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Speak Up

THE LANGUAGE OF MEDITATION: A CATALOGUE OF MANTRAS IN THE JÑĀNĀRṆAVA

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The relationship between sound and meditation has occupied an important place in the meditative traditions of South Asia. Within Jainism, this relationship finds one of its most systematic expressions in *padastha-dhyāna* – a form of meditation in which sacred syllables (*akṣaras*), seed syllables (*bīja* mantras), mantras become the objects of sustained contemplative attention. Far from functioning merely as liturgical utterances, these verbal forms are conceived as cognitive supports (*ālambanas*) that steady the mind, cultivate spiritual concentration, and guide the practitioner towards self-realisation.

Among the classical Jain works on meditation, Śubhacandrācārya's *Jñānārṇava* (11th century CE) offers one of the most elaborate expositions of *padastha-dhyāna*. It presents an extensive repertoire of meditative formulae, ranging from single syllables and seed mantras to the *Navakāra Mantra* and other sacred expressions associated with the Jinas and the *Pañca-Parameṣṭhins*. Together, these illustrate the remarkable diversity of contemplative devices employed within the Jain tradition and underscore the centrality of language as a medium of meditative practice.

The catalogue presented here brings together all those mantras and sacred syllables. Arranged according to the sequence of the Agas edition (published from Paramaśruta Prabhāvaka Maṇḍala in 1975), it is intended as a ready reference for students and scholars interested in Jain meditation, mantra traditions, and the textual history of contemplative practice. By assembling these materials in one place, the catalogue also highlights the richness and sophistication of the mantric dimension of Jain meditation:

Verse/s	Mantra	Transliteration	Type
38.2	सम्पूर्ण वर्णमाला	All letters	<i>Varnamātrkā</i> (alphabet meditation)
38.3	अ आ इ ई उ ऊ ऋ ॠ लृ ए ऐ ओ औ अं अः	<i>a ā i ī u ū ṛ ṝ !ī e ai o au am aḥ</i>	<i>Ṣoḍaśa-svara</i> (16 vowels)

38.4	क ख ग घ ङ च छ ज झ ञ ट ठ ड ढ ण त थ द ध न प फ ब भ म	<i>ka kha ga gha ṅa ca cha ja jha ṅa ṭa ṭha ḍa ḍha ṇa ta tha da dha na pa pha ba bha ma</i>	<i>Pañcaviṁśati- vyañjana</i> (25 consonants)
38.5	य र ल व श ष स ह	<i>ya ra la va śa śa sa ha</i>	<i>Aṣṭa-antyaṣṭha- uṣma varṇas</i> (Eight semivowels and sibilants)
38.6-7	ॠ	<i>rhraṁ</i>	Composite <i>bīja</i> (seed) mantra
38.10	ॠ	<i>rhraṁ</i>	On golden pericarp
38.18-19	ॠ	<i>rhraṁ</i>	With <i>kumbhaka</i> breathing (breath retention)
38.22.1	अर्ह	<i>arham</i>	Arhat- <i>bīja</i> (seed) mantra With <i>akāra, repha,</i> <i>hakāra, bindu</i>
38.22.3	अर्ह	<i>arham</i>	Without <i>bindu, kalā,</i> both <i>repha,</i> letters or utterance respectively
38.23	ह	<i>ha</i>	<i>Anāhata-bīja</i> (seed syllable)
38.25	ह	<i>ha</i>	<i>Sūkṣma</i> (minute) <i>anāhata</i> visualisation
38.33-35	ॐ	<i>om</i>	<i>Praṇava</i> -mantra on the pericarp with <i>kumbhaka</i> breathing (breath retention)
38.36-37	ॐ	<i>om</i>	Fivefold <i>Praṇava</i> visualisation Vermilion (subjugation of the world), Golden- yellow (<i>stambhana,</i> immobilisation), Black (destruction of enemies), Blood-red (hypnosis), Moon- white (destruction of karmas)

