

An Analytical Study of the Science and Philosophy of Mantra Yoga

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Abstract

The present study aims to analyze the concept, goal, science and philosophy of Mantra Yoga. Mantra is a sacred formula, it is a subtle form of a deity, sound/vibration. Rishi, Chhanda, Devta, Bija and Tattva are the five elements of a Mantra. In Mantra Yoga, the aspirant repeatedly chants a particular mantra. Mantra chanting helps focus the mind on the meaning and vibration of the words. It calms and purifies the mind and thereby paves the way for the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of the aspirant. The karmic impressions inherent in chitta are eliminated and deleted forever and in this way it breaks the bondage and cycle of life and death for the aspirant and finally the aspirant attains liberation, salvation and enlightenment.

Key Words: Mantra, Yoga, Chanting, wellbeing, Bondage, Liberation

Introduction

Mantra occupies a prominent place in Vedic religion and Indian Culture. Since time immemorial saints, seers, sages and Yogis have been practicing Mantra Yoga for spiritual enlightenment. Vedas, the core of Indian culture consist of various mantras for the accomplishment of various purposes. Mantras are used as sacred sounds or utterances. Since they are taken from the sacred texts, they are considered auspicious and God in word form. They are used in ritual and spiritual practices and various sacrificial ceremonies. We have the description of 16 types of sanskars or ceremonies in Vedic scriptures. Each ceremony is performed with a different mantra.

Our every festival is celebrated by chanting different mantras. We can't imagine of the celebration of any festivals and ceremonies

without the chanting of mantras in Vedic religion. Mantras are used both for the attainment of physical, material and spiritual goals and purposes. There are various types of mantras like Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya, Om Namah Shivaya, the Mahamrityunjaya mantra, the Gayatri mantra etc. These are common mantras or universal mantras, which anybody can use for a specific purpose. The MahaMrityunjaya Mantra (for increasing health of body and mind) and the Gayatri Mantra (for increasing creative energy and pranic energy) are examples of this. Anyone may choose to adopt and chant these mantras.

OM is considered the source (basis) of all the mantras. It is the highest and the purest and Brahman himself in word form (Sabda Brahma). It is also known as mantra Purusha

(God as mantra). It has the potency to divinize and purify all other verbal expressions and word forms. Hence, it is often used as a prefix to all other mantras to infuse them divine power and purity. Therefore Mantras constitute the core of Vedic religion and the divine culture of India. Through Mantra chanting there occurs the union of the individual consciousness with universal supreme consciousness. Thus Mantra Yoga leads the aspirant to the spiritual enlightenment which is the supreme goal of Mantra yoga.

Mantra : Meaning, concept and Importance

A mantra is a revealed word, a divine sound that has been received or experienced by Vedic seers in the state of deep meditation and trance. It is a condensed form of spiritual divine energy. Mantra is a sacred formula, it is a subtle form of a deity, sound/vibration. Mantra refers to a "mystical formula" regarding some deity. 'Mananatrayate iti Mantrah' - By the Manana (constant thinking or recollection) of which one is protected or is released from the round of births and deaths, is Mantra. That is called Mantra by the meditation (Manana) on which the Jiva or the individual soul attains freedom from sin, enjoyment in heaven and final liberation, and by the aid of which it attains in full the fourfold fruit (Purusharthachaturstya), i.e., Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. A Mantra is so called because it is achieved by the mental process. The root 'Man' in the word Mantra comes from the first syllable of that word, meaning 'to think', and 'Tra' from 'Trai' meaning 'to protect' or 'free' from the bondage of Samsara or the phenomenal world. By the combination of 'Man' and 'Tra' comes Mantra. A Mantra is divinity encased within a sound-structure. It is divine power manifesting in a sound-body. The Mantra is itself Devta(deity). The sacred Mantra or the Divine Name is a vital symbol of the

Supreme Divinity directly revealed to the seers in the state of deep meditation and trance. These symbols are in the nature of unfailing keys to gain access into the transcendental realms of absolute experience.¹

Lord Krishna says: Among words I am the sacred syllable OM. Among offerings, I am the offering of Japa(chanting of mantra or sacred formulas).²

Maharshi Patanjali says:

OM is the word denoting God.³

Swami Vivekananda very brilliantly argues: What are Mantras? The whole of this universe has, according to Indian philosophy, both name and form (Nâma-Rupa) as its conditions of manifestation. In the human microcosm, there cannot be a single wave in the mind-stuff (Chitta vritti) unconditioned by name and form. If it be true that nature is built throughout on the same plan, this kind of conditioning by name and form must also be the plan of the building of the whole of the cosmos. "As one lump of clay being known, all things of clay are known", so the knowledge of the microcosm must lead to the knowledge of the macrocosm. Now form is the outer crust, of which the name or the idea is the inner essence or kernel. The body is the form, and the mind or the Antahkarana is the name, and sound-symbols are universally associated with Nâma (name) in all beings having the power of speech. In the individual man the thought-waves rising in the limited Mahat or Chitta (mind-stuff), must manifest themselves, first as words, and then as the more concrete forms.

