

SOHAM

The Mission Of Peace - Sri Santi Ashram

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SWAMI OMKAR
SHANTI ASHRAM

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By

Swami Omkar

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TOTAPALLI HILLS, (VIA) SANKHAVARAM
EAST GODAVARI DT. 533 446
ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA

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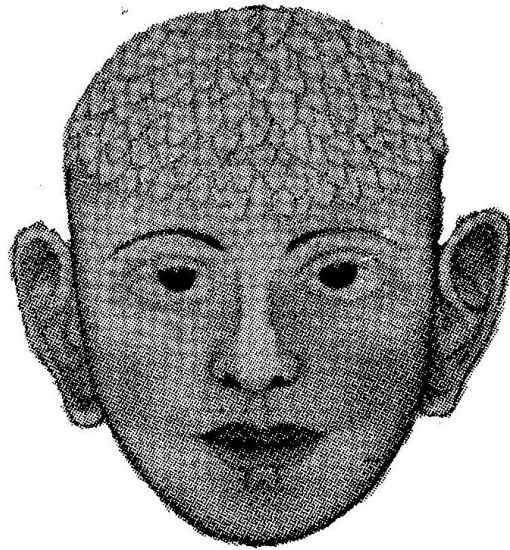
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O exiled bird! O golden Cygnet of Soham!

Floating so sadly, wandering

On life's twilight sea,

Spread fearlessly thy pinions

And in towering flight,

Go sweetly homing to

Those boundless regions of God-conscious love,

Rest not till thou dost find again

Thy long lost nest and Mother's breast,

Safe in the glory of the Sun of suns!

- Sister Sushila Devi

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FOREWORD

To gild refined gold is a ridiculous waste. His Holiness Sri Swami Omkarji has beautifully said all that is necessary to be known about the mystery and glory of *Soham*. This little brochure would certainly prove to be a great inspirer and a good guide to every aspirant.

May the Almighty Lord bless His Holiness Sri Swami Omkarji Maharaj and every one of the readers of this soul-elevating booklet with health, long life, peace, happiness, prosperity and Kaivalya (Liberation).

**-Sri Swami Sivananda
Divine Life Society Rishikesh**

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PREFACE

The present booklet on *Soham* is a companion volume to *Om Japa* which has already been published and is on the same theme — the practical realisation of Spiritual Truths.

We are deeply grateful to H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj of Rishikesh, Himalayas, the Founder and President of the Divine Life Society for his sweet and inspiring Foreword to this brochure.

There is hardly any need to mention that the truth seeker and the aspiring devotee will find the essence of many a volume in these booklets on *Om Japa* and *Soham*. It is our request that the one who reads this booklet should also read *Om Japa*.

We wish to draw the attention of the reader to the helpful diagram of the thousand-petalled Lotus and to watch and meditate on it, following the *Soham* as it rises higher and higher, becoming slow and steady, nay, finer and thinner, until it pierces the highest centre, the Sahasrara, and becomes formless and nameless in the ineffable light. Only the splendour of millions of suns remains. There is nothing further to be known. Supreme silence reigns.

May peace be unto all !

Om! Om! Om!

-Publisher

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INTRODUCTION

Swami Omkar, the author of this booklet on *Soham*, is a living embodiment of cosmic love.

This holy sage of Totapalli Hills is a cosmic benefactor, who is verily God's boon bestowed upon mankind and a rare treasure to the world and a blessing unto humanity. Sri Swami Omkarji's sublime mission in life is to bring to mankind the blessedness of peace.

Shanti Ashram, which constitutes the headquarters of the Mission of Peace, was also blessed by the holy presence of our Gurudev, Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, for some time. It is sanctified by the divine presence of our Gurudev and also of Revered Swami Omkarji Maharaj, and the spiritual love and peace which Sri Swamiji emanates pervades the entire Ashram. The very plants and trees and their flowers and foliage absorb this love and peace and put forth their very best in a living response to this divine influence which he radiates.

Swami Omkarji is a simple child of God and he has so 'emptied himself' that now God has filled him. Sri Swami Omkarji Maharaj is thus a living shrine of the here-and-now God, and Swamiji lives to radiate this divinity unto all the world. His holy name has thus become a byword in the homes and the hearts of countless people all over the world. Our Gurudev, Sri Swami Sivanandaji, has himself written the **FOREWORD** to this *SOHAM*. Therefore, the present writer considers it a blessing to be requested to write this **INTRODUCTION**.

