



AUM



***I am a Wave in the Ocean of Bliss.
I and the Ocean are One.
I am Ocean.
I am That.***

Note: It is very useful to remember that, when describing or reading about subtle levels of consciousness, words are inadequate, and can easily seem to be in conflict with one another, as one wrestles with varying terminology, or with explanations from one or another writer. Ultimately, it is direct experience through repeated practise, without a break, over a long period of time that will unravel the meaning of the explanations and bring the true insights.

When some people picture someone doing yoga, they have an image of a person sitting cross-legged with their eyes closed, thumb and fore finger pressed together, chanting the word "Om". What is Om and what does it mean? Repeating the word Om is a mantra; it is a vibration of the universe around us. Everything has a pulse and ancient yogis created Om to represent that universal pulse. Chanting Om at the beginning and end of a yoga session brings the person a sense of connection to the entire universe and is meant to be soothing and uplifting.

Yoga is beneficial no matter how much or how little of it you can fit into your weekly schedule. In general, it is recommended to start practising yoga two or three times a week for an hour each time and work your way up from there if possible. However, any time that you can find for a yoga session will work too. Nothing special is required to begin a yoga session. The only things that are needed for a yoga session are your body, mind and comfortable, well-fitting workout clothes. Then you are ready for your first yoga experience!





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1. The lower curve represents the Gross, Conscious, **Waking** state level, called Vaishvanara. (A of OM Mantra). In the Waking state of consciousness (A of OM Mantra) there are **actions, speech, and thoughts** of which we are "**consciously**" aware. The unconscious processes in the deeper levels (U and M of OM Mantra) are also there, but just not normally noticed.
2. The center curve represents the Subtle, Unconscious, and **Dreaming** level, called Taijasa. (U of OM Mantra). Mind working out its desires: The Dreaming state (U of OM Mantra) is a level where the mind can work out its **wants, wishes, desires, attractions, and aversions**. Both Yogis and psychologists speak of this as a useful process.
3. The upper curve represents the Causal, Subconscious, and **Deep Sleep** level, called Prajna. (M of OM Mantra). The Deep Sleep state (M of OM Mantra) is the level where deep impressions are stored in their latent form. It contains the **roots of our habit patterns**, the **Samskaras** that are the driving force behind **Karma** (actions). Those wants, wishes, desires, attractions, and aversions that play themselves out in dreams (U of OM Mantra), or turn into actions and speech in the external world (A of OM Mantra) have their root in this level of consciousness. Those impressions are like seeds, lying there waiting for water and fertilizer to awaken them, so they may grow in the fields of Dreaming (U of OM Mantra) or Waking (A of OM Mantra).

Prajna is supreme knowledge: "Pra" means "Supreme" and "Jna" comes from "Jnana," which means "Knowledge". Thus, Prajna (M of OM Mantra) is the level of consciousness that is of Supreme Knowledge (M of OM Mantra). How odd it is, that the domain of Deep Sleep (M of OM Mantra), where there seems to be nothing going on, is called the place of Supreme Knowledge. One who begins to gain access to this Prajna level (M of OM Mantra) also begins to gain access to what has been called the Infinite Library of Wisdom. This means direct





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- experience of knowing, not merely from some form of contact with the Subtle realm (U of OM Mantra), but with the level out of which that Subtle realm arises.
4. The dot, point, or bindu represents the fourth state, the **absolute consciousness**, which encompasses, permeates, and is the other three, and is called Turiya. (Silence after A, U, and M of OM Mantra). **Beyond Waking, Dreaming, and Deep Sleep** (the A, U, and M of OM Mantra) is the state of deep absorption, that is the stage to which one's Meditation practice next leads. It is called Samadhi. Standing on the roof of the building: From the vantage point of Turiya, one sees the entire panorama of the play of the levels of consciousness. It has been likened to standing on the roof of a three floor building, where the first three floors are the Waking, Dreaming, and Deep Sleep states (Gross, Subtle, Causal levels) . From those levels, you can only look out a window, whereas from the roof you can see it all.
 5. The arc below the dot symbolizes the separateness of this fourth state, standing above, though ever remaining part of the other three. Piercing the bindu finally allows one to attain the highest experience, and this comes after following the process of Kundalini Awakening.

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali suggests remembering the meaning of OM Mantra as a direct path to Self-realisation. Remembering the sound vibration of AUM, along with a deep feeling for the meaning of what it represents, brings both the realisation of the individual Self and the removal of obstacles that normally block that realization. (See Sutras 1.23-1.29)

In the information below, OM Mantra is presented as a means of contemplation and meditation, which pierces the three levels of reality and consciousness, revealing the fourth, which permeates the other three.