In the universe, Brahmâ or Hiranyagarbha or the cosmic Mahat first manifested himself as name, and then as form, i.e. as this universe. All this expressed he form, behind which stands the eternal inexpressible Sphota, the manifester as Logos or Word. This eternal Sphota, the essential eternal material of all ideas or names is the power through which

the Lord creates the universe, nay, the Lord first becomes conditioned as the Sphota, and then evolves Himself out as the yet more concrete sensible universe. This Sphota has one word as its only possible symbol, and this is the ॐ (Om)., it is out of this holiest of all holy words, the mother of all names and forms, the eternal Om, that the whole universe may be supposed to have been created⁴

Sri Raman Maharshi observes:

Mantras (repeating sacred syllables) or formula as a means to realize the Self. The mind is a channel, a swift current of thoughts. A mantra is a bund or dam put up in the way of this current to divert the water where it is needed.⁵

Sri Aurobindo remarks:

The theory of the Mantra is that it is a word of power born out of the secret depths of our being where it has been brooded upon by a deeper consciousness than the mental, framed in the heart and not constructed by the intellect, held in the mind, again concentrated on by the waking mental consciousness and then thrown out silently or vocally — the silent word is perhaps held to be more potent than the spoken — precisely for the work of creation. The Mantra can not only create new subjective states in ourselves, alter our psychical being, reveal knowledge and faculties we did not before possess, can not only produce similar results in other minds than that of the user, but can produce vibrations in the mental and vital atmosphere which result in effects, in actions and even in the production of material forms on the physical plane.⁶

Mantra is creation by Word. The word is a sound expressive of the idea. In the supra-physical plane when an idea has to be realized, one can by repeating the word-expression of it, produce vibrations which prepare the mind for the realization of the idea. That is the principle of the Mantra and of japa. One repeats the name of the Divine

and the vibrations created in the consciousness prepare the realization of the Divine. It is the same idea that is expressed in the Bible, “God said, Let there be Light, and there was Light.” It is creation by the Word.⁷

Swami Vishnu-devananda says :

“A mantra is a mystical energy encased in a sound structure . . . It steadies the mind and leads to the stillness of meditation.’ (Meditation and Mantra).⁸

As stated by Swami Satyananda Saraswati, mantras are “purpose-specific”, that is, each mantra, whether Bija or a more elaborate construction of separate mantra, is used to realize specific results. Health, prosperity, spiritual realization and social stability are examples of such objectives. As a result, individuals choose to recite or chant different mantras according to their needs.

It is important to note however, that one must never alter the mantra. If done, it is no longer a mantra and its power is lost. It becomes just sounds. Also, Mantra Japs must be done mindfully and with respect. The practice should be regular and exist for the practitioner with the same observances as is given to other daily practices. For example, we typically follow a specific schedule concerning our diet. This is done to ensure proper and constant nutrition to our bodies. We should treat mantras the same way. It should be done regularly at prescribed times and for a specific length of time. In this way, we can expect to gain realization through the mantras transformative inner power.

As the rishis sat in meditation and reached higher levels, they received the sounds known as mantra. Mantras, therefore, are not a creation of the human mind. They were perceived from higher sources. In Islam it is said that the Koran was revealed by God, which means that whoever received the Koran had attained a very high yogic state. In the same way, Christians speak of the

Bible as a revealed scripture. Sanatana dharma, the eternal vedic religion, too is understood as having been revealed. The Vedas were not written by man. This, however, does not mean that the pen that wrote them was held in God's hand; it only means that they were revealed to rishis in the transcendental state. The same is said about the Ramacharitamanas.⁹

Philosophy and Principles of Mantra Yoga
Principles and philosophy of Mantra Yoga lies in its elements and limbs which are as follows:

Elements of Mantra

There are five elements of a Mantra. They are: Rishi (Seer), Chhanda(meter), Devta(deity), Bija(seed), and Tattva(element).

Rishi (Seer): There were ancient seers and sages, who had the actual realization of mantra. In meditation, when the rishis were able to transcend the material consciousness, rising to a very high level, those sounds heard by them in that highest state were called mantra. Every Mantra has a Rishi. Rishi means the seer who got that mantra through divine vision (darshana) for the first time and got sidhi or perfection in that mantra. Some rishis also discover mantras, and then they become the rishi of that mantra. The seer is a spiritual scientist who firstly makes experiments with mantra in the laboratory of his own body, mind and spirit and there after he helps others in making such experiments.¹¹

Chhanda:(meter, which is technically very specific for each mantra) It is actual pronunciation of that mantra and its meter or the science behind the meter. That is "how" the pronunciation of the sound (mantra) while doing japa. It is how to say the mantra in a particular rhythm so the deity is pleased. It is the rhythm to be followed to chant a mantra. All mantras are named traditionally with a Chandas.¹²

Devta: (the deity of the mantra or governing deity of a mantra). Every mantra has a devta.