Sri Swami Omkarji literally lives, moves, and has his being in God all the time. No wonder, therefore, that anyone that draws near to Swamiji Maharaj and sits by his side is immediately in the Presence, which Swamiji carries with him and beholds before him every moment, verily, with every incoming and outgoing breath of his. It would not be far-fetched to say Swamiji lives in God.

May this *SOHAM* be a blessing to all seekers of truth.

Om! Om! Om!

-Sri Swami Chidanandaji

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SOHAM LEADS TO FREEDOM

On the letter head of Sri Kailas Ashram, the helpful words: "*Soham leads to freedom*" are printed for the benefit of the many devotees of the ashram who receive letters from Kailas. A devoted friend from China requested that I may explain the sacred *Soham* affirmation in a practical way. This message is a result of his request.

As there are Scientists in the West who have dedicated their entire lives to the research of material objects, the elements of nature, etc., so also are there Divine Scientists in the East who are called Yogis, who have renounced the world, retired into the solitude of forests, concentrating and meditating day and night and giving out their intuitional experiences for the benefit of the less enlightened. Just as the atom-bomb scientists have been busy with their tests, these Yogis, the Scientists of Atomic-bomb, the bomb of soulforce, have been busy with their own tests of inner life in pursuit of God-realisation.

The Yogis, the spiritual scientists of the East, found from personal experience that man inhales and exhales 21, 600 times a day. Their conclusions have been found absolutely correct on calculations by modern scientists. *Soham* is present in every man, woman, child, nay, even in birds and beasts, for it is the primal energy, the all-pervading truth, the inherent power of all the manifest world. It is not the monopoly of the Yogis of India, but the common birthright of all the Children of God in the world, irrespective of caste, creed, colour or nation. How wonderful it is to have something so close, so near and so inseparable and eternally one with us, which is the Life of our lives and the divine heritage of all, as it connects and unites us with the universal whole !

When you are inhaling, it sounds 'So' and when exhaling, it sounds '*Ham*'.

'So' means '*That*' (Divinity, the Godhead). It represents the Sun of suns.

'*Ham*' means '*I am*'. It represents the unmanifested in the manifest.



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In each and every breath, day and night, everyone is repeating, consciously or unconsciously - **Soham** (Divinity I am). By dropping 'S' and 'ha' in **Soham**, there remains only **Om** (I am That). The essence of **Soham** is contained in the sacred syllable **Om**, covering the past, present and future, representing the waking, dreaming and sleeping states, and finally leading one beyond time, space and causation. These are deep truths, vital thoughts and bare facts, which can be understood only by Scientists of the Soul-culture, the inner life, and not by the Scientists-of matter, the outer life. Yet, the one great consolation is that as truth is eternal, as God is omnipresent anyone can feel and realise Him by constant observation.

The Scriptures teach us that the highest, the transcendental (by whatever name you may choose to call it), is beyond the known and the unknown, but it can be realised only by His Grace with the help of *Neti, Neti*, (not this, not this) - the intuitional discrimination of rising above all objects of name and form.

Dear seekers of peace, as you read this message now, please close your eyes for a moment and observe calmly the sound with which the breath is flowing in and out. Just watch the inhalation and exhalation in each and every breath. See how there is the 'So' (That — Divinity) in the inhalation, and 'Ham' (I am) in the exhalation. I am repeating this thought to impress deeply on your minds the great truth, the essence of this message.

Soham is considered to be the Mantra of Mantras, as it is the most potent and the holiest of all affirmations, which comes from within, without the least effort for anyone. Hence **Soham** is called by the name *Ajapa Gayatri* — the mantra that repeats itself without any effort. It is the ever-present natural mantra. This holy mantra is not confined to Yogis and Jnanis, or men of wisdom, alone. It can give comfort and solace even to the most ordinary and simple-minded devotees of every religion, for they can remember the name and feel the form of their *Ishtadaivam* (favourite Deity) in the inhalation and exhalation of each and every breath. For instance, if one is a worshipper of Rama, he can feel and meditate on 'Ra' as he inhales, on 'Ma' as he exhales with every breath until he merges in Rama Himself, the Light of lights. Similarly, the votaries of different religions can substitute the name they worship and feel the Presence in the breath

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itself, for the scriptures of both the East and the West teach that God is the Breath of breaths.