In the actual practice with AUM Mantra:

1. When awareness is on the "A" of the OM Mantra, you cultivate and train yourself to have a simultaneous awareness of the Waking state, the Conscious level of mental processing, and the Gross realm of the universe.
2. When awareness is on the "U" of the OM mantra, you cultivate and train yourself to have a simultaneous awareness of the Dreaming state, the Active Unconscious processing level of the mind, and the Subtle realm of the universe





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3. When awareness is on "**M**" of the OM Mantra, you cultivate and train yourself to have a simultaneous awareness of the Deep Sleep state, the Subconscious (latent, dormant, inactive, storage) aspects of mind (the Samskaras from where the impetus for Karma, or action springs forth), and the Causal realm, out of which arises the Subtle and Gross universe
4. When awareness is on the **Silence** after the A, the U, and the M of the OM Mantra, you cultivate and train yourself to have an awareness of the consciousness that permeates all of the three personal levels (Waking, Dreaming, Deep Sleep),

AUM is like the **three parts of a river**: When recalling these levels of "A," "U," "M," and Silence during practice of the OM Mantra, it is useful to remember the metaphor of a river, which has three parts:

Bed: The river bed of stones (like the latent, Subconscious or Deep Sleep level and its impressions, symbolized by the "M" of the OM Mantra),

Flow: The flowing part (like the Active Unconscious, or Dreaming level, symbolized by the "U" of the OM Mantra), and

Surface: The surface of the river (like the Conscious, Waking level, symbolized by the "A" of the OM Mantra).

That reality or presence of existence itself, that is in the three levels of bed of the river, flow of the river, and surface of the river, is like the consciousness that permeates the three levels of Waking (A of OM Mantra), Dreaming (U of OM Mantra), and Deep Sleep (M of OM Mantra). Those three levels are also the **Conscious (A of OM Mantra), Active Unconscious (U of OM Mantra), and Latent Unconscious or Subconscious (M of OM Mantra), as well as the Gross (A of OM Mantra), Subtle (U of OM Mantra), and Causal (M of OM Mantra) levels of reality.**

Subconscious: Our Subconscious wants, wishes, desires, attractions, and aversions (samskaras) are like those stones that form the bed of the river (M of OM Mantra).

Unconscious: When consciousness moves across them, they come to life in the the flow of the Unconscious (U of OM Mantra), like the flow of the river, and

Conscious: Some burst forth into the Conscious mind (A of OM Mantra), resulting in actions, speech, and conscious thoughts, like the action on the surface of the river.





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Through practice, one gradually attains the ability to go beyond, or deeper than the various levels and thinking processes, to the direct experience of the source of the consciousness, symbolized by the Silence after the "A," "U," "M," of the OM Mantra.

When using AUM as a mantra, notice how the "A" bursts forth in an instant (whether said aloud, or thought of internally). You could say "Aaaaaa...", in a drawn out way, but the "A" itself has a very brief, instantaneous bursting forth quality to it. The sound arises quickly, in a flash, from out of the silence. When using the OM Mantra, whether aloud or internally, it is useful to allow yourself to be aware of this bursting forth quality of thoughts, images, or impressions. All of these arise in a moment from the Subtler place within (U and M of OM Mantra).

To observe the way the "A" comes forward when remembering the OM Mantra is to observe the way our whole process of thoughts, actions, and speech arises. This can be extremely useful to understand.

In relation to the Gross world (A of OM Mantra), it is interesting to note the parallels between the transition between Unconscious and Conscious thought patterns, and the way the scientists describe the coming forth of the manifest universe as a "big bang". Possibly this too is a form of the coming forth of the Subtle (U of OM Mantra), transitioning into the Gross (A of OM Mantra).

There is a transition stage between Waking (A of OM Mantra) and Dreaming (U of OM Mantra) states (or between Conscious and Unconscious states). The name of this transition stage of consciousness is Unmani. Unmani does not just refer to the personal experience between Waking and Dreaming. Rather, it is the name of that transition level of consciousness itself. (Like many words, the word Unmani is used in different ways. In other contexts, it is also used to mean Samadhi or Turiya.)

We have all experienced this pleasant transition at times when about to awaken after a good sleep, and possibly when we are "day dreaming". In this state, you have left the Dreaming world (U of OM Mantra), but have not yet fully come into the Waking (A of OM Mantra), or external world. You might be lying there pleasantly, not remembering your name, who you are, where you are, and not really caring about these things. But you are also not asleep having any dreams.

When using the OM Mantra for Yoga Meditation and Contemplation, the focus is mostly on the three states of Waking (A of OM Mantra), Dreaming (U of OM Mantra), and Sleep (M of OM Mantra), which are also called the Gross, Subtle, and Causal. However, as it is practiced, there also will be a natural, increasing awareness of the transition





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phases as well. It will become clearer how it is that conscious (A of OM Mantra) thoughts, speech, and actions are transitioning from their underlying, mostly unconscious (U and M of OM Mantra) thought and emotional processes.

