

## Mantra Meditation to Refine Our Body Ailments

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### Abstract

The mantra is a Sanskrit word for "sound tool," and Om is one of myriad such mantras. Sanskrit and some other ancient languages such as Tibetan, prototypical Egyptian and ancient Hebrew evolved as complex systems of onomatopoeia, where the sounds evoke movements of energy. This evocation is qualitative and subjective and is linked with interception (inner body sensations) and emotional sense of self, both predominantly represented in the right hemisphere of the brain. Conversely, the narrative strand of sounds in which we give them meaning is done predominantly through the left hemisphere. What is fascinating about mantras is that from a physics standpoint, the sounds themselves, before they are assigned meaning, will resonate in different parts of the body and mind, creating actual interactions or events. Mantras are information, in the literal sense of in-forming: the creation of form, or interactions. The Sanskrit language is an information sequencing system that mimics the process of nature's repeating patterns.

**KEYWORDS:** Mantra meditation, Chanting, Depression, Anxiety, Radiance.

### Mantra Meditation

Repetition of a Mantra is a powerful way to keep us in the present and calm our "monkey spirit," which jumps forever uncontrollably from one thought to another. At the moment when we inculcate the practice of being "intensely" present - without any "baggage" of the subconscious past or the distant anxiety of the future - then we live a great peace, a profound silence and a supreme joy!

In fact, this is the process and goal of meditation and the use of mantras is a very effective way to achieve it!

### Introduction

The Sanskrit language is code for the patterns of nature, sonic representations of the way nature works. Mantras hold within them the latent forms of the universe. From supreme stillness and subtle ultrasonic vibrations, these latent forms cascade into being an audible sound, which then has the capacity to in-form, or shapes reality, as has been demonstrated by cymatics. By practicing mantra, we can tap into the source of that power to manifest – we can drive our awareness deeper into the bones, muscles and tissues of the body to gain a greater sensitivity and understanding of our makeup and amplify the emotional energies latent within, much like the potential energy present in mountains that then becomes kinetic in the form of an avalanche when the earthquakes. By aiming with intention the practice of mantra into progressively deeper layers of our self, we can bring more of ourself online, as it were, and therefore more on board the journey of health and fitness towards union and wholeness. Through mantra, we have the opportunity to practice yoga.

Mantras can be done vocally, sub-vocally (whispering) or silently in the mind. It is recommended to start aloud and then proceed with the more silent variations. Silent repetition does have an effect; when the frequency of any sound is high enough, it extends beyond the human range of hearing and eventually achieves stillness, which is beyond sound itself. It has been demonstrated in a double-blind study that ultrasound probes applied to the skull can improve subjective mood, and it has been evidenced that even imagining performing musical exercises rewires and strengthens nerve connections. Both of these studies speak to the capacity of mental recitation of mantra to activate and affect the physical nervous system. Moreover, group chanting or recitation of a mantra can synchronize the brainwaves between the participants, achieving yet another level of collective efficacy, as has been shown between musicians, which can help to understand the functional basis for group chanting in many of the world's wisdom traditions.

The feelings and symbolic representations of the sounds will differ from person to person because, like any tool, the effects of the sounds depend on the user operating them and the object of use, namely the condition of the body and mind. The practitioner should first develop a state of relaxation through proper breathing. It is also important to take interest in or to have a healthy curiosity for the practice so that the effect of actually enjoying the learning process may help the mantra get a foothold in the system.

In order to have insight into and validate a mantra for ourselves, it must be experienced and felt through introspection. Let's take the mantra Om, or Aum, one of the most common in Sanskrit and Tibetan. If Aum is indeed onomatopoeic, then performing it can create an event inside the nervous system, which can then become an object of concentration and meditation, and thereby a focal point for expanding physical and emotional awareness. In terms of phonemes, we notice that it does not have any plosives or fricatives, only sonorants. From the types of solid-object physical events that the brain evolved to perceive, this respectively corresponds to an absence of hits and slides, and the presence of only rings. A, U and M are sonorants or rings, so this particular mantra qualifies an object that inherently has no interactions (hits or slides).

