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## From the Chief Editor's Desk

### Mystic Instrument of The Twelve Channels

The main idea behind the tantric tactics is to channelize the energy in such a way that it leads the awareness to the point where the realm of effortlessness begins. One cannot go on striving incessantly nor can an aspirant begin with effortlessness in theory at the very beginning. The Lord has said in the Gita – “A man desirous of getting seated in yogic perfection must work for it. The same man after having seated in yoga must retire from all efforts or karmas.”

आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्मकारणमुच्यते ।योगारूढस्यतस्येव शमःकारणमुच्यते ।

(āruruṣṭormuneryogaṃ karmakāraṇamucyate | yogārūḍhasyatasyeva śamah kāraṇamucyate |)

A total assimilation of the entire objectivity precedes the broadcasting of the rays of pure subjective consciousness.

The threshold of these two phases is utilised for abridging the course of metaphysical process. The tactics of channelizing the twelve passages for the dawning of the pure subjective consciousness has been indicated by the adept Vatul Nath through the process of “casting of the great rays.” This rising must precede the Krama or order of effort, gnosis, chewing, total consuming and the ultimate intuitive insight of one's perpetual essential nature. The energy of consciousness circulates through the conduit of twelve channels and their myriad divergent and objective reciprocation. Ten organs of action and knowledge plus mind and reason are the passages through which the awareness gets divergent. The tantras group mind with senses of action and reason with senses of knowledge. Marichi is ambiguous a shaft of rays as well as the seers or presumably the esoteric import of the seers named Marichis etc. manifest in the form of an orb of radiations which in turn denote the array of projection of Sanskrit alphabet. अव्यक्तलिङ्गिनं दृष्ट्वा संभाषंते मरीचयः (avyaktaliṅginam dṛṣṭvā sambhāṣante marīcayah). Marichis communicate with a man whose insignia is discreet. These are certainly not the pell mell voices in the head or what is called black noise these days . The voice of Marichis can be compared to the word of wisdom whispered into the ears by some omniscient entities. The deranged disorderly outflux of jabber icky resonating in the head with trail of its response in the psyche must halt and the conscience must sync with the all pervasive principle of consciousness for the expansion of Marichis . Vikas in this parlance is shredding the shroud of mental cacophony which leads to a distinct experience of Matrikas which are configurated to originate from the perpetual nada or the eternal word and finally to subside into it. The configuration of the four modes of speech further diverges into eight groups of alphabet. Their combination leads to a reciprocation of entire noumenal phenomena. Ancient adepts de iced knacks for reversing the process. The awareness converges into twelve channels corresponding to the sense organs of action and knowledge plus mind and reason. Transcending this is more of passive phenomena involving faith and devotion, since all efforts would only result in a divergence of awareness. Samba the son of Lord Krishna in his soul stirring prayer to the sun god says :

यस्तनक्चक्षुःश्रवणरसनाघ्राणवाप्यंघ्रिपाणी

पायूपस्थस्थितिरपिमनोबुद्ध्यंहंकारमूर्तिः

तिष्ठत्यंबहिरपिचजगत् भासयन्द्वादशात्मा

मार्तंडंतंसकलकरणाधारमेकंप्रपद्ये । (सांबपंचाशिका)

(yastanakcaksu:śravaṇarasanāghrāṇavāṇyamghripāṇī

pāyūpasthasthitirapimanobuddhyamhamkāramūrti:

tiṣṭhtyamrbahirapicajagat bhāsayandvādaśātmā

mārtamḍamtaṃsakalakaraṇādhāramekamprapadye |) (sāmbapaṃcāśikā)

I seek refuge in the sun who manifests within and without as the substratum of twelve senses mind and reason by manifesting in twelve forms (the sun of each zodiac as well as the presiding deity of the ten senses, mind and intellect.

### Swami Paranand Tirth

Founder President CEO

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## **Advaita Principle In Universe**

*Niraj Kumar*

The Universe is in flux. There are two colliding tendencies. Things tend to attain stability, but the nature tends to make state of things unstable. Buddha observed the latter and postulated a path to achieve the former. This contradiction makes the universe to spew the diverse pattern of aggregates. When the material universe achieved a critical threshold, self-regulatory systems emerged on the scene. But, it took billions of years for biological evolution for the emergence of self-conscious beings, we, the humans. Our universe is characterized by seemingly contradictory principles. While as a whole, the Universe is elegant, and comprehensible with simple categories, the complexity arises while unraveling the parts. As a whole total universe of the energy is exactly zero and hence, it is a pure nothingness; but in part, it comprise of myriads of —something. As a whole, it appears immutable, but everything in the universe is prone to decay and dissolution. The physicist coins the term entropy to explain this universal tendency to decay. We know how any building, cloth, food, timber, bodies decay. Heavy atoms decay through radioactivity. An even proton, which was earlier believed to be the most stable elementary particles, decay and has a longer span of half-life period of  $1.29 \times 10$  to power 34 years.

But why did material world evolve into biological world with a new supplementary form of decay-Death? Was not the universe self-propelling system without biological beings? The biological world can be seen as the offshoot of another tendency inherent in the universe accelerated change. Biological world acts as accelerator for bringing the change on the earth's crust. Biological world can be seen as augmenting the development rate of matter. Biological world has arrived at this juncture when human beings have evolved with power to accelerate change on the earth's system and geologists have started claiming arrival of an Anthropocene period as a geological period.