Going a step further, *Soham* can be experienced even by the worshippers of the elements, or Nature, and even by those agnostics and atheists who do not believe in any God whatsoever. They too want peace, love and light. They can meditate on the word 'Peace' or any other helpful thought with each and every breath. Thus, they too can try to reach the goal of this precious human birth on their own path, or mode of life.

How blessed and wonderful it is to feel God's Presence so near, nay, so inseparably and eternally one with us! Yet, one in ignorance of this life—giving Reality is struggling for life like a fish on dry land. As there is not the least necessity for the fish in the ocean to die of thirst, so also there is no need whatsoever for man to suffer with thirst or hunger for Divine Life, for he is ever filled, saturated and one with Sat-Chit-Ananda (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute), the one Indivisible Presence.

Since the days of yore, volume after volume has been written by the Yogis of India on this vital and important theme. Any amount of study of these volumes will be of no avail without actual practice. What one needs is to dwell constantly in that oneness in one's daily life. But how do we begin and how do we proceed to do so? All that you have to do is to be still and watch the '*So-Ham*' in your own inhalation and exhalation without any break, like the oil poured from one vessel into another.

"Be still and know that I am God". It is in stillness, in the silence of your Soul that you will realise that you are Divinity (That I am), the living Truth, which is being proclaimed both day and night unceasingly with each and every breath, and that you are nothing but the Truth, the Reality, the Light of the world, nay, the Sun of suns, the Godhead. Practice! Only a little bit of daily practice, continuous practice, just to observe carefully the process of breath will make you happy and perfect and enable you to drink deeply the nectar of immortality in this very life, for it is your true birthright.

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The process of **Soham**, is so natural and so simple that it is harmless and it can be felt by anyone, even by children and aged people, for it is an effortless meditation. All strain is only in a finite effort or in a restless struggle. Being effortless and natural, it is harmonious and peaceful, giving health to the body, rest to the mind and peace to the Soul. In the higher stages of this sublime observation, as the aspirant advances, he realizes that he need not put forth any conscious effort but can remain as a silent witness only of his own breath, which is drawing the whole universe into itself and merging like a wave in the ocean in complete identification with the transcendental Truth, the self-effulgent Supreme Self.

This message on **Soham** will be incomplete without paying my homage to **Sri Swami Rama Tirtha**, the God-conscious Soul, the Apostle of Freedom, who has given out a masterly message on **Soham** and wherein he writes:

So am I - That am I

God am I - Divinity am I.

One am I- Power am I.

In conclusion, I wish to share with my loving readers, one short verse that has helped me from my early days, for it contains the essence of all the religions in the World, and it is the climax of this deep and vital message. This short verse is to be memorised and repeated often as it helps one practically in reaching the heights of spirituality. Here it is:

Deho devalayaproktho

Jivo devassanathanah,

Tyaje dagnana nirmalyam,

Soham bhavena pujoyeth

- "This body is a temple of God. Jiva, the individual self, has always been eternal. Renounce the ignorance of separation from the Reality. Worship Him with Soham-consciousness!"

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Let us worship Him with each and every breath. Let us be in Him, ceaselessly, now and always. He is there in your very breath, awaiting your recognition now, for He is the Breath of your breath. If ever the world is going to be united in bonds of love and brotherhood, if ever peace is going to be established on earth, bringing goodwill among individuals and Nations, it can be achieved only through the silent practice of this Maha Mantra, the great holy affirmation of **SOHAM** (That I am), for it is all-embracing and all-including.

The breath that you are feeling within, in your home or in the silent retreats of the East or in the busy West is the same universal breath, the one **Soham** that your fellow sisters and brothers are inhaling and exhaling all over the world. Whether one is in the East or in the West, in church or in office, in meditation or in activity, **Soham** is there, ever-present, eternally present, uniting all into one homogeneous whole, in the name of one religion, one Soul and one humanity.

