 swaras and the phrases of that swaras are presented in different ragas. There are different energy channels which we

feel during different raga performances. The prakruti of each and every raag is different, the consequences are different and also the vibrations are different. Hence the tendency of a being or the environmental factors changes according to the vibrations and swar of raga.

तस्यद्वाविंशतिर्भेदश्रवणात्श्रुतयोमताः |
हृदयाभ्यंतरसंलग्नानाड्योद्वाविंशतिर्मताः ॥^[8]

Meaning of shlok:- There are total 22 Nadis in the heart and the sound or vibrations of each nadi is described and we can experience the presence of all these 22 nadis. These 22 nadis referred as 22 Shrutis in music. Out of that '4:3:3:4:4:3:2' is the ratio of all shrutis in 7 swaras (Saa = 4 shrutis ; Re = 3 shrutis ; Ga = 2 shrutis ; Ma = 4 shrutis ; Pa = 4 shrutis ; Dha = 3 shrutis ; Ni = 2 shrutis). All these shrutis are considered as Swar. But all these shrutis are not included in each and every raag of classical music. In each raag, some of the shrutis are included according to the Chalan of raag. The effect of each shruti is different on the body and mind. It is said that the great masters and sadhak of music had control over not only human emotions, but all natural manifestations as well they could produce heat and rainfall at will, and the vibrations of their voices alone would cause finely-tuned musical instruments to resonate in accompaniment.^[9-10]

There is a difference between humming a song and Mm (म) sound chanting. Also there is a difference in murmuring a tune of any song and chanting a mantra or shlok which is traditional. We immediately can experience the difference, when one actually listens to the both tune in back-to-back manner. The murmuring of any tune of a song cannot stabilize our mind, we can't experience the actual silence after that tune. But after listening to the chanting of mantra in traditional tune (it includes only 3 swaras, Udatta, Anudatta and Swarita), then immediately one can experience the silence, steadiness and stability in the body, mind and in our thought process. Your breathing becomes stable and calm. Because, there is a technology of sound in chanting, which is having an effect on our body.^[11]

यत्रकुत्रापिवानादेलगतिप्रथमंमनः |
तत्रैवसुस्थिरीभूयतेनसार्धविलीयते॥

—HathaPradipika (श्लोक - ८९)

The mind is first involved in the loud or silent sound. There is a stability in that sound and mind merges into it. Mind gets relaxed and stable when it is directed towards any Naad. The mind wants to get some object to thing over it. When we provide good and positive object, it

results in a good way. But if the main object is not good, then the result will be always negative and also gives negative impacts on the body, mind and spirit. Hence, one should take care of his object that one is giving to his mind.

मनो-मत्तगाजेन्द्रस्यविषयोद्यानचरिणः |
नियंत्रणेसमर्थोऽयंनिनादनिशिताङ्कुशः ॥

—HathaPradipika (श्लोक - ९१)

The Naad is able to control the mind, which is like an elephant. The elephant is not steady at one place, every time he is active in some work. As same as that, our mind goes into the different directions and things accordingly. That thoughts are so much diverted from the main goal of life, i.e. liberation (moksha). Hence, the Naad helps us to consciously control our mind by focusing on a particular object, i.e. listening to a sound (Naad), which is positive and which creates positivity, steadiness and peace.

Naad yoga mainly concentrates on the 7 chakras, the whole body, mind and also reacts on the thoughts. It has a complete and huge power to change the whole behaviour and the thought process of a being. Not only humans but also the animals or each and every being or soul can connect with the Naad and can improve his bodily, mental and spiritual state of being. We create and express our emotions or feeling through sound production, i.e Naad. The feeling of love, happiness, sadness, peace, joy etc. are consciously should be understood by one's self and one should continuously focus on that all feelings which are expressed by our Naad. So that we can control that sound with yoga, by focusing on the bodily and mental behaviour. It can help to heal all the diseases, disorders and illness.^[12]

Naad yoga helps to improve your confidence and personality. Relieve stress, anxiety and tension. We can experience the touch of vibrations of the sound, sharpen your observation and improves your listening skills. It rejuvenates all your senses (पंचेंद्रिय), relaxes your body, mind and soul. You can experience happiness, joy and peace. You can feel relaxed. It rejuvenates your body, mind and thoughts. It increases thinking capacity and bodily awareness. Increases consciousness and concentration. All the self-healing is possible, without using your intellectual mind. In this, you allow inner intelligence to work.

