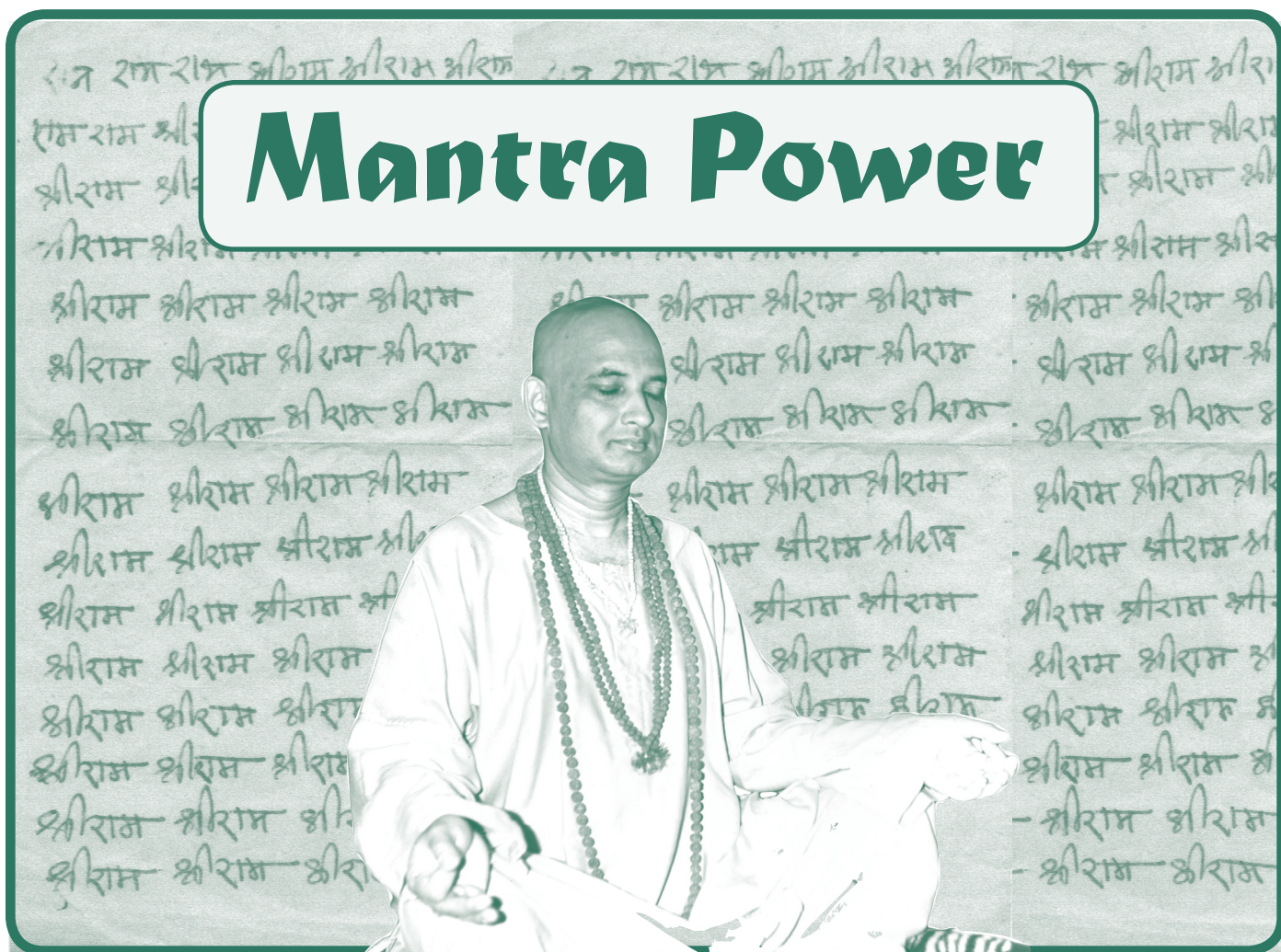


Mantra Power



The link between thoughts and words is exceedingly strong. Because of this, most people cannot think unless they mentally vocalize what they are thinking. Some even find that they talk to themselves whenever they are thinking.

Different words influence the mind in different ways and this has allowed people to choose particular word patterns to create certain effects. It is on this basis that languages have evolved. For example, if you want to create

a melodious effect, you speak with more vowel letters. If you want to be more jarring in your speech, you choose harsh consonant letters. See, for example, what will happen to your mind if you repeat “RARR” over and over again, as compared to repeating “OM” in the same way.

**By
Swami
Jyotirmayananda**

Grosser thoughts are expressed through grosser words, and more sublime thoughts require more harmonized expressions. Sages in ancient times recognized this vital link between mind and word and, on this basis, mantras were evolved.

