



Vibration and Energetic Direction ~ David Life

Date: Oct 5, 2005

Focus: Nadam

Setting: class talk

Place: Jivamukti Yoga New York

(Chanting)

OM, OM, OM, shanti, shanti, shanti

(Reading)

“The anahata nada sounds may appear in any part of the head, left or right, but beginners are advised first to meditate on the right side, since the right side of the brain needs development and blossoming, and then to expand the sound so that it reaches in all directions. By meditating on the right side of the brain we blossom the left side of our body, and the heart, which is the center of love and devotion. In modern times people tend to live either in the intellect, the brain, or in muladhara chakra which is the sex center. Meditation on nada transforms the energy of the sex center into the energy of the heart, love, and feeling. Through the navel center we are nurtured until birth and through the heart center we live. The practice of meditation integrates the heart chakra and the navel center or solar plexus, thus mystically these two centers attune the person to solar energy, physically, mentally and spiritually.” Shri Brahmananda Sarasvati

We'll meditate now silently for 15 minutes. *(Meditation)*

(Chanting)

OM, OM, OM, shanti, shanti, shanti

Lie down on your back for a few moments. Lie down on your back and relax in Savasana.

(Playing recording)

“You know the trees and the mountains and the clouds and the stars have no meaning. Because they're not words. Words have meaning because they're symbols, because they point to something other than themselves. But the stars like music, only bad music has any meaning. Classical music never has a meaning. And to understand it you must simply listen to it. And observe its beautiful patterns, go into its complexity. So you get, when your mind, that is to say your verbal systems, get to the end of their turf, that is to say when they arrive at the meaningless state, hear is the critical point. And the method of jnana yoga is to exercise one's intellect to its limits, so that you get to the point where you have no further questions to ask. You can do this in philosophy study if you've got the right kind of teacher.” Alan Watts

Move your fingers and toes, deepen the breath. And come back up to a seated position. We will chant number 15 on page two together:

*Om brahmanandam parama sukhadam, kevalam jnana-murtim,
Dvandvatitam gagana-sadrsham, tat-tvam-asyadi-lakshyam
Ekam nityam vimalam acalam, sarva-dhi-saksi-bhutam
Bhavatitam tri-guna-rahitam, sad-gurum tam namami
sad-gurum tam namami, OM*



Salutations to that inner guru, the inner guiding light, which is never ending bliss; the giver of Supreme happiness, one without a second, pulsation of consciousness beyond dualism, beyond subject and object, which is like the blue sky and is indicated by such statements as "thou art that" and "I and my father are one" and which is the final aim of life; one eternal pure without pollution, every time with you, the witness of all wisdom, beyond all states of being and beyond the three gunas, Sattva, rajas and tamas, electron, proton and neutron. I bow to that inner guru.

The way that the inner guru communicates to us in a yoga practice is through sound, through vibration. The way that the inner guru takes us out of the world of duality into a world of unity is through the unifying aspect of vibration. Vibration is the unifying aspect because all of manifestation is made of vibration. Little bundles of energy vibrating at different rates, but basically everything you see around you, including the people, the animals, the trees, this building, the cars, its all made out of the same stuff just vibrating at different frequencies. So when we all vibrate together we find common ground. We find something unifying.

When we use that inner vibration as the instigation toward action in the world, our actions are motivated out of a realm of infinite possibility. Normally people act in the world according to thought patterns, opinions, separation. This would be good, that would be bad. That limits their actions. They already are beginning their action with a firm prejudice set in their mind about what would be, usually what would be the best thing to do for me, not what would be the best to do for everyone involved. So when we hear the inner sound, we go beyond this tendency to divide and separate things into certain meanings that indicate that it doesn't mean something else. Words are in that category. A word is a word because it means one thing and not something else. Kind of the definition of the word. And as Alan Watts was saying in the beginning, good music goes beyond this categorization or separation of the world into thises and thats. He says good music I would say some good music still deals in the realm of good lyrics, inspirational lyrics, that still have a verbal content that tend to poetically carry us into another realm. Not all music though.

