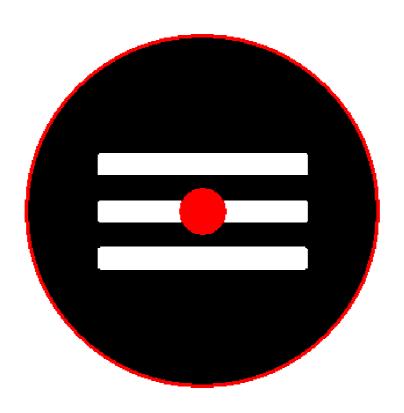
# ON THE TRUE MEANING OF MANTRA



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PREFACE	3
ON THE MANY MEANINGS OF 'OM NAMA(H) SHIVAYA'	4
THE NEW MANTRA YOGA	15
1. THE NEW YOGA OF THE INNER VOICE	15
2. CULTIVATING AWARENESS OF THE INNER VOICE	16
3. LEARNING TO MODULATE YOUR INNER VOICE	17
4. MANTRA MEDITATION IN THE NEW YOGA	18
MANTRA AND THE MYSTERY OF SOUND	20

## **PRFFACF**

This compilation of writings is intended to dispel such grossly degraded teachings on sound and Mantra as currently pervade most of the New Age literature on Yoga and Tantra. The blatant ignorance of these teachings (and their authors' ignorance of the most significant of original tantric treatises on Mantra) makes itself starkly evident in a whole host of ways, of which the following are but one small sample:

- 1. Through unashamed linguistic ignorance of what, phonemically, constitutes a pure vowel as opposed to a double-vowel (diphthong) or triple vowel (triphthong). Thus diphthongs such as /ai/ as in 'eye' or /ei/ as in 'rein' are frequently presented as if they were single vowels that could be sustained in chant something vocally and phonemically impossible. The tantras on the other hand devote immense attention to the difference between the 'Ah' vowel (as in 'far'), represented by the letter 'a' and the 'Ee' vowel (as in 'sheep'), represented phonemically by the letter 'i'.
- 2. Through a confusion between purely abstract and *quantitative* concepts of sound deriving their false authority from modern science concepts such as 'frequency' for example and their *qualitative* counterparts, the inner *feeling tone* or 'Dhvani' of sounds for example, which is central to tantric linguistics and phonemics.
- 3. Through a total failure to distinguish between the physical body and the inwardly *felt* body thus also between *inner* sound, the *inner* voice and *inner* ear and their physical counterparts. This in turn leads to a *de facto* rejection of one of the most fundamental teachings of Tantra on Mantra: "Those are not really mantras which are only a matter of [outward] enunciation." *Sarvajanottara Tantra*.

The mantric essence or *Dhvani* of a sound, syllable or word is nothing that can be vocally enunciated, sung, chanted or felt as some form of physical vibration with a specific 'frequency'. One reason is that sonic utterance of any form is invariably a vocal modulation of our physical out-breath. That is why audibly chanting, singing or 'toning' the primordial vowel 'Ah' that is sacred within tantra, is totally incompatible with experiencing its Dhvani or 'feeling tone' - which is a blissful, silent and soundless in-breath of pure awareness. Similarly, uttering sacred mantra such as 'OM' with one's body is incompatible with experiencing the *Dhvan*i of the 'M' sound, which has to do with feeling one's body itself as something uttered - emanated and manifested as a sound from soundless depths of the divine awareness. The 'meaning of mantra' in The New Yoga is rooted in a general recognition that the basic speech sounds or phonemes that our bodies make use of to utter words are but an echo of inner sounds with which our bodies themselves and those of all things are uttered. For bodies, like sounds, are but phonically shaped tones, qualities and textures of awareness.

# ON THE MANY MEANINGS OF 'OM NAMA(H) SHIVAYA'

# 1. Accepted meanings and interpretations of 'Nama(h)'

"Sanskrit 'nama' means "bow, obeisance, reverential salutation, adoration". 'te' is the dative of the personal pronoun 'tvam', "you". A literal translation of 'nama-te' is thus "reverential salutation to you". It is commonly accompanied by a slight bow made with the hands pressed together, palms touching, in front of the chest.

In a religious context this word can be taken to mean any of these:

- The Spirit in me meets the same Spirit in you.
- I greet that place where you and I are one.
- I salute the divine in you.
- I salute the Light of God in you.
- I bring together my body and soul, focusing my divine potential, and bow to the same potential within you.
- I bow to the divine in you.
- I recognize that within each of us is a place where Divinity dwells, and when we are in that place, we are One.

In other words, it recognizes the equality of all, and pays honour to the sacredness and interconnection of all, as well as to the source of that interconnection." (anon.)

From 'nama-te' also comes the basic spiritual greeting 'namaste' – used to say hello or goodbye.

What has this to do with the Great Mantra (Mahantra) of Shiva?

#### Nama(h) Shivay(a)

#### Om Nama(h) Shivay(a)

It is commonly forgotten that the Sanskrit 'nama' also simply means 'name'. To address someone by name is itself a form of respectful salutation. It is therefore from the basic meaning of 'nama' as 'name' that the salutatory and gestural interpretation of the 'Nama(h) Shivay(a)' as 'I bow to Shiva' comes, for its basic meaning is nothing but 'I acknowledge you – Shiva – by your name'.

# 2. The inner relation of name and form - 'Nama-Rupa'

Philosophically however, 'nama' is not only a word meaning 'name' but is part of an important Sanskrit philosophical term - 'nama-rupa'. This refers to the entire world of names (nama) and forms (rupa) and thus embraces every single aspect of experienced reality - whether feelings, sensations, perceptions or even thoughts and concepts - that have form or can be named in language. It also expresses the understanding that not only do we name things according to their form but also the converse – that through their very form things announce or name themselves to us.

