



PADASEVANAM

Scarsdale Sai Center

NINE FORMS OF DEVOTION (Nava Vidha Bhakti):

When Bhaktas (devotees) pray to Bhagawan (God) sincerely making all their actions as offering to God, they will certainly receive appropriate grace from the Divine. There are nine types of devotion: Shravanam (listening to the glory of the Lord), Keerthanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (remembering), Padasevanam (adoration), Vandanam (saluting), Archanam (worshipping), Dasyam (obedient service), Sneham (friendship) and Atmanivedanam (self-surrender). In whichever way you offer worship, God responds in the same way. When you surrender all your actions, you will surely receive His Grace. – Divine Discourse, Jan 1, 1994

SIGNIFICANCE OF PADASEVANAM (Serving the feet of the Lord):

“The Goddess Lakshmi is the supreme example of one who earned unique distinction by devoted service to the Feet of the Lord. Though she is the Goddess of wealth and presided over all prosperity, she showed to the world that serving the Lord’s Feet was greater than all the treasures on earth. Today’s devotees worship wealth more than the Lord. What foolishness is it to go after money, forgetting the Lotus Feet of the Lord, which are the fountain source of all prosperity!”

“A spiritual significance is attached to the touching of the Lord’s Feet, which sanctify the earth by walking on it. Scientifically also there is meaning in Pada-sparsha (touching the Holy Feet). The blood circulates from the feet to head. When one touches the toe of the Lord’s Feet, one can experience a current present in the toe. That is Divine energy. From a mundane point of view the body appears as a physical form. But from the spiritual point of view, there is an aura around everybody. It has effulgence (Tejas) from which arises spiritual energy (Ojas). This energy produces vibrations. That is why it is declared, ‘Sight of the Lord destroys all sins, dialogue with the Lord destroys all sorrows, the touch of the Lord frees one from the consequences of one’s actions’. When the devotee touches the Lord, it is like the linking of the negative and positive wires, which generates Divine energy. This connection should be from heart to heart. Only then the Divine energy will flow from the Lord to the devotee.”

Krishna had always eluded the gopikas after playing His mischief. One day they all lay in wait to catch Krishna. Krishna out of compassion for them wanted to provide a clue by which they could trace Him. Krishna went into a house stealthily and broke a pot of milk and dipped His feet in it. When gopikas came to catch Him, He ran away. He just vanished in a trice. Then the gopikas followed His footprints, which revealed to them his hide out. Krishna revealed to them the spiritual truth that if they clung to the feet of the Lord, they could win His grace. In order to please God, follow His footprints. Those that take refuge at the feet of the Lord, they will neither sin nor be miserable. With sincere devotion when you take refuge at the feet of the Lord and contemplate on them, you will not have desires



You should not worship Paadukas for worldly gains. You should worship them for gains in the inward path. When you can get mighty results why are you concerned about worldly gains? Why do you go after small pebbles? Aim at the Meru (gold) mountain itself, that is the Lotus Feet of the Lord.

"Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam Dusthara Bhava Saagara Tharanam" meaning,
"Meditate in thy mind on the Feet of the Guru. This can take you across the difficult sea of existence in birth after birth."

"The very first lesson I gave you, He said, when I declared my identity at Urvakonda was, 'Manasa bhajare gurucharanam; dusthara bhava sagara tharanam.' I said, First you must be well aware of the fact that you are floundering in *bhavasagara*, this agitated flux of birth and death, of gain and grief, of war and peace. Then, resolve on *tharanam*, the crossing of the sea, to safety on the shore. You must accept a guide in this effort; the guide could be the guru or it could be God himself, when you choose the Name and Form which most appeal to you. Lastly, I said, Engage yourself in *bhajan*, in worship offered to the Feet of the Divine Guide with all your heart and all your mind and all your strength. Have this *smaranam* without intermission as you go through your daily chores. When a person walks along a road, his shadow slides unharmed over slush and bramble, hollow and hump, because, as you can see, it has attached itself to the feet! Man is God's shadow. He can overcome the hurdles of living and the handicaps in *sâdhana* if he holds on to the Feet of God."

It is the feet that help us to move. But some people think that face is more sacred than the feet. But it is said, "Paada Darshanam Paapa Naashanam", (Vision of the Lord's Feet destroys all sins). Feet are so sacred. The feet carry the body, which is the temple of God. The Lord's Lotus Feet have to be installed in your Heart. No doubt the external worship of feet is also important. As you continue to worship the Lotus Feet, they will naturally get installed in your Heart.

Though there are many devotees why there are difficulties in this world? It is because the devotion is not proper. The devotees are immersed in Archana (worship), but what is required is Arpitham (total surrender). Arpitham is greater than Archana. When Arpitham takes place, you and God become one. The fulfillment of worship of the Lotus Feet lies in the unification of the individual with the Divine.



