

Mantras and Meanings



What is a Mantra?

The word mantra has two parts: *man*, which is the root of the Sanskrit word for mind; and *tra*, which is the root of the word instrument. A mantra is therefore an instrument of the mind, a powerful sound or vibration that you can use to enter a deep state of meditation.

According to the Vedic tradition, the ancient sages were able to hear the subtle vibrations produced by everything in nature—the sounds of the wind, thunder, butterflies, rushing rivers and all other creations. They recognized that these sounds are the manifestation of spirit into matter. They identified “Om” (or aum) as the most elemental sound, representing the infinite universal consciousness. For thousands of years, people have used this mantra to expand their awareness of the divine.

The ancient seers also identified all the primordial vibrations or mantras that make up the universe and these were eventually recorded in the Vedic literature—the four texts that form the basis for the Hindu religion. You can actually hear all the mantras yourself if you sit quietly. You’ll notice a background hum in the air, and as you practice focusing on that hum, you’ll ultimately hear every mantra the sages recorded long ago.

Why do we silently repeat the mantra?

Silently repeating a mantra as you meditate is a powerful way to enter the silence of the mind. As you repeat the mantra, it creates a mental vibration that allows the mind to experience deeper levels of awareness. As you meditate, the mantra becomes increasingly abstract and indistinct, until you’re finally led into the field of pure consciousness from which the vibration arose.

Repetition of the mantra helps you disconnect from the thoughts filling your mind so that perhaps you may slip into the gap between thoughts. The mantra is a tool to support your meditation practice. Mantras can be viewed as ancient power words with subtle intentions that help us connect to spirit, the source of everything in the universe. As you experience deeper meditative states, all thoughts and worries drop away and you experience the quiet that always exists beneath the noisy internal dialogue of the mind. In this stillness you may feel oneness with all life and profound peace.

From <http://www.chopra.com/ccl-meditation/21dmc/mantra.html>

Mantras - More Than Just Words

A saying from the Vedas claims that "Speech is the essence of humanity." All of what humanity thinks and ultimately becomes is determined by the expression of ideas and

actions through speech and its derivative, writing. Everything, the Vedas maintain, comes into being through speech. Ideas remain unactualized until they are created through the power of speech. Similarly, The New Testament, Gospel of John, starts "In the beginning was The Word. And the Word was with God and the Word was God..."

In mainstream Vedic practices, most Buddhist techniques and classical Hinduism, mantra is viewed as a necessity for spiritual advancement and high attainment. In The Kalachakra Tantra, by the Dalai Lama and Jeffrey Hopkins, the Dalai Lama states, "Therefore, without depending upon mantra...Buddhahood cannot be attained." Clearly, there is a reason why such widely divergent sources of religious wisdom as the Vedas, the New Testament and the Dalai Lama speak in common ideas. Here are some important ideas about mantra which will enable you to begin a practical understanding of what mantra is and what it can do.

Mantras are energy-based sounds.

Saying any word produces an actual physical vibration. Over time, if we know what the effect of that vibration is, then the word may come to have meaning associated with the effect of saying that vibration or word. This is one level of energy basis for words.

Another level is intent. If the actual physical vibration is coupled with a mental intention, the vibration then contains an additional mental component which influences the result of saying it. The sound is the carrier wave and the intent is overlaid upon the wave form, just as a colored gel influences the appearance and effect of a white light. In either instance, the word is based upon energy. Nowhere is this idea more true than for Sanskrit mantra. For although there is a general meaning which comes to be associated with mantras, the only lasting definition is the result or effect of saying the mantra.

Mantras create thought-energy waves.

The human consciousness is really a collection of states of consciousness which distributively exist throughout the physical and subtle bodies. Each organ has a primitive consciousness of its own. That primitive consciousness allows it to perform functions specific to it. Then come the various systems. The cardio-vascular system, the reproductive system and other systems have various organs or body parts working at slightly different stages of a single process. Like the organs, there is a primitive consciousness also associated with each system. And these are just within the physical body. Similar functions and states of consciousness exist within the subtle body as well. So individual organ consciousness is overlaid by system consciousness, overlaid again by subtle body counterparts and consciousness, and so ad infinitum.

The ego with its self-defined "I" ness assumes a pre-eminent state among the subtle din of random, semi-conscious thoughts which pulse through our organism. And of course, our organism can "pick up" the vibration of other organisms nearby. The result is that there are myriad vibrations riding in and through the subconscious mind at any given time.

