

Sūtra 23 ईश्वरप्रणिधानाद्वा ॥२३॥

Īshvara-praṇidhānād-vā

Or, by devotional dedication to God (*samādhi* can be attained quickly).

ईश्वर	Īshvara	God
प्रणिधानात्	praṇidhānāt	devotional dedication, self surrender
वा	vā	or

Samādhi is attained by *upāya* (method) which includes *śhraddhā* (faith), *vīrya* (energy), *smṛiti* (memory), *samādhi* (meditation), and *prajñā* (the awakening of wisdom) (see Sūtra I:20). A yogi's intensity of practice is divided into nine categories in Sūtra I:21 and further sub-divided in I:22. These *sūtras* state that a yogi practicing intense method with intense desire with ultimate intensity will attain *samādhi* quickly.

In this *sūtra* Patanjali states, "Or *samādhi* can be attained quickly by devotional dedication to God (Īshvara *praṇidhāna*)." In the method of Īshvara *praṇidhāna*, a yogi's devotion becomes intense. The yogi's concentration on God's name and qualities accelerates the yogi's spiritual progress such that it becomes equal to the ninth category, which is the intense method practiced with ultimate intensity. In this devotional method, the yogi completely removes the ego of being a doer and depends only on the grace of God, which brings final *samādhi*.

Praṇidhāna means "putting something down." Īshvara *praṇidhāna* means removing the ego by putting yourself down in the proximity of God. It is a method of self-surrender. The ego is removed by practicing the inner presence of God all the time in thoughts, words, and actions. This kind of mental attitude removes all egoistic feelings and develops continual faith (*śhraddhā*) in God. Yogis who surrender the ego of being a doer, as well as the fruit of their actions to God, achieve self-knowledge through the grace of God.

Īshvara *praṇidhāna* (surrender to God) is a method of the devotional path (Bhakti Yoga¹). From the very beginning of the devotional path, the presence of God within is practiced with reverential faith (*śhraddhā*). In this path, God exists in name and form with qualities as Īshvara. The special attributes of Īshvara are described in Sūtras I:24-27. In Sūtra 28, the method of Īshvara *praṇidhāna* is explained and the result of this practice is given in Sūtra 29.

By the regular practice of Īshvara *praṇidhāna*, which is *japa* (repetition) of God's name and absorbing the mind in the meaning of the *japa*, all other practices fall away and the yogi attains *samādhi*.

1 The devotional path is considered dualistic in that there is a devotee and that to which the yogi is devoted (Īshvara). When the yogi merges completely in the object of devotion, duality is transcended and the non-dual state is achieved.