

## A Comprehensive Review on Chanting of Sacred Sound “Om” (Aum) As a Healing Practice

Jayesh M. Rajput<sup>1</sup>, Jaymala M. Girase<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Pharmaceutics, JIU's Ali-Allana College of Pharmacy, Akkalkuwa, Dist- Nandurbar, State- Maharashtra, India (425415)

<sup>2</sup>Department of Physics, NTV'S G.T.P College, Nandurbar, State- Maharashtra, India (425412)

Submitted: 15-04-2022

Accepted: 30-04-2022

**ABSTRACT:** Chanting is a common traditional practice in almost every religion in this world. According to “Mandukya Puran” from Hindu religion “OM” is a divine sound which has its benefits to relieve from stress, psychological disorders, etc. In this modern world there are many diseases, disorders and complications but some complications are commonest and almost each and every human being in this modern world has it, it is stress, depression and there are many medications which claims to get relief from it but only for some duration and that too has some of its side effects but, “OM” (AUM) chanting is such a traditional practice which has beneficial effects not just in

relieving stress and depression but can also give relief from many mental and physical complications and has of course no side effects and once if learnt properly do not need any guidance. Regularly chanting of OM proved to be beneficial in treating of Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Psychiatric Disorders, Psychosomatic Disorder, Hypothyroidism and helps in improving Cognition, Social Cohesion, Memory Enhancement, Improved Lung Functioning and many more. And if chanting of sacred sound “OM” (AUM) can be used in daily lifestyle can be more beneficial.

**KEYWORDS:** om, aum, hindu mythology, yoga, chanting, healing practice.

### I. INTRODUCTION

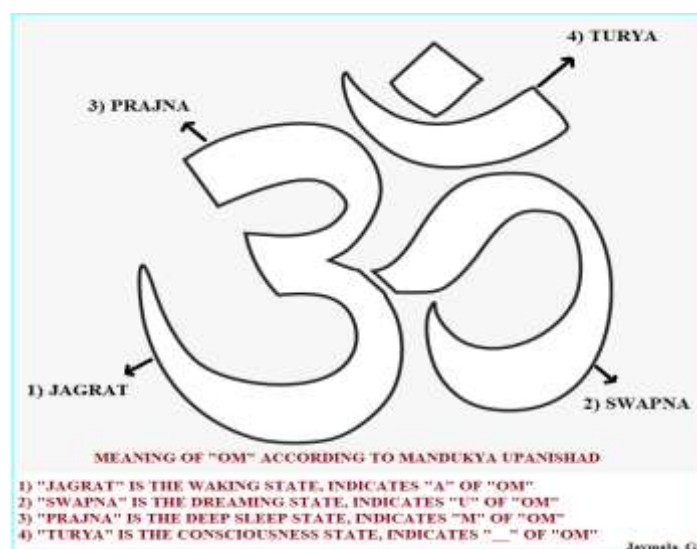


Fig 1: - Meaning of “OM” (AUM) Four states of Human Consciousness “According to Mandukya Upanishad”

### What is “OM” (AUM)?

Every living thing on this planet wants to be happy and blessed. “OM” sounds like “AUM” is a sacred Hindu Mythological concept. According to “Mandukya Upanishad” OM (AUM) denotes that there are four states of human consciousness, the first is “JAGRAT” which indicates “A” of AUM, in this state consciousness is turned outward to the external world. It is about experiencing gross material objects through the senses this is the conscious level of mental and emotional processing, the second state is “SWAPNA” which indicates “U” of AUM, in this state the consciousness is turned towards the inner world the mind can work out its unfulfilled wants, wishes, desires, aversions and attractions that are not allowed to play out in the external world. The third state is the “PRAJNA” which indicates “M” of AUM, in this state which is an unconscious state, there is neither the desire for any gross or subtle object not having any dream sequences the deep impressions of the mind are stored here in their latentform, like a seed. when some certain conditions are met, they can play out in dreams or grow into actions in the wakingstate and the final state is “TURYA” which indicates the pure consciousness is neither turned outward nor inward. It permeates and observes the other three states from the vantage point of turya, one sees the entire panorama of the play of the levels of consciousness. As per Amit Ray [18] “OM is the brahman, the indestructible life force, om is this universe, it is the nameless, the divine. It is the totality of you, I and the whole creation. It is the totality of past, present and future of this existence. At the same time, it is the eternal now unfolding this very moment. It is life-eternal flowing through this temporal existence”. According to Mandukya Upanishad, which is dedicated to describe the meaning and glory of OM, “OM” (AUM) is the name or symbol of God, [2,18] it is the combination of total three letters, namely A, U and M. it means the “A” represents the Beginning, “U” represents the Growth and the letter “M” represents dissolution/distribution, which means (creation, preservation and dissolution). [3] OM chanting itself is a type medication. In the commercial industries such as Pharmaceutical Industries, Engineering Industries, Software Industries, etc. many challenges and impediments are faced by the people. It is very tough to handle the stress many times. Therefore, to come out of the Aforementioned troubles any different ways are available, like Meditation, Yoga, Mantra Chanting