The devta is invoked by the mantra to come into the heart. There are so many streams of supreme consciousness in this vast universe. The aspirant attracts the stream of consciousness of that particular deity of that mantra as rays of the light.¹³

Bija:(the seed syllable that created the mantra and contains the mantra within itself, like the seed that creates the tree) Every mantra has a bija (seed syllable) from which it sprouts or originates, which creates the mantra. Bija mantras are used to awaken the different energy centres located in the human body. NamahSivayacomesthe bija 'Haum'. Hare Krshnamahamantra comes from "Kleem". Hrim, shrim, klim, Aiam, Hoom, Yum, Bum, Rum, Lumetc are some of the bijamantras which can be called subtle injections used to inject some additional power in a mantra. As per the need such bija mantras are added to mantras. We call them potential mantras, because they contain dormant, potential energy of different forces. Each of the powers or forces in the world has its own bijamantra. Thosebija mantras are just like little bombs, the type of time bomb which explodes just at the right moment. Just as you plant a seed in the earth and from that a giant tree grows up, giving thousands of fruits, such is the power of the bija mantra. With the practice of anushthana, prolonged mantra repetition for a fixed period of time and number of malas, and regular sadhana, the power of the mantra is awakened. When that power is awakened, the consciousness takes the form of the mantra and then the real work of the mantra begins.¹⁴

Tattva:(element)is a character of a mantra. It can also be called the key to the mantra. It is the destination to be reached by firm resolution of the aspirant. Every mantra possesses the nature of a particular element (such as Earth, Water, Fire, Air and the sky) and a particular guna(such as Sat, raj and

tam). Even elements are worshiped as per the nature of the mantra.¹⁵

Thus each mantra has a seer (rishi) who composed it, a rhythm or meter (Chhanda) which determines its sound, and a deity (devata) who presides over it and manifests when the mantra is correctly pronounced. It also contains a seed syllable (bija) which imparts to it manifesting power (Shakti) and a support (tatva) which makes it strong or stable until it delivers the intended result.

Limbs of Mantra Yoga

There are 16 limbs of Mantra yoga which ensure the aspirant's success on the path of mantra yoga. They are as follows:

1. Bhakti (devotion)-Faith and devotion to the mantra and the deity is the most important condition to succeed in mantra yoga.

2. Shudhi (purification) refers to self-purification. It stands for the purification of the body, mind and spirit. It also stands for the purification of the place and direction.

3. Asana – refers to that thing on which the aspirant sits. Asanas made of woolen, kusha, resham, Mriga-charma, baghambar, blanket etc. are considered good. Asana also stands for some particular, steady, comfortable postures in which the aspirant sits while chanting Mantra.

4. Panchang Sevan - Gita, Sahasranam, Stavan, Kavach and Hridayanyas are collectively known as panchangsevan. Gita—that which is sung. Sahasranam means experiencing the vastness of the Supreme Being. Stuti is experiencing the vastness and associating it with the heart. Kavach is having protection from the obstacles arising from sadhana. Hridayanyasa- is entering the mysteries of Mantra through the heart.

5. Achara (conduct) – Aspirant should bear a good moral conduct.

6. Dharana (concentration) - concentration is binding the mind to one place.¹⁶

7. Divyadesh Sevan (self-identification)

8. PranaKriya (Pranayama or breath regulation)-prana means breath, ayam is lengthening or widening through control. When breathing is controlled so as to retain the breath, it is pranayama.

9. Mudra (hand locks) Mudra can be described as psychic, emotional, devotional and aesthetic gestures or attitudes.¹⁷

10. Tarpana (libations) offering different objects/ materials to the deity.

11. Havan- offering oblations to the burning fire of Yagya. Mantra chanting bears no fruit without havan.

12. Bali- Sacrificing evils like pride, lust, anger and any other evil habits and practices is bali.

13. Yaag (contemplation and inner worship) Worshiping the deity is called Yaag.

14. Japa (chanting) refers to mantra chanting. Japa means the repetition of a mantra so it encompasses all uses of mantras. However, Japa is most commonly associated with a fixed number of repetitions of a mantra. Usually a string of beads, known as a Mala, with a set number of beads would be used to keep count—one repetition per bead. Traditionally, most Malas have 108 “counter” beads. and a “guru” bead used to indicate where to begin and end. Sometimes shorter malas with 54 or 27 beads can be used with longer mantras. The mala used during mantra practice acts as an anchor for the mind. If a bird is flying over the ocean in search of land, it may use a piece of driftwood to rest upon until it finds land. The mala serves the same purpose for the mind as the piece of wood for the bird. It is an anchor. Just as whispered, vocalized and mental repetitions are used to stay with the practice, the mala too is used to stay focused. The movement of the mala keeps track of time and the numbers of repetition. The movement also holds your mind, and does not allow it to slip. So a mala should always be used during

mantra sadhana. There are five different kinds of malas accepted in the yogic tradition – tulsi, rudraksha, rakta-chandan (red sandalwood), shwetachandan (white sandalwood), and crystal. Traditionally, it is believed that Vaishnavas use tulsi, Shaivas use rudraksha and Shaktas use crystal. But this is a religious belief; a spiritual aspirant can use any kind of mala to attain different states.

