

# Yoga Spirit Academy E-zine

Healing body, mind and spirit  
with the wisdom of Yoga, meditation and Ayurveda

September / October 2020

Volume 13, Issue 5

## Spiritual Practice of Mantra By Janet W. Parachin, PhD

This is the fourth article in a new series on Spiritual Practices. Read past newsletters at <https://yogaspirittulsa.com/newsletters/>. This month we look at the power of mantra to increase concentration, clarity and contemplation.

Mantra is a sacred sound or holy utterance. It can be a phrase given to you by your guru, a sentence from sacred scripture, or a seed syllable, called a *bija mantra*. When you repeat it with complete attention it awakens full awareness.

Anything can be a mantra—positive or negative—if it is repeated with attention and intention. This is why we need to be careful what we repeat to ourselves and others! If you tell your son he is good often enough he will believe it, but if you regularly tell him he stupid or bad, he will believe that too.

The Vedic tradition teaches that ancient sacred mantras are the best to use. They are so old they have been recited literally millions of times by devout and serious seekers, so their energy is so much more powerful than simply saying “I am good.” In essence, when we chant these mantras we step into a strong energy stream. Plus, Sanskrit, the language of mantra, is itself a sacred language with power in the sound of the letters.

“Ma” means mind and “tra” means to transcend. A mantra helps us to go beyond the limitations of the mind into a transcendental state of awareness. As humans we are conscious of our thoughts, emotions, memories, and the meaning we assign to those things. It’s this consciousness that allows for our learning and creativity by helping us identify with our ego: “These are *my* likes and dislikes, *my* talents and what *I* offer to the world.” But our consciousness limits us in a profound way: by identifying with a separate self we lose the unity which comes in knowing that we are all made up of the same stuff and thoroughly interconnected with everything else. For this realization to dawn, we have to move beyond the limitations of the conscious mind to embrace a transcendental state of awareness.

You can practice a mantra on your own by yourself, and we can all raise the vibration of a group, such as a family or communi-

ty, by practicing mantra together. The group itself becomes more harmonized and peaceful.

Here are two mantra practices you can try. Reflect on the state

of your mind before and after your practice. Check in again after 40 days and notice the shifts that are taking place.

### ***Bija mantra, working with seed syllables***

Seed syllables are not words, but rather sounds that have no rational meaning. They carry powerful vibrations related to different parts of the body, positive emotions and attitudes. These are the five *bija mantras* for the five elements. Since everything is made up of the five elements, chanting these mantras can bring the elements into a healthy configuration.

Earth – LAM (pronounced luhm)

Water – VAM (wuhm)

Fire – RAM (ruhm)

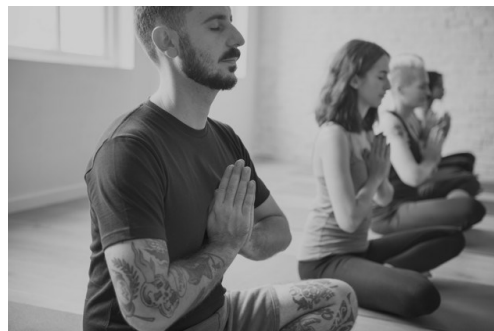
Air – YAM (yuhm)

Ether – HAM (huhm)

Putting it all together, chant this mantra 108 times.

LAM VAM RAM YAM HAM OM

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Yoga Spirit Academy  
200-hour and 300-hour yoga teacher training  
Tulsa, Oklahoma  
Dr. Janet W Parachin, Director  
918-261-9786  
[www.yogaspirittulsa.com](http://www.yogaspirittulsa.com)

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## Spiritual Practice, continued

*Healing mantras – chant 108 times every day for 40 days*



OM GUM GANAPATAYEI NAMAHA to remove obstacles

(ohm gum guh-nuh-puh-tuh-yay nuh-muh-huh)

OM NAMAH SHIVAYA to honor and heal the five elements

(ohm nuh-muh shee-vuh-yuh)

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE VASUDEVAYA for a happy home

(ohm nah-moh buh-guh-vuh-tay vuh-soo-day-vuh-yuh)

OM MANI PADME HUM “the jewel is in the lotus” for spiritual awakening

(ohm muh-nee pud-may hoom)

### How to use a mala

A typical mala has 108 beads, seeds or crystals. Often the mala has a 109<sup>th</sup> bead called the “head” which is not counted during mantra recitation. It is the starting and ending point of the session. Rest the mala on the ring finger of the right hand. Hold the stone/bead just beyond the head stone with thumb and middle finger. As you say each mantra pull the next bead toward your heart. Place the rest of the mala in the left hand in front of the navel. You can hold the left hand in Gyan (“wisdom”) mudra by bringing the thumb and index finger to touch.



## Yoga Nidra online workshop

Friday, September 25 from 6:00-8:00pm CST

Cost is \$45 cash, check, PayPal or Venmo

<https://yogaspiritulsa.com/workshops/>

Yoga nidra is known as “the yoga of sleep.” Rather than sitting upright with an erect spine, yoga nidra is practiced either lying down or sitting up in a relaxed manner reminiscent of taking a nap. You’re not asleep, but rather awake and alert to the guided meditation. In this highly relaxed state the subconscious mind is able to receive loving, supportive guidance.

In this workshop you will learn a simple outline that you can use to practice on your own or guide others in the practice. We’ll also explain the importance of having an intention (called sankalpa in Sanskrit) and help you decide what intention would best serve you in 2020. We will end the evening with guided yoga nidra that you’ll practice in your private space at home.

Plus you’ll receive a recording of the workshop you can review later even if you can’t attend on the 25th.

## Restorative Yoga Advanced Training

This course explores the theory and practice of Yoga that restores and renews body, mind and spirit. Topics include prop-supported restorative Yoga, Yin Yoga, Yoga Nidra, and lots of practice teaching. Upon completion of this course you’ll be able to offer restorative experiences for private clients and groups. Everyone who completes the course will receive a certificate for 50 hours of continuing education. The cost of the course is \$750.

Classes meet from 1:00-7:00pm on September 26-27, October 24-25, November 14-15, and December 12 (make-up day). Students can miss up to two days or one weekend and make it up by attending the make-up day and completing a written assignment.

Visit our website <https://yogaspiritulsa.com/300-hour-training/>

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