

Om-Mantra-Based Sitting versus Walking Meditations and Their Optimum Combination for Enhanced Benefits

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ABSTRACT: The basic aim of any kind of meditation is to calm the mind and to reduce the chattering occurring within the meditator. This way the meditator earns several benefits at all the planes: physical, mental, psychological, social and spiritual. A correct type of meditation is a ticket to enlightenment for the practitioner. There are many types of meditation techniques. Mantra-based meditation takes the help of a mantra (meaningful or meaningless sound) to achieve the desired results. Om-mantra-based meditation has been found to be highly effective and beneficial out of many types of meditation techniques. Om mantra meditation can be done both in the sitting posture as well as while walking. Each of the two techniques (sitting and walking meditations) has their own benefits. In fact, they complement each other. In this paper, it is suggested that an optimum combination of these two types of meditations will bring enhanced benefits to the meditator.

Keywords: Om mantra, sitting meditation, walking meditation, benefits of combined meditation.

1. Introduction to Meditation

There is an enhanced interest these days among a greater number of people across the globe to do some kind of 'meditation' in order to cope up with the stresses and many other day-to-day problems. Some of these seekers wish to go beyond the immediate physical and mental benefits. They perceive meditation to be a GPS (Global Position System) for achieving bliss, peace, enlightenment and salvation. Many such people think that the meditation a spiritual food for their hungry souls. It releases their mental knots. Hence, the meditation is a spiritual medicine for mental constipation.

What is meditation?

The word 'Meditation' comes from the Latin root "meditatum", which means, "to ponder".

Sankhya Darshan (ancient scripture in Hinduism) mentions that:

Dhyanam nirvishayam manah. - (Sankhya Darshan, 6/25)

That means: When the mind becomes free from thinking of sensual objects and their enjoyments, it is 'meditation'.

That state of the mind wherein there are no sensual thoughts, is called meditation.

According to Maharshi Patanjali (Yog Sutra-3, Vibhutipad-2), 'meditation' is defined as:

Tatra pratyayaikatata dhyanam.

That means: Uninterrupted stream of the content of consciousness is *meditation*.

There are **four states of consciousness of a person**. In the first state of consciousness, that is, the '*normal*' state of wakefulness, the 'observing self' is conscious of external objects are perceived at a 'gross' or physical level. In the second state, called '*dreaming state*', the self perceives a more subtle level of existence, the imaginary form. With the relaxation of wakeful control in this state, suppressed subconscious impressions (*samskaras*) can surface in this state. One's 'sense of self' is linked to sensory input from the external world or to the imagined world in dream. The third state is the state of '*dreamless sleep*', where the experience is 'objectless consciousnesses'. Although the perceiving self is without an object of perception, it continues to exist in this state. The conditions change, not the 'self'. However, the dreamless sleep is not the highest state. There is a **fourth state** of consciousness (*turiya*), an integration of the other three. This state is, also known a '**meditation state**', which is "the sole essence of the consciousness of self, the ever peaceful, all blissful, the one, the *Atman* (soul)". Meditation is a unique kind of 'spiritual anesthesia' in which the body becomes restful; the mind also becomes calm but surprisingly the same mind becomes alert, extra alert. During this state, one can clearly listen to the chirping of birds, the sound of ceiling fan, the sound of air conditioner and sometimes the sound of one's own breaths. It is a state of 'Restful Alertness'.

Meditation is a state of mind where there is a merging of the experiencer, the experience and the process of experiencing. It is at this stage that meditation actually becomes a living experience of human consciousness. The transcendental state of meditation is a deep sense of calm, peacefulness, a cessation or slowing of the mind's internal dialogue, and experiences of perceptual clarity and conscious awareness merging completely with the object of meditation.

2. Some of the Commonly Known Types of Meditation

There are a large number of meditation techniques in the world. We can classify meditation techniques into three broad categories: (i) focused attention (ii) open monitoring, or (ii) effortless process.

Out of this large number, the following relatively more commonly known techniques of meditation are listed [1]:

2.2.1 Hindu Meditation (Vedic & Yogic): (i) *Mantra Meditation* (the topic of this paper), (ii) Transcendental meditation, (iii) Third Eye meditation, (iv) Chakra meditation, (v) Gazing meditation (Trataka), (vi) Kriya Yoga, (vii) Sound meditation (Nada Yoga), (viii) Primordial sound meditation, (ix) Tantra, (x) Pranayama, (xi) Sahaj Yoga, (xii) Sudarshan Kriya, (xiii) Raj Yoga, (xiv) Kundalini meditation, (xv) Self enquiry and "I Am" meditation. (xvi) Osho's Dynamic meditation, (xvii) Yoga Nidra meditation etc.

