

SEED SOUNDS FOR TUNING THE CHAKRAS

Vowels, Consonants, and Syllables
for Spiritual Transformation



James D'Angelo, Ph.D.

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SEED SOUNDS FOR TUNING THE CHAKRAS



“As sound pioneer, concert musician, music philosopher, and conduit of the perennial wisdom, James D’Angelo is a refreshingly original communicator. Ever since I first heard him, 25 years ago, enchant his audience with a thoroughly engaging presentation of sound healing, I realized that here is a man who walks his talk. James’s passionate, humble, humorous, and scholarly dedication to the transforming art of sound and voice is celebrated on every page of *Seed Sounds for Tuning the Chakras*. It’s a spiritual adventure with your voice, with an inventive range of vocal exercises—accessible for everyone—that are both playful and profound. I encourage all my voice students and friends dedicated to the evolution of consciousness through sound to discover the healing properties of *Seed Sounds for Tuning the Chakras*.”

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“James D’Angelo’s *Seed Sounds for Tuning the Chakras* is an excellent resource for exploring fundamental methodology of using voice for toning exercises and chakra attunements. James’s manner of explaining the background and method of working with the chakras is a pleasing mix of traditional wisdom and contemporary insight. His introduction includes an exceptional, concise treatise on the nature of human existence and an endearing exploration into the interrelationship between sound and matter, name and form, across traditions. His wordplay while naming chakra characteristics is insightful and articulate.”

ZACCIAH BLACKBURN, PH.D.,
DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER OF LIGHT INSTITUTE OF
SOUND HEALING AND SHAMANIC STUDIES AND
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AT THE INTERNATIONAL
SOUND HEALING NETWORK

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Dedicated to the memory of
His Holiness Shantanand Saraswati (1913–1997),
formerly the Shankaracharya of North India (1953–1980),
from whom I received spiritual knowledge that has subtly
contributed to the writing of this book.

*Somewhere deep inside there is a sound that is
mine alone, and I struggle daily to hear it and
tune my life to it.*

RACHEL NAOMI REMEN,
MY GRANDFATHER'S BLESSINGS



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INTRODUCTION

The Spiritual Path

We are all on the spiritual path. It does not matter whether this truth is an awareness in our consciousness or lies hidden deep within our subconscious. Whatever the activity of humanity, at its root it is linked to the one universal consciousness that we have called God, the Absolute,* Creator, Supreme Being, Brahman, Allah, and many other names. We cannot conceive of our ultimate beginnings that spawned intelligent life. All of the major spiritual traditions acknowledge a progenitor being/force that desired to create material worlds, from subatomic particles to humanity, to the largest galaxies, all imbued with a substance that is an infinitely powerful aspect of itself. In Hinduism this essence in individuals is described as the *atman*, the all-knowing pure and blissful Self.

What is the nature of this Creation? With the exception of ourselves, all expresses order and harmony, and Creation is

*The word *Absolute* is perhaps the best English term to denote what is usually given as God. It begins with the first letter of the alphabet and could be connected to *absolution*, the forgiveness of the Absolute for humanity's forgetting who they really are.

unfolding as intended.* Even events considered to be disastrous, such as earthquakes and erupting volcanoes, are part of that order and harmony. They are the Earth's way of renewing and cleansing itself. The aspect of Creation that has not attained this harmony is our psychology, the life of the soul. The Absolute did not establish a world of human perfection in which our mind states and our overall health would not go astray. Rather, it took on the role of a cosmic dramatist by not programming sentient beings, but giving them the choice of remembering that their knowing union with the Absolute is the source of harmony, peace, and bliss. This is the primary paradox, and paradox is part of the spiritual path. It is paradoxical because the Absolute would know that humanity would forget its existence, but give us the means of finding the way back. This is the greatest drama there is.

Each of us is endowed with a soul, the center point of which, according to Hindu theology, lies between the heart and the throat. It is our inner organ that determines to what extent we are reflecting our divine essence or, conversely, acting as a separate, independent creature with its own power to do as it pleases. The purer its nature, the more the soul can guide us into a state of unconditional happiness where the heart is fully open and the mind quiet. It is a condition without cause and the most healing state we can achieve. It is as though we have tuned into a different frequency, a much finer vibration of another dimension.

*A wonderful example of nature being in harmony can be heard on a recording called God's Chorus of Crickets. Composer Jim Wilson slowed way down a recording of cricket sounds, and extended the vibrations. The result is reminiscent of an ethereal, angelic choir.

Any distortions in the soul's frequencies are the result of all the experiences it has accumulated in its journey through many lives. The identification with the material world with its myriad events and conflicting emotions becomes ever greater, functioning almost as a prison. Yet the soul's underlying desire is to have conscious reunification with the Absolute. It is summarized in the dictum, "*In this world but not of this world.*" Herein lies another paradox.

