



Bindu Magazine

Article from Bindu no 10

Nada Yoga

Collected and edited by Swami Janakananda

Nada Yoga is about sounds. It is the knowledge of the quality of sounds and the way they affect people. We have sounds that are coarse and sounds that are fine. The finest sounds we hear in the mind. In yoga we call them *the inner sounds*.



In 1969 Swami Satyananda and I visited an ashram at Bhagalpur in Bihar, India. A yogi had settled there who specialised in Nada Yoga. I remember there were big paintings there of meditating figures with rainbow auras painted around them. The different colours illustrated different levels of consciousness and their corresponding inner *Nada* (sound).

The reason why this yogi (who had the same teacher as the founder of TM, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi) had established an ashram exactly there was because the area, which was situated somewhat outside the city, had earlier belonged to the military. The soldiers had dug deep underground corridors and tunnels which reached all the way to the town. There were caves or day rooms connected to these corridors deep under the ground and it was those caves which attracted the yogi. Here you could sit and meditate without hearing a sound from noisy India. In return, you could concentrate on the inner sounds.

In the total silence down there, I experienced how the sounds really stood out.

Some years ago, when I made the tape (and now the CD) *Experience Yoga Nidra*, I asked the musician and composer, Roop Verma, to make the background music to the longer of the two deep relaxations on the tape. Through his knowledge of the old Indian music, he knows how *outer* sounds influence us - a knowledge of tones and the composition of tones, which was about to be forgotten. He had learned this, partly with his first teacher, Swami Shyam, and partly through studies of old scriptures about Nada Yoga in Indian music.

In connection with the production of *Experience Yoga Nidra* he recorded, as the first musician of our generation, themes and harmonies which are in tune with and touch our different *chakras* or psychic centres.

In an earlier issue of *Bindu* we dealt with the effect of music and Roop Verma contributed an article. In this issue, our subject is the *inner* sounds which are experienced and used in the deeper steps of the Nada Yoga meditation. We will, however, let him tell us a little about the development and the division of Indian music - away from its original wholeness and power.

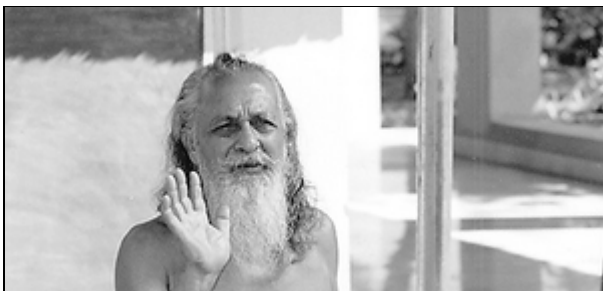
One of the years Roop Verma came to play on our three months course I asked him whether or not there were different ways to perform Indian music. It had puzzled me that certain celebrated musicians of India today, at least to me, did not seem to communicate any feeling of meditation. I seem to experience a difference between those who "put on a show" or "perform" their music - and such people as the flute player Panalal Gosh or the singer Kumar Gandharva, who radiate such a degree of devotion in their music that it places the listener in a deeper state. Roop gave me the answer in an introduction to the music that he was going to play for us:

"Until about a thousand years ago there were no such thing as 'concerts' in the Indian tradition. There was no 'performance' of music or dance or singing. Music was attached or confined to the temples for sacred ceremonies and rituals. They were not entertainment forms of music, but what I call very potent sound formulas. They are like different elements; you put them together and you get a certain effect. So these sound formulas were used in ancient times to bring tranquility and peace to agitated minds and tired bodies, as well as to change and transform the listener. On the one hand it had a therapeutic effect; to heal disease, to heal sickness. On the other hand its aim was to focus the attention of people who came to the temple - towards onepointedness. When we are centred and onepointed our lives take on a different meaning. When, on the other hand, our minds are scattered, the way we experience things is also influenced. So in order to achieve that focus, music was instrumental.

From the beginning of the eleventh century we see a turn in the history of India. Many foreign invaders came and established their empires there. The Persians, the Moguls, and so on. They liked the music and art so much that they invited the musicians to their courts, to appreciate and honour them. Now here at the beginning of the 11th century something very significant happened. The musicians and the music, which up to now was only played at the temple, was made available to everyone from the king to the common people. People who did not belong to the temples could now enjoy the music.

However, this had one disadvantage. Previously the artist or the musician did not have to prove anything. In the temple you play as part of a ceremony. There is a deity, there is a God sitting there and you don't have to prove anything, because supposedly God knows everything - all the music, and all the variations, all the rhythms. But the king doesn't know, so you have to prove it to the king. So the ego comes along. Now egos began to build up as the art was developing. They became very intellectual. A lot of music started to come from the left brain, and as a result the music took another shape. Because as the inner feelings change so does the art. Expression changes.

*From that point onwards there are two branches in music. One became the entertainment branch or what I call **deshi**. It is mentioned in the scriptures. The other is called **margi** (marga means a path) when we use the music as a path to evolve ourselves. I had the honour of studying in both the schools..."*



A yogi does not "retire" - but he doesn't necessarily have to be a guru or guide all his life.

Swami Satyananda is now continuing on his path, in that period of life, where, after having helped others and shared his knowledge, he is now devoting himself to meditation and to the realisation of his relationship with the cosmos.

One can say that Indian music today, with the exception of folk music, includes devotional music (*Kirtan* and *Bhajan*), as well as esoteric music linked to Nada Yoga which masters the aforementioned knowledge of the influence of sounds - and finally, ordinary concert music. These three may very easily overlap and there is no doubt that music as such affects us and therefore is often seen as being part of Nada Yoga. To that may be added the fact that Indian musicians, at least in earlier times, had to learn yoga and certain breathing exercises to strengthen and develop their ear for music. We present one such exercise in this issue of Bindu (see p. 4).

