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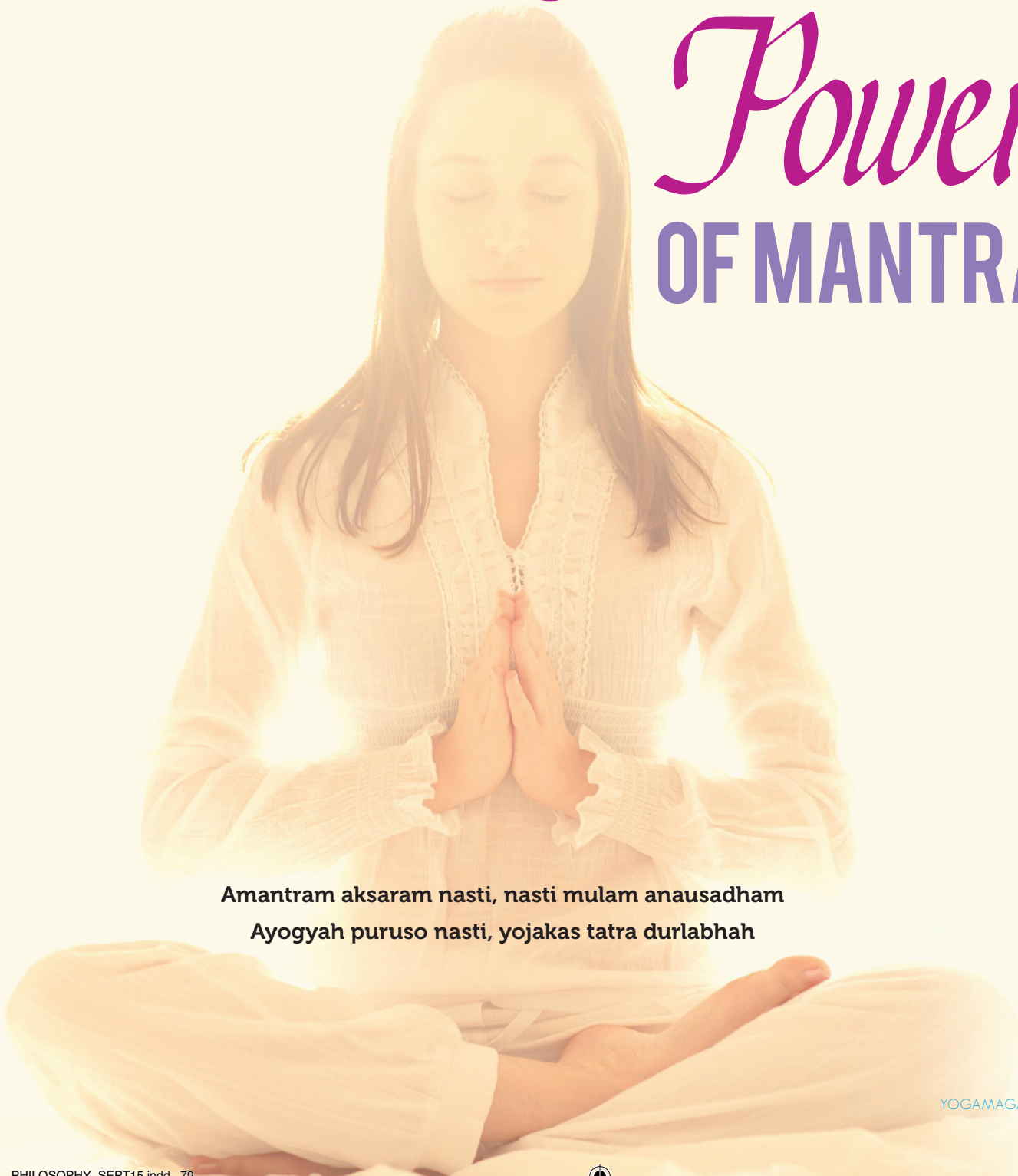


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PHILOSOPHY

THE *Real Power* OF MANTRA



Amantram aksaram nasti, nasti mulam anausadham
Ayogyah puruso nasti, yojakas tatra durlabhah

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*"In everyone's
horoscope,
there are key
sounds, or
mantras, that
reflect various
aspects of the
personality."*



There is no syllable that is not a mantra, no root that is not medicine; There is no person who is not born with a use, but it takes skill to find these things.

In everyone's horoscope, there are key sounds, or mantras, that reflect various aspects of the personality. This is based on the individual placement of planets at the time of their birth. Vedic astrology makes use of these (what are sometimes called sacred or 'primordial sounds') for naming people and businesses, for meditation, and even for finding compatible partners. In previous issues, the importance of such sounds was discussed.*

Such short 'seed syllables' or bija mantras are practicable for Westerners because they are not particularly difficult to pronounce. But probing the heart of the Mantric tradition requires a deeper understanding of Sanskrit, because the majority of mantras in that language are lengthier and more complex than the single-syllable we are used to in the West. Want to get in touch with Ganesa? His seed mantra, om gam ganapataye is great, but the longer ganapati atharva sirsam, which takes about ten minutes to recite, may introduce you to a deeper level of this deity.

