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Transcendental meditation mantras meaning

public domain photo sourceIn mantra meditation, you repeat a particular sound or short phrase again and again. This can be done out loud (chanting), in your mind, or in some combination of the two. In many spiritual paths, you can't just arbitrarily pick a mantra – your spiritual mentor or guru assigns one to you according to your phase of spiritual development and then later changes it in intervals as you grow. In other forms of meditation, spiritual or not, you pick a mantra from a given list of phrases that are thought to resonate positively. Not all mantras work well for all people, and unless you're taking spiritual direction from a mentor you should feel free to try another.Using a mantra while you're meditating helps suppress the thoughts and distractions that arise and gives you a tool to use when you're not meditating. Repeating a meditation mantra during times of stress, for many people, brings about some relaxation and helps them to better deal with whatever the crisis of the moment is. Depending on your belief system, the mantras may also do things like get you in touch with the true nature of the universe, help you spiritually closer to God, and/or activate energy centers.Mantra Meditation is One of Many WaysThere's a lot of ways to meditate. Besides using mantras, you could also focus on your breath, music, a real object, a mental visualization, or nothing at all (Zen). If you're just starting out, don't feel like you have to start by picking a mantra – you can start "meditation shopping" the different approaches. Many of the guided meditations are contemplative exercises for gratitude, cleansing, energy, and healing – where it's not a single idea that holds focus, but an exploration of concepts or guided imagery.You Might Want a Meaningless MantraFor that matter, even in mantra meditation you could pick nearly any short phrase and have the same sort of cleansing, buffering effect against the mental trivia that inevitably rises during meditation. There's some serious hitters backing the idea of your mantra having no meaning:Mantras in Transcendental Meditation are intended to have no intellectual meaning and that's very important in that approach – you can read more here.Clinically Standardized Meditation (which was created by a psychologist using a scientific approach back in the 70s or 80s) also uses a set of 16 possible mantras that have no English meaning but have soothing sounds.The meaning of the phrase is irrelevant to those who subscribe to the idea that the phrase is really just a way at getting at the underlying vibration. According to the Chopra Center, the ancient seers behind the Vedic texts put down all of the primordial vibrations that make up the universe – and that we can hear them too, if we listen attentively enough to the background hum of the air. "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."Despite those three very hefty precedents, though, repeating something life-affirming and spiritual can add something positive to our consciousnesses. There's abundant cultural heritage behind choosing something with meaning – or else I couldn't supply you with this list, which just scratches the surface. There's a ton more Hindu and Buddhist ones you could look at using, at least, and some people outside those paths just go directly to using the Lord's Prayer or the name of God according to their religion of choice. My suggestion to you is that you simply explore to see what feels best for you, especially if you're just getting started."Aum", "Om": Sanskrit/Hindu, meaning "It Is" or "To Become". This is considered most sacred in that tradition and to have the vibration of intention manifesting in the physical realm, or more simply the vibration of the universal consciousness. Also used in Buddhism and other traditions."Be the change you wish to see in the world.": Gandhi"El Shaddai": Hebrew, meaning "God Almighty""Elohim": Hebrew, meaning "to whom one has recourse in distress or when one is in need of guidance""Every day in every way I'm getting better and better.": Laura Silva"Gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha", Buddhist meaning "Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone utterly beyond, Enlightenment hail!". There's an MP3 on wildmind.org."Ham-Sah", "So Ham" (often pronounced "So Hum"): Sanskrit, meaning "I am THAT". It is suggested to use "So" on inhale, "Ham" on exhale."Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare": Hindu, read about its meaning here"I am that I am": Hebrew, God's answer to Moses when asked for his name"I change my thoughts, I change my world.": Norman Vincent Peale"I love you, I'm sorry, Please forgive me, Thank You": Hawaiian (Ho'oponopono)"Love is the only miracle there is.": Osho"Maranatha": Christian, meaning "Come Lord" and understood by some as the final teaching of the Christian Bible"Om A Ra Pa Ca Na Dhih": Buddhist, and I'm not even going to try to break out the meaning of this in a list. Read about it here, video below."Om Mani Padme Hum": Buddhist, meaning "Hail the Jewel in the Lotus" (the jewel being Buddha, but that interpretation disagreed with by wildmind.org). Video below."Om Namah Shivaya": Hindu, meaning "I bow to Shiva""Om Shanti Shanti Shanti": Buddhist and Hindu, the starting of Om followed by peace of mind, peace of body, and peace of speech. Video below."Om Vajrapani Hum": Buddhist, read more and hear it on Wildmind"Name Amita Bha": meaning "Homage to the Buddha of boundless light""Sabbe Satta Sukhi Hontu": Buddhist, Pali phrase meaning "May all beings be well (or happy)". There's an MP3 on wildmind.org."Sat, Chit, Ananda" "Existence, Consciousness, Bliss", Sanskrit, "Satcatananda". Deepak Chopra uses it. It refers to the subjective experience of Brahman.Meditation Mantra Videos"Aum" / "Om" "Ham-Sah" / "So Ham" "Om A Ra Pa Ca Na Dhih" "Om Mani Padme Hum" "Om Shanti Shanti Shanti" Sources & Further ReadingBuddhist Mantras, wildmind.org. They have quite a few more that I didn't list above.Top 10 Mantras For Meditation finerinds.comMantra definition by the Chopra Center, chopra.comMarantha – A Christian Mantra, swami.comOm namah shivaya, meditationiseasy.comOm shanti shanti shanti, wildmind.orgPrajnaparamita mantra, wildmind.orgSabbe satta sukhi hontu, wildmind.orgSimple, Profound Meditation Mantras omharmionics.comSome Mantras to Dwell Upon, meditationiseasy.comThe Power of Mantra Meditation, mayalbehappy.comWhat is the value of the 'mantra' in the practice of Transcendental Meditation? founder of the Transcendental Meditation program, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi explains on tm.orgWhat is a Mantra? – includes audio from Deepak Chopra, explaining what a Mantra is, chopra.com » Affirmations » 21 Mantras for Meditation Meditation, Spirit « The Ego Self and New Beginnings 5 Christmas Prayers » Photo: Hulton Archive/Getty Images Transcendental Meditation is having a moment. After making a big splash in the peace 'n' love era, it largely faded from view, but now everyone from Lena Dunham and Lykke Li to Oprah and Dr. Oz is into it. David Lynch has had a foundation dedicated to it since 2005, and earlier this year Jim Carrey's commencement address at a TM university went viral. But what is TM? Is it some kind of Scientology-like cult? A trendy thing to add to your self-improvement agenda? Could it be something actually worth trying? To help you decide, or so you can simply prep to be a TM aficionado the next time the topic comes up at a cocktail party, we turned to Dean Sluyter, who taught TM from 1970 to 1993. Sluyter, who has practiced extensively in Advaita Vedanta, Tibetan Buddhism, and Bhakti Yoga, is the author of The Zen Commandments, Cinema Nirvana, and Natural Meditation: A Guide to Effortless Meditative Practice, and a blogger for the Huffington Post. Here, Sluyter gives a rundown of what you need to know about the suddenly hot-again practice. It feels good. TM allows the mind and body to settle into a quiet state of "restful alertness." Usually, people come out of it feeling refreshed, energized, and at peace. Its benefits have been proven ... kind of. Forty-plus years of research has shown that TM can do everything from slowing or reversing the progression of changes that underlie cardiovascular disease (including the thickening of the tissue in the heart's main chamber and impaired blood flow within the heart), to easing asthma, to improving cognitive function, including analytical ability, creativity, and problem solving, to lowering blood pressure. True, some of the studies look a tad shaky close up (and were done by TM advocates), but even if half of them are bogus, what's left is still impressive. No, the Beatles didn't invent it. TM was developed by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, an amazingly energetic, 5'4" white-robed holy man who left India in 1958 on a mission to "spiritually regenerate the world." Educated in physics, he taught a user-friendly meditation technique that he presented in nonmystical, scientific terms. He traveled the world, giving lectures and, eventually, training teachers and building centers. In 1967, things blew up: The Beatles, Mia Farrow, and other celebs followed him to India, and he wound up on the covers of Time, Life, and Newsweek, and all over TV. Doves of people — the suburban bourgeoisie along with hippie types — started queuing up to learn. Later, Maharishi started moving in more grandiose directions, opening schools and universities, offering expensive "advanced" courses (including one that more or less guaranteed enlightenment — for a million bucks), printing