The glory of mantra is sung in every religion of the world. Even in the Bible, you will find, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1) So too, the glory of Divine Name has been

suggested in every religion. In India especially, repetition of Divine Name is more elaborately practiced and taught, and Yoga has given a very great importance to it. *Japa Yoga*, or the Yoga of repeating mantra, is a very effective aspect of *sadhana* or spiritual discipline, and is a powerful technique for attaining not only spiritual illumination, but also health and material prosperity.

Mantras and Their Meanings

Mantras have been presented by Sages and Saints as mystic formulas, and each mantra is packed with spiritual implications. A mantra yields two types of meaning: the literal and the mystical. Literally speaking, every mantra is a brief prayer. For example, “*Om Namah Shivaya*” means, “Adorations to Lord Shiva,” and “*Om Sri Ganeshaya Namah*” means, “Adorations to Lord Ganesha.” The scriptures state, “*Mananat Trayate Iti Mantrah*” — “If one were to reflect upon a mantra, it would save him from the world-process: the process of limitation, misery and repeated birth and death.”

Mystically speaking, each mantra is also composed of root-letters, every root-letter having a subtle meaning or

influence on the mind. The mantra, “*Om Namah Shivaya*,” for example, consists of various root-letters, each letter having a particular significance. “*Om*” is the symbol of the Absolute. “*Na*” refers to negation, while “*Mah*” refers to mine-ness. Therefore, “*Namah*” implies negation of mine-ness. “*Shi*” is the symbol of auspiciousness, “*Va*” symbolizes expansion, and “*Ya*” is the root-letter of the heart center and symbolizes communion with the Divine Self in the heart. Thus, a practitioner of the mantra “*Om Namah Shivaya*” invokes the Absolute Self by the sound “*Om*,” and then having negated the sense of mineness, ascends the steps of auspiciousness and expansion and enters into Divine Communion. Thus, through the literal meaning of a mantra, you express your feelings, while through its mystical meaning, you exercise the relationship that exists between verbal sound and mind.

Throughout the scriptures of Yoga, “*Om*” is emphasized as the basic mantra, the Mother of all mantras, and for various reasons is the mystic symbol of the Absolute. When you pronounce “*Om*” (spelled in Sanskrit “*AUM*”), with “*A*” the mouth is open and the sound comes from the bot-

tom of your throat, with “*U*” the sound is shaped by your mouth, and with “*M*” the sound is produced by the lips. “*Om*,” therefore, suggests all the sound expressions possible for a human being.

The Art of Repeating Mantra

Repetition of mantra, as already pointed out, is an intensive form of spiritual movement, and therefore, has an art behind it. Raja Yoga states (I-28), “*Tat Japah Tadartha Bhaavanam*” — “The Divine Name should be repeated with meaning and feeling.” When a person repeats the Divine Name with an internal feeling of devotion, the mantra becomes much more effective.

Firstly, impress your mind with the fact that the name you are repeating is the Name of the All-Encompassing Reality. Then through the persistent repetition of mantra day by day, a pattern will be set up in which you immediately become calm as soon as you begin to repeat your mantra. The moment you introduce the Name of God to your mind, it will become so filled with the Divine Presence that it will allow itself to be thrilled.

Mantra is like a delicious sugar-candy given to a child.

As you continue to repeat mantra secretly within your heart, you begin to enjoy the sweetness arising out of Divine Feeling. You savor the understanding that the name you are repeating is the symbol of God, Who is the all-compassionate, Absolute Self that encompasses all.

You may choose any mantra according to your inclination, and it will be extremely beneficial to you. However, a very important part of *Japa Yoga* (the Yoga of repeating mantra) is mantra initiation by a Guru. Through it, a mystic link is set up between you and your mantra. It is a spiritual process, impressing the mind with the mystic meaning behind the mantra. So, through initiation, you consciously and unconsciously establish the idea that mantra is Divine and through it you are linked to God.

Although you may not always remember every letter and its meaning, your unconscious has picked up the deeper implication. Even repeated unconsciously, a positive force is created through the rite of initiation. Therefore, once your unconscious has that spiritual sensitivity, though you may think you are just mechanically repeating the mantra, it is never so. There

is always an unconscious potency of the mantra.

