



Self Surrender (Ishvara-Pranidhana)

Ishvara-Pranidhana means surrender to the Divine, offering ourselves unto the Divine, *sharanagati*: “I give myself up and place myself in the Divine for the Divine to do what he wishes with me.” *Ishvara-Pranidhana* means placing yourself in God, that is, ever living in the consciousness of the Divine presence.

Our worshipful Master gave us the dictum: “Adapt, adjust, accommodate.” Within the framework of our spiritual life where we are related to God, it is surrendering to the Will of God, it is surrendering to the Will of God, saying to God: “Thy Will be done, not mine.” It is giving up ‘I’ and ‘mine’, and saying to God: “Nothing belongs to me; all belongs to you”, and then behaving and living like that to be content and remaining happy in whatever condition He may keep us.

Self-Surrender is a surrender of those factors, which hold us, bound to samsara, our present wrong consciousness. These negative factors are *raga-dvesha* (likes and dislikes), attraction and repulsion arising out of personal desires and wishes.

Even the worst man, when he is before a deity, is humble and his whole attitude undergoes a change. *Ishvara-Pranidhana* implies holding to a constant attitude of worshipfulness, devotion, faith and humility. When you are constantly trying to live with the feeling of the presence of God, you cannot have egoism. It is a very effective method of constantly keeping in check your egoism, and of changing your attitude to one of worshipfulness and devotion. Thus, it facilitates your going into communion with the Lord.

The actions of a person who feels the presence of the Lord everywhere becomes automatically controlled. He cannot do an unworthy act in the presence of God. You will naturally see that your activities – mental, verbal and physical – are kept virtuous, flawless and perfect. The moment you begin to act, you feel the presence of the *Visva-sakshi* (witness of the entire world) Lord. So you are careful not to do any wrong action.

If Self-Surrender is whole-souled and hundred percent complete and perfect, then it has in it the power to grant you the experience of Superconsciousness. In Superconsciousness one is able to go beyond the present state of bondage, one transcends error and moves into Truth, one attains Illumination.

God Bless You!

■ *Swami Chidananda*