Who remembers a time when they would walk around with a CD player and earphones on rather than an iPod? A few? Who remembers a time when they would walk around with a tape player? A cassette tape player on and listen? You're dating yourself. Not that old though but just maybe old-fashioned. Well I remember a time when I would walk around or ride my bike around with the tape player playing or even the radio playing. And I had once a very profound experience. I was in a really good mood, walking down the street, and I had my radio playing so I tuned it to a pop station. By pop I mean sort of the musical and the verbal content of the music was not exactly what I would call uplifting, usually the topics were, you done me so bad you left me, or I'm gonna get even with you for doing that, or some such thing. In any case the music I started to listen to on the radio was about that, about jealousy, about he left me for her, he's so bad, I can't quite rhyme it on the spot, I'm not quite a rapper but you get my what I'm talking about. The beat and the melody was quite nice, quite energizing, quite great for walking down the street but this verbal content was dwelling in the area of not exactly exalted emotional states. The state of jealousy. And I wasn't feeling that way, I was feeling happy. But as I was walking down the street within a half a block I started to have thoughts going through my head of jealousy. Amazingly they started to appear in my head and I started to wonder, Sharon, when I left Sharon she was having a private meeting with that really handsome young guy at the yoga center. She's been there an awful long time.



And then I realized oh my god, the music's doing that to me. So I immediately switched it off and tried to pull myself out of it again but really it started to have a lasting effect. With it off I even started to go deeper and darker into it. And I had to quick run and take a yoga class but I think we've all felt how music can, it could on one hand help us to go to sleep, a certain type of music, a certain musical content, on the other hand it could excite us and get us going and motivated and music can be used to encourage us toward nationalism, every country, every state, probably most towns have an anthem, right, and it's like marching bands and drums and sort of you know put your gun on your shoulder and march. That's sort of the old-fashioned version of it, I don't know if that motivates us so much.

Maybe if you've seen lately in the last couple of wars, at some point in the war they always show or have a story about how the servicemen on the front line are blasting heavy metal toward the other side. Heavy metal music have you seen this? Out of tanks, out of every speaker they can find and that's kind of motivating them but at the same time the effect it has on the other side is like torture. And everyone's doing it purposefully. It seems easier for us to develop a purposeful use of music that is not uplifting than it is for us to develop a sense of music and even use music to uplift ourselves, to pull us out of those dark moods, those dark places.

In India this whole idea that music has not only an emotional or verbal content but it has an effect on us that is continuous with that content has been developed to a high form. And this is called Raga. Raga means attachment and what the musical form of a raga is attached directly to an emotion or a state of mind or an atmosphere or a time of day or a kind of weather, certain type of weather, springtime, morning, dew on the grass. And it is so closely allied with that particular condition, that particular state vibrationally that it puts you there, you actually experience, depending on how well it's played of course, you could feel like you were in the early morning in dew covered grass, something like that.

There's a story told of a great, maybe one of the greatest Indian musicians who had perfected the fire Raga and was challenged by another singer to a duel. Kind of like an ancient Indian version of what's that program on television where everyone competes to see who's the best singer? American Idol. Yeah this is Indian idol. But it's way before TV and radio and all that so it was always a live show. Well the person, the musician, the singer who had perfected fire Raga was challenged to a duel onstage by another musician in front of the Maharaja and the Maharini and oh god all kinds of princes and princesses and important people were coming to this. So it was a challenge that could not be refused, it would be humiliating and an admission of defeat if the singer were to refuse the challenge. So it came the day and the musician is onstage, the singer is on stage and begins to sing the fire raga, and at some point through the raga he kind of went "aaahhh" very quickly and the whole stage burst into flame. That's how perfected this person had the fire raga. And the flame is completely enveloping him and he couldn't stop, he's like in a trance state, Samadhi state, but singing the fire raga and it started to get closer and closer. Luckily for him his daughter was in the audience, and his daughter was his student, and his daughter had perfected the rain raga. So from the audience she stood up and started singing the rain raga and storm clouds gathered, rained on her father, put it out and saved her father. And obviously no contest, no applause meter was necessary, it was obvious who was winning this challenge.

So the practice of nada yoga is making on the initial level it's making the effect that sound has on you conscious. Being aware of it and then modifying it in a way that would facilitate whatever it is you need to do.



