

Mantra for the Wellbeing

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ABSTRACT

The Mantra is the sacred sound or syllable to communicate with God and Goddess for the accomplishment of goals. During vedic times, for inner peace, calmness and to connect with the almighty sages used to chant mantras. The mantras are being chanted to solemnise and ratify hindu rituals during Yagna and Arati. The chanting mantras activate brain cells and rejuvenate the mind by which tranquillity of the mind can be attained. The present paper is an attempt to highlight upon the meaning and significance of mantra, as well as its impact upon the body, mind and soul.

Keywords: Mantra, Wellbeing, God, Chanting

Mantras are appeal in the form of prayer to deities for help as well as mercy in order to control and command the evil spirit. The chanting of mantras has been a part and parcel of the Indian lives since ages. There are various ways by which one can practice in mantra yoga. The chanting of the yogic mantras influences positively the physiological and psychological functioning of the body. A mind wants variety and gets disgusted with monotonous practice, so the mantras may be chanted, whispered or mentally repeated. Even continuous repetition of Japa without bhava has significant effect on body and mind. There are different types of Japa,

- Manasika Japa – Mental repetition of mantra
- Vaikhari Japa – Verbal louder repetition of mantra
- Upamshu Japa – Repetition in a whisper (softer voice) or humming of mantra

The individual or Jiva attains free from soul of the individual sin and enjoy heaven. It is considered as the final liberation for attaining the four types of fruit (Chaturvaga) such as i) Dharma, ii) Artha, iii) Kama & iv) Moksha. As it is attained through mental process, it is called mantra. The chanting of mantras acts as a tool to assist the human being to mediate and stimulate spiritual awakening. Mantras are considered as a tool which liberate the human beings from all types of ignorance, sorrows and illusion. One's life can be transformed from agonies to joys by chanting mantras.

Mantra: Concept

The term mantra is a Sanskrit word. It is derived from the word “mann” (root of mantra) which means mind and “tra”- meaning to protect, free from bondage of sansar or phenomenal world. **Mantrayate iti mantra – mantra** refers to Mananan means meditations

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/constant thinking or recollection. Mantra is a combination of syllables or words and basic incantation to deliver us to supreme power. It is considered as a sacred sound and spiritual tool for the mental, emotional and spiritual awakening. The recitation of the mantra, rhythmical vibrations and sound give rise to the forms. It enables the formation of the image or figure of the deity in the mind of the human being. Mantra may have a meaning or sublime thought. The arrangement of syllables sometimes gives out meaning where as in other times it is arranged so haphazardly that intelligible meaning cannot be made out of it, such as the mantras like: **Om Namō Narayana, Hari Om Tat Sat.**

Originally, mantra was considered as a form of yoga and was used for enhancing the “hath yoga” or a yoga of posture. Earlier the yoga was practiced with mantra for heightening the spiritual consciousness. Mantra creates positive vibration. When mantras are chanted with proper understanding and conscious state of mind, it gives strength and calmness as the comprehension gives wisdom.

Chanting Mantra and its Significance

The person with logical mind have a problem with those who chant mantra for transforming their life. They used to ask to themselves that:

- Does chanting mantra/ sound / vibration can change one’s life.
- Does it lead to a higher level of freedom?
- Does it ward off negativity?
- Is it beneficial for achieving materials?
- Is it lead to developing the physical and mental health?
- Is it useful for achieving one’s goal and destroying enemy’s goal?

Some people make fun of those who are chanting mantras. Since prehistoric ages mantras and yantras have in existence. In Vedic scriptures, it has been described that once the Devas (Gods) and the Asuras (Demons) argued that which one is superior, Mantras or Yantras? The God regarded the mantras as more powerful whereas demons affirmed Yantras as superior as well as mightier. For materialistic progress and prosperity, we all are using different types of Yantras.

Jnana yogi make fun and laugh at bhaktas. They use his/her intelligence to realize his / her nature. They consider intelligence is important, all other things are stupid. Once Jnana yogi met Lord Shiva and said all the bhaktas keep chanting mantras. Does transcend possible by chanting mantras and why do not you tell them to stop chanting? Lord Shiva by pointing to a crawling worm on the floor said just go the near of the worm and said Shiva Shamboo. Jnana Yogi close to the worm and uttered Shiva Shamboo, then worm died. In the same manner butterfly and deer died. Jnana Yogi asked, is the mantra used for killing others?