2.2.2 Buddhist Meditation : (i) Zen meditation (Zazen), (ii) Vipassana meditation, (iii) Mindful meditation, (iv) Metta meditation (Love & Kindness), (vi) Tonglen meditation, (vii) Walking meditation.

2.2.3 Jain Meditation: (i) Preksha meditation, (ii) Leshya meditation, (iii) Kayotsarga Meditation, (iv) Pindastha meditation, (v) Padastha meditation, (vi) Rupastha meditation, (vii) Rupatita meditation, (viii) Savirya meditation.

2.2.4 Meditation in Sikhism: Nam Japa or Nam Simran

2.2.5 Parsi Meditation in Zoroastrianism: (i) Meditation as mentioned in Gathas, (ii) Meditation on Fire, (iii) Prayer meditation.

2.2.6 Christian Meditation: (i) Using a Scripture or Sacred Word, (ii) Christ-centered guided meditations, (iii) Meditating on God's Word, (iv) Soaking in God's Presence, etc.

2.2.7 Chinese Meditation: (i) Taoist (Emptiness) meditation, (ii) Taoist (Breathing) meditation, (iii) Taoist (Neiguan) meditation, (iv) Qigong (Chi kung).

2.2.8 Guided Meditation: (i) Traditional meditation, (ii) Guided imagery, (iii) Relaxation and body scans, (iv) Affirmation, and (v) Binaural beats.

3. What is a 'Sitting or Seated' Meditation?

There are many positions we can meditate in: sitting, standing, walking and lying down. Here we discuss the "sitting meditation" first. It is a session of meditation undertaken while seated, aimed toward calming the mind and reaching inside self to observe the nature of mind. It is also called 'seated meditation'. Zazen is a type of sitting meditation.

While there are many different instructions about sitting, two common themes show up repeatedly in many different traditions. (i) The first is that you should have a firm, balanced base. Whether you are seated in a chair or on a cushion, you should feel grounded and stable. Your weight should feel balanced; (ii) The second common instruction is to have an erect spine. Slouching is discouraged. It feels uncomfortable and makes your attention a lazy. While you are sitting in an erect posture, make sure that you are not tense: physically and mentally. However, other than being grounded and having an erect spine, the rest can vary wildly: hands facing up or down; eyes open or closed; legs in lotus position or not; gaze downwards or forward.

For beginners in sitting postures, it is a common problem for the legs to fall asleep or feel discomfort after sometime into the meditation. In such a case, one can slowly and mindfully make a minor adjustment to make the body more comfortable.

4. What is a 'Walking Meditation'?

The most common meditation posture after sitting is walking. Walking meditation is mindful walking without a goal, being aware of each step and breath. Each footstep is taken slowly and in silence, creating peace and joy with each step. [2]

Walking meditation is a simple and universal practice for developing calm, connectedness, and embodied awareness. It can be practiced regularly, before or after the sitting meditation or any time on its own, such as after a busy day at work or on a lazy Sunday morning. The art of walking meditation is to learn to be aware as you walk, to use the natural movement of walking to cultivate mindfulness and wakeful presence.

Walking meditation brings a number of benefits in addition to the cultivation of mindfulness [3]. It can be a helpful way of building concentration, as a supplement to sitting practice. When we are tired or sluggish, walking can be invigorating. The sensations of walking can be more compelling than the more subtle sensations of breathing while sitting. Walking can be quite helpful after a meal, upon waking from sleep, or after a long period of sitting meditation. At times of strong emotions or stress, walking meditation may be more relaxing than sitting. An added benefit is that, when done for extended times, walking meditation can build strength and stamina. Walking meditation is a wonderful complement to the sitting meditation practice.

In Buddhism, there is a word, *apranibita*. It means wishlessness or aimlessness. The idea is that we do not put anything ahead of ourselves and run after it. When we practice walking meditation, we walk in this spirit. We

just enjoy the walking, with no particular aim or destination. Our walking is not a means to an end. We walk for the sake of walking. People say that walking on water is a miracle. But it is walking peacefully on the earth, which is a real miracle. The earth is a miracle. Each peaceful step on the earth is a miracle. Taking steps on our beautiful earth, while doing the walking meditation can bring real happiness.