Music helps us relax and creates an atmosphere, but Nada Yoga reaches deeper and more precisely into our states - and the *actual* Nada Yoga, *the meditation on the inner sounds*, has a strong liberating effect in dissolving the very deepest blocks and inhibitions of the mind. Therefore Nada Yoga belongs to *Laya Yoga* (Laya = dissolution).

*"The deer is entrapped by sweet sound.
The cobra is enchanted by sweet music.
Raga Punnagavarrali charms the cobra.
Nada entraps the mind.
The mind gets Laya in sweet nada.
Therefore you can easily control the mind
Through the practice of Nada Yoga"*
(Swami Sivananda)

"By one who is desirous of attaining perfection in Yoga, Nada alone has got to be closely heard (meditated upon), having abandoned all thoughts and with a calm mind." (Sankaracharya, Yoga-taravali)

The beginning of this article I wrote in 1996. The following text has been rewritten and edited from an article which was printed in the Danish *Bindu* in 1973. It is mainly based on things I learned during my time in India with *Swami Satyananada*, from his teaching and lectures, and from lectures and expositions he gave when he visited the Scandinavian Yoga and Meditation School. We are printing this material upon the request of some of our students.

The inner Nada Yoga is still a part of the education at the Scandinavian Yoga and Meditation School.

In 1974 I participated in a conference in Denmark where doctors, psychologists, authors and others, as well as myself representing yoga, were invited by the Ministry of Education to exchange ideas on psychosomatics (the relationship between body and mind). I happened to tell a young scientist there that there are methods in yoga where you do not have to suffer to liberate yourself from old influences or tensions, where you do not always have to confront your traumas but where you can *dissolve* them using other methods. I was thinking about *Laya Yoga* and especially the discipline within Laya Yoga which is called Nada Yoga where you concentrate on the inner sounds. Despite the immediate interest of the scientist, it must have sounded rather shocking to his ears, because, despite the ostensible independence of science in relation to religion, the basic belief still prevails that things must hurt before they do us good.



Laya Yoga

Every meditation practice or technique which breaks down the inhibitions of the mind and brings its activities to a halt is called Laya Yoga. Under the heading of Laya Yoga you find many different methods and Nada Yoga is one of them. Even during the meditation, Antar Mauna (inner silence) you are able to bring your consciousness to a level of complete rest.

The ancient great masters of Hatha Yoga, such as Gheranda Rishi and others claimed that Hatha Yoga could also be a part of Laya Yoga. For instance, breathing exercises can be used to achieve a mental state totally free from tensions.

Nada Yoga is an important method in Tantra.

Nada Yoga - a Definition

The word *Nada* comes from the Sanskrit root, *Nad*. *Nad* means to flow. The etymological meaning of *Nada* is a process or a stream of consciousness. Normally, the word *Nada* means sound.

Different States of Nada

In Tantra it is thought that sound occurs in four dimensions - four levels of sound relating to frequency, fineness and strength.

1. The coarse (ordinary audible, material) sound,
2. the mental sound,
3. the visualised sound and
4. the transcendent sound.

This we can compare with other tantric meditations where, in order to satisfy the mind, we begin in the

senses and create a state of security as a basis for going deeper. (See also Bindu no 8.)

From the body we turn to the breath which is experienced without any interference. In this way, a deeper relaxed state is triggered.

With a mantra - a sound syllable which we repeat mentally - we transcend the mind and reach the inner sounds and symbols, pictures which we see within and which, depending on their nature, represent certain levels of consciousness.

Through the use of an inner symbol, we remain aware in normally unconscious states and get closer to the core of our being and the state of pure being.

Ordinary sounds are the coarsest manifestation of sound. We are aware of the coarse sounds and we hear them every day - vibrations which hit our ear drums from the space around us, from our surroundings.

From there we move on to other, finer sounds.

After having left the coarse and tangible sounds that we experience through the senses, we can become conscious of the mental sounds. They are sounds which we hear in the mind. Their frequency and strength is dependent on both our mental and physical state. In a relaxed state they are easy to perceive. The sounds also become clearer when we are exhausted, agitated or after strong physical activity such as running or intense and prolonged dancing.

When we go deeper we reach the visual or astral sound, the sound which is found in the inner space and which appears in visual forms. Certain forms answer to certain sounds and certain states. Sounds or forms which we, for instance, experience in our dreams, belong to this plane as well as sounds which are linked to certain meditation symbols (see also p. 3).

Behind the visual sounds the transcendent or supra-conscious sound is found. The transcendent sound and the transcendent consciousness are the same. In Nada Yoga universal consciousness is perceived in the form of sound.

The tangible or coarse universe which we experience through our senses, the mind and our normal experience of people can in this way be led back to the source, the sound, Nada.

For the Nada yogi it is important to make contact with the sounds which are found in the other dimensions; the mental and psychic. In this way the capability of the mind is expanded.

Let us look at each of the four states, starting with the highest. In Sanskrit they are called : *Para*, *Pashyanti*, *Madhyama* and *Vaikhari*.

Para Nada

The transcendent sound, which has the highest



frequency, is called Para Nada. *Para* means highest or farthest, and in this connection: transcendent, and *Para Nada* the transcendent sound - which is beyond the reach of the sense organs. The sound is heard in other dimensions on other levels of consciousness.

In music each tone has a certain number of vibrations per second, which we call frequency. The character of the tones can vary in length, strength, height and harmonics (overtone structure). Exact knowledge about this can be had by using a frequency analyser, which can split a tone in vibrations per second and show its overtone structure.

In Indian music the vibrations are called *Andolana*.

We are familiar with high frequency sounds from daily life, such as dog whistles and the sounds which bats emit, as well as electronically produced tones.

The ear cannot grasp sounds which vibrate beyond a certain speed. When a certain frequency is reached, the sounds become inaudible and can only be perceived *subjectively* - as an inner sound.

