



THE HEALING POWER OF MUSIC

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Abstract

Music delves into the depths of humanity and human consciousness to create harmony. The natural harmony of musical sounds, when combined in a specific manner, has a dynamic and powerful impact in balancing the energies of the body. "Sound can heal the body, mind and spirit as well as the emotions. Music is capable of improving happiness, peace, health and concentration. It is however important to know the method and duration for which Music Therapy is to be administered the first steps towards this is the correct diagnosis of the disease and then the selection of the precise raga that will be helpful. Raga is the sequence of selected notes (swaras) that lend appropriate 'mood' or emotion in a selective combination. Depending on their nature, a raga could induce or intensify joy or sorrow, violence or peace and it is this quality which forms the basis for musical application.

Key words: Healing, Power, Music.

Introduction

Music delves into the depths of humanity and human consciousness to create harmony. The natural harmony of musical sounds, when combined in a specific manner, has a dynamic and powerful impact in balancing the energies of the body. "Sound can heal the body, mind and spirit as well as the emotions. Through this interrelationship of sound and self, we can balance and

harmonize any of these aspects within ourselves and affect all parts of our being. Through this resonance with sound we can heal our inner self as well as create harmony within our relationship.

Music is the language of emotion. Music is Divine. Everyone loves listening to music. Several scientific studies have been conducted to indicate the healing power of music and its role in improving the cognitive ability, reducing stress levels, relieving acute pain and causing several other positive changes in our body and mind. Music therapy now days are being widely as a supplementary system of treatment. Music Therapy is not the subject of an article only. The entire subject is now in the experimental and implementation.

Advantage of music therapy

Music is capable of improving happiness, peace, health and concentration. It is however important to know the method and duration for which Music Therapy is to be administered the first steps towards this is the correct diagnosis of the disease and then the selection of the precise raga that will be helpful. This knowledge can be obtained through regular experiments and experience. Procedure, discipline and a systematic method will help achieve this goal. Teaching music from very early age is beneficial. Every child is born with seven Major chakras. The base or the mooladhar chakra starts functioning from the time of birth. As the child grows, gradually the other six chakras start functioning one by one and by the age of twenty one the process is normally complete.

According to an ancient Indian text, Swara Sastra, the seventy-two melakarta ragas (parent ragas) control the 72 important nerves in the body. It is believed that if one sings with due devotion, adhering to the raga lakshana (norms) and shruti shuddhi, (pitch purity) the raga could affect the particular nerve in the body in a favorable manner. Music has been considered as having the therapeutic value for centuries. Hippocrates, Greek Father of medicine, played music for the patients having mental problems. Aristotle also started that music works as a force that purified the emotions. In the thirteenth century, Arab hospitals contained music-rooms for the benefit of patients (Antrim). At the time of World War I and II Musicians would travel to hospitals, particularly in the United Kingdom, and play music for soldiers suffering from war-related emotional and physical trauma (Dunja).

Music and its relationship with Energy Centres in the Human Body

In our day to day life, we find that all the seven chakras are not active all the time. Some do not work properly, as there are some hindrances, due to lack of required energy powers since these chakras are connected with different organs, any hindrance in their functioning creates physical imbalance in the person. Emotional and mental imbalances are also seen depending upon the state of the chakras. Indian classical music produces different effect such as healing. Cooling, soothing and emotional psyche of the listener. When the energy, vibrations and frequency of Indian classical music match with the energy, vibrations and frequency of chakras, they get activated. This inner integration makes a natural path for the Kundalini to rise upward. When rising, the Kundalini nourishes the chakras and provides proper energy to them. Since organs are connected with the chakras, they also get the proper and adequate energy required and thus the balance is restored. Once the Kundalini finds its path to rise, it rises and pierces through the fontanel bone area and forms connection with the cosmic energy (power of divine love); it enlightens the brain, and activate all the nerves in the brain, which in return enlightens the heart. Music which resonates with the seven chakras of the body can thus energize and re-tunes the body.

Training in Indian music commences with learning the seven shudh notes or swaras in ascending and descending order for vocal practice, an individual note is sung for longer span to increase breathing. Gradually melodic phrases are used. Indian ragas are based on certain combinations of notes used in fixed set of ascending and descending order. Sometimes one or two notes may be omitted; the pattern of notes used may simple or complex. Every raga will have a specific note which is extensively used-this note is referred to as the 'vadi swar' of that raga. The basic method by which Indian ragas work on the body is very simple. The seven notes are connected to the seven chakras which influence the organ and the endocrine system.

Healing through Indian Classical Ragas

Raga is the sequence of selected notes (swaras) that lend appropriate 'mood' or emotion in a selective combination. Depending on their nature, a raga could induce or intensify joy or sorrow, violence or peace and it is this quality which forms the basis for musical application.

