

## Sūtra 28 तज्जपस्तदर्थभावनम् ॥२८॥

Tajjapas-tad-artha-bhāvanam

**Constant repetition of Om and meditation on its meaning [are surrender to God].**

तज्जपः	<i>tajjapaḥ</i>	repetition
तत्	<i>tat</i>	of that
अर्थ	<i>artha</i>	meaning
भावनम्	<i>bhāvanam</i>	absorbing, dwelling upon mentally, meditation

Doing *japa* (repetition) of Om with concentrated mind while meditating on the meaning of Om is the ultimate method of Īśhvara *praṇidhāna* (surrender to God). Sūtra I:23 explains that *asampraññāta samādhi* is attained by Īśhvara *praṇidhāna* (the practice of the presence of God within). Sūtras I:24–26 describe the qualities of Īśhvara that one should meditate on while doing *japa* (repetition of the *mantra*) of Om.

Sūtra I:27 states that the sound Om is the indicator (*vāchaka*) of Īśhvara. Thus, intoning the *bīja mantra* Om invokes awareness of the presence of Īśhvara. Īśhvara is beyond the limitations of time and space. Om, the indicator of Īśhvara, is also beyond the limitations of time and space. Om has no past and no future. It is always in the present, eternal, and infinite. When a yogi performs *japa* of Om while absorbing the mind in its meaning (the qualities of Īśhvara such as omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience) the mind automatically gets fixed in the present moment. It is a state of one-pointed meditation on Om and a method of Īśhvara *praṇidhāna*.

Om is the indicator of Īśhvara. It is more than just a name for Īśhvara. Īśhvara is the meaning of the sound Om. The term *bhāvanam* (dwelling upon) here means meditating on the sound Om with faith and devotion. This includes all three stages of meditation: *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*. By saying the word “cow,” the form of a cow appears in the mind. In the same way, in doing *japa* of Om, the qualities of Īśhvara should accompany the sound of Om. *Japa* of Om and meditation on Īśhvara go together.

When meditation deepens, *japa* merges into meditation and *samādhi* is attained. When *savitarka samādhi* starts, there is a mixture of the name (*śabda*, or the sound Om), its meaning (*artha*, or Īśhvara, the form of God), and the knowledge (*jñāna*, or the qualities of Īśhvara). When the *samādhi* deepens and *nirvitarka samādhi* ensues, the name, knowledge, and meaning or form, separate. The name and knowledge drop away and only the form of Īśhvara shines forth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The form of Īśhvara experienced in deep meditation may be inner sound, inner light, or the feeling of peace.

By practice of Īśhvara *praṇidhāna*, according to the method described in this *sūtra*, the five afflictions of ignorance, egoism, attraction, repulsion, and clinging to life, as well as all binding *samskāras*, get weaker. Thus, the mind becomes purified. In that purified mind, the *samskāras* of pure knowledge get stronger. Then, dispassion for the worldly reality removes all ego, attachments, and desires. In this way *asamprajñāta samādhi* is achieved by the *japa* of Om.

Īśhvara *praṇidhāna* is the practice of the presence of Īśhvara in the heart. Emotions such as love, happiness, sadness, anger, and fear are felt in the heart center. The heart center is not the physical heart pumping the blood. It is the seat of *ahamkāra* or "I-ness." In doing *japa* of Om, the mind is concentrated on Īśhvara, and the heart or the "I-sense" becomes absorbed in the feeling of Īśhvara. When the mind becomes one-pointed in meditation and all worldly thoughts are removed, the subtle "I-sense" is realized and that "I-sense" merges in meditation. Then the real "I," the Self, is rediscovered, in which the heart and mind become one.

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣhad* describes *japa* (repetition) of Om:

Brahman or God within the heart is the target; the *mantra* Om is the bow; and the ego self is the arrow. With an undistracted mind (*ekāgratā*), one should hit the target and be completely absorbed by merging the self into Brahman.

The *Bhagavadgītā* VIII:12 & 13 similarly states:

Having closed all the gates (of the senses), and firmly holding the mind in the heart, having fixed the life breath in the head, engaged in the practice of concentration, uttering the one syllable Om, the symbol of Brahman, and remembering me, one who departs, leaving the body, attains the supreme goal.