his own currency, launching a line of health supplements and his own TV station (featuring all good news all the time, read by skinny guys in white silk suits), ranting against world leaders who didn't support his programs, ignoring recurrent allegations of financial and sexual improprieties, and trying to build a meditation theme park. His original organization is still around, but these days most of the action is in the David Lynch Foundation, which promotes TM in schools and shows all-star benefit concerts featuring the likes of Russell Brand and Sarah Silverman — and sometimes Ringo and Sir Paul McCartney. Yes, you need a mantra. The technique consists of resting your attention on a mellow, meaning-free one- or two-syllable mantra in an effortless way that allows the mantra to gradually melt like a cough drop, leaving a state of inner silence. The mantras come from the Vedic traditions of India, and are assigned by the teacher at the time of instruction. While many articles refer to "repeating" or "focusing on" a mantra, the method is actually more subtle and easygoing than that. No, the mantras aren't magic. People who talk about going to the TM center "to get my mantra" — like picking up a carton of milk — miss the point. As do those who get excited about finding lists of mantras online. The mantra is just a vehicle for the settling-down process; the crucial element is how you drive it. These particulars you learn in a one-on-one session with a teacher that takes about an hour; then you'll return for three additional sessions with a group. It's about not doing. The magic's not so much in the mantra, but in the effortlessness of the practice. This was Maharishi's genius. He figured out how to take just about any stress-puppy who comes through the door, walk her through a few steps, and get her effortlessly meditating. Effort in meditation is self-defeating, like trying to turn a jar of muddy water clear by shaking and stirring it. If you just let it sit, the mud settles to the bottom and the water turns clear. You don't have to change your beliefs or lifestyle. Bacon? No problem. Except ... If you've been using weed or anything stronger, there's a 15-day drying-out period before the initial instruction session. (No restriction on booze.) After that, you don't have to take any vows to stay drug-free, but many people lose the desire. It's portable. You can meditate on a chair, on a couch, on the subway, in a cubicle, in a church — anywhere you can sit with your eyes closed. Some TM-ers also do yoga and meditate cross-legged on a cushion, but that's optional. It's quick. You do 15 to 20 minutes in the morning and another 15 to 20 in the evening. In between, you do your thing at work or wherever, and whatever the results are, they're there. It's pricey. As TM gained popularity over the years, the "donation" to learn it gradually rose from \$35 to \$2,500. Since Maharishi's death in 2008, cooler heads in the organization have prevailed and brought the price tag down to a grand or so. It's not the only game in town. It's true that many meditation techniques use effort and concentration. But there are others that employ the same principle of not trying as TM, whether with a mantra or some other method such as following the breath or gazing into the sky. And they generally don't have the hefty price tag, the keep-you-manttra-secret fetish, and the our-way-is-the-only-way attitude of the TM organization. It's normal at the bottom, weird on top. Thousands of people over the years have simply learned TM, done it twice a day, and gone on with their normal lives, only happier — as advertised. But for TM teachers and those higher up in the organization, there's a fair amount of weirdness, including generous helpings of true-believer-ism, levitation programs, question marks about where all the money goes, and guys with gold crowns who've been appointed "kings." Go figure. If you stay with it, there are bonuses. In their public lectures, TM teachers emphasize the practical benefits like mental clarity and better health. Those benefits are real, but they're side effects. The ultimate goal — of TM as well as the many other equally effective approaches — is enlightenment, awakening, realization: permanent transcendence. This doesn't mean you become a grinning, drooling vegetable parked somewhere in a cave. You can be a billionaire hedge-fund maven like Ray Dalio (who does TM) or a king-of-the-hill NBA coach like Phil Jackson (who does Zen). But gradually, even as all the waves of doing and experiencing rise and fall as usual, your consciousness expands to include the ocean of Just Being that underlies them — and is always blissfully silent. You'll come for the stress release, you'll stay for the nirvana. 14 Things You Need to Know to Talk About TM

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