## 3. The felt nature of 'onomatopoieic' words

From the Sanskrit 'nama' came the Greek 'onoma' along with its Germanic translations as 'Name' or 'name'. From 'onoma' comes the term 'onomatopoieic' - which refers to any word which does not only name something referentially but whose very sounds directly evoke a felt sense of what the word names - for example such words as 'fluff', 'slush' or 'crack'). The root meaning of the word 'onomatopoieia' is the same as 'namarupa', since '-poieia' derives from the Greek verb 'poiesis' - to make and thus give 'form' ('rupa') to. 'Onomatopoieic words are names (nama) which give resonant phonemic form (rupa) to their own conventional meaning or sense and can thus also amplify or evoke a direct felt sense of whatever it is they refer too. The wordless inner sense or 'resonance' of words - simply as sounds - is called their 'phonaesthetic sense'. An 'onomatopoieic' word is one whose phonaesthetic sense is in resonance with its given meaning or sense allowing the latter to 're-sound' (re-sonare) more strongly by giving it form in sound.

# 4. The formative power of the primordial syllable OM

'OM' is not regarded in yoga as a name or word representing any 'thing', but rather as the mother of all mantra - an echo of a primordial sound or 'vibration' ('spanda') not only pervading but forming all things. It is the 'Divine Mother' of both all words and all worlds - and thus also of the entire realm of names and forms that is Namarupa. The latter is understood as a differentiation of the primordial vibration made manifest in the form of the entire multiplicity of sounds, alphabets and languages, sense-perceptions and verbal concepts, words and worlds – all of which ultimately belong to the world of form. As a simple syllable 'OM' can form part of an ordinary word or name. Alternatively it can be repeated, chanted or sung as a mantra. Yet its vocal or even mental utterance is no more than an echo of its reality as that 'inner

sound' through which the entire universe of forms is itself 'uttered' - out of the wordless, womblike depths of a primordial and formless silence.

## 5. From OM to NAMAH

As 'the mother of all mantra', OM is the primordial sound of the Great Mother, and is the source of her garland (Mala) of 51 skulls representing the 51 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet (Varna), each of which is the skull-like echo of a primordial inner sound. The 'Varna-Mala' is thus the primordial sound matrix or 'Matrika' of all languages and all knowledge bound to language - all limited worlds of names and forms or Namarupa. Hence the fourth of the Shiva Sutras, the foundational scripture of Shaivism. "The matrix [of sound] is the foundation of [conditional] knowledge." (translation by Georg Feuerstein). In uttering the OM before NAMAH and SHIVAYA, the worshipper not only makes obeisance to the Great Mother, descending into the inward depths of her dark and formless womb of potential names and forms. The worshipper also recognises and identifies with the Great God Shiva himself in his aspect of being wholly immersed in obeisant and reverential meditation of the Great Goddess or Mahadevi. The utterance of OM is therefore already 'NAMAH' AS an act of obeisance, being identical with immersion in a primordial realm of potentiality preceding and prior to all names (NAMA). The meditative movement from the OM to NAMAH quite literally takes the worshipper from the nameless, wordless realm of formless awareness (OM) that is the divine Mother to their own limited world of names and forms (NAMAH). The meditator can then meditate the totality of their own experienced self or 'Jiva' in its every possible aspect - bodily and mental, sensory and perceptual, emotional and intellectual - as part of that world of *limited experience* and knowledge which is NAMARUPA, recognising even the slightest sensation, feeling or thought as but another limited Form taken by awareness, a letter or group of letters (Name) in the living language of their experienced self and world.

## 6. From NAMAH to SHI-VA-YA

All names and forms have their source in the depths of that nameless, formless realm of potentiality that resounds as OM - the Mother. They are at the same time also permeated by the unbounded awareness that is Shiva - an awareness that embraces both the formless and the formed, the nameless and the named, the potential and the actual, the Mother and all her manifestations, the womb of all experienced selves and the experienced self itself. Moving from NAMAH to SHIVAYA the meditator thus now has the opportunity to pass from being aware of every aspect of their limited, experienced self and world to identifying with the very awareness of it - thus becoming that Self (atman) which IS awareness (chaitanyatman) and therefore also identical with Shiva Himself, who is nothing but awareness. The

three syllables of his Mantric name can then become a progressive elemental experience of that awareness – first as the shining and all-consuming fire SHI), then as the very breath or 'air-ness' of awareness pervading all things (VA), and finally as the pure all-embracing space of awareness it pervades (YA).

# 7. The Fivefold Syllables (Panchakshara)

The syllables NA-MA-SHi-VA-YA together constitute the sacred five ('Pancha') constituents of Shiva Mahamantra. They are traditionally associated either with Shiva's five faces, with the five elements and/or with the 'fivefold act of Shiva'. Such abstract and separate sets of metaphysical associations or 'correspondences' are easy to abstractly declare or propound and yet they give no suggestion of the profound inner ways in which their meaning can be directly sensed and comprehended by the meditator in a feeling way. The association of the syllables 'NA' and 'MA' with the elements 'earth' and 'water' for example, means nothing unless the 'N' in 'NA' is understood not as anything 'earthly' or 'natural' in a concrete sense but sensed instead as the nascent awareness concealed in all things, natural or manmade. The 'M' in 'Ma' can then be sensed as this nescience made manifest, but in a fluid way, as 'water'. The elemental associations given to NA-MA actually bespeak a wholly new experience of the perceptual world of nameable forms symbolised by 'NAMA', one through which the meditator can come to sense even those apparently solid objects or forms associated with the element 'earth' (Na) as a sublimely fluid manifestation ('Ma') of the pure nescient awareness ever-present within them. The 'elemental' experience of 'NA-MA' is thus a profound experiential metamorphosis of the word NAMA and the world of manifestation it names - now sensed as having its roots in the infinite womb or ocean of potentiality that is the great mother - 'MA' - whose primordial consonant - 'M' - recalls us to the primordial syllable 'OM'.

