Role of Om Meditation for Mental Health in day to day life

Priyanka Sharma, Dr. Leena Jha

Yoga Teacher, Professor

Maharaja Agrasen Himalayan Garhwal University

Abstract

Background

In Indian scriptures and history, the sacred syllable Om is the rudimentary sound from which all other sounds and creation emerge which signifies the Supreme Power.

Aims

Role of Om Meditation for Mental Health in day to day life

Descriptions from ancient texts

The descriptions of Om have been taken from four Upanisads (Mundaka, Mandukya, Svetasvatara, and Katha), the Bhagvad Gita, and Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras.

Om Meditation

The Om meditation technique needs to be practiced carefully to achieve all the various benefits its offers. Let's take a close look at how to start Om chanting meditation:

• The first step to starting Om meditation is to sit in the Vajrasana, also known as the Lotus pose. In case you are not able to find a comfortable spot on the floor to do this pose, you can also use a chair to sit. You need to keep your back straight and erect and your hands on either side of your thighs or knees. The point to sitting in the pose is to make sure that you feel comfortable and relaxed. Then sit peacefully and clear your head.

• Then slowly close your eyes or glance towards the ground or floor.

• The next step involves focusing on the breathing pattern you need to breathe naturally with your mouth closed. Ensure that you inhale and exhale only through your nose. Your jaw muscles need to be relaxed with your lower and upper teeth slightly parted. Remember now to clench your teeth. Focus on inhaling and exhaling without adding any frills to the process.

• Once you have your breathing pattern in place, it is time to start aum chanting. You need to fit the Om chant during your breath duration. Elongate the word om by focusing on the first sound and then keep your mouth wide open as you move on to the last part of the om sound by keeping your lips together as you chant. Then stay silent till it is time to repeat the chant.

• Continue the aum meditation while you ensure that you are in sync with your breath. You will soon fall into a cycle of chanting and find your body and mind relaxing gradually. Focusing on your inner self during Om meditation will help you improve your meditation technique and reap all the benefits it offers.

As you sink deeper into Om medication, the vibrations will become subtle and softer, like a whisper, and soon become silent. That is when you will realize that aum is present around you and active in your body. You will also notice that your breath has slowed down and become light due to the power of meditation. Unlike other meditation techniques, you do not focus on any particular part of your body during Ommeditation. Although your mind may waver, you will always find it turning back to the chanting. You can always make a mental note of the things your mind wavers to during meditation and come back to it afterward when you are calm and peaceful.

Benefits Offered By Om Meditation

Just like other meditation techniques, Om chanting meditation offers various benefits as seen below:

• Om chanting meditation will bring you tranquillity, serenity, peace, and calm.

• If you feel lost, Om meditation will help you come closer to your true self and nature.

• Om meditation works wonders in making people more open-minded and able to treat others with respect and without any prejudice.

• It is extremely healing and will keep you healthy and fit.

• Om meditation will improve your spinal cord strength.

• Morning meditation with Om chanting will rid your body of all the toxins that have built up.

• Om meditation improves concentration and the ability to focus.

• It will improve your heart health.
The Om Vibration

What Is Om?

Let’s begin with the basics. What is Om? And what does it mean?

Om is an ancient, sacred word from the eastern spiritual traditions of Yoga, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Also spelled AUM, pronouncing it involves a progression through the three sounds of A-U-M (Ahh-Oooh-Mmmm).

Unlike other words, Om isn’t revered for its intellectual meaning. Instead, the unique quality of each sound emitted when the word is intoned is what makes it so special. These sounds arise as an uninterrupted vibration that begins deep in the throat with A, hovers over the tongue with U, and culminates with bringing the lips together for M. We don’t have to do anything to make these sounds, other than vibrating our vocal chords as we open our mouth and bring it to a close again. And all other sounds we can make are contained within these three most basic vocal seeds. Thus, AUM is known as the primal sound, and it’s considered to be the primordial, ever-humming sound of the universe.

The Om Vibration As Sacred Sound

Spiritual tradition holds that the characteristics of these sounds represent the three forces – creative, sustaining, and destructive – by which the universe and life is expressed. The sound A occurs at the base of the throat – the seat of our voice – and is the first sound we can utter. Therefore, it represents the creative force of the universe. When we make the sound U, we bring the vocal vibration up and forward, holding it over our tongue. This correlates to the sustaining force of the universe.

