



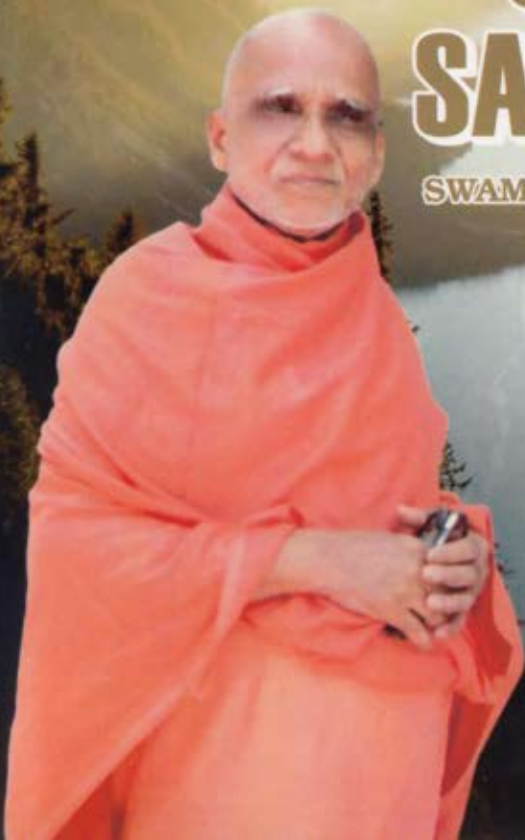
1922

CENTENARY SERIES

2022

JAPA SADHANA

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA



JAPA SADHANA

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA



Published by

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

P.O. SHIVANANDANAGAR—249 192

Distt. Tehri-Garhwal, Uttarakhand, Himalayas, India

www.sivanandaonline.org, www.dlshq.org

First Edition: 2021
[2,000 copies]

©The Divine Life Trust Society

FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

Published by Swami Padmanabhananda for
The Divine Life Society, Shivanandanagar, and printed by
him at the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy Press,
P.O. Shivanandanagar, Distt. Tehri-Garhwal,
Uttarakhand, Himalayas, India
For online orders and catalogue visit: www.dlsbooks.org

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The 25th of April 2022 marks the auspicious occasion of the Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out booklets comprising the illuminating discourses of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj arrived at the holy abode of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in 1944, and remained here until his Mahasamadhi in November 2001. Swamiji Maharaj was a master of practically every system of Indian thought and Western philosophy. "Many Sankaras are rolled into one Krishnananda," said Sri Gurudev.

Over the years, Swami Maharaj gave many profound and insightful discourses during Sunday night Satsanga, and on holy occasions such as Sri Gurudev's birthday, Sri Krishna Janmasthanami, Mahasivaratri, etc., and also during Sadhana Week and Yoga Vedanta Courses conducted by the Yoga

Vedanta Forest Academy of the Ashram. Sri Swami Maharaj always spoke extempore, spontaneously, without any preparation, and every discourse was fresh, unique, and divinely inspired. The audience was bathed in that stupendous unfathomable energy that radiated from Swamiji Maharaj during these discourses.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of Sri Swamiji Maharaj's discourses in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary.

The present booklet, '**Japa Sadhana**', comprises Sri Swamiji Maharaj's discourse on the true implication and significance of Japa Sadhana.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

JAPA SADHANA

The world of experience may be said to be constituted of three important factors: 'thought', 'name' and 'form'. These three are internally connected with one another. This relationship that obtains among thought, name and form is taken notice of in a very important aspect of spiritual practice, or *sadhana*, known as Japa Yoga. This is a term with which you are all familiar: the yoga of *japa*. In the Bhagavadgita, the Lord has referred to this aspect of spiritual *sadhana* as perhaps the best among the known methods of approach to God. *Yajnanam japayajnosmi*: "Among all the sacrifices, *sadhanas*, austerities or forms of *tapas*, I am represented by *japa*," says Bhagavan Sri Krishna. *Japa* is regarded as the most efficacious method of spiritual practice because it is intimately connected with the immediate realities of life which are intelligible to our understanding, and at the same time it is also inwardly connected with a secret silken thread to the ultimate goal of yoga. The terms 'name' and 'form', to which we have made reference here, mean much more than what we are likely to

make out from them. The name is not merely an epithet or an appellation that we casually attach to a physical form.

