

# MANTRA



With kind regards, ॐ and prem

Swami Niranjan Swami Satyasopande

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Published by Rikhiapeeth

First edition 2014

Second edition 2015

Publisher and distributor: Rikhiapeeth, P.O. Rikhia,  
Dist. Deoghar, Jharkhand, 814113, India

Website: [www.rikhiapeeth.in](http://www.rikhiapeeth.in)

Blogpage: [www.rikhiapeeth.net](http://www.rikhiapeeth.net)

Printed at Aegean Offset Printers, Greater Noida

‘Mantra’ is an offering to Paramguru Swami Sivananda and our beloved Pujya Gurudev Swami Satyananda. It is compiled, composed and published by sannyasin disciples, devotees and well-wishers of Paramahansa Satyananda as a part of nishkam seva, selfless service.

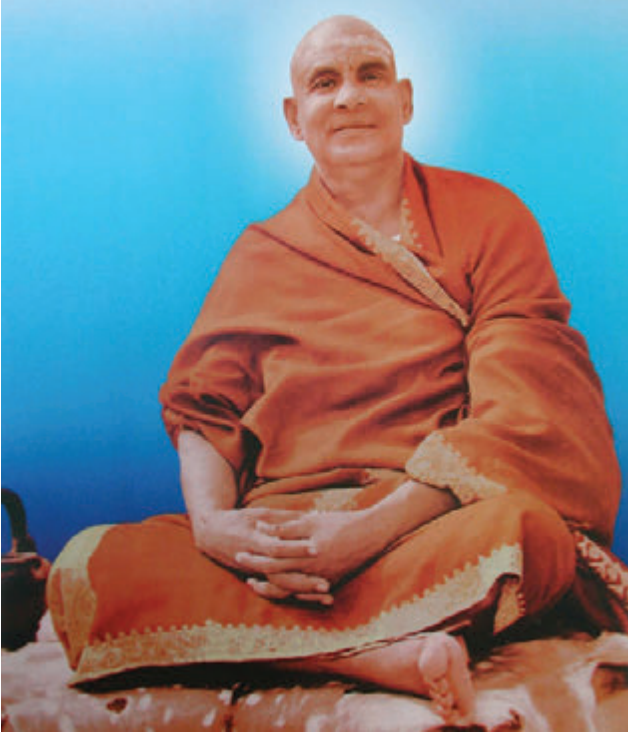
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# MANTRA



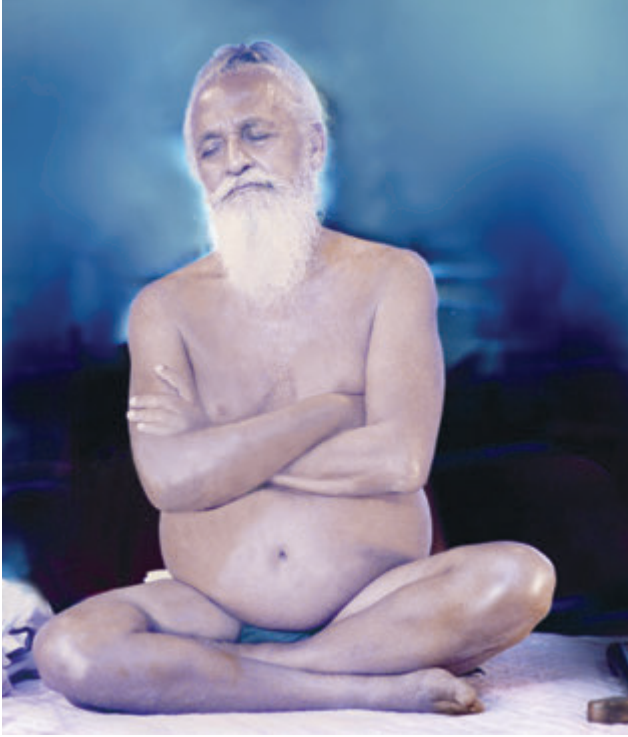
## Offering



In humility we offer this compilation of teachings on the subject of Guru to Sadguru Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who initiated Pujya Gurudev Swami Satyananda Saraswati into the secrets of yoga.



## Dedication



गुरु गोविन्द दोऊ खड़े काके लागूँ पाय।  
बलिहारी गुरु आपनो, जिन गोविन्द दियो बताए॥  
— कबीरदास

Guru and Govinda are both before me, whose feet shall I venerate first? Undoubtedly I shall choose my Guru, thanks to whom I was introduced to Govinda.

— Kabir Das

Although there are many books on mantra, this book is unique as it is a compilation of teachings spanning the life of Paramahansa Satyananda, a realised sage, who embodied the wisdom, tapasya, austerity, and enlightened understanding of the ancient Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas. More important than this was his personal and intimate experience with each and every aspect of mantra. In fact, during his final phase of life, he came to Rikhiapeeth for the perfection of mantra.

On 8<sup>th</sup> September 1989, after hearing a very clear voice say, “Perfect the unbroken awareness of your Guru mantra with every breath and beat of the heart, this is your mission now.” He arrived at Rikhia on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 1989 and pledged...

Om Namo Narayanaya  
O Lord Mrityunjaya!  
I have worshipped you  
As Kaal Bhairava with one tattwa  
As Kamakshi with five tattwas  
As Vishnu with flower, fruits, water and milk.  
In many forms, in many ways  
And in many places  
I have worshipped whatever form  
You have revealed to me as your own image.  
And now, at your burial ground  
I will worship you with every breath.  
This I promise.

It was at Rikhiapeeth that Paramahansa Satyananda brought the teachings of mantra into a modern context and gave us the unique opportunity to participate in the sadhana through the various yajnas he performed.

Section one of this book provides the reader a concise understanding of the philosophy of mantra and section two gives the reader a practical guide to the practice of mantra.

This book is a humble offering of our dedication and devotion to yoga as a mighty culture in the making to direct

the events of the world and an attempt to explain mantra and its practical techniques in a clear, practical and precise manner.

It's up to each one to take up this great science of mantra with faith, love and sincerity.

Om Tat Sat

In 1943, my Guru Swami Sivananda gave me a mantra and told me to practise five malas every day. The practice took me no longer than three minutes in all. I practised five malas regularly every day and during this period the most important link in my life was formed in those three minutes. Had I renounced my link with the mantra, I would never have achieved the position that I have today. These five malas saved me, so today I can stand firmly as a swami, holding the torch of a spiritual culture.

— Swami Satyananda Saraswati



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# UNDERSTANDING MANTRA





# Creation



## **The transcendental universal mind**

In the whole universe there is only one mind, but this mind appears to be individualised in each one of us. So, your mind and my mind are not two minds, our minds just appear to be different manifestations of the same universal mind. The truth is that the individual mind is part of the homogeneous, universal mind. Therefore, the individual mind can be connected with the universal mind if we know how to connect it. We must remember this as a law, for it is of utmost importance in spiritual life.

## **The limited individual mind**

There is a mysterious power at the core, at the base of all existence. Realised souls through the centuries have experienced this power and talked about it, but most people have not yet been able to grasp it. In the last few decades, a tremendous spiritual awakening has taken place all over the world. Now more and more people have accepted that there is a power greater than them, there is increased interest in attempting to identify with that power.

Our consciousness is confined within a limited area, the individual mind functions within a given space. The capacity of the individual mind is defined and limited by the abilities of the senses and sense experiences. For example, you can only hear as much as your auditory system allows you, you can only see as far as your optic system allows you. This is the limitation of the individual mind. There are minute forms in this universe which you are unable to see. There are resonant waves of sound which you are unable to hear. Thus the individual mind functions within a very small, confined area.

How do we expand our mind, our consciousness? We have to break the boundaries of the individual mind, only then can it flow out of its confinement and experience infinity. But the individual mind is dependent on the information supplied to it by the senses. If the sensory channels are incapable of supplying more information, then the mind is limited. To



break this limitation therefore, you have to look for ways to expand the mind.

Certain tantric techniques allow you to isolate the individual mind and separate it from the distractions and limitations of the senses, thus allowing it to expand. If you want to expand the mind and experience the mighty power behind man's existence, then mantra is the first step. It is the most important aspect of the science and art of Tantra.

### **Expansion of consciousness**

The whole process of yoga can be divided into two parts. The first part is the negation of outer consciousness and the second part is the expansion of inner consciousness. The first part of yoga aims at shutting, closing the doors of perception and the second part of yoga provides a direction to the released consciousness which expands till it becomes infinite.

The second stage can be practised when the first stage has been perfected. To make it more clear, when the withdrawal of consciousness is complete, you should take to the process of expansion of consciousness. The withdrawal and expansion of consciousness can be achieved with the help of a mantra. Every mantra has two aspects, they are name and form. The name or sound aspect will withdraw your consciousness from the external world. This is a process of negation. The form or symbol aspect will expand your inner consciousness till it merges in self-awareness. Thus it must be borne in mind that both the name and form aspects of mantra are to be practised. If



you repeat only the mantra, but do not concentrate on a form, you will enter into unconsciousness. And if you neglect name or sound and concentrate only on the form or symbol, you will have to struggle lifetime after lifetime.

As such, in the Yoga Sutras it is stated by Patanjali that through repetition of name or mantra, you bring about that state of withdrawal where you forget everything that is taking place outside. That is, you transcend the outer consciousness. However, when you have transcended the outer consciousness, what are you going to do? You have taken a jump into the ocean, but if you do not know how to swim, you are going to drown.

Therefore, when you have withdrawn your consciousness to one point through the name or sound aspect of mantra, unless you take up the form or symbol aspect and allow your consciousness to stabilise itself at one point, you will surely land up in unconsciousness. There are many forms to choose from. When your mind has become completely blank and there is absolute emptiness inside, all persons should take up a suitable form or symbol to meditate on. It is with the help of that form that the expansion of consciousness takes place.

## **Creating an explosion**

Mantra is a syllable which represents a sound. This sound can completely control the mental fluctuations. As the sound has waves it has frequencies, it has velocity. When you practise mantra and the sound is ingrained in your mind, then the consciousness undergoes great transformation. Therefore, those people who want to practise meditation must first of all find a mantra for themselves.

Mantra is a special science. When mantras are repeated mentally or even verbally, they create a certain sound vibration and you know that sound is a form of energy. It's not just A, B, C, D. Every sound has its own wavelength, its



own frequency. I am producing a sound now. It has its own frequency. The same sound, when it is thought within the mind, increases in frequency. The higher the frequency, the more powerful is the sound. At a particular level, this sound explodes and the explosion of sound creates an experience.

Now, coming to an important point, meditation is not just a mental exercise. If you first close your eyes and try to concentrate by force, to withdraw your mind by force, again and again, that will not give you meditation. Before meditation comes, you have to accomplish one stage, bring about one experience, and when that experience takes place, you get into meditation. Therefore, meditation is not an effort. When you are practising mantra, you are creating a certain frequency in the mind and at a particular point, you are creating an explosion. When that explosion takes place, an experience happens.



If you are cooking two kilos of vegetables, you don't put in two kilos of salt or two kilos of butter. There is a correct proportion. In the same way, in the practice of yoga there is also a correct proportion and that is indicated in my books because I have practised it.

There must be 70% karma yoga, 20% raja yoga, hatha yoga, kundalini yoga, etc., 5% jnana yoga and 5% bhakti yoga. If you try to practise 70% dhyana yoga, kundalini yoga, kriya yoga, tantra yoga, you will go to the mental hospital. Or if you practise 70% jnana yoga, then you become an intellectual giant but remain a pygmy in other areas of your personality. Or if you practice 70% bhakti yoga, you will be saying, "Oh God, Oh God, this microphone is working because of God's grace. This flower is red because of God's grace. Oh, today it is not raining because of God's grace." You bring God everywhere, even into the toilet. Too much bhakti is not good. It brings about an imbalance. Too much raja yoga also causes an imbalance and too much jnana yoga creates imbalance also. Because you are gross, so you need a greater proportion of karma yoga.



## **The power of sound and vibrations**

Vibrations have the power to affect the body, emotions and mind because our bodies and our minds are essentially vibratory in nature. The universe is a manifestation of vibrations. Yogic texts talk of the power of AUM in manifesting the universe, having pierced through bindu, the infinite point or center of creation. If we can understand the science and power of sound, we can master ourselves and the universe.

The power of sound to affect matter was demonstrated by the great singer Caruso who could shatter a glass with a musical note. To do this, he would strike the glass to discover its resonant frequency. Then, standing in another part of the room, he would powerfully intone the note that would resonate with the glass, causing it to shatter.

## **Hippies and mantra**

In 1968, I went to San Francisco. At that time the hippies, the 'flower children' were growing. I call it the 'Hippie Age' not 'Nuclear Age'. When they heard that a swami or a Guru or teacher had come, they came to see me, and some of them were equipped with earphones and I asked them what the earphones were. They call them the aquarius earphone. The earphone was producing a sound...aum...aum... aum aum... All the time I asked, "Why do you do all this?" They said that by this sound they were able to control their brain waves. The important point is – a sound has a definite effect on the brain wave pattern and when the sound is produced rhythmically for a period of time, then it creates an effect on the brain cycles.

Not only a few hundred, but a few thousand studies have been done on the effect of sound on the physical body, and the conclusions are these. When you produce a sound, when you practise a mantra, it alters the brain waves. It decreases the necessity of oxygen consumption. It maintains a steady blood

pressure. It relaxes the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems and has an all-round beneficial effect on the bio-chemical structure of the body. I have myself found that when you are practising the mantra, when you are practising one particular sound, at that time the behaviour of the heart is very cordial and very healthy. This is a very short glimpse of the experiments done in the United States.

## Nada

Sound is the primordial form of energy, the original substance and basis of the whole universe. This universe with its solar systems, its invisible fields of energy, is an expansion of sound energy. This sound is known as 'shabda' in yoga, 'the word' in the Bible, and 'mantra' in the tantric system. You must understand that mantra is neither religious nor sectarian. It is not Christian, Hindu, Islamic or Jewish. Mantra is a form of sound.



Sound has different stages of manifestation. Every type of energy from the primordial to the manifest state undergoes transformations, changes frequency, velocity, etc. When we talk about mantra, we are definitely talking about one of the manifestations of this primordial energy. Each letter and syllable of the mantra penetrates deep down into various levels of your consciousness.

The word nada is derived from the Sanskrit root nad, meaning 'to flow'. The etymological meaning of nada is process or a flow of consciousness. Ordinarily the word nada means sound.

According to nada yogis and the scriptures dealing with the subject of nada yoga, the nada brahma, or the ultimate and transcendental sound, is the seed from which the entire creation has evolved. A nada yogi believes that the entire macrocosmic universe is but a projection of sound alone. The Bible says, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God." This word is called the nada or the shabda. The nada yogis believe that out of one eternal sound evolved,

- the five elements (tattwas)
- the five organs of action (karmendriyas)
- the five organs of perception (jnanendriyas)
- the fourfold mind (manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara)
- the gross nature, three gunas (tamas, rajas and sattwa).

This means that prakriti, the material, mental, psychic and intellectual universe, is all an outcome of nada brahma. So



a nada yogi believes in a reality which has manifested itself in the form of vibration, much of which is out of the realm of normal perception. The eternal or original nada has the highest rate of frequency and vibration. When any object vibrates at a tremendous and unimaginable speed, it becomes still. It means that the highest point of motion and vibration is stillness. And that nada appears to be the creative principle of all matter and the entire material substance.

### **The four stages of manifestation of sound**

There are four stages of manifestation of sound according to its frequency and subtlety or grossness. The four stages are (i) para, (ii) pashyanti, (iii) madhyama and (iv) vaikhari. These four stages of sound should be understood scientifically.