# 8. The Fivefold Acts of Shiva (Panchakritya)

These are: 'Srísti' (Manifestation), 'Sthíti' (Maintenance), Samhara (Reabsorption or Dissolution), 'Vilaya' (Concealment) and 'Anugraha' (Gracing). Yet because these are five acts in one, the 'final' two acts (Concealment and Gracing) are a 'Grace' already 'Concealed' in the first two (Manifestation and Maintenance), symbolised by the first two syllables of the Panchakshara. The third act (Dissolution or Reabsorption of the manifest self and world in Shiva) is facilitated through the third syllable of the Panchakshara – 'SHI'. For this has the nature of a SHining and fiery flashing forth of awareness, one, which true to the root meaning of the syllable literally 'cuts asunder' the cord that binds us to the world of manifestation or 'MAYA'. It is this which allows us to experience its 'reabsorption' into the all-pervading air and

infinite spatiality or 'aether' of awareness (VA-YA), of which MAYA itself is nothing but a solid-yet-fluid manifestation (NA-MA). Thus it is that the Panchakshara reveals the reality of MAYA as 'MA-YA' - uniting the first and last acts of the Panchakritya - Manifestation and Dissolution.

## 9. The Ultimate Vowel - 'A' (pronounced 'u' as in 'cup')

Present in all five syllables of the Panchakshara is the ultimate vowel 'A', representing the divine awareness that is Shiva as that ultimate or absolute reality of which there is non-higher ('A-nuttara'). This vowel is the divine heart of awareness which inaudibly permeates the entire garland or Mala of Sanskrit letter from 'A' to 'KSHA', themselves combined in the name for syllables (KSHARA) and for the infinite all-pervading aetheric space of awareness that is 'Aakash' or 'Akasha', from 'Aksh' – 'pervasion'.

## 10. The Mother of all Consonants - 'M'

"Each symbol in an alphabet stands for unutterable symbols beneath it... Sound itself, even without recognisable words, carries meaning." (Seth). The mystery of all mantra is concealed in the single consonant 'm'. The name of this consonant in Greek is 'mu'. This syllable is also the root of very word *mystery*, *mystic*, *mysticism* and *mystical* themselves. All these words have a common root in the Greek mustai - meaning wise ones or 'initiates'. The literal meaning of 'mustai' however is 'those who close their mouths (muein), not speaking their wisdom aloud but embodying it mutely - in silence. It is no accident that both mustai and muein begin with the syllable mu. For this syllable is not just the Greek name for the consonant 'm'. It is also a Greek word - yet one which, paradoxically, refers to an essentially wordless sound such as a sigh, a type of sound that we do not so much utter 'with' our bodies as use to embody a particular feeling and flow of breath. Words such as the English 'mute', the Greek 'mustai' (initiate), and the Sanskrit 'muni' (sage) all begin with the consonant 'm' and with the syllable 'mu'. In proto-Sumerian, both consonant and syllable had the triple meaning of (a) woman or the feminine as such (as in German 'Mutter') (b) the source of all creation and (c) speech - or rather its creative source in lip-sealed silence. The meaning of these sounds and syllables as words can be understood as having an even deeper source in their meaning as sounds. The meaning of any sound as a sound rather than as a word or words is, by definition, not something that can be defined in words. Yet it is suggested by the common dimensions of meaning often found in words, which contain or begin with the same sound. Thus there is a whole cluster of words containing the specific consonant 'm' and/or the syllable 'mu' which share common dimensions of meaning all to do with womanhood, sound, silence and speech - meditate, muse, music, commune, mother, woman, womb, mouth, emanation, manifestation,

matter, matrix, matrika, monk, mute, muni, mouni (one who observes a vow of silence), and the 'mantra' itself – understood as inwardly sounded meaning. Why should so many words like these share both a common sound and common dimension of meaning or sense? The answer is hinted at by the mother of all consonants – 'm'.

## 11. The Articulatory Symbolism and Inner Senses of Sounds

Etymology seeks the root meanings of words through the word-senses of the sounds and syllables that compose them. Yet what if both the meaning of words as words and their meaning as sounds have their roots not in word-senses but in sound senses - in the meaning of their sounds as sounds? What sort of intrinsic senses can speech sounds carry, whether or not they find expression in the given meanings of words containing those sounds? The answer lies in 'articulatory symbolism'. Sounds as such do not 'have' meanings in the same way that words do, and yet there is a symbolic meaning to what we do in articulating them. The fact that the long 'A' sound is the most openmouthed vowel is what allows its articulation to symbolise a greater openness or expansion of awareness - and with it a feeling of wonderment or delight ('Ah'). What comes first however, is the open quality of awareness that allows us to feel such a sense of wonderment and delight. The actual articulation of the long 'A' sound - or any sound - is but an embodiment of the quality of awareness or 'soulsense' re-sounding in it. That soul-sense finds embodiment in the articulation of the sound whether we utter it aloud or merely shape our mouths as if to utter it - simply hearing ourselves uttering it with our inner voice and with our inner ear alone. Simply giving articulatory shape to specific sounds with our mouths, lips and tongues - without vocalising them at all - is enough to evoke or express their soul-sense. The meaning of sounds as sounds - their sound-sense - is therefore nothing but the silent shape and form they give to distinct soul-senses - to different qualities, moods or tonalities of awareness or 'soul'. Thus sealing our mouths firmly as if to make a long 'M' sound can be enough to evoke a sense of our whole bodies being perMeated by a sense of Melting, warMth - as if we feel sated by a warM Meal. We may utter an appreciative 'Mmm' to express our satisfaction with the meal, but the true sound is not the consonant we utter with mouths and vocal organs but a soul-sense we express with our body as a whole. The true 'roots' of all word-senses and sound-senses are soulsenses and soul-sounds. These are sounds we do not utter 'with' our bodies so much as sounds with which we utter our bodies themselves. If we can learn to silently utter and feel our whole body as an 'Ah' or 'Mmm' - imbued with a specific soul-tone and quality - then we know how to utter any sounds as 'mantra' and to experience 'the power of mantra'. That is why neither the audible vocalisation of a Mantra

through chanting or singing - nor its merely 'mental' repetition - can substitute for articulating its soul-sense with every part of our body and with our whole bodily comportment or 'Mudra'. For just as letters are *silent* shapes or faces of spoken sounds', so are our bodies the silent face and shape of 'soul sounds'. Their 'inner sense' is a 'soul-sense' that we can silently 'articulate' and 'sound' with our whole body - limbs, face and eyes - not just our lips, mouth and tongue alone.