38.39	णमो अरहंताणं	<i>ṇamo arahantāṇaṃ</i>	Arhat-mantra on pericarp
38.40	णमो सिद्धाणं णमो आयरियाणं णमो उवज्झायाणं णमो लोए सव्वसाहूणं; सम्यग्दर्शन, सम्यग्ज्ञान, सम्यक्चारित्र, सम्यक्-तप	<i>ṇamo siddhāṇaṃ ṇamo āyariyāṇaṃ ṇamo uvajjhāyāṇaṃ ṇamo loe savvasāhūṇaṃ; samyagdarśana, samyagjñāna, samyakcāritra, samyak-tapa</i>	Namokāra-mantra (remaining four salutations) placed in four directions and the four constituents of the path of liberation placed in four semi-directions
38.48	अर्हत्सिद्धाचार्योपाध्यायसर्व साधुभ्यो नमः	<i>arhatsiddhācāryopādhyāyasarv asādhubhyo namaḥ</i>	<i>Pañca-parameṣṭhī</i> mantra (16 letters)
38.50	अरहंतसिद्ध	<i>arahantaṣiddha</i>	<i>Ṣaḍakṣarī</i> mantra (6 letters)
38.51	अरहंत	<i>arahanta</i>	<i>Caturakṣarī</i> mantra (4 letters)
38.52	सिद्ध	<i>siddha</i>	<i>Dvyakṣarī</i> mantra (2 letters)
38.53	अ	<i>a</i>	<i>Ekākṣarī</i> mantra (1 letter)
38.55	ह्रौं ह्रीं हूं ह्रौं ह्रः / अ सि आ उ सा	<i>hrām̐, hrīm̐, hrūm̐, hraum̐, hraḥ / a, si, ā, u, sā</i>	<i>Pañca-bīja</i> mantra (5 letters)
38.57	चत्तारि मंगलं अरहंता मंगलं सिद्धा मंगलं साहू मंगलं केवलिपण्णतो धम्मो मंगलं ॥ चत्तारि लोगुत्तमा अरहंता लोगुत्तमा सिद्धा लोगुत्तमा साहू लोगुत्तमा केवलिपण्णतो धम्मो लोगुत्तमो ॥ चत्तारि सरणं पव्वज्जामि अरहंते सरणं पव्वज्जामि सिद्धे सरणं पव्वज्जामि साहू सरणं पव्वज्जामि	<i>cattāri maṅgalaṃ arahantaṃ maṅgalaṃ siddhā maṅgalaṃ sāhū maṅgalaṃ kevalipaṇṇatto dhammo maṅgalaṃ cattāri loguttamā arahantaṃ loguttamā siddhā loguttamā sāhū loguttamā kevalipaṇṇatto dhammo loguttamo cattāri saraṇaṃ pavvajjāmi arahante saraṇaṃ pavvajjāmi siddhe saraṇaṃ pavvajjāmi sāhū saraṇaṃ pavvajjāmi kevalipaṇṇattaṃ dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ pavvajjāmi </i>	<i>Maṅgala Daṇḍaka</i> (benedictory panegyric)

