



10 Facets of a Great Chant

How to empower your personal experience
of sound and mantra

by Dev Suroop Kaur

1. Suspend Judgment Consciously free the chatter of your inner critic and keep letting it go. Even though it may sound strange to hear your own voice, release the reluctance to open your mouth and the fear to let the sound out.

2. Relax Relax every part of your body, even every cell. As you chant, scan yourself and your body for any tension. Let it flow away on the breath. Hold yourself gently in a graceful asana – a ‘perfect seat’. Be easeful.

3. Breathe The foundation of a great chant is full and rich breathing deep into the pelvic floor and belly. Breath provides support for the voice and sustains the energy to create a relaxed chant. Cultivate long, deep, full breathing now and forever.

4. Listen While all the facets of a great chant are important, listening is the key that unlocks it all. Listen to all sounds and vibrations. Listen deeply to the sound of your own voice. Deep listening is profoundly healing and soothing and develops your inner listening – your intuition.

5. Chant from the Navel Originate the sound from your navel point. The navel is your ‘ik’ – your ‘one’ point where you were sustained while in the womb. Simply focus your attention at the navel and initiate the sound at that point. Chanting ‘har’ is a great way to find your way to this technique. Start there, then apply what you’ve learned to all mantras and chanting.

6. Allow Relax the root of the tongue and simply ‘allow’ the sound to pass through the throat and the 5th chakra. We tend to push too hard and force the voice from and through the throat, overtaxing the vocal cords and creating stress. Rather than applying force, relax and allow just enough breath to pass through to vibrate the vocal cords. Allow the sound to come from the navel and not the throat.

7. Vibrate Feel the vibration of the sound in the mask of the face. The ‘air’ in the face vibrates –in the cave of the mouth, in the sinuses, and in the air within the bones. Practice moving the vibration around all parts of the face and head. Feel the vibration in your chest, neck, belly, other parts of your body, and out into your aura. Feel your whole being vibrate.

8. Open your mouth Sounds simple, right? Open your mouth about two and a half fingers width between the teeth. Chanting a full and long ‘aaaaaa’ is a great way to practice this. Keep your mouth open and flexible for those big vowel sounds. You will be surprised that, by simply opening your mouth, how much sound comes forth. Don’t forget to stay relaxed!

9. Project the Sound You’re breathing deep, chanting from the navel, allowing through the throat, vibrating, and your mouth is open. You’re relaxing and practicing stilling the monkey mind. Now project the sound out to a single point about 12 to 18 inches in front of your face. Let it out! Remember not to push. Be easeful.

10. Focus Now that you have the first nine facets, put them all together and add the final piece: Apply and maintain a drishti – a focus. Focus at the third eye or a point on the horizon or whatever point the meditation or practice calls for. Anchor and harness the power of your mind.