

Mantra/Prayer

Mantras and Prayers are used to induce different states of consciousness. The worldly everyday consciousness is that of people screaming at us, media trying to capture our attention, friends and family telling us what direction to move in, cell phone notifications and ring tones, and our own stories of what we think reality is or ought to be. It is noisy, scrambled and highly judgmental and subliminal.

Here are some examples of modern day mantras that we say or hear everyday:

- That sucks
- Oh, that makes me sick
- That is so sad
- I can't do that
- Karma is going to get you

What if we could move inward and upward to a state of consciousness that is of balance, that has no judgment, that is of peace and contentment, that unites us to loving awareness, that lifts the vibration of the entire planet? A student said to me recently: "I just want to keep my zen!" Well, you can! Mantras and prayers do just this. They move us upward into a more loving vibrational consciousness. This movement upward can last as long as the mantra or the meditation and then again until another lower thought form comes into replace it. So the more we practice 1. The easier it is to get there, 2. The longer we can sustain this balance until some day it is not the practice anymore, it is a way of contented living. The way of Santosha.

In this teaching I wish to:

1. Describe some literal translations of the word *mantra*.
2. Describe some important elements of mantra and prayer.
3. Describe how we can come into a state of equanimity with mantra/prayer.
4. Talk about some specific mantras/prayers and their character.

Literal translation of *mantra* is a thought form that creates some sort of consciousness. We can say the same about the word *prayer*. Mantra/prayer is a thought form that creates some kind of attitude within consciousness. *Consciousness* can be defined as the awareness of the mind of itself and of the world around it. These thought forms bring things into manifestation and are the way in which we create our world. We learned in the Karma teaching that we create our world by our attitude and thus by our thought forms; aham brahmasmi, we are the creator of our lives. Thus we can create a life in which we live in a highly loving, content and balanced state of consciousness by use of mantra/prayer.

Japa is the repetition of a mantra. In japa we are trying to stop the inertia of 'that is so sad' or 'that makes me sick' and change it to a more positive and harmonious thought form and attitude. So hear me when I say inertia. We hear all the time in research and psychological journals how the mind more easily goes towards the negative. Why is that so? Because we have not given the mind positive thoughts to manifest into our consciousness. It is simple really. So when we are performing mantra we not only manifesting harmonious vibrations into our consciousness, and sending these positive vibrations into the universal consciousness or the astral world, we are also changing the inertia of the negative thought forms that are so widely used to maneuver life.

Here are some high vibrational thoughts forms or mantras that we can say everyday:

- Good Morning, I hope your day is all you need it to be!!
- You got this, you got this!!

- Om Shanti, shanti, shantih!
- Love your smile!!
- It is good to see you!!
- Thank you, that means so much!!

There are two important elements of mantra: 1. The kriya (action) and 2. The feeling state. The kriya is the action of saying or thinking the mantra. The feeling state is feeling the vibration of the mantra. So if you are chanting Om Shanti, the peace mantra, there is the actually kriya “Om Shanti” and then there is the feeling state of peace, calm and equanimity. In the SR teaching of Om Shanti we talk about if you can chant the mantra of peace without really meaning it when we are sending peace to those we struggle with, sort of like; ‘Fake it until you make it’? The teaching says that you can. That eventually the feeling state will come. And when the feeling state is there, the mantra becomes even more powerful. There is an equation in yoga; $I \times D = \text{Force}$. The intensity times duration equals force. So if you don’t have the positive peaceful feeling state when you repeat “Om Shanti”, then it will take a lot of repetitions, to have any effect. But when you begin to put a feeling state of peace into your being when you chant then you can change your reality by just a few “shanti, shanti, shantih”s. It is said with prayer, that when you pray, your prayers will be answered when you have the feeling state that your prayers will be answered. So if you are praying that the world finds peace but cussing about how this or that group of people are so hurtful, then the power behind the pray is very small. Instead if you pray that the world will find peace and are thinking that this is something that we can accomplish in this lifetime, then the power behind the prayer is very powerful. **It would be very helpful to have the idea that just by chanting Om shanti, you are already bring more peace and blessings into the universe just by the power of your mind, intentions and actions.**

What we are trying to do with mantra is come to a state of equanimity. Equanimity as defined in the Oxford Dictionary: *Equanimity is a state of psychological stability and composure which is undisturbed by the experience of or exposure to emotions, pain, or other phenomena that may cause others to lose the balance of their mind.* The more you practice mantra/prayer the more the inharmonic mantras leave your consciousness and are replaced by harmonious and high vibrational mantras. Thus you are moving through life in a more loving, peaceful, aware, and balanced state of consciousness that will be there for you when our experiences and everyday living are bombarded with drama, emotions, and negativity from those around us. This is important. Just as with our daily practices of kriya, mindfulness and meditation, when we are coming from a place of peace and balanced awareness we are better able to see imbalance, negativity and emotionality and are able to respond from a balanced and peaceful state of consciousness, or as the definition above says ‘*from a state of psychological stability and composure*’.

There are several types of mantras:

1. Saguna Mantras. These are mantras that send salutations towards a particular deity. Examples of this are:

- *Om Namah Shivaya*; salutations to Shiva.
- *Our Father*; salutations to God the Father.
- *Om Gam Ganapataye*; salutations to Ganesha.

2. Nirguna Mantras. These are mantras that are not toward a particular deity, but more to create a feeling state or vibration. Or acknowledge a feeling state or vibration. Examples of these are:

- *AUM* which is a cosmic sound in which all other sounds can be heard. When we chant AUM or Om we creating a feeling state of all creation or all sound.

- *Aham Brahmasmi*. We are the creator of our lives. When we chant *Aham Brahmasmi*, we are bring about a feeling state of that of the architect of destiny.
 - *So Hum* which means 'I am that'. When we chant it creates a feeling state to awaken the divine and creator in me.
3. Then there are mantras that are used for blessing such as:
- *Om Shanti, shanti, shantih*, 'I send tidings of peace; or I bless this food.
 - *AUM* sending blessings to everyone on all levels.
 - *The Gayatri Mantra* which is the most powerful of all vedic mantras. It begins by an invocation of the three worlds, Physical, mental and spiritual and sends forth blessings that we may see the light of these three worlds but also awaken to the light that is within each one of us.
 - *Sarveshaam Mantra* which sends blessings of goodness, peace, wholeness and auspiciousness to all beings.

These Mantras and others are a part of the SR meetings. The repetition of mantra in our meetings brings about comfort in chanting out loud and done in a sangha (group of people coming together for a common purpose), brings about a feeling state in the space that we are sharing in the moment. If you can get the feeling state and move to a deeper state of consciousness while chanting together, than it is hoped that you can begin to retain the feeling state beyond the SR meeting and through your own practice. As Ram Dass would say 'you can then start to move to channels 3 and 4'. Of which; channels 1 and 2 are of the material world that what we can physically see, touch and judge. These Mantras/Prayers are shared on the SR website under the tab: Mantras/Prayer. The Sanskrit and English translation of the mantra is shared with a brief meaning of the mantra. Also included is a recording of the mantra for correct pronunciation and to chant along with. There is hope that these mantras and others that you may find along your path, can bring you to a state of equanimity, peacefulness, and contentedness.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shantih