These days we are accustomed to any kind of name according to our whim and fancy, in relation to a form, without taking into consideration the relationship between the name and the form. In ancient days, especially in India, the naming of a particular form was based on a well-established, scientific fact. The name represents a form and the form is symbolised or indicated by a name. In a famous system of spiritual thought known as *tantra* or *agama*, it is pointed out that the expression of a particular name in a recognised manner automatically projects a particular form. This form is usually known in the *Agama Sastras* as the *yantra*. The *yantra* is not merely a geometrical drawing or a formation, but a shape that a name is supposed to take when it is made manifest through expression. Thus, the name and the form are intimately related to each other. Not only this—the name and the form are related to the thought that is behind the expression of the name and the form.

In common parlance we can take the instance of any name for the matter of that, such as a 'tree'. A 'tree' is a name, a sound symbol that is supposed

to indicate or point to a form which we know as the physical existence of the object known as the tree. We know very well how the expression of the name 'tree' evokes a corresponding idea in our mind. The idea, the name and the form seem to rise simultaneously in consciousness, so that the one is not easily distinguishable from the other. The perception of an object may evoke the idea of its name, and the utterance of a name may evoke the idea of the object or the form. Even a thought, a mere idea, may manifest itself as the form together with the name which symbolises it.

In *sadhana*, which, in the present context, is spiritual practice, this inner secret of nature is well borne in mind. Inasmuch as every name is correspondingly related to a form and the world is made up of forms and nothing but forms, we are required to evoke in our minds that particular form alone which is supposed to rouse in us the particular form of Reality or degree of Truth which is higher than the one in which we are placed at present, so that we may be enabled to rise from one degree of Truth to another degree in its higher and higher progressive forms of manifestation until we reach the highest form of it, the last or the ultimate expression of Truth which we know as God—Ishvara. And our

scriptures tell us that as we can evoke a particular form in our consciousness by the utterance of a corresponding name, we can also invoke in our mind, in our consciousness, the form of God, the Supreme Being Himself, by the recitation of the Name which is the sacred expression of that ultimate form of Reality or Existence, God Almighty.

In one of the aphorisms, or *sutras*, of a famous system of spiritual practice known as Raja Yoga, the author thereof, Patanjali Maharshi, tells us, in a cryptic expression, *tajjapastadartha-bhavanam*. He defines *japa* in this *sutra*. What is meant by *japa sadhana*? The contemplation of the implied meaning of a particular symbolic expression, the utterance of a Name—that is *japa*. So *japa*, according to this definition of Patanjali at least, is not merely a mechanical recitation of a Name or a formula, but includes also a simultaneous contemplation on the meaning thereof, though many protagonists of this form of yoga tell us that even a mechanical repetition of the Name has its own beneficial effect.

There are certain medicines which have their own effect on the system; they act on the system in the manner required, whether or not we know what medicine we have taken, notwithstanding the fact

that a knowledge of the contents of the medicine may help us in creating the necessary psychological atmosphere in ourselves so that the action may be accelerated. Knowingly or unknowingly, God's Name can be taken, whether we know the meaning of the Name, whether we can appreciate the implication of the Name, or not.

The Name of God is compared to fire that burns. Knowingly or unknowingly we may touch fire; it shall burn, it shall have its own effect. Likewise, this potency of the Name of God has its action upon our entire system, physically as well as psychologically, so that it purifies us. The process of purification is that action which takes place in ourselves, which transforms the baser metal of crude thinking engendered by *rajas* and *tamas* into that form of expression known as *sattva guna*. The recitation of a *mantra*, therefore, accelerates the process of the revelation of the *sattva* in us, transforming the *rajas* and the *tamas* in our nature. It is not so much a destruction of *rajas* and *tamas* as a complete transfiguration of the constituents that we know as *rajas* and *tamas*. Inertia, distraction and equilibrium are termed *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*.