Further, you must understand that the mantra into which you are initiated is not in conflict with any other Divine Name. Therefore, you can join in repeating or singing the Lord's Name in various ways, without ever developing doubt that other mantras may be better than your own. All mantras have equal potency. However, different mantras are given to different aspirants

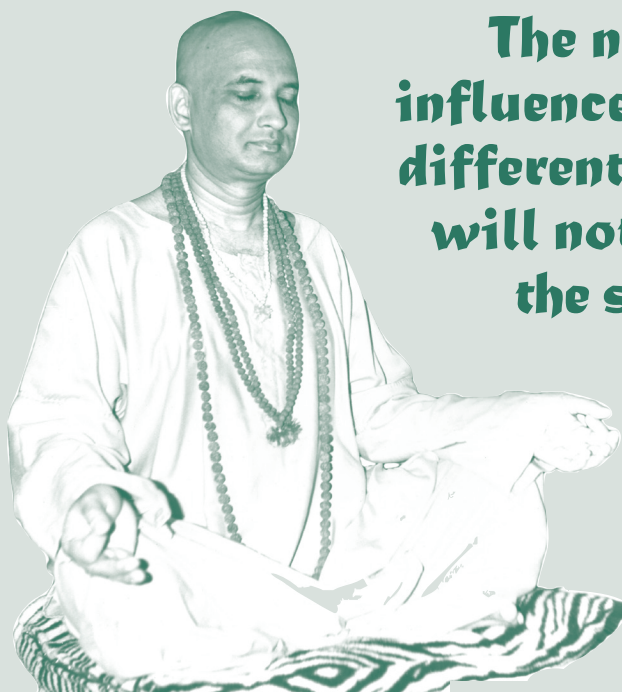
depending upon their personal attitudes, levels of evolution and inclination.

Methods of Repeating Mantra

Mantra can be practiced at any time. You can practice mantra before going to sleep or upon waking up. You can repeat your mantra whenever your mind is not involved in what you are doing, such as

Put on the armor of mantric vibrations and move in the world as a hero.

The negative influences from different people will not affect the serenity of your mind.



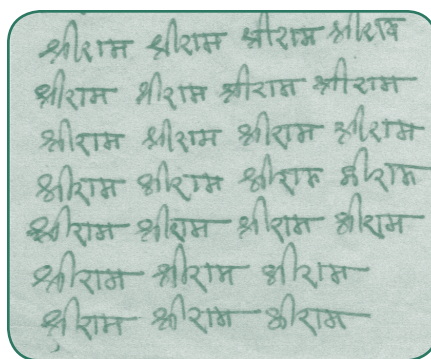
when you are performing mechanical works, eating food, walking, or driving to work. Soon, you will find your mantra beginning to assert itself at all times, unconsciously. Whenever you are calm and quiet, you will find a part of your mind moving towards your mantra, and through it, touching God. Mantra becomes a mystic hand that allows you to reach out and adore God or the Divine Self.

There are many ways of repeating mantra. If your mind is restless, you may repeat your mantra out loud, which is an aid in keeping the mind under control and calming it down. If your mind is calm, you can repeat the mantra semi-verbally, whispering it. But when your mind is very calm, it is best and most effective to repeat the mantra mentally, evoking an intense feeling of devotion and surrender.

You may also sing your mantra or other mantras alone or with other people, in which case it is known as *kirtana*. More generally, *kirtanas* are devotional songs in praise of the Divine Self. They aid the mind in generating a spiritual current of Divine Feeling and are extremely popular in India, where groups of people or families come

together for the sole purpose of singing *kirtanas*.

Likhit japa (writing the mantra again and again) is another important way of repeating mantra that is very effective in bringing about purity of mind and mental concentration. You sit and write your mantra with great patience and steadiness, as if you are touching God. If you were to write just a single page a day, you would find a great benefit in a very short time. You would learn how to relax both physically and mentally.



When you relax along with the repetition of mantra, you are charging your mind with spiritual vibrations, and in the course of time, you will realize what unexpected rewards mantra gives you. When you repeat mantra day by day with devotion, every aspect of Yoga will open up to you automatically.

You will possess a mind that understands the secrets of life.

The repetition of mantra draws the grace of God. It purifies the mind. It draws psychic powers to strengthen your personality. Mantra can be directed towards healing or towards the solution of any problem. It will aid your health. It will give a mystic glow to your face, and you will exert a magnetic influence on others. It will transform your personality. However, the highest purpose of mantra is to lead you towards the unfoldment of Self-realization.

Let your mind enjoy a Divine sweetness while repeating mantra. Gradually, as you continue your practice, your unconscious will become sensitive to the underlying Divine Presence. Through *Japa Yoga* or the Yoga of repeating mantra, you store up a reserve of mental power in your unconscious depths. Mantra is unfailing in its results and is the simplest, most vital technique of spiritual development.

Put on the armor of mantric vibrations and move in the world as a hero. The negative influences from different people will not affect the serenity of your mind. Thus, you will steadily and smoothly ascend the heights of Yoga without much effort and in a short time.