

## The Mala & the Bracelet

As used in the Mahajrya Buddhist tradition

### What is a Mala?

The mala is a string of beads used to assist in the recitation of mantras, or prayers. The most common mala is a necklace of 108 beads. Some Hindu necklaces have 109 beads, (the extra bead is used to hold the tassel, but is not counted.) Malas can also be in the form of a bracelet, and have 21 or 27 beads. We recite mantras to charge the soul (bringing in components that are often missing), elevating our consciousness and increasing our healing abilities. The expression “chanting a mala” means that we will chant, or speak rapidly, a certain mantra 108 times, while using the mala to count—we call this “japa”. It is a means of counting without placing too much attention on the counting. This allows us to focus on the philosophy and visualization of the mantras. Using the mala in recitation also transforms the mala into a power item.

### Sacred Meaning Inherent in the Mala

#### Bead Material

Beads are typically crafted from seeds, wood, bone or stone. Seeds contain the ability to produce life, so are very appropriate for healers. Wood allows life to flow, but is more structured than seeds. Bones are even more structured than wood, and also support life, but not as much as seeds or wood—for achievers or conquerors. Stone does not support biological life but is completely structured, consisting of raw energy and building materials. So, seeds represent life force, stone represents structure and building, and wood and bone are in between. General users will prefer wood as it the cheapest, and represents structure, life, everything.

Malas will lose energy over time if not used. Seed malas will hold up energy many years when unused. Stone will lose its charge within one year if not used or worn. For example, energy flows through crystal; it is natural not to hold onto energy.

#### Bead Size

Bead size is merely a matter of convenience. It accommodates ease of count depending on finger size. The smaller bead size allows discretion if wearing your mala under clothing.

## The Tassel

The original meaning of the tassel was simply practical—to mark the 108<sup>th</sup> bead as a counter. But it carries the significance of “energy that flows from consciousness”. At the end of each mala, touch the tassel to the 3<sup>rd</sup> eye to signify oneness with divinity. You can also touch the tassel to the right eye, then left eye, then 3rd eye, for seeing this divinity everywhere. Either way, the result will be the same—we put ourselves in communion with our preferred divinity.

## Tassel color

Tassel color has only a minor influence, but still has meaning.

Red—power, force, and life force; the physical realm

Orange—energy, and experiencing life.

Yellow—understanding and knowledge

Green—compassion and undefined love

Blue—peace and wisdom (knowledge of the higher self)

Indigo—higher wisdom, higher energies, and spirituality

Violet—transformation and transmuted energy

Very dark violet—divine energy (Shiva’s gaze, the compassion of Avalokiteshwara)

Beginners could have a red tassel to encourage sensitivity in feeling energy. You could use a red tassel with a brown wooden mala to have the energy of the mala as close to the physical level as possible. Green malas might have a green tassel to have everything at the level of compassion and the heart.

## Numerology—the Sacred Meaning of Numbers

- 0 The world. Multiple 0’s = multi-dimensional, levels
- 1 Primordial consciousness
- 2 Duality, or complicity, mastered or not
- 3 Expansion
- 4 Form, or structure, gateway
- 5 Force, power, action
- 6 Unification of the physical and spiritual world
- 7 Tool, weapon, spiritual work
- 8 Realization in progress
- 9 Perfection
- 10 Original consciousness of the world (1 + 0)
- 11 Movement of, or transmission of consciousness
- 12 Incarnation, embodiment, or life experience  
(as in the 12 signs of the zodiac)

- 13 The matrix, the Mother, Love, Consciousness expanding
- 21 Manifested energy, observed consciousness

### 108 Beads

Thus, the meaning of 108 beads is the realization of primordial consciousness in the world, aiming at perfection. Primordial means prior to individuality.  $1+0+8=9$ , so the goal of 108 is to achieve perfection.

### Formulas for Chanting Mantra

The determination of which formula to use with a given mantra, is based on which one will create about an hour of practice. The most common is the  $9 \times 12$  formula—9 malas per day for 12 days, results in 108 malas.

Some mantras must be chanted for 108 days (to achieve perfection) in order to use them for others.

