Sound Healing Indian Perspective

Introduction

Since very young age I have felt compassion for people in the streets who suffer from mental illness; I always wanted to understand them, I had a sense that they were trying to say something nobody cared about or understood and were mistreated and segregated. That concern moved me to choose Psychology as a career. After that I began a spiritual search that conducted me to Indian spiritual practices and my vision changed to a spiritual perspective. My sessions with patients improved with my new understanding. I started seeing my job as a spiritual practice and realize that the resilience people had to overcome the more hideous circumstances in life had to do with spirituality more than with the mental health system. I found easier to deal with my own stress and to understand the root of it, I could look at people I helped with more detached love, I could see them as whole and that view in itself seem to be empowering for them.

Since music and drumming always helped me through hard moments in life I began studying sound healing to combine healing abilities with sound and music. I would like to search into the Indian perspective since it is my area of interest. I found very interesting sites that do spiritual research, trainings and sound healing treatments in India today.

The Indian Approach to the Universe and Human Life and its Relationship to Sound

The Indian approach to human life and the Universe is for me more of a philosophy than a religion. They called Vedanta since it is the studies of the Vedas scriptures, books written in verses, poetry usually called Sutras that were channeled by the ancient mystics of India, the Richies. They were transmitted in the form of poetry and chants generations after generations from the teachers to the disciples. They were the origin and substratum of a vast religion: Sanatana Dharma known popularly as Hinduism. And they are also part of an incredible compiled knowledge of many different sciences in India, medicine, mathematics, astrology, etc.

The Indian Cosmology is expressed in the Sutras (Sacred Verses) that comprehend the science of Ayurveda. It is a science of truth as it is expressed in life; it encompasses science, religion and philosophy. Religion is understood as “beliefs and discipline conductive toward states of being in which the doors of perception open to all aspects of life”1

So for the Indian understanding of the cosmos, the Absolute(the source) before the creation of the universe was one, Aduita, unmanifest state of the universe, composed by the total union of 2 universal principles Purusha and Prakruti (Purusha pure consciousness, unmanifested, passive, beyond attributes, male aspect and Prakruti creative matrix, active, source of form, manifested, primordial mater, female aspect). Through the sound Om duality appears, Purusha and Prakruti adopt the illusion of being separated. They are never separated Aduita, oness, but they appear as if they were: duality.

Ayurveda the Science of Self Healing: Lad Vasan p.15

Om is the primordial sound, Dr. Lad call it the soundless sound. According to him, it is written phonetically OM and grammatically AUM. It means eternal new state of cosmic Prana (breath), Pranabha

From the cosmic breath sound OM the apparent separation of Purusha and the creative Prakruti happened from there the cosmic mind, Mahad, appeared, and from it, Ahankara, the illusion of separation from the source. From there the 3 Gunas emerged, basic components of everything: Satva, Rajas, and Tamas.

According to Dr. Lad: Satva qualities are: Stability, awakening, harmony, pure aspect, essence and light. Rajas: energy, dynamic movement, passion, emotion and turbulence. Tamas: Inertia, darkness, dullness, resistance, ignorance and matter.

From Satva: 5 sense organs, mind (organ of action & cognition) and 5 motor organs with their action.

From Tamas: 5 senses and the 5 elements: Space (usually translated as Ether), Air, Fire, Water and Earth. In both the organs and the elements there is also Rajas (movement).

How this all relate?

ELEMENT	SENSES	SENSE ORGAN	MOTOR ORGAN	ACTION
Space (ether)	Sound	Ear	Mouth	Speech
Air	Touch	Skin	Hand	Holding
Fire	Sight	Eyes	Feet	Walking
Water	Taste	Tongue	Genitals	Procreation
Earth	Smell	Nose	Anus	Elimination (2)

Organic and inorganic mater is made of these 5 elements; they are all expression of the sound OM. So the whole universe is the creation of sound. Any sound is produced by the meeting of Purusha and Prakriti. The upper lip (considered being Purusha), meets the lower lip (considered to be Prakriti), and Om is in this union. Any word or sound, even if you do not meet the lips, the walls in your throat meet Purusha and Prakruti. All the Sanskrit Alphabet derives from Purusha and Prakruti. Even in English and all other Languages this is truth. There are 16 vowels in Sanskrit and 26 consonants. In the Vedic anatomy; the body is made up of sound. Every organ has a sound, every system has a sound, every Dosha has a sound, and every Prakruti has a sound. Prakruti sound is the sound of the particular person's DNA; if someone knows that sound the DNA will recognize that sound and even genetic predispositions can be eradicated. That sound can be infused in someone's mantra; the power of mantra can balance someone DNA genetic code. Prakruti is everyone unique genetic code, it manifests in the person's constitution. In Ayurvedic they can understand someone Prakruti (constitution) through their specific ways of assessment. Mantra is a mystical sacred word or prayer or invocation, it can transform someone's life radically. One definition of mantra: Manyate iti Mantra: manya means mind, manyate is that which satisfies the mind: this is Mantra, another definition: Mananat Triayate iti Mantra: by repetition of sacred words and sounds you can transcend your mind, you are protected, and you are blessed.