As we bring our lips together to form the M sound, we bring the Om vibration to its finality. Once we’ve closed our lips, the sound can’t move or morph any further. To change it, we have to open our mouth, creating the A sound again at the back of the throat. So this final sound represents destruction. Together, the three sounds found in AUM intone the full, natural cycle of life, from creation to sustained life to destruction and then creation again.

It’s interesting to note, many other spiritual traditions revere words that contain these same seed sounds as well. Namely, Amen of the Jewish, Christian, and Egyptian religions, and Ameen in Islam. And modern science is increasingly coming to recognize what mystics have long observed:

What Is Om Meditation?

Om meditation means simply meditating on the Om sound by repeating it, either out loud or internally. To do this, many people use a mantra that begins with Om, followed by other Sanskrit words. They may also repeat several repetitions of Om by itself to close their practice. Some examples of commonly used mantras include Om Mani Padme Hum, Om Namah Shivaya, and Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti. However, Om can be recited on its own, as well as before and/or after any mantra of your choice.

This mantra repetition is called Japa. When practicing Japa, you can set aside dedicated time to repeat your mantra. One common way of doing this is to use a mala – or strings of beads – to guide you through the completion of 108 recitations. But you can also simply repeat your mantra anytime, anywhere as you’re going about the normal business of your life.

Some Additional Facts About Om Meditation

- Although Om meditation has its root in Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, the word OM does not have any religious connotations. It is believed to be the first sound made during the creation of the universe. When you utter this sound, it helps your body reconnect to the Universe bringing you peace and tranquility.
- There is no steadfast rule that you have to follow vegetarianism in order to practice Om Namah Shivaya meditation.
- Om meditation does not require any additional accessories beyond a mat and a clear mind.
- Practicing Om Shanti meditation every day is the best way to avoid the many benefits offered by meditation. You can start initially by meditating twice or thrice a week and then generally extending it to the other days of the week.
- Remember to wear loose and comfortable clothes for a meditation session.

• It works wonders in keeping your stress and anxiety levels under control.
• You will experience a more cheerful disposition.
• Om meditation helps you regain better control over your emotions, enabling you to react more calmly and peacefully.
• It will impart a glow to your face.
• It helps clear hormonal imbalance issues.

Remember to wear loose and comfortable clothes for a meditation session.

Practicing Om Shanti meditation every day is the best way to avoid the many benefits offered by meditation. You can start initially by meditating twice or thrice a week and then generally extending it to the other days of the week.

Some Additional Facts About Om Meditation

- Although Om meditation has its root in Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, the word OM does not have any religious connotations. It is believed to be the first sound made during the creation of the universe. When you utter this sound, it helps your body reconnect to the Universe bringing you peace and tranquility.
- There is no steadfast rule that you have to follow vegetarianism in order to practice Om Namah Shivaya meditation.
- Om meditation does not require any additional accessories beyond a mat and a clear mind.
- Practicing Om Shanti meditation every day is the best way to avoid the many benefits offered by meditation. You can start initially by meditating twice or thrice a week and then generally extending it to the other days of the week.
- Remember to wear loose and comfortable clothes for a meditation session.

The Om Vibration

What Is Om?

Let’s begin with the basics. What is Om? And what does it mean?

Om is an ancient, sacred word from the eastern spiritual traditions of Yoga, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Also spelled AUM, pronouncing it involves a progression through the three sounds of A-U-M (Ahh-Oooh-Mmmm).

Unlike other words, Om isn’t revered for its intellectual meaning. Instead, the unique quality of each sound emitted when the word is intoned is what makes it so special. These sounds arise as an uninterrupted vibration that begins deep in the throat with A, hovers over the tongue with U, and culminates with bringing the lips together for M. We don’t have to do anything to make these sounds, other than vibrating our vocal chords as we open our mouth and bring it to a close again. And all other sounds we can make are contained within these three most basic vocal seeds. Thus, AUM is known as the primal sound, and it’s considered to be the primordial, ever-humming sound of the universe.

The Om Vibration As Sacred Sound

Spiritual tradition holds that the characteristics of these sounds represent the three forces – creative, sustaining, and destructive – by which the universe and life is expressed. The sound A occurs at the base of the throat – the seat of our voice – and is the first sound we can utter. Therefore, it represents the creative force of the universe. When we make the sound U, we bring the vocal vibration up and forward, holding it over our tongue. This correlates to the sustaining force of the universe.

As we bring our lips together to form the M sound, we bring the Om vibration to its finality. Once we’ve closed our lips, the sound can’t move or morph any further. To change it, we have to open our mouth, creating the A sound again at the back of the throat. So this final sound represents destruction. Together, the three sounds found in AUM intone the full, natural cycle of life, from creation to sustained life to destruction and then creation again.