Dear readers! May **Soham** lead you to freedom now, filling your heart with inner peace, and establishing peace on earth and goodwill among communities and nations is the prayer of your brother!

Om! Om! Om!

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THE EIGHT ASPECTS OF SOHAM

In reality *Soham* is one Divinity, the Light of lights, the Indivisible. It is above duality although it appears with the process of inhalation and exhalation. It is only to comprehend the incomprehensible that we speak of the two or eight or so many aspects of *Soham*. They only connote the various angles of comprehension. So, to enter into the soul of *Soham*, to experience its real beauty, I take up the following eight glorious aspects of *Soham*.

1. Completeness or Heaving
2. Eternity or Continuity
3. Immortality or Sameness
4. Self-effulgence
5. Existence-Absolute or Omnipresence
6. Knowledge-Absolute or Omniscience
7. Bliss-Absolute or Unqualified Happiness
8. Waveless Silence or Supreme Peace

Taking them up one by one, let us try to comprehend their essence, as far as our minds can help us.

1. Completeness

Just as we speak of one ocean although there are millions of waves in it, or the light of the sun not being divided into particles although it has millions of rays, similarly *Soham* is also one without a second, for it is indivisible. We see the waves, the ebb and flow, the heaving of the ocean because of its completeness. In a similar way, there is inhalation and exhalation in *Soham* because of its fullness and dynamic energy.

2. Eternity

Anything complete must be infinite, eternal, the same in the past, present or future. *Soham* is always there without beginning and end, whether man is aware of its existence or not. It has been there and everywhere, being always one eternally. There is not a moment of time when it is absent.

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We are one with Soham in the past.

We are one with Soham in the present.

We are one with Soham in the future.

We are eternally one with Soham.

3. Immortality

As *Soham* is complete and eternal, one without a second, it must be immortal and imperishable. Neither can anything be added to it nor taken away from it. It is beyond birth and death. It does not decrease in forgetfulness or increase in awareness with all our worship, prayers and meditations. It is immortal and changeless, now and always.

4. Self-effulgence

Being one without a second, eternal and complete, the immortal *Soham* is self-effulgent. It does not need the help of anything in its self-shining splendour. There is nothing besides it to lend it any support. Because of its existence, all else exists, and because of its shining, all else shines. We can understand its self-effulgence only when we completely identify ourselves with it. It is the light not only of our life, but also of the stars, moon, sun and everything around us in the universe.

5. Absolute Existence

Soham, being one, complete, eternal, immortal and self-effulgent, is automatically established as existence absolute on the foundations of stability. No words are adequate to express absolute existence. It can only be understood by becoming and being Absolute — being established in *Soham*.

6. Knowledge Absolute

From existence absolute, proceeds knowledge absolute. Here shines the wisdom light in all its glory. It does not have knowledge; it is all-knowledge. It is not knowledge of the finite; it is knowledge of the **Infinite**, the **Eternal** and the **Indivisible**. It is the knowledge which makes one silent.

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7. Bliss Absolute

Wherever there is absolute existence, there is knowledge absolute, and wherever there is absolute knowledge, there is absolute bliss. This bliss is not the outcome of outward possessions and cannot be achieved even by the ownership of all the worlds. It is inherent in *Soham*. It is there because of its fullness or completeness. This bliss cannot be separated from the knowledge absolute and existence absolute. It is the trinity of *Soham*, expressed in the unspoken language *Sat-Chit-Ananda* — existence, knowledge and bliss absolute.

8. Waveless Silence

One who is blessed with *Sat-Chit-Ananda* — existence, knowledge and bliss absolute, naturally becomes silent like the waveless depth of the ocean. There is nothing for him to talk or think, for *Soham* is above all words and sounds. It is above all thought and expression. There is nothing like rise and fall, inhalation and exhalation anymore. Even the ebb and flow subside in the one self-effulgent and transcendental splendour of millions of suns. This leads us unconsciously to the bliss of the beyond or the peace that passeth all understanding, where all the surface differences of caste, creed, colour and nation dwindle into nothingness or are absorbed in the universal whole. Here remains only **That** — call it completeness, continuity, immortality, self-effulgence, silence, existence, knowledge, bliss or whatever you like.