Whether it's a Sun Salute or Savasana, there are things that would support it musically and there are things that would make it more difficult to obtain the highest possible experience. The same way in your daily life. How many times have you been trying to have a conversation and in the middle of trying to make that connection you realize that there's this music playing that's just constantly putting up a wall between both of you? Both just with sound and with the feeling of it. And you finally, usually a little too late turn it off and then the real communication starts. Or you're having an argument, and in the middle of the argument you realize that there's this, you had unconsciously been drawn into this whole thing with some kind of tough hard music playing. And if you wake up in that moment and you flick it off, silence, what were we talking about? You know you can really get tangled up in it and the difference between a person practicing nada yoga and a person just being normal is that the person practicing nada yoga becomes aware very quickly or even possibly plans beforehand what kind of atmosphere do we need that would be most conducive to this project that we need to do. Whether it's a conversation or a business meeting or just a quiet evening at home having dinner, or it's a party. Have you ever been to a party that had really loud pounding music and all of it was bad? Who hasn't, right? Everybody's yelling at each other this far from their ear, everybody's slowly in the night they come in like this (*happy*) and then after a little while they're like this (*sagging*), and all they can do is get drunk for god's sakes! It's a relief! So making that party tape is important too oh I'm sorry not tape, programming your iPod for the party is should take certain facilities. It's not just what is the most loud and abrasive music, it's, you have to be considerate, compassionate for others listening to it.

So initially we become aware of this on a conscious level, the effect that sound and music has on us, the effect that vibration has on us. Right now, we are hearing a lot but not hearing it. The traffic sound sometimes comes up to a conscious level sometimes not, if there's a fire truck usually we hear it, maybe not, but even underneath all of that here in the city there's a kind of a hum, a kind of whistling machine sound that's constantly there, that most of us stop hearing after a certain point. It doesn't just happen, it's not just a city thing, have you ever gone for a vacation to the seaside and at first when you get there and you're trying to sleep the first night and the pounding surf is like, oh my god. You know you might as well be in a war zone. How does anyone who lives here get any sleep at all? But then you stay for let's say several days or a week and you realize after some time you don't even hear it anymore. So our listening ability is very interesting, it can shut down, or it can shut us down, or it can turn us on. And it's very interesting to begin to observe all the range of effects that our mind has in terms of reconciling us to sound. It's also very interesting to begin to observe the way experiences, emotions, emotional and mental states are altered according to the kind of music that's there. And you can experiment with it, you can use it, it can become a very important aspect of your experience in the body. And that is nada yoga. Of course eventually as our hearing becomes more refined, we want to begin to listen on more and more subtle levels, or even not listening, to say that you're listening any more is not what it's about, it's more like feeling. You feel the vibratory signature of a mood or an atmosphere, more akin to the refinement of raga in India, you experience its essential nature and you begin to use this as a transformational tool in a yoga practice.

Did you hear what he said? I was talking before about music, musically, melodically, rhythmically, it was happening, but lyrically there was a sort of negative content that had an ill effect. And he said do you think it would be possible to enjoy the musical part of it but sort of not hear the negative part of it. To a certain extent I think and do you know what I think it's dependent on is repetition though. So usually you know everything in life is like this.



Did you ever notice smelling a flower, a sweet smelling flower, and after just a few inhales you wonder where did the sweet smell go? Or experiencing an annoying sound and over time you don't hear it any more, it's not as annoying. Initially it has a very deep and profound effect, over time as you cross a certain threshold with any of the senses there's a tendency to not smell it anymore, to not hear it any more. You go back to that same flower that's in a vase a couple days later and the smell's there again. The smell didn't go anywhere but our ability to distinguish it diminishes the more we're exposed to it. So the words, you listen to it enough and you could kind of block it out, but also I think that probably there's a genre of music, like if you listen to only popular music on the radio, it tends to all fall into a certain few categories of topics. Anger, violence, love, sex, it's all kind of first and second chakra stuff. Third chakra maybe ego, pride. After a while and you kind of start to not hear it consciously but the problem is, are you still integrating it unconsciously so that your experience of the whole world is filled with that. Everywhere you look you see anger, violence, sex, drugs, whatever, jealousy, so forth and so on.