or Transcendental Meditation, Mindful Meditation, Deep Breathing Exercise, etc. chanting of “O” is the easiest way from the Mentioned remedies. Today, numerous studies have been carried out on Meditation, Yoga, Chanting of OM such as in [1] Bangalore G. Kalyani, et.al. have studied “Neurohemodynamic Correlation of “OM” chanting: A pilot functional magnetic resonance imaging study” in which a sensation of vibration is experienced during “OM” chanting, this has the potential for the Vagus Nerve stimulation through its Auricular branches and the effects on the brain thereof, in [2] Arati Amin, et.al. have studied the “Beneficial effects of O chanting on Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Cognition in elderly women with Hypertension”. in [4] Gemma Perry, et.al. proved that by “chanting meditation improves mood and social cohesion”. In [5] Ajay Anil Gurjar, et.al. Author(s) studied the analysis of “OM” chant to study its effect on nervous system. In [7] a study was carried out by Dr. Kanchan Joshi, in that the “Effects of Nadishodhan Pranayama and OM chanting on memory enhancement of college students” were studied. Same study was conducted by Harshali B Rankhambe and Sonali Pande, in that they studied “Effect of “OM” chanting on anxiety in bus drivers”. A study was carried by Himani Anand [9] in that the author studied “Effect of meditation (“OM” chanting) on alpha EEG (Electroencephalograph) and galvanic skin response, in that he measured an altered state of consciousness. [11] A study of stress in students during examination and the positive effect of “OM” chanting in them were conducted by M V Bajappanavar, et.al. in [17] by Sumana Pothugunta, et.al. A study was conducted of OM and its therapeutic effects on psychosomatic disorders in women (30 to 50 years age). Same study was carried out by Bittoo Kumar Surlya, et.al. [19] in that study the authors evaluated the effect of OM mantra chanting along with Anulom Vilom pranayama on medical and paramedical students. An interesting study were carried out by Uttam Kumar, et.al. [21] in that the Author(s) conducted a Neuroimaging study by Neuro-Cognitive aspects of “OM” sound/syllable perception, in that OM vs Word MRI were visualized by the neural cortex in two different control conditions and the authors adopted behavior interleaved gradients technique to avoid interference of scanner noise during the presentation of stimuli in that they concluded that the common activated region DMFC supports the emotional empathy of “OM” sound while SMG

implicates the phonological processing of “OM” (AUM) syllable, they also concluded that the other activated regions further supports the diverse nature of “OM” (AUM) sound and its importance in social cognition, many of such studies were published and are under research for “OM” (AUM) and its beneficial effects.

### II. BENEFITS OF CHANTING “OM”

There are numerous benefits of chanting “OM” as per Arati Amin, et.al. [2] that OM chanting causes vibration sensation around the ears, which is transmitted through the Auricular branch of the Vagus Nerve and stimulates Vagal Nerve, because (Vagal Nerve stimulation is one of the

most common treatments in depression). Few studies are there which examines the effects of chanting “OM” in the central nervous system. Chanting of OM is highly significant reduction in anxiety levels. Chanting of “OM” is very effective way to reduce the levels of depression and anxiety. The practice of OM chanting is less time consuming and if learnt once it does not require any guidance, which makes it a simple and effective technique and can be performed anywhere. With Hinduism OM (AUM) can be seen in Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism also which have their roots in the Hinduism.

Sr.no.	BENEFITS	REFERENCES
1	DEPRESSION	2, 13, 15, 18, 22, 23.
2	ANXIETY	2, 8, 13, 15, 18, 22.
3	STRESS	2, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23.
4	COGNITION	2, 15, 22.
5	SOCIAL COHESION	4, 13, 22.
6	MEMORY ENHANCEMENT	7, 13, 16, 18, 22, 24.
7	PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS	11, 13, 16, 18, 22, 23.
8	PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDER	17.
9	IMPROVE LUNG FUNCTIONING	19, 26.
10	HYPOTHYROIDISM	25.

Table 1: - Benefits of chanting “OM” (AUM)

And numerous more benefits of chanting OM.

