

# The Om Sound

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**Seeker:** Dear Sundari, thank you for your full and very helpful response to my query regarding free will. It will take me some time to reflect on and absorb all that you said, but if I have further questions I will contact you later.

One question which has arisen since last writing concerns *Om*, or the *pranava* sound. Does it arise before or with awareness? It seems from the diagrams as if it is before, but as it is a vibration, that would seem doubtful. Also, would it be appropriate to meditate on that sound as a *japa*? I was initiated with a different *mantra*.

**Sundari:** How can anything arise before awareness if awareness is prior to everything? *Om* means "sound," which is the property of space, the first element to appear. The *Mandukya Upanishad* says *Om*, the word, or sound, "is all this," meaning, is everything that is - in the creation, or apparent reality.

*Om* is the universal primordial vibration that gives rise to the creation. If one could apply time to the process (which one can't really, because awareness is not in time - time is an object known to awareness), one could say that when *maya/Isvara* (awareness in the role of the Creator) manifest, *Om*, or the primordial sound, arises first and proceeds *immediately* to differentiate out of it into the three *gunas* - each with their own *Om* vibration or key - but it is all the same vibration because this is a non-dual universe.

Yes, you can definitely use the sound *Om* as a *mantra*.

~ *Om*, Sundari