

HELD IN THE HEART



EXPLORE | BHAKTI
INTRO TO MANTRAS & CHANTING

with Beth Barbaglia

WHAT IS JAPA YOGA?

The practice of repeating a Mantra, is called *Japa*. Japa Yoga is a direct path towards concentration and meditation. It keeps the mind focused on one pure vibration, thus counteracting the constant racing and restlessness of thought.

The Sanskrit word *Mantra* (pronounced *MUHN-truh*) comes from the root syllables “*man*” which mean “*to think*” (in reference to the mind), and “*tra*” which means “*to protect or free*” from the bondage of the physical world (in reference to the use as a tool). Therefore, the word *Mantra* could be translated and simplified as: *A tool to free the mind of suffering.*

HOW DO WE PRACTICE MANTRA MEDITATION?

A Mantra can be repeated verbally or mentally, daily, at all times or specific times, using beads, or by writing or chanting the Mantra. Japa is commonly practiced using a string of prayer beads, called a *Mala*. Using a *Mala* is very supportive, though it is not a requirement if you do not have one. You will still receive the same great benefits of this practice without the beads.

- **JAPA** (pronounced *JAH-puh*) is the Sanskrit word for the practice of repeating a Mantra (speaking or chanting).
 - **KIRTAN** When a Mantra or Divine Name is chanted, or sung with music, in a group call-and-response setting, we call this form of Japa practice, *Kirtana*, or more commonly, *Kirtan* (pronounced *KEER-tahn-uh* or *KEER-tahn*).
-

HOW TO DO A JAPA WALK

- 1. CHOOSE A MANTRA** If you don't have a relationship with a Deity, or Sanskrit doesn't resonate with you, choose an affirmation. **Example: Ahem Prema or I Am Love.*
- 2. GET OUTSIDE** Grab your *Mala* and choose an area to walk for at least 20 minutes.
- 3. WALK SLOWLY** Without rushing, begin to walk. Repeat your Mantra, quietly within, or quietly aloud if you prefer.
- 4. FOCUS GENTLY** Softly keep your awareness only on the Mantra. There is nothing forced here, and you are not listening to anything other than what's coming through intuitively. **No earphones allowed.*
- 5. OBSERVE** Walk & repeat for a minimum of 20 minutes (or as long as you want, or for as many rounds on your *Mala* you want to do), and notice how you feel — the sounds you hear, the smells, tastes, all of it. When you choose to be complete, sit quietly for a few moments and observe your breath and your energy.

For a group practice, follow these same steps, establishing that everyone will walk at a similar pace and remain in silence until everyone has reached the decided destination. For a seated practice, follow these same steps to do Japa in stillness, alone or with a group.

WHAT IS KIRTAN?

Kirtan is an ancient Bhakti Yoga practice using Sacred song & the fuel of our emotions, as an expression of devotion and prayer. The word Kirtan literally translates to “*Praising the Infinite Source, the One who orchestrates all.*”

The interactive/responsive style of Kirtan uses the repetition of simple, ancient Sanskrit Mantras which are called (sung/chanted) out by the leader and then called/repeated back by the participants. The Mantras used in Kirtan are primarily recitations of the Divine Names. The Mantras quiet the mind, and the Music frees the Heart.

WHAT IS A HARMONIUM?

The *Harmonium* is a type of reed organ, a freestanding keyboard instrument in which air is drawn through, manually via bellows, over a set of free floating reeds. The Indian Harmonium is an instrument in which 12 semitones of the tempered scale are fixed in all the three octaves of a keyboard like that of a piano. It is the principle instrument used in traditional Kirtan. Usually played by the leader of the chant, or the *Wallah*, the Harmonium is probably the most commonly used instrument in Northern India.

Even if leading Kirtan doesn't call to you, you can easily utilize this instrument as a supportive sound healing element in your meditations or Yoga classes, by simply *droning* a single note.