WHOM TO SERVE ?

Every one of you has, I know, the yearning to do *pādasevā* (massaging My feet). And if I give the chance to all who are anxious to get it, what will happen to My feet? And what a rush there will be around Me. In the very nature of things, all those who yearn cannot be satisfied. But know My feet are everywhere. "*Sarvatāḥ pāṇi pādāṃ*" (All hands and feet are His) says the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The *Purusha Sūkta* of the *Vedas* says, "*Sahasra shīrshā, puruṣaḥ, sahasrākṣaḥ, sahasrapād*" (The Supreme Sovereign Person has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet). The heads, eyes and feet of the thousands who gather here are My heads, My eyes and My feet. Nurse them, respect them, attend to their needs. Then you have done your *japam, dhyānam, and pūjā*.

The *mantra* (verse) says, "*Sarva deva namaskāram Keshavaṃ prati gachhati*" (The homage that you pay to all the Gods flows towards the One only, Keshava). I would elaborate it further and give you this new *mantra*: *Sarva jīva namaskāram Keshavaṃ prati gachhati* (The reverence, the service that you offer to every single being flows automatically to the One, namely Keshava). What does Keshava mean? It means the Supreme Godhead of the creation, preservation and dissolution.

In society there are agitation and disturbances. Students, you should join the society and see that everyone follows Sathya and Dharma. You should become ideal citizens. That is what I desire. I do not expect anything from you. I expect only one, put into practice what you have studied and be an ideal to everyone in the society. "Sarvalokha Hithe Rathaha" (one who delights in the welfare of all people). You should aspire for the welfare of all. Do not hate anybody. "Sarva Samudhitha Gunaihi". You should have all good qualities. Today man does bad deeds, but is not prepared to face the consequences. If you want to earn merit you should be prepared to do good deeds. Do good, be happy and share your happiness with others, this is your duty. With such sacred feelings, contemplate on the Lotus Feet of the Lord.

All potencies are within you. This is indicated by the *Gāyatri Mantra*. You have to feel at all times your inherent Divinity, which is also present in everyone. When you help or feed someone you must feel that the Divine in you is feeding the Divine in others.

SSS 29.30: July 30, 1996

Love of God does not mean giving up your normal duties. In the performance of these duties, every action should be done as an offering to *Bhāgavat prītyārtham* (for the sake of pleasing God). Look upon the body as a moving temple, wherein God resides. Recognise that God is always with you and around you. SSS 28.38: December 25,

Whatever you do as service, to whomsoever you offer the act, believe that it reaches the God in that person—*Īshwaraḥ sarva bhūtānāṃ* (God is in every being). So it is *Īshwarārpaṇam* (dedicated to God). SSS 13.18: November 14, 1975

Be in perpetual contact with God. Let the pipe that leads into the tap which is you be connected with the reservoir of His grace. Then your life will be full of unruffled content. Without that aware-



ness of the constant Presence, any service that you do to others will be dry and barren. Be aware of it. Then any little act of service will yield plentiful fruit. *Sarvatāḥ pāṇi pādau*. “God’s hands and feet are everywhere”. *Sarvatokshi shiro mukham*. “God’s eyes, head and face are everywhere”. *Sarvatāḥ shrutimalloke*. “God’s ears are all over the universe”. *Sarvaṃ āvṛtya tishṭhati*. “He remains enveloping all”.

Sevā (selfless service) is the adoration of the Lord as *Vishwa-Virāt Swarūpa*, God with multi-faced form and with immanence in the entire cosmos. The *Vedas* described Him as “thousand-headed, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed”. The thousands of hands and eyes and feet are all His, the Lord’s. Worship Him. That is the purpose of your *sevā*. And He is none other than your own Self. Do not count an individual as just an individual. The individual has God within him or within her as the reality. Be aware of that. SSS 8.33: September 22, 1968

In order to deserve the sacred name “*sevā*” (selfless service), the activity must be freed from all attachment to the self and based on firm faith in the divine resident in every being. *Sevā* has to be considered as worshipping the form that God has assumed to give the *sevak* (servant) the chance of worship. When a hungry *nara* (human) is served a hearty meal, what is being done is *Narayana sevā* (service to God); for *nara* is only “a form and a name” projected by *māyā* (delusion) on *Narayana* (God).