#### **Para nada**

Para means 'transcendental, 'beyond' or 'the other side'. It is beyond the reach of the indriyas, or sense organs, and the mind and other means of cognition. Hence para nada is the transcendental sound. It is indicative of the truth that there is a sphere of super-consciousness where sound is heard in different dimensions.

Every note of the musical scale is made up of different numbers of vibrations per second. They vary in length, speed and pitch. In one second, a sound may vibrate thousands of times. Above a certain frequency, sound becomes inaudible and can only be perceived subjectively. The ears cannot receive sounds that are vibrating at a very high rate. Therefore, we are not aware of all the sounds that are present in the cosmos. Sounds with a very high frequency are transformed into silence because the ears have the capacity to hear sounds only in a very limited range.

Para or transcendental sound has the highest frequency of vibration. This intense vibration makes para inaudible. Various texts mention that the para sound has no vibration.

It is a sound that has no movement and therefore no frequency. It is a still sound, but we cannot conceive of a sound that has no vibration, no movements, no motion. When a sound goes to its maximum pitch, it attains a sudden stillness, and that is para nada.

### **Pashyanti**

The second stage of sound, which has a lower frequency, and is more gross than para, is pashyanti. It is a sound which cannot be heard, but it can be seen. Pashyanti in Sanskrit means 'that which can be seen or visualised'.

The ancient scriptures maintain that sound can also be visualised. How does one see a sound? Well, have you ever heard a piece of music in a dream? This particular dimension of sound, as in a dream, is called pashyanti. It may be called a mental sound, which is neither a conscious sound nor a semi-conscious sound. It is a subconscious sound pertaining to a quality of mind and not belonging to the quality of the sense organs, like the ears.

When I say out loud "Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama," it is vaikhari, but when I close my eyes and mouth and go in and repeat mentally the sound of "Rama", visualising its color and form with the inner eye, it is known as pashyanti. When the word or the sound is heard in a sphere where one is not aware of the outer surroundings, it is called pashyanti. When



every outer sound is extinct, and you hear a new sound altogether, unlike the nature of audible sounds, know it as a special sound or the nada of pashyanti.

## **Madhyama**

Madhyama is a form of sound with lower frequencies than para and pashyanti, but still subtler than the audible vaikhari form of sound. Madhyama produces very minute vibrations. The word madhyama means 'in between' or 'middle', so madhyama means a middle sound, or the sound of a whisper.

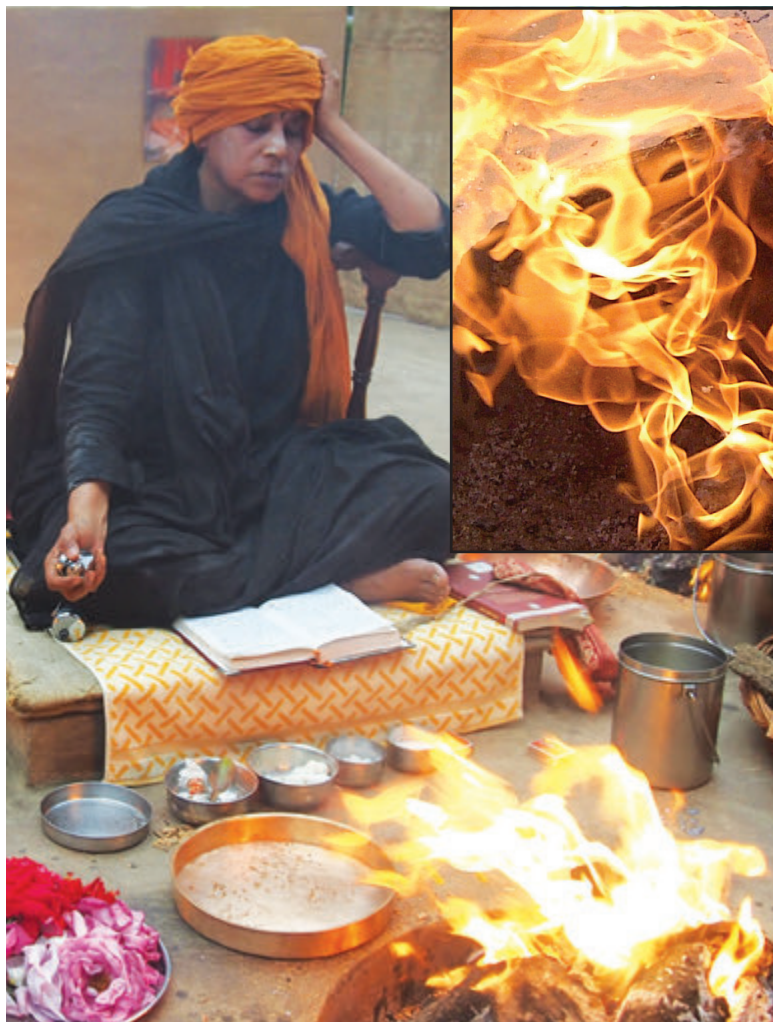
## **Vaikhari**

The fourth and gross stage of nada is called vaikhari. Vaikhari sound is audible, it is the spoken sound. It is produced by friction or by striking two things against each other. Its frequency is even lower than that of madhyama. Audible sounds have vibrations within a limited range.





To sum up, vaikhari is the gross quality of the vocal organs, madhyama is the subtler quality of the same physical organs, pashyanti is the quality of the subconscious or unconscious, and para is the quality of the soul.



The power of mantra – darshan of Swami Satyananda during Panchagni of Swami Satyasangananda, 2014.



# How does Mantra Work?



## **How the mantras were revealed**

There is a particular method by which the mantra always originates. Unless it originates by that method, it cannot be a mantra, it will be a sloka. In Sanskrit texts you will come across these two words – mantra and sloka. Sloka means a verse, such as a sloka of Gita, Ramayana, or any other scripture. They are lines of poetry. So, the mantra is not a sloka. It is not spoken, written or thought. It is revealed stuff or sound.

According to Vedic etymology, the literal meaning of mantra is 'that which was released in profound meditation'. The word mantra is a composition of two roots, 'man' plus 'tra'. Man means 'profound meditation' and tra means 'releasing', just as the power is released. So, mantra is a revealed sound. How does this happen?

In the human conscious, subconscious and unconscious, there are different images, forces, ideas and impressions. In the subconscious and unconscious mind these take the form of symbols. In dreams, in meditation and in general behaviour, we express our subconscious mind through symbols. This has been discussed in modern psychology in great detail.

In dreams what we usually see and hear are said to be symbols of the subconscious. There are also symbols of the unconscious but they are not revealed to each and everyone. They are only revealed to a very few souls and they are very powerful people, or I should say very pure people. These people are able to hear the sound or the word of the unconscious, and that word is mantra.

Mantra is revealed in a very deep psychic state, where the individual is completely lost to himself and to his worldly experiences, and when nothing but the inner light shines in front of him. Those sounds are called mantras which are heard by him when he is aware inwardly at that time or maybe a little before



that. It is in this sense that we always say the Vedas, Bible and Koran are the word of God, they are not written by man.

Always remember that if the conscious mind is completely withdrawn and the subconscious mind is also completely withdrawn, then a third power comes into operation within. When you have no power over yourself, at that time, certain revelations take place. These are usually known by rishis. In Sanskrit the word rishi means 'of inner vision'. So now you see the difference between sloka, mantra and rishi.

### **Seers of the unconscious**

The mantras which often occur in tantra shastra or in mantra shastra are the mantras which were revealed to different people at different times. Why so? Why was a particular mantra not revealed to all? Why were different mantras revealed to different people? The answer is very simple. Always remember that the unconscious of each person is different. It is only the superconscious that is the same in everyone. Mantra is revealed by the unconscious and everything in the unconscious mind – the unconscious impressions, the unconscious emanations – are different.

Who are these people to whom the mantras were revealed? The right word for these people is rishi. Rishi does not mean a saint or even a mahatma. Rishi means a seer. Seer of what? A seer of the unconscious. Do you know what the unconscious is? It is not something that you would call completely dead stuff. No, it is unconscious in the sense that the outer consciousness is not there, but it is not a negative state. In that sense, those people who have been able to see their own unconscious are called rishis.

So, the unconscious is a force. It is not the void of consciousness, it is not a state of negativity. It is more powerful than this state where we are at present. It is a different state of consciousness but this state of consciousness is not present here. Therefore, we say that the unconscious is not the ordinary



state of consciousness. The rishis were those who entered into this state and came in contact with the primal sounds of their being in profound, deep meditation. They realised the sounds they heard as mantra. Sometimes they also heard richa.

Richa means 'a collection of mantras'. Later on these richa were compiled and became the revealed books, not only of Hinduism, but of other religions as well. The Vedas are said to be revealed books, but then some people say that they were written down with pen and ink, so how can they be revealed? It is only the people who practise those things that can understand them. Sometimes in profound meditation a whole speech is given, which we remember, and in that profound meditation a force emanates from the depths of the ocean. You can see that. When that unconscious force awakens, one is called a rishi.

### **Forms of thought**

Always remember the state of rishi-hood is just before samadhi. You will find it is not so difficult to attain this state. After some practise you will be able to set aside the physical consciousness.



For the time being or maybe for a few minutes, different sounds will be heard, and these sounds are not different from you. In this context I can tell you that every thought has a form. It may be either a geometrical form or a human form. Then again, every thought has a pitch, just as in music there is pitch and different ranges of sound.

There are some thoughts which are so subtle that although they are there in your mind, you are not aware of them, and there are certain thoughts which are so big, so loud and so intense, but still you don't see them. It is exactly like the range of musical sound. Sound is perceivable within a certain range and beyond that range it is imperceptible to human ears. In the same way, the human mind is unable to conceive thoughts beyond or below a certain level.

Therefore, thoughts are so subtle that we are unable to know them, and they come in the form of symbols. The

Greeks used to feel that these thoughts have therianthropic symbols, which are figures having animal and human bodies combined, and they were right in a way. You see, it was not just a mental configuration. All human thoughts have roots in animal memories, in the memories of animal bodies. That is why in many of the ancient symbols, you find figures which, for example, have the upper body of a lady and the lower body of a fish or a cobra, or the upper body of a man and the lower body of a tiger or a goat. You must have seen many such things, and that proves that the human mind has evolved recently on the level of thinking and intellect, while still retaining the animal instincts intact.

In India, however, the conception of thought was anthropomorphic, which means we consider that thoughts have human symbols. The Egyptians and some of the other ancient races considered that the thoughts have geometrical symbols, and that concept of geometrical configuration was adopted by India in the tantra shastra. For instance, the first symbol of the unconscious is the inverted triangle. These geometrical symbols were actually considered to be figures of thought.

### **Mantra devata**

Now, as I told you, thoughts have colour, form and pitch. If you produce a particular thought in your mind, you are producing a particular form also of which you are not aware. We have always been thinking about our thoughts in the context of







the language which we have learned in our motherland. When I think about going to Calcutta, it brings to my mind thoughts of the ticket, the money, the train.

Now, you should try to observe the form of your average thought for some time every day, otherwise, it will not be possible for you to understand what exactly is meant by the form of thought. Every thought, even this speech I am giving now, produces certain forms within the consciousness. These are not merely ephemeral bubbles, but actual forms.

From the sound a triangle is created or maybe a straight line, and from there it might take another shape.

So these mantras also have forms which are known as mantra devata. Here devata does not mean a God, although in the dictionary you will find that meaning is given. The literal meaning of the word devata according to Sanskrit composition is derived from the primal sound 'dyu', which means 'to enlighten or illumine'. Primal sound is that which is not composed by man, but by nature. Dyu is always used in the sense of enlightenment or illumination.

Devata means 'illuminated stuff'. Any object which is illumined in the darkness is devata. There is darkness everywhere, you can't see anything. The consciousness is like a torch light. It just gives light to an object, it sees an object. The object which is seen in the light of consciousness is devata. Therefore, in the unconscious state, in samadhi, when everything is dark and no



object is experienced, and even the awareness of 'I' is completely cut off, then your consciousness expands. In the course of that expansion you become aware of certain objects inside, certain figures, and those are called devata.

When the rishis were in the depths of meditation, they had the realisation of two things at the same time, mantra and devata. They not only heard the sound, while hearing the sound, they also saw a figure. Every revealed sound has a revealed symbol. In samadhi, in the depths of the unconscious, you hear and you see. When you are taking up a particular mantra, you must have a very clear conception of mantra, rishi and devata. You must know what mantra you want, to which rishi it was revealed, and what is the symbol.

### Rotation of mantra

When you have understood these three points, then you go to the fourth point which is the rotation of mantra through the centers. The centers are the thumb, second, third, fourth and fifth fingers of both hands together. A certain mantra is chanted while concentrating on a particular center. It is almost like yoga nidra but with mantra. You have to circulate the mantras through the centers.

Mantra	Chakra	Physical Location
Lam	Mooladhara	Perineum
Vam	Swadhisthana	Base of spine
Ram	Manipura	Navel center
Yam	Anahata	Heart centre
Ham	Vishuddhi	Throat pit
Om	Ajna	Eyebrow centre

How are these mantras revealed? In the beginning one letter is revealed to the rishi. It is the first letter of the mantra,

for instance, the sound 'Krim'. For days together he just listens to that sound. He comes out of meditation and the next morning again he sits, goes inside and follows that sound. Ultimately the sound expresses itself in the form of a mantra, for instance, the bija mantra is 'Hrum' but the mantra is 'Om Namah Shivaya'.

The seed mantra is seen by the seer first and then gradually it begins to express itself in different syllables, maybe long or short, and this is called mantra. There are some mantras which apparently have a certain meaning when they are revealed, and there are some which do not have any meaning at all. We may call them literally meaningless.

### **Vibratory energy**

Mantra is not the name of a God or Goddess or of a person. It is not a holy word or part of a hymn. Mantra is not sacred, nor is it a tool for concentration. It is a vehicle for expansion of mind and liberation of energy.

Each mantra has a certain wavelength and frequency that is able to penetrate the internal structure of the mind. If you practice a mantra even without trying to concentrate your mind, the sound waves that resonate during the practice will still permeate your entire system. Obviously though, concentration will increase the power of the mantra. The different types of waves that you initiate while repeating the mantra pierce and awaken deeper dimensions of your consciousness that you have not experienced so far.

When you practice mantra, the sound and accompanying vibrations move in a certain pattern. However, the sound recorded by your consciousness is not exactly the same as the sound heard through your ears. In the deeper mind, the sound of each mantra has its own archetype. Because of this connection between mantra and archetype, the sound of mantra has a totally different effect on our consciousness than all the other sounds which we produce.

It is not the meaning, but the sound waves created by the mantras that influence the cosmos within and outside. Therefore, an intellectual understanding of the mantra is not at all necessary. There are some mantras which don't even have a meaning. What is important is the two basic aspects, sound and form. For example, when you chant Om, it is a sound, when you write Om in script, it is a form. So every mantra has a sound and a form, but the most powerful aspect is the sound.



### **Prana shakti**

The piece of bone, which appears to be dead matter, is not really dead at all, it is just that our eyes are incapable of detecting the energy within it. Scientists who have gone into the study of energy fields now know that what appears to be dead matter is also permeated with pranic energy. You know the famous equation of Einstein,  $E=mc^2$ , that is, matter is energy in its potential state. There is a small scientific experiment which we can use to illustrate this more clearly. If you look at a piece of bone with your naked eye, all you see is a bone. But if you look at the same piece of bone under a powerful microscope, what do you see? First you



see molecules, then atoms, and later the nucleus of the atom. Ultimately, you discover the fantastic behaviour of energy.