In terms of physics, this means our object is formless. Try resonating the mantra aloud, allowing air to flow through the nasal passage, smoothly transitioning between the three sounds. If you do not wish to disturb anyone that may be around you, you can whisper the sounds sub vocally. The A (pronounced ä, as in "car") can feel like a wide opening and has a broader vibratory effect on the physical body, approximating the gross consciousness of the waking state. The U (pronounced oo, as in "soup"), has a funneling effect, narrowing the consciousness into subtler sensations such as thoughts and impressions, approximating the dream state. The more nasal M sound is like the drone of a bee; it makes the cranium vibrate in a kind of undifferentiated and ubiquitous earthquake over the convolutions or valleys in the cerebral cortex, approximating the deep dreamless sleep state of consciousness. Traditionally, Aum represents and has the capacity to progressively open up the practitioner to the ever-present formless and timeless reality, the background radiation of the cosmos that echoes the Big Bang.

## **Benefits of Mantra Meditation**

### **Reduces Anxiety and Depression**

By combining sound, breath and rhythm, mantra meditation channels the flow of energy through the mind-body circuit, adjusting the chemical composition of our internal states and regulating brain-hemisphere imbalances, contributing to a natural abatement of fear and despair—emotions that underlie both of these common afflictions. By balancing the nervous system, chanting regulates the chronic stress and tension that is the norm for many people in today’s hyper-stimulated lifestyle. And by balancing the endocrine system, chanting normalizes hormone production, which balances our moods and overall sense of well-being.

### **Releases Neuroses**

Chanting delivers us from the excessive preoccupation with our bodies and with material concerns. It delivers us from fear of old age and death. We begin to identify with the timelessness of the soul and consequently begin to shed neurotic habits that no longer serve and that no longer seem relevant. By returning us to what is essential, it clears away subconscious habit patterns. Embraced by the steady rhythm and by the vibration that connects us all, our thoughts combine wholly with the sound current. As the captain sets the canvas to the wind, thus pulling the boat out of trouble, it is through mantra that we steer ourselves out of our own stormy seas and into clear waters.

### **It is Soothing**

The power of mantra is betrayed in the roots of the sanskrit word, man, meaning mind, and, tra, meaning deliverance, or, projection. Thus, chanting the sacred sound of the mantra delivers us from our sense dependency, from our unrelenting habit of looking toward the senses for gratification; pleasures that are and that will always be, fleeting and limited—how much can you eat? Or drink? Or buy? Sense gratification never really gratifies. We are always left either unfulfilled and guilty—wishing we had never started, or else, wanting more and lamenting the loss.

Chanting is a pleasure that transcends the senses, it takes us beyond the bounds of time and space (which is why we don’t have to understand the mantra). Thus it soothes in a most profound way. It soothes on a cellular level. It merges our finite identity with the infinite, and so dissolves us. It relieves us from the sights and sounds and stimulation of the material world and delivers us into a spiritual space, where the sound is God. The material needs are reduced to nothing but mind chatter, and like smoke pumped into the sky, will be scattered into the expanse. Through the sweetness of devotional surrender, mantra turns the negative into positive. I once heard it said: “as music has charms to soothe a savage beast, so the spiritual sound of mantra soothes the restless mind.”

### **Engenders Compassion**

While the first stages of mantra meditation deliver our restless minds from their self-inflicted distress, eventually, chanting into the all-engulfing wave of vibrations arouses our experience of ourselves as spiritual beings. It opens our perception of ourselves as undifferentiated from God. It awakens the divine light and love within us. As George Harrison has said of his lifelong Bhakti practice, chanting is “a direct connection with God.” When our spiritual identity is awakened, we experience the unity of all life, which consequently awakens our hearts and opens our capacity for compassion, whereupon we may live out our material lives free of animosity, envy and pride.

### **Boosts Immunity**

It's all about the hypothalamus. The control tower of the brain, it regulates communication between the nervous system and the endocrine system, taking in information from the entire body, before transmitting outward again, via chemical messengers. These couriers, such as serotonin and dopamine, are known as the "happiness hormones," due to the impact they have on our moods. The hypothalamus is Office in Charge of many bodily functions we tend to think of as automatic, like temperature, metabolism and nervous system, as well as pituitary secretion, affecting everything from mood to appetite to sleep. It is perhaps the single most important link in the mind-body connection.

Breath helps to adjust all the rhythms of our body—not only the familiar circadian rhythms, but the lesser known ultradian rhythms, which monitor the smaller-scale energy cycles that occur throughout the day. Because our nervous systems are often overtaxed, these rhythms are thrown out of balance. But through the technology of sound, we begin repairs. And when breath is set to sound—Wowee Zonkers! The positive effects on the parasympathetic nervous system – that part of the nervous system that tells us everything is alright – are multiplied and the healing response is triggered and it all translates into healing and stronger immunity.

