

## AYURVEDA PERSPECTIVE FOR HEALTH IMPACTS OF MANTRA AS SOUND THERAPY – A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

*Mantras* are special powerful sounds, usually root sounds of the Sanskrit language and considered as the legendary language of the gods. Those primal sounds are called sacred seed syllables, seed or *Bija Mantras*. According to the Vedic system, all creation proceeds through sound, as sound is the sense quality belonging to ether, the origin of all the other elements. Hence, through sound all creation, all the elements can be controlled. As all disharmonies in body or mind arise from an imbalance of the five elements, the right sounds can be used to adjust them all. The objectives of this study were to study literature of *Mantra* and sound therapy in Ayurveda, to review the relationship of basic *Mantra* for balance the three *Dosha*, to review scientific correlation of modern sound and *Mantra* therapy as a healing process, to find out different *Mantra* therapy as healing application in Ayurveda and to review relationship with *Marma* energy system and *Mantra* in healing application. Ayurveda classical texts (*Caraka*, *Susruta* and *Ashtangahridaya Samhitha*), published research articles in journals, related web sites, previous research papers related to Modern sound and Ayurveda *Mantra* therapy were reviewed. As per Ayurveda literature, five primordial elements are responsible for maintain the positive, negative health status of human being and the five elements can be strengthened by their respective *Mantras*. These are five basic *Manthra Lam*, *Vam*, *Ram*, *Yam* and *Harm* corresponding with Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether. also, similar *Mantras* relate to the seven tissues (*Dhatus*) of the physical body and can be used to strengthen them. It was reviewed that *Mantras* can be used by the healer to energize the healing process or by the patient to increase their own healing. The healer or therapist can repeat mantras during treatment, either in law voice or silently. All the mechanics of the universe are different sound-based harmonic vibrations; the universe itself is music. The sound, therefore, is the original and the most prima. Power over the mind, and also the psychic powers of the mind (siddhis) arise through the power of the *Mantra* and it can be used to maintain five primordial elements for the balance of the body with the mind and soul.

**Key words:** Ayurveda, *Mantra*, Sound therapy and Three *Dosha*.

**INTRODUCTION:** In Ayurveda, principle of treatment has classified as the three-fold curative approach deal with *Daivavyaprasa* (spiritual healing or divination) *Sattvavajaya* (Psychiatric treatment) and *Yuktiviyaprasaya* (rational therapy<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>). *Daivavyaprasya* is the spiritual way and methodical of healing in Ayurveda. It comprises of the use of *Dana* (taking recourse to gift), *Swastyayana* (propitiator rites), *Mangala* (auspicious observances), *Homa* (oblations), *Niyama* (observance of spiritual

rules), *Prayashchitta* (atonement), *Upavasa* (fasting), *Mantra* (Incantations) etc. Amongst all these “*Mantra*” is explained in Ayurveda as the preeminent in various places mainly the remedial measures for insanity.<sup>4</sup> The mantra is usually a repeated word or phrase, but it may also refer more specifically to a word repeated during meditation. The Sanskrit word “*Mantra*” literally means tool for thinking and if pure thought from a pure heart is better than a mantra, meaning a mantra is great and all but really, pure intention and genuine kindness mean more<sup>5</sup>.

*“Mananaat traayate yasmat atasmata mantrah prakirtitah”* The repeated incantation from which it can be overcome or protected (from servitude or disorder) is called as Mantra.<sup>6</sup>

The recitation of prayers is found cross the world and has been with us since beginning of the human being. In their Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, Hebrew, orthodox religious traditions it may find some chanting of prayers or recitation of divine name as God, Lord Jesus, Lord Buddha and Allah etc. whether it's a shamanic or pagan tradition, it may include some aspect of chanting that could be considered as *Mantric* chanting in their religious rituals and prayers. Certain aspects that singing are used to worship the divine entities and other aspects that they are used to bless someone for protection, healing or like.

**Objectives:** The objectives of this study were to study literature of *Mantra* and sound therapy in Ayurveda, to review the relationship of basic *Mantra* for balance the three *Dosha*, to review scientific correlation of sound and *Mantra* therapy as a healing process, to find out different *Mantra* therapy as healing application in Ayurveda and to review relationship with *Marma* energy system and *Mantra* in healing application.

