



THE AYUR-VEDIC UNDERSTANDING OF MODERN PHYSIOLOGY OF HEARING

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ABSTRACT

Hearing or audition is a prime aspect of every individual's life and forms one of the major sources for all knowledge perceived and analysed by a living being, following the visual source. According to Modern Medicine, sound having the form of wave enters the external ear and on reaching the tympanic membrane its acoustic energy is converted to mechanical vibrations of the ossicular chain which in turn cause oscillatory movements in the inner ear fluids transforming the mechanical energy into electro-chemical energy carried by the Auditory nerve through the Neural Pathway to reach the Auditory Cortex where the sound is processed to finally produce the decoded information called heard sound. Various theories have been propagated to understand the frequency and intensity coding function of the cochlea and each of these have been categorized into the place theories and periodicity theories, while the process of understanding is still on. There have also been efforts by Grammatists around the globe to understand the process of sound perception as it plays a pivotal role in Phonetics, Linguistics and Communication. The theory of linguistics revolves around the phenomenon of *lemma* or in the words of *Bhartrihari 'sphota'* which is considered as the source of all sound produced and heard. Philosophers too to the surprise of many have a keen interest in this subject as to them sound is a vital energy having immense power to transform both mind and matter, a subject less understood by human intellect. Sound is said to have 4 forms namely *Vaikhari, Madhyama, Pashyanti* and *Para Vak* (form of speech). This paper is a compendium of the understanding of Hearing in the narrations of Ayurveda and Vedanta in par with the current understanding of contemporary medical science. Thus it presents a Medical, Grammatical and Philosophical bird's view of the magical phenomenon called "Hearing".

KEYWORDS : Hearing, Audition, Linguistics, *Sphota, Vaikhari, Madhyama, Pashyanti*