

OHM, IS NOT FOR THE EARS. OHM IS FOR THE INSIDE.

My voice has been going through some subtle, harmonic shifts lately. I'm surprised that I'm surprised and yet, I remain in a state of distinct curiosity. In the past I've had two semesters of vocal lessons, with two capable instructors. One an opera singer who's traveled the globe performing in castles, and another, a singer and master teacher of vocalists. I wasn't surprised that both helped me gain access to before unknown abilities of my vocal cords and resonant chambers of my body. And thusly, my voice didn't so much change as my control of it and ability to confidently shape the passageways for proper flow of it. But lately, something in the sound of my voice is quite different. The sounds (quality and pitch) I create when toning that I'm hearing with my ears, are enhanced by both the higher harmonic pitches I'm hearing and feeling in my resonance chambers, as well as by the intervals/the spaces in between the pitches. I am quite literally "aum'ing" my way through it. Not in the sense of escaping what is, but to be one with and better understand the essence of this transformation from within the throws of it.

I had the following insight in meditation the other day to, "Think of it this way, Ah-Oh-Uh-Mmm..., is not about how it sounds, as much as it is about, how it makes you feel." Aum is a practice of many things for me. Over the years through Om'ing I've experienced: profound Unity of life, Equanimity beyond the dualities of this existence, an indescribable Stillness within the silent spaciousness within the sound... It's simultaneously an invitation to and expression of Bliss and a tuning into the frequency of *the Knower* within. The sound vibrations, made with great love and appreciation, seem to themselves create a pathway for the differentiating energies of life. The priority you'll soon see for a time, is not group harmony, but being in harmony with Life. It should not be that my way is your way, or your way is mine. It is necessarily unique and undefined according to the meandering paths we take to inner Knowing. However fleeting the sensation, within the sound is something that activates and stimulates the purest essence of being within us. It beckons us to a stillness that exists as existence, as pure awareness.

The other day I was in a popular bookstore, searching for a good read on sound. One that would help me to satisfy this driving curiosity within for a few weeks. Perhaps on the activations the voice goes through in waking to its connection to everything. Perhaps on anatomy of sound structures as they affect cellular structures within the human body. Perhaps on best practices for utilizing that same knowledge for health and well-being. Perhaps on the intentional use of Ohm – the sound beyond spellings and

semantics, beyond pronunciations and illusory perfections of it. Only, I couldn't find the book I was looking for. I'm not exactly sure it's been written. At least not in one concise volume, freely shared with uninitiated members of the general public like you and me. But the answers I seek to the as yet unarticulated questions, are available. And as I become clearer on what subtleties of sound, feels most urgent for me to master next, the way will simultaneously reveal itself.

Last weekend, (at the time of this writing) I attended a mindfulness expo and author event, where by chance, I got to meet the resident lama of a local dharma center in Dallas, Texas. Because I had an opportunity to facilitate a sound bath at the same venue just prior to the expo and had to spend some time breaking down my equipment, I arrived into the main hall late, after all the seats were filled. I had to find a spot to stand along the wall to listen. Not at all a problem for me. Without thinking, I moved along the wall in the room 'till I felt I'd found a comfortable spot to stand. After a brief mindfulness exercise, and some chair yoga, the guest speaker introduced the lama, as a good friend of the Dalia Lama, and coincidentally, I was standing just beside his table with only one chair, his assistant, between us. Curious... I thought to have found myself so close. When the event concluded shortly thereafter and released everyone for hors d'oeuvres in the courtyard, they, like me, were slow to move from the table. An interesting window of opportunity, I thought. So, I followed the internal prompting to "connect". I was swift. Introducing myself as - being who I am (🙏)... A Mindfulness Facilitator who specializes in sound, primarily the singing bowls and gong..., and "I have a question for you about deep voice toning if you have a moment." Oh if only I'd been as articulate as that. Really I stumbled a bit not knowing quite how to describe the deep voice and I recall saying something more like "I've been noticing that during toning my voice is 'deeper' sometimes. Much deeper, really and it feels quite stimulating to my energy centers. Can you tell me more about how to consistently make this voice?" He was gracious to even take my question, and more so to answer so sincerely. In short, he spoke about how toning "ohm" can be done by lay people as meditation and as such may deliver one into a state of great peace. And then there is the "Deep voice ohm. And if that is what you are talking about, out of the many monks who can make "The Sound" only few are trained to teach it." The period is appropriate here. It was a short, good talk. As he spoke, our eyes met and barely shifted from each other. I was listening, intently for what was said, implied, and shared beyond words. I was listening into the tone of his voice. And so our brief encounter concluded with, him saying something like he hoped that would help me along. I smiled in gratitude and said, "I'll go be one with it."