Human beings can be characterized as possessing newer property of self-consciousness and —reflection . Therefore, information, thinking, consciousness, belief and ideology has trumped over other properties in the case of human beings. It took only a few million years for human beings to usher in information revolution by affecting changes in material world itself. The next logical step is emerging and we soon can have the self-aware automata created by human beings. Apart from decay and death, the new corresponding disorderly principle that afflicts self-aware mankind is the dementia. Dementia is the decay of the capacity of self-awareness. It is interesting to observe the corresponding growth in memory- related diseases alongside the development of highly intelligent machines. But, human beings have become co-creator of the universe by directly imbuing the material world with higher intelligence. The self-organizing machines have emerged out of human quest to build intelligent designs. Scientists at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in collaboration with researchers from Harvard University's Wyss Institute and the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences have built a 2-dimensional a flat object that can fold itself into a walking robot. By fusing folding principle into robotics, scientists at Harvard school of engineering and applied sciences also created a Kilobot which is a team of 1,024 simple robots that can operate as a single unit, like termites in a termite mound. These have the ability to swarm together to form complex shapes like the letter —K, or a starfish. When these tiny robots are given a simple instruction like —make the letter K and then left to get on with it without further human interaction, they accomplish the task by communicating with each other via infrared. Thus, swarm of robots can cooperate in a collective. Is this the precursor to creating another form of living materiality bypassing the biological principle?

Self-organizing robots can further be developed to work like the simple biological cells which are the building block of complex biological organism, including human beings. Human endeavour to achieve the short-circuiting of the biological pathway may in turn lead to emergence of self-aware machines. It was understood that dreaming is the manifestation of our propensity to self-awareness. Now the whole architecture of dreaming has been excavated. The engineers have been claiming that androids do dream during electric sleep. But, once the mechanism of human dreaming is inserted into android, in all likelihood, robots can be experiencing dreaming. In last November, a cleaning robot, Irobot Roomba 760, is alleged to have committed suicide by climbing on to a kitchen hotplate where it was burned to death. The incident that took place in Hinterstoder in Kirchdorf, Austria was widely reported. Thus, self-awareness is emergent in machines now. The question that puzzles is why should mankind be

incessant in imbuing intelligence and self-consciousness directly into material world, short-circuiting the biological world? Biological self-consciousness was created through carbon-pathway, but French philosopher Gilles Deleuze rightly observes that we are creating a silicon-pathway to intelligence. This question has been in my mind for more than two decades.

On 29th October, 1991, while contemplating over the complex issue of teleological principle in the Universe, I stumbled across a preliminary answer. I was perplexed with the question, why should death emerge in biological world? Wasn't decay in the material world sufficient? I followed Sri Aurobindo's idea of differential rate of inner & outer world and amalgamated in that late night reflection. Outer world evolves at a slower pace than the inner world. Death is a mechanism to maintain harmony between two worlds. The inner world develops faster due to the power of consciousness. Man's incessant urge has always been to develop outer world. Science & technology is meant to make nature evolve faster. With our intervention on earth's crust, mankind is accelerating the development of the outer world. Communication technologies and infrastructures have accelerated the transfer of matter. In fact, we are now entering into a world where we are able to print 3-D materials using communication technology and apply the same to achieve teleportation within a decade. The social or political system works to develop the society or nation. Our urge to develop the outer world springs from our fear of —death.

Mankind has always dreamt of conquering death. If two rates of development are equal, there would not be any necessity of death! I concluded that fateful night that while human aim is to conquer death, the directionality in the Universe is towards attaining maximum conscious state. Fear of death impels man to develop the outer world with an ultimate purpose to conquer death. Spirituality is a techne to conquer fear of Death, while science & technology springs from our urge to accelerate the outer world so as to erase the necessity of death, thereby overcoming the existential dread of Death. Spirituality directly concerns with obliterating any sign of fear of death from self by achieving a non-dual state of awareness. Spirituality aims to achieve an *Advaita* (nondual) state when there is no longer any boundary between inner & outer world, where there is the awareness of *Tat Tvam Asi* (Thou are me) and *Aham Brahmasmi* ( I am the Universe). Science and technology is the complementary path to spirituality alone whose goal is to develop the outer world so as to bring harmony with the inner world.

With recent spate in voices emanating from different centres for a Trans-human future, I am optimistic that finally man-machine singularity would efface the differential rate between the material and biological world. The digital immortality will be succeeded by real biological immortality, since there would be no necessity for death. Will that be the end of religion? Will that be the singularity moment for even our contemporary socio-political system? What would the immortal human beings do? Will Man become the image of God and co-creator of the Universe by accelerating the rate of growth of material world and further evolution of intelligence in biological world? This is likely to be so. There will be no existential crisis for either immortal biological man or the immortals android clones. The challenges always lurk far ahead.

We can not anticipate the challenges until we cross the boundary of singularity! This urge to achieve harmony in the universe so that there is no necessity of decay, death, and dementia (3-D) can be termed as the *Advaita* principle. The difference between inner and outer world is erased by the effort of the whole as well as parts of the universe. *Advaita* principle not only works in the realm of the human beings, but inherent in non-organic materiality even. But, the effort of mankind to achieve immutability of materiality and immortality of conscious designs will mark a decisive break in the evolution of universe. To achieve non-duality of inner and outer world is the foremost drive of the universe in its every shade.