The five elements manifest in the human body as three basic humors called Doshas. Vata: Water & Earth, Pitta: Fire & Water, Kapha: Water & Earth. According to the combination in each person there will be the person's constitution or Prakruti.

The Indian approach to sound healing takes in consideration these 3 basic principles of all that exist in regard to what the healing need to achieve. If sound itself created the universe, sound could help human being achieve the goal of his existence, to reunite or to lose the illusion of separation. If sound created mater, sound can definitely affect mater. Sound as everything can be of the 3 basic qualities: satvic, rajasic, or tamasic and conduct human toward increment those qualities in them. The aim would be to increase satva and decrease tamas and rajas.

Here there is a Chart that can serve as a guide

Factions of Tri-Doshas

VATA	**PITTA**	**KAPHA**
(Air-Space)	(Fire-Water)	(Water-Earth)
Movement	Body Heat	Stability
Breathing	Temperature	Energy
Natural Urges	Digestion	Lubrication
Transformation of Tissues	Perception	Unctuousness
Motor Functioning	Understanding	Forgiveness
Ungroundedness	Hunger	Greed
Secretions	Thirst	Attachment
Excretions	Intelligence	Accumulation
Fear	Anger	Holding
Emptiness	Hate	Possessiveness
Anxiety	Jealousy	(3)

The Indian Perspective to sound healing also can be helpful to determine the dominant Dosha in a person, or the Prakruti combination; that could be a way to assess which kind of sound healing would be the most appropriate. The Prakruti or constitution can be assessed with different forms of tests: color of the skin, eyes, physical appearance, the tongue test etc. and the pulse for the most experience ayurvedic practitioners. They can also be approach with a questionnaire.

Organizations and Schools in India for Treatments, Training & Research Today

There are several organizations in India for treatment, training and research into the sound healing field in today's world. The web sites I visited describe their specific modality. Some use the Bija sound, these are the seed sounds that were channeled by the ancient mystics and they have the power to heal deep troubles even before they become illnesses and to produce higher states of consciousness. Some use Tibetan bowls and some music and integrative approaches with westerner music therapy principles.

(2)Ayurveda; The Science of Self Healing- Vasant Lad p.24 (3) Ayurveda; The Science of Self Healing- Vasant Lad p.28

Para-Tan Sound Healing

http://sound-healing-para-tan.org/healing_mantra.html

Is a organization of sound healing in India that use mantras and the Bija sound (seed sounds) we studied some of them in class: AUM, AIM, SHIM, HRIM, KRIM, KLIM, HLRIM. "Every Mantra has a color, an element, a devata (deity) or a divine form and method of recitation. In determine an appropriate mantra; astrology is taken into account, with reference made to the science of elements, color and the predominant guna (satva, rajas, tamas). Acording to the birth sign, one can decides on a mantra" Also according to other astrological features, or by choosing a deity and asking a Guru for the mantra. "Each mantra posses two divisions-sound and form…These mantras will help activate all your energy centers and balances your inner energy thus helps you to live in harmony with your outer world." They have reasons to believe that illnesses can be detected even before they manifest in the physical body.

This organization do sacred traditional rituals and it could be observed how cultural, religious and scientific aspects are combined as something typical from the traditional Indian idiosyncrasies. They declare: "The Bija works a a deepest level, directly with your cellular memory …Emotional memories release with Para-Tan Sound Healing, as use by ancient Tantra Masters, is now brought to life again, due to the blessings of the Divine Mother. Emotional memories are stored in the organs, and this will show itself in the navel years before it get to become a major illness…The sounds of the Divine Mother can help repair damaged DNA, thus reduces the chances to become ill." That doesn't mean superstition at all, the structural system I base in a comprehensive view that combines science, philosophy and religion into a elaborate perspective.

There are also Schools of Sound Massage done with singing bowls,

International Academy of Sound Healing

http://iash.in

This academy main focus is the Tibetan Singing Bowls; they use the traditional metal ones. They made a beautiful description of the history, sacred metals used, attributes and healing effects on the human body from the Singing Bowls.

"*Created through a exacting & delicate combination of hand-hammered technique from 7 sacred metals (Gold, Silver, Cooper, Tin, Mercury, Iron & Lead) which lend their unique frequency to the vibration of the bowls. The harmonic sounds created from these bowls aid the meditative process…Singing Bowls are played with wooden mallet, produce rich blend of harmonic overtones" they "have direct effect on the Chakras…They produce the sacred sound of AUM. Their rich sonic vibrations alter space, mind & time*."

