

Mantra Shakti

Colloquially, mantras are referred to sounds, words or tunes which are used during prayers or sadhana. They have some special words or some special tunes that bind the words together. They are a symbolic representation of the Almighty and His energy. Therefore they serve as an aid when one meditates upon the Almighty's form. Mantras also help in protecting one from all kinds of fears. Since it is through processes associated with the mind ('mann') that we learn/ receive them, they are termed as 'mantras'.

‘मननात्तत्त्वरूपस्य देवस्यामिततेजसः।
त्रायते सर्वभयतस्तस्मान्मन्त्र इतीरितः।।’ (कुलार्णवतन्त्र)

Mantras are not just a combination of words or syllables, they have a purpose; a meaning too. Through sadhana when mantras become a form of energy, then this energy has the capability to open the door to TRUTH and result in the experience of the true essence of this universe. Mantra-Shakti (power of mantras) is a result of one's sadhana-shakti. This sadhana-shakti is experienced through sadhana (sadhana = disciplined practices associated with spirituality). When mantra-shakti (power of mantras) and sadhana-shakti (power of sadhana) flow together, a seeker reaps the fruits of his mantra-sadhana.

Shakti (energy) is inherent in the mantras. Hence we can say that there is no difference between Shakti and Mantras. The Almighty's Shakti is primarily divided into two parts; Gyan-Shakti (energy related to Knowledge) and Kriya-Shakti (energy related to actions). Pranav mantra is the seed of Gyan-Shakti and beeja-mantras are the seeds of Kriya-Shakti. Pranav mantras relate to the Nirgun (un-manifested/ formless) nature of Adi Shakti. Beeja Mantras (seed mantras, root mantras, primary mantras) and other various mantras that are part of vedas or other holy scriptures relate to the sagun (manifested/ having-form) nature of Shakti. Since Pranav relates to the Nirgun nature of Shakti it is of utmost importance. It can be called the king of mantras and is a bridge between all other mantras.

We have said earlier that mantras are most commonly used during prayers, worship. There are different forms of Upasanas (worship) and each of them has their own beeja-mantra. These beeja-mantras are of utmost importance for that particular form of worship. The pranav mantras are beyond specific forms of worship. They are beyond pancha-koshas and urdhva sapta-loka (seventh world/ realm). The Beeja-mantras on the other hand can take one only up to the sixth urdhva realm/world. Some Beeja-mantras have the pranav included in them. Such beeja mantras result in worldly prosperity as well as in enlightenment. **Note: In vedas, Loka (realm/ world) refer to different realms of consciousness. There are 7 adho lokas and 7 urdhva lokas. The seventh urdhva loka is the highest realm of consciousness).**

सत्यं वो वचम्यहं देवाः, प्रणवस्थ गतिः खलु।
उच्चैः सप्तोर्ध्वलोकेभ्यस्तयास्ते पञ्चकोषतः।।
गतिश्च बीजमन्त्राणां षष्ठलोकावधि ध्रुवम्।
किन्तु ते प्रणवोपेताः कैवल्याभ्युदयप्रदाः।। (शक्तिगीता)

Pranav Mantras: Aum and Hreem are both called Pranav mantras. Aum is the sound-form of the ultimate Energy (Shakti). It is considered a symbol of Brahma. It represents all the three states; Jagrit (conscious), Swapna (unconscious) and Sushupti (sub-conscious). It is made from 'AA', 'OO' and 'MA'. 'AA' denotes Brahma, 'OO' denotes Hari and 'MA' denotes Rudra. Maheshwari (Devi) is denoted by the half-matra in 'MA'.

‘अकारो भगवानब्रह्माऽप्युकारः स्याद्वरिः स्वयम्।
मकारो भगवानुद्रोऽप्यर्धमात्रा महेश्वरी।।’ (दे. भा. पु.)

Hreem is considered the pranav for Goddess. It denotes the seed form of Maya, which is the source of this entire universe. It is made of three alphabets (Hindi) 'HA', 'RA' and 'EE'. Here 'HA' denotes the gross body, 'RA' the subtle body and 'EE' the causal body and Adi-Shakti who is beyond these three is the energy resulting from their combination 'Hreem'.