(*Niraj Kumar* has written on Hindu and Buddhist Tantras. His forthcoming work is on *Kalacakra Tantra* .He lives in New Delhi, India.)

## Wisdom from Shiva's Rattle Drum

Swami Paranand Tirth



॥ घढधष् ॥ 10॥

घढधष् सर्वभूतानां पादपायू उपस्थकः ।  
कर्मन्द्रियगणा ह्येते जाता हि परमार्थतः ॥ 20॥

(ghaḍhadhaṣ sarvabhūtānāṃ pādapāyū upasthakaḥ ।  
karmendriyagaṇā hyete jātā hi paramārthataḥ ॥)

The ninth beat of Shiva's rattle drum manifested as the organs of locomotion, excretion and reproduction.

**Keywords:** Bisyllabic, Resonate, Vak, Shabda Brahma, limbic movements, stimuli the metaphysical birth , kshobha , enforced subservience , righteousness

The primordial word which as one school of thought maintains is inseparable from its meaning , manifests as it's "meaning counterpart in various forms at various levels of the power and process of creation. This aphorism is more of a sequel to the previous speech and hand manifestation of the bisyllabic eighth beat. There is an instinctive relationship between verbal expression and gestures made through hand. Somananda, the grand master of Shaivite mystic Abhinavgupta enunciates in his work *Shiv Drishti*, how speech or Vak is not just like any other organ of action. Vak or the conceived and expressed word has its root deep in the conscious and universal substratum. It resonates within all sentient being but only highly developed and contemplative mystic are aware of this phenomena. The all pervasive अग्नि in the form of cosmic vak dawned upon mortals and entered them in the form of word. While still in the primary stage, its unison with meaning and as it gets grosser begins to separate, till in audible form where it is completely separated from its meaning. This and Shabda Brahma according to some mystic canons is eternal and imperishable. This beginning and endless absolute principle accounts for the entire universal phenomena including the manifestation at various forms in the form of causal, subtle and gross existence. The Vak or the eternal word mentioned in the previous aphorism is only a conditioned expression of the universally pervasive Shabda Brahma which interlaces all fourteen beats *aka* aphorisms and thus the entire ontological categorisation of the universal phenomena. Feet or the organ of locomotion, excretion and sexual enjoyment develop in a triple way: firstly the way they show up in an embryo, then when a person is able to walk on his feet and thirdly when the principle of righteousness governs and

restricts his movements. Limbic movements regulated and disciplined by ethics accelerate the pace of spiritual perfection.

Defining an ascetic the holy canons say that a yogi is signified by absence of irregular limbic movements and even his REM patterns are well defined

न पाणिपादचपलोननेत्रचपलो यतिः

The term *parmarthatah* in the Karika of Nandikeshawara refers to as it were the dawning of the respective presiding deities of the limbs at a microcosmic and microcosmic level. At macrocosmic level in the beginning of the creation and microcosmically while the all pervasive spirit pervades the individual in the form of consciousness as an agency of various organic functions .

योंतःप्रविश्य मम वाचमिमां प्रसुप्तां संजीवयत्यखिलशक्तिधरः स्वधाम्ना

अन्यांश्च हस्त चरणश्रवणस्त्वगादीन् प्राणान्नमोभगवतेपुरुषायतुभ्यम्

(yomtah praviśya mama vācamimāṃ prasuptāṃ samjīvayatyakhilāśaktidhara:  
svadhāmnā

anyāṃśca hasta caraṇaśravaṇastvagādīn prāṇānnamobhagavatepuruṣāyatubhyam)

While trying to pray to the all pervasive Purusha -Dhruva the ascetic boy, who is dumbfounded and flabbergasted as the lord incarnates before him, begins his felicitation thus:

My obeisance to the lord who is omniscient and endowed with all might in his spiritual magnanimity. He pervades me from within and revives and inspires my speech which is in a state of slumber along with other organs like hands, feet, ears skin and spirit or prana .

There is a debate in Panchashi -a treatise on monistic Vedanta about the sense organs being made up from the five basic elements. They remain just the same even in a dead body after the soul has gone to meet his maker. What it takes for their perceptions of their respective stimuli is their having been presided by their respective deities. In this case Vishnu, Yama and Prajapathi are the presidents. When these presiding deities interlace and decree the respective sense perceptions they can be said to have been “born”, at least in a metaphysical sense. This is just what the author of Kashika means by

जाता हि परमार्थतः।

The “metaphysical “birth” of these sense organs including the ones we have discussed in the preceding aphorism is their ability to perceive or carry out their respective functions. Upon being presided over by the deities we have mentioned earlier.

Locomotion as the most cardinal limbic movement doesn't pertain only to walking alone. The root गम् in Sanskrit grammar can be construed to mean many things according to the permutation and combination of all or some prefixes and the three persons and singulars, dual plurals. The continuation of impetus from speech or verbal expression to gestures or madras displayed by hands, the same also applies to limbic movements of hands and feet. One author of a tantric canon while describing the term क्षोभ says that the hands move first before a man begins to walk. In the ancient books of conduct for a Hindu the direction, distance and the process of answering the calls of nature is specified. In the Buddhist ethics going to several places like a pub or house of ill fame is banned. Such advancements in ethical injunctions expect civilised people to be mindful about their limbic movements.