Om!Om!Om!

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MEDITATION ON *SOHAM*

Of all the meditations, meditation on the breath *-Soham-* is the most helpful. It leads one in the easiest, simplest and most direct way into the transcendental state of the splendour of millions of suns. Concentration or meditation on *Soham* through the breath leads one to identify oneself with that light which is the one reality, the one light, within, without and all around. Having recognised the light within, one feels the Presence of That in the very cells of one's being. Everything exists and shines because of that self-effulgent light. One can feel it even in the beginning with the very first breath, for it is there always repeating *Soham* (That I am, Divinity I am, Light I am).

In fact, the light and the *Soham* breath are not two but one. They are inseparably, eternally and indivisibly connected. The one who is meditating on the breath is meditating on the light. To understand and assimilate the process of *Soham-breath* meditation, let us take the following sacred statement:

I am in the breath.

The breath is in me.

I am the breath.

In the past, I have been the breath.

In the present, I am the breath.

In the future, I am bound to be the breath.

Where is the moment of time when I am separate from this breath, whether in the past, present or future? I am eternally one with the breath. Nay, I am the breath, the *Soham*. (Here breath means *Prana*, the primal energy, the source of all).

To come to more practical Sadhana or spiritual practice, let us close our eyes. Try to rise above these words and feel the breath which is ever within. You can actually feel the breath, for it is there always, even in your sleep, repeating *Soham, Soham* (*I am That, I am That*) both day and night. Try to shift your breath from the physical to the spiritual, from the flesh and blood to the mind and breath, from body-consciousness to God-consciousness.

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As stated already, since breath and light are not two but one, as you follow the breath ceaselessly, it will lead you right into the Light of lights, for Light is the Breath of breaths. All that is wanted is to follow the **Soham** breath within, in all its stillness, with all the strength of the mind, heart and soul in order to reach the goal of our precious human birth, and thus be established in the highest state of *Samadhi*, the transcendental state where one is so absorbed within that he is completely unaware of all without. Let us recognise that Divinity, the Light of lights, both in its ebb and flow and in the inhalation and exhalation. Verily, you are in the breath, the breath is in you. You are the breath, the **Soham**, the Light of lights.

As you meditate on the breath, you will realise that the breath within is the same as the breath without. There is only one eternal breath, **Soham** breath, which makes you feel one with all the people of the world, nay, with all life, manifested and unmanifested. As you merge deeper in this meditation, you will realise that you have been the **Soham** breath not only from the beginning of the body, but also from the beginning of creation itself, for **Soham** is eternal. Because of **Soham**, all the worlds exist. They are in you and you are in them. In **Soham** meditation, the world merges like a bubble in the ocean of light. The finite breath becomes the infinite breath; nay, it recognises that it has never been the finite, but ever the infinite and eternal **Soham** breath. The individual itself has been the universal (*Jivo Devassanathanah*). Thus, individual worship of the breath leads us to universal worship of **Soham** - the full, the absolute, the incomprehensible whole.

Om!Om!Om!

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A DIALOGUE ON *SOHAM*

The following talk with Brother Chaitanya, the editor of Peace Journal and a votary of *Soham*, will be helpful in experiencing the Soham-consciousness even amidst work in daily life.

Q: I can feel *Soham* and be aware of *Soham* breath within, during my meditation with eyes closed, but how can I feel it when my eyes are open and I see a thousand things of every form and name ? How can I do so especially amidst my busy work?

A: If you can feel *Soham*, consciously within with eyes closed, you can also feel it with eyes open, for that which is within is without too. It is One without a second. It is simply a matter of practice.

Keep on wearing the *Soham* spectacles when you are not in meditation, even while working. Thus, through *Soham* spectacles of universal love or God-consciousness, everything appears as the manifestation of *Soham*, the primal energy. Know that not only what you see, but also that which is seen through your very eyes is the manifestation of *Soham* energy.

Q: Can one feel *Soham* while walking?

A: It is easy to feel it while walking too especially when you walk alone. With every step, you can rhythmically concentrate on *Soham*. You can inhale and exhale *Soham* constantly. You can practise a certain kind of rhythm, a oneness with *Soham* during your walks.

Q: Can we practice it when we eat and drink also ?

