

The Science of the Divine Word OM - Swami Omkarananda

The Science of the Divine Syllable

The trilateral monosyllabic divine word, OM, philologically considered, covers in its triple 'mora', the entire ground of sound-phenomena, and acquires the distinction of being the only scientific syllable in all languages. As a transcription in time-limits, in all Nature, and through the human voice, of the timeless mystic resonance inherent in the primeval functionings of the Infinite, it gains the prerogative of being the only natural, real, original, sublime and synonymless Name of the infinite Divinity, as against all other names of the Deity, whether in Hinduism, or in other world religions, that are found to be manmade, qualified, characteristic, derived from the attributes of the Divine, apprehended by an approaching, adoring and aspiring human intelligence.

Philosophically, OM is not so much a descriptive synonym as the very constitutive essence and organic self-expression of the indestructible Reality, Akshara.

Cosmogonically and cosmologically, OM is the archetype of creative Power, the Logos, not as conceived by Philo, but as envisioned and experienced by the luminous Soul of the ancient Seers. It is the creative and revelatory Divine Word, the inconceivably subtle elemental sound-structure, self-formed of light, Tejas. It is full of the primordial and ultimate Energy that forms, sustains and reabsorbs billions of universes, and that is immanent in all that is manifest, as rhythm, reason, law, sound-continuum-cum-light-continuum, analysable in a sequence, as the first and fundamental Thought, a Will, a Self-conscious Entity, a great Self-organising Consciousness.

Ontologically, in its 'mora'-less, syllableless, nameless, soundless aspect, OM is the Transcendent Unmanifest. By this very uniqueness of its native double status, it overcomes the hurdles of the dualistic principles in Platonic and other cosmogonies, and yields itself, by its intrinsic and extrinsic scientific character, as the only foundation for an integral philosophy of life and action.

Therapeutically, several and repeated experiments in its vibrations have conclusively proved its curative, sedative and healing effects. Psychologically, the incessant mental repetition of this creative Word, results in the wholesome and personality-integrating physiological effect of a deep track made in the brain, effectuates a sublimation of the conational substance, a transmutation of mind's crude energies, and, in consequence, exerts an awakening and formative impact upon the inner life.

Psychically, advanced Yogic students, by virtue of a subjective mastery over the repetition of OM, release rhythmic internal vibrations and regulate the irregular flow of the vital force, the unsteady and disharmonious vibrations of the five sheaths, restore a rare poise and balance to the mental functions, and seek to hit the plexuses and awaken the powers coiled in them.

Parapsychologically, astrally and supraterritorially, the ancient Sages of contemplative perception and living beatific experience, who have had the advantage of conducting by extra-scientific faculties, special investigations in the psychological, psychic, occult and spiritual potentialities of the mysterious and mystic sound embodied in this sacred syllable, discovered that when intoned in accordance with the prescribed rules, and potentiated by the purified heart, it unfolds the Consciousness-Force inherent in itself. It can not only radically transform the entire man at each of his conscious and unconscious levels, and render active in him the Power of the Superconscious, but also aid him, – through the non-material and extraordinarily subtle waves ensconced in its produced vibrations, – to affect, or influence, the inhabitants of other worlds, touch and quicken the heart of the Deity, and move It to flood him with Its Grace.

Musicologically, it constitutes the substratum of all the seven notes, and in one of the preceding higher gradations of its own self-manifestation, it presents itself as the primal music of the spheres, subtler than the one of Shakespeare's grand conception, and sweeter than the celestial music 'acoustically perceived' by the poetic genius of Milton, audible only to the inner audience of the perfected Yogis.

Transcendentally, it represents itself as 'Nada-Brahman', the Melody Absolute, claiming for its devotees such supreme Indian Beethovens as Tyagaraja.

Methodologically, it commands, all for itself, an independent school of sound-mysticism, 'Natha-Yoga', plays a pre-eminent role in the scheme of Vedantic thought, in the systems of Yoga, in the Tantra Sadhana, and finds the Upanishads repeatedly eulogising it.