We are not conscious of all vibrations in the cosmos. Also below a certain level, we are limited by our sense of hearing.

The waves, which the electroencephalograph (EEG) registers in order to measure the brain's bioelectric impulses, are limited to a quite small number of sinuswaves, between one and 60 Hz. These "waves" actually belong to the musical scale. But the human ear cannot perceive sounds below about 16 Hz - although the structure of such tones are in harmony with the rest of the scale.

The very low bass tones, for example, can be felt as vibrations directly on the body even though they are not audible.

The Nada Yogis have defined that Para or transcendent sound has the highest frequency. Para's intense vibration makes it inaudible. Various texts mention that the Para sound has no vibrations. It is a sound without movement or frequency. It is a still sound. We cannot grasp a sound which has no vibration. When a sound reaches its maximum height, then it reaches stillness - and that is Para Nada. It is completely uniform. A state of consciousness corresponds with this stillness. The Nada Yogi reaches this state by becoming one with Para Nada.

In the Upanishads, the mantra OM is said to be the manifestation of Para. The audible Om, which we chant, is not Para because it is the object of our hearing, our understanding and our logic. Therefore, the audible OM cannot be called transcendent. Para is at the same time silent and eternal. It has form and its nature is Jyoti (light). It is different to the sounds one usually understands or hears. The Upanishads state clearly about the Para Sound: "*This is OM, this sound is OM.*"

Pashyanti

The second level of sound has fewer vibrations and is coarser than Para. It is called *Pashyanti*.

Pashyanti in Sanskrit means: "that which can be seen or visualised". The old scripts maintain that sound can also be seen. How can one see sound? Have you ever heard music in a dream? This particular dimension of sound which occurs in dreams is called Pashyanti. It can be called a mental sound. It is neither a conscious sound nor a half conscious sound. It is a subconscious sound which is linked to the characteristic of your mind and not to your vocal organs; tongue, throat or mouth. It is not heard with the physical ear, but with the inner ear.

When I loudly say "Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram", it is called Vaikhari but when I close my eyes and mouth and go in and mentally repeat the sound, "Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram", while visualizing its colour and form, it is called Pashyanti. When the word or the sound is heard in a sphere where one is not conscious of the outer surroundings, it is called Pashyanti. When every outer sound has disappeared and you hear a complete new sound, unlike the way the ordinary sounds sound, then it is a special kind of sound or Pashyanti Nada.

Madhyama

A sound, which has fewer vibrations than Para and Pashyanti, but which is finer than Vaikhari, is called Madhyama.

Madhyama is a sound that can hardly be heard. Ordinarily when two objects hit each other they produce a sound. But in the case of Madhyama no two things physically hit each other to produce an audible sound. For example, when a clapping sound is produced, it is called a coarse sound. Madhyama produces vibrations such as when one whispers; it is an intermediate sound. The word Madhyama means "in between" or "the middle". The middle sound can be called whispering or is like the sound of whispering.

Vaikhari

The fourth and coarsest plane of Nada is supposed to be Vaikhari. The Vaikhari sounds are audible and can be physically produced. Vaikhari is the spoken sound. It is produced for example by rubbing or hitting two things against each other. Its vibrations are limited to a certain range.

Para has the quality of soul, Pashyanti has a mental quality. Madhyama has the finer quality of the vocal organs and Vaikhari has the coarse quality of the same physical organs.

The Universe and Nada

According to Nada Yogis and scriptures dealing with Nada Yoga, the original and transcendent sound is the seed from which the whole of creation has grown.

The Nada Yogi experiences the macrocosmic universe as a projection of sound vibrations - that the whole world has developed from sound alone.

In the bible there is a reference, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God". This word is called Nada or Shabda in Sanskrit.

Sufis in India call it Surat. Surat-Shabda-Yoga is another name for Nada Yoga practice. Certain Muslim mystics are also of the opinion that the world has developed from sound and form.

Australia's original inhabitants, who supposedly have the oldest continuous culture on earth, tell how "the ancestors" made the world come into being through song.

The Nada Yogis claim that the five elements, the five physical senses, the five subtle senses, the fourfold mind and the three gunas have developed from an eternal sound. That means that the material, the mental, the psychic and the intellectual universe have all originated from *Nada-Brahma*, the sound universe. It is the way the Nada Yogi experiences his/her reality. It manifests itself in the form of vibrations, of which the highest either does not vibrate at all or vibrates at such a high frequency that it lies outside the reach of human senses.

The eternal or original Nada vibration is the highest. When any object vibrates with an enormous and incredible speed, it then becomes silent. That means that the highest point of speed and vibration is silence and that sound seems to be the creative principle behind all matter (see also p. 24).

The Upanishads (in this context with special reference to Nada-Bindu-Upanishad and the Hansa-Upanishad) and the Vedas describe that in the beginning was nothing. There was absolutely nothing, there was non-existence in the universe - there was only sound. The sound was unending, the sound was the only existing reality. The universe evolved from sound, and therefore the fundamental structure of the universe is based on *Nada* or sound vibrations.

Music is a result of Nada.

Mantra in its purest form is a manifestation of Nada.

The movement of *Energy* (Prana) in the body is an expression of Nada.