5. Some Common Types of Walking Meditations

Following are some of the common types of walking meditations [2]:

(i) Theravada Walking Meditation

In the Theravada Buddhist tradition, walking meditation is an essential part of their training and lifestyle. In Thailand monasteries, many monks walk for long hours as a way of developing concentrations – sometimes as much as ten to fifteen hours a day!

(ii) Zen Walking Meditation (Kinhin)

In Japanese Zen, this is called *kinhin*. Practitioners walk clockwise around a room, in a very specific posture. It is usually done between sessions of seated meditation practice (*zazen*). This is the walking meditation with the slowest pace.

(iii) Thich Nhat Hanh's Walking Meditation

The Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh, who is a notable influence in the modern mindfulness movement and in modern Buddhism, has a simplified approach to walking meditation [4]. Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese Buddhist monk and was a Noble Peace Prize nominee in 1967. He is settled in a small village in France where he teaches walking meditation to people. Different from other techniques, this walking meditation technique makes use of affirmations in order to produce positive mental states. Thich Nhat Hanh reveals how this simple practice has helped him regain his own peace and serenity during difficult moments.

(iv) Mindfulness Walking Meditation

This is an adaptation of traditional Buddhist walking meditation by the modern mindfulness movement. Instead of being a practice of concentration (focused attention) – as it is in the Theravada tradition – it is more of an open monitoring practice. In other words, the attention is not laser focused on the soles of the feet; instead, it is watchful to the variety of sensations and perceptions of the present moment.

(v) Yoga Walking Meditation

In the Yoga tradition, walking meditation is not as popular as in the Buddhist tradition, where this type of meditation is more emphasized. In traditional Yoga, meditation seems to be always seated. However, there are a couple of practices by Swami Sivananda (in his old-school book, “The Science of Pranayama”) and one by Swami Satyananda (in his book, “Sure Ways to Self-Realization”). The idea of this exercise is to coordinate different types of *pranayama* (breathing regulation) with the stepping. This is often more challenging, from a breathing point of view, than other types of walking meditation. Unlike other practices, in which we simply observe the breath, in *pranayama* we actively *guide* the breath. It may require some previous training in these breathing exercises in seated position for one to be able to do it comfortably.

(vi) Daoist Walking Meditation

In the Chinese tradition, we find some walking meditations, which are more focused on physical health; others use visualization to harmonize body and mind; and yet others are more “free form”. Daoist walking meditation is one the Chinese meditations.

6. What is Mantra?

The word “**Mantra**” comes from the ancient Sanskrit language. ‘Man’ (pronounced as ‘Mun’ as in Nun) means mind, and ‘tra’ means release. Another interpretation of Mantra is “*Mananaat traayate iti mantra*”. That means: That which protects (traayate) by constant repetition (chanting), is a Mantra. Any thought, idea or technique, which removes blindness of mind, is known as mantra. A mantra is a sound, a word, or a phrase, that is recited repetitively, usually in an unvarying tone, and is used as an object of concentration or contemplation for calming the mind. The mantra may be chanted aloud, or recited silently. Words/syllables of Mantras can be meaningful or meaningless (just a sound) and they may or may not be associated with any particular spiritual or religious systems. A mantra is a combination of transcendental sounds meant to release the mind from all the anxieties of material life. One gets miraculous benefits by making use of the causal energy of Mantra.

The importance of Mantra is beautifully explained in ‘*Yoga Vashishtha*’ (6/1/81/39) as follows:

Yathavireka kurvanti haritamya swabhavataha.
Bhavanavashataha karya tatha paralvadayaaha.

Meaning: Just as by eating yellow myrobalan (amla like fruit of yellow colour) the digestion system functions more quickly and thus diarrhea ensues, in the same way Mantra chanting with steadfastness and powerful sentiments influences the body at a momentous pace. So, mantra can be said to cure the mental constipation and unblock all the knots from it.