So it still has although you might not be hearing the words as such it has an underlying effect. Whereas the ocean sound, the waves washing in on the beach, after a while you don't hear it except that there's something about it that creates a mood of calm, a mood of ease, and connection to nature, and so forth and so on. But you might not be saying as you walk down the beach, "*gosh, what a mood of connection of nature, what a wonderful*" right? It's just that you're immersed in it. But you could immerse yourself in the sounds of music that have a negative effect and still not be hearing them on a conscious level but being affected by them. So you have to as you study it in your own life and you study the effects you have to be aware of the subtle level. You can kid yourself and say I can listen to anything it's not going to have a negative effect on me, but over time you might find yourself a prisoner of the negative effect. And wondering why you're always acting in a certain way. But by the same token you can use it beneficially too.

You know we just ran into a friend of ours at the Yoga Journal conference from Israel. And she just moved from Israel with her kids to South Africa. And she was asked by someone that she met there to come to a township and teach yoga classes. Well not only is she blond, white, skinny girl, young, doesn't speak the language, but she'd never taught a yoga class before. But she for who knows what reason she said yes. She accepted the challenge cos she thought it seemed like I don't know maybe it could work. So she went to this community and started teaching just sun salutations. I'm not sure exactly how she got it going ti couldn't have been real easy but it's probably like show and tell. And gradually over time she built up a class to about maybe this many people, maybe a few less, who knew how to do the sun salutation. But every time they would assemble, like once a week or something, all around them in every tree, on every building, on every place that someone could sit around, there was an audience. Not exactly an audience, it was more like an orchestra. Because these people have such a close association between rhythm and movement that they are inseparable. They can't imagine moving without a rhythm attached to it, it doesn't exist. So what they did was everyone seated around the outside would create a rhythm, just with whatever was available, their voice, boom-ba-ba-boom-ba-ba-boom, I don't know, some kind of rhythm, maybe their hands or their feet, whatever, for the ones practicing sun salutations, so that they would then have a rhythm to move with. And everyone participated. And she said it was such an amazing joyful experience, to be immersed in this culture, where they recognize the potency of the music, and how it instigates action in a certain way. Could be good, could be not good, in this case it was great. It was an incredible fusion of minds and bodies and sounds.



And she said it just keeps getting bigger and bigger and bigger, the orchestra keeps growing faster than the people doing Sun Salutes. But it just really got me excited about coming back and teaching this program on nada yoga because really I wish we could have that raw experience of it, but we have to settle for canned music in this class and do our best with it alright? We'll do that today. You can pass the chanting sheets - yes?

Well it's not as concentrated because you're fragmented, you're watching one thing, you're doing something else, you're listening to a third thing and maybe even thinking something completely different. You're given a fragmented experience. In the experience I just described in the township everything was cohesive, everything was working toward a facilitation of the movement. So yes on the one hand it could make your experience deeper, or it could not make your experience deeper, it depends on the degree of connection, and inter-relationship there and the way it's designed or the way it's consciously planned, it depends on a lot of things, it depends on a lot of things.

Your ability to hear it and allow it inside of you, allow the music to move you. Here's me at a music club (*arms folded, standing still*) just can't let it inside, you know. Everyone else is like "aahh" (*dances around*) dancing and like the music has like got them going, but I'm like (*arms crossed*) "could I have another soda water?" you know, can't do it, for whatever reason most of the time. So you know, there again, is that the music's fault? No. Is that the people there, they're fault? No. I just don't have the capacity to let it in and let it move me, let the music move me. Just block it out. So there's a lot of factors and really it has to be dealt with initially on a conscious level.

Conscious awareness of music and really important experimentation. Don't assume -- I mean not all classical music is contemplative. It's not just oh well I need to be contemplative I need to settle down let me just put on some classical music and you put on what - the Firebird. No. Or some kind of a maybe you need to get organized. And you put on some modern music that's real disjointed and you get nowhere with it so you make another choice. So experimenting with it can be very helpful, you can acquire over time a really good sense of what works and what doesn't, what helps and what doesn't. Experimenting on your own at home with the music you play while you do asana practice can be really interesting because when you do asana practice you really open up a lot of the channels through which music can flow.

Ok stand up.

