

The first part of the book is devoted to a study of the
 history of the Japanese people and their culture. It
 traces the development of the Japanese nation from
 its early beginnings to the present day. The author
 discusses the various influences that have shaped the
 Japanese mind and character, and the role of the
 emperor in the history of the country. She also
 examines the social and political conditions that
 have led to the rise of modern Japan. The second
 part of the book is a study of the Japanese
 mind and character. It discusses the various
 characteristics of the Japanese people, such as
 their sense of duty, their respect for authority,
 and their love of harmony. The author also
 discusses the various influences that have shaped
 the Japanese mind and character, and the role of
 the emperor in the history of the country.

PART III
JAPA

Children of tender age do not want to learn to read and write because they prefer to play. If little boys and girls are to be taught reading and writing, they will have to be persuaded to learn. So also, to begin with, one has to repeat the Name forcibly. Constant practice is needed. Look, when dirt accumulates on a vessel, it has to be scrubbed and polished to become shiny. Rubbing it just once will not make it clean. In order to light a match, friction is necessary; one cannot be sure at what instant fire will blaze forth. With the repetition of the Name it is also similar. By sustained practice success

will be accomplished. Become wedded to the yoga of practice.

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The fact that you are aware of your incapacity to concentrate on God's Name is also His grace. Even though not interested take the Name as a medicine. This also will have a good result. You will improve. God's Name is not like worldly medicine that acts at times and at other times does not ; God's Name invariably bears fruit. This is why it is said, either get yourself admitted into the hospital, take the medicine prescribed by the doctor, regulate your diet, and your illness will be cured. Or use the doctor's medicine and diet while remaining at home. That is to say, either renounce everything and seek refuge

solely in His Name, or else, while remaining with your family, act according to your Guru's instructions and live a regulated life. Thereby also you may hope to get rid of your disease. Who ever likes to take injections ? Yet they are beneficial. Which child enjoys learning to read ? All the same, by studying regularly with the assistance of one's parents and teachers one becomes an educated person. This is so where learning is concerned that serves worldly ends. Again, if you can acquire *Brahmavidyā*, the knowledge of Reality, there is hope of recovering supreme wealth. What is supreme wealth ? None but God Himself.

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No attempt is futile ; everything serves a purpose. Suppose you are travelling some-

where by railway. In order to catch the train you will first go by boat from your village to Dacca, then descend from the boat with the help of a stick and get into a horse-carriage that will take you to the station. Although your aim is a journey by train, you cannot say that the boat, stick, horse-carriage and so forth are of no use. Similarly, you should understand that everything you do in order to realize God is helpful. Nothing at all is wasted. By whatever Name you may invoke Him, your effort will be crowned with success. The main thing is to cling to the Name with constancy.

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You say the mind will not concentrate on the Name. What do you gain by feeling

upset when your mind wanders here and there? Rather reflect in this manner: "The mind does not obey me; very well, I shall not obey the mind either; I shall continue to repeat the Lord's Name." Have you never watched children flying kites? How very high the kites rise up freely, yet they are limited by the length of the string to which they are tied. The kite can be compared to the mind and sense objects to air. Keep the mind tied by the string of God's Name; some day or other it will become still.

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Just try to keep the kite of your mind tied to the string of a divine Name. If it is fixed in this manner your thinking will some

day or the other get under control. Although restlessness is the nature of the mind, yet to become still is its dharma. To make it calm, you will have to be centred in something. In order to find a job you look to some person or other for support, you go to a particular place. Similarly, in order to be liberated have recourse to the Name.

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At all times the repetition of the Lord's Name should be kept up. Through the practice of the Name enjoyment, liberation, peace, all these will blossom forth. With firm faith, implicit confidence and devotion, casting away pride, adhere to the Name and you will see that all your work will be done,

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as it were, of itself. When this body was engaged in the play of *sādhana*, this kind of thing used to happen and this is why so much stress is laid on it. Do not take anything lightly in order to test God, for by doing this you will not advance towards Self-realization. Surrender your all to Him! Your burden, the burden of the world is ever carried by the One who sustains the universe — remember this!

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While working with your hands, His Name should be repeated mentally. The work you do with your hands is the *mudrā*. With this very *mudrā* sustain the flow of His Name. Nursing the sick — anything at all is His

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service, His work. Let this be your attitude of mind.

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Whenever you possibly can, sustain the flow of a sacred Name. To repeat His Name is to be in His presence. Just as a human friend opens his heart to you and tells you all about himself when you come to him, so, if you associate with the Supreme Friend, He will reveal His true Being to you.