7. What is Mantra-Based Meditation?

Mantra meditation is the process of quieting and focusing the mind using a sound, word or phrase (called ‘mantra’), recited either aloud or silently. The purpose of mantra meditation is for spiritual growth, or for relaxation of mind. It is also known as ‘japa’ meditation, from the Sanskrit word for “muttering or rhythmic chanting”. The mantra meditator achieves a state of ‘restful alertness’ after performing this process. When we are in a natural state, we are in a state of good health: physically and mentally. But if some part of the body begins to vibrate at a wrong frequency, the energy becomes stuck and disease sets in. Therefore, through ‘mantric’ chanting, one can cause the stuck energy to become released, and we can return to our natural state of resonance, thus affecting a cure [5]. It has been found that the sounds of specific mantras chanting will cause the left and right hemispheres of the brain to synchronize. Such chanting will also help oxygenate the brain, reduce our heart rate, blood pressure and assist in creating calm brainwave activity. There is a reason why most of the prayer/meditation on the planet is vocalized [6]. Sound amplifies our prayers. Through positive intentionalized and internalized sound, we can generate the miraculous effects.

8. What is Om-Mantra-Based Meditation?

Om-mantra-based meditation is a mantra-based meditation technique where the mantra used is the syllable ‘OM’. It has been reported by many practioners of meditation that the Om-mantra-based meditation technique is one of the most powerful, effective and beneficial technique.

9. More on Om Syllable

Om is a sacred syllable representing Brahman, the impersonal Absolute, omnipotent, omnipresent, the source of all manifest existence. Om is said to be the essence of all mantras, the highest of all mantras, the Divine Word or Shabda Brahman. It gives power to all mantras. Hence, almost all the mantras begin with Om. Om is the sound of the infinite. Om is said to be 'Adi Anadi', without beginning or the end and embracing all that exists. Om moves the *prana* or the cosmic vital force. Hence, it is called *Pranava* [7].

The importance of Om is evident from the fact that Saint Dnyaneshwar, a renowned Indian saint who lived in the state of Maharashtra during the period 1275-1296, begins his Dnyaneshwari, a vernacular commentary on the Bhagavad Gita by addressing *Parmatman* as *Om* and paying obeisance to Om. He says therein that the Vedas describe Om and conversely implies that the Vedas have emerged from Om.

In the linguistic sense, Om is a word from the Sanskrit language having its own root. It is derived from the root "ava" which is in the sense of *rakshanam*: protection, and sustenance. Therefore, "ava - man" means the one who protects and sustains this entire creation (universe) by lending his existence and consciousness. By the rules of Sanskrit grammar, the suffix "man" in the word "ava - man" loses the last vowel, which gives "avam". Through vocalization process, "va" becomes "u". Further "a" and "u" combine to form the diphthong, "o", finally yielding Om.

Phonetic significance of Om: Every form of this creation (universe) is the God's form and the name for that form is the God's name. If God is everything, and one wants to give God a name, a name not in any particular language or alphabet, a name that is purely phonetic, that includes all the names that are there, what should one do? In any language, when a person opens the mouth and makes a sound without any other effort, it is "a". When one closes the mouth and makes a sound, it is "m". All other sounds in any language fall between "a" and "m". All the words in all languages are made up of letters, and the letters are, even if there is no script, are sounds. The one sound that represents all these sounds produced by the letters, is "a - u - m", or "OM". It is the sound, which does not require the need of your tongue; so even a person who cannot speak (a dumb); can produce this great sound of OM, without any effort.

"Om it īdam sarvam" (Taittirīya Upaniṣhad 1.8) **That means:** "This whole world is OM". The syllable OM, also known as Aum and Pranava, is the most sacred symbol of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism. It is used both as a symbol and as a sound in religious worship, ritual chanting, performance of sacraments and rituals, meditation and tantra. In Hinduism, it is venerated as Brāhman ('Brahma Naada' or 'Pranava Nada'), in the form of syllable (Akshara) and sound (Shabda). Om is believed by many as "Apaurusheya" (not of human origin).

Initially, in the early Vedic period, because of the sanctity associated with it, the word 'OM' was kept as a secret and never uttered in public. It was used in private conversations and passed on from the teacher to the disciple or from father to the son directly and in secrecy. It was also not used in the rituals. Because it was not permitted to use the word directly, some early Upanishads referred to it indirectly as the udgita (upsound) or pranava (calling out), alluding to its significance in regulated breathing and religious chanting respectively.

