

OM JAPA (Its Mystery and Methods)

The Mission Of Peace - Sri Santi Ashram

OM JAPA (*Its Mystery and Methods*)



Sri Swami Omkar

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THE SACRED SYLLABLE OM

"The goal which all the Vedas proclaim, which all penances declare and desiring which they lead the life of Brahmacharya—celibacy-1 tell it to thee in brief— it is *Om*.

—*Kathopanishad*.

"The sacred word Om is called the bow, the arrow the soul, and Brahma its aim. It should be pierced by him whose attention does not waver. Then he will be of the same nature with Him, as the arrow becomes one with the target when it is pierced.

Within the heart where the arteries enter as the spokes do the nave of the wheel, He moves—becoming manifold. Meditate on Him—through the word *Om*. Let it abide with you so that you may cross the ocean of ignorance."

—*Mundaka Upanishad*

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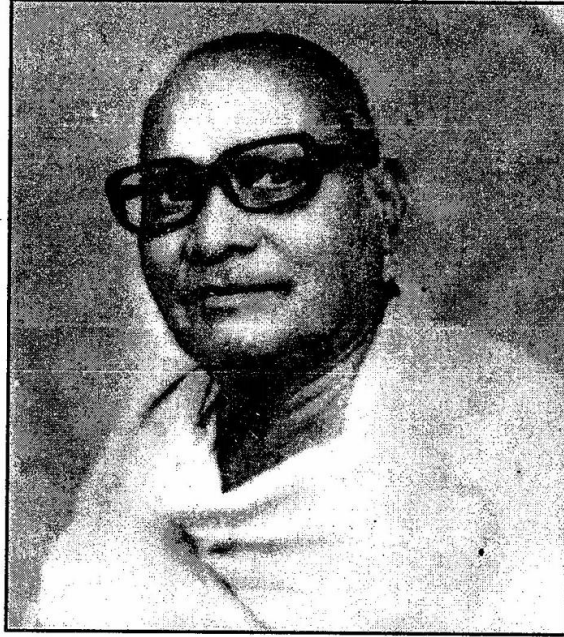
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FOREWORD

Om Japa (Its Mystery and Methods) is only a revised edition of Sri Swami Omkar's previous booklet: *The Significance of the Mystic Syllable Om*, published several years ago in 1935. The contents of that have been generally prescribed with some modifications and additions. The 'Foreword' to the previous booklet, by Sister Sushila Devi holds good for this edition as well.

Brother Ramdas, who lives a silent and dedicated life, wrote from Hong Kong to Swamiji:

"I love and adore *Om*. I believe pious Hindu people make a Japa of *Om*. How do they utter the words in their Japa? As you wrote the booklet on Japa many years ago, may I request you kindly to revise and expand it and to write a message explaining and teaching the ways and methods for those who wish to make a Japa of *Om*. The teachings may not be necessary for those who are in India and born as Hindus but your message will be a blessing to those who wish to make a Japa of *Om* and who are neither Hindus nor live in India."

So this was the origin and cause for bringing out this edition. The brother has offered all the funds necessary for the publication. The contents of this booklet are entirely Swamiji's own. Thanks are due to Sri V.L.N. Murthy, chairman of our Peace Committee, for his valuable suggestions in the reshaping of the previous pamphlet. The final arrangements of the contents with the additions of Sri Swamiji has fallen to my lot. As such, I would own all faults or discrepancies in the arrangement of the material.

Needless to say the booklet is meant for all who have a desire for spiritual experience of the Truth, irrespective of their religion or nationality.

Parmatma Prakash, Muradabad. (Mt. Kailash-11.6.52)

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FOREWORD

(to the Previous Edition)

(Entitled: The Significance of the Mystic Syllable Om)

The Significance of the Mystic Syllable Om by our Swamiji in the form of this short message contains the essence of all scriptures.

This book also contains two inspiring exercises for meditation. The photo print of the sacred syllable Om in Sanskrit is added as it will be helpful as an object of meditation for all seekers of Truth.

It is most uplifting and ennobling to identify ourselves with the sacred syllable **Om** and to feel that we are ceaselessly radiating and sending forth rays of life, light and love towards the whole of humanity.