# 12. The Body itself as Mantra, Mudra and Murti of the Divine

Words are bodies of sound. Conversely, bodies of any sort are sounds being shaped patterns, qualities and structures of vibration or tone. The human body too is Mantra, being the embodiment of those inner soulsounds which give bodily form and shape to specific soul-tones and qualities - innate tones and qualities of awareness. Like other bodies, the human body is a three-dimensional image or 'Murti' of these inner sounds. Similarly its every gesture, movement and comportment - its every 'Mudra' - is a sound, a Mantra made visible as a bodily image or Murti. It is for this reason that bodily images or Murti of the Gods - if their comportments or Mudra give perfect aesthetic expression to the qualities of awareness associated with a given Deity - were understood as manifestations of their corresponding Mantra. It is as if, in the West, we were to recognise the physiognomy and face of a great composer as the very image and embodiment of their music itself - its soul made manifest in the flesh. So it is with the 'idols' or Murti of Divinity worshipped in Hinduism, and specifically with the Divine Awareness, transcendent and immanent, that is named, imagined and 'worshipped' as 'Shiva'. It is the innate qualities of this Divine Awareness that both resound in its Mantra and are made visible or manifest in its human bodily image or Murti. The worshipper recognises the Murti both as one among countless natural manifestations of the Divine Awareness, and at the same time recognises in its human form a perfect embodiment and 'personification' - from persona (face) and per-sonare (through sound) - of the specific soul-qualities associated with the Murti of Lord Shiva, his Mudra and his five-syllable Mantra. That is why, through proper understanding of this Mantra one can not only enter into meditative and worshipful resonance with Lord Shiva. One can also let one's own self and body be transformed into a mirror and embodiment of the worshipped - a living image or Murti of the Divine. In this way also the true tantric purpose and power of Puja - 'worship' is achieved - to attain a state of identification of the worshipper with the worshipped. This identification is named by that other great Mantra of Shiva: 'SHIVOHAM' - 'Shiva am I (become)'. As for 'OM NAMAH SHIVAYAH', enough has been written here to give a proper sense, not only of its inner meaning, but also of the divine nature of all Mantra as expressions of a primordial relation of Divine Silence, Sound and Speech. The interpretations I offer should also remind the reader that

the very qualities of meditative and worshipful awareness needed to worship a specific deity or Devata are the very essence of that deity both resounding in its Mantra and made manifest in its Murti. For Shiva Himself is also in constant meditative worship of The Mother and Her silent power of manifestation (Shakti) through sound (Shabda). Hence the profound truth of the ancient Tantric principle that Mantra and Devata, name and divinity, worshipper and worshipped - are One.

# 13. The Sixth and Central Syllable - 'HA'

There is a hidden yet central sixth syllable at the very heart of the fivesyllable mantra or Panchakshara. This is the Sanskrit 'Visarga' - an 'H' that can be written after a final syllable and is followed by the last vowel of that syllable. If the Visarga is added to the last syllable of NAMA(H) it becomes NAMA-HA. That is significant because esoterically just as Shiva is associated with all vowels but above all the 'A', so is the Visarga identified specifically with an unaspirated 'HA' – expressing the the innate power of manifestation that is Shakti. On the level of esoteric and articulatory symbolism, this unaspirated 'HA' is seen as the very Heart of Shiva - a Hallowing, Hovering Hiatus or interval between that active 'ex-HA-lation' or emanation of awareness which, as Shakti, manifests the entire embodied universe and its 'in-HA-lation', a return to that pure, unmanifested awareness symbolised by the simple 'A'. Hence by Holding the unaspirated 'H' sound as Visarga or 'HA' in one's awareness - after the final 'A' of 'NAMA' - the meditator can identify with the vibratory union of Shiva and Shakti – a truly 'A-HA' experience! Through it the meditator can experience the truth that the universe is not manifested or 'created' once and for all time by some creator god - but is in a constant vibratory state of rapid intermittent manifestation (Shakti) on the one hand and dissolution in pure, unmanifest awareness (Shiva) on the other. The meditator can experience their very own body as not simply 'there' but as constantly 'flashing forth' into embodiment or incarnation from a state of pure bodiless awareness as if they were 're-incarnating' countless times each second. The central emission point ('Bindu') of manifestation is the 'Hrdaya' or 'Heart' of awareness sensed in the mid-point of the diaphragm. By turning NAMA into NAMA-HA then, the Visarga offers an experience of Shiva as the divine couple or Yamala - as 'Shiva-Shakti'. It also adds a whole new word to the 'Maha-Mantra' - the word MAHA or 'great' itself. Yet it is odd that despite the great importance attached to this particular Mahamantra in the religion and practices of orthodox Shaivism, there is no mention of it whatsoever in the most sublime and refined of Shaivist traditions and treatises - those stemming from the schools of 'Kashmir Shaivism' or 'Shaivist Tantra' synthesised by the great Tantric teacher and adept, Abhinavagupta. Yet even contemporary followers of this great tradition emphasise the

Panchakshara at the expense of its Heart - the Visarga or 'Ha'. Above all they forget that in all the major treatises or 'Tantras' of Shaivist Tantra what counted most of all was both the experiential and conceptual comprehension of different Mantra as phonemically condensed dimensions of awareness. Mantra were not seen as simple spiritual tools by which, through mere repetition or 'Japa' - and without need of any deeper conceptual comprehension - one could 'magically' attain an experience of higher dimensions of awareness. Hence the need for new in-depth treatises or Tantras on 'Mantra' such as I offer here.