108 beads  $\times$  108 malas results in 11,664 mantras. Overall, it means perfection of life experience, creating realization of primordial consciousness in the world.

- 1 is the consciousness
- 6 is the unification of the physical and spiritual world
- 4 is the form, or the structure
- So we unite the consciousness in the body

If we take the pair of identical numbers:

- 11 is the consciousness that is transmitted
- 66 unites the zodiac, the unification at all levels
- 4 in the form or in the body

if we do the addition:

$$1+1+6+6+4=18$$

18 is the consciousness that is realized

$$1+8=9$$

9 is the number of perfection

The  $1 \times 41$  formula (1 mala per day for 41 days) is form of consciousness.  $4+1=5$ , giving the power to use the mantra. 40 is a perfected number, is the perfect form of the world. Hindus decided to add 1 just in case, to be beyond perfection of the form of the world, which resulted in giving us the power to use it.

The 21x41 formula (21 recitations for 41 days), for example, the Mahakaruna. This formula is used when doing one mala of the prayer takes more than one hour. 21 is manifested energy. Every mantra charged 41 days is sufficient for the user to be affected personally. To use outside of your body, and to greater extent, you need to supercharge for 108 days.

Any mantra can be charged at 1008 malas if you wish to grasp the enlightening experience of the specific mantra. 1008 is original consciousness in the three planes (1000), with the perfection (8). You can charge 1008 malas of specific mantras that touch you personally. If you charge a series of mantras for 1008 days (e.g. five elements) be certain to do them all at once equally, or in their suggested order, not to create imbalance (1008 malas of fire mantra charged prior to the equivalent of earth mantra could cause harm to your nervous system, or make you prone to dehydration.)

During a seminar, the energy is so intense and new initiations going on without your notice, that you should relax your own processes during this period. In order not to lose your process, just do 1 mala per day of the short mantras, and 21 recitations of the big (paragraphs) mantras, simply to hold your energy. This will allow you more time to integrate the new experience, and let the higher energies to sink in. This method should not be used to skip days whenever you want; it only works when you are in a very spiritual mindset the entire day. For everyday you bypass simply by doing support short processes, just add those days at the end of your expected end date.

***If you don't have a mala, you can count to 108 using the digits of your fingers. The simplest, yet least accurate (and least desirable) method, is to chant the mantra for about 30 minutes per day.***

### Mala Technique

“Roll the mala”, or “pop a bead” with either the thumb or major finger. You should not use your index finger to shift the beads, as this will empty the charge. However, it is not dramatic to touch the mala with the index while not doing japa. Begin the counting with the first bead *after* the bead with the tassel. This bead will be “1”, and the tassel bead will be “108”.

Hold the mala with both hands, creating a loose loop. If counting with the major finger, hold your hands palms down with the tips of thumbs and ring fingers touching, and the mala resting where they touch. Pull the mala toward you with the right major finger. If counting with the thumb, hold hands with palms up, mala resting on ring fingers. Pull the mala toward you with the right thumb.

You can also roll the mala with just the right hand, leaving the left hand free or positioned in a mudra of your choice. I have a friend who leaves the mala around his neck while rolling with the right hand.

### **Wearing Your Mala**

Wearing your mala day to day is not required. Wear it to encourage energies, when you feel spiritual—wear it constantly if you want to be spiritual all day. Don't wear it when you don't want to be spiritual. The more you wear it when spiritual, the more it affects you—both you and the mala elevate back to the state when you were charging it.

When not wearing it, don't put your mala just anywhere. You may place the mala on the surface of your altar, or you can keep it in a small pouch or case. Don't put your mala in front of the sun or the moon, as we use this technique when we want to purify the malas.

## **Guidelines for Charging Mantras**

### **Requirement for the 9x12 Formula**

There isn't an absolutely required process. We are charging consciousness, and this is always perfect. There is a recommended time frame—9 malas (or 35 minutes) for 12 consecutive days (in this example). This formula is a guarantee for someone who has not done any spiritual work to raise consciousness. But you can do 3 malas per day for 36 consecutive days, or 1 mala per day for 108 consecutive days. Maha uses a muscle-building analogy—a manageable amount of sacrifice for an extended time is the best balance and gives the best results. If you want to do more than 9 malas per day, it's best to just charge several different mantras. If you must miss a day, try to do one mala to hold the energy, and add a day at the end.

