

# Say Yes to Krishna's Name and to Spiritual Sound

“Of sacrifices I am the chanting of the holy names...” [BG 7.8]

“Of vibrations I am the transcendental om.” [BG 10.25]

“O son of Kunti, I am the sound in ether and ability in man.” [BG 10.25]

## 1. Physical sound

Sound is characterized in modern science as mechanical waves that propagate through a medium such as air, water and solids. Sound waves are generated by a sound source, or a vibrating medium. ~~Although sound can be transmitted as both longitudinal waves and transverse waves, sound waves are commonly featured as longitudinal waves.~~ These waves, consisting of alternating pressure, i.e. deviations from the equilibrium pressure, produce compression and rarefaction when traveling through a medium and display tremendous amounts of energy. For example, consider the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami event that killed around 230,000 people. This most devastating event of its kind in modern time was generated by the energy of sound waves released simply from a minute shaking of the Earth’s crust, or tectonic plates.

In Sankhya philosophy, sound is established as the initial subtle element among the five subtle elements, viz. smell, taste, form, touch and sound. From sound, the other subtle and gross elements sequentially arise under the influence of the time factor, thus initializing both the cause and effect of subtle and gross matter.

“When egoism in ignorance is agitated by the sex energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead [*i.e., when false ego (sprung up directly from the mahat-tattva, which evolved from the Lord's own energy) is endowed with the active power of the mode of ignorance*], the subtle element sound is manifested, and from sound comes the ethereal sky and the sense of hearing [*i.e., ear*].” [SB 3.26.32]

## 2 Spiritual sound

When we talk about sound, commonly what appears in our mind is consideration of physical sound - the vibration that is externally carried by

sound waves. How can we, who act and perceive through physical sound, logically understand the existence of spiritual sound? We refer to the authority.

“According to Vedic knowledge, the Vedic sound is divided into four phases” [SB 11.21.36] or categories, viz. *para*, *pasyanti*, *madhyama*, and *vaikhari*. The first three of the divisions are internally situated within the living entity and only the fourth division *vaikhari* is externally manifested, experienced as audible speech or sound.

Technically, the sound waves observed within our common experience, which are transmitted through air, signal towers, Internet, etc., represent only the *vaikhari* aspect of sound. The Vedas teach us that, although the mind can only perceive the subtle element sound that is carried by the gross element ether, sound itself is full in all four phases.

Sound within each of the four different phases, or stages, is distinct from each other in quality. “In the *vaikhari* stage, the sound and the meaning are different, yet they are related. This relationship however is purely by convention.” “In the *madhyama* stage, there is simultaneous difference and non-difference between the sound and its meaning, i.e., there is both difference and non-difference, the balance being in favor of difference.” “At the *pasyanti* stage, there is no difference between the sound and its meaning. Whatever sound is heard, that itself is its meaning: whatever is the meaning, that is the sound”. “In the *para* stage of sound, even the question of the nature of the relationship between sound and its meaning does not arise, for in the spiritual plane, sound, meaning, and its knowledge do not separately occur.” {NOTE: The source for these references should be cited. Is the source Staph’s monogram?}

“Persons who are learned and who have true knowledge define sound as that which conveys the idea of an object, indicates the presence of a speaker screened from our view and constitutes the subtle form of ether.” [SB 3.26.33].

Through these four stages of sound, the communication between layers of realms are made possible, namely: the spiritual realm; the subtle realm (the material level at which elements are formless: smell, taste, color, touch and sound, and five senses for acquiring information); and the gross realm (the material level at which elements have the nature of objective sensations: earth, water, fire, air and ether, and five working senses).

“The *para* stage carries the communication between Supersoul and individual soul [at the spiritual level]”. “The *pasyanti* stage perhaps carries the communication from the subtle realm to individual soul, whereas the *vaikhari* stage is the stage that operates at the gross level.” “...the *madhyama* stage may carry the communication from the gross to the subtle realm”. {As above, the source for these references should be cited.}

### 3 Say yes to spiritual sound

After having addressed the importance of subtle element sound and the existent of spiritual sound, we confront the question of motivation: Why say yes to spiritual sound? To this end, we inquire into the purpose of material creation.