## 14. From the Kashmir Shaivist Tantras

How wonderful it is that although only one sound, that is SHIVA'S NAME, is always on the lips of their tongues, yet devotees can taste the ineffable relish of all the objects of the senses.

Utpaladeva

... Mantra is the instrument by which one comes to experience the divinities within the body.

In fact [as said in the Guhyayogini Tantra] "It is the Inner Sound that is Mantra".

In the process of expansion, the changeless, unsurpassable, eternal, reposeful, venerable Bhairava [Shiva], is of the form 'A', which is the natural, primal sound, the life of the entire range of letter powers. He in the process of expansion assumes the 'HA' form, for expansion is of the form of HA, i.e. Kundalini Shakti ... In the MA-HA, which is the highest bliss ... that which is 'A' according to the previously described principle, is the mysterious secret.

Because its essential nature is the supreme 'A', it [the HA] is an expression of the first vowel, 'A'. The blessed Lord [Shiva] is in fact eternally vibrating within himself. In him is the central power [Shakti] which is full of the abundance of all beings.

Therefore the phoneme HA, the Visarga, is termed the Rudra-Yamala, the Rudra-Dyad, because it consists of the supreme Shiva [Rudra] and Shakti, the rest and activity which constitutes the union of Bhairava with his Beloved.

'I make the universe manifest within myself in the sky (VA-YA) of awareness. I who am the universe, am its creator!' This Awareness is the way in which one becomes Bhairava. 'All of manifest creation is reflected within me. I cause it to persist.' This is the way in which one becomes the universe. 'The universe dissolves within me. I am the flame of the great and eternal fire of awareness' – seeing thus one achieves peace.

Mantra are the sacred phonemes both worldly and divine. They save by giving form [to comprehending awareness]. For worldly purposes they are of the form of thought-constructs [Vikalpa]; as divine or transcendental they are full of the power of higher awareness [Samvit-Shakti].

#### Abhinavagupta

... when the Yogi achieves a firm insight into his authentic identity, all Mantras can do all things, because he knows how they arise and pass away.

Kshemaraja

# 15. From Kshemaraja's commentaries on the Shiva Sutras

(translated by Jaideva Singh)

Sutra 1, Section 2

#### Chittam mantrah

... that by which one deliberately, secretly i.e. ponders inwardly as being non-different from the Highest Lord is *Mantra*. Thus that *chitta* [consciousness] itself ... is *mantra*. The etymolological interpretation of *mantra* points to its characteristic of *manana* i.e. pondering over the highest light of 'I'-consciousness and the other characteristics of *trana*i.e. protection by terminating the transmigratory existence full of difference. The mind of the devotee intent on intensive awareness of the deity acquires identity with the deity and thus becomes that *mantra* itself. It is this mind [*manana*] itself which is *mantra*, not a mere conglomeration of letters.

It has been rightly said in the Sarvajanottara:

"Those are not really *mantras* which are only a matter of [outward] enunciation."

In Shrikanthi-Samhita, it has been said;

"If the practitioner of *mantra* is different from the *mantra* then his *mantra* will never be successful."

## 16. A Personal Karika on 'Mantra'

What is the soul? What is the body? Who or what are we? Who or what are the gods? As souls we are fluid vowels. As bodies we are fleshly consonants. As spirits we are a divine symphony of Soul tones, a divine alphabet of Soul sounds, resounding with Divine soul moods. We, no less than all Divinities, are uttered as Living Mantra from the music of This divine alphabet, shaped within The divine mouth and matrix of constant creation. We too are made flesh, manifest and materialised Sounded into selfhood as sacred syllables, Through the divine alphabet, the Matrika With which God shapes Gods as Mantra, and us as Persons too. Doing so through sound, 'Per-Sonare', that we Might utter Him as Mantra anew.

## **OM NAMAHA SHIVAYA**

## THE NEW MANTRA YOGA

#### 1. THE NEW YOGA OF THE INNER VOICE

Our 'outer' physical voice is an expression of our Inner Voice. Through our outer voice we shape and modulate the tone of the audible sounds we make when we speak or sing. Through our Inner Voice we can learn to shape and modulate the silent inner Feeling Tones that find expression in our audible voice. Our Inner Voice is what tunes and sets the tone of our outer voice. The New Yoga of the Inner Voice is a revolutionary new form of voice training. Have you ever felt a dissonance between the message of your spoken words and the message implied and communicated through your tone of voice? The New Yoga of the Voice teaches us to alter the pitch, amplitude, timbre and overall tone and quality of our outer voice by first of all modulating the corresponding qualities of our Inner Voice. It is this that allows us to bring the audible tones of our outer voice into total resonance with the feeling tones we wish to communicate through it. The New Yoga of the Inner Voice is also central to 'insounding' or 'invoking' Mantra, not through mere 'mental' repetition, but through uttering the sounds of each Mantra with our Inner Voice - the voice of our entire inwardly felt body. It is in this way - through the Inner Voice - that we can learn to use Mantra to alter the entire shape and tone of our inwardly felt body, our Awareness Body.

#### PRACTICING THE NEW YOGA OF THE INNER VOICE

Exercise 1: Becoming aware of your Inner Voice

- 1. Say your name aloud (or any word, phrase or mantra).
- 2. Now just whisper the name.
- 3. Now mouth it silently, without any breath leaving your lips.
- 4. Finally with your mouth completely closed, just HEAR yourself inwardly uttering your name.