It’s interesting to note, many other spiritual traditions revere words that contain these same seed sounds as well. Namely, Amen of the Jewish, Christian, and Egyptian religions, and Ameen in Islam. And modern science is increasingly coming to recognize what mystics have long observed:

What Is Om Meditation?

Om meditation means simply meditating on the Om sound by repeating it, either out loud or internally. To do this, many people use a mantra that begins with Om, followed by other Sanskrit words. They may also repeat several repetitions of Om by itself to close their practice. Some examples of commonly used mantras include Om Mani Padme Hum, Om Namah Shivaya, and Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti. However, Om can be recited on its own, as well as before and/or after any mantra of your choice.

This mantra repetition is called Japa. When practicing Japa, you can set aside dedicated time to repeat your mantra. One common way of doing this is to use a mala – or strings of beads – to guide you through the completion of 108 recitations. But you can also simply repeat your mantra anytime, anywhere as you’re going about the normal business of your life.
Repeating any mantra is an incredibly effective way to tame your mind. I’ve written about this in more detail in another post, which you can read here if you’re interested. But what we’re going to explore more deeply in this post is the specific *Om* meditation benefits, with an added focus on the *Om Vibration* that occurs during vocal chanting of this potent sound.

**The Om Vibration As Healing Sound**

While it’s difficult to put into words, I like to think of *Om* chanting as a form of sound therapy, which uses instruments such as tuning forks, singing bowls, gongs and binaural beats to affect the mind and nervous system in healing ways. If you’ve ever experienced a sound bath session or heard a singing bowl resonate its powerful hum, you may know what I’m talking about here. When I do my vocal *Om* meditation, I can feel myself vibrating internally, just like these instruments. Only I’m using my body to create my own self-healing sound.

I call this the *Om* vibration, and it has several pronounced effects on my body-mind-spirit system.

**Om Vibration Benefits**

First, it produces the instant feeling of calm I already mentioned. In fact, when I first started my practice, this was the only recognizable benefit I experienced. I wasn’t expecting anything more, and this wonderfully healing result was enough to keep me coming back again and again to my practice. However, over time, I began to notice another, far more fascinating effect emerging.

As my *Om* meditation practice progressed, I began to experience the inner vibration generated during my chanting as a gently purifying force. Not only could I feel the subtle energy in my system far more distinctly, but that energy felt pure and light. All trace of nervous or heavy energy (or any other negative or imbalanced energetic state) simply dissipated.

With this energetic alignment, a feeling of lightness uplifted me at the same time a steadiness undergirded me. A radiance I can only describe as sweet infused my whole being. And while it seems odd to describe a light as being sweet, it’s the only word that ever comes to mind when I try to grasp it. It’s almost like I can taste or smell it. But in truth, I can’t clarify it with any of my senses.

**Research-Based Om Meditation Benefits**

One of the most profound effects I’ve noticed arise from my yoga and meditation practices is a rewiring or re-attuning of my nervous system. When I say that, I’m describing my felt experience. I don’t know exactly what has happened to my nervous system. And I haven’t been able to find scientific studies that fully explain it. But I know it’s been fundamentally altered, because I respond to life circumstances and environmental cues in an entirely different way than I did years ago – without having to think about it.

Many studies have attested to the physical and mental health benefits of these practices, which is why they’re quickly gaining traction in healthcare settings. Now, scientific inquiry seems to be turning toward figuring out how they work, with some studies already beginning to offer some insight. One such study, published in the International Journal of Yoga Therapy, looked at how *Om* chanting might be connected to the vagus nerve. The vagus nerve, with its vagal tone, seems to be the closest correlation science has to offer to what I’ve observed within myself – a re-attuning of my nervous system.

**Vagus Nerve Stimulation During Om Meditation**

The recent introduction of Vagus Nerve Stimulation as a treatment option for depression and epilepsy inspired the *Om* chanting study mentioned above. Other studies have shown that stimulating the vagus nerve results in decreased activation of the limbic system, which is part of the brain involved in our emotional responses to our environment. The vagus nerve is our automatic regulator. It’s the main component of our parasympathetic nervous system, which returns us to a state of calm relaxation after a fight-or-flight response. And it’s involved in a wide variety of functions, including digestion, heart rate, immune response, and control of our moods.