The sacred OM is the primordial sound from which the whole creation has manifested. It is compared to the so-called scientific big bang theory. The Mandukya Upanishad deals with this topic in detail. The sound Om is divided in four stages or parts. A.U.M. and the silence afterwards. These four represent the four states of human life, viz., the waking, dream, deep sleep and *turiya*. They also represent the three bodies, viz., Gross body, subtle body and causal body and the fourth state as *turiya* or the transcendental reality. *Turiya* is not a name but an indication for the self which is the subtlest state or the transcendental meditation state. OM (AUM) is the

mystic name for the Hindu Trimurti, and represents the union of the three gods: “A” for Brahma, “U” for Vishnu and “M” for Mahadev, which is another name of Shiva.

OM or AUM is not just a sound a vibration. It is not just a symbol. It is all that is within our perception and all that is beyond our perception. It is the core of our existence. OM was revered before the birth of all the religions in the world. The origin of “Big-Bang” is from the experiments made by Dr. Robert Wilson and Dr. Arno Penzias on microwave radiation in the universe [7]. During their studies, they were continually getting some unknown radiation from the universe. This radiation was associated with the body at a temperature of 3^0 K and it is presumed that the radiation must have emanated when Big Bang took place.

If we consider the following equation for the energy:

$$E = h\nu = kT,$$

here h is Planck’s constant ($= 6.626 \times 10^{-34}$ J-s), ν is the frequency of radiation (in Hz), k is Boltzmann’s constant ($= 1.38 \times 10^{-23}$ J/K) and T is temperature in degree Kelvin. By substituting $T = 3^0$ K, we get $\nu = 6.25 \times 10^{10}$ Hz, which is in the microwave region, as mentioned above.

Actually, the above-mentioned experiment proved the reverberation of the Big Bang explosion with which the universe began. Synonymous to this, our scriptures state that the sound OM or AUM – the Pranava mantra – was the first energy created at the time of disturbance of the equilibrium. It has been accepted in Hindu Religion that AUM, the first **primordial** sound energy (‘Brahma Naad’) emerged in the process of creation. Hence, what the scientific experiments revealed as microwave reverberations during the Big Bang is already explicitly explained by Hindu scriptures in the form of ‘AUM’.

10. How to do Om-Mantra-Based Sitting Meditation?

Some guidelines for the Om-mantra-based sitting meditation are given here below:

(i) Sit comfortably with your spine erect (but not tense). Eyes should preferably be closed gently. Settle down for a minute or so. Pay attention to yourself inwardly. Now start chanting ‘OM’ mantra, in the same tone, rhythmically, periodically and several times.

(ii) This mantra, in the beginning of meditation session, may be audible to you and to others near you. Do not worry but this will help you in focusing your attention, its meaning and essence. This is just a starting point, which will help you to go deeper into meditation. This is called the ‘*Vaikhari Japa*’.

(iii) Now mutter the Om-mantra with a low volume of sound. Lips alone should move while you pay attention to the meaning of this mantra. This sound will not be audible to anyone other than yourself. Do this several times. This is called ‘*Upamsu Japa*’.

(iv) Now repeat the Om-mantra **mentally**. Be absorbed in the mantra. Try to hear the mantra in your heart chakra. This is known as ‘*Madhyama Japa*’. A mantra is more effective if it is mentally intoned—that is, mentally “sung” on a single note. (The pitch does not matter—whatever is spontaneous and natural.)

Uttamo maanaso devi. Trividhaha kathito japaha.

Meaning: Manasa japa is that where even the chanter does not hear the words. The silently practiced manasa japa is much better than the soft (whispering) voiced and loudly uttered voiced japa.

This makes the repetition stronger and of deeper effect, because intoning unifies the mind and naturally concentrates it. In this way the invoker is constantly imbued with the power and consciousness inherent in the mantra. So whenever we intone the Om-Mantra, we align and link our consciousness with its origin: both our spirit and Divine Spirit.

(v) Next, in the '*Manipura chakra*' or the navel centre, sometimes see the mantra sound vibrations manifesting in various pictures and colours. See them, observe them but do not force these colours or pictures to be visible to you. They may not appear every day. This stage is called '*Pashyanti*', the stage of observing.

(vi) Next, just enter into perfect silence. Sit like this without observing, not even your breaths. You will now enter into a transcendental state of consciousness, a peaceful state. This stage is called the '*Para state*'.