Prana does not only mean life, it means existence as well. The etymological meaning of prana is 'life in existence'. If an object is devoid of prana, it will disintegrate.

Each mantra is the conductor of a certain type of energy, it is infused with prana shakti. For example, there is a special mantra for snake bite. When a person repeats this mantra thousands of times, it becomes charged with a particular type of energy. If someone has been bitten by a snake, a person who has perfected the mantra can be called in. As soon as he chants the mantra, the poison is dispersed without causing any further pain or harm.

Most people do not understand the power of the mantra and use any word or name for their mantra. For example, you may admire a great man and make a mantra out of his name, but that is not a mantra in the sense that we use the term. If you think of that man as your Guru or your God, then you have emotion for him, so you like the sound of his name. That is a mantra of emotion, it is not a mantra of prana shakti.

## **Akshara and varna**

Mantras are a combination of akshara and varna. Akshara is not a syllable, akshara means 'imperishable vibration'. Varna means 'colour'. These mantras have a deity and also

a yantra. For example 'Om Namah Shivaya' is the mantra. Its mandala is the Shivalingam. The devas and devatas, according to the tantric tradition, are the mandala and at the same time they have a yantra which you see in the form of geometrical formations. They are not just lines and circles, and they have a very powerful effect on the deeper consciousness of man.

Each and every akshara in the mantra is the seed of vibration. It is repeated in the mind or verbally, or with pranayama. Each and every akshara is so powerful that in tantra there is matrika, nyasa, varnanyasa, where these akshara are projected throughout the body. Their vibrations are injected into each and every part of the body.

Each and every akshara is sound, every sound has vibrations, and every vibration can be enlarged and made very powerful. You must have heard some of the stories about Tansen. He used to sing Raga Deepak and Raga Megha. Lights used to burn and clouds showered rain, because the sound vibration reached such a high pitch that the elements



of nature came under their influence, mind was connected with matter. And when the mind is connected with matter, if the man is strong enough, then matter is influenced. If the man is weak then the mind is influenced, not matter.

For all of us now music is enjoyment, recreation, pleasure and jumping. The very philosophy of music has been destroyed by us because it exists today only on the level of the senses. It cannot influence matter because there is no science in it. However, when you sing a raga you are actually producing vibrations that are the connecting link between your mind and the elements of nature. There has to be a medium between your mind and that part of nature which you want to influence. So, in order to link yourself with that particular item of nature, you create vibrations at such a high frequency, like laser beams, that nature is affected, there is rain and lamps are set alight. But this ability has been lost, even though the mantras and ragas still exist.



### **External and internal awareness**

The mind has two levels of awareness – external and internal. When you have sensual perceptions, then you know that the awareness is external. When the mind becomes extrovert, it experiences the world through the five different sense organs. The sensual experience is the game of the mind.

When you dissociate the mind from the senses, the awareness becomes



internal. The mind can turn either way. If the mind is introverted, the senses are inert and lifeless. Then you cannot hear, see, smell, speak or touch. This withdrawal is called *pratyahara*. When the mind turns inwards, you approach the barrier between the individual mind and the universal mind and begin to get a glimpse of the cosmos, which is an infinite experience. It has no beginning and no end, no circumference and no center.

So awareness can be external or internal, material or spiritual. Material awareness is an external experience of the mind. Spiritual awareness is an internal experience of the mind. When the mind is barricaded, it is limited to material experience, but when the barrier is broken it has spiritual experience. In yogic philosophy, this barrier is known as *avidya* (ignorance) or *maya* (illusion). This barrier can be broken by the practice of mantra.

### **Man is limited – mind is not**

Modern psychology says that mind has three dimensions – conscious, subconscious and unconscious – and thousands of years ago, an Indian tantric philosopher said that there are three levels of consciousness – gross, subtle and causal. These three classifications of mind are very broad and general. This mind,





which you do not know, has millions of layers and during your lifetime, during one day of your life, you are functioning on more than one level of awareness. This you must understand.

During the twenty four hours of the day, whether you are happy or unhappy, your consciousness is functioning or you are living in different realms or layers of this consciousness. You do not exist on just one layer. Not only you, but even

animals and vegetables are not functioning on one layer of consciousness. Through practise and training you can develop your awareness so that you are able to function on thousands and millions of layers of consciousness during your lifetime.

Objective awareness, subjective awareness and transcendental awareness are the broad classifications of awareness. You find it difficult to function on all levels at the same time because you have limitations. Human beings have limitations. You are able to function only within your limited range of awareness and not beyond that. Through the practice of yoga, you will have to overcome these limitations so that you are able to function on unlimited layers of mind and consciousness, but how do we break the boundary? How can we break the confines of evolution? It is possible by sound.



Sound is an explosive force. Even the gross form of sound can completely destroy big rocks. Mantra represents this science. Because of religious training, when a mantra is given to you, you feel that it is something akin to religion and in order to practise it you must be very pious and virtuous, but mantra is more than that.

### **Breaking the barrier between the individual mind and the universal mind**

When we begin to practise mantra, we create vibrations in the individual mind. As the mind becomes calm, quiet and concentrated, these vibrations are transferred to the universal area of the mind. Then the barrier between the individual and universal mind is broken. Because of this barrier, our minds are cut off from one another, you don't know what I think and I don't know what you think. But when this barrier is broken, your mind and my mind become one mind, the universal mind.



# Mantra, Yantra and Mandala



## **The three tools of Tantra**

Much of Tantra is concerned with worship in a ritualistic form, using the three basic tools of mantra, yantra and mandala. This ritual is not based on superstition or blind faith but has been scientifically, systematically and practically designed to direct the whole process of living towards transcendence. Ancient religions used these methods, but now the aim of ritualistic worship has been generally lost sight of, and has degenerated

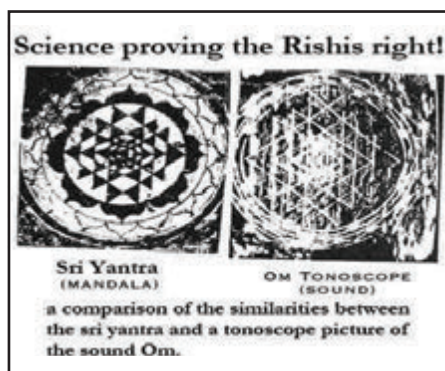
into the performance of mere automatic and meaningless actions which are not understood by the practitioner. When there is no understanding, no benefits will accrue.

Tantric rites are used for tuning into different levels of being which are beyond normal perception. They are concerned with worship, mantras, yantras, mandalas, mudras, etc., which make the mind calm, receptive and one-pointed. This is conducive to the experience of meditation that will transform one's understanding and relationship with life, with oneself, and with other people. Tantra aims at transforming everything in life into a ritual so that the individual performs every action and thought with a feeling of worship and awareness. The action of bathing, dressing, sitting for worship, offering various symbolic sacrifices, the union of man and woman, the stages of development from conception, birth, marriage to death, are all transformed into worship.

In Tantra, one has to be continually aware of every action and thought whether it is ceremonial worship, or an everyday duty. Each act has to be performed with absolute attention, not mechanically or unconsciously. This awareness and concentration eventually prepares one for meditation. Tantric worship is not confined to the temple. It is done from the moment one gets out of bed in the morning to the moment one returns to bed at night.

## Mantra

Mantra, yantra and mandala are the most important aspects of Tantra – its essence. Almost invariably, these three are used in conjunction with each other to form powerful practices.



The mantra is the vehicle of consciousness, while yantra, mandala or devata are forms of consciousness.

Mantra is the direct link with the 'beyond'. The world we know is materialised and shaped through mantra, through sound at all levels and degrees of subtlety. Mantra originates in the substratum of Shiva (consciousness), and can be used to retrace the direction of manifestation so that one again merges with consciousness. A mantra is therefore a means to make a 'U-turn' and retrace one's path back to the source.

## Yantra

A yantra is a specific form of mandala consisting of geometrical shapes and figures, and often diagrams of deities (especially in Buddhist Tantra). It is a particularly powerful form of mandala and deep concentration upon it can lead to the realisation of the higher nature. The word yantra means 'instrument', 'machine', 'apparatus', or 'implement'. The yantra is indeed an implement (or tool) because it acts as an instrument for tuning in with consciousness, a spiritual machine for inducing states of meditation.

The human brain consists of billions of archetypes, which are symbols of man's experiences from this incarnation and



previous incarnations, from his fathers and forefathers. Every experience we perceive through the senses is registered within the consciousness, not in its original form, but in the symbolic form of an archetype. No experience is ever lost or left unregistered by

the human consciousness. There is a constant process of registration, transformation and storage, right from the time of birth up to the point of death, nothing we experience through our senses is destroyed. Even experiences in sleep, dream, deep hypnosis and complete unconsciousness take on a symbolic form somewhere in the physical, mental or causal bodies. These forms are known as samskaras, the different



patterns of man's karma. And these billions of samskaras find their expression in this life of pain and pleasure, fulfillment and failure, sickness and health.

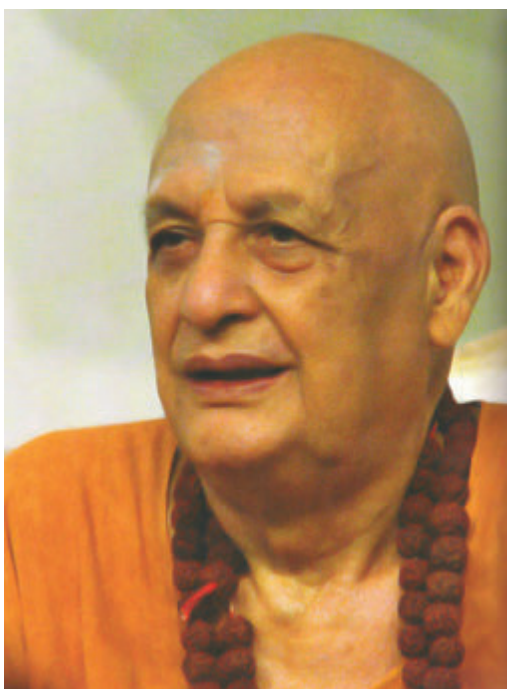
Yantra is the science of geometric symbols. Yantras can release the archetypes and samskaras which are deeply embedded in the consciousness, either in the form of visions, psychic experiences, psychic sensations, divine experiences, dissipation or turbulence of the mind. By unburdening the mind and the soul, the practices of mantra and yantra liberate the potential energy in man.

## **Mandala**

A mandala is a focus for cosmic powers. During tantric worship and practices, the mandala becomes the symbolic center of the universe. It is laid out according to a fixed plan and its construction is a rite in itself. Everything in the manifested world is a mandala in essence. Each and every

object is a focal point of consciousness, an expression of the underlying consciousness. Thus, deep concentration on any form can bring about a realisation of this consciousness. For this reason, bhakti or devotion is an important part of tantric meditation practices, because it supercharges the power of concentration. This becomes more piercing when backed by the emotion of reverence and love.

Every thought forms a mandala. A man and woman in union form a closed unit or circle, which can also be a perfect mandala for attaining higher states of consciousness. The Guru is an extremely powerful mandala as he acts as a magnet to draw down cosmic consciousness. He radiates and glows with the light of this great force. It is through the Guru that cosmic powers are unleashed and transmitted to the disciple. This is the grace of the Guru mandala.



# The Power of Mantra



## The value of a mantra

When one accepts a mantra from his Guru, he is receiving a sound of great power. Whether the mantra is given by me or by another Guru, you should be aware that you have in your possession one of the most precious things in life. Everything can fail you, but your mantra never will. Do not look at it merely from the religious point of view. You must see the mantra from the practical point of view.



Just as you sow a seed, you must plant the mantra deep within, so that in the course of time it will permeate your whole being. Every morning, before you commence your daily activities, and at night, before you retire to your bed, you should repeat your mantra.

Those who suffer from nervousness, fear, anxiety and other acute mental manifestations should always keep a small mala of 27 beads with them. Whenever they are free, even if it is just for a few minutes before lunch, after dinner, while talking to someone, waiting for the bus or train, or while watching television, they can repeat the mantra mentally.

Practise the mantra whenever you are idle, during the day or night, whether you are thinking sensible things or useless things. You can even practise when you are eating chocolate, drinking coffee or taking alcohol. If you keep your mind busy with the mantra whenever it is free, in the course of time, you will find that the mind no longer wanders like a vagabond. The mind which had no base now has a point to which it can return. Through this simple practice, those suffering from nervousness, fear and depression will be able to bring about a great transformation in their mental state. Mantra is a very powerful tool for handling all the manifestations of the mind.

Throughout our lives we have been thinking and thinking, almost incessantly. Just imagine, what a huge book you would fill if you were to register each and every thought you had since the age of five! From today, keep a written account of each and every thought you have. In a very short time they will amount to millions. Then, one fine day, take your diary and a red pencil. Sit down quietly and read each thought you have recorded. Ask yourself, 'Was that necessary?' If the answer is 'No', strike it off. If you are perfectly honest with yourself, I'm sure you'll find almost 99% of your thoughts were unnecessary.



This means that your mental energy was wasted on all those thought processes. Every time you think, you are drawing a lot of energy from your storehouse of prana. As long as you are playing a transistor radio, it is consuming the battery, and if you leave it on all day, the battery will soon be flat. In the same way, if you squander away your prana shakti in endless thought processes, your battery will soon be flat. However, if you have a method by which you can conserve your prana shakti, you will have a lot of vitality. Now if you can understand that thinking consumes energy and mantra conserves energy, then you will realise the secret of mantra. Most of us would have strong willpower if only we had a base on which to center our minds. Then we would not suffer mentally or emotionally. Our sufferings are not due to any divine curse. They are our own creation. They are the result of our mismanagement of the great power that is in our hearts and minds. We have misused it and today we lie here impotent. Our minds are dull, our memories are cloudy and our hearts are broken by anxiety.



So, to all of you who have mantra and to those of you who are thinking about it, I will remind you once again that everything in life can fail, but the mantra never will.

### **Awakening spiritual consciousness**

In tantric philosophy, mantra is a force which can be used for the awakening of our spiritual consciousness. The basis of mantra is sound, which ranges from gross to subtle. Sound is a force which creates ripples in the vast ocean of the cosmos.

Throughout the cosmos there are slow, medium and fast sound waves. The medium waves are perceptible to us, but the slow and fast waves are not. When the sound of mantra is produced, it has a medium range of frequency which is known as perceptible or gross sound. But when the mantra is silently intoned, it has a faster rate of frequency and becomes imperceptible or subtle sound.

Therefore, a mantra works on the earthly plane and also on the higher planes. When you produce a sound and accelerate the frequency, it affects the inner realm of consciousness. Just as when you pick up a pebble and throw it into calm, quiet lake, the impact creates ripples which form circles which expand wider and wider according to the force and weight of the pebble. In the same way, when you repeat a mantra, the sound hits the homogeneity of consciousness and creates ripples which help to expand the mind.

Any thought force is material force, mind is matter and is composed of twenty four tattwas or elements, just as any motor car is composed of many parts. Now, if you know a way to expand the mind, you can liberate the energy. Liberation (moksha) does not imply a religious process. It is a scientific process, just as is the release of energy from matter by the process of nuclear fission and fusion. In the same way, if you want to release the shakti (energy) which is inherent in your mind, in your desires, in your passions, ambitions, anger, greed, mean mindedness, petty thinking, etc., there is a way – we call it expansion of mind.

What is expansion of mind? This is the subject matter of Tantra. It is the subject matter of yoga, which Vedic dharma has been teaching for over ten thousand years. When you close the eyes, and you behold something in you that is because the mind has expanded. When there is no sound in this room and you can hear the bell within you that also is because the mind has expanded.

