

OM: The Breath of Brahman

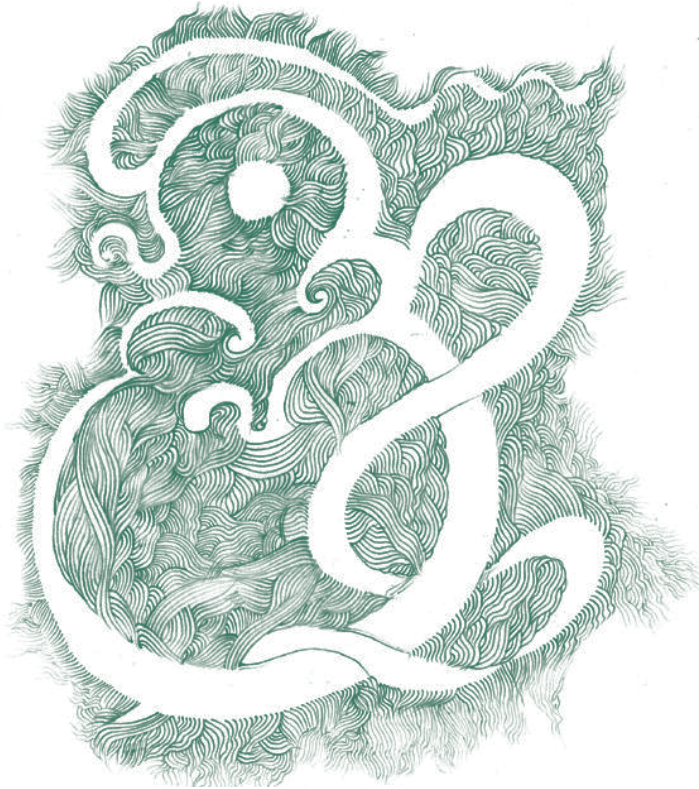
by Swami Jyotirmayananda

The Melody of Om

Whether seated in meditation, or moving about during the day's activities, try to train your mind to hear all sounds as the Breath of *Brahman* – as the fascinating, heavenly melody of Om that is sung perpetually by the self. All “real” sounds you hear in the world are merely inflections of Om.

The Self chants Om through the lips of the whole creation. You need only listen. The ocean sings Om in its rolling waves. The rumbling clouds and whispering breeze sing Om. When the sun rises, it sings aloud and awakens all creatures by chanting Om— dispelling darkness and fear. Train your “ears” to hear this with new mystic sensitivity.

As you evolve, even the grossest sounds that normally agitate the mind — cries, loud shouts, bursts of anger — all must be considered as merely variations of Om. Meditate on those sounds you have always rejected as ugly and demoniac, and



try to hear the higher language of the Self reverberating through them.

Also, reflect upon your own use of the gift of speech. Your lips should be a channel for the Self, not the ego. The Self should sing through your words. Your speech exists only to chant Om, to express the subtle meaning of the Self. Whenever you speak of others, feel that Om is rising up within you like the rising sun, and let the song of Om radiate from you like its inspiring rays.

You can also meditate on a musical melody that your mind finds entrancing. All great compositions emanate from the heart. The urge to recognize melody, and to feel joy when listening to melody, has its root in the heart.

Deep within the human heart is a Melody of Silence that is beyond description. In this relative world, the spirit, unable

to discover that spontaneous melody, tries to simulate it to whatever extent possible. This effort to simulate and capture that melody in the plane of the senses has given rise to the great art of music. By pursuing melody with the mystic sensitivity of a meditative mind, you will be led to the deeper melody that exists within.

All internal sounds, all thoughts and desires that clamor in the mind, must also become absorbed in the cosmic melody of Om. When all the noises of mental tensions are absorbed, the Melody of Silence alone is heard.

In meditation, try to witness the clamor of your thoughts and desires as still another inflection of Om. As you do, the clamor will subside to a murmur that melts into the Melody of Silence, which is Om in the subtlest form.

The Sama Chants of Chhandogya Upanishad

Another meditation to train the mystic “ear” is taught in Chhandogya Upanishad. In this teaching, one is reminded of the traditional methods of singing the Sama Chants during a sacrificial process well known in Vedic culture. There are five stages in this Sama chanting. In Stage One, the priest clears his throat by chanting Mantric root letters. In Stage Two, he sings introductory praise of the deity being adored. In Stage Three, he chants loudly about the central theme of the sacrifice. In Stage Four, his chanting begins to diffuse. In Stage Five, his chants soften to conclusion.

The Upanishad suggest that you learn to apply these five stages to all major phenomena encountered in the world, and thus perpetually meditate on Sama as you think about objects and phenomena around you. In this form of meditation, you discover that the whole universe is perpetually singing the Sama chants in five stages, perpetually chanting the Vedas.

The following is one example of this Sama meditation taught in Chhandogya Upanishad: Meditate on the five-fold Samaan as rain. Whenever rain comes, develop the idea that the whole world has opened before you the great Vedas. View the wind that precedes the rain as Stage One, chanting of root letters. View the formation of rain clouds as Stage Two, introductory praise. View the tumultuous shower as Stage Three, the loud chant. View the retreating lightning and thunder as Stage Four, diffusion. Finally, view the end of the rain as Stage Five, the conclusion.

In this manner, you will not only enjoy the beautiful sight of rain, but your mind will be filled with inspiring thoughts of the melodious chants of the Vedas as well.

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