Mantras start a powerful vibration which corresponds to both a specific spiritual energy frequency and a state of consciousness in seed form. Over time, the mantra process begins

to override all of the other smaller vibrations, which eventually become absorbed by the mantra. After a length of time which varies from individual to individual, the great wave of the mantra stills all other vibrations. Ultimately, the mantra produces a state where the organism vibrates at the rate completely in tune with the energy and spiritual state represented by and contained within the mantra.

At this point, a change of state occurs in the organism. The organism becomes subtly different. Just as a laser is light which is coherent in a new way, the person who becomes one with the state produced by the mantra is also coherent in a way which did not exist prior to the conscious undertaking of repetition of the mantra.

Mantras are tools of power and tools for power.

They are formidable. They are ancient. They work. The word "mantra" is derived from two Sanskrit words. The first is "manas" or "mind," which provides the "man" syllable. The second syllable is drawn from the Sanskrit word "tra" meaning to "protect" or to "free from." Therefore, the word mantra in its most literal sense means "to free from the mind." Mantra is, at its core, a tool used by the mind which eventually frees one from the vagaries of the mind.

But the journey from mantra to freedom is a wondrous one. The mind expands, deepens and widens and eventually dips into the essence of cosmic existence. On its journey, the mind comes to understand much about the essence of the vibration of things. And knowledge, as we all know, is power. In the case of mantra, this power is tangible and wieldable.

More About Mantra

1. Mantras have close, approximate one-to-one direct language-based translation. If we warn a young child that it should not touch a hot stove, we try to explain that it will burn the child. However, language is insufficient to convey the experience. Only the act of touching the stove and being burned will adequately define the words "hot" and "burn" in the context of "stove." Essentially, there is no real direct translation of the experience of being burned.

Similarly, there is no word which is the exact equivalent of the experience of sticking one's finger into an electrical socket. When we stick our hand into the socket, only then do we have a context for the word "shock." But shock is really a definition of the result of the action of sticking our hand into the socket.

It is the same with mantras. The only true definition is the experience which it ultimately creates in the sayer. Over thousands of years, many sayers have had common experiences and passed them on to the next generation. Through this tradition, a context of experiential definition has been created.

2. Definitions of mantras are oriented toward either the results of repeating the mantra or of the intentions of the original framers and testers of the mantra. In Sanskrit, sounds which have no direct translation but which contain great power which can be "grown" from it are called "seed mantras." Seed in Sanskrit is called "Bijam" in the singular and "Bija" in the plural form.

Let's take an example. The mantra "Shrim" or Shreem is the seed sound for the principle of abundance (Lakshmi, in the Hindu Pantheon.) If one says "shrim" a hundred times, a certain increase in the potentiality of the sayer to accumulate abundance is achieved. If one says "shrim" a thousand times or a million, the result is correspondingly greater. But abundance can take many forms. There is prosperity, to be sure, but there is also peace as abundance, health as wealth, friends as wealth, enough food to eat as wealth, and a host of other kinds and types of abundance which may vary from individual to individual and culture to culture. It is at this point that the intention of the sayer begins to influence the degree of the kind of capacity for accumulating wealth which may accrue.

3. Mantras have been tested and/or verified by their original framers or users. Each mantra is associated with an actual sage or historical person who once lived. Although the oral tradition predates written speech by centuries, the earliest oral records are annotated on palm leaves designating a specific sage as the "seer" of the mantra. This means that the mantra was probably arrived at through some form of meditation or intuition and subsequently tested by the person who first encountered it.
4. Sanskrit mantras are composed of letters which correspond to certain petals or spokes of chakras in the subtle body. There is a direct relationship between the mantra sound, either vocalized or subvocalized, and the chakras located throughout the body.
5. Mantras are energy which can be likened to fire. You can use fire either to cook your lunch or to burn down the forest. It is the same fire. Similarly, mantra can bring a positive and beneficial result, or it can produce an energy meltdown when misused or practiced without some guidance. There are certain mantra formulas which are so exact, so specific and so powerful that they must be learned and practiced under careful supervision by a qualified teacher. Fortunately, most of the mantras widely used in the West are perfectly safe to use on a daily basis, even with some intensity.
6. Mantra energizes prana. "Prana" is a Sanskrit term for a form of life energy which can be transferred from individual to individual. Prana may or may not produce an instant dramatic effect upon transfer. There can be heat or coolness as a result of the transfer. Some healers operate through transfer of prana. A massage therapist can transfer prana with beneficial effect. Even self-healing can be accomplished by concentrating prana in certain organs, the result of which can be a clearing of the difficulty or condition. For instance, by saying a certain mantra while visualizing an

internal organ bathed in light, the specific power of the mantra can become concentrated there with great beneficial effect.

