

[Video for mantra](#)

Mantra, Chaptr. 6, *Light and Vibration: Consciousness, Mysticism and the Culmination of Yoga* - Swami Sivananda Radha

In my heart is a song
that speaks of my dream
to be forever with You.

SOUND AND LIGHT ARE VIBRATIONS, and vibrations are different frequencies of Energy. Just as there is always some electricity in the air but it will only manifest as thunder and lightning under certain conditions, this also applies to Kuṇḍalinī, the latent Energy within ourselves. Kuṇḍalinī is both Light and sound, and mantra, the divinely inspired perfect word-sound form, is used to attain Her. Mantra is Śakti power manifesting as sound. Mantras are Kuṇḍalinī herself, for She is all language.

Ancient texts state that the universe came into existence through the power of sound. Even a single sound has enormous power. Think of the range between the sound of thunder and the sound of silence. The most profound expression of that Energy is the cosmic Om, which is the origin of all other sounds and symbolizes the essential spiritual reality. The mantra Om is said to give birth to rays of Light, bringing illumination to the mind.

There are two aspects to every sound – the audible expression, and the subtle sound-essence (śabda) that carries the meaning and arises from the source or eternal spirit. When the spoken word is sounded within and without, contact is made with this power. The chanting and recitation of mantras activates and accelerates the creative spiritual force, promoting harmony in all parts of our being. With practice we are gradually converted into a living centre of spiritual vibration that is attuned to other centres of vibration vastly more powerful.

Mantras are sacred sound syllables in which great wisdom is locked up, wisdom that will reveal itself only if we understand exactly what we are doing. Mantra affects certain areas of the mind, refines the emotions and prepares us to become ever more receptive to Divine influences. If you concentrate on a mantra and recite it with real feeling and a clear mind, it is very difficult not to get involved in the process.

It is usually suggested to recite a mantra a thousand times a day for forty days, to gain results. By this effort we put ourselves on track. It is like an airplane, revving up, taxiing, preparing for take-off. Eventually our efforts will take off until we reach a point of effortlessness. When we reach that point, we have pierced through the barriers – the cultural, social and survival barriers that have been put up around the mind, and we will find the place where Light is always reflected.

Mantra is the most profound speech, sound at its highest, because it takes us away from the ego's selfishness and self-importance. It lifts us beyond all other existence. When that supreme sound really becomes sovereign, it can move the world, change lives, actions and thinking. It can turn us into completely new beings. It is like being clothed in a new cloth of thought and

sound. We hear ourselves speak, but no longer the speech of self-importance in which the mind continuously engages, but the sound of our innermost being.

The mantra has several powers – the power we give it, which reflects back to us; the power of whoever perceived it initially; the power from the millions of people who have practised it since; and also the power from those who have attained liberation through the mantra. As a comparison, you can think that if 500 million people believe in Jesus, Jesus is a power even if he never lived as a human being. The teachings have become personalized through that symbol.

The power of the mantra will become apparent only if practised while keeping all other intrusions out. It is not the practice alone that brings benefit, but maintaining awareness and focus and staying with the words that we are chanting. If you chant OM, make space for OM alone, without other thoughts. Ask what it means that OM is the cosmic sound. Go into depth as you practise, using your intelligence.

Observe the effects of your practice in your daily life. This is the foundation. Doing a long practice by will alone will not bring many benefits. When mantra is practised with the right attitude, sincerity and persistence over time, the results will become a source of strength, joy and happiness. A desire to go further will develop naturally without the force of willpower.

THE POWER OF THE MANTRA sets awareness in motion. Not by automatic, emotionally uninvolved repetition, but by inquiring what the mantra really is. What am I reciting? What happens to the mind when reciting the mantra? When the outside world disappears, the inner world opens up – your own inner world. Then you can destroy the three worlds that you have been so involved in without any true benefit to yourself or others. These three worlds are the emotional world, the mental world and the world of self-created illusions.

The sound of each word has its own vibration, and that, too, has to be clarified. The vibrations are intensely coloured by our emotions. Can we trust emotions? Not really. We all know people who love us today and hate us tomorrow. When emotions are refined, they move into the heart, and the feelings of the heart differ greatly from the emotions. Emotions demand a response from others because there is a feeling that “by myself I don’t know.” When we enter the heart, we do know and need no feedback. It is as if the sun of awareness shines on the lake of emotions, and the water evaporating into air loses its heaviness and power to destroy. When we repeat a mantra, we have to know what the vibrations of our speech generate. Is it all emotions? Is it less emotion? Is there a hint of love? Is there an abundance of love? Is there an intense commitment to love? An intense commitment to achieving what we ask in the mantra?

Mantra chanting is a way to transform powerful emotions into finer feelings to fill the heart. The vibrations of the heart change the rate of vibration of your entire being. With recitation of mantra comes the feeling and the desire to create for this incredible power a place to reside. The Heart Lotus becomes the natural place. The heart, when filled with transcendent feelings, is the best place to experience the pulsation and vibration of the Light.

In mantra practice, the Light takes shape and form and vibrates in the human voice. That is why mantra must be spoken. Our sense of hearing must be influenced. Our sense of hearing must get the message clearly. Much later, when the first experiences have taken place, the words of the mantra can be thought in the mind, inaudibly. This silent language, the conversation we start with the Divine, will be very helpful.

Think about it again. The power of the mantra sets awareness in motion. Think of the vibration that your words create outside your human body. The sound that has been released with the breath: Does it fade, die out or continue the journey? When you chant the mantra, where will the vibrations of the mantra go? Will they reach the walls? Will they penetrate the walls or bounce off? Will the vibrations die? What space and time will it take for the mantra to emanate into the distance?

When I practised mantra for five hours a day, I became keenly aware that sounds have images. I have seen the sounds of Hari Om like soap bubbles, each one having only one colour and that colour vibrating very strongly. Some were tiny bubbles and some were very big. It started me asking: Once a sound is released, where does it go? What would happen if I could travel on one of those bubbles?

The luminosity experienced in mantra practice arises from sounds of a high frequency that affect the brain but are seldom remembered in waking consciousness. It often takes a long time before the mind lets us into that hidden place, to which waking consciousness has no access. Mantra practice is like shooting at a target. To aim at a target requires concentration, motionlessness. Both body and mind need to be under control. You can lose the sensations of the body and dim the report of the sense perceptions, but never lose consciousness. Stay aware.

The training of spiritual practice, after the first wave of enthusiasm is over, often leaves people feeling bored. If they chant a mantra, it becomes a dry, meaningless repetition. However, I found that when the mechanicalness is overcome, the body and a certain portion of the mind settle down. The body comes more under control, which later proves very helpful in meditation. By meditation, I mean not simply sitting and closing the eyes and seeing what happens. It is very difficult to put into words, because the words imply a greater activity inwardly than there actually is. Meditation is a condition that makes us conducive to coming into a greater expectation. A conviction develops that something is going to take place, so one sits in this expectation now that the body has become more responsive to it.

The mantra will eventually become creative in us, revealing itself through the practice. But it takes time to reach that point and it takes discipline to control the aspect of mind that likes to engage and interfere. This part of the mind may have a certain impression of what is going on, but it does not have the understanding. It is important not to demand answers, while it is all right to pose questions. The experience of the mantra revealing itself will answer in a way that is far more precise and detailed than can be expressed in words.

The exploration of sound and consciousness can lead to a whole different understanding of the world we live in and the world we create. At some point we may recognize that each human being is in essence a mantra, a very unique yet cosmic mantra. When we have this perception about ourselves, we cannot help but let go of old patterns and obstacles and enjoy the wonder of being part of the cosmic symphony.