Want to create understanding and harmony in your life? The Visnu Sahasranama can help, but you have to invoke the thousand names of Visnu with some degree of intelligibility. It is true that intention is ultimately most important, but the power of a mantra really shines when it is also properly articulated. For example, 'ananda' means "lack of joy, misery" while ānanda denotes the opposite: "rolling in joy, bliss." Do you think flipping these could have an effect on your spiritual practice?

In my classes on Sanskrit for yogis, we joke that the word cakra (pronounced 'chuh-kruh') is only a shaakraah in California. That is, there are variants in Sanskrit pronunciation wherever you go - even in different regions of India (think prakriti versus prakruti). But attaining a rudimentary understanding of 'correct' pronunciation frees us to play and be creative when we like - to call a cakra a shaakraah with delight - and with the inside understanding that we know what to call it when the time is right.



DIFFERENT KINDS OF MANTRAS

In Ayurveda, there are mantras for healing various organs and systems in the body. For example, hrum is a bija mantra for the liver, while rm works for the ears and hrim for the eyes. A slightly longer version of these also exists, like Om hrim suryaya namah for the eyes, and Om dvam dvara vasinabhyam namah for the ears.

There are also longer mantras like the maha mrtyunjaya that are recited 108 times per day to help with difficult to treat diseases:

Om tryambakam yajamahe sugandhim pusti
vardhanam
Urva rukam iva bandhanan mrtyor muksiya
mamrtat

This famous mantra actually comes from the Rg Veda and is embedded in the Sri Rudram- an ancient paen to Rudra and a powerful healing hymn that takes about thirty-minutes to recite in its entirety.

There are also Tantric-based mantras like the cakra bija sounds:

Lam- 1st cakra
Vam- 2nd cakra
Ram- 3rd cakra
Yam- 4th cakra
Ham 5th cakra
Ksam or Om- 6th cakra

There are also short, medium, and long mantras for each of the planets. Having trouble with Saturn? Try the Shani bija: om sam sanaiscaraya namah. Or his Puranic mantra:

Om nilanjana samabhasam, ravi putram
yamagrajam
Cchaya martanda sambhutam, tam namami
sanaiscaram

Want to please all nine planets in one swoop? You can do that too, with long or short mantras like this one:

Brahma muraris tripuranta kari, bhanuh sasi bhumi
suto budhas ca
Gurus ca sukrah sani rahuh ketuh, sarve grahah
santi pradah bhavantu

The mantra om namo bhagavate vasudevaya is a sacred invocation said to cleans all twelve houses of your horoscope with its twelve syllables. A concentrated form of the Visnu Sahasranama,

it invokes the sustainer of the universe to ensure peace and harmony in the home and in our relationships.

Probably the most popular and most numerous mantras are those dedicated to deities, like the aforementioned Ganesha and Visnu, as well as mantras to the divine mother, avatars like Rama and Krsna, and even natural forces like Vayu and Agni- Wind and Fire personified.

Literally thousands of mantras exist to honor the various aspects of Nature and the deities that represent them, and to learn these takes dedicated study under a guru and a lineage. The common thread that unites them, however, is Sanskrit. And though few of us will become Sanskrit scholars, a little effort goes a long way towards making the words you speak mantras, and the mantras you say powerful and imbued with meaning.

- See the April and May issues for Namaste- What's Your True Name? For more information or questions about your primordial, or sacred sound, refer to the author's DVD program Decoding Your Life Map With Vedic Astrology, available on amazon.com, or email him directly at: siddhadeva@yahoo.com

For more on healing, planetary, and other mantras, as well as the Sanskrit know-how behind them, refer to the author's Sanskrit Without Stress DVD program, available on www.spirittype.com

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SIMON HAS A POPULAR DVD SERIES 'DECODING YOUR LIFE MAP WITH VEDIC ASTROLOGY', AND TEACHES SANSKRIT AND MEDICAL JYOTISHA AT THE AYURVEDIC INSTITUTE IN ALBUQUERQUE, NM. TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ONLINE SANSKRIT LEARNING AT THE AYURVEDIC INSTITUTE VISIT ONLINELEARNING@AYURVEDA.COM. TO FIND YOUR DHARMA OR READ THE FIVE DHARMA TYPES, VEDIC WISDOM FOR DISCOVERING YOUR PURPOSE AND DESTINY, PUBLISHED BY DESTINY BOOKS.