	केवलिपण्णतं धम्मं सरणं पव्वज्जामि ॥		
38.60	ॐ ह्रीं श्रीं अर्हं नमः	<i>om hrīm śrīm arham namaḥ</i>	Composite vidyā-mantra
38.62	णमो सिद्धाणं	<i>ṇamo siddhāṇam</i>	Siddha-mantra
38.63	ॐ नमोऽर्हते केवलिने परमयोगिनेऽनन्तचतुष्टशु दधिपरिणामविस्फुरदूरुशु क्लध्यानाग्निनिर्दग्धकर्मबी जाय प्राप्तानन्तचतुष्टयाय सौभ्याय शान्ताय मंगलाय वरदाय अष्टादशदोषरहिताय स्वाहा ॥	<i>om namo'rhate kevaline paramayogine'nantacatuṣṭaśud dhi-pariṇāma-visphurad- ūruśukladhyānāgni-nirdagdha- karmabijāya prāptānantacatuṣṭayāya saubhyāya śāntāya maṅgalāya varadāya aṣṭādaśadoṣarahitāya svāhā</i>	Mahāvidyā / Arhat-vidyā mantra
38.64-65	ॐ णमो अरिहंताणं	<i>om ṇamo arihantāṇam</i>	Praṇava-yukta Arhat-mantra
38.67-70	ह्रीं	<i>hrīm</i>	Māyā-bīja mantra
38.74-75	ह्रीं	<i>hrīm</i>	Māyā-bīja visualisation
38.81	क्ष्वीं	<i>kṣvīm</i>	Kṣvīm-bīja vidyā mantra
38.85	णमो अरहंताणं	<i>ṇamo arahantāṇam</i>	Arhat-mantra
38.86-88	ॐ / अ / ह	<i>om / a / ha</i>	Praṇava-Śūnya-Anāhata triad
38.89	ह्रीं ॐ ॐ ह्रीं हंसः	<i>hrīm om om hrīm haṁsaḥ</i>	Māyā-Praṇava-Haṁsa mantra
38.90	स्वी	<i>svī</i>	Svīm-bīja mantra
38.91	ॐ जोग्गे मग्गे तच्चे भूदे भव्वे भविस्से अक्खे पक्खे जिणपारिस्से स्वाहा ॥; ॐ ह्रीं स्वर्हं नमो अर्हताणं ह्रीं नमः ॥	<i>om jogge magge tacce bhūde bhavve bhavisse akkhe pakkhe jiṇapārisse svāhā; om hrīm svarham namo ar'hatāṇam hrīm namaḥ</i>	Vidyā-mantras
38.95-99	ॐ णमो अरिहंताणं	<i>om ṇamo arihantāṇam</i>	Arhat-mantra with directional visualisation
38.101-102	णमो अरिहंताणं	<i>ṇamo arihantāṇam</i>	Arhat-mantra (without praṇava)
38.103	श्रीमद्वृषभादिवर्धमानान्ते भ्यो नमः	<i>śrīmadvṛṣabhādi- vardhamānāntebhyo namaḥ</i>	Tīrthānkara-vandana mantra

38.104	ॐ अर्हन्मुखकमलवासिनि पापात्मक्षयंकरी श्रुतज्ञानज्वालासहस्रप्रज्ज्व लिते सरस्वति मत्पापं हन हन दह दह क्षां क्षीं क्षूं क्षीं क्षः क्षीरवरधवले अमृतसम्भवे वं वं हं हूं स्वाहा	<i>om arahanmukhakamalavāsini pāpātmakṣayaṅkari śrutajñānajvālāsahasraprajjalit e sarasvati matpāpaṁ hana hana daha daha kṣāṁ kṣīm kṣūṁ kṣaum kṣaḥ kṣīravaradhavale amṛtasambhava vaṁ vaṁ hram hūṁ svāhā</i>	<i>Sarasvatī-vidyā mantra</i>
38.108	अ सि आ उ सा	<i>a-si-ā-u-sā</i>	<i>Pañca-parameṣṭhī bīja-mantra visualisation on lotuses at naval, forehead, throat, heart and mouth respectively</i>
38.110	नमः सर्वसिद्धेभ्यः	<i>namaḥ sarvasiddhebhyaḥ</i>	<i>Siddha-mantra</i>

The catalogue presented here demonstrates that *padastha-dhyāna* is far more than a practice of repetitive mantra recitation. The range of these sacred formulae reveals a sophisticated contemplative system in which language is transformed into a disciplined means of cultivating concentration, purity, and self-awareness. By systematically organizing these meditative supports, the *Jñānārṇava* offers a glimpse into the richness of the Jain contemplative imagination and its nuanced understanding of the relationship between sound, meaning, and spiritual experience.