In fact, these three qualities, or properties, known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, are not extraneous

toxic matter that have entered into our system like a thorn that has struck our feet, but they are forms of our mind itself. The *gunas* of *prakriti*, known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, are not outside the mind, like dirt or dust that covers a mirror on its surface. While the dust on the mirror is different from the mirror and we can wipe the surface of the mirror and the dust can be eliminated, not so is the case of the transformation of *rajas* and *tamas* into *sattva*. The mind itself is the substance out of which these *gunas* of *prakriti* manifest themselves. What is the relation between the mind and the three *gunas*, viz., *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*? The quality of a substance is generally distinguished from the substance. The redness of a rose is generally regarded to be different from the rose itself. We do not say that redness itself is the rose. The rose is the substance in which the character or the quality of redness inheres. Not so is the case with the mind in its relationship to the *gunas*. The *gunas* of *prakriti*, the qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, in relation to the mind, are related to the mind as the three strands of a rope are related to the rope. You know what are strands of a rope: three thinner ropes make a thicker rope. The three thinner ropes are not outside the thick rope. They themselves form the thick rope.

The threads themselves form the cloth. There is no cloth outside the threads. Though we use two different epithets—threads and cloth—we will find it is only a way of naming two different circumstances of one and the same substance. The threads are the cloth, and the cloth is the threads, though when we purchase a piece of cloth we do not say that we purchase threads. It is a way of expression, but, actually, substantially, they mean one and the same thing. Likewise, the mind is the *gunas*, and the *gunas* themselves constitute the mind-stuff. So, in the transformation that takes place from the condition of *rajas* and *tamas* to the state of *sattva*, what happens is an inner reconstitution of the elements of the mind into an inner setup of circumstances known as *sattva*. It is something like the transformation of the constituents of milk when it becomes another substance known as curd, though the analogy is not wholly appropriate here. I cite this instance only to tell you that the constitution is inwardly reshaped and an external element does not introduce itself. We ourselves become another thing in this process of transformation.

The principle of God is not wholly outside our nature. The Supreme Being, whom we are invoking through *mantra japa*, is not entirely disconnected

with our inner constitution, or makeup. We are not importing God from outside, like an external element unconnected with our nature. God is not brought into our nature from outside, from the seventh heaven. The element of God, the principle of Reality, is manifest from within. This fact could be clear to us when we contemplate on the fact of the Immanence of God, as the scriptures proclaim. God is not merely transcendent to our nature, though He is also that, for He is at the same time immanent in us, which means to say that the nature of God is not only superior to the baser nature of *rajas* and *tamas* in us, which is the meaning of transcendence, but also that the principle of God is hiddenly present, secretly permeating our own personality, our own mind, intellect—our very Atman itself. In fact, the Atman in us is the Brahman of the cosmos. This is what the ancients have declared. The Self is the Absolute. The internal is at once the Universal-All.

The invocation of *Ishvara-shakti* through *mantra japa* is, therefore, an attempt at bringing some higher face of reality from outside into our inward constitution as a manifestation of what is within us in a greater degree of its expression. So we play a very important role in the practice of *japa*. We, as *sadhakas*, seekers, are as important an element

in the practice of *japa sadhana* as the principle of God, the Deity, and the constitution of the letters of the *mantra*. In fact, *japa* involves three important elements, or *shaktis*, or powers, viz., *mantra-shakti*, *devata-shakti* and *sadhana-shakti*. The *sadhana-shakti* is the power that is within our own selves; the *mantra-shakti* is the power that is hidden in the peculiar combination or juxtaposition of the letters of the formula; and the *devata-shakti* is, again, the power of the immanence of a higher principle in the *mantra*.