Japa is of three kinds. Japa done aloud is the lowest; Japa done in low tones is the middle; Japa done mentally is the best.¹⁸

15. Dhyana (meditation) – when concentration becomes deeper it is called meditation. Uninterrupted stream of the content of consciousness is meditation.¹⁹

16. Samadhi (absorption) is the state of self-realization. It is the complete absorption of the individual self with the supreme self. In this state the awareness of the external world is absent. There is the experience of the eternal self, akhanda swarup. This is the level of consciousness called samadhi, trance or turiya. That state becomes Samadhi when there is only the object appearing without the consciousness of one's own self.²⁰ It may sound a lot but for the sincere practitioner, who continues to practice step-by-step, it all comes together naturally.

Science of Mantra

The science of Mantra as developed by the –Rishis – the Indian sages of yore, is a science based on the realization of the omnipotent power of Shabd(word)– the eternal sound. The limitless power of Sabda enfolded in the specific compilation of the Vaidika Mantras was deeply realized by the rishis. They were therefore known as mantra Drusta – the visionaries of mantras. They had experienced, experimented and expanded enormous applications of the science of mantras. While teaching different modes of mantra-sadhans, they had also warned concerning the precautions

necessary to avoid any improper use of such mantras.²¹

Every mantra in the Vedas has been linked with a Devta that symbolizes an eternal energy field of specific flow of cosmic consciousness. Whenever a mantra is enunciated or chanted in a specific rhythmic manner, its associated sonic waves expand in a specific pattern and after traversing across the layers of energy-particles in the surrounding space reach and penetrate the corresponding cosmic nuclei of divine powers. The subtle energy of mind generated through meditation while performing a japa of the mantras helps transformation of the sound waves into electromagnetic waves for necessary cosmic transmission. The collision of the mantra-waves with the corresponding divine power center results in the reflection of the desired (as per the aim of the associated mantra) cosmic radiation. The latter return back to the physical and subtle energy cores in and around the Sadhak, or, reach at some other 'point' in the universe as directed by the specific chanting pattern of the corresponding mantra.

The above process of transmission and reception or 'communication' between the sadhaka and the divine center(s) is slow and shows negligible effects in the beginning. Its impact gradually increases in a compounded manner with the dedicated practice and perfection in the Upasana and japa of the mantra along with a rise in the intrinsic faith, mental piety and concentration and continence of the sadhaka

Savita – the subtle body, the eternal source of energy for the Sun – is supposed to be the devata of the great Gayatri Mantra. A truly devoted, spiritual sadhaka of this mantra receives the vital energy, inspiration and divine illumination from Savita. Apart from the natural gains of the physical and mental vigor and discerning intellect, his attitude gets enlightened and likewise the solar rays,

his inner mind can envision and reach (realize) everything existing in the universe. The internal piety and moral strength of sentiments and the divine faith of the sadhaka help faster attainment of these miraculous powers through the japa-sadhana of the Gayatri Mantra.

The Gayatri Mantra is regarded as supreme of all the Vaidika Mantras. In terms of linguistic meaning, it is a universal prayer of arousal and illumination of righteous intellect in all. Many other divine prayers written in different languages might also imply similar meanings, but it is the unique sonic pattern that gives a unique importance to this mantra.

The subtle sonic pattern of this mantra is supposed to generate specific vibrations in the gross as well as the mental and causal bodies of the sadhaka and in his surroundings. These vibrations empowered by the spiritual force of the sadhaka have purified inner self conjugate with the extrasensory impulse of the supreme consciousness.... The single lettered (bija) mantras like Hrim, Klim, Aim, Hum, Yam, Fat etc. are of basic importance in the science of mantras because of the special conscious as well as 'mechanical' (tantrika) effects of their sounds. The cyclic enunciation (or chanting) under different rhythms, pitches and intensities is practiced in the japa of a mantra to make different uses of its (mantra's) sonic vibrations. In ManasikaJapa the mantra is uttered silently (mentally); the level of 'perceivable' sound increases gradually (e.g. from the silent movements of the lips and the tongue to murmuring and humming) in the upansu and vacikajapas. As described in the previous sections, the Vaidika Mantras also have specific swaras (classical musical accents) associated with them that offer varieties in their japa and hence in their effects.... The SamaGana (vaidika modes of collective chanting) of these mantras indeed creates

powerful currents with latent but inducing impacts at the physical and the subtle levels of matter and consciousness.