Nada Yoga Meditation

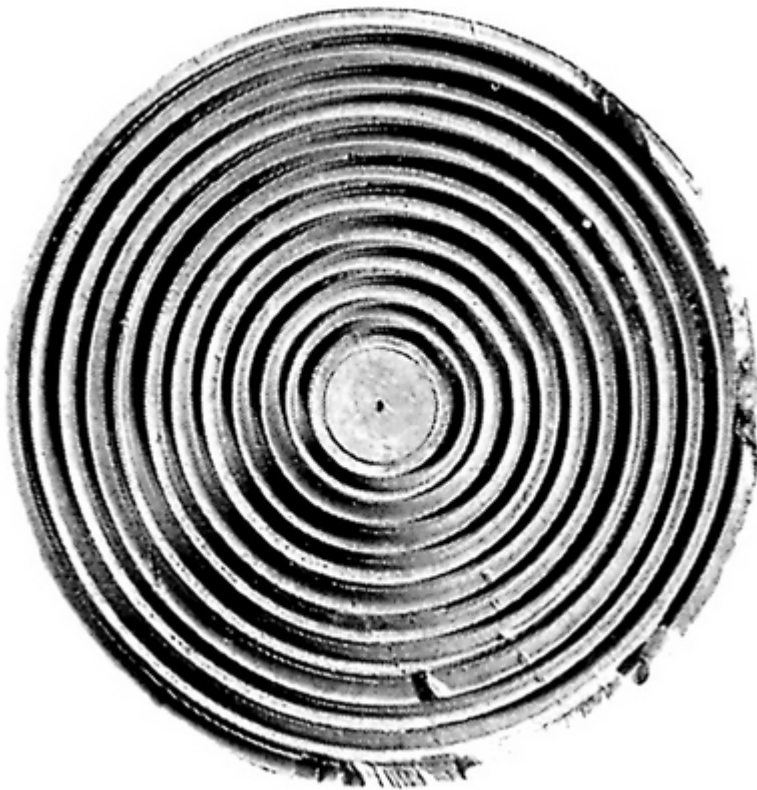
Every real form of meditation shares certain common effects with others.

Some forms are stronger, some weaker, some focus on one thing, others focus on another.

The method in *Nada-Yoga-Sadhana* is to reach the original, the finest inner sound, *Shabda* or the inner word.

You could characterise Nada Yoga as a sort of vibrating vacuum cleaner which dissolves tensions and blocks even at the finer levels of consciousness.

To reach the superconscious or transcendent and non-empiric sound, the process must start with the experience of the coarser sounds.



The Nada Centre

In which centre is the transcendent Nada experienced? Bhaktis (those who liberate themselves through devotion) place their *Ishta*, the personal centre, in *Anahat Chakra* by the heart. Yogis use the centre of intuition in *Ajna Chakra* in the middle of the head. The Vedantics seek it in *Hiranya Garbha*, the golden egg in *Sahasara Chakra* in the upper part of the head.

In the same way, the Nada Yogis locate the sound centre in *Bindu*, which is located at the top of the back of the head. Bindu is the centre in the brain where an on-going sound vibration takes place. To be able to experience the Nada sound, Bindu has first to be located.

But rather than exploring the theory of this science at the outset, it is better initially to investigate it in a practical way and localise or discover the mental, astral and psychic nature of the Nada sound. Different techniques and aids within Nada Yoga can be used to help practitioners go through the different psychic or non physical sounds, so that consciousness can be brought into harmony with the real Nada.

Practising Nada Yoga in Bhakti Yoga

When a Bhakti Yogi uses a Mantra, the first technique that he or she uses is to focus on the sound produced by the Mantra. It is said aloud.

When he has warmed up with this practice or when he has attained a deeper and clearer awareness of the sound of the Mantra, then he stops producing audible sound vibrations. He intensifies his experience of the Mantra by whispering it or by saying it with his lips without producing any audible sound. He aims to become one with the whispered Mantra.

When it is achieved, he stops moving his mouth and begins to experience the mental mantra. Now he chants the same mantra in his head. It is as if he himself is not producing the mantra, but is *hearing* the mental and fine tones. Although they are inaudible to the outer ear, they can be picked up by a finely tuned consciousness. The Bhakti Yogi experiences the Mantra as if he actually sings it so that everyone can hear it, but it occurs only in his mind.

When the Mantra begins to work, it causes the awareness to let go of all outer things and turn to the deeper levels of consciousness. Then the Mantra changes to Nada, a constant sound which occurs by itself. The aspirant will on this level of consciousness think it audible, but it will not be noticed or heard by others. It is Mantra-Nada-Yoga for Bhakti Yogis.

Music and Nada Yoga

Music is also Nada Yoga. When it comes to music, one speaks of Nada on a scientific and classical level. In the past, musical development took place in close harmony with Nada Yoga Sadhana. Pranayama (breathing exercises) constituted an important and preparatory part of this Sadhana.

In different conscious states the mind is attracted to different vibrations of Nada. It seems as if some compositions of sounds (Nada) are unpleasant at one time of the day and pleasant at another.

These forms of Nada are known as Ragas in music; tones or combinations of tones. India's morning music (Bhairawee or Bhairawa Raga) appeals to some but not to all.

Swami Satyananda says that he is especially fond of India's midnight music, the Malkos, the Durga or Jogia Ragas. The evening raga, such as Bhimpalasi, is also popular with many. For the most part, girls and boys at the sensitive age prefer Bhairawee. This shows that the mind reacts differently at different times to different sound waves.

Music can be a pleasant, interesting and inspiring spiritual practice in itself - but it can also be a part of Nada Yoga. Through music, the mind can be tuned to the finest vibrations and thereby prepared for the transcendent Nada.

"Nada is found within. It is a music without strings which plays in the body. It penetrates the inner and the outer and leads you away from illusion." (Kabir)



Practical Introduction to Nada Yoga

Precautions

There are certain precautions one must take as an intense Nada Yoga practice may give rise to a disturbing presence of certain sounds. It can happen that a person experiences the sound as if it's humming in the ears the whole day. It can be that they hear the ringing of bells or other sounds. Maybe they become disturbed in their daily tasks by these tones.

Through the practice of Nada Yoga, the inner sounds are gradually developed, but you do not have to listen to them at other times of the day. Let us presume that Nada Yoga has been practiced in the night and you have discovered different sounds. Next morning you go to the office or the classroom and begin to hear the sound of bells. You want to avoid it, you try, but you still hear the sound. You may also experience it as if bees are humming in your ears. If these symptoms appear you have to consider what to do. Is your diet okay, otherwise you have to change it? Do you want to continue, but get irritated or disturbed by the sounds? Then you have either to change your attitude or if you do not succeed and you want the sounds to stop then you have to give up the Nada Yoga path.