The voice you now hear uttering it is your Inner Voice.

The ear you now hear yourself uttering it with is your Inner Ear.

#### 2. CULTIVATING AWARENESS OF THE INNER VOICE

Just as you can learn to modulate the tone and quality of your outer voice so can you learn to modulate that of your Inner Voice. Indeed learning to modulate your inner voice is a revolutionary way of learning to alter the whole tone and quality of your outer voice – thus bringing it into resonance with the tones and qualities of feeling you wish to communicate through your words. The key to modulating both our Inner and Outer Voice is awareness of the basic parameters of the voice as such. These are its pitch (low or high), its amplitude or 'volume' (low or high), its tempo (slow or fast), its timbre (flat or resonant, rough or smooth, hard or soft, sharp or dull), and its seat – where we feel our voice coming from in our bodies.

## Exercise 2: Becoming more aware of your Outer Voice

Assess the basic parameters of your own ordinary speaking voice (pitch, amplitude, tempo and timbre) by marking an 'X' at a corresponding position on the lines below:

Law	PITCH	l li aula
LOW		High
	AMPLITUDE	
Low		High
	TEMPO	
Slow		Fast

Now imagine your body as a vertical line descending from the top of your head, down through your neck, throat and chest to your belly and lower abdomen, and point to the part of your body you feel your voice coming from. Alternatively draw a vertical line and mark the main SEAT of your voice on it. Finally, draw a new set of horizontal lines along which you can mark the TIMBRE of your voice in its various dimensions – from flat to full and resonant, clear and sharp to dull, soft to hard, rough to smooth, cool to warm etc. Then experiment with simultaneously changing two or more parameters of your ordinary Outer Voice.

#### 3. LEARNING TO MODULATE YOUR INNER VOICE

Begin with the basic exercise in The New Yoga of the Voice:

- 1. Say your name aloud or any word, phrase or mantra.
- 2. Now just whisper the name. Now merely mouth it silently.
- 3. Finally, close your mouth and just hear yourself uttering it inwardly with your Inner Voice 'in-sounding' or 'in-voking' it.

Now you can practice modulating your Inner Voice in its different parameters:

#### 1. SEAT

Invoke the name again, and be aware of the seat of your Inner Voice - where you feel it coming from and resounding – for example your head, throat, chest, belly or lower abdomen. Experiment with first raising and then lowering the seat of your Inner Voice from its initial centre or location. Now see just how far you can raise and then lower the seat of your Inner Voice.

#### 2. PITCH

Be aware of the pitch of your Inner Voice. Experiment with first raising and then lowering its pitch. Now see just how 'high' and then how 'low' you can pitch the tone of your inner voice.

#### 4. AMPLITUDE

Be aware of the amplitude or volume of your Inner Voice. Experiment with making your Inner Voice louder or quieter, and seeing just how loud or quiet you can make it.

#### 5. TEMPO

Be aware of the tempo with which you utter a name, word or phrase with your Inner Voice. Experiment with uttering it faster and then more slowly. Now see just how much faster and then how much more slowly you can utter it with your Inner Voice. Try insounding or invoking the name SO slowly that you felt you could almost indefinitely linger with and elongate each sound, staying with and savouring its sensual qualities.

#### 6. TIMBRE

Use all the other key parameters to experiment with altering the overall timbre and emotional tone of your Inner Voice, for example making it sensually and emotionally warmer or cooler.

# 4. MANTRA MEDITATION IN THE NEW YOGA

The New Yoga is about learning to actively shape and tone our Feeling Awareness and in this way body that awareness. It is with our physical voice that we shape vocal tones into the audible sounds of speech. It is through our inner voice and inner sounds – Mantra - that we can reshape the tone and quality of our Feeling Awareness, and in this way shapeshift our inner body – our Body of Feeling Awareness. This means learning to silently *breathe and body* different Inner Sounds – as pure shapes, tones, qualities and flows of Feeling Awareness.

#### INSOUNDING WITH THE INNER VOICE

- 1. Open your mouth wide as if about to utter a sustained 'AH' sound.
- 2. Hardly breathing out, and without making any audible sound at all, inwardly hear yourself voicing a sustained 'AH' sound.
- 3. Now imbue this inner 'AH' sound with a feeling tone of wonder and delight, letting this feeling tone show itself in your face and eyes.
- 4. With each in-breath, feel yourself breathing *in* your awareness of the world around you with this feeling tone of delight, and experience this very feeling and in-breathing of awareness *as* a soundless 'AH'.
- 5. Sense this blissful in-breath of awareness centering itself in your 'heart', feeling it as flame in the centre of your diaphragm.
- 6. With each physical in-breath feel for a gesture of your arms and hands that embodies the awareness bliss you are breathing in.

Now purse your mouth as if to make a sustained 'UH' sound (as in 'trUe'), hear yourself sounding it inwardly and imbuing your inner voice with a low pitched feeling tone bearing a quality of deep awe and reverence. Finally, closing your mouth, and, sealing your lips firmly, hear yourself inwardly humming a deep and sustained 'M' sound. Feel the inner hum permeating your entire body and imbuing it with a quality of fluid warmth.

The 'ear' with which you hear yourself uttering the inner AH sound is your Inner Ear, the voice you utter it with is your Inner Voice, the face you mime it with is an Inner Face of your soul, and the eye that lets its qualities show through your eyes is your Inner Eye and an inner self or "I". Feel yourself uttering your whole body as the AH sound, and be aware of how this alters the entire way you feel your body from within – giving it a sense of lightness and translucence. It is this way - and not through any audible chanting of 'AUM' or 'OM' - or any sounds and mantric 'seed syllables' - that you will come to experience the true meaning of 'Mantra' and the true mystery of Inner Sound.

## 5. PRACTICING THE NEW YOGA OF SOUND

"If we follow the successive sounds as they occur in a single word ... then we can experience all possible shades of feeling ..."