### III. HOW TO CHANT “OM”?

Chanting of sacred sound “OM” (AUM) is like a journey from the noisy or disturbed to a still and healthy mind. As per Amit Ray [18] OM chanting is a creative art, it is not just a mechanical repetition of a word. He also mentioned that our utterness of OM should be spontaneous and unique. We don’t have to worry about the perfection of our chanting, since OM is the cosmic sound, it is the eternal seed vibration of the universe, and not any human vocal cord can produce it perfectly, he also mentioned that chanting the sound “OM” in your own way in relaxed manner, it should be chant almost effortless. He put his method of chanting OM in that he mentioned that allow the OM to unfold in its own way in your consciousness fit comfortably while keeping your back straight hold the hands together. Keep the eyes closed and mentally repeat the word “O-O-OM-M-Mmm” slowly and rhythmically with your outbreath, he mentioned that one should not need to chant “OM” in every breath, he can give a gap for one or two breath and then again can start. By chanting slowly,

the length of chant should exactly match the normal length of one’s breath. If the outbreath is short chant short “OM” and if it is long chant long “OM”. In reality the vibration of cell in your body itself signifies the vibration of the holy OM. It is spontaneous chanting happening in one’s body.

Ajay Anil Gurjar, et.al. [5] also put a method to chant “OM”, he put allow the mantra to flow with the breath, repeat like this;  
 Exhale: - “OMmmmmmmmm...”  
 Inhale: - “OMmmmmmmmm...”  
 Exhale: - “OMmmmmmmmm...”  
 Inhale: - “OMmmmmmmmm...”  
 Exhale: - “OMmmmmmmmm...”  
 Inhale: - “OMmmmmmmmm...”

He also put an alternative method that imagine OM mantra only on exhalation, if that feels more comfortable.

Exhale: - “OMmmmmmmmm...”  
 Inhale: - “(silence)”  
 Exhale: - “OMmmmmmmmm...”  
 Inhale: - “(silence)”

#### IV. APPEARANCE OF “OM”

Visually the sacred “OM” (AUM) is made of three curve shapes, a sweeping semi-circle, and a dot as Amit Ray [18] technically, there is no restriction about the colour of the OM symbol. OM itself is the symbol of Auspiciousness.

One should meditate on OM with a colour that creates wellbeing and auspicious vibration on mind. It is said that normal bright white colour is considered as the colour of the symbol of “OM” because, the seven colors of white represent the seven aspects of the OM symbol. However, in many divine places OM is colored in red or golden colour also.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The practice of chanting “OM” (AUM) is a traditional way and can be beneficial in many complications like it can relieve from Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Psychiatric Disorders, Psychosomatic Disorder, Hypothyroidism and it is helpful to build Cognition, Social Cohesion, Memory Enhancement, in Improved Lung functioning and many more. And, so we recommend further detailed study for further supporting traditional chanting of sacred sound “OM” (AUM) and we recommend it to include in our daily life style.

#### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Author(s) declares “No Conflict of Interest”.

#### REFERENCES

- [1]. Bangalore G Kalyani, Ganesan Venkatasubramanian, Rashmi Arasappa, Naren P Rao, Sunil V Kalmady, Rishikesh V Behere, Hariprasad Rao, Mandapati K Vasudev, Bangalore N Gangadhar, **Neurohemodynamic correlates of 'OM' chanting: A pilot functional magnetic resonance imaging study.** Department of Psychiatry, Advanced Center for Yoga, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bangalore – 560 029, India, International Journal of Yoga Vol. 4 Jan-Jun-2011, pg. 1-6.
- [2]. Arati Amin, Sai Sailesh Kumar, Archana Rajagopalan, Supriya Rajan, Soumya Mishra, Udaya Kumar Reddy, Joseph Kurien Makkadan, **Beneficial effects of OM chanting on depression, anxiety, stress and cognition in elderly women with hypertension.** PK Das Institute of Medical Sciences, Kerala, Little Flower Medical Research Centre, Kerala, Saveetha Medical College, Saveetha University, Chennai, Sattva Cultural Space & Research Centre, Kerala, JIPMER, Pondicherry, International StressManagement Association of India, Hyderabad, Indian Journal of Clinical Anatomy and Physiology, July-September 2016;3(3);253-255.
- [3]. Bhavna P Harne, **Higuchi Fractal Dimension Analysis of EEG Signal before and after OM Chanting to Observe Overall Effect on Brain.** Department of Electronics, S. S. G. M. College of Engineering Shegaon, India, International Journal of Electrical and Computer Engineering (IJECE) Vol. 4, No. 4, August 2014, pp. 585~592.
- [4]. Gemma Perry, Vince Polito, William Forde Thompson, **Chanting Meditation Improves Mood and Social Cohesion.** Department of Psychology, Macquarie University, Australia Department of Cognitive Science, Macquarie University, Australia. Pg. 1-4.
- [5]. Ajay Anil Gurjar, Siddharth A. Ladhake, Ajay P. Thakare, **Analysis of Acoustic of “OM” Chant to Study Its Effect on Nervous System.** Sipna’s College of Engineering & Technology, Amravati (Maharashtra), India. IJCSNS International Journal of Computer Science and Network Security, VOL.9 No.1, January 2009. Pg. 363-367.
- [6]. Naren P Rao, Gopikrishna Deshpande, Kalyani Bangalore Gangadhar, Rashmi Arasappa, Shivarama Varambally, Ganesan Venkatasubramanian, Bangalore N Gangadhar, **Directional Brain Networks underlying OM Chanting.** National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bangalore, India, AU MRI Research Center, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama, USA, Department of Psychology, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama, USA, Alabama Advanced Imaging Consortium, Auburn University and University of Alabama Birmingham, Alabama, USA. Asian Journal of Psychiatry, pg. no. 1-19.
- [7]. Dr. Kanchan Joshi, **Effect of Nadishodhan Prayayama and Om chanting on Memory Enhancement of College Students.** Department of Yoga, H.N.B. Govt. P.g. College, Khatima, Uttarakhand.