Subtleties so Far, Shared Freely:

And so we've come to it. I am about to share with you, my Ohm journey understandings so far. Because I believe there must be others like me, with similar questions, and maybe we can help each other. But first one last anecdote. One book of particular interest to me on this subject is something of a modern classic called *Healing Sounds* by Jonathan Goldman. Since I've been going through this recently with the harmonics of my voice, I pulled it off the shelf and "dusted" it off so to speak. It's a recounting of portions of the author's sound journey and distinguished career. There's a passage in the forward where he discusses having developed "the deep voice" on his own, then having had it refined by two different groups of monks and further, having been charged by a Master to teach it. He later speaks of the "responsibility" of such knowledge and teaching it only to more advanced sound practitioners at his workshops.

So it seems, some would pay for specialized training, others would dedicate their lives to it, and others still, seem to come into the knowledge on their own, and have it be more fully realized /"refined" in group practice with masters. Not yet being one who can presently budget for a sound retreat workshop, or one with access to the masters that I know of, I must depend on my own inner Knowing for a time. For who's to truly say who is somehow worthy to receive such knowledge more or less than others and why? And would the concern be that throughout human history, there have been so many abuses of spiritual knowledge? We're all still here and growing. What I do know is that, I'm moved to share what I know about this as I go. Only what I know. This based on my own life experiences that color my perception, defining the things that I value most as worth sharing with the ones that highly value them. Information, training and education, is all available to those that seek to connect with the information and sense it as a part of themselves. In this, it cannot be kept from them. Some knowledge is drawn from a deep well within us, more consciously embodied, and then shared.

Ah-Oh-Uh-Mm: The Beginning, the Middle, and the End

Let's begin with some of the subtleties of creating the sound. The sound that itself begins and ends with silence. I'm going to share some of the more mechanical instruction only as a guide in tuning in to your own way of doing this. It's not the technique that I'm highlighting, but getting to the *feeling*, however is best for you.

First is the sitting still or "sitting deep". Sitting in an armless chair to begin can sometimes be helpful. Sitting deep happens when the body, mental focus, emotions, and breath are all in sync. Begin

by finding the natural posture of your spine. Naturally erect, not overly erect, allowing one to rest into the breath awareness because the body is still and comfortable. Opening the rib cage, resting the shoulders gently backward, and chin gently tucked inward. Teeth slightly parted. A kind of inner buoyancy will be the result of this as if gravity itself is the weaker of an unseen force connected to the breath.

And I breathe, and I listen, and I even imagine the sound, till I'm moved to create it. Aum – the sound- sound being most essentially energy waves, can be imagined as a stepping down of universal energies, into the environment around us, through to the electromagnetic fields around the body that include the mind and emotions, as well as the conglomerate of resonance fields that we recognize as the body itself. From an infinite universe, sound travels into the finite, infinitesimally small spaces of the body. It seems to connect into inner spaces, like missing pieces of a puzzle, carefully placed. And from the inner spaces, again it emerges and expands upward and out through the air passageways of the body, past the larynx and pharynx, and the oral and nasal cavities that all color the sound with harmonics. I have a sense of this before I even begin to make the sound. But later as I do, again and again as I make the sound, I'm listening and feeling within to what is resonated. The energetic sound bubble we create with our voice expands both outward and within. Honoring the journey of the timeless Ohm, is imperative to my process as it becomes the communion that moves me to create the sound and add my voice to the ever-present harmony of life.