**Methodology:** Ayurveda classical texts (*Caraka*, *Susruta* and *Ashtangahirdya Samhitha*), published ten research articles in journals, related web sites, previous research papers related to Modern sound and Ayurveda *Mantra* therapy were reviewed and search and reviewed keywords based on Ayurveda perspective of *davya vyaprsaya chikitsa* and effectiveness of sound therapy in psychiatric disorders.

**Results and Discussions:** Basic *Mantra* for balancing *Tridosha*; *Mantra* are like medicinal herbs which carries *Prabava*

(potency) *Guna* (quality) and which comprises particular energy effect. This energy vibration of effect depends on several factors such as sound factor, *Pranic* factor, mental factor and spiritual factor<sup>7</sup>. Among them sound factors acts upon on body and the mind, *Pranic* factor acts upon on *Prana vayu*, mental factor responsible and control the mind and spiritual factor acts upon on soul of the individuals. *Tamas* is the force of passivity, retardation, inhibition, grounding, pulling downwards, heaviness and material. *Tamas* creates the shape and material of perceived reality; *Tamas* allows us to sleep. *Rajasis* the force of activity, promotion, arousal, stimulation, restlessness, initiation, regeneration.

Any movement or activity is due to *Rajas*, who propels life. *Sattva* is the power of conscience, purity and clarity of perception. *Sattva* allows the expansion of conscience and spiritual growth. *Sattva* is a dynamic state of balance between *Tamas* and *Rajas*, expressed through harmonious and appropriate discretion, preventing all exaggeration hence sound factor, *Pranic* factor, mental factor and spiritual factors mainly responsible for changing the state of mind quality such as *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Thamas*.

*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are the biological humors which comprises particular unique energy type which may responsible for health, disease as well as the *Prakrti* (constitution) of human being. Each *Dosha*'s quality and energy level, its normal functions depend on its main attributes and predominant primary element which contained. (Table 1). *Vata dosha* is made up of *Akasha* and *Vayu Mahabhuta*, therefore to bring balance to *vata dosha* may use chants and mantra that vibrates with more earth, water and warm quality energies. *Vata dosha* is the main biological humor which acts upon controlling of *pitta* and

*kapha* energy. If any disturbance to mind may result in disturbance of *vata* energy. Worry, insomnia, poor memory, cough, fatigue, diarrhea, flatulence, constipation, sexual disorders and arthritis are the main symptoms and diseases manifested when *vata* get unbalanced in the body<sup>8</sup>. According to the main attributes and predominant primordial element of *Vata dosha*, sounds that are used with warm, soothing, calming, gentle, and slower sweet and rhythmic are the best for balancing the *vata dosha*. *Pitta Dosha* is made up of mainly *Agni Mahbutha* hence to bring balance to *pitta* may use chants and mantra that vibrate with more cooling energy of earth, water and love and compassion in nature. If any disturbance to

*pitta* energy may result in indigestion, addictions, anger, mental disorders, eczema, visual problem, cancers are the main symptoms and diseases manifested when *pitta* unbalanced<sup>9</sup>. Sounds are with cooling, soothing, calming are the best to balance the *pitta*. *Kapha* mainly made up of mainly earth and water element therefore to bring balance to *kapha* may use sounds (Chant and Mantra) that vibrate with more air and ether energy. Physically and mental dullness, food sensitivity, slow digestion, irritability and obesity are the main symptoms and diseases which are manifested when the *kapha dosha* became unbalanced<sup>10</sup>. Sounds are with uplifting, warming, inspiring, invigorating, rhythmic are the best to balance the *kapha* energy.

