



Dr. K's Guide to Mental Health

Practice | Japa | Notes

Japa is a prayer bead mantra practice. Oftentimes, when chanting a mantra, various meditative and religious traditions will use a set of beads to keep track of rounds of chanting or to cultivate particular kinds of spiritual energy.

Practice Instruction:

- Prayer beads should be held between the third and fourth fingers and the thumb
- Start on the bead right next to the guru bead (the central bead with the tassel)
- With each repetition of the mantra, you should advance one bead
- Go around toward the prayer bead until you reach the guru bead
 - Once you reach it, turn around and go back in the reverse direction
 - Don't pass "through" the guru bead with a repetition of the mantra

You can go either practice for a designated length of time or for a certain number of repetitions. Starting off, one round of mala is sufficient (108 rounds not counting guru bead) or you can do the mala for a certain length of time (20 minutes).

A few additional points:

- Mantra practice should be done in isolation for personal mantras. Your mala should be kept in private, and should not be worn as a fashion accessory.
- Mantra should originally be chanted out loud, and then softly, and finally silently in the mind. The progression along this path should be done under the guidance of a guru.
- At the same time, if you feel a general tendency after chanting out loud to be quieter, or do it silently, follow that instinct. This shouldn't be driven by anxiety or feelings of embarrassment but should be a natural inclination.