It is our request that the loving readers should read this message keeping their center within, recognizing the Presence in each and every sound, for all sounds are the emanations of the one universal sound *Om*.

May nothing but the mystic word Om vibrate both in the stillness of our hearts, as well as in the activities of our busy lives, is my Prayer.

-SISTER SUSHILA DEVI

INHALE AND EXHALE PEACE

THY BIRTHRIGHT

TRUTH IS ONE

MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES

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CHAPTER 1

SIGNIFICANCE OF OM

Our daily worship in the Ashram begins with *Om*. We end it also in the prolonged chanting of the mystic word *Om*, followed by a meditation.

Om is ascribed as the beginning, middle and end not only of the scriptures but of everything in creation. The sacred scriptures and the Vedas begin with *Om* and they all end with *Om*. There is not a Mantra, a ritual or a worship which is not connected in some way or the other with the sacred syllable *Om*. It is the life and soul of all forms and names. Hence it has been said: "By repeating the sacred syllable *Om*, one is repeating all the sacred scriptures in the whole world." And so does assert the Mandurya Upanishad as well: "*Om* is verily the beginning, middle and end of all. Knowing *Om* as such, one without doubt attains that oneness with God." "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." So says the Bible too. How striking and thrilling are these words about the word! And *Om*, the mystic syllable, is only symbolic of the Word.

You may say, "Why should it not be Christ or Krishna, Rama or Zoroaster, Buddha or Mohammed and X or Y? Why should it be the sacred syllable *Om* alone?" The answer is that *Om* is the most simple, natural and all-embracing sound that even the mute and the dumb can pronounce. It is a word expressed in every language. *Om*, *Amen*, *Ahmin* - all refer to the highest state of consciousness of truth. When you repeat Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed or Zoroaster, they are holy Names; that is they represent God in the various personified forms. The universal, cosmic aspect of God, God that is formless, changeless and without cause, is indicated by *Om* alone.

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In repeating *Om*, no effort is needed. One can repeat it without the least exertion. Often it comes out of its own accord. We see children repeating it when they are happy. Even people in sickness and suffering repeat it unconsciously, as it gives them some relief. The repetition may not be exactly *Om* but with a little variation, it resembles *Om*.

In the Bhagavad Gita, the song celestial, Lord Krishna says, "Those that meditate on the mystic syllable *Om*, forgetting everything else, will in no time realise God." Again He says, "Reciting *Om*, the syllable eternal and thinking upon Me, he who goeth forth abandoning the body, reaches those blessed heights, from where there is no return."

Om is not a mere common word. It is a mystic word, a powerful word, with hidden strength and latent energy. It is a life-giving and soul-awakening word. In repeating *Om*, you feel it is coming out from the very depths of your being, gushing from your very cells. It is a word that can never be separated from one's life. The most astounding fact is, whether you believe it or not, you know it or not, the mystic word *Om* is always expressing itself through you, nay, through every creature and sound on earth.

In your very breath there is *Soham*, operating day and night, 'so'while you inhale and 'ham'while you exhale, In *Soham* the consonants 'S' and 'H' (H with A IA, HA, to make the sound complete) represents the gross world, and the vowel 'O' and the nasal vowel (Anuswara) 'M' represent the Spirit or Truth. If the consonants are removed there is *Om*, flowing in your breath, proclaiming unconsciously and incessantly in every breath: "I am the Truth, I am the Divinity, I am the Universal Breath, the One without a second. I am all-in-all, the Indwelling Presence of every heart, as well as the whole creation." Behold, recognise and be silent. *Om! Om! Om!*

The essence of the message so far is that *Om* is the symbol of the Divine Energy, the interpenetrating Presence. As such, it cannot be confined to any

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individual or religion. It is the common heritage of all the children of God, of the whole of humanity. Consciously or unconsciously it is expressing itself through our thoughts, words and deeds. Peace, eternal poise and limitless power will be ours when we can recognise its full significance consciously and attune ourselves with the *holy word* in every moment of our lives, both for our good and for the common good of the world.