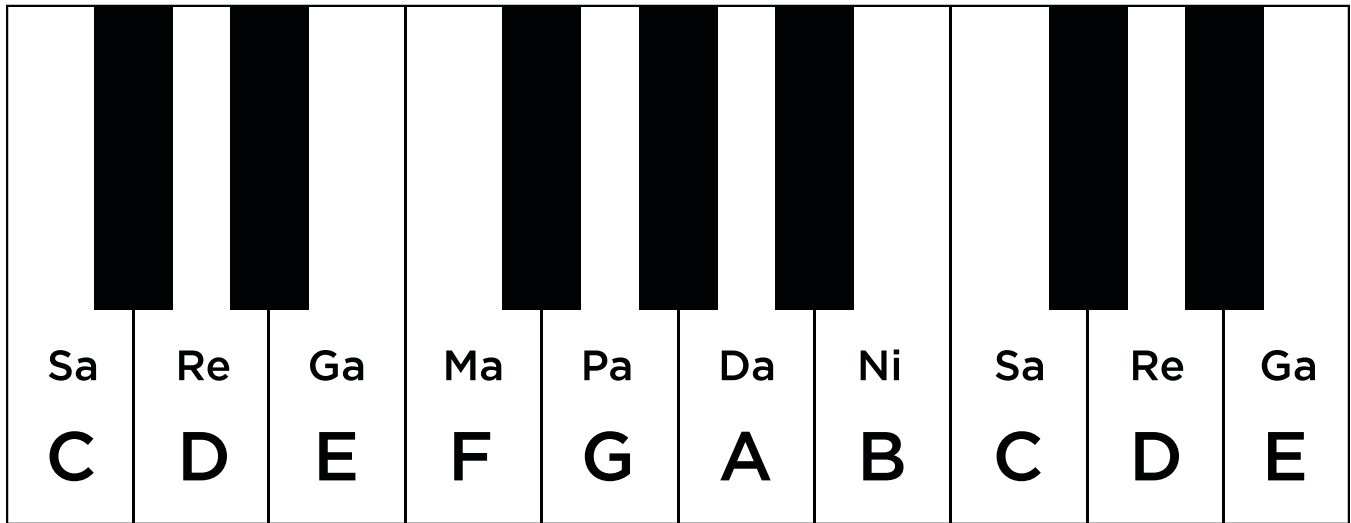
HOW TO APPLY DRONING IN YOUR PRACTICE OR SESSIONS

For your own practice/healing or for classes if you are a teacher, you can choose your drone key based on it's alignment with a specific Chakra. By doing this, you enhance the practice with a cleansing vibration that's literally tuned to the energetic quality of that Chakra.³

Use this chart to identify which key you'd like to drone:

KEY	CHAKRA NAME	LOCATION	ELEMENT	ENERGY
C	1st Chakra: Muladhara	Root	Earth	Grounding
D	2nd Chakra: Svadisthana	Sacrum	Water	Life-energy
E	3rd Chakra: Manipura	Navel	Fire	Power
F	4th Chakra: Anahata	Heart	Air	Love
G	5th Chakra: Vissudha	Throat	Ether	Creativity
A	6th Chakra: Ajna	Third Eye	All	Wisdom/Insight
B	7th Chakra: Sahasrara	Crown	All	Transcendence

KEYBOARD, NOTE NAMES, & BASIC CHORD STRUCTURES



KEY	MAJOR CHORDS	MINOR CHORDS
C	C E G	C E \flat G
D	D F \sharp A	D F A
E	E G \sharp B	E G B
F	F A C	F A \flat C
G	G B D	G B \flat D
A	A C \sharp E	A C E
B	B D \sharp F \sharp	B D F \sharp
B \flat	B \flat D F	/

\flat = **FLAT** (ex: C \flat - black key to left)
 \sharp = **SHARP** (ex: C \sharp - black key to right)

What is Sargam?

Western music uses a technique called “Solfege” for sight-singing and ear training. You may have heard the octave scale sung as the very familiar “Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti Do”.

Indian music uses a Solfege-like system called “Sargam”. Similar to Solfege, Sargam uses the 7 notes (Swaras, Sanskrit) to make a scale, they are: “Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Da Ni”.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES & READING TO LEARN MORE:

BOOKS:

- *Chants of a Lifetime: Searching for a Heart of Gold* by Krishna Das
- *Music and Mantras: The Yoga of Mindful Singing for Health, Happiness, Peace & Prosperity* by Girish
- *Healing Mantras: Using Sound Affirmations for Personal Power, Creativity & Healing* by Thomas Ashley-Farrand
- *Shakti Mantras: Tapping Into the Great Goddess Energy Within* by Thomas Ashley-Farrand

WEBSITES:

- www.heldintheheart.com/for-your-mind
- www.ninaraochant.com
- www.bhaktibreakfastclub.com
- www.olddelhimusic.com

REFERENCES & RESOURCE CREDITS:

¹Pages 3 & 6: <https://sivanandayogafarm.org/teachings/bhakti-yoga/> / ²Page 5: applications derived from Swami Sitaramananda ©2014 / ³Page 16: Chakra chart derived from ‘Music and Mantras’ by Girish / Pages 7+ written by Beth Barbaglia and various referenced personal training materials. Images via Girish, olddelhimusic.com, Google.

A FEW SIMPLE CHANTS

हरे कृष्ण हरे कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण हरे हरे हरे राम हरे राम राम राम हरे हरे

MAHAMANTRA

C F A • C E G • B D G • C E G

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare

SHRI RAM JAI RAM

C E G • B D G • C F A • C E G

Shri Ram, Jai Ram, Jai Jai Ram

JAI MA

C E♭ G • B♭ D G

Jai Ma, Jai Ma, Jai Ma, Jaya Ma

SIRI GAITRI

C E♭ G • G# C E♭ • B♭ E♭ G • B♭ D F

Ra Ma Da Sa Sa Say So Hung

LOKAH SAMASTAH

C E G • C E A • C F A • C E G

Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu
Om Shanti Om, Shanti Om, Shanti Om