

Mahavakya Meditation

After my experience of the Cosmic Hum, my meditations went through a very interesting process of change and evolution. They've now gelled into a new practice, which I feel could help others.

My experience of the creation vibration, or cosmic hum, has receded more into the background and I now sit much more with the cosmic silence, Being, the no-thought state or whatever one might be moved to call it.

When I first close my eyes, I start with 'um.' I repeat it silently and rapidly, as in umumumum, sometimes to the point of it becoming a continuum. It almost always brings me to a quieter, less mentally active state within a few minutes or less.

If you try this, it may take you longer, especially if you are new to meditation. If this is the case, don't hesitate to use um as your primary mantra for most of your meditation. This would be your optimum, early practice and, over time, you will get more and more used to the settled, less mentally active state. And remember to have it be as effortless as possible. Mentally pushing is not helpful. In all your meditation practices, the lighter, easier, more effortless the touch, the better.

This um sound is very close to the Vedic/Hindu 'Om' and the Tibetan 'Huum' and it's the closest sound our human voices can produce to the Cosmic Hum. But the 'uh' vowel is the easiest and most open vowel for our mouth and throat to make. All the other vowels close some area of the lips, mouth or glottis more fully and with more exertion.

So though my meditations are silent, mental and without moving the mouth, I choose um as being removed from any tradition and the easiest to think as well as say. (I still associate 'ing' and 'im' with Transcendental Meditation and Hindu goddesses and feel less inclined to use them.)

Then, when my mind is more settled, I begin my own, personal series of mahavakyas.

In the enlightenment traditions of India, especially in the Upanishads and Advaitya schools, the mahavakyas, or great sayings, can loosely be translated as I am That, Thou art That, All this is nothing but That.

In referencing That, the word that I prefer to use is 'Being,' though I also use many others.

What those traditions are saying is that, ultimately, our truest, deepest nature, our real, eternal identity is That. All the rest is ephemeral and not truly who we are.

That, or Being, is always there.

Just as our bodies, our minds and the air we breathe are always there, so is Being.

But it is the most subtle, elusive aspect of our existence. It doesn't change or fluctuate. It is the only absolute in contradistinction to all the other relative aspects of our existence and the universe.

There are places our bodies can't exist. Our minds can shut down. Under many circumstances, we can be deprived of air.

But Being never ends. It is the eternal, omnipresent backdrop of everything else.

Just as we used to see the white screen when we entered a movie theater and then lost awareness of it as we were drawn into the images which fell upon it, Being is the backdrop of all other things.

It can be called many things, described in many ways.

Stillness, Silence, non-fluctuating awareness, the Vastness, the Void, the Oversoul, Pure Being, Pure Consciousness, God, the Great Empty Effulgence, the Source of All That Is, and more.

It could also be called the vacuum state. There is this small, obscure part of Quantum Mechanics that really holds it all together. Without it, the whole model would unravel. Most scientists are uncomfortable with it and many don't even know it's an integral, necessary piece of the physics of reality. The reason it causes most scientists to blanch is because in order to describe it, they have to resort to godlike phrases.

All things exist in the vacuum state in virtual form. Nothing exists there in actual form. All that is comes from it. It is non-fluctuating, changeless, omnipresent and eternal. It underlies and is the source of all things.

It is Being and is available to our experience as the silent, non-fluctuating awareness that has no object. It is the cosmic stillness.

For most of us it is almost always the case that any hint of a thought or feeling or, certainly, the normal stuff of life, obliterates the experience of it. Our awareness is overtaken with the myriad relative inner and outer experiences we all know.

But we carry it with us always, everywhere we go. It is the absolute of our existence. It abides in every system, organ, cell and quark. There is nowhere it is not. It is so close it is lost. Any fluctuating, relative thought, feeling, perception or thing overshadows it.

We can experience it in meditation when thoughts subside and we perceive an unbounded, eternal vastness or a subtle, non-changing presence. We know it to be 'right there' where it always has been and always will be. As our practice develops, we can also begin to experience it along with other relative phenomena. Maharishi (the Beatles Transcendental Meditation guru) used to call this 'witnessing.'

And any pronoun, specifically It or This, could replace That. Once we understand what we're talking about, we can reference it any way we please.

So we'll get to Being. But after my mind settles through the easiest use of the shortest, most central, most neutral mantra 'um,' I begin a string of sayings or mahavakyas I feel to be the foundation stones of healing, evolution and enlightenment.

The second one is what came to me and became The Love and Forgiveness Meditation mantra. The first and second together form the heart of the ancient Hawaiian healing practice called Ho'oponopono.

I start with what is, to me, the less powerful half, but also a very important one, 'I'm sorry, please forgive me.'

I think this one to five times, depending on whether it's my longer morning or shorter afternoon meditation, or the shortest one I do before sleep (30-45, 20-35 and several to 15 minutes respectively, though sometimes I go longer).

