



Ringling Bell: A Science Behind Traditional Ritual Of Ringing Bell Before Entering Temples Or While Offering Prayer To God

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ABSTRACT

The ringing of bell is considered as a main ritual in doing pooja or before entering a temple. It is a tradition that is followed in Hinduism, Buddhism and some other religions. Ringing the bell is considered as evoking the god for prayers as the bell rings it produces a sound of "OM" (the holy mantra used in Hindu culture). In Scientific language the vibrations produced by ringing of bell gives our brain a certain frequency of vibrations which are maintaining our nervous system and relaxing our brain. By the development of advance science, we get to know that every Hindu tradition followed has a scientific reason behind it which could not be explained to people in ancient times so were told a spiritual act.

Introduction

In Indians the act of ringing bell before entering temple or ringing bell while offering prayers to God is rooted since their ancient times. This act has many reasons behind it such as spirituality, psychological reasons and scientific reasons. It is often observed that ringing bell while offering prayer makes our mind stable, relaxes our mind and gives positive vibes.

The bell seems an ordinary instrument but has a great power and produces vibrations of frequency that directly has an effect on our mind and body. A person with distracted soul feels stable and blessed after listening to the vibrations produced by the bell. This sound is also considered as purifying sound for people. There are many reasons told in different sources for ringing bell while entering the temple or while offering prayers. The reports say that different types of bells represent different reasons. The number of strokes we ring of the bell has meaning which can be explained.

History of Bells

The use of bells in Hindu culture is from thousands of years. In ancient contexts we can see the importance of ringing of bell explained in spiritual way, or a signal to the divine to evoke him.

Early Use of Bells in Hinduism and Buddhism

In every Hindu temple we can see a bell hanged or in house of every Hindu we can see hand bells placed at their worship space. The association of bell is considered or related to the presence of Lord Shiva a principal deity in Hinduism and also believed to showcase his presence in this universe. The bell sound is supposed to invoke the presence and spiritual awareness of Lord.

In Buddhism, the bell plays a vital role in their religion as well. It is considered to ring bell and create a spiritual atmosphere. In Buddhist temples they often ring bell to signal the devotees about the beginning and end of meditation sessions. They consider that ringing bell helps the meditator keep his mind calm and prepare for the meditation or any other spiritual practice.

Evolution of the Bell Ritual

Over the years, the practice of ringing bells in temples has evolved. In the ancient times the bell was ringed for practical purposes such as for seeking the attention of people for important events or to signal the ritual times. Over the time the use of bell changed but the importance of ringing the bell has not decreased yet. The bell is ringed worldwide for many different reasons.

The Spiritual and Symbolic Meaning of Bell

The bells in the temple are just more far than object that produces sound; it has a spiritual and symbolic significance in many different cultures.

The bell as a Symbol of the Divine

In Hindu culture the bell is considered as the symbol of Lord Shiva's presence. The vibrations produced when the bell is ringing is believed to help make connection with the divine power. The sound of bell is often listened as the sound of 'Om', which is used in many Vedic chants to invoke the all mighty. The sound of bell helps the devotee connect to the universe, aligning the mind and body with the spirituality of the temples.

In the Buddhist culture the ringing of bell is often considered to purify the environment they stay in and remove the negativity from the surrounding air. This also signifies the enlightenment, purity, clarity of the soul who is performing or offering the prayers to the divine.

The bell is also considered as the spiritual seat of God and Goddess. 'Anant' which means infinity illustrates the body of the bell, Goddess Saraswati is represented by the tongue of the bell, the handle of the bell is said to be the 'Vahan's' that is 'Garuda' and 'Nandi'. This states the significance that the bell is considered as the form of the divine.

Sound as a Purifier

The sound of bell is considered as purifying the mind as well as the negative energy present in the surrounding. The devotee acquires his/her concentration towards his praying from their stressful regular life.

Psychological and Emotional Effects of Bell Sound

When a devotee rings the bell before entering the temple it makes him prepared from his mind to offer prayers or perform the meditation process. The ringing of bell continuously in the surrounding of the temple keeps the negative energy away from the temple due to which devotees feel the positive vibrations when they enter any temple.

The bell produces a resonating sound that relaxes the mind, body and the soul of the devotee. The sound waves can have relaxing effect on our body, lowering the stress levels and anxiety levels from the human body. This helps us in staying mentally fit. When continuously a bell is ringed this puts the listener to a state of relaxation.

The ringing of bell has now become a compulsory practice in the Hindu culture which is now helping the devotees feel a connection with the divine and get emotionally connected to the Lord.

Scientific Explanation of the Bell's Effect

While there is a specific significance of ringing bell is ancient culture there have been discovered scientific reasons that are proven which gives benefits to our body. The vibrations, resonance and frequencies produced when bell is ringed have a direct impact on the physical and mental state of the human.

The human ears detect the sound of the bell and the vibrations that reach the ears are directly sent to the human brain which allows human brain to concentrate to a specific work. Also, the bell produces many sounds of rich, harmonic sound composed of several frequencies which are low to mid-range of frequency spectrum. The waves produced by bell get synchronize with a certain pattern of brain frequencies which are alpha and theta waves present in our nervous system. The theta waves are linked with the process of deep meditation and mental clarity. While the alpha waves are connected to the calmness and relaxation points. The vibrations entering the brain give a peaceful experience and help the listener increase his concentration level.

When we ring the bell while entering the temple we should stand below the bell for a few seconds as the bell has a minimum of 7 echo vibrations which create a harmony between our left and right brain. The 7 echo vibrations are long enough to touch and activate our 7 chakras of the body.

It is been observed that the people who listen to the harmonious sounds like the ringing of bells regularly have lower stress levels and also lower cortisol. Lower cortisol levels can enhance emotional regulations and also help improve concentration levels. Also, in the nervous system there is activation of parasympathetics. This contributes in releasing of dopamine and serotonin which makes the listener feel comfortable and peace.

In Hinduism mainly the ringing of bell is considered the start of the praying or to invite the divine to enter the environment and purify it with his presence. While in Buddhist culture the ringing of bell is significantly used at the beginning and at the end of the meditation. We can see many places the same ritual is followed for example for Hindus the Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Varanasi is a perfect example where bells are rung before starting the aarti and also during the aarti. While for the Buddhist Mahabodhi Temple, Bodh Gaya is an important site where they ring bell to signal the meditators the start of meditation and engage them with the divine.

Conclusion

This tradition is followed all over the world by many religions as offerings to God or a procedure to engage with the divine. But the scientific reasons behind it are now coming forward which have many benefits on human brain, soul and body. In the olden days the science could not be explained to the people as they would not understand or it was unable for them to explain the science behind it so it was told as a ritual.

So, ringing the bell before entering temples is a very powerful ritual having its significance in both scientific ways and spiritual ways. The vibrations of the bell act as a purifier for the energy in our surrounding and hence is considered a way to engage with the divine. The frequencies also heal our body from inside to reduce stress, anxiety and keep the mind in a calm state. As this practice continues, we get to know about its significance in spiritual and scientific way.

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