In conclusion, let me refer to the story 'Mange Mardana' the Killing of the thousand-hooded snake by Krishna, beautifully related by Swami Rama Tirtha. Krishna jumped into the lake and stood on his head, dancing and chanting the syllable *Om* on His divine flute. He did not stop chanting the sacred syllable *Om*, until He completely crushed the hoods of the snake. Thus, He came out victorious and lived as benefactor of humanity. The vicious snake is, in reality, no other than the mind. The thousand hoods are its numberless desires, cravings, passions, such as jealousy, spite, envy, anger, sorrow, selfishness, arrogance, conceit and the like. It is time for every one of us to act as Krishna did, to plunge ourselves into the lake of our being and begin chanting the mystic word *Om*, crushing one passion after another, with our dancing feet, and singing flutes on the rhythm of life. The more we crush, the more we rise; yet, with persistent practice, we surely come out triumphant like Krishna.

This is not a mere story for light reading but a practical exercise to overcome evil, with the help of the good and with the holy vibrations of *Om*. It is also an uplifting thought, to think that our bodies are the flutes and when we empty ourselves of all passions and thoughts of 'mine' and 'thine', the Lord Himself sings through us celestial songs.

Om! Om! Om!

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CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF THE WORD OM

Many people ask whether the word should be written 'OM' or 'AUM'. In fact, both are the same. OM is the fusion of the three elementary sounds. *A* (as, in 'vocal') *U* (as in 'put') and *M* (as in 'come'), *A* and *U* being blended into *O* when pronounced together, according to Sanskrit grammar.

By repeating *A*, *U* and *M* separately you will notice how these three sounds cover the whole range of sound production. *A* begins from the root of the tongue, from the lowest boundary of the origin of sound; *U* comes from the middle, the region near the palate and *M* comes from the extremity, the tip of the tongue. In pronouncing the entire syllable, all the vocal organs come into close juxtaposition. OM is the fundamental and original sound from which have arisen all other sounds. *A*, *U* and *M* represent the triple stages or aspects in the world such as:

A	U	M
Brahma	Vishnu	Shiva
Father	Son	Holy Ghost
Waking	Dreaming	Sleeping State
Body	Mind	Spirit
Gross	Subtle	Causal Existence
Past	Present	Future

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In all these triple aspects, we see how *A*, *U* and *M* cover the whole of our life in every plane. If you know the mystic word OM, you will be able to know in a most natural way the mystery of God, for the mystic word leads you directly into the Presence of the Universal God.

It has been said above, that the letter *A* represents the waking state, that is, the gross world of phenomena, the letter *U* represents the dream world, the world of imagination and fancy and *M* represents sounds of speech. OM is thus the matrix of all speech.

Now, the most important thing is to understand the meaning of the word OM, the letters, that is the unconscious state of sleep, the unknown world. But there is a fourth state beyond them. How is this superconscious state represented by Om? As you repeat OM, the sound resulting from repetition of the mystic word leads into the fourth state of cosmic-consciousness. Hence, when you repeat OM, as you pass through **A U M** (the waking, dreaming and the sleeping conditions) at the end of each repetition you recognise in silence, the marvellous effects or results in the fourth stage. The resultant sound of the repetition of OM leads into the highest state of peace. It is a state to be meditated and understood in silence through intuition.



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CHAPTER 3

METHODS OF OM JAPA

Japa means the repetition of a sacred syllable, word or Mantra. For the beginner it is helpful even to repeat simply 'OM, OM, OM,' for some minutes twice a day or more, specially at dawn and dusk or according to one's convenience. One should sit alone in a convenient posture, keeping the upper part of the body erect. He may choose a room, go to a place of natural beauty - a hill, by the side of a river or the beach. As the devotee evolves, he understands that there are two other ways of repetition. Firstly when one repeats the Name of God - OM, with the mouth, one begins to feel ecstatic and instead of pronouncing aloud, he likes to repeat it with the lips in a silent way. As he continues, he enters into such a blissful state that he does not like even to move the lips. The least motion is a strain for him. Then automatically, the repetition with the lips stops. Now comes the final stage of repetition with the breath. He is inhaling OM, and exhaling OM, the Light of lights with every breath. He recognises the Light within and the Light without. Now, he does not repeat even with the mind. He is only aware of the OM, the Presence, which is already repeating itself in each and every breath. As he follows OM in every breath, with no other thought or ripples in the ocean of *Sat Chit Ananda* - the Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute, he reaches those blessed heights, where there is neither inhalation nor exhalation, but only the self-effulgence of the splendour of millions of suns. Of course, for the beginner, it is difficult to feel the Presence in the breath, but for the advanced, for those who have surrendered themselves to God, nothing exists except God. Even in sleep they are aware of the Presence, the *Soham*, the Om, which is always present. Again it is necessary that before one begins the *Om Japa*, he should understand the meaning of Om and identify himself with its essence. The essence is: 'That thou art'; God or *Om* is not separate or away from you.