11. Benefits of Om-Mantra-Based Sitting Meditation

Om-mantra-based meditation brings several benefits to its practitioner. It builds immunity from outside disturbances; it brings freshness, happiness and energy; it results into glowing skin and *Brahma Tej* (divine glow) on the face; it improves the pattern of breathing; it helps relieve the symptoms of asthma; it helps to keep the heart healthy; it strengthens the lungs; it calms the mind; it keeps depression at bay; it reduces stress; it helps beat damage caused due to stress; *it helps develop self esteem*; it is helpful for weight loss; it reduces the problem of stammering; it improves the eye sight; it is helpful in curing the psycho-semantic diseases; it helps in improving the concentration and focus; it improves learning power and cognitive skills; It makes nervous system robust; it regulates neurons for better communication between mind and body; it purifies the mind; it attracts positive energy; it liberates the devotee from the worldly problems; it transforms the practitioner to a transcendental state, in which the body is perfectly at rest, the mind is simultaneously calm and 'super alert' (a state of 'restful alertness'); it leads to ultimate bliss, and salvation;... and so on.

Om-mantra-based meditation is the divine magnetic needle. We know that the magnetic needle points to the north; hence, the ship does not lose its direction. Similarly, the Om-mantra-based meditation always points to the transcendental light of the Supreme; hence, the seeker does not miss his goal: existence, consciousness, and bliss. In other words, Om-mantra-based meditation acts as a GPS (Global Positioning System) for enlightenment, bliss and salvation.

12. How to do Om-Mantra-Based Walking Meditation?

Here are some things to keep in mind for doing Om-Mantra-Based Walking meditation:

(i) Place: You might consider doing walking meditation first in your backyard or If you are in a secluded place where you will not be distracted or disturbed. Stay away from high-traffic and heavily populated walking areas. It is also important that you feel safe in your surroundings.

(ii) Duration: Ideally practice for at least 15 minutes. Since there is no discomfort of seated practice, you can naturally do it for longer periods as compared to sitting meditation.

(iii) Hands and arms. You can clasp your hands behind your back or in front of you, or you can just let them hang at your side—whatever feels most comfortable and natural.

(iv) Preparing before meditation: Before you start your walking session, spend a minute or two just standing there, breathing deeply and anchoring your attention in your body. Take a few deep breaths. Close your eyes and do a scan of your whole body, starting at your feet. Make note of any sensations, thoughts or feelings and take the time to explore the sensations fully.

(v) **Pace:** Slow is better. Pace should be steady and even. If your mind is agitated, or your ability to focus is weak, walk very slowly, until you can stay in the present moment with each step. When driving on the highway, one may be driving at eighty, ninety, or even hundred kilometers per hour. Driving at that speed, one will not be able to read some of the signs on the road. If one wants to read those signs, it is necessary to slow down. Nobody has to say, "Slow down!" but the driver will automatically slow down in order to see the signs. In the same way, if walking meditators want to pay closer attention to the movements of lifting the feet, moving forward, putting down, and pressing the ground, they will automatically slow down. Only when they slow down can they be fully aware of these movements.

(vi) **Technique:** Take a deep breath. Recite 'OM' while exhaling with the simultaneous synchronization of moving one-step forward. Then there should be silence for the next step (right step now, if it was left step first or vice versa). Simultaneously exhale the breath while silently chanting OM and taking left (or right) foot forward. Then there is a silence while you take the right (or left) step forward. Repeat this process for 15 minutes at least. Keep your pace slow. Neither look down on the ground, nor straight; just gently gaze at about one or two meters away from you on the ground and keep walking slowly, rhythmically, chanting OM with synchronization with the breath. Feel the sensation of the lower part of your feet as you walk. Enjoy this exercise. After a few minutes, you will get absorbed into it; and your mind will be focused and become calm. Actually, the initial effort by you in ensuring the simultaneity of synchronization of your breath, Om chanting, movement of steps will leave little scope for you to get distracted to other unnecessary thoughts. In this way, walking meditation transcends you more easily to a thoughtless state as compared to sitting meditation.

(vii) **Re-focusing.** Just as in sitting meditation, whenever your mind starts to engage with thoughts (or any type of mental content), bring your attention back to your walking steps and your breathing. With your attention in the legs and feet, feel the sensations of each step. Feel the legs and feet tense as you lift the leg. Feel the movement of the leg as it swings through the air. Feel the contact of the foot with the ground. There is no "right" experience. Just see how the experience is felt by you. Whenever you notice that the mind has wandered, bring it back to the sensations of the feet walking. Getting a sense of the rhythm of the steps may help maintain a continuity of awareness.