7. Mantras eventually quiet the mind. At a deep level, subconscious mind is a collective consciousness of all the forms of primitive consciousnesses which exist throughout the physical and subtle bodies. The dedicated use of mantra can dig into subconscious crystallized thoughts stored in the organs and glands and transform these bodily parts into repositories of peace.

<http://dharmaproject.150m.com/mantras.html>

Mantras and Their Meanings

Mantras are Sanskrit words, sounds or phrases which are repeated in meditation as an object of concentration. The vibrational quality of the mantra sound currents are thought to help attune the mind and body leaving one feeling refreshed, clean and purified. Mantras can be chanted out loud or internally. They have been used throughout the centuries and it is believed that the sacred power of words and the accompanying sounds in mantra aid in spiritual progression (transcending into higher states of consciousness) and to effect healing in the physical and energetic bodies.

Aham Brahma Asmi: This is considered an “abstract” mantra (meaning it is not associated with a particular deity) whose words evoke a feeling of “oneness” with all of creation denying confinement to the body and mind.

Aham Prema: I am Love of the highest order – Divine Love.

Om: Om sometimes written as AUM is said to be the root of all letters and words. Representing the most important of all mantras it is the representation of the Supreme Being. The past, present and the future are all included in this one sound. Meditation on this sacred syllable is said to lead to liberation.

Om Aim Hrim Krim Chamundayai Vichche: The benefit of chanting this mantra is to facilitate concentration of mind and for the speedy fulfillment of aspirations and desires, apart from attaining courage and energy.

Om Aim Saraswatyai Namah: Om and salutations to the bestower of wisdom, intelligence, knowledge and creative artistic energy.

Om Dram Om Guru Dattaya Namaha: This mantra is a means to sharpen your skills as a spiritual counselor and teacher (guru), as well as progressing you along your own spiritual path.

Om Dum Durgayei Namaha: Om and salutations to the bestower of compassion, fearlessness and patience. May you bless me with your protection and love.

Om Gum Ganapataye Namaha: This mantra can help resolve many problems and difficulties. It works to bring about unity between our desire and the object of that desire.

Om Hanumanthaya Namah: Om and salutations to Hanuman, the bestower of victory, success, strength, stamina and power.

Om Hareng Baglamukhi Namaha: Bagalamukhi means “The Crane-Headed One” and this mantra is used to uncover deceit and to suppress an enemy’s gossip or slander against you.

Om Hiranyagarbhaya Namaha: This mantra is used to heal the heart and emotions.

Om Kali Ma: This mantra calls upon the goddess Kali. It is said to vibrate with her power and serves as a vehicle for transporting you into her domain. The goddess Kali is thought to be a very powerful catalyst for spiritual progression. She is also known as the destroyer.

Om Kleem Namah: Freeing the devotee from sins or wrongs within his/her life returning to purity.

Om Kleem Shum Shukraya Namah: The word ‘Kleem in this mantra denotes Kama Shakti, the power of love, delight, contentment and fulfillment.

Om Sri Krishna Sharanam Namah: Krishna literally means the one who attracts all. To the beloved lord Krishna I pray to take me under his shelter.

Om Mani Padme Hum: O radiant jewel in the lotus of my heart, please shine brightly. May my heart have the strength to feel compassion for all sentient beings.

Om Muni Muni Mahamuni Shakyamuniye Svaha: Muni means “sage” and Maha means “great.” This mantra is devoted to the Buddha and is used to invoke the ideals (compassion, love, kindness, etc) represented by the great sage.

Om Namah Shivaya: Om and salutations to Shiva, the bestower of inner strength, fearlessness, consciousness and detachment.

Om Namo Narayanaya: Om and salutations to Vishnu, the governor of harmony, balance, peace and inner-transformation. May I be blessed with infinite love, prosperity, power, glory and wisdom.

Om Parama Prema Rupaya Namaha: Om and salutations to the supreme divine love, I honor you and welcome your presence in my life, manifesting in the form of a beloved.

Om Radha Krishnaya Namaha: Manifesting as the lovers Radha and Krishna, this is a mantra is a prayer for conjugal love relationships to call in the divine to the couple and elevate them to an enhanced state of intimacy and love.

Om Sarva Kamadaya Namaha: Om and salutations to Shakti, the granter of desires and the active energetic force of Shiva’s universal consciousness.

Om Shreem Maha Lakshmiyei Namah: a blessing mantra for abundance and prosperity on both the physical and spiritual planes.

