

The sign of Aries is the first sign in the zodiac, and as such, is strongly associated with beginnings. Additionally, the Tibetan tells us that it is one of the signs which is responsible for receiving and transmitting the first ray, which is also closely associated with beginnings. We are all familiar with the famous passage from St John's Gospel, "In the Beginning was the Word...". In fact, when we read the Bailey books, we find that there is a preceding stage, so the passage could be re-phrased, "In the Beginning was the Breath (i.e. Spirit), then the Sound or Word (i.e. Soul)...".

When we consider ways in which one might mark the distinction between humanity and the animal kingdom, one obvious marker is the use of language. Note that this is not to suggest that some animals do not have language - but if they do so, humanity has not yet been able to definitely recognise it as such. Animals certainly seem able to understand concepts, as experiments in teaching sign language to apes and other animals suggest; but if their sound-making capabilities limit the ways in which they can transmit and share those concepts, then their groupings will find it more difficult to build what we would call culture, a shared lexicon of conceptual categories which can be constantly revised and added to, which is like a ladder for the accelerated ascent of consciousness.

One obstacle to identifying animal languages is that the conceptual categories of animals may be so different from ours that we have no ready way to grasp what they are talking about. Another obstacle might lie in a simple distinction in language which is important for the kinds of sound worlds which human languages create, namely, the distinction between vowels and consonants. Vowels are open sounds, whereas consonants are mainly sounds which help begin and end words. Imagine trying to have a language which consisted only of vowels - it would probably be very difficult to distinguish where words began and ended. Could it be that human study of animal languages has so far not yet identified what we would call a language because we just haven't identified what they use as their consonants?

Before we continue, let's pause briefly, and then say together the Mantram of the New Group of World Servers:

May the power of the One Life pour through the group of all true servers

May the Love of the One Soul characterise the lives of all who seek to aid the Great Ones

May I fulfil my part in the One Work through self-forgetfulness, harmlessness, and right speech

OM

Every human language has its own characteristic sound world, which is shaped by many different factors. For example, there is the way in which the language is intoned - the characteristic rising and falling in tone in different parts of a sentence that can often be used to identify a language without even knowing the words spoken - one of the most obvious is Swedish. This also helps identify a regional accent within a language.

The word "accent" is also used to indicate points of emphasis in music - and this brings in the idea of rhythm in speech. This is heightened in poetry, as well as in other forms of heightened speech, such as prayers and incantations. Perhaps the most well-known example in English is Shakespeare's use of the unrhymed iambic pentameter. For those of you unfamiliar with this technical description, an iamb is what's called a two syllable metrical foot, which has the emphasis on the second syllable - for example, "To be..." - or more generally and informally, "ti-tum". A pentameter is a line of five metrical feet, which means an iambic pentameter should have the following pattern of emphasis, "ti-tum ti-tum ti-tum ti-tum ti-tum". Here's an example from Tennyson: "The woods decay, the woods decay and fall", drawn from the poet James Fenton's book, *An Introduction to English Poetry*. Now the ironic thing is, that while Shakespeare is known for his use of iambic pentameter, when I was trying to think of a line which fits this pattern exactly, from my - admittedly meagre - recollections from school, I really struggled. Try the experiment yourself. Take that famous line that I began above: if you read it with the suggested emphasis it would be - "To **be** or

not to be: that is the quest” er, whoops, what happened to the last syllable? Well, of course, Shakespeare did include another syllable at the end of the line, so immediately we know that this isn't a straight pentameter. Furthermore, the emphasis I gave to “is” *might* conceivably be given, but it seems much more natural to place the emphasis on “that” and take it off “is”. It's also rather doubtful whether you would say that the emphasis on the first syllable of “question” is anything like as strong as the emphasis in the first three feet. In fact, as Fenton shows, there is a wide variety of ways in which the iambic pentameter can be varied quite naturally: and Shakespeare, and many other poets, use this variability skilfully to produce various effects, such as the build-up and release of tension found in “To be or not to be”.

Continuing with the idea of the sound world of a language, it is interesting that Fenton notes that certain types of poetic effects work better in other languages - for example, French poetry seems better able to accommodate six-foot lines; and Italian poetry has the form “ottava rima”, which has rhymed stanzas of eight lines in the following pattern: a-b-a-b-a-b-c-c, which Italian can more easily accommodate because of the higher proportion of similar endings to words. This, in its turn, is because Italian is a more highly inflected language than English, with verbs and nouns changing ending according to various rules. Another simple thing which influences the sound world is the frequency of letters used in the words of a language. So for example, in English, e is the most common letter, while in Portuguese it is a. It seems plausible to speculate that all of these differences in sound are reflecting, in some subtle way, differences in the mass psychology of respective language users. Perhaps it also means that certain magical effects created by the sound of heightened speech would work better in some languages than others.