So, what does this have to do with *Om* chanting? A common sensation felt during *Om* vocalization is vibration in the head and ears. The vagus nerve has auricular (ear) branches. Therefore, this study hypothesized that chanting *Om* might stimulate the vagus nerve, producing a similar deactivation of the limbic system. And indeed, it did.

This is significant, because low vagal tone (or a less active vagus nerve) is associated with decreased capacity to deal with stress, poor digestion, elevated heart rate, and less stable moods. Stimulating the vagus nerve is good for our whole system. And *Om* chanting does this. It seems likely this phenomenon explains – at least partly – the *Om* vibration’s notable calming effect.
Other Research-Backed Om Meditation Benefits

Another study compared Om meditation when practiced out loud and internally, by both experienced and inexperienced practitioners. Here’s what they found:

- Chanting Om increases positive mood, decreases negative mood, and improves attention.
- Om repetition in a group setting increases altruism. (This effect was more pronounced for vocal chanting than silent repetition.)
- Interestingly, the inexperienced mantra practitioners in this study gained more benefits from vocal chanting than silent, inward repetition.

Starting An Om Meditation Practice

If these Om meditation benefits intrigue you, and you want to start your own practice, it’s easy to do. All you have to do is select a mantra that appeals to you. You can choose to work with Om by itself, or you can choose a mantra that begins with Om. You can also use any other mantra that feels meaningful for you. Then close your practice with several repetitions of Om. If you’re not sure what mantra to use, you can find options at the following resources:

Set aside at least ten minutes a day for your Japa meditation practice. You can repeat your mantra inwardly to yourself or out loud, and if you like, use a mala to guide you through 108 repetitions. This is considered to be a sacred number, which is why malas contain 108 beads – one bead for each recitation – plus one larger bead. You can use the larger bead to close your practice with several vocal chants of Om.

I have found using a mala helps keep me focused on my mantra. Completing the full round of 108 repetitions gives my mind time to let go of distractions and fully settle into the meditation. Whether I’m practicing out loud or inwardly, by the end of it, I feel energetically realigned. Additionally, repeating my mantra inwardly at different times throughout the day helps me connect to the present moment, access my calm center, and clear any negative or agitated energy that may arise within me.

Om Meditation Tips

- Before starting your mantra meditation, take a few moments to center yourself by focusing on your breath.
- Sit with a long spine and relaxed shoulders.
- Contemplate the meaning of your mantra before beginning your repetitions, setting the intention to align energetically with it.
- Anchor yourself by focusing on the connection between your bottom and the ground beneath you. Or, if you’re seated in a chair, by focusing on the connection between your feet and the floor. This creates a stable energetic base as you begin to work with the subtle energy in your system through mantra repetition.
- When chanting Om, hold the vibration of each sound (A-U-M) for a moment before moving to the next. This allows each sound to resonate through your whole body-mind-spirit system. Then hold a little space of silence at the end before starting the next round.
- After chanting Om, you can meditate in silence if you want. Your body-mind-spirit system is perfectly aligned for it. But if not, be sure to sit quietly at least for a few moments to let your system bask in your inner glow, attuning itself to the Om vibration.

Closing Thoughts…

Om chanting and mantra meditation can create dramatic shifts in your body-mind-spirit system. It produces immediate calming, centering and uplifting effects – feelings of bliss beginners can access right from the start. And over time, it reconfigures how you function at the physical, mental, and energetic levels. That calm, centered, positive state gradually becomes your normal. And when stress arises, it’s much easier to return to this state of poise.

The Om vibration is beautiful, transformative, and difficult to describe with words. But the quote below comes pretty close:

The Ancient Powerful Practices of Hindu Meditation

Hindu Meditation

Hinduism is a religion, or a way of life, found most notably in India and Nepal. With approximately one billion followers, Hinduism is the world’s third largest religion by population, and the majority religion in India, Nepal and Bali (Indonesia). Hinduism has been called the “oldest religion” in the world, and some practitioners and scholars refer to it as Sanātana Dharma, “the eternal law” or the “eternal way” beyond human origins.

Most notably yoga and meditation have emerged as popular spiritual practices in modern times that stem from the Hinduism. Below is an outline of the rich and varied types of meditation from the Hindu tradition, how to do them and includes links to further resources to help you on your path:

Mantra Meditation (OM Meditation)
Origin & Meaning

A mantra is a syllable or word, usually without any particular meaning, that is repeated for the purpose of focusing your mind. It is not an affirmation used to convince yourself of something.

Some meditation teachers insist that both the choice of word, and its correct pronunciation, is very important, due to the “vibration” associated to the sound and meaning, and that for this reason an initiation into it is essential. Others say that the mantra itself is only a tool to focus the mind, and the chosen word is completely irrelevant.