A: When once you realise that all motion, all manifestation, whether it be in eating and drinking or in reading and writing, is all from the same source, the divine energy, it is easy for you to be aware of it, and to recognise it in all the various manifestations of life not only within you, but even in others and in the whole universe.

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Q: It is easy enough to feel *Soham* within and without, when the mind is steady, but how do we recognise *Soham* during the endless wanderings of the restless mind ?

A: Try to realise the source of thinking. What is that which thinks in the mind ? If it were not for the divine energy, how can your mind think and wander? In the very wandering of your mind follow the *Soham*. Then it will be easy for you to be the master of your mind.

Q: How can it be possible to recognise *Soham* even in those who take joy in insulting, criticising and persecuting us ?

A: Not only is it possible, it is the blessed opportunity of your life to test your self-realisation or spiritual consciousness. Blessed are they who are persecuted in His name. Anyone can love his friends. Only a Godman, a soul of *Soham-consciousness* can

love his enemies too. For him, there are neither friends nor foes. All are the loving images of the one God. Hence love them, rather worship them, to be sanctified by recognising the One in the many.

Q: How can we be aware of *Soham* during sleep? Is that also a matter of practice?

A: Think. What is that which sleeps in you ? The Real never sleeps. Only the mind is asleep. *Soham* never sleeps. It is equally present in the waking, dreaming and sleeping states. If you can feel *Soham* within, you can feel it without. If you can feel it in silence, you can also feel it in sound. Above all, if you can feel *Soham* now in the living

present moment, you can feel the same eternally, for *Soham* is the only Reality, the Light of lights, eternally existing.

Q: Finally, kindly throw some light on the well-known illustration of '*the snake in the rope*'.

A: This is the most illuminating illustration that Vedanta, the essence of

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all wisdom, gives us to understand the Real and to distinguish it from the unreal world of forms and names. To understand *Soham*, we can analyse the simple and direct analogy of the rope and the snake as follows:

1. Two things never exist, when only one thing exists. It must be either the rope or the imaginary snake.
2. By ignorance, man mistakes the rope for a snake, and suffers untold agony with false fear and worry.
3. When he recognises the rope as rope by means of the light of wisdom, he is free from all fear.
4. Take the rope as breath, the ceaseless *Soham*.
5. As long as you recognise *Soham*, the snake of the world does not exist.
6. The moment you forget *Soham*, there is the world, the snake.

Here is the highest truth given in a nutshell. Thou art the *Soham*: the rope, the breath, and all else is ignorance, imagination. 'Divinity thou art: *Soham* art thou'. May we ever abide in this infinite and eternal glory! May all homage be unto *Soham*!

Om! Om! Om!

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PRAYER

(For World Peace)

Adorable Presence!

Thou who art within and without, above and below and all around,
Thou who art interpenetrating the very cells of our being,
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 !
May all be aware of Thy Presence in the East and the West,
and in 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 !
Om! Om! Om!

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Pranavo Dhanuh Saro-hyatma,

Brahma Thallakshya Muchyathae,

Apramathaena Vedhavyam

Sarvath Thanmayo Bhaveth.

The *Pranava (Om)* is the bow, the *Atman* is the arrow, and *Brahman* is said to be its mark. It should be hit by one who is self-collected, and that which hits becomes like the arrow, one with the mark, that is *Brahman*.

-Mundaka Upanishad.

The goal which the Vedas proclaim, which all penances declare and which they leading the life of *Brahmacharya* desire, I tell it to thee in brief - *it is Om*.

This syllable is *Brahman*, this syllable is the highest. Having known this syllable, whatever one desires, one gets that.

-Kathopanishad



SOHAM

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THE VISION UNIVERSAL

(For Daily Repetition)

I see the glorious vision, the Vision Universal where everything is always full and perfect, which does not need any set hours for spiritual study or long prayers and deep meditations.

I need not wander anywhere outside to seek God, for He is everywhere. I need not dive even within, for He is equally present outside also. Whether eyes are closed or open, the Omnipresent is there within and without.

Being omnipotent, He is all-powerful. He is both the manifested and the unmanifested. He is also omniscient, all-intelligent. I recognise Him in work as well as in rest, in sound as much as in silence.

