

Om Namah Shivaya

(Sanskrit: ॐ नमः शिवाय; IAST: Om Namaḥ Śivāya) is one of the most popular Hindu Mantra and the most important mantra in Shaivism. This mantra is dedicated to Lord Shiva . This Mantra appears as 'Na' 'Ma' 'Śi' 'Vā' and 'Ya' in the Krishna Yajurveda in the Shri Rudram hymn^[1]

ॐ नमः शिवाय

Om Namah Shivaya in Devanagari script

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A Shiva Lingam

Text

This mantra is present in the Shri Rudram hymnin Krishna Yajurveda^{[2][3]}. Shri Rudram hymn is taken from two chapters in fourth book of Taittiriya Samhita (TS 4.5, 4.7) of Krishna Yajurveda. Each chapter consist of eleven *anuvaka* or hymns^[4]. Name of both chapters are *Namakam* (chapter five) and *Chamakam* (chapter seven) respectively.^[5] Om Namah Shivaya mantra appears without OM in eighth hymn of *Namakam*(TS 4.5.8.1) as Namah shivaya ca shivataraya (Sanskrit: नमः शिवाय च शिवतराय च; IAST: Namaḥ śivāya ca śivatarāya ca). It means "Salutations unto Śiva the auspicious one, unto Śivatara the one than whom none more auspicious can exist".^{[6][7][8][9][10]}

Translation

Namah Shivaya means "adoration (namas) to Lord Shiva", preceded by the devotional syllable "Om". The syllable "Ya" at the end of the mantra denotes an offering. Thus the mantra *Om Namah Shivaya* actually means "I offer to Shiva a respectful invocation of His Name", and not merely "I respectfully invoke His Name".

In Siddha Shaivism tradition Nama Sivaya is considered as Pancha Bodha Tatva of Lord Shiva and his universal oneness of five elements:

- "Na" sound representsearth
- "Ma" sound representswater
- "Śi" sound representsfire
- "Vā" sound representsPranic air

- "Ya" sound represents sky or ether

Its total meaning is that "universal consciousness is one" .

In the Shaiva Siddhanta Shaivism tradition the five letters represents :

- *Na* is the Lord's concealing grace
- *Ma* is the world
- *Śi* stands for Shiva
- *Vā* is His revealing grace
- *Ya* is the Ātman or soul ^[11]

Origin

This Mantra appears as 'Na' 'Ma' 'Śi' 'Vā' and 'Ya' in the Yajurveda in the Shri Rudram hymn . Thus predates the use of *Shiva* as a proper name, in the original context being an address to Lord Rudra (later Shiva), where Shiva retains its original meaning as an adjective, meaning "auspicious, benign, friendly", a euphemistic epithet of Rudra.^[11]

It also appears in the Shiva Purana in the chapter 1.2.10 (Shabda-Brahma Tanu) and in its Vidyeshvara samhita and in chapter 13 of the Vayaviya samhita of the Shiva Purana as 'Om Namaha Shivaya'.

The Tamil Saivaite hymn Tiruvacakam begins with the five letters 'Na' 'Ma' 'Śi' 'Vā' and '𑌕'.

It is called **Siva Panchakshara**, or **Shiva Panchakshara** or simply **Panchakshara** meaning the "five-syllable" mantra (viz., excluding the Om) dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is the most holy salutation to Lord Shiva

Usage

This mantra is repeated verbally or mentally, drawing the mind in upon itself to Lord Shiva's infinite, all-pervasive presence. Traditionally it is repeated 108 times a day while keeping count on a strand of rudraksha beads. This practice is called japa yoga. It is freely sung and chanted by everyone, but it is most powerful when given by one's guru. Before this initiation which is called mantra diksha, the guru will usually require a period of study. This initiation is often part of a temple ritual, such as a puja, japa, homa (fire ceremony) , dhyana or and while smearing vibhuti. The guru whispers the mantra into the disciple's right ear, along with instructions on how and when to chant it.^[11]

Effect

This mantra is associated with qualities of prayer, divine-love, grace, truth, and blissfulness. When done correctly, it calms the mind and brings spiritual insight and knowledge. It also keeps the devotee close to Shiva and within His protective global fellowship.

Traditionally, it is accepted to be a powerful healing mantra beneficial for all physical and mental ailments. Soulful recitation of this mantra brings peace to the heart and joy to the Ātman or soul. Many Hindu teachers consider that the recitation of these syllables is sound therapy for the body and nectar for the Ātman.^[12] The nature of the mantra is the calling upon the higher self; it is the calling upon Shiva.

In popular culture

Television serial

Om Namah Shivay was also a TV serial telecasted on an Indian TV Channel, DD National (DD-1).

Movie

These words were chanted by a prisoner as his heart was ripped out by Mola Ram in the 1984 George Lucas and Steven Spielberg film *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*.

In *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia* (2007), Elizabeth Gilbert explained that the first chant provided by her guru was "Om Namah Shivaya."^[13] Gilbert wrote that this meant "I honor the divinity within me."^[14]

Game

These words are chanted by characters Yogi & Reggie as in the 2014 video game *Far Cry 4* as the protagonist experiments with their psychedelic concoctions; the fictional religion in the game is loosely based on Hinduism, thus the chant.

Music lyrics

"Om Namah Shivaya" is also featured in the "Mahadeva" tune by Astral Projection, a popular psychedelic trance band.

"Om Namah Shivaya" is also featured in the "Serpente" (Serpent, snake) song in the *SETEVIDAS* (SEVENLIVES) album (Deckdisc, 2014) by the Brazilian singer Pitty, the princess of rock in Brazil.

Guitarist Steve Hillage also recorded a psychedelic rock version of the song on his 1976 album L, produced by Todd Rundgren.

Om Namah Shivaya is the tenth album (and eighth solo album) by Nina Hagen, released in 1999.

"Om Namah Shiva" is found in Jah Wobble's *Heaven and Earth* album.

"Om Namah Shivaya" is found in MC Yogi's *Elephant Power* album.

"Om Namaha Shiva" is found on Shiela Chandra's *Weaving My Ancestors' Voices* album.

"Om Namah Shivaya" Peace offering is found on Apache Indian's *Best of Apache Indian 2000* album.

"Om Namah Shivaya" is found on Album Viragya: Bonding with Beyond by Isha Sounds.

See also

- Karpuragauram Karunavtaaram
- Mahamrityunjaya Mantra
- Shri Rudram Chamakam
- Śiva
- Vibhuti
- Yajurveda

References

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External links

- [Recitation of Om Namah Shivaya mantra](#)
 - [Discussion of the mantra, its meaning, and everyday use](#)
 - [Audio download and pronunciation instructions](#)
 - [Namah Shivay Chakras](#)
 - [Meaning and Significance of Om Namah Shivaya](#)
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