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You are a part and parcel of That. That which exists is One and That thou art. What is most important in the *Om Japa*, is the identification with the Light of lights, the interpenetrating Presence, which is permeating the universe as well as oneself.

The second method is as referred to above in Part 2 (The analysis of the word *Om*). In chanting *Om* you begin with *A*, prolonging the sound as long as you can, then *U* and finally *M*. The sounds of *A* and *U* in fact, make one continuous sound of *O*, like the drone of a musical instrument. The chant should be as long as possible, without strain to the person chanting it. The final *M* sound prolongs itself into silence. Thus covering the waking, dreaming and sleeping states, the sound leads finally to the transcendental state through the silence produced by the chanting of *A*, *U*, and *M*. Dwell in that waveless silence after the sound *M*, as long as you can, and then again begin with *A,U,M*, which leads you into silence every time you chant and is finally followed by a deep meditation. By chanting *A,U,M*, one rises above past, present and future and the resultant factor leads one into the fourth dimensional state or the cosmic-consciousness, the goal of human birth. In this repetition of the entire syllable *Aum*, all the vocal organs are touched and it covers the whole range of sound production. Hence it has been said that in repeating *Om*, one is repeating all the scriptures of the world.

Thus, so far two important and helpful methods have been explained, the ***Om*** for deep meditation through mouth, lips, and breath, and the ***Aum*** for chanting aloud, prolonging the ***A*** and ***U*** sounds with final ***M*** as long as one can chant.

There is another method which is helpful to keep the ceaseless flow of divine consciousness amidst work, play or rest. All are fond of music, in some form or the other. When happy, one begins to sing a tune consciously or unconsciously. In every language, there are so many popular songs that draw the mind and inspire the very soul. For instance, there are the sacred Mantras: 'Hare Rama, Hare Rama' or 'Sri Rama Jaya Rama'. One sings and chants it in so many ways. We can substitute the words 'Om, Om,'

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or add them and sing them in any tune we like and similarly we can do with 'Lead Kindly Light' or any other song. The important thing in this chanting of Om, in any tune rhythmically is to allow the senses, mind, intellect and the ego to merge, in the universal vibration, in the oneness of the One Indivisible Life. Feel ecstatically that you are merging in the one God, in His eternal peace, light and love. Esoteric teachings like these are better understood if they are given by a person who lives the life even without uttering a word about them.

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CHAPTER 4

HIGHER MEDITATIONS

All methods of *japa* do lead to meditation and silence ending in the transcendental state of consciousness. But here, meditation means the concentration of the mind on *Om*, in a specific way, within and without. On the front of this booklet there is a photo print of the Sanskrit word *Om*. Have a look at it concentratedly. Observe its self-shining splendour and close your eyes. Do not think any longer that *Om* is outside of you. It is within you, you are that *Om*. Your body itself is the physical aspect of *Om*. From top to toe you are the *Om* figure, the manifestation of *Om*.

Now feel that the middle curve is passing through your navel centre and the downward curve through the lower region of your body, and the upward curve towards the head. Behold, there is the crescent on top of your head. In the crescent, there is the Sun of suns, shining in full splendour. Identifying thus with the mystic word *Om*, meditate on its great significance which is life, light and love. Chant aloud the word *Om*, and as you get absorbed within, chant only with the lips and finally inaudibly feeling the essence within. Concentrate, feel as you inhale, you are taking all the rays of the sun or *Om* within, and as you exhale, you are giving out the rays of light, spreading and radiating them, far and near, all over the world with every breath. What a wonderful thought! Try to practise this meditation especially in the early hours of dawn facing the sunrise and in the sunset hour beholding the retiring sun. As the rays merge in the sun at time of dusk, let the world also merge in you as you get absorbed in deep meditation.