This very pleasant state is often confused with Meditation. Meditation is done in the Waking state (A of OM Mantra), in which one is full awake and alert. Then, gradually the veil is opened to allow the deeper states or levels (U of OM Mantra) to come forward into the Conscious, Waking state of awareness (A of OM Mantra).

As one progresses in Yoga Meditation, opening to the Unconscious (U of OM Mantra) begins. One stays in the Waking state (A of OM Mantra), but gradually lifts the veil, opens the curtain, so that the Unconscious (U of OM Mantra) begins to come forward. What comes is that which was normally only accessible in the Dreaming state (U of OM Mantra).

It is in this field of observation that the Yogi does the Meditation of remaining one-pointed by letting go of the thought patterns arising. "Let them come, and let them go," is the message the Yogi says to the mind, as Non-Attachment (Vairagya) becomes a reality, not just an act done in the external world. (See Yoga Sutras 1.12-1.16 on non-attachment)

Gradually, the intensity of the coloring attenuates, eventually allowing the thought pattern to remain in latent, seed form (until it is dispensed with entirely). It is because of this process of attenuating that the Yogi says that Yoga Meditation is the highest of all therapies. (See Yoga Sutra 2.4 on attenuation)

Taijasa is not the "spiritual" realm: This level of Taijasa (U of OM Mantra) has often been confused as being the "spiritual" realm, failing to note that it is only the second of four levels of consciousness in AUM Mantra (or third of the seven, including inbetween states). If one is not familiar with this, it can seem that there are only two realms (a Gross and Spiritual) with a transition between them. One can easily get caught in a trap of pursuing the actions, beings, and objects of the Subtle realm (U of OM Mantra), not recognizing that they are merely a level to move through, not a place to go and stay. Journeys in these subtle realms (U of OM Mantra) are no more useful in the journey of Self-realization than journeys to a thousand cities in our external world (A of OM Mantra), though some such journeying is sometimes needed so as to learn the lesson that the journeying is not needed..

Patanjali, codifier of Yoga science describes many siddhis (powers) that come to the Yogi through practices. Some say that the Yogi is seeking these powers intentionally. However, Patanjali actually mentions these on the foundation of Non-Attachment





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(Vairagya) and Discrimination (Viveka), such that the seeker will abandon these powers when they come (See Yoga Sutra 3.38). In other words, seeking of the breadth of the Subtle realm (U of OM Mantra) is a distraction on the journey to enlightenment; with Discriminative Wisdom and Non-Attachment, one is better off to let go of these allurements.

At the same time that the Yogi observes and lets go of the Subtle realm (U of OM Mantra), there is also a beauty in witnessing as one moves forward in the journey. We can surely enjoy the scenery along the way, though it may be best, the Yogis remind us, to move on to the Realization of the Absolute, which is not subject to death, decay, or decomposition.

There is a transition stage between Dreaming (U of OM Mantra) and Deep Sleep (M of OM Mantra) states. The name of this transition stage of consciousness is Aladani. Aladani does not just refer to the personal experience between Dreaming (U of OM Mantra) and Deep Sleep (M of OM Mantra). Rather, it is the name of that transition level of consciousness itself.

This is a state that one normally does not experience consciously. This state is very subtle. It is a transition (as is Unmani, between Waking and Dreaming, as described above), but is the transition whereby the latent, formless facts or impressions start to stir, and end up taking form in the Unconscious mind (U of OM Mantra), that part normally only accessed when one is having dreams while in the Dream state of sleep (U of OM Mantra).

One may sometimes consciously experience the transition between Dreaming (U of OM Mantra) and Waking (A of OM Mantra), either while in bed at sleeping time or at Meditation time. This might be experienced as very beautiful or very horrifying, depending on the nature of the thought patterns. However, the transition at Aladani is very different from the Waking (A of OM Mantra) to Dreaming (U of OM Mantra) transition.

Here, in the Aladani transition, the thought patterns that are in their unmanifest, formless, latent form start to stir. This is literally the beginnings of the enlivening of latent Samskaras, the source of our Karma (the word Karma literally means "actions"). It is a process that one is not normally conscious of. Once again, it is very important to note that this is not the same as the process whereby Unconscious active mental process springs forward through Unmani into the Waking or Conscious state; this is happening at a deeper level.





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As attractive as the Gross and Subtle realm can be, these levels beyond Taijasa (the Dream State or Subtle realm) can be even more alluring and distracting. As one touches on this transition phase from which the Subtle realm and Subtle thoughts are born, one starts to see the way in which both the subtle and material realm are manifested and can be manipulated.