When mind expands, either by sadhana or by the good karmas of your previous birth, what happens? Surdas said, "The blind can see, the deaf can hear, and the dumb can speak." The same idea is given by Tulsidas in the Ramacharitamanas, "When expansion of mind takes place, a separate reality is created, and this separate reality is known as darshan."

The word tantra is derived from two roots – tan, 'expansion of mind', and tra, 'liberation of energy'. The latter refers to the



awakening of kundalini shakti. How? Tantra is the theory and there are practices. Hatha yoga is a part of Tantra, as are kriya yoga, mantra yoga, laya yoga and others. They are all branches of the tantric system.

However, to be very frank with you, the tantric system was very much misunderstood, because this is the only science which proclaims that, in order to expand the mind and release the energy, you do not have to change anything in your life. If you are a householder, remain a householder, if you are

a brahmachari, remain a brahmachari, if you are eating meat and drinking wine, let it be.

On the other hand, all the religions and all the sadhanas taught by different cults and sects say, 'If you want to awaken shakti and realise the divine, don't do this, don't do that.' Tantra says, 'No, you start the spiritual journey from your own doorstep.' If you want to go to New York, you start from here, you don't have to go all the way to London and start from there. From each place, there is a direct road to the final destination. That is the principle of Tantra.

It is also said in the Gita, 'Whether you are a brahman, a shudra, or whatever type of person you are, you can always go ahead.' Yantra, mantra, mandala, remember them. These three are important aspects of Tantra. If you say, 'I want

to practise tantra, what should I do?’ I would suggest you practise these three.

### **Harmonise with cosmic forces**

Man’s inner being is constantly in contact with something much greater than the limitations of individuality, but the average person is not aware of this. Mantra brings about a state of resonance between an individual and the depths of his being. It is the tool through which we can create harmony with inner cosmic forces.

### **Eliminate karmas**

The mind is much more than thought or feeling. The mind is like an iceberg – only a small portion is visible, the remainder lies submerged under the ocean. According to modern psychology the mind exists at three levels – conscious, subconscious and unconscious. In Vedanta we call them sthula sharira, sukshma sharira and karana sharira.

The unconscious mind is very powerful. The word ‘unconscious’ should not be misunderstood. The unconscious mind is like a storehouse. All disease, success and tragedy in life originate in the unconscious mind. The experiences that you have had in life, the important as well as the unimportant, are all registered there. It is something like a hidden camera in the streets. Everything that passes within its range is immediately photographed. In the same way, whatever experience you have is immediately transferred back to the unconscious through the indriyas (senses) and the mind. There they are stored in bija (seed) form. This process starts from the fourth month that the child is in the womb of the mother. From this point on, the child’s experiences are embedded deep in the unconscious mind.

The unconscious body is called hiranyagarbha, the golden egg. Through mantra sadhana (practice) we can penetrate it





deeply and eliminate all kinds of karmas, one by one. That is why they say that by the practice of mantra one becomes free from the entanglements of karma.

### **Tattwa shuddhi**

It is very difficult to know which mantra is good for someone and which mantra to give. Mantra is a very broad science. Mantra is sound you repeat and a form which you see. You keep on repeating it, for example, Om, Om, Om, Om... At some point, the mind detaches from the senses. Just like when a rocket is fired, at some point, the two parts separate. I am just giving you an example. The mind is separated from the senses by continuing on repeating that mantra. I can't predict when it will happen, but it will happen. This is the scientific and etymological meaning of the mantra. "Mannanattrayateiti mantra". If you keep doing mannanan the mind separates.

Everybody's mind is plugged into the senses. Now your mind is plugged to your ears. So you are listening, or your



mind is plugged to your eyes, so you are seeing me. The sound, the touch, the form, the taste and the smell. These are the outcomes of the relationships between the mind and the five senses. Without mind, the eyes can't see. Without ears, the mind can't hear. You know this, without the world of the five senses, the mind cannot have experiences. So, the mind is always plugged into the senses.

The mantra therefore, has to separate the mind from the senses – shabd, sparsh, roop, ras, and gandh. These five, the five tattwas – the akasha, vayu, agni, jal and prithvi, (the ether element, the wind element, the fire element, the water element, the earth element), these are five primordial elements. And these five primordial elements can be understood through your birth signs, Aquarius, Gemini etc. There are twelve birth signs, and these twelve birth signs are related to a combination of these five senses, the five elements. Now, if you are a Sagittarius, you belong to the fire element. So the mantra has to be a mantra which belongs to the fire element.

There are special mantras called bija mantra or seed mantras. These are Aim, Hrim, Klim, Shreem, Hrom, Om, etc. These bija mantras are elaborated on by the Guru, they are developed like you develop a photograph. Om Namah Shivaya is a fire mantra. I choose this because I am a Sagittarian. If you are also a Sagittarian, we can share the same mantra, no problem! The mantra can be



written, the mantra can be chanted loudly, or whispered, or repeated mentally.

## **Chitta shuddhi**

The mind is not one homogenous unit. Just as water is formed by the combination of hydrogen and oxygen, the mind is a combination of numerous formations or samskaras. Some are weak and insignificant, while others have a powerful influence on the character, habits and nature of the individual. Some are casual and periodical, while others accompany you all the time.

It is understood that powerful thoughts like anger, passion, jealousy or fear come into the mind from time to time, but during meditation many insignificant thoughts also keep coming and going. This happens because we have not cleaned the samskaras. That is why the first prerequisite to meditation is chitta shuddhi (mental purification). Chitta shuddhi means cleaning the samskaras. Otherwise, when you sit for meditation so many thoughts constantly come into the mind, causing restlessness and disturbance. The practice of mantra is one of the best methods of chitta shuddhi, if it is done with awareness of all the thoughts that enter the mind as the mantra is being repeated.

## **Alter brain waves**

What happens when a sound is produced? Scientists have seen that the brain wave patterns are altered. Tantrics also say that when a sound is produced, it alters the frequencies of the brain waves, making the mind calmer and more intuitive.

## **Mantra for healing**

### **The body**

The science of mantra is the science of sound. Sound waves affect both the physical and the mental bodies. People seem



to think that only medicines, injections, tablets or herbs can cure sickness. These things are fine, but there is definitely a more powerful and effective formula available to man and that is sound in the form of mantra. In mantra yoga you repeat a particular sound, which is suitable to your personality and your qualities. The mantra is then transformed into a form of pure energy, which is responsible for the regeneration of dead cells in the body.

### **The mind**

If you practice mantra regularly, you will treat your own mental problems, and correct your abnormal mental behaviour. You will be your own mental doctor. Also, you will develop an intimate friendship with the mind, and all of its fantastic faculties will open up to you.

According to nada yoga, the structure of matter is comprised of millions of sounds, both familiar and unknown. Every object is a dense composition of sound particles, and

the aggregation of these particles is conceived by the yogis in the form of a sound or mantra. When you recite the mantra, you are actually working out the problems of your awareness and your mind. This is a most powerful practice.

### **Mantra and anxiety**

Michel Girodo, of the University of Ottawa, Canada, has studied the effects of mantra japa on patients diagnosed as “anxiety neurotics”. Each subject was instructed in japa, repetition of mantra, in this case ‘Rama’. They were told to expect relaxation, peacefulness and tranquility, if the practice was performed regularly, for a 40 minute period twice a day. After eight sessions, several patients showed marked improvement and reduction of anxiety.

### **Mantra – mind over matter**

People think that mantra is a kind of psychological balm. It clearly does offer psychological consolation. It gives you hope to live on, it gives you hope to work, it gives you some sort of sympathy, some sort of optimism, some basis to live and not commit suicide, but that is not all. Mantra has a definite effect on the objective field. I used to say, and still do, that ‘mind can move matter’, but it can only move matter when it is mounted on a mantra, yantra or mandala.

### **Discipline of the mind**

The discipline of the mind begins with mantra. Just as a soldier is brought to the parade ground and drilled, ‘left, right, about turn, right turn’, likewise the mind too has to be disciplined with mantra. Therefore every spiritual seeker must obtain one mantra. A mantra is powerful. It is a strong force that cures maladies of the mind. It completely overhauls the entire structure of the mind. Those who want to go high, who want to go deep must have a mantra.

## Mantra is for everybody

Mantra is for everybody. Why did the tantric tradition give us mantra? Tantric texts say that even a person who can't walk, talk, see, or hear, who is absolutely destitute, with everybody against him, can practise mantra and become enlightened.



# Symbols, Visions and Samskaras



## Symbols

With mantra japa, you must have a symbol. This will serve to fix your awareness, and also enhance the power of your mantra. You have to identify a symbol for yourself. There are three types of symbols – gross, medium and subtle. Some use inverted triangles, others a flame, some have a tiny little shining star, others concentrate on the heart, some



on the lotus - blue lotus, red lotus, yellow lotus, some on the cross, some on Christ, some on Shiva, some on their own Guru, and so on. When your mantra has unleashed visions, you must immediately awaken your symbol with your eyes closed. For example, suppose your symbol is the flame of fire, even as you see the flame of fire outside, in the same manner, with your eyes closed, you should be able to see the flame of fire within. And this experience



of the flame of fire should be abiding, it should continue, it should be stabilised. Some people want to have this experience in a particular zone of the heart, while others would prefer it in the bhrumadhya, the eyebrow center. It is an individual preference. However, the symbol must never be changed.

## Visions

When you try to become aware of your symbol, visions float across the mind. What are you going to do with them? It is very difficult, the more you are aware of your symbol, the more the visions fly across, the more you have beautiful dreams, like the visions of people who have taken LSD or ganja.

Once maybe twenty or twenty-two years ago, I was in the Himalayas, at Gangotri, the place where the river Ganga originates. I was living there for a period of nine months, with another sadhu. It was snowing continuously,





and I used to stay in the room all day and all night, keeping the fire going. I used to have prolonged visions, of big tunnels and small tunnels, I would see camels going through those small tunnels. Once I had a wonderful vision, it was fantastic, you'll like it. Please understand that I am talking about a vision, something like a dream, not reality.

It was in the morning. I was walking towards the river with a pot, like a tea pot or a neti lota made out of copper.

On the way, I found that an elephant was chasing me. Eventually he got close to me, because he could take such big steps. Having no recourse to anything else, I had a bright idea, I got into the pot to hide. The elephant approached, looking for me everywhere. Then he looked into the pot and found that I was there. He became very angry, and then he also got into the pot. I was terribly frightened, and I got out through the nozzle. The elephant knew how I had gone, and he also tried to get out through the nozzle. What happened then, is that his tail got caught in the nozzle, and wouldn't come out. I ran fast and, having no other escape, I climbed up a small tree, about five feet high. The elephant had meanwhile got

his tail unstuck and was soon standing underneath the tree.

Now, so far you may have understood my story, but beyond this point it is going to be a little difficult to follow. The elephant started trying to climb the tree. I was incredibly afraid. Out of terrible fear, I started to urinate. The elephant was happy and started to climb up the urine as if it were a rope. Again, out of horrible fear I got another shock, my urine stopped and the elephant fell down because his rope broke. That was a vision, but it was so real that I remember it to this very day. Even as I was relating this to you, I could actually feel myself entering the pot.

## **Visions – manifestation of samskaras**

### **Vikshepa**

Visions such as those that I have described are a result of deeply embedded samskaras. These samskaras manifest in three ways – vikshepa (distraction), vikalpa (one-pointedness), and laya (total dissolution). The first occurs when the mind is continually jumping from one point to another and is never constant. For example, when you are concentrating on the flame of a candle and a distracting thought passes through your mind, it is called vikshepa.

### **Vikalpa**

The second formation is called vikalpa. When you have established pratyahara, dissociated your mind from the senses, one-pointed awareness takes place. Then you begin to see visions. You may be concentrating on the flame of a lamp, but you begin to see the inner television! These psychic formations of the mind are called vikalpa, and they are extremely difficult to break. In dhyana yoga if a thought comes to your mind, you can definitely force it out. But when vikalpa comes, you are helpless. These are involuntary expressions of the psychic formations and you have no

control over them. Now this kind of thing happens. These experiences come up, whether induced by meditation, or by using some kind of herb or medicine. These symbolic manifestations of pranic energy in the mind are known in the yoga shastras as vikalpas. They are the greatest barriers to spiritual awareness. I can assure you it is very difficult to fix these vikalpas.

I have told you about just one of my experiences. I have had fantastic visions. During these visions I forgot all about myself, all about my mantra, and all about the symbol on which I was supposed to focus my mind. Sometimes these visions would continue for hours together. During those nine months at Gangotri, I tried my best to keep my mind fixed on my symbol, but I found that I still was drifting far away. I would often see beautiful rishis and munis with beards over the snow-capped mountains, and the Gods and Goddesses of Hindu mythology. I would never say that they were hallucinations or imagination. I consider them to be the most powerful expressions of the deeper states of my mind, because fantasy is the mind, and is dormant in every being.

Every man tries to suppress his fantasies. We have locked our brains with a big master lock to which the key is lost. We never allow these suppressed fantasies to function, because we have been taught that fantasies are bad. I say, fantasies are good. You must use them. From the beginning you must use the faculty of fantasising. Later on this will help you to overcome the vikalpas, the psychic explosions, and the psychic barriers.

## **Laya**

There is a third and powerful formation of the mind called laya which means dissolution, suspension. In laya, consciousness is completely eliminated and there is total shoonya (void). You have been concentrating on the flame of a lamp and suddenly everything is switched off, there is



no flame, there is nothing, and you are totally helpless, lost. This is a very obstinate formation.

So there are three types of samskaras – distraction, psychic visions and suspension of consciousness. How are you going to free yourself from these samskaras? Mantra is a very valuable tool for this purpose. When you are practising mantra, it is absolutely necessary to use a mala (rosary). Mantra and mala together will fix the formations of the mind. For example, while practicing ‘Om, Om, Om’ your mind suddenly drops and visions appear. The turning of the mala will interfere with the visions and revive your consciousness. This is the importance of mantra in relation to dhyana yoga and the awakening of spiritual consciousness.

### **Symbols are the inner guide**

Meditation, the inward journey I have been telling you about, carries you along many paths and through many experiences, and the journey needs a guide. The outside guide is the Guru, but who is the inner guide? If I am your Guru, I can



guide you as long as you are awake. But when the sun does not shine, when the mind, the senses and the outer consciousness are withdrawn, and the awareness of time, space and object is no more, who is going to be your guide? Who will lead you on?

The inner guide is the symbol. Every yoga aspirant, every student of meditation must have a symbol for himself, and this symbol has to be fixed. It can be anything. It can be myself, it can be yourself, it could be your heart or a

blue lotus, the cross, Christ or the Shivalingam. It could be anything, everyone must have one. Your outer Guru may be anyone, I don't care, it is all the same. But your inner Guru is the shining light of your symbol at a time when you are completely and totally dead to the outer life, when you are no more, when name and form are gone, when time and space have been transcended. At that time the light is needed. This is why sages have always emphasised the need for a symbol.

During the inward journey, there comes a moment when you are either completely lost in *shoonyata*, the void, because you have no guide light, or you emerge, come up, and follow that light. I hope this is very clear, for this is the secret. All students of meditation, who have been and who shall be treading the path, must remember that you have two possible destinies – one is the path of light, and other is the path of void.

The path of void is shoonyata, complete and total annihilation of consciousness. The path of light is where there is someone, something, some experience, maybe a person, maybe a light, maybe music. These are the two paths, you must be clear about which path you are on.

I have spoken about visions, which are the manifestations of samskaras. I have also spoken about two other things – about the mantra, and about the symbol. The whole edifice of meditation, the whole structure of dhyana yoga is built on these twin pillars of mantra and symbol, so they have to be very strong pillars.



