

The Power of Language

By Rama Berch, C.S.Y.T., E-RYT 500

The universe arises from one sound, according to St John, "In the beginning was the Word..." Yoga says that "Om" is that primordial sound from which everything has arisen. Theoretical astrophysicists detail the effects of the Big Bang in milliseconds, citing the arising of the first sound, the emanation of light, the beginning of time and the expansion of space. Om is that vibration that manifested first as sound and still vibrates through and beyond everything that exists. When we chant Om, we approximate the sound, though it is actually heard in its pristine power in the quiet inner spaces of meditation, reverberating in the space inside your heart.

The one sound split itself into many sounds, fragmenting into separate vibrations that then became and becomes the many separate things. This process by which the formless manifests this astounding array of multiplicity is named "*matrka*" in Sanskrit. *Matrka* is like a prism held in the beam of sunlight, splintering the one ray of light into a rainbow of colors. *Matrka* splinters the one sound into many sounds, like a, O, M, L, etc. We combine these sounds in various ways to form words. Then we use the words to tie ourselves up in knots!

The knots in your body are actually caused by your mind. You already know that you can actually think yourself into exhaustion. You create tremendous layers of physical tensions with your thoughts every day. It isn't the words you say to other people that have the most power -- it is the words you use on yourself. The repetitive thoughts, especially the ones that you would never admit, create bindings that lock up your body and EVEN limit your life. MORE powerful are the hidden levels of unspoken thoughts that create unrecognized patterns through your whole life. Many people choose to undergo hypnosis or to see a therapist to uncover and name these hidden bindings. The power of doing yoga, meditating and studying Sanskrit is that you can completely clear them away.

The power of Sanskrit is that it reverses *matrka's* process. By studying the sounds and learning the words, you begin to untie the knots that you didn't know you had. Sanskrit is the language of yoga. It is a specialized language that communicates the principles of yoga and describes the profound inner levels of experience. English is also a specialized language, arising from a dialect of German that was spoken by the merchants. English is a language of trade, of economics, of barter. Its influence on your mind can even affect your relationships, leading to a cost-benefit analysis -- am I getting enough for everything I give to this person?

When you steep your mind in the sounds and words of Sanskrit, the vibration frees you from the "barter mentality". This metamorphosis is the goal of all yoga practices, but the poses alone may not be enough to deal with some of your most deeply imbedded mental patterns. This is why we offer chanting programs and Sanskrit courses at MYA, as well as why we play Sanskrit chants as background music in our classes. The beauty of the language acts as a subliminal yoga, emptying the hidden recesses of your thoughts as you clear the tensions from your body. When you take the chants home or play them in your car, yoga continues to work on you without you having to "do" anything.

This month we will contemplate the power of language. Take this opportunity to look at the words you use on others and the words you use on yourself. And try out some Sanskrit, to see if it really can open up a new dimension of yoga for you.

Namasté,