We have to take into consideration all these three aspects when we take to *japa sadhana*, so that it becomes a complete spiritual practice by itself. *Japa* is a complete *sadhana* and it does not need any external addition to make it more complete. *Tajjapastadartha—bhavanam*, to repeat what Sage Patanjali has told us. The Name of God is a little different from the ordinary names connected with particular objects in the world. It is not like calling out to a tree or to a cow that is grazing in the field. While the temporal names which we attach to particular physical objects of the world rouse or evoke in our mind the form of that particular object alone which is by convention connected with the particular name, the Name of God rouses in our

mind the idea not merely of any particular isolated object of the world, any temporal event or thing, but invokes in our mind the notion or concept of a wider reality than we are likely to conceive in our minds in terms of earthly relations.

The Name of God, especially when it is given to us in the form of what is known as a *mantra*, is a power by itself. It has a *shakti* of its own, and this is the reason why *bhaktas*, sages and saints have told us that even a mere repetition of the Name of God has the capacity to produce an effect of its own, though we may not be really meditating, though we may not be in a position to contemplate the actual meaning hidden behind it. The *mantra-shakti*, or the power of the *mantra*, arises on account of the fact that is beautifully and scientifically described in a science known as *mantra-shastra*, which is akin to the science of chemistry in our own ordinary life. Chemical elements act and react upon each other. We know the action between acid and alkali, for instance. Different chemical combinations are supposed to produce different effects. Sometimes the chemical reaction is such that it can produce a tremendous effect. Mantras produce such effect, similar to the reaction of chemical elements, because of the peculiar combination of letters. The

mantra-shastra is a secret which tells us that every letter of the alphabet is a condensed form of energy. Sounds are really energy manifest. The sound is not merely an empty form of verbal manifestation, but energy that is made to express itself in a particular shape. And this packet of energy, this tied up form of force, which is a particular letter of the alphabet, is made to come in contact with another packet of energy called another letter. They collide with each other, or, we may say, they act upon each other or fuse into each other—whatever be the process that takes place there—so that the utterance of a group of letters, which is the *mantra*, produces, by the process of permutation and combination of these letters, a new form of energy which gets infused into our system because it has arisen from our own mind, thought and the recesses of our being. We get charged with that force, as if we have touched a live electric wire. There is a special name given to this science; it is *gana-shastra*, in *tantrik* parlance. Words are forces, thoughts are things, so they tell us. Words are not empty sounds that we make when we speak or utter a name or give expression to an idea. It is because of the fact that thoughts and expressions are powers by themselves that the words of saints take immediate effect. The words that a saint or a

sage utters are not empty sounds that he makes. They are forces that are released like atom bombs; they can manifest themselves in the physical world and events can take place. That is why people go to a Mahatma for *ashirvada*, or blessings. His words are forces, power that he releases to take immediate effect, or even a remote effect, as the case may be.

The utterance of a *mantra* is the release of an energy, not only inside our own personality but also in the outer atmosphere of which we form contents. *Japa sadhana* not only brings a transformation in our own inward personality, but also sympathetically produces an equal effect in the society of which we are a part. Therefore *japa sadhana* is also a social service. It is not merely a personal *sadhana*, inwardly practised by us in our *puja* room, but it is also a great *seva* that we do to mankind. An aura is produced around that *sadhaka* who takes to *japa sadhana* honestly and sincerely. We purify not only our nature inwardly but we also purify the atmosphere outside. We become a source of inspiration to people when we actually take to *japa sadhana* with concentration of mind and with real faith in the efficacy of the practice. God's Name is a wonder. It is a miracle by itself. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of," said the poet. The prayers that we

offer to God are definitely capable of producing the desired result.

I had occasion to meet a humble *sadhaka* some years back—a householder. He was a votary of prayer, and a very honest person. He came to me to discuss a certain difficulty that he was experiencing while offering prayers. Incidentally, he mentioned his *sadhana* to me. He said, “Swamiji, my *sadhana* is only prayer to God. And with this *sadhana* of prayer, I also try to do a little bit of service to people outside. The people may be very far from me, they may be even in London; it makes no difference. I might not have even seen that person whom I want to help. I might not have even heard of his name.” I asked him, “My dear friend, how do you direct your thoughts to a place or to a person whose name you do not know, whose location is also not known to you?” He said, “Swamiji, I have got that much of faith, by the grace of God, that the wonder is worked not by the prayer of my thought but by a medium which my prayer seems to contact, which works in its own omniscient manner.” I was glad to see such a *sadhaka* who understood the secret of prayer and *japa*. What works is not our personal strength or our individual thought, but that which our thought is able to rouse into activity and which is omniscient.