Aladani and Aladin's lamp: Notice the similarity between the names of the level of consciousness called Aladani and the story of Aladin's lamp, wherein there was a genie. The genie was in latent form, but by rubbing the lamp, a transition process begins whereby the genie comes forth to fulfill any wishes. Between the stage of the genie being inside the lamp, and being fully formed, the transition of the genie is that of smoke that changes and solidifies into form.

For one truly on the path of Self-realization, this is a level to be acknowledged and moved past, allowing the stirrings to fall back to rest so that the Absolute can be experienced.

In this level of Prajna (the level of Deep Sleep; M of OM Mantra) is the storage of the formless, latent thought patterns (formless forms) called Samskaras that drive Karma, or action (A of OM Mantra). If one can gain access to the Samskaras (M of OM Mantra) while they are in this latent form, they can be more readily altered such a way that they lose their potency.

Then, having lost their power (or reduced it substantially), the deep habit patterns, or Samskaras (M of OM Mantra), can no longer bind one to what would otherwise automatically drive actions, speech, and thoughts. Now, those deep impressions (M of OM Mantra) have become mere memories with little or no power. It is like a rope that before could bind, but that has now been burned. Though maybe still having the shape of a rope, it has lost its ability to bind. (This process is definitely not one of psychological suppression or repression.)

There are a variety of techniques that professional and lay people use at the Waking level (A of OM Mantra) to indirectly affect changes in these deep impressions. Some of these can be very useful to spiritual aspirants in their journey. However, the Yogis want direct access to these deep impressions (M of OM Mantra) so that they can choose their own deep habit patterns. In this way, the Yogi gradually becomes a master over the Samskaras (M of OM Mantra) leading to his or her own thoughts, speech, and actions.





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Those with great access to this level are sometimes revered, although even this attainment is short of the Self-realization that comes with the realization of Turiya, the Absolute Reality (Silent aspect of OM Mantra). The Yogis suggest that the aspirant turn away even from the allurements of the offer of such creative powers, and instead walk in the pursuit of the Highest Realization.

There are many forms of Samadhi. An even cursory review of the texts will reveal dozens of different types. Mostly, these differences have to do with the nature of the object on which one was meditating before dropping into the state of Samadhi with that object.

The Object on which one is meditating (and then enters Samadhi) may be Gross or Subtle. A simple example will help. If one is internally meditating on the image of a red rose, that object is a Gross object (the A of OM Mantra). Meditation may shift away from the red flower to the red color alone, the "redness". However, even that is still a Gross object of sorts. However, if attention shifts to light itself, or to the ability to see light, those are subtler (the U of OM Mantra). If attention shifts deeper to the observer who is doing the observing, or to the blissful feeling that comes from the absorption, then these are still subtler. However, in any case there is still an "object," although that object may be extremely subtle.

Similarly, Meditation on a spiritual or religious object will also move through levels of experience, from Gross to Subtle, to Subtler, and to Subtle-most (the A, U, and M of OM Mantra). Eventually the inward shifting of attention reveals the essence of the object of Meditation and Samadhi.

In Meditation on an object, whether Gross or Subtle, there are three parts: 1) An Observer, 2) A Process of Observing, and 3) The Object being observed. With Samadhi, it is as if these three parts collapse into only one. There is no longer an observer observing the observed; rather, there seems to be only the object. It is as if the observer and the process of observing have become absorbed into the object, such that object is the only thing left.

Music of Sound: Because the three-syllable AUM is a sacred sound, its pronunciation is open to a rich logical analysis. The first letter **A** is regarded as the primal sound. It is produced at the back of the open mouth, and is therefore said to include, and to be included in, every other sound produced by the human vocal organs. Indeed **A** is the first letter of the Sanskrit alphabet. The open mouth of **A** moves toward the closure of **M**. Between is **U**, formed of the openness of **A** but shaped by the closing of **M**. Here it is interpreted in relation to the three curves; the three syllables making up AUM are susceptible to the same metaphorical decipherment. The dream state (symbolized by U), lies between the waking state (A) and the state of deep sleep (M). Indeed a dream is but





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the compound of the consciousness of waking life shaped by the unconsciousness of sleep. AUM thus also encompasses within itself the complete alphabet, since its utterance

proceeds from the back of the mouth (A), traveling in between (U), and finally reaching the lips (M).

Now all alphabets can be classified under various heads depending upon the area of the mouth from which they are uttered. The two ends between which the complete alphabet oscillates are the back of the mouth to the lips, both embraced in the simple act of uttering of AUM. This is like locking the door to the outside world and instead reaching deep inside our own selves, in search for the Ultimate truth. But over and above the threefold nature of AUM as a sacred sound is the invisible fourth dimension, which cannot be distinguished by our sense organs, restricted as they are to material observations. This fourth state is the unutterable, soundless silence that follows the uttering of AUM. The blissful and non-dual state this is the state symbolized by the dot.

**I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to
elevate his life by conscious endeavour.**

