



NADA YOGA: THE THERAPEUTIC EFFICACY OF NADA

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ABSTRACT

The path of self realization through the practice of nada yoga in a Hatha yoga tradition is based on the fact that everything in the universe is vibrating and/or resonating. Nada yoga is the science of nada or sound that is the experience of pure consciousness by increasing the level of awareness. Two types of nada i.e., Ahata and Anahata are categorized in nada yoga system. The external music or sound as Ahata is perceived externally by sensory organ to brain while the Anahata nada is truly internal and sacred sound which is one's own nada that is not heard by other at the same time. The Anahata nada can manifest in ten different forms. The practice of nada yoga encompasses several health benefits ranging from improvement in concentration by relaxing and stilling the mind, triggers various neurochemicals for better functioning and promotes holistic wellbeing by vitalizing and harmonizing the whole system. Material and Methods: The data utilised in the current study was acquired from important Hatha Yoga texts, music-based books for ahata nada, and widely spread research publications appearing in peer-reviewed journals and other reliable internet sources connected to the effects of nada yoga on the human body. Results: In both preventive and therapeutic ways, Nada (Sound) significantly enhances a practitioner's overall well-being.

KEYWORDS : Nada, Consciousness, Ahata, Anahata, Neurochemicals**INTRODUCTION:**

Yoga is a complex and age-old practice that has its roots in Indian philosophy. Although it started out as a spiritual practice, it has grown in popularity as a means of fostering both physical and mental wellbeing. In the Rig Veda, the word "yoga" is first mentioned. Yoga derives its name from the Sanskrit root word "yuj," which means "union" or "to join." The power of "sound" was employed by ancient people to restore the rhythm and harmony of the body and mind. The Yoga of Sound is known as "Nada Yoga" in traditional parlance. Nada yoga is an ancient spiritual practice which focuses on sound to meditate. The union and mutual relation of Siva and Shakti is nada.^[1] The word 'NADA' is made up of two syllables Na and Da. Na stands for Life-force or Prana vayu and Da is Fire or Agni. Nada is thus produced by the amalgamation of Prana and Agni inside the human body.

Nakaram prana-namanam dakarmnalam viduh |**Jata pranagni samyogat tena nadobhidhiyate || Sangitaratnakara 1/3.6**

Nada yoga is the classical term for the process of uniting individual mind with cosmic consciousness through sacred sounds. It is well established that the practice of nada yoga can cure psychosomatic diseases.^[2] Psychosomatic diseases are generally physical conditions like hypertension, gastrointestinal disturbances and/ or etc. that are believed to arise from stress, anxiety and other mental illnesses. Yoga deals with the realization of Anahata nada which is believed to have curative effects on mind and body. Nada yoga incorporates various forms of sound.^[3] Many studies have shown that nada either Ahata or Anahata increases the thinking capacity of the practitioner by altering the brain waves pattern^[4]. Nada yoga can also help to relieve hypertension^[5], negative thought waves, and sleeplessness and improves concentration and memory by involving the mind in the flow of sound.

In short the yoga of sound not only rejuvenates the whole system but also induces a feeling of happiness by attaining the state of higher consciousness^[6].

NADA:

Nada is the initial sound or primordial vibration from which all of creation has emerged.^[7] The majority of spiritual traditions frequently employ music and sound to reach a higher state of consciousness. In nada yoga, numerous psychological issues are treated using sound vibrations and resonances.

CATEGORIZATION OF NADA: Nada can be divided into two categories;

1. Ahata Nada
2. Anahata Nada

“Ahato anahata shcheti dwidha nado nigadyateh” | Sangitaratnakara 1/2.3

1. Ahata Nada: The striking of two objects produces ahata nada. The sound produced by human, animals, birds, streams, rivers, waves of

sea, sound of the conch and musical instruments are the examples of ahata nada. This nada is striking in nature and heard externally.

2. Anahata Nada: Anahata nada is the name given in many Hatha yogic texts to the mystic sounds heard at the time of deep contemplation. This nada is non-vibratory, internal and unstriking in nature.