Irregular limbic movements like loitering aimlessly, hunting, gambling etc. has been depicted as inversions arising from unregulated libido drive. The primordial organs and their perceptions or action were in perfect harmony with the principle of ऋतम्. With deviation at an individual level the rapport was disturbed and the essence of righteousness diminished. The ecclesiastical governance and subservience to it became necessary with increasing deviation. This enforced subservience doesn't suffice to refine or cultivate a particular virtue, especially when it comes to syncing with something that is innate and instinctive. Conscience for example manifests as "voices in the head" which are either too oppressive or too mild. The choice, in most of the cases is the aspirants discretion -he tosses the coin till he wins! This remains till the conscience, spiritual insight and the underlying principle of ऋतम् or righteousness are in tune.

The creator who also pervades his creation at all three i.e. gross, subtle and causal levels plus microcosmic and macrocosmic manifestations is always present . Thus Shiva, the virtual author of these aphoristic beats is present within them. The very first aphorism describes the creative, sustaining and annihilation's principle. He along with his omniscience regulates these various gradations of objective, manifestations as pure subjective consciousness A docile subservience to him and his various manifestation can establish the rapport between the creation ,creature and the creator ,this is a golden path way to ethical perfection .

The ninth beat from Shiva's drum created and pervaded the limbs, their presiding deities and their objects. Owing to their origin in the Supreme Being they have the innate prowess to restore their rapport with the perfect cosmic being. The ethical discipline is merely a secondary means to this restoration. The innate and indwelling principle of righteousness is the room temperature because of its being pervaded by the divine word which manifests as the aphoristic beat and thus organs and their objects. Usually organs of action are attributed to prana and those of knowledge to mind. The mind, reason, ego and heart is in turn activated by the empirical soul and the cosmic principle through the individual soul. Ultimately the cosmic principle is the agency for their efficacy and perfection when they are in synchrony with Him and when the synchrony is disrupted these lead to degeneration and imperfection . There is very good analogy of a chariot, charioteer and horses in one of the major canons of Vedantic metaphysics. A man who is in tune with his conscious nature and is fully aware reaches the ultimate goal. A charioteer whose limbs is comparable to horses and objects of sense perception to the road, if not conscious of his spiritually perfect nature and is not fully aware meets with an accident and never reaches the goal. This difference lies in believing that senses are innately pervaded by the righteous principle and must be regulated by them throughout his journey of spiritual evolution . And not believing in the law of karmas , prenatal and post Mortem consequence of a soul . The non believer is bound to crash land since he has no spiritual goal as such. Unbridled "fun riding" and "road rage" culminates into a spiritual disaster. The revelation which can only be understood through a grammar caricatured on these aphorisms enlighten us about these injunctions which lead human kind to perfection. This is yet another explanation of the phenomena -secondary though !

The metaphysical origin of various constituents of the universal phenomena doesn't have to be explained in just one particular way they are devised by the revelations to befit the competence of an aspirant to help him transcend the objective portion of the phenomena . This dialectics is best understood when a group of aphorisms or the entire set of fourteen aphorisms is collectively reflected over . The preceding two aphorisms explain the power and prowess of the evolution of matter and energy from the primordial word or शब्दब्रह्म is a successive as well as concomitant process at the same time depending on the perspective of an aspirant who is yet to transcend his

disposition as a constituent- component of the universal phenomena and the stand point of an enlightened being no as *Spanda Karika* says sports with this universe as a boy does with toy . The next aphorism encrypts how the sense organs of knowledge spring forth from the tenth beat of Shiva's rattle drum

*To be continued.....*

## **Sri Sankuka's Interpretation of Rasa-Sutra**

*Geetika Kaw Kher*



The Indian aesthetic thought is ruled by stalwarts like Bharata, Anandvardhana and Abhinavagupta. There has been considerable amount of research and critical examination in their works. The common thread binding all three of them is their thought provoking inputs on Rasa theory. Rasa--roughly translated: "as emotive aesthetics"--is one of the most important concepts in classical Indian aesthetics, having pervasive influence in theories of painting, sculpture, dance, poetry, and drama. . Rasa theory argues that the presentation of emotions is the proper object and domain of poetic discourse.

Bharata in *Natyashastra* his pioneering work on Indian dramatics mentions eight rasas and says Rasa is produced when 'Vibhava', Anubhava and Vyabichari bhava come together.

Vibhavanubhava-vyabichari-samyogad Rasa nispatih (*Rasa Sutra, Natyashastra*)

Vibhava: A medium through which an emotion arises in an actor e.g. A child riding a stick and enjoying it as if he were actually riding a horse.

Anubhava: All the physical changes arising due to the vibhavas e.g. changes in facial expression and body language

Vyabichari bhava: Transient emotions eg. Weeping with joy.