#### **Rudolf Steiner**

Were we to slow down our speech to a degree that enabled us to almost indefinitely prolong the enunciation of each and every sound of a word or name, we could savour each sound as the embodiment of a completely different "shade" or 'flavour' ('Rasa') of Feeling Awareness. We could also feel each sound as a distinct self - the 'per-sonification' of a distinct face or 'persona' identical with that shade or flavour, tone or texture of awareness.

## Mouthing, Miming and 'Morphing' Inner Sounds

Choose a word, personal name or sacred mantra, or, if working alone just allow sounds - vowels or consonants - to come to you one by one.

Looking at yourself in a mirror or facing a partner, silently MOUTH the first sound, taking care to position your jaws, tongue, lips in exactly the way you would to utter the sound audibly, but instead of doing so MIME it in an exaggerated way – forming the 'Mudra' of the sound.

Hear yourself uttering the sound inwardly. At the same time savour the 'onomatopoeic' quality of the sound – for example the warm, permeating quality of an 'M' sound, the shimmering or showery quality of a 'SH' sound, the languid quality of an 'L' sound, the uplifting quality of an Ah sound or the steadying quality of an Eh sound.

Let the tone and texture, feeling and flavour, of the sound show itself in your eyes, not only MOUTHING the sound but also MIMING its qualities and exaggerating every feature of mouth and eyes in order to give form to the silent face or 'Mukha' of the sound.

Silently MOUTH and MIME the transition from one sound to the next as slowly as possible, so that it shows itself in an incremental MORPHING of your entire facial expression, accompanied by METAMORPHOSIS of your entire bodily sense of self, as both become imbued by the feeling tone or MOOD of the new sound, and its sensual texture.

If looking in a mirror check to see how expressively you give form to each new inner sound. If working with a partner, mirror each other's expression of each sound, and feel the resonance this brings about.

# MANTRA AND THE MYSTERY OF SOUND

The true meaning of 'mantra' has to do with the mysteries of sound – in particular the intrinsic relation between sound and sense, between sense and sensory qualities, and between sensory qualities and soul qualities, sound tones and soul tones.

Sounds have an intrinsic inner sense of their own. Individual speech sounds such as 'SH' possess their own inwardly felt sense or meaning. The intrinsic, felt sense of individual speech sounds finds expressions in so-called onomatopoeic words such as 'hum', 'fluff' or 'hush' - words whose sound 'resonates' with their meaning or sense.

Resonance is inwardly felt sense. The inner 'resonance' of a sound, whether a speech sound or musical tone, is not its 'vibration' but its inwardly felt meaning or sense.

Awareness is always toned. Our awareness of ourselves, other people and the world is always coloured or tuned by a specific soul mood, feeling tone or 'soul tone'.

Feeling tones are echoed in voice tones. That is why a true speaker or singer does not just utter vocal tones, but brings them into resonance with the feeling tones they seek to express.

Vocal qualities express qualities of feeling tone – of soul. A voice whose sensory quality is flat or resonant, hard or soft, sharp and piercing or mellow and rounded, light or dark, richly coloured or grey and monotonous, muddied or clear, gives expression to corresponding sensual qualities of feeling tone.

Health is an unmuddied clarity of feeling tone. Healing comes about through learning to fully and consciously embody the underlying feeling tone of our mental, emotional or physical state of being.

Speech sounds are phonic shapings of vocal tone and feeling tone. Just as we use vocal sounds to shape and modulate our breath and vocal tones, so we use inner sounds to shape and modulate the sensed qualities and felt tonalities of our awareness.

We do not have a body - we body. Bodying is the process of giving physical shape and form to inner feeling tones, inwardly shaping these inner soul tones as soul sounds.

Inner sounds are soul sounds. Soul sounds are those inner sounds with which we body our own soul – giving bodily shape to inner feeling tones or 'soul tones'.

Behind the audible sounds of all alphabets and languages is a hidden alphabet and language of inner soul sounds. This language finds expression in the use of sound in poetry, in the felt sense and resonance of so-called 'nonsense' words and poems, and in glossolalia – the speaking and interpretation of unknown 'tongues'.

*Matter is mantra.* Mantra are not sounds or words that name or symbolise things, but words that quite literally become things – sounding them into material form.

The body is a mantra. Every bodily shape (murti), comportment or gesture (mudra), and face or countenance (mukha) is a mantra – it is a shaping of feeling tones with its own inner sound.

The true meaning of the word 'psychology' is 'soul-speech'. Psychology refers to the speech (logos) of the soul or psyche. For the audible sounds our bodies utter when we speak are the echo of the soul sounds with which speak our bodies themselves.

Through the babble of babies they body their own souls. The basic speech sounds that babies of all cultures first babble are the means by which they body their own soul. Babies use the 'b' sound, for example, to align the boundaries of their soul body with that of their physical body surface. They use the 'm' sound to feel the inwardness of own bodies, as they once felt the warm womb that surrounded them.

Sounds attract and condense senses in the same way that dream images do. There is a sensuous syntax of sound which wordlessly links and condenses the senses of all words that contain a common consonant.

Word with common sounds have a common dimension of sense. This is reflected in clusters of words which clearly share both a common sound and a common dimension of meaning or sense - for example 'm' words such as mother, womb, amnion, embryo, music, muse, commune, intimate, meditate, warm, calm, balm, comfort etc.

The intrinsic sense of a single sound (for example the 'm' sound) can never be named or summed up in a single word such as 'comfort'. That is because the overall inner sense or resonance of any word we might choose to name it with will be influenced by all the other sounds it contains - each of which have their own intrinsic sense.

The given meanings of words as words are an expression of their meaning as sounds. But the given meaning or sense of a word may be more or less in resonance with its inner sense – its sound sense or soul sense – and therefore also distort that sense.