The Middle: Projecting Within

When opening the mouth to create the sound of ohm, the top of the head remains relatively still, and the chin drops slightly open to allow the sound to pass. The “deep sound”, presently, primarily resonates three areas of my body. The sound vibrations gently massage the resonant chambers of a very specific point in the center front of my diaphragm, the center front edge of my larynx, and interestingly the center of my forehead so I intentionally place split focus in these three areas just before I make any sound. I've observed other areas are activated as well at different times and I've begun experimenting with that. For example, after making the sound for a while I can feel a kind of stirring in the center front of my chest and a really relaxing flow, like warm soothing water sensations in my spine. And while making it, I sometimes I also feel a similar influx sensation rising from my thalamus upward into the pineal area. And you know what, as I type this out, I do realize how strange it sounds. But these are the self-discovered subtleties that no one speaks about, shared here for what it's worth to you.

Finally, there's the intentional deep breath before the first audible sound. At the top of the breath, focus on the resonance points, the audible sound begins slightly after the exhale starts as a compliment to exhalation. And it ends, slightly before the end of exhale, before completely emptying the lungs. It's best fit for me each time is comfortably in-between the pauses of the breath. There's a smooth rhythm to it, no trying, just breathing. For "AH" sound, to begin the sound, the tip of my tongue is gently touching the base of the mouth at the lower gumline. Then remains resting there as the shape of the mouth shifts into the O shape of the lips for the "Oh" sound. You'll mostly likely hear interesting whistles as the harmonics are more pronounced in the shifts. The "UH" sound is a shifting sound and is brief, coming as a result of the shape of the mouth changing to pass into the closed lips of the "Mm" and as a result of thinking "Uh" as I'm making the "Oh" sound. "Mm" resonates somewhere in the center of my head around the area of the pineal and above and tickles the nasal passages just a bit and the middle of the tongue is lightly touching the protruding part of the roof of my mouth. It's almost impossible for me to describe positioning. I'm so not a master, but I know where I'm at and the many splendored benefits of the practice so far. One must listen to their body/mind system, and the harmonics, and practice recreating the harmonics you choose until it becomes muscle memory to your system. This is nothing short of a Vegas nerve massage that stimulates and promotes the body's overall well-being. It can be quite the experience in the release of endorphins when practiced, even for those like me who are still inconsistently producing "The Deep Sound."

Aum is- all-inclusive -simultaneously the question, the answer, and understanding.

Aum is - tuning in, resonating as, Being

Aum is - a closed circuit

- The Bindu differentiating
- transference of multi-dimensional information
- ...

As I type, I wonder, ***what has ohm been to you so far on your journey?*** I would love to know. Please leave your comments below.



The End: Beyond Spellings

Sometimes when I'm making the "ah" sound, I'm thinking "oh", or when I'm making the "oh" sound I'm thinking "uh". And the sound that is emerging is technically both or neither. ***The word, the sound, the symbol, is beyond all my many different spellings in this writing.***

Over and again, we make the sounds that nourish our system until we begin to crave silence and are moved to completion. Always allowing a time of silence to enclose the sound itself. Some might even say, silence is abiding even as we are making the sound within the spaces in-between the harmonics and the fundamentals. In the closing silence we feel the vibrations and sound settling within us and slowly begin to shift back into our everyday awareness.

In conclusion, this is a practice in progress, and I believe there is no body of knowledge that someone else has to teach me in order for me to know. I have never seen lack of opportunity as an excuse not to be educated. But, we are as humans hardwired as communal creatures. We tend to learn faster and feel a more pronounced sense of accomplishment when we are learning in groups of two or more. So, join me, in the sound of bliss and tell me your most exceptional experiences so far with this sound of sounds.

Namaste,

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