Talking of the magical power of sound, the great prehistoric stone circle Stonehenge is made from massive stones that some have speculated were transported by druids using the power of sound. I can vaguely recall reading somewhere an apparent eyewitness account of Tibetan lamas doing something similar. Perhaps we will all have that power one day. But it's probably the case that we aren't yet ready for such power - think of the potential for abuse - so it's being safeguarded. In this connection, the Tibetan remarks, “Words of Power, ancient mantrams (such as the Lord's Prayer) and the Great Invocation are only effective if used upon the mental plane and with the power of a controlled mind—focussed on their intent and meaning—behind the spoken effort. They then become potent. When said with the power of the soul as well as with the directed attention of the mind, they automatically become dynamically effective.” (*Ext. P.144*) So it seems likely that we are still in the infancy of understanding the power of sound to heal and to create. There is an interesting remark in *Cosmic Fire*, where the Tibetan indicates that humanity will in the future “Reduce the formulas of the coming chemists and scientists to SOUND, and not simply formulate through experiment on paper.” (*P.486*)

These possible manifestations of the power of sound in the human kingdom are the faint precursors of the true creative power of sound. As we read in *Initiation Human and Solar*: “The basis of all manifested phenomena is the enunciated sound, or the Word spoken with power, that is, with the full purpose of the will behind it. Herein, as is known, lies the value of meditation, for meditation produces eventually that inner dynamic purpose and recollection, or that internal ideation which must invariably precede the uttering of any creative sound. When it is said that the Logos produced the worlds through meditation it means that within His own centre of consciousness there was a period wherein He brooded over and meditated upon the purposes and plans He had in view; wherein He visualised to Himself the entire world process as a perfected whole, seeing the end from the beginning and being aware of the detail of the consummated sphere. Then, when His meditation was concluded, and the whole completed as a picture before His inner vision, He brought into use a certain Word of Power which had been committed to Him by the *One about Whom naught may be said*, the Logos of the cosmic scheme of which our system is but a part....

We cannot here trace the expansion of the basic words, from their enunciation by cosmic entities down to the infinitesimal differentiations produced in the speech of man, the vocal expression of the animals, and the song of birds. Each is a manifestation of consciousness in some degree, and each produces an effect. What the initiate is learning to do is to make sounds *consciously*, and thus produce a studied and desired result; to utter words; and be fully aware of the consequence on all planes; and to create forms and direct energy through sacred sounds, and thus further the ends of evolution.” (*pp.150, 155*)

In *The Rays and the Initiations*, further information is given, particularly with regard to the Sacred Word, the OM.

"The A.U.M. and the Amen are both of them an expression in sound of the principle of active intelligent substance in the divine manifestation, the third aspect, and have served human need in that phase of material and form development. I refer here also to the development of mind or of the mental form. The personality as a whole, when perfected and brought under control of the soul, is the "Word made flesh."

The mass of aspirants and of disciples are today learning the meaning of the O.M., which is not the Word made flesh, but the Word released from form, and expressing itself as soul-spirit and not as body-soul-spirit. It might, therefore, be said that:

1. The A.U.M. (note that I separate each aspect of this triple sound) brings the soul-spirit aspect down on to the physical plane and anchors it there by the force of its outgoing vibration. Using a symbol to make my meaning clear, it is like "a strong wind that pins a man against a wall and makes free effort difficult." It vivifies form; it intensifies the hold of matter upon the soul; it builds around the soul a confining prison—a prison of the senses. It is the "sound of enchantment," the sound that is the source of glamour and of maya; it is the great beguiling and deceptive energy, the note of the involutory arc. In it are hid the secret of evil or matter, the uses of form, first as a prison, then as a training ground and as a field of experience, and finally as the expression for the manifestation of a Son of God.

2. The O.M. rightly sounded, releases the soul from the realm of glamour and of enchantment. It is the sound of liberation, the great note of resurrection and of the raising of humanity to the Secret Place of the Most High when all other Words and sounds have failed. It is not a triple sound as is the A.U.M., but a dual sound, significant of the relation of spirit and soul, and of life and consciousness. This lost Word, symbolic of the loss in the three worlds (typified by the degrees of the Blue Lodges in Masonry) must be recovered and is in process of discovery today. The mystics have sought after it; the Masons have preserved the tradition of its existence; the disciples and initiates of the world must demonstrate its possession.

3. The SOUND is the sole expression of the Ineffable Name, the secret appellation of the One in Whom we live and move and have our being, and Who is known to the Great White Lodge through this name. Remember always that name and form are synonymous terms in the occult teaching, and these two words hold the secret of manifestation. The goal of the initiate is identification with all forms of the divine life, so that he can know himself to be an integral part of that Whole and can tune in on all states of divine awareness, knowing for himself (and not just theoretically) that they are also his own states of awareness. He can then penetrate into the divine arcana of knowledge, share in the divine omnipresence and—at will—express the divine omniscience and prepare himself to manifest in full consciousness the divine omnipotence.