- International Journal of Yoga and Allied Sciences, Volume: 1, Issue: 1, pg. 52-57.
- [8]. Harshali B Rankhambe, Sonali Pande, **Effect of “Om” chanting on anxiety in bus drivers.** Department of Physiology, Rajarajeswari Medical College and Hospital, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India, Department of Physiology, Topiwala National Medical College and B.Y.L Medical College, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. National Journal of Physiology, Pharmacy and Pharmacology, Vol 10 | Issue 12, pg. 1138-1141, Doi-10.5455/njppp.2021.11.10268202014102020 .
- [9]. Himani Anand, **Effect of meditation ('OM' chanting) on alpha EEG and galvanic skin response: Measurement of an altered state of consciousness.** Dayalbagh Educational Institute, (D.E.I), Agra, UP, Indian Journal of Positive Psychology, 2014, 5(3), 255-259.
- [10]. Ira Das, Himani Anand, **Effect of Prayer and “OM” Meditation in Enhancing Galvanic Skin Response.** Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Agra, India. Psychological Thought 2012, Vol. 5(2), 141–149 doi:10.5964/psyc.t.v5i2.18.
- [11]. MV Bajappanavar, Dr. Jyoti A Upadhye, **Effect of OM chanting during examination stress in students.** Research Scholar, Department of Studies in Physical Education and Sports Sciences, Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapur, Karnataka, India, Research Guide, Department of Studies in Physical Education and Sports Sciences, Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapur, Karnataka, India. International Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Health 2021; 8(6): 140-142.
- [12]. Ajay Anil Gurjar, Siddharth A. Ladhake, **Time-Frequency Analysis of Chanting Sanskrit Divine Sound “OM” Mantra.** Sipna's College of Engineering & Technology, Amravati University, Maharashtra, India, IJCSNS International Journal of Computer Science and Network Security, VOL.8 No.8, pg. 170-175.
- [13]. Jai Paul Dudeja, **Scientific Analysis of Mantra-Based Meditation and Its Beneficial Effects: An Overview.** Professor and Director, Amity University Haryana, Gurgaon 122413, India. International Journal of Advanced Scientific Technologies in Engineering and Management Sciences (IJASTEMS-ISSN: 2454-356X) Volume.3, Issue.6, pg. 21-26.
- [14]. Sanjay Kumar, HR Nagendra, NK Manjunath, KV Naveen, Shirley Telles, **Meditation on OM: Relevance from ancient texts and contemporary science.** Department of Yoga Research, Indian Council of Medical Research Centre for Advanced Research in Yoga and Neurophysiology, SVYASA, Bangalore, India, International Journal of Yoga, Vol. 3, pg. 1-5.
- [15]. Latha Satish, Devi Shah, Pratima Mathur, **Chanting as a Healing Practice – Qualitative Analysis of Subjective Experiences.** International Journal of Science and Consciousness, Mar. 2021, 7(1), 01 – 18.
- [16]. Lalita K. Wani, Dr. Dhananjay E. Upasani, Dr. Anupama Deshpande, **REVIEW OF SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS OF SACRED SOUND OM (AUM).** PhD. Scholar, Shri Jagdish Prasad Jhabarmal Technical University, Jhunjhunu Rajasthan, India. Associate Professor, MIT School of Engg., MIT ADT University, Pune, India. Professor, Shri Jagdish Prasad Jhabarmal Technical University, Jhunjhunu Rajasthan, India. Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research (JETIR), Volume 7, Issue 11, pg. 541-546.
- [17]. Sumana Pothugunta, Dr. K. Ramesh Babu, **OM THERAPEUTIC EFFECTS ON PSYCHOSOMATIC DISORDERS IN WOMEN (30 TO 50 YEARS AGE).** Research Scholar, Department of Yoga and Consciousness, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India, Associate Professor, Department of Yoga and Consciousness, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India. Journal of Critical Reviews, Vol 7, Issue 8, 2020, pg. 956-959.
- [18]. Amit ray, **Om chanting and Meditation, a way to health and happiness,** inner light publishers, pg no- 1-120.
- [19]. Bittoo Kumar Surlya, Dr. Manila Jain, **To Evaluate the effect of OM Mantra Chanting along with Anulom Vilom Pranayama on Medical and Paramedical Students.** Assistant Professor, Physiology,

