



## DRUMMING – THERAPY OF JOY

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I began my spiritual journey at a young age. At that time, I did not understand what spirituality was. I only knew that I really really liked Lord Shiva. I liked all his forms - his meditative form and his Nataraja form, his warrior / destroyer aspect and his creative aspect. Ofcourse, it helped that he was always depicted as a handsome, romantic figure, very much in love with his wife. And I specially loved his trishul and his damaru. The music that flowed in my mind when I thought of him made my heart beat faster, and brought a spring to my feet.

According to Hindu mythology, Shiva is the lord of the cosmic dance and the cosmic sound of AUM, from which the entire universe is generated. Shiva is often depicted with an "hourglass drum" or damaru provides the music for the dance, and symbolizes the act of the creation of the universe through sound. The sounding of Shiva's drum produced the first sound (Nada, the source of creation) in the void of nothingness; its pulse setting up a rhythm to which Shiva began his dance of creation and destruction.



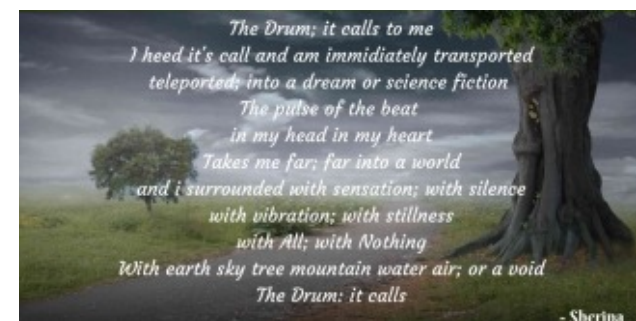
The damaru is a small drum with two drumheads, which symbolize the two states of existence--unmanifest and manifest. When a damaru is vibrated, it produces dissimilar sounds which are fused together by resonance to create one sound. The drumbeat is the sound that fuses the unmanifest and manifest aspects of vibration into one resonance. The sound thus produced by the damaru symbolizes Nada, the cosmic sound of AUM,

which can be heard during deep meditation. According to Hindu scriptures, Nada is the source of creation. It is through this drum that the universe was created, and through it the universe will be destroyed and renewed again in the endless cycles (rhythms) of time.

Research shows participating in group drumming activity boosts the body's production of feel good endorphins. Tapping into the state of flow experienced during a group drumming session is powerful and transformative. You feel energised and intensely focused at the same time.

This is what I had been told. And as I grew and progressed on my path, I often incorporated the chanting of AUM into my meditations. At times I heard a distant drumming in my dreams. However, my only experience with drums was at weddings or at Ganpati Visarjan, when the dhol was played and automatically, every human body began to dance, unable to stop their feet from moving to the beat. But drumming as a therapy was still an abstract concept for me.

Until I found myself drawn to Shamanism and attended a basic workshop conducted by Shamans Paul Hinsberger and Neelam Nanvani. This is where I was introduced to Drumming as a therapy, as a means to connecting with my Higher Self and my Guides. As I listened to the sound of the Drum, I felt as though the cosmic sound of Aum was ringing in my ears. Here I found myself playing the drum in a group drumming session, dancing as tears flowed down my cheeks.



Shamanic drumming uses a repetitive rhythm that begins slowly and then gradually builds intensity to a tempo. It is a simple and effective technique of ecstasy that brings about a fundamental change in consciousness. The Universe it made up of vibrational energy, and drumming with a single, flowing, rhythmic beat can bring about a shift from the Beta state to an Alpha state, or meditative state. According to Quantum physics, everything in the Universe, from the smallest subatomic particle to the largest star, including us humans, have an inherent vibrational pattern. The entire Universe is created through vibration and can be influenced through the vibrations of Shamanic drumming. To put it simply, Shamanic drumming is an ancient form of rhythm healing.

The reason drums have been used since ancient times is because the sound of the drum is a call to the Higher Beings that we are calling them or seeking to connect with them. It is believed that when we play the drum, our soul can journey to alternative realities and connect with our guides and power animals for healing, guidance, empowerment and wisdom. Drumming also makes it easier to break through the chatter of the day to day life and have a quick connection with our spirit helpers and allies.

What takes hours in meditation is very easily possible in 10 minutes of drumming.

Drums are symbols of the rhythm of life. Their beat can be equated to the beating of a heart. Since the heart is central to our **survival**, its beating indicates that we are alive and once it stops, we die. Through time immemorial, humans have used rhythm to bring a change into our life: peace and serenity, and also activation of the brain and the body, both can be achieved by the simple act of drumming. **Drum** therapy is an ancient approach that uses rhythm to promote healing and self-expression. ... Recent research reviews indicate that **drumming** accelerates physical healing, boosts the immune system and produces feelings of well-being, a release of emotional trauma, and reintegration of self.