**(Table 1) Attributes and element of the Dosha<sup>11</sup>**

<i>Dosha</i>	Attributes /Elements	Attributes of the <i>Gunas</i>	
<i>Vata</i>	Cold, dry, light, subtle, mobile, sharp, hard, rough, clear Element – <i>Akasha, Vayu</i>	<i>Sattva</i> <sup>12</sup>	No hot or cold, wet or dry, light, subtle, moving, sharp, soft, smooth, clear.
<i>Pitta</i>	Hot, slightly wet, light, subtle, flowing, mobile, sharp, soft, smooth, clear Element - <i>Agni</i>	<i>Rajas</i>	Hot, slightly wet, slightly heavy, gross, mobile, sharp, hard, rough, cloudy
<i>Kapha</i>	Cold, wet, heavy, gross, dense, static, dull, soft, smooth, cloudy Element – <i>Jala, Prithvi</i>	<i>Tamas</i>	Cold, wet, heavy, gross, solid, static, dull, hard, rough, cloudy (dark)

According to the individual *Dosha*'s attributes, elements, mantra and chanting may vary with quality, pitch, way of chanting, type of mantra to balance the individual *dosha*. Some common mantra would help the balance the *dosha* listed in the table 2.

**Table 02; Mantra for the element and Dosha<sup>13</sup>**

Mantra	Element	<i>Vata</i> (Air + ether)	<i>Pitta</i> (Fire)	<i>Kapha</i> (Water +Earth )
<i>LAM</i>	Earth			<i>LAM</i>
<i>VAM</i>	Water			<i>VAM</i>
<i>RAM</i>	Fire		<i>RAM</i>	
<i>YAM</i>	Air	<i>YAM</i>		
<i>HAM</i>	Ether	<i>HAM</i>		

**Table 03: Main Bija Mantra (seed syllables for healing and its function)<sup>14</sup>**

Type of Mantra	Property and its action in healing
<i>OM</i>	To energize or empower all things and all process, clear the mind, open the channels and increases the <i>Ojas</i> . Sound of sun and carries the <i>Prana</i> .
<i>SHRIM(Shreeem)</i>	Promoting general health, beauty, creativity, and prosperity.

	Strengthen the feminine nature.
<i>RAM</i>	Drawing down the protective light and grace of the divine. Gives strength, calm, rest and peace.
<i>HUM</i>	Warding off negative influences, negative emotions, black magic, awaking <i>Agni</i> and promoting the digestive health.
<i>AIM(aym)</i>	Best mantra for the mind, improving concentration, thinking, improving speech and helpful in mental and nervous disorders.
<i>KLIM(kleem)</i>	Gives strength, sexual vitality and control of emotional nature.
<i>KRIM (cream)</i>	Gives the capacity for work and action,
<i>SHAM</i>	Promoting peace, calm, detachment and contentment.
<i>HRIM(hreem)</i>	Cleansing and purification, gives energy, joy and ecstasy after atonement.

**Mantra for healing in relation to *Marma* energy system:** *Marma* are anatomical sites where *Mamsa*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Asthi* and *Sandhi* meet together and mentioned in details description of their types, numbers, locations and symptoms when injured which are totally 107 *Marmas* as per Acharya Susruta<sup>15</sup>. *Marma* are categorized in three main types as Structural wise classification (*Rachana behdha*), Distribution wise classification (*Shadhngha bedha*) and Prognosis wise classification ( *Sadhyashadhyabedha* ) as per Acharya Susrutha<sup>16</sup>. According to definitions, *Marma* are vital points of the human body which confluence of *Mansa*, *Sira* *Snayu*, *Asthi*, and *Sandhi* and the places which are resides *Prana* that help to survive a person<sup>17</sup>. *Marma* regulates the flow of information in physiologically and psychologically. *Marma* system basically damaged by unwholesome diet, high stress level and due to the physical trauma, which results in susceptibility to disease. Physiologically some of *Marma* points are more sensitive to any type of injury than remain parts of the human body because “*Prana*” (vital force) is supposed to localize in those area. In anatomically, structures of those points

are vulnerable in surgical procedures and localized *Marma* points of human body comprised with half an *Anguli* to four *Anguli*, varieties in different dimensions as per Acharya Susrutha.