For a still higher meditation, meditate on the top of the head in the Sahasrara centre, the thousand petalled lotus where it is infinite light within, without and all around. And here, there is neither repetition nor chanting of *Om* even in the mind. There is neither inhalation nor exhalation. In the Light of lights, in the highest centre, in the beginning, you feel only a little recurring pressure. As you merge deeper, even this sensation also dissolves.

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You feel nothing but *That*. This is the ultimate significance of the mystic word, *Om*, the infinite, the eternal, the incomprehensible splendour of millions of suns.

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In conclusion, let me take the reader into my personal experience and give my own method of the repetition of *Om*. With the repetition of *Om* thrice only I feel lifted to the blessed heights of spiritual consciousness. With the first *Om*, I try to attune myself with the past, present and future, the one ceaseless vibration. With the second *Om*, I try to rise above body, mind and world. And with the third *Om*, I try to rise above time, space and causation. The reader is welcome to help himself and help us in spreading this 'Creed of Transcendentalism' through the sacred syllable *Om*. All these methods of repeating, singing, chanting and meditating on *Om* lead only to that transcendental state, where the breath leads to breathlessness, the sound or vibration of *Om* leading into the great void of waveless silence. The peace profound which passeth all understanding is not comprehensible to the finite, mortal mind, but it is comprehensible to the infinite, eternal and immortal Truth within us, for It is one without a second, being all-knowing or knowledge itself.

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*Breathe on me, breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love
And do what Thou dost do.*

Om, Om, Om!

*Breathe on me, breath of God,
Until my heart is Pure,
Until with Thee I will one will.
To do and to endure.*

Om, Om, Om!

*Breathe on me, breath of God,
So shall I never die,
But live with Thee, the perfect life
Of Thine Eternity.*

Om, Om, Om!

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"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

Dear blessed readers, may you be with that Word, and may you, as that Word, be with God, as that Word itself is God! Above all, may you all be the living flames of the mystic *Om*. May peace be unto all!

OM! OM! OM!

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AUM

All joy I am, Om, Om, Om.
All knowledge I am, Om, Om, Om.
All truth I am, Om, Om, Om.
All light I am, Om, Om, Om.
Fearless, fearless I am, Om, Om, Om.
No attachment or repulsion, I am the
fulfilment of all desires, Om, Om, Om.
I am the Over-soul, Om, Om, Om.
I hear in all ears, Om, Om, Om.
I see in all eyes, Om, Om, Om.
In all minds I think, Om, Om, Om.
Sages aspire to know the Truth which is
myself, Om, Om, Om,
One life and light that shineth through
the sun and stars am I, Om, Om, Om

—Swami Rama Tirtha

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OUR IDEAL

It is the individual peace that paves the way towards universal peace, so establish it first in your own heart, then share it in your home, radiate it in your community and thus let it vibrate from heart to heart till it pervades the whole nation and permeates the whole world, the entire universe, through your own pure and ideal life of peace.



Published by The Mission of Peace - Sri Santi Ashram,
Via Sankhavaram, East Godavari District, Pin - 533 446,
A.P., India.

Printed at **SRI SANTI ASHRAM**, Lemons Bay Colony,
Visakhapatnam - 530 017.

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PEACE PRAYER

(FOR WORLD PEACE)

ADORABLE PRESENCE!

Thou who are within and without,
Above and below and all around,
Thou who art interpenetrating
the very cells of our beings;

Thou who art the Eye of our eyes,
the Ear of our ears,
the Heart of our hearts,
the Mind of our minds,
the Breath of our breaths,
the Life of our lives and
the Soul of our souls.

Bless us Dear God, to be aware of
Thy Presence NOW and HERE.
This is all that we ask of THEE!

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May all be aware of Thy Presence
in the East and the West,
and the North and the South!
May PEACE and Goodwill
abide among individuals as well as
communities and nations!
This is our earnest prayer!
May Peace be unto all!

Aum Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!

- Swami Omkar

(Please repeat this prayer for your Peace as well as for World Peace)