Soon after a mother came with the new born child and asking for blessings of Shiva. Shiva looked at the Jnana Yogi and said utter Shiva. Jnana Yogi with apprehension said I do not want to kill the child. The child sat up and spoke “I was worm, with mantra transform to butterfly and with another mantra turned into a deer and with another mantra turned into a human being and with utter one mantra wants to attain the divinity.

The Power of Chanting Mantras

The divine presence of GOD exists in five different forms (Pancha Bhoothangal) such as earth, water, air, fire, and sky. Even though the five different forms are shapeless and

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colorless, but the power emanates from all these five different forms or Pancha Bhoothangal. The vibration is the individual proof of the existence of this power and chanting of mantras create these vibrations. When one chant this mantra the power of “Pancha Boothangal” within him/her gets activated. So, the saints/ sages (Siddars) performed eight different types of divine action by using those Panchatharam such as: i) Vasiyam, ii) Moganam, iii) Startanam, iv) Uchadanam, v) Akasharanam, vi) Vithvesanam, vii) Pethanam, viii) Maaranam. In order to defeat negative energies, for thousands of years, sages and ancestors have been using divine action “Maaranam” by invoking agni (fire).

The power of chanting mantras is derived first from the syllable after that the meaning of the word is formed by the syllables. There are fifty independent syllables. The syllables are mapped in the body, having its own point of origin. The syllables are manifestations of Vak (Rhythms with “Bach” which is the origin of speech). Each of us having cosmic endowment to be creative. Chanting mantras create vibrations and is very powerful like patton tank or atomic bomb. The chanting of mantras – NAMASIVAYA is considered as a supreme mantra, which means: NA- Earth, MA- Water, SI- Fire, VA- Air, YA-Sky

The crux of chanting mantras lies in sound. Even if that is strange (pun-intended) but it is considered all about mantra. The chanting of mantras creates certain vibrations in the body, every cell vibrates with the sound of mantra. For example, the syllable “OM” produces vibrations in abdomen, upper thorax and head. According to mythology the sound “OM” equate with the sound of creation. The vibration was emanated when the supreme power (Brahman) was in motion. The first or primeval sound of the universe is “OM” which sustain the seed of the life.

Chanting of Mantras: Research Findings

The power of chanting of mantra was topic of research by the Italian researcher namely, Dr. Luciano Bernradi, working as Associate Professor in the department of Internal Medicine of University of Payja. His paper was published in the British Medical journal. In his studies he found when the participants recited vocally two mantras in a louder voice such as i) Sanskrit mantra- Om Mani Padme Om, ii) Latin Prayers – Ave Maria, have both physiological and psychological benefits. Chanting of two mantras loudly by the participants reach six breaths in a minute which leads to natural rhythmic fluctuations of the human circulatory system.

Modern Neuroscience discover the relationship between chanting of mantras and its impact on the function of the mind. The frontal lobe (responsible for thought, learning, perception, and emotion of the human brain) is activated when we chant mantra. The vibrations during chanting mantra create brain patterns. In order to transmit messages brain uses certain fluids and reciting mantras activate the fluid in a positive way. According to psychologists, chanting mantras have positive impact (positivity and inner peace) on the human brain by releasing stress hormones. Recitation of mantras synchronize breathing, both lengthening as well as slowing cardiovascular rhythms. It not only improves heart function but also improve oxygenation which resulting feeling of calm and well-being.

Chanting of Gayatri Mantras

Gayatri mantra (GM) is considered as one of the oldest, nearly 20,000 years old divine hymn available in the vedic literature. As Gayatri mantra pertains to sun, as explained by Viswamitra Maharsi in rig Veda, it is also known as Savitr mantra. It is an effective validated and standard tool for physical, emotional and spiritual awakening. It is useful for behavioral changes of the person which leads to healthy life style.