If you find that you transcended or fell asleep during a charge, you were still activating the energy prior to transcendence or sleep. If you don't finish the charge on this day, just don't count the day, but it does not interrupt the process. Upon coming back to yourself, do a few mantras to prevent the process from being lost, and add a day at the end.

### **Charging a Replacement Mala**

If you ever lose, break, or give away your mala. Since it is your soul that you charged with the mantra, and you only wish to re-empower a new mala, you need only do one day of the suggested recipe you initially used, while your mind is focused on charging the mala. You may also choose to simply rewire the mala if you have all the beads. So if you charged a mantra using the 9x12 formula, you can charge this mantra in the new mala by doing 9

malas. If you charged a mantra using the 1x41 formula, you can charge this mantra in the new mala by doing 1 mala.

### **Charging More than One Mantra at a Time**

When charging mantras from series (like the elements) you have to be certain to start the mantra charges in order to finish charging each mantra before you finish the next one following it. Start the fire mantra charge after you start the earth mantra charge, so that you finish the fire charge after you finish the earth charge. This also means that if you charge the earth and fire elements in the same twelve days, you simply have to do the earth mantra first, and the fire mantra charge next.

To charge the 9 Kuji-In mantras, do 1 mala of every long mantra each day (in order, Rin through Zen) for 108 days (not doing the Kuji-In mudra while you hold your mala).

The order can give additional power to the charging, like building on a foundation.

### **Charging Additional Traditions of the Minor Element Mantras**

If you have charged the Hindu tradition with the 9x12 formula, and now want to charge the Buddhist or Christian traditions, do the 1 day formula. So, you would do 9 malas for one day.

### **Charging More than One Mala at a Time**

Each mala only gets one half of the charge.

### **How to Test if a Mantra is Charged**

The 9 x 12 formula, or other formula to get to 108, will get the job done, even if you don't feel it. Then, over time, occasionally do one or a few malas to sustain the level of consciousness.

If you miss several days during the charging process, and are questioning whether you must start over, do this test: After completing the 12th day, don't do the mantra for one week. Then, in a random moment when you are not spiritually active, say the mantra 9 times. If the energy comes powerfully, in a not-supposed-to-be-spiritual moment, you're charged. If the energy comes very lightly or doesn't have any effect, then your charge is broken, and you should start over the full 12 days.

You can completely lose a charge, by endorsing criminal activities, act in a way that does not promote compassion, or having no spiritual practice for 2 years. If you have spiritual thoughts everyday, acting with compassion, feeling happiness often, you will not lose your charges even if you stopped the actual spiritual practices.

## The Bracelet

### Why Wear a Bracelet?

Wearing the mala necklace influences the soul and allows you to put yourself in a state of being more easily. Wearing a bracelet on the left wrist (or receiving hand) gives some energy to the wearer any time. Wearing the bracelet on the right wrist (or giving hand) increases the power of a Reiki or Majutsu treatment. It is not recommended to leave the bracelet on the right wrist when not doing healing because the energy it emits can disturb certain persons that are near you.

### Loading the Bracelet

There are no rules for loading a bracelet, except that it is preferable to load it with mantras that you have already fully charged. After charging the mantra using either the 108 mala process (or the 41 mala process for the longer mantras), you can put this mantra on your bracelet. You need only recite the mantra the number of times as there are beads on the bracelet—if your bracelet has 21 beads, recite the mantra 21 times. You do not need to redo mantra 108 times.

Which mantras should you load on your bracelet? In general you would choose your specialty or preference—only what you use most often. A common choice would be the five elements.

### Structure of the Bracelet

buddhist tradition

There is no set number of beads on a bracelet. But as there are several opportunities to recite 21 mantras or prayers in the Buddhist ritual, we recommend a bracelet with 21 beads. Bead color can represent a divinity or concept. It is fine to do your own research and customize your bracelet by choosing colors of your preference.