However the whole discussion on Rasa and all the complex questions arising alongwith are incomplete without explaining the inputs from the other pre- Abhinavagupta commentators on *Rasa Sutra* from Kashmir. Any scholar or student who tries to venture into the depth of their contribution right at the onset faces a major crisis due to the lack of documentation and records. Hence when one started looking for Sri Sankuka's writing, one realized that none of the original stuff exists and only information about the scholar and his ideas can be gleaned through Abhinavabharti and writings of Mammata and Hemchandra..In the former text, the commentary on *Rasa Sutra* by Sankuka is explained in brief only to be refuted. Nonetheless this refutation cannot be taken as final and the scholar's work considered less important. As R B Patankar observes —...these three critics must have taken Sankuka's theory seriously: otherwise they would not have given it the space they have done in their writings: nor would have Bhatta Tauta thought it worth his while to attempt its detailed refutation...||<sup>2</sup>

One would like to plead for considering the theories of these commentators on *Rasa Sutra* not as important archaic steps leading towards the genius of Abhinavagupta but as independent theories having their own merits. In this short write-up, I am trying to look at Sri Sankuka's theory on *Rasa* and his interpretation of *Rasa Sutra* clearly from a logician's (nyayika's) point of view and point out its far-reaching philosophical and metaphysical aspects.

Born in Kashmir and trained in the Nyaya philosophy, Sri Sankuka used clear cut logic to explain his stand. He studied the Rasa Sutra not from the point of view of production of the aesthetic object on the stage, but from the considerations of the matter in which aesthetic experience arises from the aesthetic object. He vehemently critiqued the theory of 'Art as imitation' proposed by Bhattalollata, his older contemporary. His ground for such refutation was simply the fact that the basic mental state (sthayi bhava) cannot be imitated i.e. if an actor is playing the part of a victim of a tragedy; the actor himself does not undergo the pain and suffering of the character hence there is a sense of detachment. Here the actor is constantly trying to present a mental state and for all we know the basic mental state he himself is undergoing might be that of anxiety to do well on stage or anxiety about the success of the drama and what he could do with the money and the fame. Since the tragedy is neither the actor's nor the spectator's the feeling of enjoyment is possible. There is a sure 'proscenium barrier' which automatically puts the actors in a totally different plane...a place where for some time the audience can forget its existential dilemmas and enjoy someone else's tragedy or story...someone who is just in the realm of imagination.

Hence the point, which Sankuka tries to stress on, is that art cannot be an ordinary imitation but it is a kind of an indirect Inference. Hence the sthayi bhava of the character, which is inferred by the actor, is called Rasa. Thus Sri Sankuka interprets the Rasa Sutra to mean that the basic mental state inferred from vibhavas and anubhavas is Rasa.

*AbhinavaBharti* gives a detailed account of the theory of 'Chitaraturaga nyaya', which is the most interesting contribution of Sankuka to the vast repertoire of aesthetic theories. The arrangement of scenes etc. on the stage together with successful acting by the actor gives rise to the consciousness of the identity of the actor with the hero whom he impersonates. This consciousness is not of the nature of illusion nor of doubt. It cannot be said to be true or false. It is similar to the consciousness that one has at the sight of a life like picture of a particular horse and is called "Analogy of a pictorial horse"- *Chitaraturaga nyaya*'. The perception relevant in art is different from the four known varieties of perception enumerated by the Sanskrit scholar's viz. veridical perception, false perception of resemblance and doubtful perception. The most enigmatic and interesting question here is what kind of seeing is relevant for *citra-turaga pratiti*.

To understand the concept, let us assume that one is looking at a painting. Actually what one is seeing is a framed piece of canvas with pigments spread over it but one often says that one can see a particular object which the picture reminds us of. Once that is established one identifies the other related objects in the painting. That all these things are spatially and temporarily inter-related in certain ways is clear; but they are so inter-related in the picture-space and picture-time, which are not continuous with our space and time. To make it simpler one can take the example of the mirror space. The objects reflected in the mirror are the reflections of the objects placed in the room yet they exist in a different space altogether. Similar is the case with the picture. Our relation with the objects in the picture-world appears to be peculiar. It appears that there is a limited one-way causal relation between these objects and us. To quote an example, suppose one is looking at a picture of a person. Whatever one does will have absolutely no effect on the person himself. Often as children one must have drawn beard and moustache on the pictures in the newspaper or magazines. While on one hand our drawing makes no difference to the person who is represented in the picture on the other hand neither can that picture admonish us or hit us for doing the mischief. But let us assume the picture is of a holy saint or a divinity that we revere then the image assumes an immense power. Then it gains the capacity to move the faithful onlooker though still it cannot move or come out of that picture frame. One feels that this wonderful argument of Sri Sankuka very beautifully and logically explains the essence of idol worship where the devotee is sure that the idol is just a medium. Hence devotees throughout the world have created images of the deities and saints in whom they feel holy presence. The devotees are very much aware that the image is not the deity itself but just serves as a reminder of the all pervading one and as an object to concentrate ones devotion on. An image or an idol allows one to have a one to one relationship with the deity and worship. Almighty is in form of mother, friend, lover, father and thus personalize their worship.

Thus the beauty of his theory is not just limited to the Arts as it is understood in present day context. All the Indian aesthetes who have commented on the Rasa-Sutra of Bharata, essentially from Kashmir, have

been great thinkers and philosophers in their own right. The fact that they could derive so much out of a simple appearing sutra and for generations comment on it talks of their excellent scholarship, power to articulate and condense the essence of the written word.