“O son of Kunti, at the end of the millennium every material manifestation enters into My nature, and at the beginning of another millennium, by My potency I again create.” [BG 9.7]. “In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium.” [BG 4.8]. “Although the spiritual existence was there with the Lord, the material existence was dormant in Him. By His will only is the material manifestation done and undone.” (SB 3.5.23 p) “The whole process (*of material creation*) is to enliven the sleeping conditioned souls to the real life of spiritual consciousness so that they may thus become as perfect as the ever-liberated souls in the Vaikuntha lokas. The Lord wanted to create the cosmic manifestation to give another chance to the conditioned souls who were dormant in forgetfulness.” (SB 3.5.24 p).

In other words, the living entities who are obsessed by the duality of sensual perception, and by material opulences such as knowledge, beauty, wealth, fame, power, and liberation, and who are entangled by the chain of reactions of fruitive work, are fast asleep to the consciousness of their “true self.” Self-realization, or attending to “the progressive value of life,” is simply the gradual process of spiritual awakening. This awakening process is not at all confined to a certain class of man, or to a narrow set of activities, or to a specific belief system. Indeed, it is spontaneously and incessantly available through descending mercy at every single moment inside every heart of all searching souls throughout the innumerable material universes, regardless their state of

being, be they of goodness, passion or ignorance. The reason is simple but irrevocable; it is the Will of Lord Krishna and His Purpose of material creation.

Spiritual sound proves the perfect medium for this descending mercy!

## 4 The nectar of spiritual sound

“The sense whose object of perception is sound is called the auditory sense.”

[SB 3.26.47]

Besides perceiving sound waves with frequencies between about 20 Hz and 20 kHz, another remarkable feature of the human auditory system involves sensing of gravitational force and movement, which is facilitated by a special group of cells with a calcium carbonate structure located in inner ear. For a man who is falling in his sleep, the auditory system will serve as a reliable sense that snaps him awake. Either a ringing alarming clock or a feeling of falling during a dream while asleep will provide an impetus to awaken from bed. In morning we are awakened by sound. Similarly, our real spiritual consciousness is awakened also through hearing. {Question: Could you explain why you added this interesting information regarding the inner ear’s effect on sensing gravitational force? Particularly, it is in the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph under the “nectar of spiritual sound” heading.}

From the description of the four stages of sound, it may be said that all desires, sensual perceptions, thoughts and reactions, impetus for action etc., that enter and exit one's consciousness can be understood as sounds at different stages.

Being a spirit soul, at some level we are inevitably conscious of all these sounds and have no choice over the type of sounds that enter into the mind - which by nature is flickering, unsteady and occupied with thoughts and reaction.

However, “intelligence is still higher than the mind; and he [the soul] is even higher than the intelligence.” [BG 3.42]

“...If he likes he can turn his face to the service of the Lord. The individual living entity is given that independence.” (SB 3.26.18 p).

Each soul, as the knower of the bodily machine, we are endowed with tiny free will, the independence to consciously direct the mind to hear the sound that

cultivates knowledge, is devoid of false ego and conveys the opulences of the all-attractive Lord. This is also confirmed in BG: "A person who is not disturbed by the incessant flow of desires - that enter like rivers into the ocean which is ever being filled but is always still - can alone achieve peace, and not the man who strives to satisfy such desires." [BG 2.70].

Self-realization, or spiritual awakening is urgent, but it is not to be urgently achieved. "Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self." [SB 1.2.7]. The only shelter for soul is to render loving devotional service.

Hearing, not merely through ear, but through heart, is an effective way of serving. Simply by hearing about Krishna, the transcendental sound directly between the soul and Supersoul, our real consciousness will be gradually awakened. And thus our life's desire is in accordance with the desire of the Lord in a well-tuned mutual song.