The combination of *Mantra* and *Marma* heals the physical body, changes the frequency of the subtle body, and removes negative patterns from the mind because which carry energy information between the mind and the organs and tissues of the body; they are supposed to access points to body, mind, consciousness. *Marmas* are considered as the intersection between matter and energy, the physical and subtle planes, matter and consciousness<sup>18,19</sup>. *Marma* manifest with *Vata*, *Pitta* and *kapha* energy which are basic biological humors of the human body. Sanskrit alphabet itself can generate the *Mantra* because Sanskrit is the only vibrational language that transmits meaning through sounds hence it can awaken the inner *Shakthi* (*kundalani shakthi*) and activate the energy points word off the negative energies by recite *Mantra* with deep emotional felling, awareness of deep spirituality with connect to mind, heart and soul<sup>20</sup>. Sanskrit alphabet contains fifty sounds and each sounds related to a place on body or *Marma* points.

(Table 04)

**Table 04 –Constituents of Sanskrit Alphabet and its relative body parts<sup>21</sup>**

Sounds of alphabet constituent	Region of the body	Examples
Vowels (16)	Head and senses	<i>AM namah sirasi</i> –head <i>AM namah muche</i> –face <i>UM namah dakshina karne</i> –right ear

First 20 consonants	Main joints on arm and legs.	<i>OM tam namah dakshina padamule</i> – right leg <i>OM tham namah dakshina januni</i> –right knee
Last 05 consonants	Abdominal region	<i>OM pam namah dakshina parsave</i> – right side of the body <i>OM mam namah udare</i> - belly
09 semi vowels sibilants	Tissue, mind and soul	<i>OM lam mamsamane namh kakudi</i> –the souls of the muscles, the palate. <i>OM lam paramatmane namah jathare</i> – the supreme soul, the belly.

Any alphabet letters can be turned into Mantras by adding an *anusvara* or final “M” is added to each of the letters. As an example, the letter “ai” becomes *Mantra* “AIM”, this is the conventions of whole Sanskrit alphabet become *Mantra*<sup>22</sup>.

**Table 05 – language constituent and universe mapping<sup>21</sup>**

Language constituent	Mapping part of the universe
Vowels	Consciousness, spirit and <i>Purusha</i>
Consonants	Matter, nature, <i>Shakthi</i>
Sibilants and semi vowels	Connection between Conscious and matter

**Table – 06 –Hormone / Neurotransmitters and their normal functions and effectiveness along with the sound therapy<sup>23,24,25,26</sup>**

Hormone/Neurotransmitter	Physiological function	Effects in sound therapy
Adrenalin	Adrenaline is released in response to a stressful, exciting, dangerous, or threatening situation. It helps the body and mind respond more quickly by increasing heart rate, blood pressure and diverting blood flow from the digestive system to the muscles.	Singing may reduce the adrenaline level in the blood.
Cortisol	Cortisol regulates a wide range of processes throughout the body, including metabolism and the immune system response.	Cortisol levels reduce when we sing for pleasure or listening to music (as opposed to performing, which can be stressful), indicating that singing is a stress-reducing activity <sup>23,24</sup>
Dopamine	Dopamine can elevate our mood-state.	
Endorphins	When released, they have a pain reducing and mood lifting effect.	Singing, dancing and drumming all trigger endorphin discharge whereas just listening to music and low vitality musical activities. <sup>25</sup>
Immunoglobulin A (IgA)	an antibody blood protein that is an important part of the immune system.	The relationship between chanting and IgA and found that chanting significantly improves IgA levels <sup>26</sup>

Hormones and neurotransmitters play major role in human body to maintain the positive health and specially increase in adrenaline has been linked to a whole host of health problem like, heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure and mental health conditions. Therefore, reducing the amount of adrenaline in the system is important for overall health and wellbeing and other hormones as well. (Table -06)

**CONCLUSION:** It is concluded that five basic *Mantra* can be used to balance the three *Dosha* which are the primordial factors for negative health as well as the maintaining the mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing. *Mantras* can be chanted mentally by the healer over the patients to help and restore the health which energize in mental and emotional level.

It was concluded that taking spiritual health into consideration by mantra therapy (sound therapy) helped people to 'manage their stress, to reduce depressive symptoms and to enhance health-promoting behaviors.

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