The Nada Yogi can hear a voice in a wakeful state if he is at an advanced level. To him, it sounds as if someone is whispering in his ears. This is a kind of "Siddhi", an ability to hear the sound of an unknown voice.

This, however, should not be confused with a group of people in India called *Karnapischachee*, which means "the ghost in the ears". The Karnapischachees are often consulted by people in difficulties. Then they hold a kind of bell in their hands and ring it close to their ears for some time, until they hear a voice. They are used as oracles and whatever is heard or whispered in their ears is told to the person who asks. A Yoga practitioner should not use such a method to achieve this result as it often leads to deafness. As a result the Karnapischachees in India have hearing problems.

These days many people have hearing impairment, which can be compared to the case of the Karnapischachee. This applies to rock musicians, for example, or people who work in a noisy environment. These injuries of course have no-thing to do with Nada Yoga. Also there are people who spontaneously hear sounds like a ringing in their ears. Some of these sounds are probably caused by injuries to the ears, while others can be related to the sounds which are heard in Nada Yoga. The Yogi cannot monopolize these phenomena; the yogi has only discovered them and knows how to use them to benefit from them, but the sounds are there anyhow.

If a person seeks help from a doctor because he or she is suffering from disturbing sounds and does not know the positive sides of this phenomenon, and if the doctor cannot help maybe it could be useful for the person to change his attitude to the sound and start to practice Nada Yoga under the guidance of an expert.

It often happens that things we want to get rid of do not disappear when we fight them. It applies, for example, to pain. If we, on the other hand, face the pain and allow ourselves to experience it then we can let go of it. In the tradition of tantric yoga this method is called *Pratyahara* and has already been described in an earlier issue of *Bindu* and in more detail in my book, "*Yoga, Tantra and Meditation in Daily Life*" (Rider Books, UK and Weiser, USA. In France, Editions Satyanandashram).

This way of applying pratyahara is in accordance with a conclusion which science has reached concerning noise in the environment. If you view the sounds as harmful and become irritated about them, you are more likely to be harmed by them than if you, to a certain extent, can accept them.

With regard to Nada Yoga, it is possible to turn what you once considered disturbing sounds to your own advantage.

Teresa of Avila (Teresa de Jesus) did not find guidance about the inner sounds in the European culture in which she grew up. Therefore she didn't realise how she could use them in her spiritual life. She describes them as clearly as any Nada Yogi in her book, *"The Interior Castle"*. *"It roars like many big rivers with waterfalls, there are flutes, and a host of little birds seem to be whistling, not in the ears, but in the upper part of the head, where the soul is said to have its special seat."*

A Nada Yogi's Diet

A Nada Yogi's diet ought to be easily digested. Food which brings a quick energy rush to the brain is not suitable. Food and drink which cause hypertension or high blood pressure should be avoided. You have to ensure you get the necessary nutrients which the body needs to maintain its normal functions.

Preliminary Practice of Nada Sadhana

The Nada Yogi must learn to use certain *Mudras* (attitudes) and *Bandhas* (locks) and a few *pranayamas* (breathing exercises). Here follows a short description of *Mula Bandha*, which is known by most people who practice Hatha Yoga. And of a Mudra which is useful to awaken the Nada sound, *Vajroli Mudra*. This also is known by many Hatha Yoga practitioners. But here it may be explained in another way.

In many books on Hatha Yoga we are told that in **Mula Bandha** we should concentrate on the anus, on the anal sphincter muscle. That is in itself correct. But according to Tantra, and the more advanced yoga, Mula Bandha is nevertheless a contraction of the perineum. This must be understood fully. The contraction of the anus or the anal sphincter muscle is Mula Bandha as understood by Hatha Yoga novices. In Tantra Yoga, however, or in the academic yoga, Mula Bandha is the contraction of the perineum, the "seat" of kundalini, also known as *Muladhara Chakra*. It is the area between the anus and the sexual organs which should be contracted.

In Nada Yoga, Mula Bandha therefore means contraction of the perineum and not contraction of the anus.

Vajroli Mudra also comes under Hatha Yoga. Many different forms of Vajroli are found which we shall not go into detail about here. The contraction of the muscles of the sexual organs and the urinary system is called Vajroli Mudra. It influences two important nerve flows in such a way that the energy becomes freed or transformed to heat (see also my book for a more detailed description).

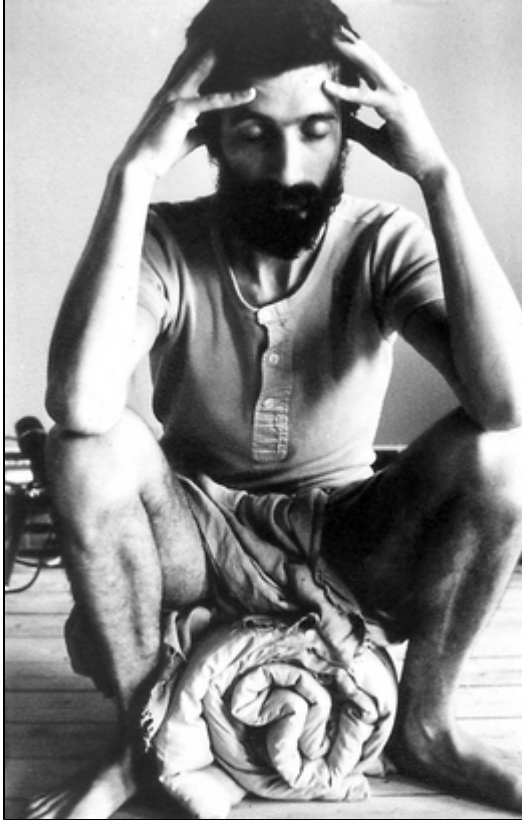
Muladhara Chakra is the actual starting point for Nada. When this chakra is "heated", the sound is experienced by the aspirant. But the sound has different frequencies in the different chakras, which are found in the spine and in the head. Therefore the chakras are the places of the original sounds. Different *Bija Mantras* or seed-syllables give them vocal expression: Lam, Vam, Ram, Yam, Ham and Om.