As far as Ragas in Indian classical music is concerned its been defined in various ways. In Indian Texts its been explained as 'Swara Sannivesh' or you can say melodic patterns of musical tones. Again for Raga its's been said that 'Ranjayati Iti Ragah' means it should be pleasant to ears. So if we will analyse it we will come across the structural and functional quality of a raga. The structural part of a raga is nothing but as the combination of all Shruti, Swara, Varna, Alankar, Gamak etc which are all the elements of swaras. As far as the functional aspect of a raga is concerned it's the manifestation of all these constituents and whose ultimate goal is to please the ear at the end. It was Matang for the first time who used the word Raga and he has explained in the technical sense that it's a particular sound formation embellished by musical tones and the movement of tonal patterns which is pleasant and delightful to the human mind is called Raga.

The Raga research center in Chennai Indian is currently making comprehensive study of Indian Ragas and evaluating their therapeutic with the help of music, doctor and psychiatrists. It is believed that classical Indian Ragas can benefit a whole host of conditions raging from insomnia, high and low blood pressure to schizophrenia and epilepsy. The Raga research center Chennai has established after research in curing of diseases through classical ragas, that each raga has a different effect on the diseases.

Raga Anand-bhairavi reduces hypertension similarly raga Shankarabharnam Provides relief to mental patients. The Head of the Raga center Mr. K. Vidyanathan says that Indian classical music is full of miraculous power.

Some ragas like Darbari Kanhada, Khamaj and Pooriya are found to help in defusing mental tension, particularly in the case of hysterics. For those who suffer from hypertension, ragas such as Ahirbhairav, Pooriya and Todi are prescribed. To control anger and bring down the violence within, Carnatic ragas like Punnagavarali, Sahana etc. do come handy. Not only psychological impact, but also somatic or physiological impact of ragas has come to light in some recent works (Sairam, 2004b). For instance, stomach-related disorders are said to be cured with some Hindustani Ragas such as Deepak (acidity), Gunkali and Jaunpuri (constipation) and Malkauns or Hindolam (intestinal gas and for controlling fevers). Fevers like malaria are also said to be controlled by the ragas like Marva. For headaches, relaxing with the ragas like Darbari Kanada, Jayjaywanti and Sohni is said to be beneficial (Verma, 2004). There is a growing awareness that

ragas could be a safe alternative for many medical interventions. Simple iterative musical rhythms with low pitched swaras, as in bhajans and kirtans are the time-tested sedatives, which can even substitute the synthetic analgesics, which show many a side-effect. They are capable of leading to relaxation, as observed with the alpha- levels of the brain waves. They may also lead to favorable hormonal changes in the system (Crandall,1986).

Indian music, with its many Ragas, is known to be particularly therapeutic value.

Therapeutic roles of various Ragas.

Ragas	Therapeutic applications
Ahir bhairav	Indigestion, Rheumatic Arthritis, Hypertension
Asavari	Building confidence
Bageshri	Insomnia
Basant Bahar	Gall stones (Cholecystitis)
Bhairavi	Rheumatic Arthritis, Sinusitis
Bhimpalasi	Anxiety, Hypertension
Brindabani Sarang	Depression
Chandrakauns	Anorexia
Darbari	Sedative
Darbari Kanada	Headache, Asthma
Deepak	Indigestion, Anorexia, Hyperacidity

Indian classical ragas are categorized in such a systematic way that we understand the therapeutic values only by knowing their name and characteristics, like Raga Pooriya is basically used for creating sleepy mood. It is said that Pt. Onkar Nath Thakur sings Raga Pooriya to cure sleeplessness of Mussolini great ruler of Italy.

Pt. Onkar Nath Thakur observed number of beneficial effects on human beings. A boy suffering from insomania was cured as a result of rendering of raga Pooriya by pandit ji. It has been reported by Ved Mani Singh Thakur that Malaria, hysteria, insomnia, tuberculosis constipation, typhoid and many other diseases can be cured through various ragas like Hindol, Marwa, Pooriya, Bilawal, Tilang, Ramkali, Bhairavi, Malkauns, Piloo, Asawari, Bhairav, Vrindavani Sarang, Desh etc.

Omkar Therapy

The sound is OUM, it is known as the primordial sound. This primordial sound or Omkar or Pranav mantra is very powerful and proper chanting of this sound can cure many diseases as well as keep a person healthy and peaceful. The Omkar Therapy is part of a discipline called music therapy (in this case Indian music), a type of therapy that allows the improvement of the health through music.

The Omkar consists of 4 sounds: A and U contracts that give O, O nasal (anuswara) and M. Each of these sounds has a direct effect on our energy system.

1. A- kar has the power to activate the left channel or lunar channel,
2. U- kar has the power to activate the right channel or solar channel,
3. M- kar acts directly on the center channel.

This therapy is widely used for stress management.

Conclusion:

Indian classical music has very successfully been used in therapy. Various ragas have been found to be very effective in curing many diseases. Thus, it has opened the doors for the musicians to use classical Ragas in music therapy. A major advantage of music therapy is its versatility which indicates the possibility of combining it with other related forms of therapy and neighboring disciplines. I am an artiste in the Kirana Gharana and I am a performer till now. I have experienced Music therapy is the use of music for positive changes in the psychological, physical, cognitive, or social functioning of individuals with health or educational problems. It is closely connected with the behavioral science and is a connecting link to art and science.

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