The consistent japa of the mantras has dual effects: externally, it generates vibrations in the surrounding space and internally, it stimulates the extrasensory energy centers (chakras) and subtle endocrine glands inside the body. The impact of these effects amplifies significantly with continuous repetition of such rhythmic enunciation at a constant pace. The internal creative effects of japa can be illustrated by simple analogy with the functioning of a typewriter. When a key of a typewriter is pressed, its impact results in the printing of the corresponding letter or symbol on the paper. Similarly, the vibrations produced by silent or vocal enunciation of a syllable or combinations of the syllables of a mantra make specific impressions on the subtle energy centers and nerve-bundles and stimulate them. Regular repeated practice of the same japa under adept disciplines is indeed the root of the enormous potential gained during different spiritual experiments of Mantra-Vijnana. That friction gives rise to the thermal and electrical (static) energies – is well known to every student of physics. The internal vibrations produced by the sonic waves of japa create similar effects and activate the otherwise unused latent glands and extrasensory energy centers inside the body of the sadhaka.²²

The advanced scientific applications ranging — from remote control of the space-crafts by electromagnetic waves; delicate surgeries to heavy metal cutting by the Lasers.... etc. clearly illustrate that it is not the equipment or the device but it is the 'power' of the (energy) waves that induces such wonderful effects. The supernatural effects of the supersonic waves generated by the japa of mantras are more remarkable and are still beyond the reach of the advanced

instruments (generators and the sensory devices) developed so far.²³

The japa yoga aims at using the physical as well as the spiritual power of sabda with the help of the specific sonic patterns of the mantras. The subtle energy waves generated by the japa of a mantra reach at the specific cosmic center (linked with the devata of the mantra) and attract the supernatural currents of cosmic consciousness in proportionate amounts. The whole universe is like an ocean of the electromagnetic and conscious energy waves. The flow of thoughts and sentiments takes place via the latter kind of omnipresent waves. The sublime energy waves produced along with the 'physical' sound waves by the japa are spread in the cosmos and they reach back (with an amplified impact) to the sadhaka after being superimposed and further 'electrified' by the subtle waves of similar nature existing along their cosmic path.... Sounds are vibrations. They give rise to definite forms. Each sound produces a form in the indivisible world, and combinations of sound create complicated shapes. Repetition of a Mantra has a mysterious power of bringing about the manifestation of the Divinity, just as the splitting of an atom manifests the tremendous forces latent in it. When a particular Mantra appropriated to a particular god is properly recited, the vibrations so set up create in the higher planes a special form which that god ensouls for the time being. The repetition of the Panchakshara Mantra - Om NamoSivaya - produces the form of Lord Siva. The repetition of Om Namu Narayanaya, the Ashtakshara Mantra of Vishnu, produces the form of Vishnu.²⁴(Saraswati,Swami Satyananda,1974)

The Scientific Basis of recitation of Gayatri Mantra.

The Gayatri mantra is considered one of the most universal of all mantras, invoking the universal Brahman as the principle of

knowledge and the illumination of the primordial Sun. The mantra is extracted from the 10th verse of Hymn 62 in Book III of the Rig Veda.

ॐ भूर्भुवस्वः । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् । भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि । धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्

OmBhūrbhuvaswahaTatsaviturvarenyambhar
rgodevasyadhīmahidhiyoyonahaprachodayāt

Meaning: O God, the giver of life, remover of pains and sorrows, bestower of happiness, and creator of the universe; Thou art most luminous, pure and adorable; we meditate on Thee; May Thou inspire and guide our intellect in the right direction.

Yugrishi Shriram Sharma Acharya' observes:

"A person can proceed rapidly on the path of spiritual growth and self-realization through the devotion of Goddess Gayatri the Supreme creative energy of the Divine. The Mantra endows its devotee with true wisdom. TheSadhna of Gayatri is the worship of Supreme Knowledge. It is my personal experience and firm belief that those who worship Gayatri will never be lacking in spiritual enlightenment and worldly happiness."Acharya, Sri Ram Sharma.(2005)²⁵

The 24 letters of the Gayatri Mantra have been designed in such a way that the mere chanting of this Mantra activates subtle energies in the subtle nerves (Naadis) of the tongue, throat, brain centre and palate. It is the only Mantra which when chanted opens up and links all the Chakras present in our body. No other Mantra does the same. The Naadis (subtle nerves) of the mouth transport the impulses of Gayatri Mantra chanting, to the various Chakras of the body thereby creating an uninterrupted flow of divine energy.