The symbols for these chakra are lotus flowers - four-leafed, six-leafed, 10 leafed, 12-leafed, 16-leafed, two-leafed and a thousand-leafed lotus flowers. These lotus flowers represent central seats of consciousness and of the psychic energy in the spine and in the body. The leaves symbolise the number of minor energy flows, *Nadis*, to and from each chakra and their corresponding frequencies, indicated by secondary Mantras (sound syllables) written on each leaf.

There are many **breathing exercises** which can manifest or create a distinct Nada. As already mentioned, for all yoga practitioners and musicians **Bhramari** (the Bumble Bee) is essential (see page 4).

Murcha pranayama can also be used but should not be used by a beginner. You must go step by step through other breathing exercises before you can begin to use Murcha. When you have learnt Mula Bandha, Vajroli Mudra and Yoni Mudra (see the next section), then they are practiced while you hold the breath and turn your awareness to Bindu, the psychic centre at the top of the back of the head. This is where the Nada Yoga concentration really begins.

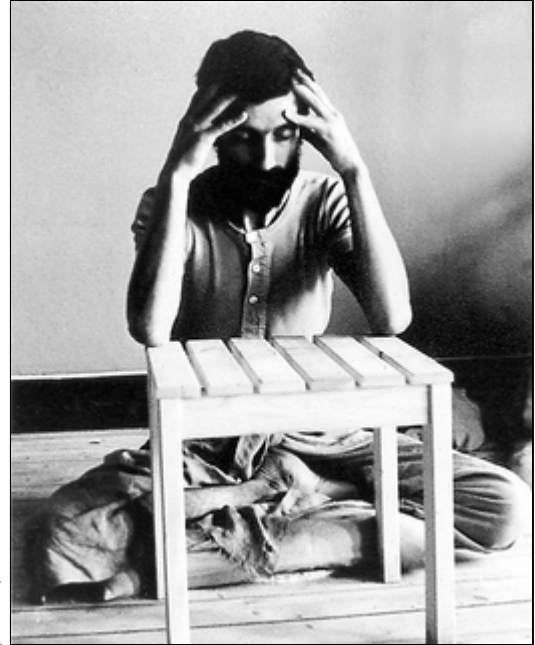
The Poses in Nada Yoga



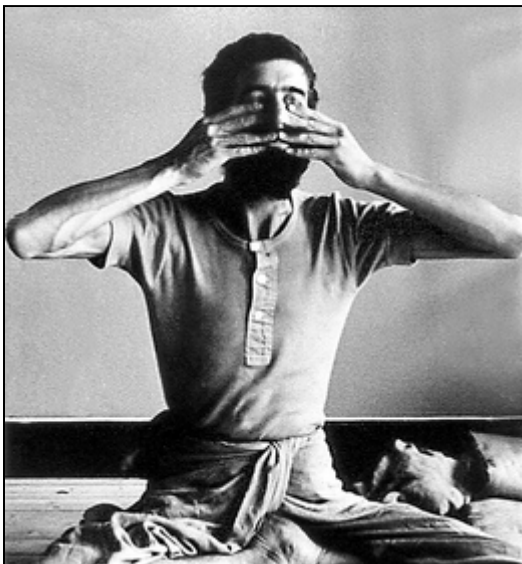
1. **The Nada Yoga pose** is the most suitable pose for beginners. Take a fairly big and hard pillow, place it on the floor and sit astride it, so there is pressure on the perineum. Sit with the soles of the feet flat on the floor. The knees project up towards the ceiling so that the elbows can rest on them. The back is kept straight.

Put a thumb in each ear and at the same time rest the head in the hands.

2. Sit in **Siddhasana (the perfect pose)** with a stool in front of you to rest the elbows. Siddhasana can be used so that you can sit in this pose for a long time without moving. Siddhasana is done by placing one heel up in



the groin so that it presses against the perineum (for men) or the vagina (for women). The rest of the foot lies against the thigh. Then put the other foot above the first, so that the heel touches or presses the lower abdomen and the pubic bone above the sexual organs. The two heels must be placed right over each other without touching each other. Then the toes of the upper foot are placed between the thigh and leg muscle. In this way the pose is locked. Some people are also able to put the toes of the lower foot between the leg muscle and the thigh from below.



3. For the little more advanced, **Yoni Mudra** is recommended (the experience of the womb). Sit in Siddhasana. Inhale and close the ears with the thumbs. Place the index fingers over the eyelids, so they can stay closed without being pressed too hard. Close the nostrils with the middle fingers, one at each side and close the mouth with the ring fingers and the little fingers by placing them above and below the lips respectively. After that do Mula Bandha and Vajroli Mudra while holding the breath.

Variation: Do the above but without closing the mouth and nose. Stay sitting for longer and breathe normally.

4. For the even more advanced Nada Yoga



practitioner who

has succeeded in following the sounds with closed ears: sit in Siddhasana with the hands resting on the knees and the index finger in contact with the thumb either at its root or at its top. The three other fingers are stretched out and together. This is called Chinmudra. At this stage you need no longer close the ears if there is reasonable silence around you.

"Bathe in the center of sound, as in the continuous sound of a waterfall. Or, by putting the fingers in the ears, hear the sound of sounds" (Vigyan Bhairava Tantra)

When you sit in the Pose in Nada Yoga

Lock the ears gently with your fingers. Listen inwardly up to **Bindu**. Bindu is the cranium's plexus. It lies above the pineal gland, above Ajna Chakra and diagonally behind and above the pituitary gland, behind Sahasrara Chakra.