Om Shri Dhanvantre Namaha: Used to enhance one's own healing skills for the self and for others. This mantra works to promote healing on all levels – physical, mental and emotional.

Om Sri Maha Kalikayai Namah: Prayer to the Kali diety to invoke her transformative power and eradicate negative qualities in the world. Maha Kali is one of the most fearsome of all expressions of Divinity.

Om Sri Maha Lakshmyai Namah: Prayer to the Lakshmi diety. She bestows wealth and abundance of a material and spiritual nature. She is almost always pictured as a beautiful woman standing on a lotus blossom with her arms open and giving.

Om Sri Rama Jaya Rama: This mantra is used to transcend karma and purify the ego. It invokes the healing energy of the sun and brings harmony and enlightenment allowing the divine within to navigate through problems and issues in life.

Om Sri Ramaya Namah: Om and salutations to Rama, the bestower of happiness, inner peace and balance. May your radiant warrior energy, inner focus and personal integrity reside within me.

Om Tare Tuttare Ture Swaha: Used to purify all the impurities of your body, speech and mind and liberates the devotee from samsara, from all true suffering or problems.

So Hum/Ham Sa: Sometimes called the So Hum breath the mantra is meant to be mentally repeated in harmony with the breath. "So" is the outbreath and "Hum" or "Ham" is the inbreath creating a circle of breath and mantra where one links to the other. The translation of this mantra is "I am that I am" meaning the devotee is without form, without quality, without past, present or future. He or she simply "is" in the awareness of the Divine. This is a very powerful mantra.

From <http://www.yogabasics.com/japamalabeads/mantras>

Here are my 5 favorite Sanskrit mantras, with their ancient meanings and how we can adopt them into our modern lives:

Mantra: *OM*

Translation: The sound of the universe. It's the first, original vibration, representing the birth, death and re-birth process.

Modern adaptation: Chanting the sound OM brings us into harmonic resonance with the universe – this is a scientific fact! OM is said to vibrate at 432 Hertz, which is the natural musical pitch of the Universe, as opposed to 440 Hertz, which is the frequency of most modern music.

Decreasing your frequency to coincide with that of the Universe stills the fluctuations of the mind, allowing you to practice yoga through sound. OM is an idyllic way to begin and end a yoga or mediation practice, and also comes in handy when you just need to chill out.

Mantra: *Om Namah Shivaya*

Translation: I bow to Shiva, the supreme deity of transformation who represents the truest, highest self.

Modern adaptation: In the book *Eat Pray Love*, Elizabeth Gilbert is given this mantra by her Guru, which she lovingly refers to as the “Amazing Grace of Sanskrit.” Her interpretation is, “*I honor the divinity within myself.*” This is a great mantra to help build self-confidence, reminding us that we are all made up of divine energy and should treat ourselves accordingly.

Mantra: *Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu*

Translation: May all beings everywhere be happy and free, and may the thoughts, words, and actions of my own life contribute in some way to that happiness and to that freedom for all

Modern adaptation: Most commonly associated with the Jivamukti Yoga School, this mantra is a powerful way to dedicate yourself to living a life of non-harming and being of service to the greater good. This mantra encourages cooperation, compassion and living in harmony with the environment, animals and our fellow human beings.

Mantra: *Shanti Mantra*
Om Saha Naavavatu
Saha Nau Bhunaktu
Saha Veeryam Karavaavahai
Tejasvi Aavadheetamastu Maa Vidvishaavahai Om

Translation: May the Lord protect and bless us. May he nourish us, giving us strength to work together for the good of humanity. May our learning be brilliant and purposeful. May we never turn against one another.

Modern adaptation: A perfect mantra to start a yoga class, a new day, or even a new business with. It unites the participants and sets a tone of non-competitiveness, unity, and working together towards a common goal.

Mantra: *Om Gum Ganapatayei Namah*

Translation: I bow to the elephant-faced deity [Ganesh] who is capable of removing all obstacles. I pray for blessings and protection.”

Modern adaptation: In Hindu teachings, Ganesh is known as the god of wisdom and success and the destroyer of obstacles. This is my favorite mantra, which I always draw on when I'm facing a big challenge in life and especially when I'm traveling.

From

<http://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-8188/5-ancient-mantras-that-will-transform-your-life.html>

Resources

<http://www.spiritvoyage.com/mantra/Aa-Oo-Um/MAN-000178.aspx>

<http://www.chopra.com/ccl-meditation/21dmc/mantra.html>

<http://www.yogabasics.com/japamalabeads/mantras>

<http://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-8188/5-ancient-mantras-that-will-transform-your-life.html>