Do not postpone the cultivation of devotion to God. Start serving God through service to your fellow-beings. Every act of service, however small, is service to the Divine. SSS 16.18:

The individual is *Chitta* (consciousness). God is *Sat* (eternal and absolute). When *Sat* and *Chitta* combine you have *Ānanda* (bliss). *Sat-Chit-Ānanda*. Only the *sādhana* (spiritual discipline) undertaken to realise *Satchidānanda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss) is true *sādhana*. Where is this *Sat*? This *Sat*, the Divine, is in everybody. So you must be prepared to serve everybody, regarding everyone as the Divine. You may have normal relationship with your kith and kin. There is nothing wrong in this. You must perform *sādhana* in the spirit that the One pervades the many. In this process you must cultivate the feeling of love. There is no higher *sādhana* than the cultivation of love. SSS 18.31: December 29, 1985

Service is best built on the strong foundation of *Tat twam asi*. “That” and “This” are the same. “That” is “This”. “This” is “That”. There is no other. There is only One. Kites fly high but all are lifted and kept high by the same air, the same wind. The kites have no separate wills. The pots of water in which the sun is reflected may be many, but the sun is one and unaffected when the pots break or the water is dried up. All help that you give is therefore help given to yourself. All service is to the self alone. When another is poor, you cannot be rich. When another is in distress, you cannot have joy. The same current runs through and activates all. *Īshāvāsyam idam sarvaṃ*. All this is God. *Vāsudevaḥ sarvaṃ idam*. All this is *Vāsudeva* (God), nothing more, nothing less.

SSS 5.58: November 27, 1965



HOW TO SERVE ?

Before the festivals of Dashera, Birthday and Shivaratri every year, I am exhorting you to take up the vow of *sevā* as a spiritual *sāadhanā*. I must say that I am not satisfied with your performance yet. But I have not given up instructing you and commissioning you for I am hoping that you will catch up with the ideal some day or other. This is an example of the quality of mercy that is natural to Me. That quality makes Me appreciate even the little attempts you make to practise the ideal of *sevā*. Why have you come such long distances, braving all the expenses and troubles of the journey? To be in My presence and to win My Grace, isn't it? Why then do you seek other contacts, others' favour once you have reached this place? Why fall into grooves that deny you My presence and grace? Forget all else and stick to the orders that I give. I want only to initiate you into the spiritual path of *sevā* and love. Do not be ashamed that you have been asked to watch a heap of sandals or to carry water to the thirsty or to stand at the gate. The privilege and pleasure consists in the use to which you put your skill and time for helping others. You long for serving Me. Let Me tell you, serving those who serve Me gives Me as much satisfaction as serving Me. Serving anyone is serving Me for I am in all.

The relief and joy that you give to the sick and the sad reach Me, for I am in their hearts, and I am the One they call out for. God has no need of your service. Does He suffer from pain in the legs or ache in the stomach? Try to serve the godly. Be *dāsānudāsas*, servant of the servants of the Lord. The service to man is the only means by which the only means by which you can serve God.

Love must be manifested as *sevā* (selfless service). *Sevā* must take the form of food for the hungry, solace for the forlorn, consolation for the sick and the suffering. Jesus wore Himself out in such *sevā*. The heart full of compassion is the temple of God. Jesus pleaded for compassion. Compassion was His message. He was sorely distressed at the sight of the poor. This day Jesus is worshipped but His teachings are neglected. Sai is being worshipped but His teachings are neglected. Everywhere, pomp, pageantry, hollow exhibitionism. Lectures, lectures, lectures! No activity, no love, no *sevā*. Heroes while lecturing, zeroes while putting what is said into practice. Develop compassion. Live in love. *Be good, do good and see good. This is the way to God.* SSS 15.37: December 25, 1981

All service should be regarded as an offering to God and every opportunity to serve should be welcomed as a gift from God. When service is done in this spirit, it will lead in due course to Self-realisation.

It is this kind of selfless, spiritually-oriented service that is needed today. To a world riddled with conflict and chaos, this will provide a climate of serene peace. Regard yourselves as brothers in a family. But do not stop there. Go beyond kinship to the *atmic* unity. You have to march from the *annamaya* (the physical) to *vijnanamaya* (the higher wisdom) and on to the state of *anandamaya* (divine bliss). Shed completely all selfishness and self-interest and enter upon service activities as the highest purpose of life. Service must become your life-breath. You must become ideal *sevak*s and set an example to the world.

SSS 20.26: November 19, 1987



Serve the people who will gather here with love, humility and efficiency. Then when they return to their villages, they will tell their kith and kin, “The people we met at Prasanthi Nilayam treated us much more lovingly than any close relative. They seated us in the shade. They came to us often to inquire about our health. They brought the doctor to us. They gave medicine when someone was ill. They spoke soft and sweet whenever we asked for some information”.

Wherever you are, whatever work you do, do it as an act of worship, an act of dedication, an act for the glorification of God who is the inspirer, the witness, the master. Do not divide your activities by deciding, “These are for my sake” and “These are for the sake of God”.