Bindu is found in the part of the brain which deals with our optic powers.

The Brahmins in India have a tuft of hair where Bindu is situated.

It is this centre you should concentrate on after having closed the ears. And it is here in Bindu that the sound is manifested or where it descends from the transcendental plane to the next plane and where you experience it as an astral sound.

Now you will probably hear some sound or other. It can be the sound of a bumble bee, of bell chimes or of bird song. It can be the sound of a musical instrument, maybe the sound of a harp or a flute. It can also be a sound which is kind of like the whistling tone of a television, but finer.

Continue listening for some time to the sound which comes to you first.

Let the first sound be the starting point - the one end of a thread. Hold on to the first sound as closely as you can. When you are getting close to the sound then you will experience that other sounds arise in the background.

The sound which arises in the background maybe is of the same kind, but finer, or of a totally different kind. At this point you let go of the first sound, you go onto the next and concentrate intensely on it.

During your listening the sound will become clearer. You get closer to the sound, both mentally and psychically.

You feel as if you become one with the sound. When this has happened you discover that a third sound has arisen in the background, which you then concentrate on.

In this way you can continue with a fourth, a fifth, a sixth sound, a seventh, eight and ninth inner sound. Different sounds can arise. It can be like a river which flows through the landscape, the distant sound of the sea, a bell which rings or chimes. It can be the sound of a flute, a guitar's rhythm, the sound of birds chattering at sunset, crickets or grasshoppers. It can even be the vision of a star-filled night sky, completely devoid of sounds.

If it is difficult to discover a sound at Bindu then let the mind search at Sahasrara or Ajna or at the left or right ear drum. Or experience a space within, with the starting point in the middle of the head or search at the centre between the eyebrows until you are sure to hear a sound.

The method to discover the sound is simple. Instead of imagining a sound put all your attention on listening and then you will soon hear the first sound. An inner Nada sound should be followed until it becomes clear and distinct. As soon as it is distinct, another sound (another tone) is heard or felt in the background.

When you discover the other sound then let go of the first and follow the second. Sound after sound keep coming up as if from the bottom of an ocean.

This process continues until the consciousness feels free of the mind's influences.

When to practice

You can practice Nada Yoga whenever you have time. However, in order to get a tangible result, a beginner should practice Nada Yoga between midnight and two o'clock in the morning.

Midnight is the time which is free from other disturbing sounds, and the absence of light in the atmosphere also helps. Doing it at this time helps to turn the mind inwards.

Or get up at two or three o'clock in the morning, take a shower and then sit properly. You will find it quite different at this time and you will surely hear something. And once you have had a hint of the sound, when you have found a trace of the sound, when you have come into contact with a sound, then it's easy to go on.

Of course there are diversions which are disturbing at the beginning. Our mind is influenced by inhibitions, habits, tendencies and urges. But even if there are many disturbances within, the practice of this *Sadhana*, the spiritual practice, is generally very rewarding.

The Nada Yoga Sadhana unfolds and reaches the unbroken sound, which in yoga is known as Anahata Nada - the sound which continues. It has no beginning and no end. At the highest point of your practice, your Sadhana's highest state, you may feel that the whole body and mind, the whole personality is nothing but rapid vibrations, a movement of fast sound vibrations and you experience yourself as sound. This Nada Yoga is a great Sadhana, a great spiritual method. In India there are many people who have perfected it.

Traditional Descriptions

Nada at different Levels of Consciousness

The sounds which are heard are real. They are symbols of the contents of the mind and of the consciousness. The mind rests in these symbols and, with their help, goes more quickly into a finer state. The sounds are experiences from a deeper level of consciousness. They are not imaginary. They can be understood as vibrations of different spheres of one's existence. In the various dimensions of existence, different sounds are heard. First there are the physical sounds, and when the consciousness becomes fine and transcends the physical plane, it then comes into contact with the fine sounds which arise with the movement of the prana or the vital energy in the body.

The whole range of human consciousness can be divided into three, or subdivided into five, parts.

The conscious area is made up of *Annamaya* and *Pranayama Kosha*, two "bodies" which exist respectively as physical matter, the "food" dimension and as Prana, the energy dimension.

The personality's other sphere is made up of *Manomaya* and *Vigyanmaya Kosha*, mainly mental and astral material, the conscious mind and the dream dimension.

The third area of consciousness is *Ananda Maya Kosha*, which is a "body", a dimension, full of bliss.

When you practice Nada Yoga, the sounds appear in accordance with the existing connection between the mind and the other areas of consciousness.

Consciousness can, for example, linger in the physical body and when the ears are closed the sounds or vibrations that come from the heart, the lungs, the brain, the blood circulation and the different metabolic processes can be heard taking place in the body.

If the consciousness lingers in *Prana Maya Kosha* - the psychic energy, and has penetrated it, then Nada will be heard as a flute along with many other sounds.

If the mind has reached deep into *Ananda Maya Kosha*, then other sounds will disappear and the fruit of

Nada Yoga will remain.

It is difficult to say which Nada belongs to a certain area.

In India illustrations are given in the form of symbolic stories.

The individual consciousness, which continues to rise upwards and to discover the transcendental tones is, in Indian mythology, symbolised as "Rishi Narada". Without denying Rishi Narada's historic existence, the esoteric meaning of the word "Narada" must be understood. Narada is supposed to be a Rishi who has a Veena (a musical instrument) in his hands. According to the Nada Yoga's traditional schools the inner sound from a Murlī (a flute) or a Veena belongs to the conscious sphere, where Dwait Bhava or the duality of consciousness ceases to exist.