Great seekers after Truth meditate upon it, for an assimilation of its deepest significance, and its most comprehensive meaning, which were, tradition has it, difficult of description, even for such great sages like Brihaspati and Vasishtha. The sacred Books of Truth-realization speak of OM in a series of metaphors such as a bow, an arrow, a ship that conveys the soul of man into the Bosom of the Eternal and the Infinite, which it itself is.

The Science of Mystical Syllables and Divine Sounds

The first manifestation of God is Ether or Sound. Sound is the quality of Ether. Sounds are vibrations. They give rise to definite forms. Each sound produces a form in the invisible world. Combinations of sound create complicated shapes.

The text-books of science describe certain experiments which show that notes produced by certain instruments, trace out on a bed of sand, definite geometrical figures. It is thus demonstrated that rhythmical vibrations give rise to regular geometrical figures.

The sacred books of ancient India, on the subject of music, tell us that various musical tunes, ragas and raginis, have each a particular shape. For instance, the Megha Raga is said to be a majestic figure seated on an elephant. The Vasanta Raga is described as a beautiful youth decked with flowers. From this, it is clear that a particular raga or ragini,

when accurately sung, produces aerial etheric vibrations which create certain characteristic shapes.

In the contemporary world, this view has received corroboration from the experiments carried on by Mrs. Watts Hughes, the gifted authoress of *Voice Figures*. She delivered an illustrated lecture before a select audience in Lord Leighton's Studio, to demonstrate the beautiful scientific discoveries on which she has alighted as the result of many years of patient labour.

Mrs. Hughes sang into a simple instrument called an 'Eidophone' which consists of a tube, a receiver and a flexible membrane. She finds that each note assumes definite and constant shape, as revealed through a sensitive and mobile medium. At the outset of her lecture, she placed tiny seeds upon the flexible membrane and the air vibrations set up by the notes she sounded, danced them into definite geometric patterns. Afterwards, she used dusts of various kinds. Lycopodium dust was found to be particularly suitable. Describing the shapes of the notes, a reporter speaks of them as remarkable revelations of geometry, perspective and shading. 'Stars, spirals, snakes, wonders in wheels and imagination rioting in a wealth of captivating methodical designs', such were what were shown first. Once, when Mrs. Hughes was singing a note, a daisy appeared and disappeared, and 'I tried', she said, 'to sing it back for weeks, before at last I succeeded'. Now she knows the precise inflections of the particular note that is a daisy, and it is made constant and definite by a strange method of coaxing and alteration of crescendo and diminuendo.

After the audience had gazed enrapt at a series of daisies, some with succeeding rows of petals and some with petals delicately viewed, they were shown other notes, and these were pansies of great beauty. 'How wonderful, how lovely', were the audible exclamations that arose in the late Lord Leighton's studio, and exquisite forms succeeded exquisite forms on the screen. The flowers were followed by sea-monsters, serpentine forms of swelling rotundity, full of light and shade and detail. After these notes came others, and there were trees, trees with fruits falling, trees with a foreground of rocks, trees with sea behind. 'Why' exclaimed people in the audience, 'they are just like Japanese landscapes'.

While in France, Madame Finlang's singing of a hymn to Virgin Mary 'O Ave Maria' brought out the form of Mary with the child Jesus in her lap; and again the singing of a hymn to Bhairava by a Bengali student of Benares, India, studying in France, gave rise to the formation of the figure of Bhairava with his vehicle dog.

Thus, the repeated singing of the name of the Lord gradually builds up the forms of the special manifestations of God, the Deity whom you seek to worship, and this serves as a focus to concentrate the benign influence of the Being which, radiating from the centre, penetrates the worshipper or the singer.

The Eternal Word – OM

OM is essentially mystic, and therefore, wholly non-sectarian. The people of all religious denominations, and particularly the seekers after the divine Truth, have always, through the millenniums, used this word of divine Nature and Power, with immense spiritual profit.

The mystic seers of the ancient times received many revelations on the sacrosanct form and the ontological implications of the character of OM. They conducted prolonged experiments in its vibrations, and made many researches in the spiritual effects it exerts, the diversity of utility it permits, and the benefits it confers.

- Swami Omkarananda