- Chirayu Medical College and Hospital, Bhopal, India. Professor and Head, Department of Physiology, Malwanchal University Index Medical College, Hospital & Research Centre, Nemawar Rd, post Bavlia near Khudel, village, Indore, Madhya Pradesh 452016, India. Scholars International Journal of Anatomy and Physiology. Pg. 38-43. DOI: 10.36348/sijap.2021.v04i03.005.
- [20]. Dr. Rajendra Prasad Pathak, **A Review Study on Potential Effects of Chanting of Om/Aum, Maharityunjay Mantra and Gayatri Mantra.** Newsletter of ARMARC Vol 28 Series 3, pg. 1-5.
- [21]. Uttam Kumar, Anupam Guleria, and Chunni Lal Khetrupal, **Neuro-cognitive aspects of “OM” sound/syllable perception: A functional neuroimaging study.** Centre of Biomedical Research, Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences Campus, Lucknow, India, COGNITION AND EMOTION, 2015 Vol. 29, No. 3, 432–441, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2014.917609>.
- [22]. Himani Anand, **Effect of OM Meditation on psychological wellbeing among adolescents.** Dev Sanskriti- Interdisciplinary International Journal (2014), 4, 38-43.
- [23]. Mukta Bhatele, Prattyush Singh Solanki, **Effect of Om Carol on Certain Diseases: A Survey.** Department of Computer Science & Engineering Gyan Ganga Institute of Science and Technology Jabalpur, (M.P.) [INDIA], Computer Science & Engineering Gyan Ganga Institute of Science and Technology Jabalpur, (M.P.) [INDIA], International Journal of Modern Engineering & Management Research, Volume 7 Issue 3, pg. 20-24.
- [24]. Sasithorn Sachdev, Phakkharawat Sittiprapaporn, **Electroencephalographic study of auditory system while listening to Ohm chanting.** Researcher, Brain Science and Engineering Innovation Research Group, School of Anti-Aging and Regenerative Medicine, Mae Fah Luang University, Bangkok, Thailand, and Department of Anti-Aging Medicine, School of Anti-Aging and Regenerative Medicine, Mae Fah Luang University, Bangkok, Thailand, Assistant Professor and Head, Brain Science and Engineering Innovation Research Group, School of Anti-Aging and Regenerative Medicine, Mae Fah Luang University, Bangkok, Thailand, and Department of Anti-Aging Science, School of Anti-Aging and Regenerative Medicine, Mae Fah Luang University, Bangkok, Thailand. ASIAN JOURNAL OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, Vol 11 Issue 1, pg. 75-79. DOI: 10.3126/ajms.v11i1.26529.
- [25]. GAURAV SWAMI, SAVITA SINGH, K. P. SINGH, MANISH GUPTA, **EFFECT OF YOGA ON PULMONARY FUNCTION TESTS OF HYPOTHYROID PATIENTS,** Departments of Physiology and Medicine, University College of Medical Sciences & Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital, Dilshad Garden, Delhi – 110 095, Indian J Physiol Pharmacol 2009; 54 (1): 51–56.
- [26]. R.N. Raichur, S.B. Kulkarni, R.R. Rahul, G.B. Aruna, R.R. Sridevi, **EFFECT OF MEDITATION TRAINING ON PULMONARY FUNCTION TESTS.** Department of Physiology, J.N. Medical College, Belgaum, Department of Physiology, KIMS, Hubli. Recent Research in Science and Technology 2010, 2(11): 11-16.