

The Power of Chanting

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A mantra is a word or series of words chanted aloud or silently to affect consciousness. Translated, 'MAN' means mind and 'TRA' means to tune the vibration. Chanting is used as a spiritual tool in almost all cultural and religious traditions. Mantras were one of the earliest components of yoga and are quite possibly the first type of meditation that was developed. In yoga traditions a mantra is usually a Sanskrit or Gurmukhi word.

Yogi Bhajan, who brought Kundalini Yoga to the West, said, "*mantras are not small things, mantras have power. They are the mind vibration in relationship to the Cosmos. The science of mantra is based on the knowledge that sound is form of energy having structure, power, and a definite predictable effect on the chakras and the human psyche. Each time you perfect a mantra, you are a like a master musician who can evoke elevated states of being from the instrument of self.*"

Each mantra invokes an exact response for very specific purposes: such as spiritual development, healing, prosperity etc. When combined with the person's intention, mantras can become even more targeted and empowered. The mantras are said to increase in power in direct relationship to the number of times repeated.

The practice of chanting a mantra is considered the easiest form of meditation. Sitting in a comfortable position, with the eyes closed, the mantra is repeated silently or aloud. Pay careful attention to the speed and rhythm of your chanting, the correct pronunciation, aim, and meaning of the mantra. Allow the mind to be focused on the mantra, letting the thoughts go and maintaining a slow and deep breath. A Mala (string of beads) can be used to count a series of 108 repetitions of the mantra.

Mentally, mantra meditation increases concentration, and improves memory and focus. Physically, mantra meditation lowers the heart rate, reduces blood pressure, and activates the relaxation response to allow healing and rejuvenation to occur. Mantra meditation builds self-confidence and self-empowerment, reduces stress and balances the emotions. Spiritually, mantras are said to dissolve karma, produce wisdom and are considered one of the yogic paths towards self-realization.

Yogi Bhajan said, "*we meditate so that our minds can be sharp and alert. We chant mantras so that our souls may be ignited like candles. In the light of this beauty we will walk.*"

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