# Importance of Guru Mantra



Up to the point of initiation, you can practice any general mantra, but once you have been initiated into a mantra, this becomes your personal mantra. The mantra can be written, the mantra can be chanted loudly, or whispered, or repeated mentally.



## Mantra diksha

When the mantra is given by a Guru, it is registered by your atman. This is called mantra diksha. It is a seed which grows as you develop your sadhana or spiritual practice. Mantra should always be received from a Guru. This is the first form of contact or initiation between the Guru and the disciple. A disciple has to have a permanent relationship with a Guru, through the mantra. Neither mantra nor Guru should be changed. Before the Guru can pass on the powers of a mantra, he must feel that the aspirant is strong enough and ready to receive it. Many Gurus can transmit certain magnetic powers to their disciples, but if the disciple is not ready it can disturb his mental and nervous balance.

Initiation is something like an electric shock entering the person's mental atmosphere. Just as a cartridge needs to be struck by the hammer of the gun in order to fire, so the mantra needs to be struck by the hammer of the Guru in order to explode the consciousness. The relationship between the Guru and disciple is based on the mantra. With the help of the mantra, the Guru is trying to fix the samskaras.

When a disciple accepts a mantra from his Guru, he is establishing a relationship with the Guru, and he is also receiving a sound of great power. A personal mantra is one of the most precious things in life. Getting a mantra from a Guru is very different from reading a mantra, knowing about the mantra, discovering a mantra, or getting all the knowledge about the mantra from a book. When a Guru says, "Om Namah Shivaya", he is sending energy. I'm sending you energy. Speech is energy. Sound is energy. It is a current, it is a wave, it is a frequency, it is a velocity. It has electrons and protons. Many things are happening when I talk to you. So, when the Guru says, "Om Namah Shivaya" in your ears, it is completely different from the knowledge which you get from the book. You know Om Namah Shivaya, you know the Gayatri mantra, the Mahamrityunjaya mantra, etc. You



know all the mantras, but I am not telling you a mantra, I'm sending energy into your brain.

So that's important. "Uskohtehein, kaanphukana" that means "to blow into the ears." Our ancient expression in India is, "yaar, kaanphuka lo!" (Blow into the ears!) And the kaan (ear) is not the right one, it is the left one. Now I remember the song of the saint, "Murlikaunbajarahe ho, gaganmandalkebeech?" Who is playing the flute in the middle of the sky? "Gagankamandal" means depth of your consciousness. "Uttar dishadhuniho?" The flute doesn't play within the depth of your consciousness, it enters through the uttar (north). The sound enters when the Guru whispers the mantra, and immediately they put a cloth on the disciple. Now, when the Guru whispers a mantra, it is called upanshu. That is how the mantra is given to the disciple. And that mantra has to be repeated. My Guru asked me to repeat five malas of "Om Namah Shivaya" on the day of diksha, before sannyasa. He said to do it in the morning the first thing after I left my bed.

After accepting the mantra, you become the disciple. When you practise that mantra you strengthen the Guru-disciple relationship and once this is established, you can

become the channel through which the Guru's thoughts are conducted. The disciple must be regular in his meditation. If there is regular contact with the Guru, you can draw upon his unconscious help and guidance. In this way maximum benefits are derived from the sadhana.

The unconscious mind of the Guru interacts with the unconscious mind of the disciple, not the conscious mind. At this level we are all interconnected and related to each other, permitting communion of thought and feeling. Because of this interrelation, the Guru knows when a disciple has become unsteady in his mind or when a calamity is going to befall him. If the Guru is truly capable, he can even alter the disciple's destiny.

The Guru is concerned with only one thing – removing the duality and distance that exists between the two minds of Guru and disciple. The disciple may have certain worldly aspects, heart, mind and intellectual power of reasoning, but the Guru is not so concerned with these. He knows that his disciple has to leave him at some stage. Therefore he must be sure that the disciple is detached from ego, and there is complete unity and oneness in their relationship.

When I took brahmacharya diksha, that is when I was admitted in the ashram, I became a disciple. My Guru gave me diksha, five malas in the morning and five malas in the evening. So, in the





morning I did it, in the night also I did it. I can tell you very frankly, I could never finish my malas. Either the mind wandered here and there, or it just went into depression. The mala fell down. It happens even today, at this age, when I don't have a mind at all. When you do the mantra of your Guru with concentration, you are not able to complete it. When your mind wanders, then the mala also goes wandering. That is where the relationship between the Guru and disciple begins and ends. Between the Guru and the disciple is the connection of the mantra. Just like between a husband and a wife, there is a connection of love. Between an indigent man and a capable man is a connection of compassion. Between a bhakta and God, is a connection of bhakti.

## **Never change your mantra**

I find that many people keep on changing their mantra, but when they come to me for yet another one, I say, "No! One mantra forever!" The mantra is not your wife whom you can divorce at any time. The mantra is a part of your consciousness, a part of your subconscious. Mantra is a part of your soul, a part of your mind, a part of your spirit. How can you renounce a mantra and accept another?

Analysing this psychologically, we will realise that one mantra, which becomes a part of consciousness, will always conflict with another mantra in deeper states of meditation. Therefore, once you have a mantra, whether it is Aum, Sham, Sri or Klim, from me, or from any other Guru, stick with it. Never try to get a better mantra. Though you might get a better husband, mantras are all the same. To be very frank, when people come to me for a mantra in the West, my first question is always, "Have you ever had a mantra before?" "Yes." "What is that?" I ask. They say Aum, Klim, etc. "Where from?" "From some other sect." I say, "Okay, your mantra is the same, but now let it be from me." I don't want to change anyone's mantra, whether it is Allah or Buddha or Jesus or Dam or Rama or Govinda or Klim or Hrim or Aim or Shreem. I think anything can lead you, provided you have faith in it. If you want to change your current mantra, you are going to change the new one also, because you have developed the habit of doing that. So stick to one mantra.

Sometimes, a person becomes attracted to a mantra other than the one he was given originally. He begins to feel that another mantra is better than the one he is using, and so he adopts a new mantra. This is a mistake, since it can create more harm than good. It can cause much confusion in the psyche. Such confusion, once created, is very difficult to correct. I know this very well from personal experience.



## Never change your Guru

Don't go on jumping from Guru to Guru. There is only one secret of success – stick to something. If you are practising my system stick to it, and if you are practising some other system stick to that. One Guru, one mantra – that is called spiritual chastity.

Remember the words 'spiritual chastity'. Don't go on with your old habits of flirting, or at least don't project them into your spiritual life. In material life you may go from this husband to that husband, from this wife to that wife,

from this job to that job, from this flat to that flat, from this country to another, and it may all work out alright. But in spiritual life only one thing will work – one-pointed chastity of spiritual purpose.

If you have faith, you have hope, and if you can strengthen your faith you can do great things in life. The purpose of all the different rituals we have in life is to strengthen, revive and resurrect the faith. When you lose faith you lose hope, then everything in life is lost. Those people who have broken hearts, they have lost the vision of faith. When you practise mantra, you are strengthening your faith. But to keep your faith strong all the time, you must remain intimately connected with your Guru. If you begin to doubt him and if your mind is filled with negativity towards him, you are assassinating your faith.



Once you have a mantra which has been charged by a Guru, it will immediately start to change the course of your life if you accept it with your heart and mind and utilise it daily. Each time you sit for practice, remember your Guru, and at the end of the practice remember him again. Keep your eyes closed throughout the practice and relax your body and mind. Forget your name, forget your home and forget your environment. Just repeat your mantra, immerse yourself in it and become the mantra itself.





# Types of Mantra



## **Bija mantras**

There are many, many different types of mantras. The most important of these are the bija mantras or seed mantras. When the yogis reached very high levels of consciousness, when they transcended the physical consciousness, the astral being, and when they broke through the barriers of the unconscious, then these bija mantras were revealed to them.

The bija (seed) mantras are very powerful sounds which have significant and instantaneous effects. These mantras

consist of a single syllable sound. There are millions of bija mantras, but we only know a few of them, for example Aim, Hrim, Klim, Shreem, etc.

Each bija mantra has its own element and each element is associated with a chakra or center in the body. Om belongs to ether, the most subtle element. The seat of ether is ajna chakra. Therefore, Om is the mantra of ajna and is considered to be the father, the most powerful of all bija mantras. Those who are serious seekers of the absolute reality use the mantra Om. Each chakra has an associated bija mantra. The bija mantra Lam belongs to the earth element, the seat of mooladhara chakra. Vam belongs to the water element, swadhisthana chakra. Ram belongs to the fire element, manipura chakra. Yam belongs to the air element, anahata chakra. Ham belongs to the ether element, vishuddhi chakra.

Bija mantras are extremely potent. Those aspirants who have not fixed their samskaras should not practice a bija mantra, they should practise something else. When you use a bija mantra, the awakening of prana is uncontrollable. That is why so many people have experiences within the second day of practicing a bija mantra.

## **AUM**

According to the Vedas, AUM is considered to be the creative force of the universal mind. The concept of universal mind is very difficult for us to comprehend. In the scriptures it is called hiranyagarbha which is compared with an egg. In the center of this egg is the point from which sound emanates. Nada literally means sound, but here it refers to the ultimate point of resonance. This point is a transcendental point where the sound AUM is in unmanifested form. There is no vibration, no rhythm, no wave, and everything seems to be completely silent and in potential form. It can be imagined as total inactivity.

At opposite poles of this universal egg are the forces known as time and space. Space is the positive energy force and time is the negative energy force. When you produce the mantra AUM with your mouth, or recite it in the realm of your mind, these two psychic forces attain a state of polarity and try to project themselves towards the central nucleus. When union occurs, there is an explosion of force, which results in the whole universal creation. Therefore, the mantra AUM represents the creative force, the center in which time and space unite, and where infinity is split into a multitude of infinities.

According to the science of mantra there are four kinds of sound waves – standing waves, reverberant waves, oscillating waves, and transcendental waves. The mantra AUM produces all of these waves. AUM is a combination of three sounds 'A', 'U' and 'M'. 'A' creates the standing wave, 'U' the reverberant wave, and 'M' the oscillating wave. The fourth wave, being transcendental and beyond the sense

of hearing or speech, is created by meditating on AUM at the heart center.

The first three sound waves belong to the three dimensions of human consciousness and are interconnected. 'A' represents the waking or sense consciousness, 'U' the dream or subconsciousness, and 'M' deep sleep or unconsciousness. The fourth wave represents the unlimited dimension of consciousness which is beyond the mind and the





senses. Therefore, we can say that AUM has four bases, the sensual world, the mental world, the terrestrial world, and the ultimate state. AUM is the most powerful, the most benign of all the mantras.

You must practice the mantra AUM in four stages. First, aloud, either as Ommmmmm or Oooooomm, allowing the sound to be registered by the brain, which in turn alters its waves so that peace of mind and pratyahara (withdrawal) occur spontaneously. After a few months, it should be chanted in a whisper, then mentally, and finally in conjunction with the breath. Pratyahara becomes successful if mantra is taken as the basis of sadhana or spiritual practice.

When the sound AUM is produced by us, it resounds through our physical, astral and spiritual existence. It not only influences the alpha patterns in the brain, it also purifies all the nadis, the channels through which energy flows. It influences the microcosmic structure of the body, and charges the atmosphere around us. We are in an age where we have much scientific evidence for this.

Concentrate on AUM, convert your consciousness into AUM and then transmit the vibration and currents of AUM. Your son, wife or husband in the next room will receive these vibrations if they are ready for it. The power of mantra is greater than the power of a nuclear weapon. There is no comparison, because mantra power is a constructive power and by practicing mantra we awaken unseen forces within us. These forces are infinite.

## **Effects of Om Chanting**

### **Conflict resolution**

Although the use of pranayama and asanas has become well known in all spheres of life, people don't understand how the chanting of 'Om' can influence their business relationships. I quote the example of a well-known company in Germany. Whenever their board of directors gathered for their meetings, there were always major disagreements, conflicts and problems, ultimately ending in bitter relationships and lack of cooperation. To solve this problem, they introduced certain practices of yoga into their program. Before the meeting began they extinguished their cigarettes and closed their eyes for five to ten minutes. First they chanted 'Om' several times together with long 'O' and short 'M', then they concentrated for another three to five minutes on the natural breath which flows continuously, singing the mantra 'Soham'. After finishing this practice they began their business discussions. They found that this short and simple practice of yoga helped them not only in maintaining harmony and vitality in the meeting, but also in tackling crucial business problems in a very efficient way.

### **Dynamic tranquility**

'Om' is a powerful tonic for tuning the whole mind. In the Medical University of Barcelona, doctors have conducted



research into the effects of Om chanting on the brain. Men and women of all ages, executives, students, housewives etc. chanted Om in a variety of ways. Short 'O' long 'M', long 'O' short 'M', equal 'O' equal 'M'. A very sophisticated polygraph machine that measured ECG, EEG, and GSR recorded the results, simultaneously registering hundreds of impulses taking place in the body. It also recorded alpha, beta, theta and delta waves.

Apart from changes recorded in different parts of the body, the most outstanding result was that the brain waves alternated between alpha and theta. When 'O' was being pronounced alpha frequency was registered, and theta frequency registered when 'M' was chanted. A state of alpha intensity corresponds to a deep state of relaxation, and theta intensity represents a state of creativity and inspiration which is associated with states of meditation. Now the effect of these alternating waves in the brain is a state of dynamic tranquility. On the other hand, the state of relaxation normally experienced by an executive during a busy working day is one of passive tranquility, when the mind feels lethargic and regresses into a state of *tamas*.





## Moving towards transcendence

When the mantra Om is written, it consists of four curves, over which there is a crescent moon with a bindu or point. Bindu is the center, or focal point of Om. Each curve represents infinity in its different aspects of time, space, object and transcendence. Therefore, Om has within itself the force known as prakriti or nature, as well as the spiritual force.

The yogis meditate on this symbol of Om in order to develop the spiritual and mental force

within them. There are two manifestations of this energy, one is fulfillment which belongs to the material plane, the other is transcendence belonging to the spiritual plane. Om is a very powerful mantra for the purpose of transcendence.

In India, the path of sannyasa is traditionally associated with the cosmic mantra Om. The main sadhana (spiritual practice) of many sannyasins is continuous remembrance of Om. The Narada Parivrajaka Upanishad says, "Apart from Om no scriptures and religions need to be studied." The importance of Om in a sannyasin's life is reiterated in a large number of other scriptures, including the Mandukya Upanishad.

The Mahanarayana Upanishad says, "The sannyasin should concentrate all his thoughts on Om. This syllable is the essence



of the Upanishads and its secrets are carefully guarded from those who are considered unfit by the devas (astral beings). He who continually reflects on the meaning of Om after taking initiation into sannyasa will attain the Supreme. This comes through knowledge of the secrets of Om."

## Gayatri



The mantra Om was amplified in order to form Gayatri. The twenty-four syllables which make up the Gayatri mantra are,

*Om bhurbhuvah svah  
Tatsaviturvarenyam  
Bhargo devasya dhimahi  
Dhiyo yo nah prachodayaat*

The Vedas, the oldest books known to man, emanated from the twenty-four syllables of Gayatri. The Gayatri mantra is the symbol of spiritual consciousness in man. This consciousness has three stages – the time when it dawns, when it is fully fledged, and when it enters eternal space. To start with, consciousness is in total darkness, as though it were the dark hour of midnight. The sun rising at daybreak symbolises spiritual life, and the sun setting in the evening symbolises consciousness. When there is no sun, no light,

this is the dark night of the soul according to the Bible, or Shivaratri, the dark night of Shiva, to Hindus. Out of that dark night comes the dawn of day, and inner vision, inner perception or awareness begins to take place. This is the concept of Gayatri.