(viii) Walk with calmness, dignity and joy, as though you were an emperor or a tiger doing a slow but a majestic walk. Place your foot on the earth with peace and the peace will return to you.

(ix) If you see something, while doing walking meditation, like the blue sky, beautiful flowers, the hills etc., you may stop for a while and appreciate these things; but your synchronization with Om mantra with your breathing should continue as before. It is only your feet, which stopped, nothing else. After a while, continue walking as before.

(x) **Attitude.** We are not going anywhere. There is nothing to achieve, except mastering our attention and presence. Simply be with the *process*. Be in present state.

13. Benefits of Om-Mantra-Based Walking Meditation

Following are some of the benefits of Om-mantra-based walking meditation [8]:

(i) In our daily lives, we spend more time walking than sitting quietly with our eyes closed. Walking meditation can serve as a powerful bridge between meditation practice and daily life, helping us to be present, mindful and concentrated in ordinary activities. It can reconnect us to the simplicity of being and the wakefulness that comes from it.

(ii) Walking mindfully on the Earth can restore our peace and harmony. When we practice walking meditation correctly, we massage the Earth with our feet and plant seeds of joy and happiness with each step. This way we heal our Mother Earth and, in turn, she will heal us.

(iii) The ability of focusing, developed in walking meditation, is easily carried into our daily life.

(iv) For those who do long sessions of seated practice, walking meditation can be helpful to overcome the lethargy that unavoidably comes. And also offer a chance for the body to replenish.

(v) When we are tired or sluggish, walking can be invigorating. At times of strong emotions or stress, walking meditation may be more relaxing than sitting. An added benefit is that, when done for extended times, walking meditation can build strength and stamina.

(vi) Whenever we are upset or angry on something, walking meditation can be very helpful. Until you are calm enough to look directly at the anger, just continue with your synchronized Om-mantra-based walking meditation. After a while, the anger will subside and you will feel strong enough to understand the cause of anger calmly and objectively.

(vii) Walking meditation improves immunity of the body and reduces blood pressure. It helps reduce glucose levels in diabetic patients.

(viii) It helps to regulate the production of serotonin, a key neurotransmitter in controlling mood and suppressing anxiety.

(ix) It boosts the brain's ability to communicate with the rest of the body while also maintaining the structure of brain's cell membranes, which improves the clarity of mind and memory power.

14. Optimum Combination of Om-Mantra-Based Sitting and Walking Meditations for Enhanced Benefits

We have discussed above various benefits of Om-mantra-based sitting and walking meditations. Some benefits are common to both, others are exclusive to sitting or to walking meditation. If we combine the two types of meditation techniques, we shall obviously get enhanced benefits as compared to any single technique: sitting or walking. But we have to find an optimum combination of both the meditation techniques for deriving maximum benefits. Based on the literature surveyed coupled with my own experience, it is suggested to give nearly two-third of the time to sitting meditation and nearly one-third of the time to walking meditation. This practice should be done daily, twice a day: early in the morning (in the Brahma muhurat) and in the evening (just before sunset). Some practioners prefer to do the sitting meditation first and then the walking meditation, and others do it in the reverse order. Do the way you feel comfortable with. Another freedom of walking meditation that can be done during any time of the day and the evening, if not convenient to do it along with sitting meditation, due to availability of less time or whatever be the reason. In fact, the walking meditation can be done even after taking meals. This will further help the practioner in the digestion of his food. The summary is: Practice both types of meditations: sitting and walking, for enhanced benefits to calm your mind, to relieve yourself from various stresses, to feel yourself physically fit, refreshed, energetic, mentally and psychologically healthy, spiritually blessed and enlightened.

15. Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper we have first defined what meditation is. What are various types of meditations? What is a sitting meditation? What is a walking meditation? What are various types of walking meditations? What are Om-mantra-based sitting and walking meditations? What is the procedure and benefits for each one of these techniques? And finally, what should be the optimum combination of both these types of meditation techniques to derive maximum benefits at various planes: physical, psychological, social, mental, and spiritual? The heartfelt purpose of writing this paper is to spread this message to a large cross-section of readers so that they start practicing an optimum combination of Om-mantra-based sitting and walking meditation techniques to derive the enhanced benefits as compare to any one technique.

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