My Shaman teachers taught me that everyone is rhythmical. Beginning from our heartbeat, rhythm is something that all of us have within us. Drumming helps us to rediscover the music that is inherent in us and around us. According to wisdom teachings of ancient elders, emotional disturbance manifests as an irregular rhythm that blocks the vital force from expressing fully in the body. Rhythmic drumming can facilitate the removal of blockages and release tension from the body. Recent studies confirm that through rhythmic repetition of ritual sounds, the body, the brain and the nervous system can be energized and transformed.



In these frenetic times of constant online connectivity, mindful meditation may not be the most instinctive or accessible means of relaxation. Wellbeing experts say we should do it, but why can't we do it? For most of us meditation does not come naturally and it's important to recognise that we're all wired differently so should explore the many different outlets available to us. Drumming can definitely be one such outlet. It is said that the sound of the drum brings with it the power of 10 people praying. It is also said that the drum is the heartbeat of the earth and its round shape represents the Sacred Hoop, or the wheel of life and the universe.

### Benefits of Drumming:

#### 1. Drum out stress and anxiety

Research shows participating in group drumming activity boosts the body's production of feel good endorphins.

Tapping into the state of flow experienced during a group drumming session is powerful and transformative. You feel energised and intensely focused at the same time. As we all know, the aim of any kind of meditation is to be focused, single pointed, and that is exactly what drumming does for us - it awakens an awareness within us

A recent study revealed that participants receiving blood tests before and after a one hour drumming session displayed a reversal in stress producing hormones, which proves that this is a powerful and transformative activity in managing stress and anxiety.

#### 2. Maximise brain function

Drumming is a great workout for your brain and can actually make you smarter, because when you drum, you access your entire brain. Research shows that the physical transmission of rhythmic energy to the brain actually synchronizes the left and right hemisphere. So when the logical left hemisphere and the intuitive right hemisphere of your brain pulsate together, while improving concentration, coordination and problem-solving skills, your inner guidance system, or intuition, becomes stronger too.

Listening to drumming can have the same effect as drumming itself. The sound of drumming generates new neuronal connections in all parts of the brain. The more connections that can be made within the brain, the more integrated our experience becomes. This leads to a deeper sense of self-awareness.

Research has demonstrated that the physical transmission of rhythmic energy to the brain synchronizes the two cerebral hemispheres. When the logical left hemisphere and the intuitive right hemisphere begin to pulsate in harmony, the inner guidance of intuitive knowing can then flow unimpeded into conscious awareness.

The power of drumming is especially pertinent in the case of those with dementia, where anxiety and agitation are common symptoms. A study has shown that innovative group music intervention using percussion instruments with familiar music has the potential to reduce anxiety and improve psychological well-being.

The power of music and rhythm has been shown to increase dopamine levels in the brain, which makes it especially effective in the management of Parkinson's and can have powerful transformative results in stroke survivors.

### 3. Boost your immune system

Growing evidence links drumming to a reduction in pro-inflammatory immune response in the body while also increasing the positive anti-inflammatory defences the body needs to stay healthy.

Group drumming has immense benefits. When a group of people play a rhythm for an extended period of time, their brain waves become entrained to the rhythm and they enjoy a shared brainwave state. Research found white blood cells increase significantly after group drumming, which is likely due to the slowing down and synchronisation of breathing during the sessions and thus, increased blood flow.

### 4. Feel more connected

We live in the age of connectivity. But we may be slowly losing our connection to our self. Drumming is a way to feel connected firstly to our own Higher Self, and then to others, without speaking or acting and solely through the non-verbal pulsating

rhythms created in the circle. You don't need to be an extrovert, you don't need to be musical and you certainly don't need to have played an instrument before. **A shamanic drumming circle** is a place for practitioners to get together for learning, healing, and the direct revelation of spiritual guidance. **A drumming circle** provides an opportunity to connect with your own spirit at a deeper level, and also to connect with a group of other like-minded people.

### 5. Enjoy yourself

Injecting fun into your life is a serious business. Those who deprive themselves of fun and recreational experiences are more likely to commit crimes, be less productive and have low self-esteem. It is important for us to keep aside some time during the day for ourselves, even if it is just a few minutes, to do the things that we enjoy doing, to relax, de-stress and communicate with our Higher Self.

The drum, when played in resonance with the heartbeat of the earth has a song. It is the song of the cosmos. All you need to do is begin with beating in rhythm with the beat of your heart, soon you will connect to the beat of the earth mother and the cosmic echo. When you are in sync, it will sound like you are surrounded by a humming choir. Then you, the drumbeat, your heartbeat and the heartbeat of the earth will be one with the cosmos.

**Sherina Tanwani** is an authorized System BrahmaSatya trainer and healer since the year 2001. She conducts various workshops:

- Brahma Satya Energy Healing - Level 1, 2 & 3
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