STAGES OF NADA/ SOUND:^[8] The sound has following four divisions;

1. Para: Paranada is the highest frequency of sound energy and the primordial voice that only manifests in prana. The cosmological Om is paranada and the sound remains here in an undifferentiated state. Para voice germinates thoughts and is the first manifestation of voice.

2. Pasyanti: Pasyanti assumes different forms of sound when materialized and finds its manifestation in the mind. The navel chakra, also known as Manipura, serves as the seat of pasyanti.

3. Madhyama: Indriyas are a manifestation of Madhyama. It is the unexpressed, intermediary stage of sound. The heart is where madhyama is located.

4. Vaikhari: Vaikhari is an audible sound that manifests through thoughtful expression.

CONCEPT OF ANAHATA NADA IN RELATION TO ENERGY CHAKRA

The chakras, which are vortices of psychic energy, are felt as circular motions of energy at specific rates of vibration.^[9] There are six important chakras namely Muladhara, Svadhisthana, Manipura, Anahata, Vishuddha and Agya and Sahasrara is the chief chakra.^[8] Anahata nada originates from the Anahata chakra, and since vayu tattva governs the Anahata chakra, it allows one to hear a variety of sounds clearly and distinctly.^[10] Anahata chakra is located behind the heart in the spine and is associated with manomaya kosha that is represented by blue lotus with twelve petals.^[9] In addition to enhancing the energy of the anahata chakra, nada yoga meditation also influences and boosts the energy of all other chakras.^[10] The second psychic knot also known as Vishnu Granthi, which resides in anahata chakra, represents the bondage of emotional attachment. When this is opened, one is liberated from all selfish, egoistic, and emotional attachments and achieves mental and emotional control, stability, and tranquility.^[9]

RELATION OF NADA TO THREE GRANTHIS: The Sanskrit word 'granthi' means knot and when a practitioner removes the knot and opens psychic barriers, then the free flow of prana rises upwards which lead to the progress of realization of oneness and universal joy. In the Hatha yogic texts, there are three granthis which are responsible for preventing the free flow of prana along the sushumna nadi. The three granthis are;

1. Brahma granthi: According to Yogashikha Upanishad, the Brahma granthi is located in the Muladhara chakra.^[11] The individual is kept in a state of material desire by this first significant barrier. When the energy ascends by piercing the Brahma granthi, the practitioner experiences bliss. **Chapter 4 Verse 70 of Hatha Yoga Pradipika**^[12]

states that, when the prana goes through the Brahma granthi, a feeling of bliss emanates from the void, one hears wonderful tinkling sounds as well as the unstruck sound (anahata) within the body. In another Verse (**Chapter 4 Verse 71: HYP**), the yogi's body transforms into lustrous, brilliant and disease-free state with a divine fragrance, when he experiences arambhavastha in the void of the heart.

2. Vishnu granthi: The knot of lord Vishnu is located in the anahata chakra. It relates with the bondage of emotions. **Chapter 4 Verse 73 of HYP** states that, the highest happiness is revealed when the Vishnu granthi is penetrated. Then the kettledrum's sound emerges from the void.

3. Rudra granthi: Rudra granthi is seated in the Agya chakra. **Chapter 4 Verse 76 of HYP** states that, upon piercing the Rudra granthi, the prana travels to the vicinity of Ishwara. The flute's tinkling sound then resonates like a vina during the nishpatti stage.