Gayatri is best practised at sunrise, though it can also be chanted at noon and at dusk. You can practise it together with nadi shodhana pranayama, or alternate nostril breathing. Being a Vedic mantra, it has to be enunciated properly.

According to the Hindu system, those who are pure vegetarian should practice Gayatri on a tulsi mala, and those who are non-vegetarians should practice on a rudraksha mala. For the practice of Gayatri, there are no restrictions concerning diet, drinking or marital status. The only restriction is that you must receive the mantra from a Guru.



The practice of Gayatri is the roadway to spiritual evolution. Those who suffer from mental dullness and want to brighten their intellect should practice Gayatri japa. At first this japa was said to be for Brahmans only, ladies could not recite it, but now it is accepted as a suitable mantra for all.

There are many Gayatris, such as Brahma Gayatri, Surya Gayatri, Rudra Gayatri and Vishnu Gayatri. Gods are invoked through these mantras. They are objective experiences, not subjective experiences.

## **Om and Gayatri**

Gayatri mantra has a powerful and simultaneous effect on the body, mind, senses and spiritual life. Whenever you practise Gayatri mantra, you should concentrate on the form of Om. Gayatri and Om are equally powerful, but the action of Gayatri is not as speedy as the action of Om. Om is considered right only for a few, not for everybody. But Gayatri is meant for the general masses because its purpose is to create a process of expression, to illumine the different states of human consciousness.

Hindus teach this mantra to their children at the age of 7, 8 or 9 years, before that they are not allowed to practise it. When they have fulfilled all the obligations and desires of life, they can begin to practice Om. The mantra Om is for yogis, because it is the shortcut for the fulfillment of spiritual transcendence.

## **Other mantras**

There are special mantras which can be used for specific purposes such as influencing your destiny, or to overcome a specific problem. These mantras are discontinued as soon as they have fulfilled their purpose.

A very powerful mantra is the 32 names of Durga. It has cured and solved many difficult problems which have perplexed me. It is never done verbally, mentally or in whispers. You have to chant it loudly and pronounce each name clearly.

Devi Atharva Shirsham is the only japa to be written and not repeated. However, it is written only when there is the particular planetary conjunction of Satavisha Nakshatra, Bhauma Vara and Amavasya, which comes once in several years. As long as the conjunction exists, you must do the japa in writing, and it is very beneficial.

The Mahamrityunjaya mantra is a very powerful mantra. It offers protection from disease or accidents. This is also known as the moksha mantra.

Shiva is said to have disseminated the Ramataraka mantra – Sri Rama Jaya Rama. It was the mantra of Samarth Guru Ramdas. This japa can restore peace in a troubled home.

The Katyayani mantra is given to girls who are finding it difficult to get married. This mantra brings about mental changes in the girl, the results are positive.

When a person suffers from many ailments, his entire energy is wasted in brooding over these things. I ask such people to do Durga Path, Gayatri mantra, Mahamrityunjaya mantra, Rama naam mantra and recitation of the Bhagavad Gita. You may argue that you believe in one God and not in many Gods, but is your faith strong? Will it give relief from the tensions of life? I am not advocating faith, I am advocating that which is best for you.

When college students come to me and complain of certain diseases, I ask them to read the Hanuman Chalisa. The results are very positive. After reading it, a change comes about in their body and mind.

Many people complain of quarrels in the home, the husband or the wife does not listen, the in-laws cause trouble. Those people who fear that they have many enemies, should do the Devi Kavacham Path. This japa brings about a subjective change in the practitioner. Whether the practitioner is freed from the idea that he has enemies, or whether the mental vibrations change the idea of the other party, I do not know. But I am very clear about this. Loving and peaceful thoughts travel, and evil thoughts also travel. If you think ill of a person for fifteen days, he will become suspicious of you. If you think well of a person, he will develop trust in you. Therefore, through mantra japa, your bhavanas or feelings travel. It works.

In different parts of India people have perfected different classes of mantra. In Tantra there are many traditions – vedachara, vamaachara, kaulachara. However, the mantras have to be applied strictly in accordance with the tradition and the system. For instance, if you follow vedachara, then you cannot learn or be taught the Abhichara tantras. They will



be handed down to you only if you belong to the kaulachara tradition. A different class of mantra which is Abhichara mantras are not written down but handed down from Guru to chela (disciple). Mithila in Northern Bihar was, and still is, famous for Abhichara mantras. They are used to cause disease or kill someone.

The Abhichara mantra was directed at Adi Shankaracharya by a great tantric of Mithila. In order to avert the effect of this, Adi Shankara had to propitiate Devi. The mantras composed by him are known today as 'Ananda Lahari' beginning with the mantra:

*Shivah shaktya yukto yadi bhavati shaktah prabhavitum  
Na chedevam devo na khalu kushalah spanditumapi*

By chanting this mantra, Adi Shankaracharya was able to avert the Abhichara which was aimed to kill him.

A few more powerful systems are also known to us like Bagala Mukti, Tara Yantra, Sri Yantra, but these mantras are benign in nature. With them you can only create positive effects, not malefic effects.



There is also another class of mantra through which a thought, a message can be transmitted to another person living anywhere, or through which one is able to read another's thoughts. Then there are minor mantras for curing scorpion bites, snakebites, jaundice, etc. They are known to people even to this day.

### **Mantras in Kali Yuga**

It is true that through mantra one can do many great things. However we need to be careful, because as time has gone by, man has changed his nature. He has become very selfish. He has become very emotional and sentimental. He is prepared to kill and destroy anyone for a bit of property, or because of some jealousy! If these mantras were revealed to him now in this Kali Yuga, you can just imagine the state of affairs there would be. So the wise men have withdrawn these mantras from the public. Only a few are now revealed, for example, the bhakti mantras which help you to transform your nature. Then there are those that help overcome some sort of difficulties in life, worries, anxieties, passions, etc. These are mantras like 'Om Namah Shivaya', 'Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya', etc.

Although some people are still in possession of what we call the 'malefic' mantras, when they use them for a selfish purpose they rebound on them.

## **Tantric mantras**

Tantric mantras are carriers of pranic energy which must be used according to the rules for specific purposes. Many mantras are given in the tantra shastras, but it is necessary to study them very carefully in order to use them properly. Tantric mantras are those which influence the deeper nature of the universe. They are also intended to fulfill certain desires of man. Tantric mantras are very powerful and can unleash enormous energy.

## **Misconceptions about mantras**

Some people say that they worship the sun and recite Gayatri mantra, therefore they will not recite the Vishnu mantra. This is not faith but intellectual confusion. If you worship many Gods and recite many mantras, you are helping your inner personality which is full of conflicts. It is better if you engage your mind in a variety of mantra recitations to keep it occupied.

## **Mantra and yantra for children**

The first thing you should teach your children is “Hari Om Tat Sat”. Hari is the all-pervading, immanent reality. The supreme reality is not only transcendent, it is immanent as well. It is not only here, it is everywhere. So Hari represents immanent reality that is everywhere. Om represents the transcendental reality that is beyond attributes, beyond gunas, beyond name and form, beyond maya. Tat is ‘that’. Sat is ‘real’. That is real and this existence is real. We have to see the reality on both planes, the immanent as well as the transcendent. Therefore, I always say “Hari Om Tat Sat.” When your children open their mouths, let them say, “Hari Om”. When you bear them, always give them good samskaras, good karma, “Hari Om”. If you have missed the great opportunities of spontaneous spiritual revelations,



why should your children also miss out? You have been making great efforts to spiritualise yourselves because your parents failed to do so. Why should you fail your children? They should grow up in such an atmosphere that spiritual awareness is a spontaneous event in their lives. This is how a new psychic race will be born. All of you should be the harbingers of that psychic race.

Relaxing the brain through mantra is one of the methods of increasing perception, but yantra is a more direct method because it is not a process of relaxation like mantra is. It is a process of awakening. Some systems use music to help children relax. This is not bad, but it creates a certain amount of inactivity. Most music makes the mind inactive, although some types of music make it expressive, and other types are very awakening for children.

Visualisation of yantra is, however, a totally dynamic, activating method. When you practise awareness of the yantra, your mind is continually generating higher wave patterns, it never regresses. Concentration on a particular yantra stimulates a similar archetype in the brain, which creates an awakening at a higher level.



# MANTRA PRACTICE



# Mantra Japa



## **Key guidelines for the practice of mantra japa**

### **Gradually reduce the frequency of the brain waves**

In the practice of mantra, first of all you have to decrease the frequency of the mind waves, which are responsible for the brain waves. In order to decrease the frequency of the mind waves, you have to withdraw the senses. When the brain is isolated and the senses cannot feed it with the necessary sensorial impulses, then the frequencies decrease.

Now decreasing the frequencies of the mind is a process which should not be done suddenly. It should be done gradually, because when the mind undergoes a change of frequency many corresponding changes take place in the body. There is a change in the body temperature, in the oxygen consumption, in the galvanic skin resistance, in the quality and quantity of hydrochloric acid and enzyme secretions. Therefore, in order to give the body time to adapt, the process of decreasing the frequencies of the mind must be gradual.

If, for example, your mantra is 'Om Namah Shivaya' you should practise it at a particular rhythm. You can focus your awareness at the eyebrow center or at the heart, and then you must fix the speed. Now this speed of repeating the mantra should remain the same throughout at each practice. But you can reduce the speed over time. For example, at the first stage you can chant, 'O-m Namah Shivaya'. And the second stage, after one month, chant 'O-m Na-ma-ha Sh-iv-a-ya' (slower). Maybe, after one year, or one and a half years, you can say 'Ommm-Naaa-maaa-haaa-Shh-ivaa-ayaa' (very slowly).

### **Bring your awareness to the nosetip**

First of all bring your awareness to the nosetip. This is very important for two reasons. The first reason is that when the eyeballs move, the rhythms of the brain are affected, consciousness is not steady. Therefore, the eyes have to be absolutely steady, and awareness has to be fixed at one spot. That is point one. Secondly, the nose is directly connected with the perineum, which is the seat of the most important center in the body - mooladhara chakra. When you concentrate on the nosetip, impulses keep moving from the nosetip right down to the perineum.

### **Breath awareness**

After you have been concentrating on the nosetip, become aware of the breath, the natural breath which moves at

the speed of about fifteen rounds per minute. The breath has to be felt at the nosetip, flowing through both the nasal orifices. Then synchronise your mantra with the natural flow of the breath, either one mantra with inspiration and one with exhalation, or more than one mantra with inspiration and exhalation. The number of mantras per breath depends both upon the length of your mantra, and on your comfort level.

### **The flow of breath**

When you practice japa, your breath must always be flowing from the left nostril. If the breath is flowing through both nostrils, that is alright, but the right alone should not be flowing. If the breath is not flowing through the left nostril, then there is a simple method of changing the flow from the right to the left. In ancient times they used a special kind of staff or armrest. It was made of wood and was placed under the right armpit. A slight pressure was applied under the armpit. After a short period of time, the air stops flowing through the right nostril and starts to flow through the left nostril. This is a traditional method of swara yoga. There is a simpler method. Place your left hand into the center of the right armpit and apply some light pressure. You will soon find that the breath will start to flow through the left nostril.





Remember to check the air flow in your nostrils before starting the practice of japa. If the flow is wrong, that is, through the right nostril, then use the above technique to bring about change.

### **Practise regularly**

Mantra is so powerful that it can change your destiny, economic situation, physical structure, etc. If you want the mantra to change the whole structure of your life, you must practice it regularly, every morning and

evening. Practice for ten minutes early in the morning before everyone gets up, and again at night just before you go to bed.

### **Pronounce mantra correctly**

The purpose of a mantra is to make an impression on the psychic superstructure of the mind. To get the right effect, the pronunciation should be perfect. The correct articulation will create the exact sound vibrations in the unconscious mind. Incorrect pronunciation could possibly do harm if continued for a long period, but more likely will bring about no effect at all. Likewise, you should not change the pitch or intonation of the mantra without good reason.

Bhaktas (devotees), however, are lucky – they do not need this correct pronunciation of the mantra. All they have to do is constantly remember the name of their chosen deity, repeating it mentally or otherwise. Their bhava (strong feeling of love) alone will take them to their goal. For them, there is no need for correct pronunciation, a mala or anything else.



Devotion is enough. But for those not inclined towards bhakti yoga, pronunciation of their mantra is very important.

I have found that anyone who listens with awareness can produce the correct sound of the mantra. At first you may not be able to repeat the correct sound aloud, but you can perceive it. After hearing a melody several times, you can recreate it in your mind, even though you may not be able to sing it. In the same way, if you listen to the pronunciation of the mantra, even if you do not repeat it aloud, you will conceive the correct sound in your mind, and this is enough.

### **Mantra can be practiced in four different ways**

There are four ways in which mantra can be practised,

- (i) baikhari – aloud, with the mouth
- (ii) upanshu – whispering, with movement of the lips
- (iii) manasik – silently in the mind, with no movement of the lips or tongue, no stir in the throat
- (iv) ajapa japa – spontaneously with the breath.

When sound is produced in these four different forms, it produces different types of waves. When you chant Om aloud or in a whisper, it creates a standing wave. When you repeat it silently in the mind, it produces a resonant wave. Spontaneous mantra synchronised with the breath creates a continuous, rhythmic wave which has a long range of vibration. When you chant the mantra with your mouth or lips, it has a short range of vibration, a very quick rest period.

### **Follow a prescribed sequence of mantra chanting**

For the best results, mantra should be practised in the following sequence – first chant aloud, producing the sound with your mouth. After a few months, just whisper it on the lips, without producing any vibration. Then later, after a year or so, fix a point at the eyebrow center, nosetip, or in the

heart, and repeat your mantra silently there, synchronising it with the pulse beat. Finally, practise spontaneous awareness of the mantra with the rhythm of the breath. This is the most important form. If the mantra is to penetrate the inner consciousness, to reach the point where thoughts originate, where consciousness emanates and evolution begins, then this last form of spontaneous mantra awareness, ajapa japa, must be practised. This doesn't mean to say that you should not chant aloud, but this is the lower form. Feeling the mantra spontaneously is the higher form.

### **Mantra has to be repeated**

The mantra has to be repeated thousands of times. Gradually, as your mind becomes quieter and quieter, the vibrations grow more powerful. The mantra then goes deeper into the consciousness, pierces through the conscious mind and the subconscious mind and penetrates the unconscious mind. Once the mantra enters the unconscious mind, it destroys all samskaras and mental formations. Therefore, the mantra must be repeated regularly with the mala. If your mantra is Om, practise five malas every day. If you don't have time in the morning, do it at night. Regardless of what sort of life you lead, practise first and then sleep.

The mantra is a purifying force. Nothing in the world can pollute the mantra, nothing can make it impure. Mantra can purify all corruption. Om is the most powerful, the most benign of all the mantras.

### **Mantra anusthana**

Anusthana is a traditional practice in which a particular mantra is chanted for a prescribed number of times. A sankalpa or vow has to be made to complete them over a given time period. There are many kinds of anusthana but the two most important are sadharana anusthana and



purashcharana anusthana. Sadharana anusthana is done on all nine days of Navaratri. During this time, simple, bland food is taken and no work is done. Purascharana is a long anusthana in which the mantra is repeated as many hundreds of thousands of times as the number of matras or letters it contains. For example, if the mantra is Om Namah Shivaya, it must be repeated 500,000 times – this means 5000 malas. This can be completed in a short period of time or over a long period at your convenience. If you do not want to undertake the full number, then you can do only half or one quarter. Anusthana is typically initiated on an auspicious day, for example, the day of an eclipse.