So each of us is a noncorporeal soul dwelling temporarily in a physical body with all its senses. The soul's frequencies are distorted, literally out of tune, because it has lost its way due to the domination of the senses and the discursive mind. These disturbances, which need to be healed, are first experienced in our psychology, and this has consequences at both the physical and spiritual levels. Whatever path we choose to return to the source of our being, it is ultimately about the healing of the soul. *Healing* is the operative word as opposed to *curing*. Healing—to make whole—is directed toward the finer aspects of our nature and alters our psychology for the better. This often carries over into the physical body. The pathway toward this healing is usually threefold: Receiving spiritual knowledge from self-realized teachers, whether through the spoken or written word; living that knowledge that has imprinted itself on our consciousness; and establishing practices and rituals that awaken and purify our soul life.

The purpose of this book is to provide one of these ritual pathways via awakening and resonating to the innate vibratory powers of vowels, consonants, and seed syllables for transformation and healing. By investing them with meaning we can then consciously use them to re-tune and purify our energy centers—our *chakras*, an

integral part of the soul. Our voices, the master instruments for producing rich, natural sounds, can lead us toward the source of our being, enabling us to integrate and become one with the voice of the Absolute. This is the union, or yoga, that the soul deeply desires, and our voices can be the conduit to this blissful paradise.



1

Creation as Vibration

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shone in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.

The Logos existed in the very beginning. The Logos was with God, the Logos was Divine. It was with God in the very beginning. Through the Logos all existence came into being, no existence came into being apart from the Logos. In it life lay, and this life was the light of humanity; amid the darkness the light shone and the darkness did not master it.

These two versions of the opening verses of St. John's Gospel (John 1: 1–5) proclaim that the whole of Creation came into existence through a singular all-powerful vibration. Into the void of space was projected the voice of the Absolute, also known as God, Brahman, Allah, the Infinite Creator, the One

without a Second, and many more names. It is the seed vibration of all the archetypes, with never-ending potential consisting of a plethora of overtones and undertones. It is as though the Word, or Logos (from the Greek), was metamorphosized into the world through the vibration of light, the insertion of the *L* representing both the Logos and the Light. It shaped inert matter and produced a living, breathing universe.

Wor(L)d

The very word *universe* is a fascinating one to describe our vast environment. Its connotations are spiritual because *uni* means “one,” and one meaning of *verse* is “turning.” Literally, the universe is a turning toward the One. And as the word *verse* also refers to poetry and music, the meaning of “universe” can be expanded to “one song, one sounding out, or even one Word.”

Verse = Turn
to the
Uni = One

Closely related to the sound of *verse* is the Latin word used in the Vulgate Bible for the Word or Logos:

Verbum = The Word, The Logos

From *verbum* is derived the English word *verb*. It refers to the active part of a sentence structure, just as the original Word’s purpose is to reverberate and activate the inertness of matter through its pure

desire and emotion. Here again a word reveals itself. Emotion is simply “the moving out from” in its basic meaning, a projection of something that has power and coloration. At the same time there is an ancestral precedent of the Word in the Sanskrit root *Vrt*, meaning “to come into being,” transformed in the German to *Wort* (pronounced “vaurt”).

There seems to be a connection between sound and words that begin with the *V* sound. *Verbum* itself, *Vibration*, and *Voice*, for example. Anyone who sounds a *V* on its own will feel how strong a sound it is—a great buzzing of the lips. Even the shape of the *V* as a series portrays a particular sound waveform, the sawtooth wave:



This pattern is also a series of the letter *W*, the opening of *wave*. Closely connected with waves is “water,” or in German, *Wasser*, in which the *W* is sounded as a *V*. The Biblical historian David Elkington has discovered that “the Word was with God and the Word was God” has ancient roots.¹ He traced the etymology of the word *God* back to the sound syllable *guth* from Old High Norse, which has the root meaning of “voice.” At the center of the word *voice* lies our human essence, or individual Self, the *I*.

VOICE

This concept of the first primordial sound being likened to the projection of a voice into the void is nowhere better described than in Genesis, which describes the Supreme Being intoning a statement of what it desired and bringing it into existence:

And God said, "Let there be light and there was light." And God said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so.

GENESIS 1:3 AND 1:9

In a similar vein there is the passage in Psalm 19:1–4 in the Old Testament:

The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows his handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night shows knowledge. There is no speech nor language where the voice is not heard. Their line is gone through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them has he set a tabernacle for the sun.

The process was taken a step further when the first human, Adam, was given the role of naming the creatures:

And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

GENESIS 19

The implication is that the sounding of the names, like archetypal vibratory formulae, actually fixes their physical manifestation. Such naming is mirrored in the Egyptian creation story in which Ra, the first god, arises out of the celestial waters sounding his own name, and thereafter creating other forms through utterances and visualizations.

