

MANTRA

From the ancient Sanskrit language, Mantra means a sound, word or phrase, specifically for use in meditating. The word Mantra is a compound of 'manas', meaning the mind or to think; and 'tra', meaning instrument or vehicle. The words or phrases of traditional mantra are also from Sanskrit, a language used in many Asian nations and cultures including India, Tibet, Hinduism, and Buddhism.

Following the literal meaning, consider a mantra as a vehicle for the linear, rational, analytical mind to transcend into an enlightened consciousness. Mantra cultivate energy for physical wellbeing, peace of mind, relaxation or personal growth. They are methods to evoke an effect with the power to transform the perception or experience of reality.

The Science of Mantra

Inside the mouth are 84 “energy meridians” which activate while forming the words of a mantra. Those “energy meridians” correlate with nerves, so that as the mantra is spoken, certain nerve signals are triggered to cause a relaxation response in the central nervous system. Medical and scientific evidence shows that mantra can stimulate the release of secretions that promote function of immune and neurological systems. **“Yogic mantras stimulate the secretions of the pituitary gland**, which is located only millimeters from the palate...certain permutations send signals to the command centers of the brain—the **hypothalamus**, and the **pituitary**, primarily, and also to the **pineal gland**, [which] orchestrate a healing response and send out packets of information in the form of **neurotransmitters and chemicals, in the brain and throughout the body,**” writes Dharma Sing Khalsa, M.D., an expert in Kundalini yoga and researcher of Alzheimer’s disease.

The calming or healing effect of mantra is well-summarized as **“sonic formulae that take us beyond, or through, the discursive faculties of the mind and connect our awareness directly and immediately to deep states of energy and consciousness”** by Russill Paul, in *The Yoga of Sound: Tapping the Hidden Power of Music and Chant*.

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The mantra: Om

Pronunciation: A-U-M

(say it as a three-toned single syllable)

Translation: Beyond any direct literal translation, **Om** is said to be the first sound generated by the creation of the universe and continues to resonate in all forms of life. It can be thought of as the foundational vibration of all life, the vibrational frequency of life.

Applications for use:

Generate stability, centeredness, nurturing.

The mantra: Sat Nam

Pronunciation: Saaaaaaaat. Nam.

(say it so *Sat* is extended longer than *Nam*.)

Translation: I Am Truth

Applications for use:

Connect to true nature, true self, express inner truth, cultivate intuition.

Creating a verse of mantra with those two mantra, yields **Sat Nam Om**. That verse carries the resonant message of centering in the truth of one's self.

The mantra: So Hum

Pronunciation: So. Hum.

Translation: I Am That

Applications for use: affirm personal presence, cultivate a more substantial sense of being, create a sense of connection to a greater presence. Easily pairs with inhalation and exhalation.

This mantra dates to the Isha Upanishads, first millennium BCE, from Hindu and Buddhist traditions where it was used as breath mantra and a philosophical aphorism. The meaning of this mantra can be interpreted into modern language as, "I am". "I exist". "I am present"... and following a more spiritual perspective "I am that which is divine".

This quality of balance in this mantra is amplified by structuring a palindromic verse: **So Hum Hum So**. The reflective, unifying, and balancing attributes are thought to translate into a concept of "I am that I am" and "I am that, that is me"; or more generally, the macro is in the micro, and the micro is in the macro, they are in fact one and the same, and are omnipresent.... and following a more spiritual perspective "I am the divine, the divine is me".