Then come 'I love you and forgive you,' 'Please help me,' 'I surrender,' 'It's here,' 'It's me,' 'I am This,' 'I am free,' 'I am success,' 'I turn everything over to God,' 'I love everything I do,' 'I love everyone and everything,' 'I live love' and 'Thank you,' each thought the same number of times as the first, though I sometimes add one or two repetitions to the short ones and if one of them stands out and seems to have the most juice in that particular moment, I will stay with it longer until I have milked it sufficiently.

Regarding 'I'm sorry, please forgive me,' we have all done damage—to people, animals, places and things, to emotions and sensibilities, to hearts, minds and souls, to ourselves, our loved ones and our ecology. It is good to apologize and ask forgiveness for these things.

Of 'I love you and forgive you,' I have written extensively. Consider reading my books.

'Please help me,' we ask of God and the universe, our higher power, the devas and the living, breathing, flowing threads of existence.

'I surrender' is to those same things and what is. We cause ourselves great grief by fighting what already is.

'It's here,' acknowledges that Being or That or cosmic stillness is here and helps us become aware of it.

'It's me,' affirms that we are best off identifying with It.

'I am This,' reaffirms that and helps deepen the experience.

'I am free,' helps us gain liberation.

'I am success,' is more purely for me because I have been denying myself success all my life, though it might help others.

'I turn everything over to God,' helps us let go of everything, which, ultimately, we must to gain liberation.

The next three bear elaborating and repeating. We do so much from or tinged with annoyance, aggravation, duty, necessity, boredom, determination, need, greed and so on. We also do so much semi-consciously, with a small part of our awareness. The more we do with, of, in and through love, the better. It transforms us and everything we touch. Imagine loving everything in your life, everything you do, all the daily chores and everything else. Imagine doing everything with more love and consciousness. This can more and more be lived. We can consciously live love. And these love mahavakyas thought in the awareness of deep meditation can help.

'Thank you' is to all the above and more, to everything we are given, to all that sustains us and to the Source of it all. It's also the last piece of Ho'oponopono.

Then I usually think the word 'Soma,' which I have probably thought once or twice already.

Besides the pranayama or yogic breath techniques and the yoga postures or asanas that I learned from Maharishi, this is the only other technique from him I still use and, by far, my favorite of all the techniques he gave us.

And, to my knowledge, he only gave it to a very small number of us, though he may have given it to more people later.

Four or five of us who worked most closely with him at the time were sitting in his small meeting room one afternoon when he said, "Do this one thing. Every once in a while in your meditation, think the word Soma."

Maharishi used to talk about Soma a lot.

According to the traditions of India, a more sublime, divine, celestial, nectar-like product can be produced in the digestive systems of the most fully relaxed, the awakened or enlightened, the twice-born sages or saints of the world. Think 'mouth-watering, divine saliva' though that hardly does it justice and it's produced in other places along the alimentary canal besides the salivary glands.

Internally it's called Soma. But when it's produced in higher quantities, it secretes out onto the skin where it supposedly can be perceived as something subtle, lovely and magnetic and is called Ojas.

So all of us who sat with him often heard of it and knew the concept of it well.

And, in deep meditation, just the thought of it can help produce it.

So all my meditations contain the thought of that word at least a number of times throughout.

Then, for the rest of my meditation, however long that might be, I cease all mental effort, and, as much as possible, remain being the Being, feeling the flatness, attending to inactivity, sitting in silence, knowing the no-thought state.

This cessation of mental activity, or perceiving, experiencing and being the void, has many levels and degrees.

One can go deeper and deeper into the stillness to the point of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, wherein one is totally absorbed in it and becomes, as if, totally gone, in a 'coma,' not asleep or in thought but in a state of suspended animation where a half hour can go by in the blink of an eye.

This is rare, but it can happen. Or lesser states of samadhi can ensue where we feel and know we're in a very deep place and we just sit there in it, experiencing its qualities.

Sometimes of course, I, too, get carried away in thought or rumination. This is inevitable and no cause for self-punishment. When I become aware it has happened, I simply return to Being or think Soma or one of the mantras till it all settles down again.

At the end, I almost always repeat 'Soma' a number of times, rub my palms together, place them over my eyes and take a moment or two to come out slowly. Sometimes I lie down after my meditation.

So my meditations encompass all these things.

Perhaps it is idiosyncratic, meant only for me.

But I do not believe it.

I believe that if millions or billions of us were to do this meditation as described above, comfortably sitting without head support and with eyes closed three times a day, before meals not after, it would be an astounding force for good in the lives of the individuals who practiced it and for the world, itself. I believe that each person who might add this to their daily routine would engender a step forward for all of us. I believe that even hundreds of thousands of us doing it regularly would greatly benefit and help push forward the evolution of collective humanity and the well-being of our biosphere.

Try it for a while.

Let yourself see.

Perhaps you'll come up with a few mahavakyas of your own.

So maybe that's what we'll call it.

Mahavakya Meditation.