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## Essence of Nada - Primordial Sound Into Practice

*Suva*



When we are born, we relate to the sound. We relate to the touch, smell, emotions, motions and audio-visual registration. We know that these elements appear as decoding tools that evolved long before the words formed out of the primary core - sound. The words that decorate to form a sentence, more or less can be assumed as a compiled refinement of e-motions. Therefore words sit in the secondary mold to cast a spell on the multiplication of diverse differentiation. Gradually humans developed these patterns of lingua franca to highlight the coding system of communication evolving from the sonic space. The distribution of these compact word patterns had been influenced by geographical and cultural palettes, within the umbrella of shifting pigmented civilizations. But in the midst of lingual environment what is the role of sound? How can we discover the essence of primordial sound – Nada in our practice and understanding of music? Many scholars have already interpreted words and notations of sound in myriad textual frames. However to proceed further I will illustrate more on the essence of sound that touched me through my visual, performative and performance practice in the chapters of my artistic growth. My toddler days were nourished with the sensory filaments of sound through music and the intricacies of rhythm. It was far different than the modern day electrified gadgets that are condensed with screens to touch and type. Sound of Vedic hymns, chants from the Buddhist Gomba, Sunday morning bells from the nearby church and soothing azan resonating throughout the sky, painted an esoteric environment around the vicinities. Then there was the home atmosphere that magnified story telling sessions, sound of common fireplace, aromatic sound of cooking and the sound of affinity among neighbours. These sounds were the primordial space before words demented my being, by refining and defining the queer world of differences through language, customs, compartmental branding in the name of religion, taboos and cultural razors. What was so appealing about such audible colours? Being amplified by this sonic space, the creative growth of mine often came up with questions, identifying the body of sound. How would one look into the formalistic feature of sound? Is it possible for us to visually experience the tonal frequency of sound? How can the audible-tonal mood be visually preconceived? These questions may be lyrically answered through an enriching excerpt from the poem – The Brook by Alfred Lord Tennyson :-

I chatter over stony ways,

In little sharps and trebles,

I bubble into eddying bays,

I babble on the pebbles. -----| (4th stanza)

Tennyson's poem – The Brook, has a phonetic note towards the depiction of sonic velocity. His verses catch the tonal frequency in lucid typographic scales perceiving a dynamic flow of sound. This poem attempts to record a visual interpretation of audible perambulation that this native stream performs.

Would it be appropriate to express that Tennyson explores the primordial sound -Nada, while recognizing the suchness of experience? Nada is the Sanskrit word for —sound,|| and meditating on the inner sound means nada yoga, also indicates the sound of silence. Coincidentally in Spanish nada means —nothing.|| It is understood as a primordial sound, being the essence of life and that which resonates in everything. Nada Yoga system dissects the sound of music into two categories: internal music, anahata, and external music, ahata. The seat of internal music is the heart chakra area (anahata), that hosts the beats of life form and receives the subtle sounds, silent to the mundane ear to hear although one can listen to those in depth. We also have one of the valuable philosophical treatises, known as Sama Veda that represents the rapture and devotion to sound in spiritual practice. Sama Veda is the third scriptural understanding along with Rig, Yajur and Atharva; it is described here that —Sapta Swaral or seven notes (Sa Ri Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni similar to Western- Do Re Mi Fa So La Ti) were derived from the sound of non-human humane species in their appropriate season. A table below draws a comparison of the seven notes and it's associations, according to the ancient text of music– *Naradiya Shiksha* (1.5.3; 1.5.4)

Name in Sama Veda	Symbol	Sama Veda	Bird/animal associated with Music
Madhyama	Ma	svarita	heron
Gandhara	Ga	udatta	goat
Rishabha	Ri	anudatta	bull
Shadja	Sa	svarita	peacock
Nishadha	Ni	udatta	elephant
Daiwatha	Dha	anudatta	horse
Panchama	Pa	svarita	Cuckoo

These seven notes are complimenting the external flow of music and also has the possibilities to enter the internal space of sound. There is also —rhythm|| that accompanies the rambling notes to keep on the dialogue of sound in its vibration and resonance. In today's world textual informations on sound of music are in abundance that we can register in our knowledge bank and all the key words are just click away, ready to be captured through the web-net tools. My relation to sound through rhythm and notes pass through transitional phase more aligned to practice and experiencing. The childhood lullabies, rustle of the bamboo trees, smell of the pine tree saps and sound of dew drops, ringing flow of mountain springs and roar of waterfalls, the morning and evening walks through the green meadows; all these were inspirations to explore beyond the conventional frame. To detect the inner faculty (primordial essence) there is this strong feeling growing in me to excavate the tactile quality of sound. How can I reach through such an element? It is obvious for me to turn my attention towards construction of sculpture incorporating the unconventional matter, mass or channels. Each sculptural creations gradually evolved into deeper understanding of something in between ! That which is the void or the gap, the micro notes between those, the intricacies of rhythmic timing, the kumbak (pausing) stage between Puraka (inhalation) and Rechaka (exhalation) in the rhythm of breathing. These experiences are my notations and potential materials. A medium through which I have been cogitating to process my inner insight so that I can share with others. That is where the avid forms of performance and performing comes alive in my creative venture. There is a thin line between performing and performance (Art), the former that relies on rehearsed formats and the later builds up the format while presenting. This is possible for me only through improvisation which helps by knowing the space, material and the participatory observers. Presently we associate demonstrations on sound with a term called Sound Art and Performance. Usual frame of Sound Art has to do with technological devices in most cases dealing with the noise. Bringing the popular in abstract dimension where noise develops an adrenalin state, but then very often we miss out the organic tincture of the primordial essence of sound. We can imitate but cannot produce the subtle purity which can be expressed through acoustic ways. For