Just as when one hits the keys of the keyboard of a computer, a corresponding alphabet gets typed on our computer screen, so also the moment the mouth chants the

Gayatri Mantra, various Naadis (subtle nerves) of the mouth transport the energy impulses originating in the mouth to the various Chakras of the body. They in turn get activated, resulting in the increased manifestation of the subtle energies present in our body. Apart from the Chakras various Bhramars, Kamals (lotus centres), Granthis (energy knots), Sansthans (other energy centers) also get awakened during the chanting of Mantras. In this manner the chanting of the Gayatri Mantra subtly commences and awakens the subtle energy centers of the body thereby benefiting the devotee extraordinarily both materially and spiritually. As righteous intellect, and discriminating faculties develop it is only natural that physical, material and spiritual benefits follow. The Gayatri Mantra Sadhana indicates a well-organized scientific process of spiritual growth. GayatriSadhana is not based on blind faith but has a solid scientific basis to the same. Acharya, Sri Ram Sharma. (2012)²⁶

Healing Power of Mantras

Mantras are specific sounds or vibrations whose effects are known. When either chanted aloud or repeated silently, they can create a desired effect in any area of your physiology or life—for healing, transformation, and inner awakening. This is, of course, a vast subject and there are mantras for everything from curing snakebites to spiritual awakening.

Mantra is a sacred utterance of word, sound or short phrase which has psychological and spiritual influence. Continuously repeated either aloud or silently, a Mantra penetrates the depths of the unconscious mind and helps in attaining spiritual connection and also assists the body in healing itself. OM (AUM) is the most basic mantra or Seed Mantra. The single word OM produces the sound and vibration which allows you to feel one with the nature. The vibrations of

the mantra chanting repeatedly stimulate the energy chakras. Desired health benefits can be achieved if we chant a particular mantra by focusing attention on the specific part of the body which is to be healed. In short we can say that Mantra is the living force of God and very useful for healing besides spiritual growth.

Chanting of MahaMrityunjayaMantra (ॐ

त्रयम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम् ।

उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान् मुक्त्योर्मुक्षिय मामृतात् ॥

Om TrayambakamYajamahe,

SugandhimPushtiVardhanam,

UrvarukmivBandhanat,

MrityurmokshayaMamrata) generates

divine vibrations that ward off all the negative and evil forces and creates a powerful protective shield.

MahaMrityunjaya rejuvenates, bestows health, wealth, long life, peace, prosperity and contentment. The healing and nourishing forces enter the human body through foods, medicines, supportive emotions, and encouraging thoughts. The

MahaMrityunjaya Mantra attracts these forces and creates an inner environment to enhance their effectiveness. Have faith and Lord Shiva is there to protect you.

Various yogic and spiritual scriptures (Yoga Sutra-4.1, 1.28, 1.29, Manusmriti 4.46, Mahabharat Ashwa-44.8, Linga Puran-8.5.124, 125) state that Mantra chanting has been useful for physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. The Yogavashistha-6.1.8.1.39 states that: Just as eating of Harre makes the digestive system active, in the same way by strong feeling the words of Pranav Mantra affect the body. Vedas (Rigveda-7.59.12, Yajurveda-3.60) state that Mahamritunjaya Mantra is powerful enough to relieve one from all sorts of physical and mental problems. It is powerful enough to face even the death.

several researches have been conducted on the effect of Mantra which shows the

healing power and therapeutic significance of mantra. Some of them are as follows:

Joshi, Prof. Rajni, P.(2007): The word mantra in Sanskrit refers to a specific structure of sonic patterns coded in syllables and vowels, that works as a spiritual tool to liberate the mind from ignorance, illusion and impure tendencies. The specific configurations of syllables and the corresponding combinations of phonemes in the mantras make the letters powerful carriers of the energy of sound. While ancient scriptures have always extolled the virtues of mantra, several renewed scientists have also made experiments in various modern laboratories to understand the science of mantra.²⁷

Gore, M.M. (1997) studied “ physiological response to two different types of OUM recitation”. This study was done on 6 students who chanted high pitched OMKARAS 10 times per day on different days. Polygraph recording was taken before and after. It was found that in the high pitched OMKARA eye movement and muscles of chin activity were significantly high, while in low pitched OMKARAS eye movement, blood pressure and heart rate were decreased, but it was not significantly low.²⁸

Oster, Lolin F. (1996) studied the “effect of mantra chanting and meditation on Nervous system” and found that mantra chanting and meditation affects parasympathetic nervous system which shows the psychological changes which is responsible for relaxation.²⁹

DheeraGovind Das. (1999). studied the” effects of the “Hare Krishna” Mantra on stress, Depression and the Three Gunas”. The Hare Krishna mantra group subjects were made to chant Hare Krishna mantra 25 minutes (3 round) each day for 28 days. In this study 62 subjects (between age group 24 to 63 yrs.) were taken. To measure stress “Index of clinical stress” and to measure

depression “General contentment scale” and to measure Trigunas, “Vedic Personality Inventory” were used. Pre-Test and Post Test were conducted. The results showed that Sattva was significantly increased and stress, depression, rajas, tamas were dramatically decreased. According to DheeraGovind Das mahamantra can be used to reduce stress, depression as clinical intervention.³⁰