Only some specific time is not needed to do Naad yoga. While doing any kind of work or in daily routine, we can do the Naad yoga. For example, while preparing a

food, you can listen some silent classical instrumental music, which can relax your mind and makes your food and mood well. You can take a bath with the background sound of omkarajapa or any mantra, which is related to 'Jalatatva' from panchamahabhoota. One can chant any mantra (more probably in Sanskrit) while making you ready for your job or school, college or any work, which can influence your thoughts in one direction. Also, Naad yoga helps in controlling and removing negative thoughts from the body-mind and also from the environment. When you wake up or when you sleep at night, you can just create a sound of Aum or any soothing sound, which can refresh your mind and can cut all the negative thoughts. It can be any sound, japa, mantra or anything. Aahat or Anahat Naad, both are good to make a starting and end of your day in a good note. In our Indian tradition, there are specific mantra, shlok or chanting techniques included before and after the any kind of karma. This sanskar of production of Naad or chanting has a huge scientific background, hence by knowing the science behind our tradition, we can understand the importance of that sanskar and we should follow that sanskar and tradition for the sake of our health and for our goods.

Scientific Evidences on Naad Yoga

The ancient literatures and recent books revelled the treasure of Naad Yoga but in recent times various scientific evidences also supporting these claims.

The Naad Yoga study was carried out on 80 students varying in the age of 18-20. The students attended the Naad Yoga therapy every day for 30 minutes for 1 month. After one-month students were showing the significantly decrease in the level of neurosis which important to reduce the stress.^[13]

In COVID-19 era the most of the things i.e work, teaching, entertainment depended on internet based online software. The online Naad Yoga practices is also increased in last two years. One study was published on online Naad Yoga therapy which was conducted on 67 students for 6 weeks. The result showed that the online Naad Yoga program increased the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) of the students.^[14]

When we can listen the music for stress relief whether it is before stress, during stress or after stress? To check this one study was carried out on 48 male and assigned them to listen the music as per their preference. The heart rate variability (HRV) score was

measured to analyse the result. The statistical method suggested regarding the timing of listening to music, there was no mutually statistical difference observed and he result indicated that listening music before, during and after the stressful events has a similar relief effect.^[15] The similar experiment performed on 56 young healthy adults and stress was measured on electroencephalogram (EEG). The observations indicated the same results suggested by Chennafi et al., 2018.^[16]

During Covid-19 pandemics most of the employees, students are working from home and the stress was simultaneously increased during this time. One survey and experiment were done on medical care, education, and restaurant staff for music therapy to relieve stress during working hours. The survey suggested that the music therapy enhanced the employeesl creative inspiration, friendship relations, eliminated employee fatigue, and some potential unfavourable factors which ultimately made the positive impact in many aspects in the workplace.^[17] The Pahadi Raag in Indian Classical music is very useful for decreasing the depression or stress.^[18] The person who practised the Naad Yoga for than 90 days have observed the positivity, wellbeing and health.^[19] The Indian classical music raga Raga todi could be useful in reducing the state anxiety level in stressful conditions.^[20]

Conclusion

Now a days, the mental stress, depression and work load is increasing day by day. In future, the physical and mental stress will increase more. So, everyone should understand the ideal health and its management techniques. Naad yoga is one of the techniques in which you can control your health and your mind as it controls your actions (karma). Not only in stressful conditions, but also to remain constantly and continuously in a good-positive mood, you can practice Naad yoga, as a daily routine work. As we eat, we drink, we walk, we travel, we study, as same as that work or a habit of doing something good, to do all that work which I said before, very correctly and without any obstacles. By applying the knowledge of sound and the tools of sound (voice, breath etc.), we can heal our self. The different frequencies of Naad affects on different chakras on body. The positive frequencies or good vibrations affects positively and creates stability and peace. If we listen or stay in a negative frequency, in a negative vibration, we can feel negativity, stress, tension in our body and mind. To see, to listen, to eat,

to smell and to touch - is best and true entity. Hence, we should connect with a sound or Naad which is natural or created by our self, but that sound should be hygienic to our body and mind. The sound which can neutralize and stabilize your behaviour and thoughts. When our body and mind is stable, then each and every situation in our life, may be positive or difficult, we can handle it with good attitude, in a positive and healthy way. So, stay connected with good understanding of each and every Naad of nature and every part of our nature, to enjoy the life.

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