### **It is Easy**

You don't have to sing well because it's not about singing, in the usual sense. We're not memorizing complex lyrics, layering harmonies, and we're not certainly not busting out powerhouse solos. It works whether it's done alone, or in a group, as in a powerful kirtan. It works whether it's done softly or in full voice, as long it is from the heart and with the belly. Although for enhanced effect, we can add eye-focus and a gentle hand mudra, these are simple to include and can be incorporated gradually.

### **It is Free**

All you have to do is show up. As Krishna Das has said, it won't work if you don't do it! All that is needed is some time and an open heart. The benefits of chanting cannot be established through reasoning and intellect. It can only be experienced through devotion, faith and constant repetition of the Mantra.

### **Opens Intuition**

**Pronunciation:** By enunciating the mantra, the tongue taps certain points along the roof of our mouths, sending signals to the hypothalamus, which in turn, regulates the chemical activity streaming into all parts of the brain and body. It might be likened to tapping the keys of a piano—inside the casing, a hammer bounces up and strikes the strings which are tuned to produce a specific and foreseeable note; behind the curtains a remarkable vibratory process is going on.

**Rhythm:** Through repetition of the mantra, patterns of sound are inscribed onto the brain. The unconscious becomes the conscious, the automatic becomes the deliberate, the mindless becomes the heartfelt. The repetition frees us from our destination-fixation—from our need to rush to the end. The repetition is the whole point. Through repetition, the mantra washes over us, as the waves in the sea gradually get us wet. It dissolves us into unison, which is the essence of yoga. We "die" in a sense, as our ego fades into the infinite, as it gets unavoidably absorbed by the sound.

**Projection:** When we chant from the navel point while articulating the mantra, we not only stimulate the upper palate, but we vibrate the central channel by which prana, or,

life force, flows—what yogis for millennia have referred to as the shushmuna (or shushumna by some translations). This dual process is said to move us into the realm of anahat—the realm “without boundary.”

### **Increases Radiance**

Our thoughts reflect and affect our mood, our attitude and our general tenor. Our thoughts are silent sounds. And sounds are electromagnetic vibrations. The more refined our thoughts, the more elevated our vibration; the more elevated our vibration, the closer we get to the highest vibration of all—our own divine nature. The entire universe was built on sound, which is nothing but vibration. By vibrating a certain combination of sounds, we are able to tune into various levels of intelligence, or consciousness. Thus, chanting mantras is a conscious method of controlling our moods, and in turn, our frequency and resultant all-around radiance, much like changing the channel on the television.

### **It is empowering**

In the Hindu and related Dharmic traditions that use mantra meditation as a regular part of practice, there is a mantra for everything—for every ill and every challenge. To note just a few examples, in the Tibetan tradition, the Om Mane Padme Hum mantra has been used for centuries to invoke the blessings of compassion.

### **Conclusion:**

Chanting is not just about religion and spirituality; rather it's a combination of sound, breath and rhythm that helps you to channelize your energy. The mantras have both psychological and physiological effects on your body. Here are few ways chanting can improve your mental and physical health. Chanting certain mantras puts pressure on tongue, vocal chords, lips, palate and other connecting points in the body. The vibration from the mantra stimulates a gland called hypothalamus. It is responsible for the regulation of many body functions including immunity and some happy hormones. The happier you are the stronger your immunity. The certain vibrating sounds of the mantras helps in stimulating the hormones that calms the mind and relaxes your body. It also helps you to concentrate and thereby works as a tranquilizer for your mind.

According to a research and experts people who chanted mantras had better concentration and learning power. Because when you chant the resultant vibration helps to activate the chakras present on your face and head which are responsible for concentration and memory. It helps to beat stress and stress-related problems. Regular chanting helps to reverse the damage done by constant stress on your body. Chanting helps to stimulate the body chakras, also known as the energy centres of the body. Different energy centres helps in the smooth functioning of different body organs. At times the alignment of the chakras can get a little haywire and chanting helps to align them, keeping your body disease free.

In addition to giving you peace of mind, Mantra helps you eliminate psychosomatic disorders. This helps to banish nervous tensions and sedimentary problems. The holistic path of Mantra helps you become familiar with yourself. Due to the increased stability of the mind, you will lead a peaceful life without stress, anxiety and stress. Mantra is the ultimate way to achieve peace and tranquility. This increases your sense of security and increases your self-confidence. It also eliminates negative behaviors. It is an ultimate remedy for various addictions, as it purifies you inside.

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