Sharma, R.S.(1994) a senior medical scientist and cardiac specialist studied the effects of Gayatri Mantra chanting. 20-20 Subjects were taken in both groups i.e. controlled group and experimental group. In both group’s diet and way of living was kept the same. The experimental group chanted Gayatri Mantra for three yrs. After every three months’ data was collected. It was found that in controlled group the subjects were the victim of heart disease, high blood pressure, angina, cardio vascular diseases etc. whereas the Gayatri mantra chanters were comparatively very well.³¹

Pranav, Dr. Pandya.(2006) emphasizes that during Gayatri mantra recitation, the vibration of mantra vibrates the whole bone structure of thoracic cage and that the vibration reaches down to the lungs. This vibration also produces very significant effects on the endocrine glands. These vibrations reach the deep lying tissues and nerve cells. It increases the circulation of the blood. The vibrations which multiply all through the body produce electro genetic waves.³² The entire body relaxes under the influence of this internal vibrio massage, which increases energy and concentration and reduces depression and anxiety.

David, B. Wolf. (2003) conducted an experiment to determine the effects of chanting the Mahamritunjay Mantra on stress, depression and the three gunas-Sattva(enlightenment), Rajas (passion) and Tamas(inertia) described in the Vedas and the Gita as the basis of human psychology.

The primary hypotheses of the study was that the mahamantra group would increase sattva and decrease stress, depression, rajas and tamas significantly more than the other groups. Participants were randomly assigned to a maha mantra group, an alternate mantra (placebo) group, and a control group. ANOVA results supported these hypotheses from pretest to post test at $p < .05$ for all dependent variables except rajas. The result shows that the mahamantra has potential in addressing problems related to stress and depression and that it be considered as one possible component of a spiritual approach to social work practice.³³

Rana, Dr. Pragya.(2009). Conducted a research on the “Effect of Mahamritunjaya mantra on mental states.” 100 P.G. students of DevSanskritiVishwavidyalaya were taken as samples i.e. 50 experimental group and 50 control group. The experimental group chanted Mahamritunjaya mantra for 6 months. The control group was not given any mantra for recitation. The result showed that there was a significant decrease in the levels of anxiety, stress and depression of girls due to mantra recitation. The reduced level of anxiety was the result of the change in the physical and psychological state of the subjects through mantra chanting. The mantra recitation decreased the saturation of lactate in blood, which represents the reduction of anxiety. Mahamritunjaya mantra recitation is also helpful in reduction of stress. Mantra recitation with meditation makes us more relaxed and less reactive to stressful situations and events. It is also helpful in overcoming depression. The consistent recitation of the mantra creates energetic vibrations which directly affects the consciousness and surroundings of a person. The vibrations of mahamritunjaya mantra produces very significant effect on the endocrine glands. These vibrations reach the deep lying tissues and nerve cells which increase the circulation of blood and

produce electromagnetic waves which increase energy concentration and reduce depression and anxiety. It also helps control the secretion of hypothalamus, pituitary and adrenal gland. The entire body is relaxed under the influence of this internal vibriomassage. It takes the afflicted person to a state of optimism and positivity in attitude and life.³⁴

Alfred A. Thomas, Doctorate in Medicine from Paris School of Medicine found that chanting sounds have therapeutic effect on the body. Chanting calms the bodily system and activates the body’s natural process. It also helps in getting rid of addictions like smoking, alcohol and drugs. Marian Diamond, a professor of Anatomy at the University of California, Berkeley also confirms that chanting helps in increasing immune system.

Dr. Watkins, a senior lecturer in neuroscience at Imperial College London, in the recently carried out research demonstrated that musical structure of chanting can have a significant and positive physiological impact. The chants are said to reduce stress levels, lower blood pressure, increase performance hormones level as well as reduce anxiety and depression. Dr Alan Watkins also confirmed that when we chant, the vibration of the sound calms the nervous system. It also reduces stress and increases memory power.

Practice of Mantra Yoga

Select any Mantra or Name of God, preferably that given to you by your Guru, and repeat it from 108 to 1,080 times daily (one to ten malas). Later on you can chant more malas as per your capacity, time and as per any specific anushtan. Always keep your Guru-Mantra a secret. Never disclose it to anyone.

It is better to stick to one Mantra only. If Lord Krishna is your deity, you See Lord Krishna in Rama, Shiva, Durga, Gayatri and

in everyone. As God is the one but He is known by different names. Hence your love, faith and trust in your deity and Mantra is much more important. Without faith and trust mantra chanting bears no fruit.

Get up early in the morning at 4 A.M. and do Japa for two hours. The early morning period (Brahmamuhurta) and dusk is the most favourable time for Japa and meditation. This is when Sattva (purity or steadiness) is predominant.

Take a bath or wash your hands, feet, face and mouth before sitting for Japa in the morning. At other times this is not absolutely necessary. Do Japa whenever you have leisure, at the three junctions of the day - morning, noon and evening - and before going to bed.