Mantras are used in Hindu traditions, Buddhist traditions (especially Tibetan and “Pure Land” Buddhism), as well as in Jainism, Sikhism and Daoism (Taoism). Some people call mantra meditation “om meditation”, but that is just one of the mantras that can be used. A more devotion oriented practice of mantras is called japa, and consists of repeating sacred sounds (name of God) with love.

How to do it

As most type of meditations, it is usually practiced sitting with spine erect, and eyes closed. The practitioner then repeats the mantra in his mind, silently, over and over again during the whole session.

Sometimes this practice is coupled with being aware of the breathing or coordinating with it. In other exercises, the mantra is actually whispered very lightly and softly, as an aid to concentration.

As you repeat the mantra, it creates a mental vibration that allows the mind to experience deeper levels of awareness. As you meditate, the mantra becomes increasingly abstract and indistinct, until you’re finally led into the field of pure consciousness from which the vibration arose.

Repetition of the mantra helps you disconnect from the thoughts filling your mind so that perhaps you may slip into the gap between thoughts. The mantra is a tool to support your meditation practice. Mantras can be viewed as ancient power words with subtle intentions that help us connect to spirit, the source of everything in the universe. (Deepak Chopra)

Here are some of the most well-known mantras from the Hindu tradition:

- om
- so-ham
- om namah shivaya
- om mani padme hum
- rama
- yam
- ham

You may practice for a certain period of time, or for a set number of “repetitions” – traditionally 108 or 1008. In the latter case, beads are typically used for keeping count.

As the practice deepens, you may find that the mantra continues “by itself” like the humming of the mind. Or the mantra may even disappear, and you are left in a state of deep inner peace.

How to do it

Transcendental meditation is not taught freely. The only way of learning it is to pay to learn from one of their licensed instructors.

In general, however, it is known that TM involves the use of a mantra and is practiced for 15–20 minutes twice per day while sitting with one’s eyes closed. The mantra is not unique, and is given to the practitioner based on his gender and age. They are also not “meaningless sounds” – rather, they are Tantric names of Hindu deities.

Types of meditation practiced in Yoga.

The most common and universal meditation practice

Third Eye Meditation — focusing the attention on the “sp” between the eyebrows” (called by some “the third eye” or “ajna chakra”) . The attention is constantly redirected to this point, as a means to silence the mind. By time the “silent gaps” between thoughts get wider and deeper. Sometimes this is accompanied by physically “looking”, with eyes closed, towards that spot.

Chakra Meditation — the practitioner focuses on one of the seven chakras of the body (“centers of energy”), typically doing some visualizations and chanting a specific mantra for each chakra (lam, vam, ram, yam, ham, om).

Gazing Meditation (Trataka) — fixing the gaze on an external object, typically a candle, image or a symbol (yantras). It is done with eyes open, and then with eyes closed, to train both the concentration and visualization powers of the mind. After closing the eyes, you should still keep the image of the object in your “mind’s eye”.

Kundalini Meditation — this is a very complex system of practice. The goal is the awakening of the “kundalini energy” which lies dormant on the base of the spine, the development of several psychic centers in the body, and, finally, enlightenment. There are
several dangers associated with this practice, and it should not be attempted without the guidance of a qualified yogi. **Kriya Yoga** — is a set of energization, breathing, and meditation exercises taught by Paramahamsa Yogananda. This is more suited for those who have a devotional temperament, and are seeking the spiritual aspects of meditation. To learn it, you can apply to receive the Self-Realization lessons.

**Sound Meditation (Nada Yoga)** — focusing on sound. Starts with meditation on “external sounds”, such as calming ambient music (like Native American flute music), whereby the student focuses all his attention on just hearing, as a help to quieten and collect the mind. By time the practice evolves to hearing the “internal sounds” of the body and mind. The ultimate goal is to hear the “Ultimate Sound” ( para nada ), which is a sound without vibration, and that manifests as “OM”.