I am using words which are futile to convey the underlying meaning of the Word. Understanding can only be arrived at when a man lives the Word, hearing its soundless Sound and breathing it forth in a vital life-giving breath to others.

The masses are hearing the sound of the A.U.M. and, in their higher brackets, are finding that A.U.M. the expression of something from which they seek release. The aspirants and disciples of the World are hearing the O.M. and in their personal lives the A.U.M. and the O.M. are in conflict. This may represent a new idea to you, but it conveys an idea of an eternal fact... You will see, therefore, how the teaching leads man progressively onward and how the occult science brings man in touch with great mental reversals and divine paradoxes. For aeons the Word of the soul and the Sound of spiritual reality are lost. Today, the Word of the soul is being found again, and with that finding the little self is lost in the glory and the radiance of the divine Self.

This discovery is consummated at the time of the third initiation. The initiate and the Master, along with those of higher rank who are approaching identification with Shamballa, are steadily and ever more clearly hearing the Sound emanating from the Central Spiritual Sun and penetrating all forms of divine life upon our planet—via our Planetary Logos Who hears it with clarity and with understanding—the Sound of the lowest

syllable of the Ineffable Name of the One in Whom all the Planetary Logoi live and move and have Their Being, for They are centres in the LIFE which is expressing itself through the medium of a solar system.

Earlier I pointed out that the sound of the A.U.M., the sound of the O.M. and the SOUND itself are all related to vibration and to its differing and varied effects. The secret of the Law of Vibration is progressively revealed as people learn to sound forth the Word in its three aspects. Students would also do well to ponder on the distinction between the breath and the Sound, between the process of breathing and of creating directed vibratory activity. The one is related to Time and the other to Space and they are distinct from each other; and (as the Old Commentary puts it) "the Sound, the final and yet initiating Sound, concerns that which is neither Time nor Space; it lies outside the manifested ALL, the Source of all that is and yet is naught." (No thing. A.A.B.)

There are, therefore, great points of tension from which the Sacred Word, in its major aspects, goes forth. Let me list them for you:

1. The creative point of tension—a tension achieved by a planetary Logos when He responds to the Sound of the Ineffable Name and breathes it forth in His turn in three great Sounds which made one Sound on His Own plane of expression, thus creating the manifested world, the impulse towards the unfoldment of consciousness, and the influence of life itself. This is the Sound.

2. Seven points of tension on the downward or involutory arc; these produce the seven planets, the seven states of consciousness, and the expression of the seven ray impulses. This constitutes the sevenfold A.U.M. of which the Ageless Wisdom takes note. It is related to the effect of spirit or life upon substance, thus originating form and creating the prison of the divine life.

3. The A.U.M. itself or the Word made flesh; this creates finally a point of tension in the fourth kingdom in nature, at which point the evolutionary cycle becomes possible and the first dim note of the O.M. can be faintly heard. In the individual man this point is reached when the personality is an integrated and functioning whole and the soul is beginning to control it. It is an accumulative tension arrived at through many lives.

4. Then comes a point of tension from which the man eventually achieves liberation from the three worlds and stands as a free soul; he is then a point within the circle—the point indicating the point of tension from which he now works, and the circle the sphere of his self-initiated activity.

I need not carry the story further; from tension to tension the initiate passes just as do all human beings, aspirants, disciples and the lower grades of initiates; from one expansion of consciousness to another they go until the third initiation is undergone and points of tension (qualified by intension and purpose) supersede all previous efforts and the will aspect begins to control." (pp. 52-56)

As we enter into this period of the three spiritual Festivals, we learn that the forces of Restoration, which are active at Easter, release an energy into humanity which carries the "life which produces the birth of forms". We also bear in mind the ceremony of Wesak, with its powerful mantric rituals, and the Festival of the Christ, during which we are told:

"The result of this solemn three days of invocation will be followed by a climaxing day wherein the Hierarchy will unitedly, and led by the Christ, pronounce the entire Invocation, prefacing each stanza with its appropriate keynote, again sounded in unison. These notes you cannot know, but if, for instance, a very large number of the New Group of World Servers were brought together, their united OM might approximate the appropriate keynote." (Ext. P.556) So once again, the creative power of sound is highlighted. Let us now enter into our meditation, seeking to produce that inner group sound which can reach the Hierarchy and Shamballa, and to transmit the evoked sound from higher spheres, into the consciousness of humanity. Our seed thought is, "Let the will-to-love fire the entire world with the 'spirit of relationship'."