THERAPEUTIC ASPECTS OF NADAYOGA

1. Brain Health: Research has shown that listening to music either Ahata nada or Anahata nada activate the brain regions that are involved in various functions. By releasing nervous tension, music calms the brain and nerves and helps the body components afflicted by tension to resume their usual functions.^[11] Recent brain imaging studies employing PET and fMRI have demonstrated that certain types of music stimulate neuronal circuits that are similar to those linked to euphoria and reward, which give rise to emotional bliss and have an impact on mood and brain functions.^[13]

2. Improves Concentration and Memory: Ahata as well as Anahata nada has been scientifically proven to boost concentration and improves memory. When the mind flows towards the sound then it becomes very concentrated which leads to expanded awareness.^[14] **Chapter 4 Verse 82 of HYP** states that, the muni should focus his mind steadily on the inner sound after covering ears with the fingers to achieve the state of stillness. **Chapter 4 Verse 89 of HYP** states that regardless of the nada to which the mind initially adheres, it becomes absolutely still in that and vanishes along with it. In another verse (**Chapter 4 Verse 90, HYP**) it is mentioned that, the mind engaged in nada does not yearn for sensual objects, just as a bee consuming nectar is unconcerned about the fragrance. The detachment from sensual objects creates awareness and equanimity. According to the findings of one study by Naveen Kumar,^[15] children's verbal memory and concentration are improved when they listen to music in an active mode.

3. Improves Mental Health: Research shows that the nada yoga meditation and/or nada pranayama is used as an intervention to promote mental health by treating various mental illnesses. The possible action may be due to release of several neurochemicals that play a major role in mental health. **Chapter 4 Verse 83 of HYP** states that; repeatedly listening to the nada causes one to become less conscious of outside sounds. As a result, the yogi conquers mental turmoil in just fifteen days and experiences joy. In various studies, it has been suggested that music impacts stress response system of the body particularly the autonomic nervous system. The practitioner who had listened to music tended to recover more quickly following a stressor.^[16] Hammer (1996)^[17] conducted research on the association between participants' perceived stress levels and music therapy. After the music therapy sessions, there was a perceived drop in stress levels in the experimental group, and the findings imply that music therapy may be a useful tool for reducing stress. According to study findings by Arvind KS and colleagues,^[18] practicing nada yoga significantly reduced several criteria variables including anxiety and aggression. Once the anger and anxiety are appropriately addressed through nada yoga practice, it results in the development of mental health, which in turn improves physical health.

4. Remove Thought-waves (Vritti) and improves Sleep quality: The music entraps the mind (and subsequently the vrittis), says Swami Sivananda.^[19] The same way that milk and water become one, so does the mind and music. Thought waves are generally associated with sleep quality. Nervous disorders, insomnia, etc. can all be greatly improved by music.^[11] When the mind is absorbed in nada, there are no vrittis.^[12] It is a well established fact that suspension of thought waves improves the sleep quality which in turn creates happiness and joy.

5. Holistic Health: A growing number of studies indicate that yoga especially nada yoga is beneficial in holistic wellbeing. In addition to

bringing comfort and relief in times of distress, it stimulates, energizes, invigorates and vitalizes the entire system.^[11] In accordance with Chapter 4 and Verse 75 of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, the third stage of nada-anusandhan is parichaya-avastha, which is the experience of the sound of a drum. At this stage, the imbalance of the three humours (Vata-Pitta-Kapha) as well as pain, old age, disease, hunger, and sleep are conquered. The technique thus essentially has a more favourable effect on holistic health. According to Canadian Association of Music Therapy,^[20] the "Music therapy promote, maintain, and restore mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

CONCLUSION:

Nada yoga is an ancient healing practice which balances the individual's mind, body and soul. The sound of yoga may be an ideal intervention to treat various psychological conditions ranging from stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia, negative thought waves and increases one's concentration and memory. The current review showed how the practitioner of nada yoga absorbs his mind in the flow of sound and in turn alleviate physical discomfort by balancing the mental faculties and enjoys happiness and wellbeing.

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of nada yoga for various mental health conditions. The sound of yoga also has numerous other benefits including pain management and enhancement of recovery in any disease and traumatic conditions. It is hypothesized that listening to music improves the immune health by increasing the antibodies and natural killer cells. Hence further studies are needed to validate the effectiveness of nada either ahata or anahata in improving immune system of the body to check the growth of invading viruses and to settle down the foreign bodies while also ensuring the body's optimal functioning.

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