

## Effects of music on Nervous System

Before explaining its effects on nerves it is necessary to briefly describe an intricate and awe-inspiring part of the nervous system itself. These details are quoted from the "*Foundation of Biology*"<sup>1</sup> and "*How your Nervous System Works*"<sup>2</sup> :

"Many reflexes that help control the internal environment involve a special part of the nervous system (ANS). This system consists of nerves making up the motor pathway to the heart, stomach, intestine and other internal organs. These nerves are not under voluntary control, that is, you can not make your heart beat faster on command."

"The two major divisions of the automatic nervous system are called the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems."

Sympathetic nerves leave the middle regions of the spinal cord.

"Parasympathetic nerves leave the central nervous system from the upper regions where they travel in cranial nerves (i.e., 12 pairs of nerves attached to the brain and serving head and neck), and from the lower most regions of the spinal cord where they travel in spinal nerves.

"Most internal organs of your body are supplied with both parasympathetic and sympathetic nerve fibres."

"In general, these two types of nerves work in opposite ways. For example, impulses travelling along sympathetic nerve fibres towards the heart increase your heart-beat rate, whereas impulses travelling along the parasympathetic nerves leading to the heart decrease its rate.

"When we examine the effects of sympathetic stimulation of various organs, a pattern begins to emerge. We find that sympathetic stimulation causes a number of events:

1. Widening of air passage leading to the lungs;
2. Constriction or narrowing of blood vessel in the skin and in the intestinal tract, resulting in blood being shifted from the digestive organs and skin to the muscles;
3. A general slowing down of movements in the intestinal tract;

4 An increase in the force and rate of heart-beat:

5. Release of the blood sugar from the liver;

6. Release of the hormone adrenaline.

All of these activities prepare the human being for emergencies such as running or fighting. The widening of air passages makes it easier for the human being to breathe faster and get more oxygen. Blood is shifted from regions where it will not be needed during the emergency (the intestinal tract, for example) to skeletal and heart muscle which will need oxygen and blood sugar.

The heart beats faster and stronger so that blood circulates through the muscles at a higher rate. Blood sugar is released from storage in the liver into the blood stream where it will be available to supply muscles with energy.

In short, sympathetic stimulation prepares the man for emergencies and in this process increases the blood pressure, retards the function of digestive system and increases the sugar contents of the blood.

The function of Parasympathetic nerve system is opposite to the sympathetic system:

"It widens the veins, releases noradrenalin hormones and generally retards activities."

"The two nervous systems run parallel to each other and in co-operation from one part of the body to another. The co-operation of the two systems is essential for maintaining the equilibrium of the body, which in turn has a great bearing and effect on the physical and mental health of man. Should at any time there be a lack of co-operation between these two systems, physical or mental disorders could arise resulting in one disease or another."

Some actions or movements outside human body can adversely affect the natural equilibrium of these two systems. One of those things is music.

A brisk and lively musical programme, particularly if it is accompanied by musical instruments, disturbs this equilibrium of the various systems; digestion is badly affected; palpitation of the heart is increased; blood pressure goes high and abnormal secretion of hormones leaves a lasting bad effect upon general health.

Music stimulates mostly the sympathetic nervous system; and it may create insomnia (lack of sleep); it may cause tempers to flare up; sudden laughter or nonsensical talks are amongst its possible effects. It may even lead to mania (a kind of madness).

Such people may be seen to move their hands and feet in dancing pattern even when not listening to music.

Dr. Volf Adler, who was a professor in the Columbia University, found out that the best melodious record of music can badly harm the nerves of a human body and the warmer the weather the more the harm. He proved that music upsets the nervous systems unnaturally and causes considerable fatigue.

This research of Dr. Adler had a widespread effect on many Americans; many stopped listening to music altogether. The belief that music was harmful for a progressive nation like U.S.A. reached a stage when a member of the Senate proposed a resolution to ban the music in the country. Relevant proofs and arguments were put before the Senate. But in a nation steeped in lust and materialism, not many senators could be found to vote for that resolution<sup>3</sup>.

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1. William D. McElory & Carl P. Swanson and others; published by Prentice-Hall, Inc; Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey U.S.A. 1968.
  2. J.D. Ratcliff; Reader's Digest — Book of Human Body.
  3. Illustré Dimanche; No. 630; Paris; as quoted in, "Falsafa-e-Tahrim-e-Musiqui", published by the institution "Dar Rah-e-Haqq", Qum, Iran.

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