Do you refrain from bathing when faced with waves of the sea? Surely, you plunge right into the midst of them and take your bath. Similarly, in the very thick of tempests and difficulties of worldly life endeavour to maintain the remembrance of Him, the repetition of His Name.

One Hundred Eighty Eight

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The performance of *japa* has a beneficial result of its own. When a person practises *japa* and dedicates its fruit to God, the fruit can never be destroyed or lost. When the time is ripe God will return it to the aspirant. When the *sādhaka* begins to notice that his desires and passions are growing weaker and weaker, he should understand that God is in this way bestowing upon him the fruit of his practice. This is why one does *japa samarpana* (offering one's *japa* to one's *Iṣṭa*).

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Different kinds of flowers are prescribed for different kinds of *pūjā*; similarly, there are

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various mantras and various kinds of rosaries. To practice with the help of beads is certainly necessary. But when *japa* comes about of itself — spontaneously — then of course there is no more need to count. However, as long as one performs *japa* by effort, one will have to keep count of it. There is all the difference between doing *japa* and *japa* occurring of itself. The mind must reach a condition where it cannot remain without the remembrance of God.

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Having as one's sole pursuit the Self-revelation of that palace of jewels in the form of the Word (*Akṣara*), of God who Himself present in His creation is imperishable, eternal

— He indeed being the supreme talisman of protection and safety; knowing Him who is ever poised in Himself to be alone worthy of remembrance — this is the highest good.

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The *akṣara* (syllable or series of syllables) by which the mind becomes liberated is called mantra. The *akṣara* is *cinmayi* (permeated, as it were, by consciousness); it is the *Śabda Brahman*; it is called the *Nāma Brahman*. Feel convinced that He will be found in the Name. Have firm faith that the seed that has been buried in your consciousness will without fail grow into a tree. Just as after sowing a seed, it has to be watered and manured, similarly the seed in the form of a mantra will

be made to sprout when provided with the necessary nourishment in the form of *satsang*. As you desire God, be it in a particular form or without form, so will you find Him.

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The Name and the Named are identical; for He Himself appears as Name. The letter (*akṣara*) is indeed God's own guise. When the Name one repeats becomes alive, it is as when a seed is sown the tree grows out of it. If the Name that appeals most to any particular person is constantly repeated, one arrives at the realization that all names are His names, all forms His forms. Furthermore, that He is without name and form will also by and by come to light.

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The immutable Brahman, the primeval sound, the *Omkāra* are one and the same as the word "Mā" — *ānanda* in essence. Is it not God to whom you say, "Thou art Mother, Thou art Father, Thou art Friend, Beloved, Master!"? He indeed is the Mother, all-pervading (*mayī*), who gives to everyone exactly what he needs — She Herself giving of Herself to Herself!

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Karma accumulated for ages and ages, sins and desires are wiped out by God's sacred Name. Just as lighting a lamp illumines a cave that has been in darkness for centuries,

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even so the obscurity of numberless births is annihilated by the power of a divine name.

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By God's Name the pull of evil is vanquished. There is a saying that it is impossible for man to commit as many sins as can be annulled by God's Name: just as a single spark of fire can consume more things than you are ever able to accumulate, so by the contemplation of the Supreme Being, by the endeavour to approach Him, all your sins will be obliterated. The destructible will be destroyed and Reality stand revealed.

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One seed has to be destroyed by sowing another seed. That is to say, by the constant

repetition of the seed mantra, the seed of karma will be destroyed and then no more new karma will be created.

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Those who know who is their *Iṣṭa* may while doing *japa*, contemplate Him from His feet to the crown of His head. If one wants to engage in *japa* for a prolonged time, then one should concentrate on the word (*śabda*) while repeating it. God is present in the syllable (*akṣara*); God is present in the sound (*śabda*).

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To some devotees the One gives *darśana*

in the form they love most. He has endowed you with devotion and capacity, but He has not come to you in the form of a mantra, a word of power. For the time being repeat the Name of Him that appeals to you most ; contemplate Him in the form dearest to you and pray, "Lord, reveal Thyself to me in the way that is for my ultimate good !"

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Keep on repeating the Name of the Lord. Pray : "Lord be pleased to manifest in the form of *dikṣā*." Endeavour at all times to remain merged, plunged in the Name. Solely for the sake of God must His Name be repeated — remember this.