‘हकारः स्थूलदेहः स्याद्वकार सूक्ष्मदेहकः।
ईकारः कारणात्माऽसौ हींकारोऽहं तुरीयकम्’ (दे. भा.)

Beeja Mantras: For a seeker the beeja-mantras are a source of energy and divine power. They are comparatively more powerful than other mantras. Example of beeja mantras: 'Lum', 'Bum', 'Rum', 'Yum', 'Hum'; these beeja-mantras are associated with earth, nectar, fire, air and sky.

Both, Pranav and Beeja-mantras are root mantras. That is, other mantras are formed from them. In these root mantras sound/tune is of primary importance. In the other mantras feeling (bhav) is of primary importance.

Since Shakti (energy) is inherent in mantras, through mantra-siddhi (attaining extraordinary powers associated with mantras) one can accomplish any action. There is nothing in this world that cannot be attained through mantras. Mantras can bring glory in worldly matters, in beyond-worldly matters (paar-laukik) and can result in Liberation too. It is through the power of mantras that our ancestors during 'Shraadh' come and accept the food that is given to them. It is through the power of mantras, that the strength of Gods gets manifested during yagnas and brings bliss and wellness to the world. It is through the power of mantras that even Rishis (during Brahma-yagna) and Gods (during Dev-yagna) accrue great strengths and powers which results in bliss for them and for others.

When mantras are linked to actions then they bring prosperity to the 'doer'. When mantras are associated with Bhakti (devotion) then they take the devotee closer to his/her beloved. From mere words and tunes mantras get transformed to energy. This energy of the mantras is due to the words becoming chetan (full of consciousness). At this stage, when the mantras merge with the ishta's form (beloved's form), then at that point the mind automatically dissolves and this paves the path for the experience of Liberation. The importance of mantras is not just in bhakti (devotion). The Vedas are noted for Karmakand (spiritual practices related to actions), Upasanakand (spiritual

practices related to devotion/ worship) and Gyankand (spiritual practices related to knowledge and wisdom). Mantras can result in success in the pursuit of any of these three paths.

Mantras are also very powerful in bringing success when pursuing the path of *Chakras*. (Note: Simply put, *Chakras* are vortex/ centres of energy in the human body, gross & subtle). The manifestation of God or the vision of God associated with a particular chakra is achieved through mantra-siddhi. Depending on the capability/state of the seeker who is pursuing a chakra, the energy associated with that chakra reflects in the seeker as a result of mantra-shakti. Without mantra a chakra results in ignorance (avidya).

Through the power of mantras even in an inert object, consciousness can be produced; as in idols, yantras etc. Through the power of mantras even in a lifeless being life can be induced. Example, through sadhana a dead body can be made conscious.

Just as the society can be categorized into four varnas, so can mantras. Vedic mantras are called Brahman mantras, Tantric mantras-Kshatriya, Mishra mantra –Vaishya and Laukik (worldly) mantras – Shudra. Vedic mantras result in Liberation, Tantric mantras result in other-worldly fortunes, Mishra mantras result in fulfilling of desires and Laukik mantras result in removing obstacles.

‘ब्राह्मणा वैदिका मन्त्रास्तान्त्रिकाः क्षत्रियाः स्मृताः ।
मिश्रमन्त्रास्तथा वैश्याः शूद्रा उक्तास्तु लौकिकाः ॥’

In summary, Mantras are the reason for the creation and dissolution of the universe. Pranav is the first thing that came into being. After Pranav, came the rest of the world or all things that we know and talk about. Since Pranav originated at the beginning of the creation of the universe it is also the source of vedas. Thus the entire universe’s creation is dependent on mantras. At the time of dissolution of the universe the entire visible world transforms into energy associated with words/ sounds. This energy of the words/ sounds transforms to Pranav and all the energy associated with bhav (feelings and emotions) transforms to advait-bhaav (the feeling of non-duality). Hence, mantras are of primary importance during creation, sustenance and even dissolution of the universe.

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