example, a jolt of thunder with an immense bass sound cannot be the same, even if one imitates these using electronic devices. When I go through the pathways of deeper sound, the acoustic flow touches those high and low frequency tones in a biomorphic semblance and those resembling sensation blends amiably around the space of presentation. This brings me to the parallel path of Nada yoga which is an art of using sounds and tones to create inner transformations. We know that all living beings relate to the sound of music. Scientists have been discovering the response of the flora and fauna towards sound vibration which pervades all existing matters. In Indian Classical Music we have methods or styles of singing like Dhrupad and Tarana that chromatically evolves through the outer sound and brings us to the vast space of inner sound. We can find such similarities in Throat singing style of Mongolia, that traverses through undertones and overtones. Overtones are also utilized as a tool for sound healing in music therapy, an alternative treatment procedure which is becoming popular presently throughout the world. Then we have the rhythm section very much present in our bodily mechanism, for instance our heart beats. Can we agree to such a concept, that rhythm evolved from the perambulated timing of our heart complimented by our breathing? In this case we may be aware that our life force is fuelled by the application of Nada yogic system. In the practice of *Pranayama* (breathing technique) one can experience the function of Nada with an effective mudra known as *Dhenu*.

Mudra, combination of overtone and *Bhramari Pranayam*. This is performed while sitting in Siddhasana (posture) and placing the mudra in each chakra points of our body, the base chakra can be represented by placing the mudra on the base of sitting position. For Music practitioners, this pranayama method intensifies to a concentrating mode where one can experience the true essence of Nada – primordial sound world.



**Image:** Dhenu Mudra

Being aware of the sacred syllable – Om, the symbol of primordial sound with immense reverence I am coming to the conclusion with a shloka from Mandukya Upanishad - “Om ityeta dāksharam idam sarvam tasyopavyakhyānam bhūtam bhavāt bhaviṣyadīti sarvam Omkāra eva” ( Om is the imperishable, and it is 'all this'. All this, whatever is visible, whatever is cognisable, whatever can come within the purview of sense-perception, inference or verbal testimony, whatever can be comprehended under the single term of creation all this is Om )

(*Suva* is a freelance performance artist and a musician based in Finland. Academically trained in sculpture he now teaches Yoga and acoustic drumming and is involved in creating experimental music.)

## Huma Asli Maheshwar Bood

*Rashneek Kher*



Not many people in Kashmir would have known the name, Ali Mardan Khan, had it not been for the small area in downtown Srinagar that is named after this Afghan Governor. Despite this he would have remained a name in the books of history like many others rulers but for the verses that immortalized him in Kashmiri Folklore, despite him not being a Kashmiri. The verses were written at a time which was clearly our dark ages. It was forbidden for non Muslims (read Hindus) to read their scriptures or practice their religion openly. I am not sure if it is entirely true but it is widely believed that the Hindus were ordered not to recite Sanskrit verses thus forcing them to make Persian as their language of connect to their deities. Whatever may be the historical accuracy of this —orderl , to this day we recite Bhakti verses in Persian and there is one in particular which I remember and goes something like this:

Chakreshwari Hajat rawa, Sajath gada ra padshah

Vaah Vaah chi Lakshmi Thapna,shree sharika devi nama

(That Goddess Chakreshwari, who can turn a beggar into a king She who listens to our prayers and answers them I salute, thee, Seat of Lakshmi, who incarnates in the form of Sharika (in Kashmir).

To cut a long story short, one evening Ali Mardan had a vision which took the shape of a beautiful Persian Devotional Poem .Most of us keep reciting them at religious and social festivals with fervor & devotion. Thanks to the oral tradition that has helped carry this poem in its totality to us. It also is a commonplace in most of our Leela\* renditions. I am using the version published in Sahaj Kosam (compiled by Moti Lal Saqi) 11 for Mast Bab Ashram. It is slightly different from the version (the last verse differs) that comes down to us via the oral route. I make an attempt to transliterate the verses.

Huma Asli Maheshwar Bood,Shab Shahi ki Man Deedam

Ghazanfar Charma-e-barbood,Shab Shahi Ki Man Deedam.

(It was Shiva, the real God, the King I saw that night Adorned was his body with Lion Skin, the King I saw that night)

Ze Basmash Jam-e-bar-tan, Zunar-ish mar-e-bar garden

Ravanish Gang-e-bar sarbood,Shab Shahi.....

(Besmeared with ash, Instead of the scared thread a snake coiled around his neck Un ebbed flows the Ganga from his locks, the King I saw that night)

Seh Chashmash bar-jabee-daarad, Zi mahro maaha roshan tar

Se Karan Daste-Bastah Bood,Shab Shahi.....\*\*

(Brighter than sun and moon, shone his three eyes In Salutations to him stood Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva (the 3 causes of the universe), the King.....)

[ \*\*This verse needs a little explanation, the three reasons though commonly understood as Shiva,Vishnu and Mahesh are seen in a different way by the Saivites of Kashmir. The Will (Iccha Shakti of Citi-Supreme Consciousness) in itself has the triple process of manifesting, maintaining and dissolving the universe. So the three reasons could also be understood as attainment of Swatantraya (Freedom from Bondage of Ignorance)]

Be Dastash AAb-e-Kaunsar,Ve bekh Nakoosay Nilofar

Hilalash Taj Bar Sar Bood,Shab Shahi.....