I can give you an illustration to explain what this perhaps means. In a broadcasting station people sing a song or send a message through the airwaves. The message is in the form of sound. We say something before a microphone in the station. What happens is that the sound that we make there in the form of a song, a *bhajan*, or a *kirtan*, or a lecture, or a discourse, is not really conveyed to the receiving sets—the radios or the transistors. The radios, in their internal mechanism, are not directly connected with the sounds that people make in the broadcasting station. What happens is that the sound is converted into energy. What travels through space, or ether, is not the sound that is made in the broadcasting station, but that into which the sound is cast, or moulded, or transformed. An impersonal form of energy which travels through space has an impact on the receiving sets, gets recharged, or reshaped, or retransformed, into the sound which was originally made in the broadcasting station. That which is midway between the two instruments, the broadcasting set and the receiving set, is not the sound. Energy can be converted into sound through the receiving set, and sound can be converted into energy through the broadcasting set. This is the secret of radio as well as television, and this is the secret of nature as a whole.

Prayers can work wonders in this manner. Our prayers or the invocations that we make through *mantra sadhana* or *japa* are converted into an impersonal force, which is the power of God, and the miracle is worked by God Himself. We cease to be the ultimate agent of the action. Our agency is only incidental. What really works is something higher than ourself. So the credit must go to God, finally, even when *japa* takes effect. God Himself seems to be doing *sadhana* for us. Who can do things in this world other than God? We cannot even lift our fingers without His will. As they say, even a dry leaf cannot move in the wind unless the Father wills it. The whole universe is divinity—resplendent, gorgeous in its glory and abundance. We have forgotten that we are an integral part of it. And in *japa sadhana*, particularly, we try to attune ourselves, attune our inner psychological constitution with that Omnipresent structure of the cosmos which is *Ishvara-shakti*, or Divine Will operating. We can appreciate how important *japa* yoga is. In the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata, an entire chapter is devoted to this exposition of *japa sadhana*. Japaka Upakhyana is worth reading. It says how a person, a sage was devoted to *japa* entirely—Gayatri *japa* especially—and he could defy the intrusion of even

the higher *devatas* like Indra and Yama, and he attained *moksha* through *japa* alone. It is no wonder that, in the Bhagavadgita, Bhagavan refers to this system of yoga as the best: *yajnanam japayajnosmi*.

May I request you, brothers and sisters in the spiritual field, to take to this *sadhana* sincerely, wholeheartedly, and stick to it tenaciously. You will see for yourself that it makes you a different person. Small wonders and miracles will begin to take place around you. You will be surprised how things take shape without your knowing what happens. The atmosphere will slowly change. Prayers are powers; please remember this. And these powers which are generated by prayer are endowed with greater strength than even bombs. It would not be an exaggeration to say that you will be doing the greatest service to mankind if you honestly offer prayers to God from the bottom of your heart. God will hear your prayers through His All-pervading ears. *Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvatokshi-siromukham*: "Everywhere It has ears, everywhere It has eyes." It can see what you do even in the remotest corner of this world, and It can hear what you say wherever you are. Your prayers will be heard, and this will be a service that you do to your own Atman, your soul, for its salvation. Not only that, it will be a

great service that you do to humanity itself. May I repeat the request once again, that you take to this *sadhana* honestly, with intense faith, and you will see wonders, miracles manifesting themselves.

Yajnanam japayajnosmi—"Among all the sacrifices, Sadhanas, austerities or forms of tapas, I am represented by japa," says Bhagavan Sri Krishna. Japa is regarded as the most efficacious method of spiritual practice. Because, it is intimately connected with the immediate realities of life which are intelligible to our understanding, and at the same time, it is also inwardly connected with a secret silken thread to the ultimate goal of yoga.

—SWAMI KRISHNANANDA



A DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY PUBLICATION