

STORY #90

*You all chant the Vishnu mantra, Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya, to purify your mind and body. Be sure to repeat it sincerely. If you practice this japa in the best possible way, you will purify your body and mind, and the feeling of surrender will flourish in you.*

*This mantra, and others such as Gayatri, Ram, and Om, are mantras of divine origin. They have all evolved from anahat nad. The simple letters, words, and sentences which form these mantras aren't as simple as they seem. They have special energy hidden in them and grant wonderful blessings to the seeker.*

DADAJI, WHY CHANT MANTRA REPEATEDLY?

ONCE MY REVEREND GURUDEV instructed me to chant the mantra, Om Namah Shivaya, so I did as he said. After about 1,000 repetitions, however, it occurred to me that although the mantra means, I bow to You, Lord Shiva, I wasn't bowing to Lord Shiva. My tongue was merely saying, Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah Shivaya...I bow to You, Lord Shiva. I bow to You, Lord Shiva. I bow to You, Lord Shiva. Yet, I wasn't able to comprehend the mantra's secret.

Then another thought came to me. Why repeat the sentence, I bow to You, over and over? Why can't I just tell the Lord this once and be done with it? Why should I repeat the same sentence millions and billions of times? Wouldn't the listener become tired of hearing it?

Becoming impatient with these thoughts, I put down my mala and ran and bowed at the holy feet of my Gurudev.

"Gurudev," I said. I'm chanting the mantra, Om Namah Shivaya, according to your instructions, but I haven't once bowed down to Lord Shiva! Should I bow to Him each time I speak the mantra, or should I bow to Him over and over without saying the

mantra? This repeated bowing down should be called, bowing japa!”

In a serious, but affectionate voice, he replied,

“Son, your statement is correct from one point of view, but it’s incorrect from another. Yes, it’s true that the literal meaning of the words, Om Namah Shivaya, is, I bow to You, Lord Shiva, but the intended meaning is totally different. The intended meaning is, I surrender to You, Lord Shiva.”

“But Gurudev,” I asked, “Why should I keep reminding Lord Shiva that I’ve surrendered to Him? Couldn’t I just tell Him once? Why should I repeat the same sentence so many times?”

“Here, too, you’re mistaken,” Gurudev explained. “The Lord is very compassionate. If we tell Him just once, I surrender to You, He accepts it immediately. But the chanter’s mind is distracted and it escapes somewhere else right after speaking the mantra. His mind moves his mouth in rote repetition of the words, but doesn’t sincerely surrender. In order for the distracted mind to become pure and sincerely surrender to the Lord, the seeker must repeat the mantra thousands and thousands of times. The labor of so many mantra repetitions succeeds when the mind finally sincerely accepts the idea of surrender and becomes so concentrated that it becomes no-mind. At that point, without mind, who needs japa?”