(With a conch of Lotus Shoot in one hand and the pitcher of nectar in another The Crescent Moon embellished his forehead, the King.....)

Uma az soi-chip-binger, Zi Sad Khursheed Taban-tar

Savare Kulb-e-nar bood, Shab Shahi.....

(Uma on his left, effulgent, like a thousand suns; Be seated on Nandi, I saw the king that night.....).

Ajab Sanyasiye deedam, Namu Narayanay Guftam

Be Khakhay Paye Bosidam,Shab Shahi....

(Wonderstruck I said Namu Narayan, incredible sage he was In reverence, I bowed to touch the specks of dust at his feet, the King.....)

Nighahay bar mane Miskeen,Namud-e-az- chasme taaban-tar

Makanash La maaken tar bood,Shab Shahi.....

(With his divine grace (Anugraha) ,he showered his radiance Immersed me in the universe of consciousness, the King.....).

Manam Mardan Ali Khanam,Ghulam-e-Shahe-Shahanam

Ajab Israr Main Beenam,Shab Shahi.....

(I Ali Mardan Khan who is the servant of the king of the kings Is witness to a mystic experience, the King..... )

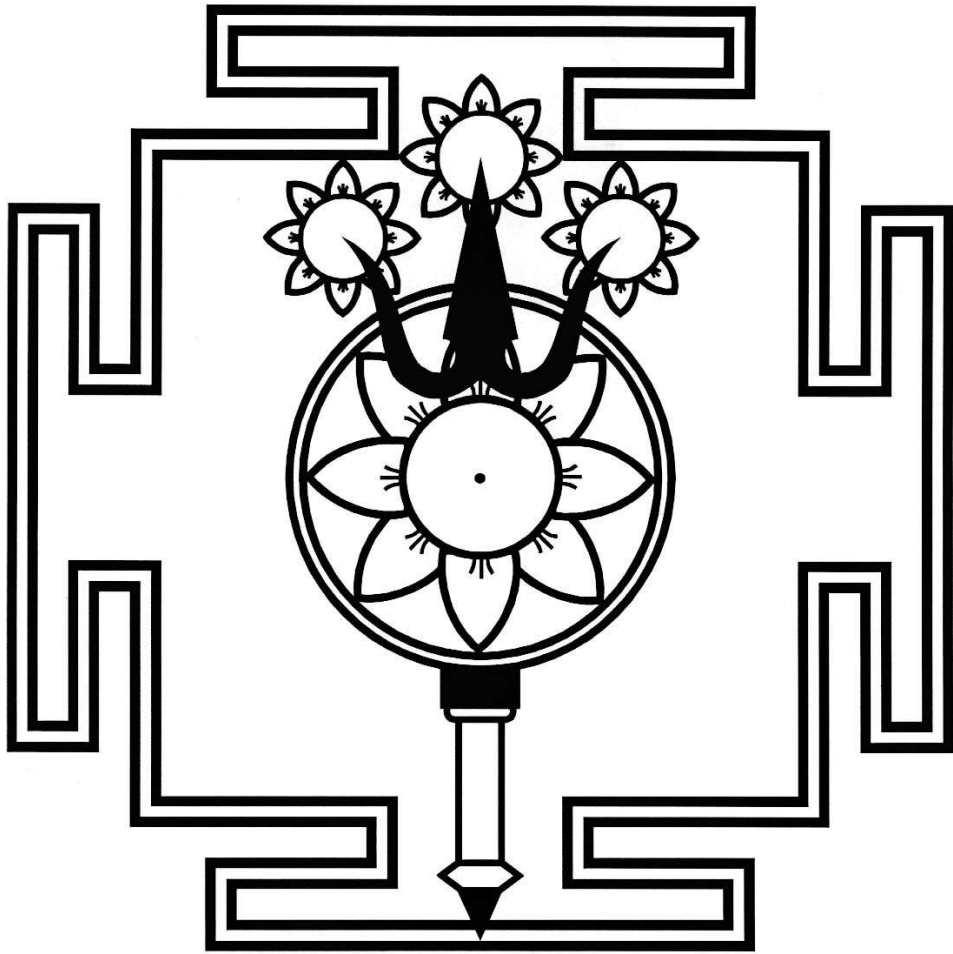
Another version of the last verse is *Manam Marde Musalmanam, Ali Khanam Namee Dhanam*, which means I Ali Mardan a devout Muslim , who owes every breath to Ali (the Caliph).

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This poem is also a reiteration of the Kashmiri Saivite standpoint of the world being real as against the Vedantic concept of it being Maya (unreal). That the poet's vision is not of a formless deity but one that he describes in great detail with its physical attributes and iconography reinforces the Kashmiri Saiva thought of the creation being real when Unmesh (broadly translated as opening of eye/thought ) happens. Note: I would welcome improvements in translation. Persian is not a language I am well versed with. I thank my friend Geetika, without her help this translation would not have been possible.

\*Leela is a Kashmiri Devotional Poem.

(Rashneek Kher is a Kashmiri poet and a literary critic living in exile in Faridabad.)



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