Face east or north during the practice. This enhances the efficacy of the Japa. Sit on any asana made of kusha or rug. Spread a piece of cloth over it. This conserves body-electricity. Sit in a separate meditation room or in any suitable place, such as a temple, on a river bank or under a banyan or peepul tree.

Maintain a steady pose. Attain mastery of the posture. You must be able to sit in Padmasana, Siddhasana or Sukhasana for three hours at a stretch.

Resolve to complete a certain minimum number of malas before leaving your seat.

Recite some prayers before starting the Japa. A rosary is a whip to goad the mind towards God. Use a rudraksha or tulsi mala of 108 beads.

Do not allow the mala to hang below the navel. Keep the hand near the heart .

The mala must not be visible to you or to others. Cover it with a towel or handkerchief, which must be clean and washed daily.

Use the middle finger and the thumb of the right to roll the beads. The use of the index finger is prohibited.

Do not cross the meru while rolling the beads. Turn back when you come to it.

Sometimes do the Japa without a mala. Use a watch.

Do mental Japa for a time. When the mind wanders, do the Japa aloud, or whisper the Mantra for some time and come back to mental Japa again as soon as possible.

When you repeat the Mantra, have the feeling or mental attitude that the Lord is seated in your heart, that purity or Sattva is flowing from the Lord into your mind, that the Mantra is purifying your heart, destroying desires, cravings and evil thoughts.

Do not do the Japa in a hurried manner, like a contractor who tries to finish his work in a short time. Do it slowly with feeling, one-pointedness of mind and single-minded devotion.

Pronounce the Mantra distinctly and without any mistakes. Repeat it neither too slowly nor too fast. Increase the speed only when the mind wanders.

Be vigilant and alert during Japa. Stand up when sleep tries to overpower you.

Try to associate the Japa with the rhythm of the breath and meditate in the form of your Deity. Keep a picture or idol of the Deity in front of you. Think of the meaning of the Mantra while repeating it.

Regularity in Japa Sadhana is most essential if success is to be achieved. Sit in the same place and at the same time every day.

Do not beg for any worldly objects from God while doing Japa. Feel that your heart is being purified and that the mind is becoming steady by the power of the Mantra and the Grace of the Lord.

Observe silence and avoid distractions, calls and engagements.

It is important not to leave the place at once after the Japa is over and mix with everyone or plunge into worldly activity. Sit very quietly for at least ten minutes, humming some prayer, remembering the Lord and

reflecting upon His infinite love. Then, after devout prostration, leave the place and commence your routine duties and activities. In this way the spiritual vibrations will remain intact.

Continue the current of Japa mentally at all times, whatever be the activity in which you are engaged. Carry on your Sadhana with tenacity and perseverance, without a break. Realize the glorious goal of life and enjoy supreme bliss.

Conclusion

Mantra Yoga is the union of the individual soul with the supreme soul by the chanting of the manta. It is said that one can achieve the ultimate salvation or union with supreme consciousness by chanting the mantras, which is the aim of mantra yoga.

The manta itself is Devta (deity), manifesting in a sound body. Constant repetition of the mantra with faith, devotion and purity bestows on the aspirant illumination, peace, eternal bliss and salvation. By constant repetition of the manta the aspirant imbibes the virtues and powers of the deity that presides over the mantra. Mantras are in the form of praise and appeal to the deities, craving for help and mercy.

For example the chanting of Gayatri Mantra bestows on the aspirants discrimination and salvation. Recitation of Surya Mantra bestows health, long life, vigour, brilliance. Recitation of Aditya-hridaystrotam in the early morning is highly beneficial. Lord Rama conquered Ravana through the recitation of this strotam imparted by Agastya Rishi. Rhythmical vibrations of

sound give rise to forms. Recitation of the mantras gives rise to the formation of the particular figure of the deity.

In fact, mantra yoga is an exact science. Every mantra has Rishi to whom it was revealed for the first time and who gave this mantra to the world. He is the Drashta or seer for this mantra. As sage vishwamitra is the rishi for Gayatri Mantra. Secondly, the mantra has a metre (chhandas), which governs the inflection of the voice. Thirdly, the mantra has a particular devta or a supernatural being, as its informing power. This devta is the presiding deity of the manta. Fourthly, the mantra has a bija or seed which gives a special power to the mantra. The bija is the essence of the mantra. Fifthly, every mantra has the Shakti. The Shakti is the energy of the form of mantra, i.e. of the vibration-forms setup by its sound. These carry the man to the Devta that is worshipped. The devotees get darshan of the IshtaDevta (deity).

By the practice of mantra japa, the aspirant's conscious will is awakened and through the willpower everything is accomplished. Different mantras have different benefits. All those who practice japa of Gayatri mantra will find it very beneficial for the health and intellect. For skin diseases or iron deficiency, anushthana of the Surya or Sun mantras is beneficial if practiced properly. Through mantra one can remove disease, sorrow and restlessness. Mantra is so powerful that within a moment one can change bad habits also. It is important for people to study and understand this science in the correct way.

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