The sound sense of a word is its soul sense – its inwardly felt sense or resonance as a shaped modulation of feeling tone.

Every thing, like every word that names it, has its own inner sound and feeling tone. Just as it has an outer shape and colour tone, so does it also have an inner sound and feeling tone. Just as it has a material texture, so does it also have a felt inner timbre.

All sensory qualities have an intrinsic inner meaning or sense, whether or not we have words for it. The immediate meaning or sense of sensory experiencing lies in the felt soul qualities it gives expression to.

Sensory qualities are the outer manifestation of inner soul qualities. Thus sensory colours and textures are the expression of colourations and textures of soul.

Soul qualities are qualities of feeling tone. 'Soul' is awareness. But awareness is always toned and all soul qualities are essentially qualities of feeling tone. Light for example, is the basic quality of feeling tone that expands our awareness in space. Darkness is the basic quality of feeling tone that slows our awareness in time.

*Matter is metaphor.* The sensory qualities of material objects are a sensory metaphor of the soul qualities manifesting through them.

Both sensory qualities and soul qualities are essentially tonal qualities. Just as vocal tones have sensory qualities of hardness or softness, warmth or coolness, distance or closeness, heaviness or lightness, brightness or darkness, flatness or depth, so are all soul qualities essentially qualities of feeling tone. Just as vocal tones give expression to feeling tones, so do sensory qualities give expression to soul qualities.

Inner sounds can only be fully sensed by insounding them. This means silently mouthing and miming the speech sounds that correspond to them, and hearing ourselves inwardly utter or sound them.

The voice with which we utter sounds or words inwardly is the inner voice. The ear with which we hear ourselves doing so is the inner ear. Most people can speak and hear. But they have lost conscious use of their inner voice and inner ear. What makes a sound or syllable into a

mantra is not chanting it aloud or mentally repeating it but the full and resonant use of the inner voice to in-voke or insound it.

Through sound we personify our soul. The word persona referred to the facial masks worn by Greek actors. Its literal meaning is to 'sound through'. A letter is the silent face or mask of a sound. Similarly a person's mouth and facial expression - their facial mask is a silent sound.

The relation of outer and inner sounds is one of morphic resonance. By giving silent outer form (morphe) to a inner sound though our mouth shape and facial expression we both dramatically personify that sound and amplify our bodily resonance with its inner feeling tone.

For every sound there is a self. Using our mouth, eyes and face to personify a sound - adopting its expressive facial 'mask' or persona, allows us to experience every sound as the expression of a distinct self - a distinct aspect of our own soul, with its own unique feeling tone.

Sounds mould our facial features. Conversely, moulding our facial mask or persona in different ways not only helps modulate our vocal tones when we speak or sing, but to can be used to silently reshape and modulate our inner mood or feeling tone.

Both outer and inner sounds serve to shape, colour, modulate and texture tone. A mantram is any sound, syllable or word through which we can use our physical bodies to shape, colour, modulate and texture not only our vocal tones but our feeling tones or soul tones – thus altering the shape, tone and texture of our soul body. The soul body is a composite of the soul qualities belonging to those feeling tones.

Like words, bodies of any sort are symbols. Just as words are symbolic composites of letters so are physical bodies – objects of any sort - symbolic composites of sensory qualities. What they symbolise are the soul qualities that find expression in them.

Like words, bodies of any sort are sounds. Letters and words are not only symbols. They also have a sound. Words can be considered not just as composites but as bodies of sound. Like words, bodies are also sounds. They are also bodies of sound – not audible sounds but inner soul sounds.

Any thought, unspoken, has an inner sound. True 'thinking' is impossible unless we can clearly hear the mental words of our unspoken thoughts with our inner ear, and fully feel their inner sense or resonance within our bodies.

The physical organism is a musical instrument or 'organon' of the soul. By moulding our facial mask and bodily comportment in resonance with our basic inner feeling tone, we amplify that feeling tone and communicate it in a silent bodily way. In this way we can also use our physical body to play on the instrument of our soul body or psychical organism.

The psychical organism or soul body is a musical instrument or 'organons'. It is the instrument with which we give physical shape and form to inner feeling tones, embodying them as cell and organ tone, muscle tonus and vocal tone.

Through vowel sounds we ensoul our bodies. By insounding different vowel sounds we can experience our soul body or psychical organism expanding beyond the boundaries of our flesh or physical organism, taking on a different shape to it, and lending it a different tone.

Through consonant sounds we embody our souls. By insounding different consonant sounds we can experience the felt shape, tone and texture of our physical organism as the embodiment of inner soul shapes, tones and textures.

The human being is a musician. The relation between the psychical and physical organism, the soul body and the physical body, can be compared to the relation between a musician and the physical instrument he plays. The instrument makes the actual audible sounds of the music being played, but it is the silent sound of the musician's facial expressions and movements that show the real music of his soul – the feeling tones he is shaping with his soul body or psychical organism.

The physical body organism is the 'word become flesh'. It is the embodiment of an inner language of soul sounds and soul tones.

The mystery of sound is concealed in the word 'mystery' itself. Like the words mystic, mysticism and mystical it has its roots in the Greek 'mustai'. Mustai meant 'initiates', but it's literal meaning was the 'closed-mouthed ones', those who do not outwardly speak but speak through silence - embodying the secrets of their soul with their lips sealed.

The mystery of sound is the mystery of the 'MU'. This single syllable is both the Greek name for the 'm' sound – a sound we can only make with our mouths closed and lips sealed – and an actual Greek word. The word refers to a wordless sound such as a sigh – a sound that we do not so much utter 'with' our bodies as use to almost silently body a particular feeling tone.

The true meaning of mantra is the guarding or saving liberation (tra) of awareness (man-) that comes from the human being experiencing his own body as made up of mana – the innate substantiality or 'soul stuff' of awareness that is experienced as feeling tone, becomes manifest as matter and is made malleable through inner sound.