He is beyond the known and the unknown. I am That. That is All. All I am. Glory! Glory!

Om! Om! Om!

SOHAM

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SLAY THE MIND

How can I rely on this world ?
It has no real existence,
The body is like froth or a bubble,
Everything is perishable;
Kings, Poets, Scientists,
Have been reduced to dust;
This world is but a long dream.
Days and nights are passing away,
The senses and mind are deceiving.
I have detected the dacoit,
That dacoit is the mind;
It cannot deceive me now.
I have slain the mind
With the sword of discrimination.
I have found out the Atmic pearl,
I enjoy the bliss eternal;
Soham Soham Soham.

-Sri Swami Sivananda

SOHAM

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TAKE SHELTER IN THE LORD

Daily, life is seen to be passing away,
Youth fades away,
Beauty vanishes quickly, Wealth is fickle
Like the bursting bubble;
Life here is like a flash of lightening,
Time swallows up the whole world;
There is no security here;
Stabbing, shooting, looting, burning everywhere!
Diseases attack you,
There is hatred, criticism and vilification,
Cheating, black-marketing and food poisoning
O Man! Wake up at once,
Take shelter in the Lord, He will save you!

Thus says **Sivananda**.

SOHAM

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ASHTAVAKRA SAYS

My Child! You may often speak upon various scriptures or hear them, but you cannot be established in the Self unless you forget all.

Happiness belongs to that master idler to whom, even the closing and opening of eyelids is an affliction, to none else.

Having known yourself to be that in which the universe appears like waves on the sea, why do you run about like a miserable being?

Completely give up even contemplation, and hold nothing in your mind. You are verily the Self and therefore free. What will you gain by thinking?

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SOHAM

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IF I CAN

If I can throw a single ray of light
Across the darkened pathway of another,
If I can aid some soul to clearer sight
Of light and duty and thus bless my brother,
If I can wipe from any human cheek a tear,
I shall not have, then, lived in vain while here.
If I can guide some erring — to truth,
Inspire within his heart a sense of duty,
If I can plant within the soul of a rosy plant
A sense of light, a love of truth and beauty,
If I can teach one man that God and Heaven are near,
I shall not have, then, lived in vain while here.
If from my mind I can banish doubt and fear
And Keep my life attuned to truth, love and kindness,
If I can scatter light and hope and cheer,
And help and remove the curse of mental blindness,
If I can make joy more, more hope, less pain,
I shall not have, then, lived in vain while here.

SOHAM

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If by life's roadside I can plant a tree
Beneath whose shade some wearied head may rest,
Though I may never share its shade or see
Its beauty, I shall yet be truly blessed,
Though no one knows my name.

-Selected

*The holy breath, **Soham**, kills egoism, destroys ignorance and creates love and laughter in the heart and peace in the soul.*

-Sri Swami Omkar

SOHAM

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SRI SHANTI ASHRAM

O come to Shanti Ashram,
Abode of rest and love,
To visit, stay or meditate.
And find the peace that's incarnate.
The gates are wide.
There's room for all.
We welcome folks both great and small.
Come to your gardens full of flowers,
And tarry in its fragrant bowers,
High lovely hills to soothe the eyes
At Sri Santi Ashram where peace abides.
There wild birds fill the air with song,
And learned Sadhus linger long:
They'll share with you the truths so dear
That make mere man a saint or seer.
Then flock to Shanti Ashram,
The Universal Home.
Its gates are standing now ajar
To friends from near and far.

-Sister Sushila Devi

YAMA IS LAUGHING AT US

The world is so enticing and *Maya* so thick that it makes even the learned ignore and forget the Real, the life-giving nectar, and run after the unreal, the changing phenomena. Such people, even if they pass near heaven itself, are so busy with the mundane things of finite life that they do not have the time to enter into heaven even though its gates are wide open.

They satisfy their restless minds by saying that they will go in next time, leisurely, and then spend a long time in heaven. At such childish thoughts Yama, the Lord of Death, laughs, for he is one of those who believe in the present, living moment, for anything may happen in the next moment.

Verily, this moment alone is ours and not the next. Hence, the time to enter into heaven is now or never.

