



Chants and Invocations

Chanting is a yoga practice called Nada Yoga, the yoga of sound. Chanting and singing have been used for centuries in many traditions to help people to connect to the divine spirit in themselves and the universe. Whether singing praises to god, chanting native or tribal songs, singing kirtan (call and response chanting), or chanting a personal or universal mantra, there is something within the singing itself that soothes the spirit and sets a tone of reverence and honor.

For this reason, we often chant as a part of yoga class. We find it helps people to settle into the deeper purpose of practice and to remember that the time spent in yoga is in honor of oneself and one's health.

Chanting is said to raise the chanter's vibrational level and to bring about feelings of peace, calm and well-being. Being the energy bodies that we are, chanting is one way to effect healing on a deep level within the body and spirit. Chanting has been shown, in medical studies, to lower heart rate and blood pressure and to produce endorphins (the body's natural pain relievers) as well as support balanced metabolism.

A chant can be used as an invocation to open your yoga practice or a yoga class. This helps to set the tone and to create an enhanced space/environment for the reverential quality you may want to bring to the practice. It also reminds us that the practice has benefits beyond the purely physical ones attained through the *asanas* (postures). Closing chants help to close a yoga or meditation session and to support taking what was received in the practice into everyday life.

When we sing chants in yoga class, most of them are in Sanskrit which is said to be a language of the heart and so universal in its energetic effect on us.

There are many references to a wide variety of chants online and you can listen to a multiple renditions on YouTube and other sites.

On the following page are several chants we sing at HeartSong.

Chants and Invocations with translations:

OM (Aum) – Om is said to be the sound of the universe and has the perfect vibration for spirit. The 3 sounds of om (a, u, m) represent the beginning, the middle and the end of the cycle of life and the universe. When you chant the sound of Om, the sound moves from the back of the mouth, through the middle and out to the lips which can also represent the deep personal expanding out into connection with all else.

Om, Shanthi, Shanthi, Shanti – Om, peace, peace, peace be to all.

Often chanted at the end of prayer or practice – also often used to end another invocation or chant.

Om Namah Shivaya Invocation

Om Na-mah Shi-va-ya Gu-ra-ve

I bow to the goodness within myself, Who is the true teacher within and without

Sat-chit-an-an-da Mur-ta-ye

This essence insides takes the form of truth, consciousness and bliss

Nis-pra-pan-ca-ya Shan-ta-ya

Which is never absent and is full of peace

Nira-lam-ba-ya Te-ja-se

Which exists without conditions, and is the vital essence of illumination

We learned this chant from John Friend of Anusara yoga. The chant is used as an invocation in most Anusara yoga classes and while we don't specifically teach Anusara yoga, we do feel it sets the tone for the way we want to practice.

Saha Navavatu Invocation

Om Saha Na-vava-tu

May we, teacher and student be protected together

Saha nau bhunaktu

May we enjoy the fruits of our actions together

Saha vir-yam kara-va-vahai

May we achieve strength together

Taja-svi na-va-dhitam astu

May our knowledge be full of light

Ma vidvi- sha- vahai

May there never be discord between us

Om shantih shantih shantih

Om, peace, peace, peace

This chant is also an invocation and is traditionally sung at the beginning and end of a teaching.

Guaytri Mantra

One simple translation attributed to S. Krishnamurthy is:

Om bhur bhuv-ah sva- ha	We meditate upon the radiant Divine Light
Tat savitur var-en-yam	of that adorable Sun of Spiritual
Bhargo devas-ya dhi-ma-hi	Consciousness; May it awaken
Dhiyo yo nah pracho-dayat	our intuitional consciousness

This mantra is considered the holiest verse of the Vedas (ancient texts) and is sung as a daily devotion by Hindus and Buddhists all over the world.