### **Practise mantra whenever you are idle**

Practise the mantra whenever you are idle, during the day or at night, whether you are thinking sensible things or useless things. If you keep your mind occupied with the mantra

whenever it is free, you will soon find that the mind no longer wanders like a vagabond. The mind now has a base, a point to which it can return. Through this simple practice one can bring about a great transformation in the mental state. Mantra is a very powerful tool for handling all the manifestations of the mind.

Throughout your life you have been thinking almost incessantly, and if you examine your thoughts, you will find that 99% of them are unnecessary. Just imagine how much mental energy is wasted on all those useless thought processes. If you had a base on which to center your mind you would have strong willpower, a one-pointed mind and a lot of vitality.

### **Other rules for practise**

- A mantra is absolutely personal and should not be revealed to anyone.
- Mantra can be repeated at any time and in any place, although it is best to practise at a regular time each day, either early in the morning after asanas and pranayama, or before sleep at night.
- Mantra can be practised with or without a mala and in any posture, but when you are practising in the morning or before sleep, it is best if you practise with a mala and in a meditative posture with eyes closed.
- Clothing should be loose and comfortable. Many people experience greater steadiness and tranquility if they place a geru dhoti over their head and shoulders during their mantra practice.
- Do not try to concentrate while practicing mantra, otherwise you will create tension.
- Repeat the mantra quickly if the mind is disturbed and slowly if the mind is more relaxed. If you are sleepy, repeat the mantra verbally.

- The mala which is used for mantra sadhana should never be worn around the neck or lent to other people. When it is not being used it should be kept in a small bag of its own.
- The mala given to the disciple by the Guru at the time of initiation should be used in preference to all other malas and must always be kept with reverence.

### **Common errors in japa**

I have discussed the right way to do mantra japa. However, there are some common errors made by spiritual aspirants. These errors, in time, can have adverse effects on the psyche.



- Firstly, the practice of japa should be done when alone. If, however, five or ten serious people wish to practise as a group, then that is different and acceptable. Otherwise you should practise alone. There is a spiritual law that if yogic practices are done in front of others, perhaps for show, then they will lose their effect. This law applies to japa.
- Secondly, don't try to explain your experience to other people who are against yogic practices, they are not ready to listen and will not understand. Instead they will probably laugh at you and deplete your precious spiritual inspiration and impetus. Practise alone.
- The third most common error is to practise too much. Some people are over-enthusiastic for self-realisation and they



practise for hours and hours every day. This can easily lead to what is called, in the language of psychology, extreme introversion and perhaps even a catatonic state. You should not overdo japa. You know very well that any medicine which is powerful should not be taken above the prescribed dose. In the same way you should not take too much 'medicine' in the form of japa.

At the time of mantra diksha (initiation into the use of a mantra) the Guru will usually prescribe the maximum limit of daily practice. During my initiation from my Guru, I was told to do five rounds of the mala when I went to bed at night, five malas after waking up in the morning, five malas after lunch and five malas after dinner in the evening. I knew that five malas would take about twelve minutes and I wondered why Swamiji had prescribed so little practice for me. I thought that I should do about three hours of japa every day. The one thing that he emphasised was that I should not miss my practice for even one day. So I used to do my twelve minute

japa practice four times per day. The forty-eight minutes trained my psyche to such a degree that even now I can tell the exact time of the day by the spontaneous need to do the japa practice. This is called disciplining the psyche. Some people say that it is not the quantity, not even the quality, but regularity that is most important in japa yoga. Please remember this point carefully.

### **Guided mantra meditation**

Please be seated in a comfortable cross legged pose. Close your eyes and chant Om with me three times.

Now focus your attention on the tip of your nose. When you try to look at the nosetip with your eyes closed, this is known as nosetip gazing. By fixing the mind on the nosetip you are also steadying the eyes, and when the eyeballs are still, concentration and meditation can occur more easily.

It does not matter if your mind wanders from its concentration point every now and then, but the eyes should remain steady. When your mind and your eyes are fixed on the nosetip, you don't have to make strenuous efforts to concentrate. Just bring your awareness to the nosetip from time to time. Maintaining awareness of the nosetip, follow the natural movement of the breath.

Witness each inhalation and exhalation.

Without moving your awareness from the breath or the nosetip, listen carefully to the instructions.

The natural breath is usually even, but sometimes it becomes deeper, shorter or longer. It does not matter, the important thing is to maintain awareness of the nosetip and the breath at the same time.

Breathing generally continues involuntarily, but at times you have to voluntarily breathe in and out. If the breath becomes shorter or longer it does not matter. Don't try to control the breath, merely witness it.



In synchronisation with the breath, begin to mentally repeat your personal mantra, or if you do not have one, repeat the mantra So-ham. As you inhale use So, as you exhale use Ham.

You have to maintain simultaneous awareness of the nosetip, the breath and the mantra. Nosetip gazing helps to stabilise eye movement, and breath awareness makes the mind open and free, so that the mantra penetrates the deeper layers of your consciousness.

Continue mantra repetition with the breath for 10 to 15 minutes.

The breath will become finer and finer, at times it will be deeper and at other times it will be shorter. If you are able to maintain constant awareness of the breath, it will become deeper, but if you lose contact with the breath, due to the fluctuations of the mind, then the breath will become shorter.

The nosetip is a very important center. If you are able to keep your mind fixed on the nosetip, and at the same time follow the breath, you can influence mooladhara chakra.

If you feel tension when you concentrate on the nosetip, it means you are making too much effort and are not sufficiently relaxed.

Nosetip gazing, breath awareness and mantra repetition should be practiced simultaneously. Threefold perception at one instance, this is one way of practising mantra meditation.

Now, for a few moments only, relax your mind – not the body, only the mind.

No nosetip awareness, no breath awareness, and no mantra awareness. Relax the mind completely. Let it go where it chooses, let it think what it wants.

This relaxation of the mind is important if you practise your mantra for a long time. But if you are only practising your mantra meditation for 10 minutes, then it is not necessary.

If you can pause for a minute or two at the end of each 15 minutes of practice, or for 5 minutes at the end, it will be very good.

The nose is shaped like a triangle, you can imagine it. When you concentrate on the nosetip you are fixing your mind on the lower middle point of the base of the triangle.

The right side and the left side are the channels where you feel the inspiration and the exhalation. Again, for just a few minutes, witness the breath. Focus your attention on the nosetip and the ingoing and outgoing breath.

Keep going and centrally establish the nosetip as a point. When you are aware of the breath in the proximity of the nosetip, you get a better idea of the breath and also of the nosetip.

Begin to repeat the mantra in synchronisation with the breath, So with inhalation, Ham with exhalation. Nosetip awareness, breath awareness and repetition of the mantra.

Now chant Om with me three times. Hari Om Tat Sat. You may open your eyes.



# Allow the Mind to Flow



## **Do not try to control the mind**

Tranquility is not necessary when you practice mantra, nor is it the aim. Tranquility is an ideal. Man has to learn to live with reality. Nature is living with stress. The universe is living with stress. Learn to live with stress. That is the ultimate aim. Stress is struggle, struggle is life, and life is progress. Forget about control.

The science of mantra is not a branch of hatha yoga, it is a part of Tantra. In Tantra it is said that mantras can influence

the totality of human consciousness and destiny. The mantra you practise creates a lot of force within your inner self. Although you can concentrate with the help of a mantra, mantra is not a tool of concentration. The purpose of mantra is to permeate your whole body, mind, and spirit with resonant vibrations. Therefore, when you are practising mantra, even if your mind is not concentrated, but is jumping from thought to thought, you are still getting the full benefits of the practice. If you want to think of a man



or a girl, go on. If you want to think about how to earn money, millions, billions, trillions, do it! If you want to become the prime minister of Australia or the secretary of the United Nations, if you want to destroy Russia or America, if you want to make the whole world Protestant or Catholic, or if you want to break into houses or banks and take all the money, go ahead and think about it.

Once I told my Guru that the mantra he had given me was of no use because when I practised it, my mind would jump about like a monkey. What is the value of repeating a mantra if it doesn't concentrate the mind?

He gave me some very practical advice, "You do so many things in life which apparently have no value. So why don't you continue with the mantra for an extra five minutes." I repeated my mantra, as he ordered, for years together with



absolute regularity. Even though I had no faith in it, the mantra had very deep and powerful effects on the whole structure of my consciousness. I practise it even today.

Therefore, I cannot agree with those people who say, "Close your eyes, control your mind and practice mantra. You will come to the light." I have practised not for one or two years, but for a whole lifetime, and I know this is not the way.

### **The mind is invincible**

You talk about controlling the mind, but what are you talking about? You can definitely streamline and channel your emotions, the pattern of your thinking and the structure of your ambition, the social mind. But the real mind is invincible and is completely indomitable. Therefore, you must realise that in order to understand and control the thought process you have to go into the deeper spheres of your mind. That is the science of mantra. The sounds which you receive and the sounds you make, create resonant waves both in the depths and at the surface of the mind. These sound waves have various forms known as mandalas which go deep and hit the depths of the mind.

### **The mental process is involuntary**

The mental process is involuntary, and you cannot terminate it at any point of your choice. You might think that you have

created a vacuum in your mind – shoonya, void, a thought-free mental area. But that's all delusion, man can never be free from the thought process. You not only think on the conscious plane, you think even though you are unconscious. When you are extrovert and preoccupied, an unseen, eternal, unbroken and protracted process of thought movement continues behind the mental curtain. You don't see anything, but there is constant movement.

### **Do not suppress thoughts**

What happens when you practise mantra? More and more thoughts express themselves. The mind becomes wild. As long as you are occupied, you are quiet, your mind is peaceful. But when you begin to concentrate on the mantra, everything comes to the surface from the hidden depths. Does this mean that you are not progressing? Is it a negative symptom? No! During the period when you practice mantra, the wilder the mind becomes, the better it is for you. You do not require clarity, tranquility or passivity of mind. The most important thing is to come face to face with the mind.

You should never try to reject a thought process. Every thought that is suppressed comes back again even stronger, especially if it is most horrible, obscene and sinful. Every thought is power, every thought is like a bomb. The more you suppress it, the more it comes out. And the later it comes out, the more terrible it is.

You may be able to disassociate the mind from the sensory channels so that the senses cannot supply stimuli, but what about the inherent nature of the mind? Mind is a bundle of samskaras, impressions. There are thousands of memories, of experiences. How are you going to deal with this multifarious nature of the mind? If you try to perform mental genocide, you will have to pay horribly. How many impressions in the mind are you going to suppress? You will just create internal conflict, which could ultimately make you schizophrenic.

You must allow the mind to think without opposing, abusing, or hating it. If there are any evil thoughts in the mind, learn to accept them, do not suppress them. Whatever thoughts arise, learn to face them with full awareness. They are your inheritance from childhood, from your parents, and from society. They are your personality, your structure. They are 'you', and you must not try to kill yourself.

### **Don't fight with yourself**

Sit for one hour, try for two hours, and try to extend the time so that eventually you can sit for three hours. Sit down properly – Om Namah Shivaya...Om Namah Shivaya...Om Namah Shivaya...You begin to think about your job...Om Namah Shivaya...Oh my mind is so restless, I'd better do some pranayama...No, I am too tired...

Okay. You see, this is what you have been doing all the while, wrestling with yourself, with your mind. Who is controlling whom? You are fighting with yourself. The right hand is pulling the left hand, the left hand is pulling the right. The entire atmosphere of antagonism is self-created. You are creating a split in your own mind. One part of the mind is fighting with another part of the mind. One tendency of the mind is fighting with another tendency of the same mind.

Therefore, when you practise mantra, please don't quarrel with yourself. If your mind is running into fantasies, let it go. You expect the mind to be calm like a moonlit night, free from clouds and thunder. That's not possible. When you practise your mantra, please remember that you are not practising it to stop this eternal process, to crush the basis of your faculties, your knowledge, and your enlightenment. To crush the mind is to kill life. To suppress an emotion is to destroy the very base of your ambition and desire. Man cannot be anything unless he has the whole mind to work from. The greatest discoveries in history, the greatest victories, the greatest



paintings, compositions, and realisations, they are all products of the mind.

The mind is constantly resonating, vibrating with all kinds of impressions, even now, but you don't see it, you don't know it, because your senses are engaged. As soon as you isolate your mind, you can see the whole beautiful game it constantly plays. The more you evolve in spiritual life, the more you become aware of the homogeneity of the mind. So therefore, in Tantra, do not aim at killing any of the expressions of the mind. Mind is not your problem at all – you are



the mind's problem, always wanting more experiences. So whenever you practice mantra, yantra or kriya yoga, please remember that you are not going to fight with the mind.

### **Encourage the mind to explore**

When you practice mantra, the deeper you go, the greater areas of the mind you explore. You will not only see the passions, ambitions, dreams, and compassions, you will see horrible fears, thoughts which you could never think on the mental, psychic or para-psychological planes. That's natural and, if it doesn't happen, you can be sure that you have a mental block somewhere, and you must cure it. I repeat, a mental blockage has built up, and you must find it, and get rid of it.



As you practise your sadhana, you must not interfere at all with the mind and the experiences that come to you. You have to explode the karmas, the impurities must come out so that you can be free of them. The dormant and suppressed emotions and desires, the karmas and inhibitions buried deep in your subconscious mind, which you are escaping, running away and hiding from during the daytime, must come out at the point of concentration, at the point of repetition of the mantra.

People come to me every day saying, 'Swamiji, my mind is very restless and I am not able to concentrate. Kindly give me a mantra.' I have to tell them, 'This is not possible. I don't teach mantra for this purpose. But if you want your unconscious to be exploded, if you want the great treasure to reveal itself, then, I can give you a mantra.'

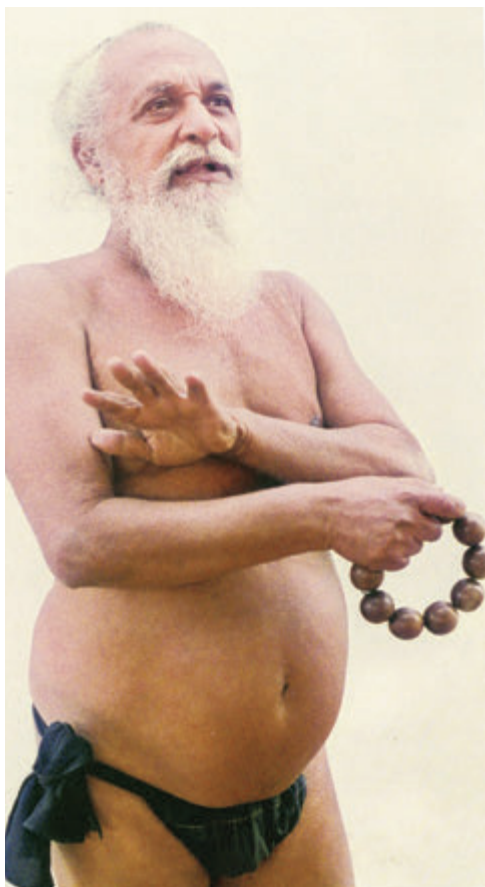
### **Thinking is not a process, it is a panorama**

Thinking is not a process, it is a panorama. The mind does not move, it does not walk, it does not run. But you see the mind in parts, therefore you think it is moving, just as you see the sun moving but the earth not. This is one of the most important things that all of us must understand. This idea

is very important in yoga. It influences the whole mental condition, the state of being. You feel thoughts moving, emotions running wild, passions assailing you. But that's your experience, your feeling – that's not a fact. You see the whole thing, part by part, and therefore you feel that the mind is moving from past into present and from present into future, from future into past and from past into future. But it is not like that. The universal mind is homogeneous, it cannot be separated by time and space. Time and space are in its womb.