**Tantra** — unlike the popular view in the West, most Tantra practices have nothing to do with ritualized sex (this was practiced by a minority of lineages). Tantra is a very rich tradition, with dozens of different contemplative practices. The text Vijñānabhairava Tantra, for instance, lists 108 “meditations”, most of them more advanced (already requiring a certain degree of stillness and mind control). Here are some examples from that text:

- Merge the mind and the senses in the interior space in the spiritual heart.
- When one object is perceived, all other objects become empty. Concentrate on that emptiness.
- Concentrate on the space which occurs between two thoughts.
- Fix attention on the inside of the skull. Close eyes.
- Meditate on the occasion of any great delight.
- Meditate on the feeling of pain.
- Dwell on the reality which exists between pain and pleasure.
- Meditate on the void in one’s body extending in all directions simultaneously.
- Concentrate on a bottomless well or as standing in a very high place.
- Listen to the Anahata [heart chakra] sound.
- Listen to the sound of a musical instrument as it dies away.
- Contemplate on the universe or one’s own body as being filled with bliss.
- Concentrate intensely on the idea that the universe is completely void.
- Contemplate that the same consciousness exists in all bodies.

**Pranayama** — breathing regulation. It is not exactly meditation, but an excellent practice to calm the mind and prepare it for meditation. There are several different types of Pranayama, but the simplest and most commonly taught one is the 4-4-4-4. This means breathing in counting up to 4, holding for 4 seconds, breathing out for 4 seconds, and holding empty for 4 seconds. Breathe through your nose, and let the abdomen (and not the chest) be the one that moves. Go through a few cycles like this. This regulation of breathing balances the moods and pacifies the body, and can be done anywhere.

Yoga is a very rich tradition, with different lineages, so there are many other techniques. But the ones above are the most well-known; the others are more specific or complex.

With all these types of Hindu meditation, you are likely to find one that you like. If you are a musician, perhaps nada yoga is something that will attract you. If you are a devotional person, kriya yoga is a good option. Kundalini and Chakra meditation should only be attempted with a teacher.

Probably the simplest one to try is the “third eye meditation”, which is simple and yields results fairly quickly. For the other types you would probably need more instruction, either of a teacher or a good book (see references above). Besides, Pranayama is definitely something anyone can benefit from.

**Self-Enquiry and “I Am” Meditation**

**Origin & Meaning**

Self-Enquiry is the English translation for the Sanskrit term atma vichara. It means to “investigate” our true nature, to find the answer to the “Who am I?” question, which culminates with the intimate knowledge of our true Self, our true being. We see references to this meditation in very old Indian texts; however, it was greatly popularized and expanded upon by the 20th-century Indian sage Ramana Maharshi (1879–1950).

The modern non-duality movement (or neo-advaita), which is greatly inspired in his teachings – as well as those of Nisargadatta Maharaj (1897–1981) and Papaji – strongly uses this technique and variations. Many contemporary teachers to employ this technique, the most famous ones being Mooji (whom I’ve personally been with and recommend), Adyashanti, and Eckhart Tolle. How to do it

This practice is very simple, but also very subtle. When explaining it, however, it may sound very abstract.

Your sense of “I” (or “ego”) is the center of your universe. It is there, in some form or another, behind all your thoughts, emotions, memories, and perceptions. Yet we are not clear about what this “I” is – about who we truly are, in essence – and confuse it with our body, our mind, our roles, our labels. It’s the biggest
Mystery in our lives.

With Self-Enquiry, the question “Who I am?” is asked within yourself. You must reject any verbal answers that may come, and use this question simply as a tool to fix your attention in the subjective feeling of “I” or “I am”. Become one with it, go deep into it. This will then reveal your true “I”, your real self as pure consciousness, beyond all limitation. It is not an intellectual pursuit, but a question to bring the attention to the core element of your perception and experience: the “I”. This is not your personality, but a pure, subjective, feeling of existing – without any images or concepts attached to it. Whenever thoughts/feelings arise, you ask yourself, “To whom does this arise?” or “Who is aware of (anger, fear, pain, or whatever)?” The answer will be “It’s me!”. From then you ask “Who am I?”, to bring the attention back to the subjective feeling of self, of presence. It is pure existence, objectless and choice-less awareness.

Another way of explaining this practice is to just focus the mind on your feeling of being, the non-verbal “I am” that shines inside of you. Keep it pure, without association with anything you perceive.

On all other types of meditation, the “I” (yourself) is focusing on some object, internal or external, physical or mental. In self-enquiry, the “I” is focusing on itself, the subject. It is the attention turned towards its source. There is no special position to practice, although the general suggestions about posture and environment are helpful for beginners.

Conclusions

It is considered that a person who realizes Om, merges with the Absolute. Scientific studies on Om suggest that the mental repetition of Om results in physiological alertness, and increased sensitivity to sensory transmission.

Keywords: Om, Upanisads, Patanjali’s yoga sutras, Bhagavad Gita

REFERENCE