Nada Yoga in Bhagavata



Nada Yoga is illustrated in the big Indian book called "Bhagavata" (Bhagavata is not the same as the Bhagavad Gita). Krishna's lifestory is related in the form of a symbolic and allegorical story. Bhagavata says: "*Krishna left his palace at midnight and went into the jungle. The light of the full moon shone in the first winter month. He began to play the flute. The flute's echo spread over the quiet and undisturbed atmosphere. The music travelled from the jungle and was heard by the Gopis (village girls, cowherd girls). And when they heard the sound of the flute, they left their homes and their men in an instant and forgot everything that had happened there.*

They ran straight away to the place from where the flute's Nada was flowing. They began to dance around the flute player. After a little while they each discovered that they danced with Krishna himself."

The story seems fantastic, and what lies behind it is only properly understood by yogis. Nada Yogis regard Krishna as a higher conscious plane, where the higher plane's Nada flows in the deepest state of Nada-Sadhana. When the flute's tones arise, the senses leave their respective objects for pleasure and experience - they withdraw to the place from where the flute's

sound or Nada flows. There the senses dance around Nada. On that stage the senses let go completely of their links with the outer objects and the yogi will say, "Dharana (the ability to see and experience within) has taken place and Dhyana (meditation) is dawning".

In Sanskrit the word "Krishna" means "that which draws" or "that which attracts". It is derived from the root "Karshan". Therefore the word "Krishna" means "the one who draws", "the one who withdraws" or "the one who attracts". It also means "farmer". And the word "Gopi" usually means "daughter of a cow herd family". In Sanskrit "go" means "senses, cow, poor, the humble and the whole visible universe." Symbolically, Gopi means "senses".

Who then are the men who are married to these senses - these Gopis? You could say that the men of the eyes are the *forms* and the men of the ears are the *sounds*.

When the music of the flute is heard, the sense of hearing withdraws from the outer audible sound and merges with the inner Nada.

This process is *Pratyahara*.

Nada Yoga and Kabir

A famous Nada Yogi, *Kabir* (see him also cited earlier in the text and in the previous issue of *Bindu*) says in one of his poems, "*Who is there playing the flute in the middle of the sky? The flute is played where Ganges and Jamuna float together and the confluence of the three rivers - Ganges, Jamuna and Sarawati - takes place in Trikuti. Oh, this is the meeting place for Ganges and Jamuna. The sound flows forth from the North. Cowherd girls hear the sound of the flute and lo, they are all hypnotised by Nada.*"

The ultimate experience in Nada Yoga is a sound which is higher than the sound of the flute. The music on this highest plane of consciousness is not a flute, Veena, a cloud, lightning, clapping or the sound of brass instruments being hit together, nor is it any other instrument. It resembles neither the classical music of the East nor of the West. The music of the highest conscious plane is "Unahada Nada".

Unahada Nada or Anahata Nada

What is Unahada Nada? Up to now, people have not been able to agree on this. Some say that it is the cosmic sound of OM. Others say that it is like Bhramari - a sound which is unending, unbroken like the sound of a bee. Some say that it is the heartbeat, "throb, throb, throb" which is called "Unahada Nada".

Some call it Anahada and others call it Anahat. These two words have two different meanings. Anahat means "an" + "aahat". "An" means "no" or "un", "aahat" means "that which strikes, beats or hammers". Therefore, Anahat means "unbeaten, or, no hitting of two things against each other". When a sound is produced, it happens through striking, but Anahat is a sound, which is not produced through any striking. It is spontaneous and automatic. Certain scholars say that Nada is Anahada. "An" means "none" and "Hada" means "boundary" or "connection". Anahada means "infinite", "without beginning or end" or "indescribable". It is a sound on which no limitation can be placed. It can be any sound.

Nada Yoga and Yogi Goraknath

Yogi Goraknath, disciple of Yogi Matsyendranath, was more spiritually developed and had greater insight into the spiritual life than even his own Guru. He writes, "*Oh Sadhu (aspirant), carry out Japa [the repetition of a mantra] of 'So Ham'. That Japa should not be carried out by the mind. It should be experienced in the breath so that even when you are engaged in your daily activities you should be conscious of your day's 21.600 breaths. When your subconscious or your inner consciousness unites with your breath throughout the 24 hours of a day, 21.600 rhythms are experienced with a speed of 15 to 19 rounds per minute (which is at least 900 breaths per hour). Then Anahata Nada manifests itself.*" He continues: "*There will be light in the spine. The 'Sun' energy [which is connected to the right half of the brain], **Surya Nadi**, will be awakened. You will feel an indescribable vibrating sound resonate from every pore of your body and it will be like **Om** or **Soham**.*"

This is a description of Nada Yoga according to Yogi Goraknath.

Nada Yoga in India

Different Nada Yoga schools exist in India - for example those which came into existence after Maharishi Mehidhas, Radha Swami and Kabir.

The initiation into Nada Yoga in India is passed on personally as is the case with the initiation into the use of Mantra and into the great Kriya Yoga. But the Nada Yoga Sadhana remains incomplete both in practice and in theory. Hatha Yoga, Dhyana Yoga, Raja Yoga and other branches of yoga are more complete and are described with accuracy down to the smallest detail.

But this is not the way with Nada Yoga, perhaps because it is taught directly from teacher to student, and not revealed in writing.

"The mind exists as long as there is sound, but with the cessation of sounds, there is the state of being above the mind.

The sound is absorbed in the Akshara (indestructible), and the soundless state is the supreme seat.

The mind, which along with Prana has its Karmic affinities destroyed by the constant concentration upon Nada, is absorbed in the unstained One. There is no doubt about it."

(Nada Bindu Upanishad)

This page was updated: 24.06.2006 | © Copyright & Impressum | Powered by eZ Publish

SCANDINAVIAN YOGA AND MEDITATION SCHOOL

Phone: +46 372 550 63 •

Fax: +46 372 550 36

Email: haa@yoga.se

Haa Course Center
S-340 13 Hamneda
Sweden