Perhaps there is a link between the word *utter* in the context of giving birth to something, and the word *uterus*, the birth canal. Such manifestations through the archetypal voice are at the heart of St. John's Gospel:

And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld its glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

JOHN 1:14

Here the voice of the Absolute, the Father in this case, intoned the name of his son, and that sound signature became the Son's flesh. The relationship between the word *son* (and even *sun*) and the French word for sound, *son*, is very apposite. Progenitors emanate vibrations that enliven inert matter and create flesh:

The Son (SOuNd or SoUNd) of God
The SOuNd of the Voice

These connections can also link to the word *person* from the Latin *personare*, "to sound through or resound." In effect, the Christ became the vibrational transmitter of the one voice. In terms of physics, they were in "sympathetic vibration." To quote the American physicist Dale Pond:

The common connecting link between substance and energy is vibration. And the common vibratory phenomena that connects the vibration is sympathy. . . . In real human terms, we call sympathy or sympathetic association—LOVE. This is the Law that

binds individuals together. This is the Law that binds molecules together.²

As stated previously, the original Greek expression for the Word is the Logos. One of the definitions of the word *logos* is proportion and ratio, which has relevance to the phenomenon of sound as the progenitor of Creation. The nature of musical tones and their combinations, and the inner structure of matter when excited by sound are fundamentally based on proportions and ratios. The wisdom of the ancients has described a process of the unfoldment of Creation not as a “big bang,” a term used by many physicists, but as something essentially musical, an intoning and chanting—in a phrase, “the enchantment of the universe.” It could well be that the voice that chanted the Word preceded the later event known as the “big bang.” In any case, the theories of certain cosmologists are beginning to be in accord with the Creation teachings of the ancient sages. Here is a newspaper report from *The Independent* (UK):

Scientists have recorded the music of creation in an experiment using the astronomical equivalent of a time machine to go back to the origin of the universe. A telescope suspended from a high-altitude balloon circling the South Pole has detected harmonic “notes” which rung out like a bell in the first fractions of a second after the “Big Bang.” Cosmologists believe that these minute ripples of sound became the “seeds” of matter, which eventually led to the formation of stars, galaxies and planets such as Earth.³

Mark Whittle, a cosmologist and professor at the University of Virginia, has produced these findings as part of his research in a field he calls Primordial Sound: Big Bang Acoustics:

It (the universe) would have begun in complete silence leading to a whisper, then a descending scream, building into a deep rasping roar, and ending with a deafening bass. The highest-pitch sounds ultimately spawn the first generation of stars, while the deep bass notes slowly dissolve to become the tapestry of galaxies. By looking at the ratio between the pitch of the notes, we can figure out what the actual chord is. For the two deepest notes in the cosmic chord, we find a slow change across the first million years from a major third to a minor third.* Stated more poetically, the Universe's symphony opens with a positive major chord, but as time passes, the mood shifts to a sadder one as the minor chord builds.^{4†}

Carolin Crawford, professor of astronomy at Cambridge University, England, gave a similar vision of the universe when interviewed on BBC Radio:

*The major third is the distance between the note C and the note E going two white steps up to the right on the piano; the minor third is the distance between the note C and the second black key to the right, known as E flat on the piano.

†Here there is a curious connection to the symphonic tone poem, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, by German composer Richard Strauss. The opening measures of this work, representing the Superman, were chosen by Stanley Kubrick as the theme to underscore the beginning of Creation in his film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Strauss very clearly moves from the major to the minor chord and vice versa several times, perhaps subconsciously producing the effect that Prof. Whittle describes.

When light and matter are no longer coupled, the light photons are free to stream towards us and this is the first point at which we can see what the universe was like. We see the minute fluctuations which have been caused by sound waves which went through the early universe. These fluctuations and densities go on to become the seeds and, as the universe grows, and expands, these seeds are the center around which galaxies and clusters of galaxies eventually form. So the sound waves have a crucial role in defining these structures.⁵

Ancient sages were able to perceive the Logos in its manifold manifestations, the echoes of which are still present in the universe. For example, Tibetan monks, by projecting their consciousness into space, have heard “the music of the spheres” and re-created these sounds in their gongs, bowls, bells, and trumpets, as well as in the depths of their voices.

In India, the original sound of Creation is recognized as the three-pronged seed *AUM*,* often shortened to *OM*. A complementary sound to *OM* is *HUM*, and when joined to the Sanskrit word for mind, *manas*, gives us the basis of who we are: HUMMANAS, or humanity. Similarly, in Sufisim one of the primary sounds expressing the nature of Allah, the Supreme Being, is *HUUU*. Mysteriously, the elision between *AUM* and the Sanskrit word *vac*, translated as “speech” but also associated with “transcendental sound,” forms the English word:

*Metaphorically, there is visual symbolism of the *U* at the center of *AUM*, like a cup. “You” are filled with its holy spirit.

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