

Overview of Mantra

Translation of 'mantra':

'man' from root 'manas' meaning mind
'tra' from the root 'trana' meaning to protect
So mantra can be translated as ***'that which protects the mind'***

Alternatively:

'man' can be translated as 'to think' & 'tra' as to be liberated
So 'mantra' is sometimes translated as ***'that which liberates the mind'***

More contemporary definitions of mantra:

- * *"Subtle sound vibration, process of Tantra for liberating energy and expanding consciousness from the limitations of mundane awareness"* Swami Muktibodhananda Saraswati, HYP, p553
- * *"A mantra is a mystical energy encased in a sound structure"* Swami Vishnu-Devananda, Meditation & Mantra, p47
- * *"Mantras, or simple chants, are short phrases packed with energy and intention — specifically designed to generate powerful sound waves that promote healing, insight, creativity, and spiritual growth."* Thomas Ashley-Farrand, Healing Mantras,
- * *"Sacred Mystic Syllable Repetition"* Muz Murray
- * *"Mantra is a sound, syllable, word, or group of words that is considered capable of creating spiritual transformation"* Wikipedia.org

Types of Mantra: There are two main classifications of mantra:

Nirguna (without form)

- * Bija Mantras or Seed Sounds of the Sanskrit Alphabet
- * No exact meaning, works on the pranic body creating a particular vibration altering consciousness
- * e.g. Aim (I'm) Klim (kleem) Shrim (shreem)
- * These include abstract mantras where for example we assert identification with the Cosmos: Soham "I am that I am", OM

Saguna (with form)

- * Usually deity mantra, where there is a specific form with attributes
- * Has specific meaning, can also utilise emotions and images, such as a yantra
- * We are invoking a personalised aspect of the Whole
- * e.g. "Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya"

The Origins of Mantra

- * Origins are unknown as mantra was an **oral tradition** passed down through the generations although we can see it has its verifiable roots in the Vedas and in Tantra and is practiced widely throughout all forms of yoga

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- * It forms a primary part of the culminating meditative experience of Hatha Yoga (Laya Yoga) as the yogin moves towards Raja Yoga
- * Bhakti Yoga includes mantra, especially as Bhajans or Kirtans
- * In Classical Yoga we find references to the use of mantra e.g. Bk1 v28 "Constant repetition of Om and meditation on its meaning (leads to samadhi)"
- * We also find Mantra Yoga per se, rooted in Tantra

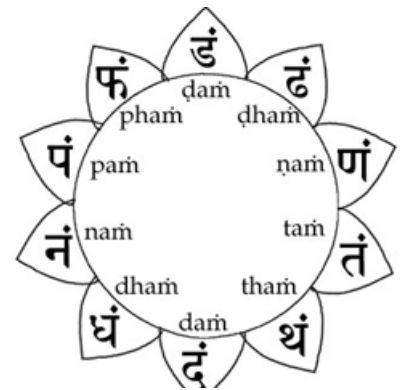
So how does mantra work?

1. Mantra affects us as vibration, i.e. as an energy-based sound
2. Mantra conveys attention and intention

Mantra as a vibration

"Gradually, the vibration of the mantra begins to override all of the lesser vibrations ... Ultimately, the individual will be in perfect harmony with the energy & spiritual state represented by and contained within the mantra."

Healing Mantras Thomas Ashley-Farrand p52



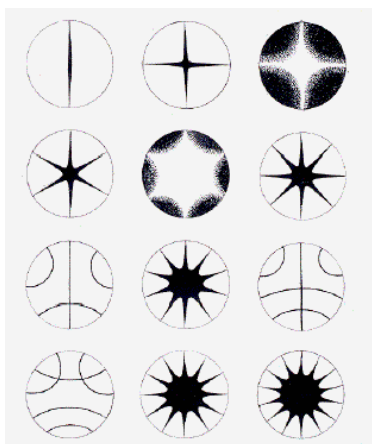
Manipura Chakra: 10 petals



"Matter is nothing more than an oscillating field that upon our approach dissolves into pure rhythm ... Of what is the body made? It is made of emptiness and rhythm. At the heart of the world, there is no solidarity, there is only dance. "
From The Silent Pulse by George Leonard

Shiva as Nataraj, The Cosmic Dancer

We are all comprised of, and all exist within a soup of vibrations (Prana/ Shakti) and by using mantra we are consciously altering our vibration.



Chladni Figures

Sound can be constructive or destructive. Famously Ernst Chladni, an 18th Century Physicist & Violinist, discovered that fine sand scattered on metal plates would move to create highly organised patterns when music was played, confirming that sound could create order out of seeming chaos. It is also well known that a certain pitch can shatter glass, or an army marching must march out of step when crossing bridges or the bridge may collapse.