-In the Hours of Silence

SOHAM

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GOLDEN THOUGHTS

Men are four:

He who knows, and knows he knows,
He is wise — follow him,

He who knows and knows not he knows,

He is asleep — wake him:

He who knows not, and knows not he knows not,

He is a fool — shun him,

He who knows not, and knows he knows not,

He is a child — teach him.

-Arabian Proverb

Whatever I do with my body, speech, mind, intellect and soul or, by the bent of my nature, all that, I dedicate to the Supreme Narayana.

May the wicked become good, may the good realise peace, may the peaceful be released from all bondage, and may the released liberate others.

SOHAM

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MEDITATION

Let us feel the Grace of God like a white light falling into our heart!

Let us feel the spirit radiating out through every cell — soothing, healing, purifying every organ.

Let it then go forth from our beings into the whole world to bring light to those in gloom, comfort to those in pain, and love to all creation. May all beings feel the loving touch of God's Grace now.

Om! Peace! Om!

- *Sister Sushila Devi*

I expect to pass through this world but once. Therefore, if there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow human being, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again.

Omar Khayam

SOHAM

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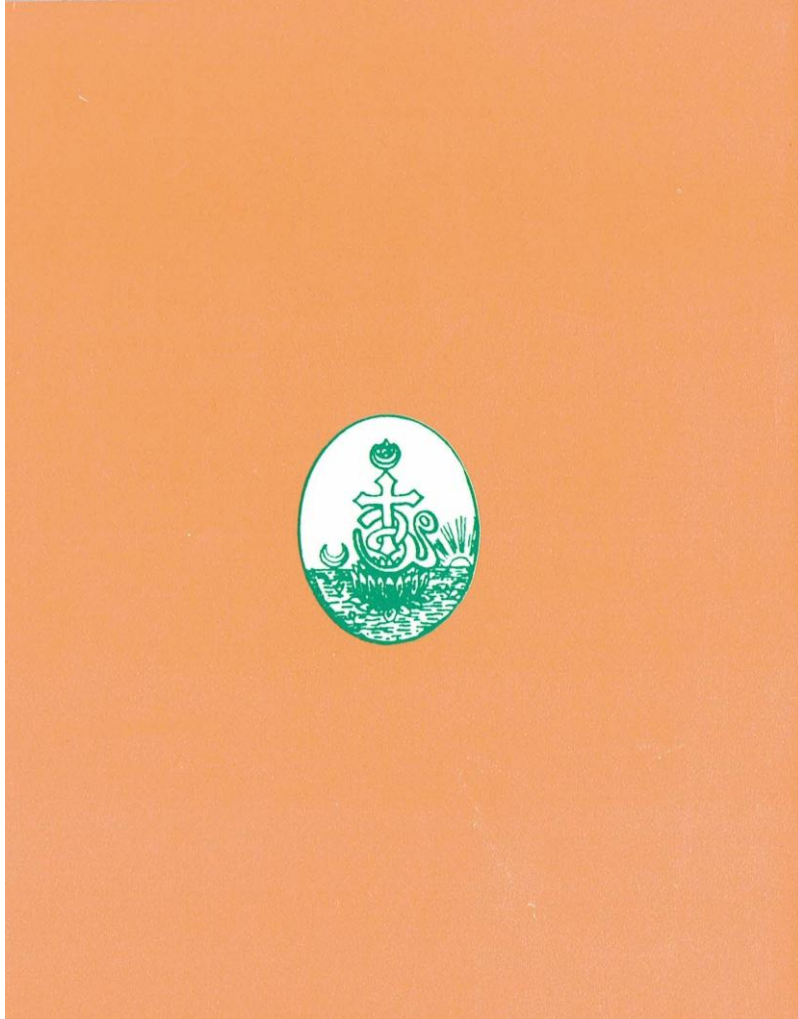
THE MISSION OF PEACE

Founded in 1917 by Sri Swami Omkarji, it is situated in the beautiful surroundings of nature, resembling holy retreats of the Himalayas.

It is a universal peace center of worship and wisdom-culture, where a Mohammedan, a Hindu, a Christian, and one and all can find a heaven of peace, worshipping in their own way and according to their own custom. A hearty welcome awaits you here forever to partake in active service, quiet meditation and infinite peace.

SOHAM

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