The Ayurvedic sage Charuk called that synergy of the effects of the sound of the bowls "samvahan". It is a Sanskrit word that means "*re-awakening of tissue. The overtones "bring new life to stagnated parts, and they re-awaken the healing powers within the body*"

The vibrations resonate on the cells and the 70% of water of the body spreading through it in waves that travel in concentric circles. "*These especial vibrations are soothing enough to calm the nerves, yet penetrating enough to reach the marrow of the bones*"

There is some idea of the history of the Tibetan Bowls research show their origin in India and they were brought to Tibet by Tantric Masters seems as their apparition in the west at the time of the Chinese invasion.

*"According to Tibetan oral traditions, the existence of Singing Bowls dates back to 560-480 B.C., the tradition was brought back from India to Tibet, along with the teaching of Buddha by some great " Tantric" masters in the Tibetan region…In 1951 China invaded Tibet. Then the Chinese began to destroy most of the monasteries & temples. Many monks fled the country. Living outside their country and in poverty created pressure to sell their belongings, which contributed to the gradual appearance of the singing bowls on the western market in the 1960's & 1970's***."***

The Sound Yoga School:

http://singingbowlstherapy.com utilizes singing Tibetan bowls:

"*The pure sonic waves that ring from Sound Yoga Singing Bowls wake up your ability to hear with more than your ears. We feel the sound of singing bowls as much as we take it with our ears." They use the bowls in the area of tension or any other symptoms, detoxification, emotional release, increasing energy, self confidence, experience bliss. They develop a unique sound massage: "The Sound Yoga Academy is established to teach and promote the Peter Hess Sound Massage in India. Peter Hess ® Sound Massage, a unique method of working with sound and vibrations, is based on the Eastern Knowledge and tradition and developed completely for the Western world.."*

This school talks about their history as having their origin in India form 500 years ago and finding their home in many other different Asian countries like" *Japan, China, Thailand and the Himalaya region."*

In this school they had found that it is very difficult to find the authentic antiques that resemble the original metal composition, so they started researching in order to fabricate them themselves.

"Today, because of the increased demand, there are only few antique singing bowls of good quality. Often new bowls can be found, that neither correspond to the old metal alloy nor are fabricated in the traditional way. Since 1990 Peter Hess has been trying to track down the knowledge covering the traditional composition and fabrication of singing bowls. After a few failures he succeeded in early 1996 with the continued help of Mr. Sunil Sharma (who is a perfectionist himself in engineering field), Father of Manan Sharma to revive the traditional fabrication of singing bowls in the old composition of 12 metals. These new singing bowls with the Peter Hess products® seal of quality, that are produced according to ancient tradition, guarantees constant quality throughout. From almost Eighteen Years, Manan Sharma's company is producing those bowls for Peter Hess & exporting them to his company."

Kailash Tribal School Holistic Sound Healing

http://www.yogatribe.org/yoga.php?id=11#

This is a school in located in a small town Mcleodganj, India near Dharamsala, the city that received thousands of Tibetan refugees and current home of the Dalai Lama. It offers great accommodations and a beautiful view. They provide yoga classes and different other forms of healing training.

They provide Holistic Healing and Courses using many modalities including Reiki, Sound Therapy, Ayurveda, Meditation and Music. This school uses a wider approach also in sound healing in terms of the instruments, including Indian music instruments like table and sitar.

"*Sound Therapy uses different modalities including mantras, Himalayan singing bowls, tuning forks, chimes, gongs and healing music.*"

There is a web site about the world of Music Therapy in India called:

Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy

https://voices.no

In this Forum there is an Interview made by Sumaty Sundar to Mr. Aurelio who is a musician and music therapist among many other titles he has. He is s resident at the Auroville Community in Pondicheri India, he is the Director of the Mohanam Cultural Center there.

Mr. Aurelio talks about many interesting aspects of the Indian Music as having an impact on both sound and music therapy in India. The whole interview could be found at this link: https://voices.no/index.php/voices/article/view/369/292

He talks about how Ayurvedic science, the Indian understanding of the universe and human life could be found at the core of Indian music. He describes how one eminent Indian musician who comes from a family of medical practitioners considers Indian music as an instrument for transcendence.

Also he explains the possibilities in the integration of the Indian and other eastern approaches with the westerner point of view in the area of sound healing and music therapy.

"Is it that the east placed more emphasis on the inner dimensions of sound and that the west explore more it's structural manifestation, that the east approach healing through the essence and aim of our life, that the west was preoccupied with problem solving and therapeutic techniques? If we take it again from an integral point of view then all the factors work together in a successful treatment and process of positive change. Music is a total phenomenon and even if its impact can be analyzed and taken apart into its purely material, vibrational, sound components on one side and its structural, aesthetic, conceptional part on the other…"

Conclusion

Ayurvedic principles and analysis could be used as method of assessment, Indian chants and mantras as part of the treatments along with combination of instruments, bowls, and tuning forks.

After the class on modes, I could see how the westerner approach on the Pythagorean modes could be integrated into the Ayurvedic 5 element analysis and combine with Indian satvic harmonies in a sound healing treatment.