Everything is affected by changes in vibration including ourselves as we are inevitably also '**Vibrational Beings**'.

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The Nature of Sanskrit

Sanskrit letters and words are especially significant as:

The alphabet is Sruti i.e. revealed wisdom containing the creative vibrations of the universe

There is a direct correlation between a word and its meaning i.e. **a word contains the energetic effect of its meaning**, so for instance when toning 'shanti' meaning 'peace' we are actually create peace – **the sound always supports its meaning**

ॐ

भूर् भुवः स्वः

तत् सवितुर् वरेण्यं

भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि

धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्

Gayatri Mantra in Devanagari

Sanskrit is a beautiful and very profound language for example:

Whilst vowels can be pronounced individually consonants require a vowel to be spoken and every vowel changes the nature of the consonant e.g.

- * The 'a' sound serves to help **manifest** whatever consonant it is connected to
- * The 'i' sound serves to **direct its energy** in a pointed manner
- * The 'u' sound serves to give it force and **consistency in manifestation**
- * So, if we look at the root 'ha' it's meaning is to throw out, cast or exhale, 'hi' means to throw a spear, to harm, to direct, incite, motivate and 'hu' means to offer

Or for OM (AUM)

This is representative of 'all that is' or Brahman, said to be the underlying tone of the Universe where:

- * 'A' the first letter is concerned with manifestation (Brahma 'The Creator')
- * 'U' is concerned with consistency of manifestation (Vishnu 'The Preserver')
- * 'M' the last letter is concerned with closure or endings (Shiva 'The Destroyer')

So, OM connects us to the underlying vibration of the universe

To tone:

A = 'father' (back of throat/navel)

U = 'room' (forward mouth/thorax)

M = 'mmm' (front of mouth/head)

Sounding the AU same length as M



Alternatively sounded as:

OM = 'home'

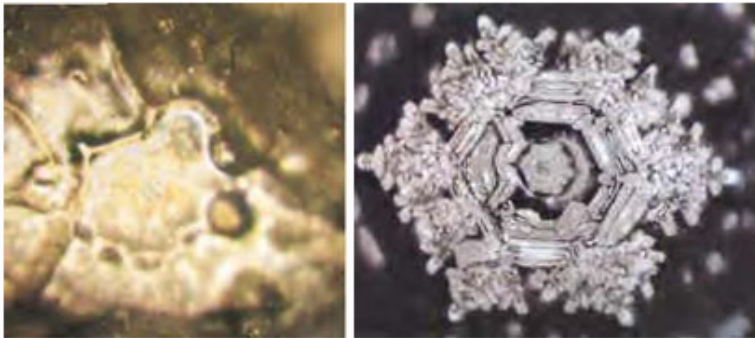
***"The secret of mantra lies in the nature of the Supreme,
who is aware that the entire universe is his body"***

from the Shiva Sutra

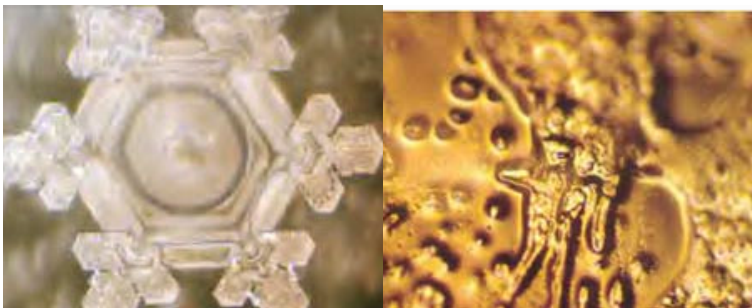
Mantra & consciousness: To go further our thoughts and emotions, and our very intentions are creative, possessing the ability said to alter the three-dimensional world.

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As an interesting example through the 1990's Dr Masaru Emoto performed many experiments on the physical effects of words, prayer, music, and the environment upon the crystalline structures of water. And remember we are more than 70% water!



Water before & after prayer



Thank you & I will kill you!



Music also directly affects our **emotional state**. Think of how much time and money is devoted to the music industry, film soundtracks, national anthems etc.

Or the way that many religions use devotional songs (Bhajans/Kirtans) to engender love and surrender, and sometimes ecstasy!

For those wishing to follow a spiritual path we need to recognize that the mind constantly creates a stream of words which are constantly creating our sense of self & that our sense of self is being self-created in this way.

All of yoga aims to liberate us from that false sense of self and certainly mantra is one of the most direct ways to work with this.....

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