SSS 7.18: April 21, 1967

Every act must be regarded as an offering to the Divine. It may not be easy to develop such an attitude. But if the effort is made sincerely, it can be achieved. It does not call for abandonment of hearth and home or giving up your wealth and position. What I ask from you is to devote at least half an hour in a day of twenty-four hours to service. Is this beyond your capacity? If you can serve the government or someone else for eight hours a day for the money you earn from them, experiencing in the process many trials and difficulties, can't you devote some time to win the grace of God, the benefit of which is immeasurable? SSS 17.13: May 20, 1984

Consider every good work as God's work.

SSS 32.pt2.1: July 29, 1999

Sevā (selfless service) is prescribed as one among the nine steps towards realisation. You must therefore be earnest about it and welcome all chances to serve the old, the sick, the disabled, the diseased and the distressed.

SSS 13.18: November 14, 1975

Worship of God in temples and shrines has its place in sanctifying time and in sublimating the instincts and impulses. Inquiry into reality has its use in clearing the fog of doubt. But activity in the shape of *sevā* (selfless service), charged with love, fulfils the aims of all paths of the Godhead, says the *Bhagavad-Gita*. All hands are His. All eyes and all faces and mouths are His. He works through all hands. He walks through all feet. He sees through each eye. He eats and speaks through every mouth. Everything is He. Every step is His. Every look, every speech, every act is His. That is the lesson that *sevā* instils.

SSS 11.22: May 11, 1971



INSPIRATION...

Abou Ben Adhem

Students might have heard the story of Abou Ben Adhem who always offered “*sarva bhūta dayā pushpaṃ*” (compassion on all beings) to the Lord. Every day he used to go round the streets to serve the destitute and the handicapped and return home late in the night. One night when he returned home, he found in his bedroom an angel writing something. When he asked her as to what she was writing, she replied that she was making a list of those who loved God. She replied in the negative when he asked her if his name was there in that list. The following night, when he returned home, he again found the angel writing something. He queried, “Mother, what is it that you are writing now?” She said, “Son, I am writing the names of those who are dear to God”. He again wanted to know if his name figured in the list. She replied that his name was on the top of this list. The sum and substance of this story is that God is pleased when you serve your fellow human beings.

SSS 33.12: August 22, 2000

KRISHNA

When the *rājasūya yagna* (ritual ceremony performed by the kings) was being performed, Krishna came and asked Dharmaraja to allot some work to Him. Dharmaraja turned to Krishna and said that there was no work appropriate to Krishna and that, if Krishna would Himself indicate what work was suitable to Him, it would surely be allotted to Him. Krishna went close to Dharmaraja, patted him on the back and said that he had a special qualification and that He would like to do work appropriate to His qualification. Dharmaraja could not make anything out of this. So Dharmaraja asked Krishna to tell him what His special qualification was so that he could find suitable work for Krishna. Krishna said that He was fit for removing the leaves in which people ate their food and which had been used once. Because after people eat their food in the leaves, they become somewhat unclean and if those leaves are not removed they create some dislike in the minds of people. Krishna therefore took up this work so that He could give pleasure and good feeling to people. The Lord sets the example for the devotees to follow. He teaches that service done to any living being is offered to Him only and is accepted by Him most joyfully.



A small story....

Once upon a time, there lived many fishes in a pond. Everyday, they would wake up in the morning with a dread - the fisherman's net! The fisherman would be there every morning, without fail to cast his net. And without fail every morning, many fishes would get caught in it. Some would be taken by surprise, some caught napping, some would not find any place to hide while some others, even though aware of the lurking danger, would simply find no means to escape the deadly net.

Among the fishes was one young fish that was always cheerful. It had no fear of the fisherman's net and it seemed to have mastered the art of being alive and staying lively. All the senior fishes wondered as to what might be the secret of this little fish. How could it manage so well when their cumulative experience and wisdom were not enough to save them from the net. Unable to bear their curiosity and desperate to find a way to escape the net, all the fishes went to this little fish one evening.

"Hey little one! We have all come here to talk to you."

"Me!?" said the little fish, "What do you want to speak to me about?"

"We actually want to ask you something. Tomorrow morning, the fisherman will be back again. Are you not scared of getting caught in his net?"

"The little fish smiled, "No! I will not be caught in his net ever!"

"Share with us little one, the secret behind your confidence and success", the elders pleaded.

"Very simple", said the little fish. "When the fisherman comes to cast his net, I rush and stay at his feet. That is one place that the net can never reach, even if the fisherman wants to cast! So, I never get caught."

All the fishes simply marvelled at the simplicity of the little fish's wisdom.

When the Supreme Lord or the **Avatar makes a descent** into this ocean of worldly existence, the only way to escape the *Mayajaal* or the net of Maya or illusion that He casts is to take refuge at His lotus Feet.

Was not the first bhajan that Swami sang, "*Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam*"?

Source : <http://aravindb1982.hubpages.com/hub/Lesson-from-a-fish>