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The effect of chanting mantras on the mental health is well researched. It is also well documented in the religious literature in ancient era, but due to lack of scientific validation it is not being popularized. Gayatri mantra (GM) consists of twenty-four letters and each letter provides conscious energy as well as magnetic field in the human body.

According to Karnik (1983) the impact of GM on human body is due to specific syllables of the mantra. The chanting of mantras pressures on tongue, lips, vocal cords and, palate. Continuous and repeated chanting of 24 syllables of GM creates resonance in the nerve as well as nadis of the body. It not only creates electromagnetic wave in the body, but also attracts the current of the sun, God of energy. Due to positive impact on the physiological and psychological functioning of the body, the students are advised to chant mantras before their formal studies.

The chanting of vedic mantras not only enhance the attention but also increase the blood supply to the brain, concerned with the memory (recallability and organisationability). Studies demonstrate that the chanting of mantra activate medial frontal gyrus which in turn increase visuo-spatial attention. Similarly, activation of i) left lateral middle frontal gyrus, ii) right angular gyrus and iii) right supramarginal gyrus also enhance visuospatial attention. Chanting of GM also increase the spatial and verbal memory which corroborate the findings of the study on chanting of Gayatri Mantra of Narayan and Venugopalan (2018). Research findings also state that chanting of GM has significant effect on attention, memory, anxiety and mental state. It also improves learning power, concentration, peace, eternal power and quality of life.

Chanting of AUM Mantra

In Hindu religion Aum/OM is considered as sacred sound which means Atman -soul (Self within) and Brahman – divine, supreme spirit, ultimate reality, cosmic principles. The symbol AUM/OM consists of three letters which symbolizes:

- A - Conscious state of the mind
- U - Dream state of the mind
- M - Dreamless sleep state of the mind and spirit.

The entire symbol with crescent and dot combines all the three states and transcends them. Aum represents both aspects of the god such as i) Unmanifest (Nirguna), ii) Manifest (Saguna). It is called Pranav which pervades throughout the life and run through Om Prana or Breath.

By chanting the AUM/OM creates sensation & resonance in:

- i) **AAAA** - nervous system in the stomach and chest region.
- ii) **OOOO** - throat, and chest region.
- iii) **MMMM** - nasal cavity and brain region

When it chants all together, it activates stomach, spinal cord, nasal and brain region. From abdomen energy moves to the brain, and activating spinal chord and brain. Then it activates all the chakras present in the body which in turn benefitted physically, mentally and spiritually. The sound of AUM creates vibration in the body and activate all the chakras of the body which establishes connection with GOD. AUM represents Brahman which has three qualities such as immortality (Satya), Consciousness (Chitta) and Bliss Body (Anand). The reciting of the word “OM” which also align our body vibes with the universe. The

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mantra OM is the ocean of energy and it optimally energizes the function of the body. As we exist in the physical plain OM transcends the confines of the physical body by connecting the individual consciousness with cosmic consciousness.

Chanting Mantras for Meditations

Meditations is all about entertaining powerful thought in mind instead of allowing the mind to roam. With the help of mantra mind can be brought back to track. Mantra can be used verbally or recited loudly or by soft whispering incantations with the vibrations of vocal cord or silently in mind. The lowest form of use of mantra by the beginners is verbal repetition but silent repetition is considered to be the most potent as it does not make the mind switch off or sleeping. The ten minutes practice of mantra mediation create physical relief and also enhancing immune function. The whole gamut of mantras has been used by spiritually empowered rishis since ages.

CONCLUSION

The benefits and power of mantra is very intense. The mantras are the energy of cosmic sound which can reorient the mental tendencies. It has amazing potential of healing physical and mental ailments. Each word or phrases of mantra can transcend the mind and emotions which has positive effect on body, mind and inner self. The syllables/words/ phrases of mantra possess unique healing potential to achieve stillness. The importance of chanting mantras is immense. The intended effect of the mantras can be achieved only when it is chanted with proper pronunciation. A mind can achieve spiritual focus or higher consciousness when the meaning of the mantra combined with rhythm. The energy of the body as well as mind can be liberated and quality of the consciousness can be expanded with regular practice of the techniques of chanting mantras. The effect of the mantras are largely positive and pertaining to mental, physical, and spiritual awakening.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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