Therefore, when you are practising mantra, you should be happy when your mind is developing the areas concerning the past, present and future. When evil and criminal thoughts are awakened in your mind, or when you have thoughts of God and compassion, it is all the same. If you want to crush the evil idea, you must crush the good idea as well. This is a very important point, and it is here that the whole process of life, of evolution, is stuck. Those people who have been able to transcend the barriers of life, have done it only after realising this.





### **Accept and observe each thought**

When you sit down to practise mantra, all kinds of thoughts, worrying thoughts, anxious thoughts, passionate thoughts, anguished thoughts, etc., rush to the surface of the mind. So when we are practising japa and a thought comes, we push it out, another one comes and we push it out. But this is incorrect. We must accept and observe each thought, with detachment, without involvement, and let it pass of its own accord.

## Antar mouna

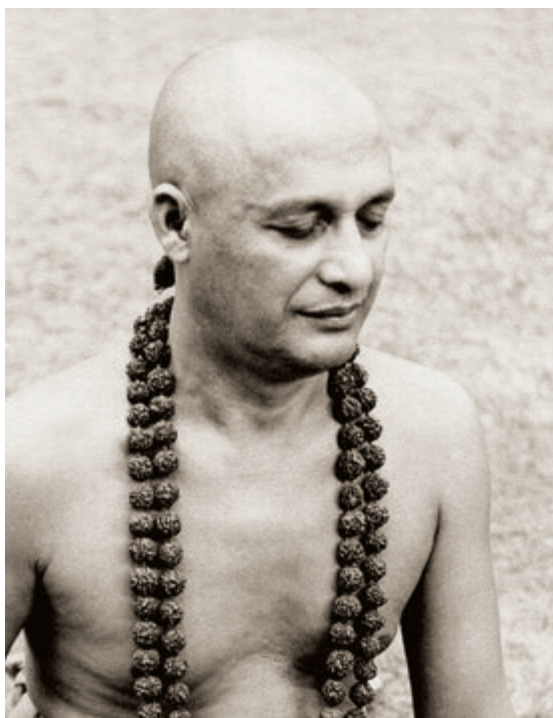
Acceptance of the mind is a very important attitude, especially during the practice of mantra. To live with our own thoughts and feelings is very difficult. Whenever the mind is disturbed, you must find out what is the cause of the disturbance. Try to become a witness of all that is happening.

The process of witnessing is called antar mouna. Japa yoga must be followed or accompanied by antar mouna. When we are practicing mantra and a thought comes into our mind, we must stop for a moment and see the thought, whatever it is. Then continue the mantra until another thought comes. During the practice of japa and antar mouna, significant and insignificant memories of the past flash into our mind. These memories should be seen very clearly if we want to purify our mind. Every experience which we have during mantra practice or meditation has an important bearing on our life.





# The Mala



## Why use a mala?

Most people think that they can practice japa yoga in any way that they like. After all, it is only chanting a mantra (psychic sound), so it matters little how it is chanted, it matters little whether one uses a mala (rosary) or whether it is held in the left hand or right. In fact, this is totally incorrect, japa has its own special rules and regulations. If these are not followed then japa will fail to bring results.

The purpose of japa is to awaken the psychic awareness. To bring this about, it is necessary to use a mala. But why use a mala? Surely the awakening of awareness can be achieved without a mala. A mala itself doesn't awaken awareness, so why bother to use it?

Psychic awareness can be awakened without the use of a mala, agreed, but the trouble lies with the human temperament. The mind does not remain steady for any length of time. Therefore it becomes necessary for us to choose a medium through which we can know when we are aware and when we are not. When you travel to a faraway place, you pass many milestones on the way. Even if there were no milestones you would be able to reach your destination. But the milestones act as a check and show you that you are going in the right direction. In japa, the beads are the milestones and the mala is the road. The road and milestones are essential in order to ensure that you reach your psychic destination. The beads maintain awareness and keep the psychic system in check.

Let us make this point more clearly for those who have not been able to follow. We use a mala as a method for checking and detecting those moments when we lose awareness and forget what we are doing. It is also used to give an indication of how far we have progressed in the practise. At a certain stage in japa, when the mind becomes quite calm and serene, it is possible for the fingers to become inert. They become momentarily paralysed and you become completely unaware. Sometimes the mala may fall to the ground. Then know that you have strayed from the aim of japa, that is, you have failed to maintain awareness. If you don't have a mala in your hand when you practice japa, how will you know what you are experiencing? You might be under the impression that you have experienced a state of spiritual ecstasy, when all you have really experienced is total unconsciousness. That happened to me once.





One evening at six o'clock I sat with my mala for japa. I sat in padmasana and used a wall to support my back. I finished my practice at about four o'clock in the morning, and except for terrible pains in my knees and thighs, I felt so happy. I was so overcome with happiness that I went directly to Swami Sivananda. I said, "Swamiji, I have just spent ten hours in samadhi." He just laughed at me and said, "That is very nice."

At another time, Swamiji asked me if I was still practising japa. By this time I had given up using a mala and I said, "Yes, Swamiji, I'm still practising." "Do you use a mala?" he then asked. "I don't have a mala," I replied. "Where is the mala I gave you?" he asked. I told him that I didn't believe in malas so I had given it away. Swamiji then said, "You may believe in a mala or not, that is only intellectual, this is not a question of belief, but a question of need." Then he reminded me of the night I had spent ten hours in 'samadhi'. "Do you remember that night?" he asked. "Very clearly, Swamiji" I replied. "Well then, can you be sure that you were aware throughout or did your mind go blank?" I said, "I don't know." Then Swamiji said, "There must be some method where we can know and directly check." I then asked, "What could that method be, because in deep states of consciousness it is not possible to remember anything." Swamiji finally replied, "It is the continuity of a mala that will tell you of your state of consciousness. If you are conscious of the mala and the

fingers moving each bead, then you are aware. That night you were not in samadhi but in a state of unconsciousness. You were asleep.”

When japa is done correctly and concentration takes place, the mala will continue to move almost automatically. At the same time, the number of rotations of the mala should be counted on the fingers of the left hand. A mala may not be something that your intellect can accept, but for successful practice of japa, it is a necessary tool for the mind.

### **Types of malas**

For mantra meditation you should have a mala of 108 beads. They must be strung on strong cotton thread which is knotted between each bead. The most commonly used malas are tulsi, rudraksha, sandalwood, coral and crystal. Tulsi beads are made from the stems of tulsi plants which are highly revered for their psychic properties. Tulsi has a strong and purifying effect on the emotions and is soothing to the mind. The sensitivity of tulsi makes it one of the best media for



practising mantra, however it should not be used by those who consume alcohol or a non-vegetarian diet.

Rudraksha, the seed of a jungle fruit, is the second most commonly used mala. It is not so sensitive to psychic things and there are no restrictions regarding its use. Rudraksha improves blood circulation and functioning of the coronary system and reduces high blood pressure.

Sandalwood malas are sweetly scented and contain pacifying and protective vibrations. They are cooling and beneficial to those who have any type of skin disease. Coral malas are used by those who have eczema, ringworm, scabies, etc., or mental disorders like schizophrenia and neuroses. Crystal malas have psychic properties and are used for higher tantric sadhana.

It is best to use the mala given to you by your Guru at the time of initiation. Wherever possible, use a mala made by the disciples of your Guru, at his ashram.

### **Why 108 beads?**

The fact that a mala has one hundred and eight beads needs some explanation. Personally speaking, I'm not really satisfied with the explanation I am going to give you. They are explanations that I have heard from my elders and from what I have read in the scriptures.

The digits of 108 have the following meaning, '1' represents the supreme consciousness, '8' represents the eight aspects of nature consisting of the five fundamental elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether, plus ahamkara (individuality), manas (mind) and buddhi (sense of intuitional perception), and '0' represents the cosmos, the entire field of creation. To put it another way, '0' is Shiva, '8' is Shakti and '1' is their union or yoga.

There are some scholars who believe that 108 represents the number of skulls on the garland worn by Kali, the Goddess of destruction. It is said to symbolise the 108 reincarnations

of the jiva (the individual consciousness) after which an individual will become self-realised.

There are many more explanations in different books. However, the meaning of these numbers has significance at a deeper psychic level. They are numbers that are chosen to help bring about auspicious conditions whilst doing japa. They are numbers that have been found suitable by the practical experience of ancient rishis. Explanations of these numbers are merely for those who want intellectual answers.



### **How to use a mala**

Besides the 108 beads of the mala, there is also one extra bead called the meru or sumeru. This bead can be considered to represent the top of the psychic passage called the sushumna. For this reason, the meru bead is also called the bindu. The 108 beads symbolise the 108 centres, stations or camps through which your awareness travels up to the bindu and then back. These centres are really chakras, though mostly minor ones, and they represent the progressive awakening of the mind. The bindu is the limit of this expansion of mind.

When you use a mala you should never cross the bindu. Please remember this point carefully. When you begin your practice at this point and return to it again, you will have completed one rotation of awareness through the psychic

passage called the sushumna. From this point you simply reverse the mala and continue your practice.

Let me say that we rotate the mala in this special way in order to revive our awareness, having become distracted from the practice by thoughts and emotions. When we start the rotation of the mala, there is no problem up to say, ten beads. After that the mind becomes distracted by this or that, the fingers move the beads automatically. But when the sumeru bead comes, the consciousness is revived by the change in the feel of the mala. This brings about a return of awareness to the practice in hand.

Three fingers are used for holding and rotating the mala – the thumb, third finger and fourth finger. The second and fifth fingers are not used at all. Hold the mala in the fingers as shown in the diagram. It is very simple. Join the tips of the thumb and ring finger. In the small groove formed between the thumb and ring finger, rest the mala. Now with the third finger



you should begin to rotate each bead one after the other. Remember, you should rotate the mala towards the palm of the hand.

The mala which is used for japa should not be worn around the neck. It should be put in a small bag. Malas that are used for decoration are not really considered suitable for serious practice of japa. Never lend your japa mala to other people.

You can still practise japa if you don't have a mala, you merely count on your fingers.

## Position of the right arm

The mala is always held in the right hand. Traditionally japa is done while holding the right hand near the heart, with the right forearm resting lightly against the body. The left hand is cupped and placed in the lap facing upwards. It can be used to catch the lower end of the mala to prevent it from swinging to and fro and becoming entangled.

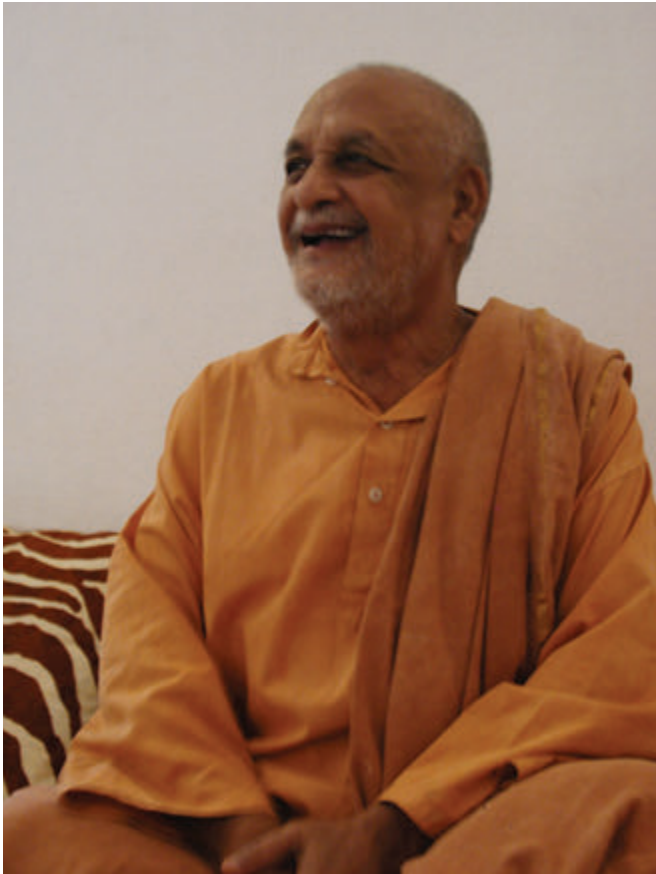
Those people who practise a large number of rounds of the mala every day will find that their arm gets very tired. The position is not suitable. Something must be used to support the arm, but you should not use the other arm to support it. Instead, take a piece of cloth and make it into a sling. Use that to support your right arm. This is essential for those who do hundreds of malas every day.

## Use of a gomukhi

If you do long periods of japa practice every day, then the use of a gomukhi is highly recommended. The word gomukhi means 'in the shape of a cow's mouth'. It is a small bag which resembles the shape of a cow's mouth. The mala and your right hand are both placed inside the gomukhi so that they are obscured from view. With your hand in the bag, you then begin to rotate the mala, the bottom of which is supported by the bottom of the bag.



A gomukhi is very light, doesn't interfere with the practice of japa and prevents other people interfering or becoming curious about your practice. It can be used when you walk along a street or when you leave your house. It is widely used by those who do anusthana (sustained practice for long, fixed periods of time), perhaps 50,000 to 60,000 beads per day. For them it is almost a must.





# Epilogue



The mantra is a purifying force. It is such a great purifier that no matter what you eat, how you live, what you think, or which religion you belong to, it will dominate and destroy all the samskaras. When the samskaras are destroyed and the veil is split asunder, you will see the divinity shining like the sun before you. What you have been searching for is not far away. There is only a veil between you and me, which has to be destroyed by the mantra shakti, mantra yoga.



If you allow your mind total independence and liberty, it will transcend itself even without your knowledge. The path of experience is not so long and tedious. The experience is here and now. It is already in you, so you don't have to develop it. It has always been in existence, but you are not able to experience it, because you are bound by certain limitations. Allow your mind to flow, to break its barriers, to be anarchical, to wander freely like a vagabond, to

commit crimes (inside, of course). Allow it to find itself, give it space to run, and let it experience psychic forms. Don't worry about bad thoughts, or be happy about good ones. Just see them as you see cars moving down the street. You are aware of them, but you have no personal involvement. There is endless traffic in the mind, and when you are trying to practise mantra, the rush hour begins. Therefore, when you practice mantra, please be aware of whatever comes to your mind. Do not put things into categories and compartments. The purpose of mantra is not to make the brain inactive, but to increase its sensitivity and awareness. This is the tantric system and it teaches you to face facts.

One day, all these energies will unite with the central energy and suddenly, like Buddha, like Christ, like any other sage, you will find things are melting and everything is happening by itself. You will not know what to do. You will

not be required to know what to do, you won't have to think, "Now what am I to do?" It is as if you have been thrown into the upper portion of Niagara Falls and you don't know what will happen next. You are just moving along with the flow of consciousness, you can do nothing else, and you have to become a part of that event.

Key guidelines for mantra chanting – get your mantra from a Guru, never change your mantra, gradually reduce the frequency of brain waves, bring your awareness to the nose tip, simultaneously become aware of your breath, practise regularly, pronounce the mantra correctly, follow a prescribed sequence of mantra chanting, and practise mantra whenever you are idle.

Never try to control or suppress the mind. Allow it to flow, and become a witness to your thoughts. A mala must be used for mantra practice. It helps to maintain awareness, and also to measure the number of mantras that have been chanted. Japa becomes ajapa (spontaneous) japa when the mantra automatically repeats itself without conscious effort.

Mantra is so powerful that it can change your destiny, economic situation and physical structure. If you want the mantra to change the whole structure of your life, you must practise it regularly, for a long and interrupted period of time, every morning and evening.

— Swami Satyananda Saraswati



