

CHAPTER: IV

Different types of Bhakti

(*Pāda-sevā*, *Arcana* and *Vandana*
Dāsyā, *Sakhya* and *Ātmanivedana*)

CHAPTER IV.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF BHAKTI

(Continued)

(Pāda-Sevā, Arcana and Vandana -
Dāsyā, Sakhyā and Ātmanivedana).

4. PĀDA-SEVĀ - Serving the feet of the Lord.

The Bhāgavata believes in the sovereignty of the path of devotion. It extols Pādasevā even above the achievement of unity with God.¹ It may therefore be taken as the goal of the supreme religion. One who resorts to the lotus-feet of the Lord is beyond fear and attains to

1. मुखमैन्द्रियकं दैत्या देहयोगैर्न देहिनाम् ।
सर्वत्र लभ्यते दैवाद् यथा दुःस्वप्नयत्नेन ॥
तत्प्रयासो न कर्तव्यो यत आद्युर्व्ययः परम् ।
न तथा विन्दते क्षीत्रं मुकुन्दचरणाम्बुजम् ॥

Bh. 7-6-384

अथैऽकुलभ्यङ्गयामद्युतस्य, पादाब्जुजीपासनप्रत्र नित्यम् ।
उद्विज्जबुद्धैस्सदात्मभायाद्, विश्वात्मना यत्र नियतर्तौ भूमीः ॥

Bh 11:2:33

ever-lasting bliss. Pādasevana literally means serving the feet of the Lord, as is done by the Goddesses Lakṣmī and Pārvatī.² No mortal being is so blessed as to have the good fortune to practise this type of Bhakti; for the Lord is not visible to the physical eyes. In the context of personal God, Pādasevā may plausibly mean clinging to the lotus feet of the Lord, and it is possible to serve the feet of the Lord in the image of God, or the God in the form of this universe. In a wider sense, Pādasevā is the service of humanity, specially the sick, the poor and the needy, for at bottom service of the world is service of the Lord. If one cannot serve human beings, one must serve animals and plants to lighten the burden of Karma and to

2. सञ्चिन्तयैद्भगवत्त श्चरजारविन्दं,
क्षेत्राद्भुशध्वजसरोरुहला म्छनाढ्याम् ।
उत्तुङ्गाश्चकविलसन्प्रख्यकपान् ज्योत्स्ना-
प्रशरतनमरद् दृययाब्धकारम् ॥

realise the divine presence in all beings. Pādasevā from the metaphysical standpoint is a very noble concept. If the cosmic Puruṣa, as the Puruṣa Sūkta tells us, consists in four Pādas of which the entire universe is one, the doctrine of universal selfless service and tender regard for all life find fruition in the service of the universe. It is really the first step towards realising the goal of Pādaseva. The Bhāgavata has held out Pādasevā as the target of its universal religion. The service of the universe is its own reward, for through it the votary enjoys the pulsating presence of God.³ Devotion of Pādasevā is the easiest means to achieve the goal of life. God is omnipresent. He pervades all. To love Him we must love all. To see Him

3. Siddheśvara Bhaṭṭācārya : " The Philosophy of The Śrīmad Bhāgavata " - Vol. II - P. 128.

we must see all in Him. We exhalt in Him and consequently we cannot hate anybody as He is in all. We realise oneness in diversity. Thus a true devotee sees the Supreme in the individual soul.⁴

The devotees clinging to the lotus feet of the Lord do not aspire for identity with the Lord. They care not even for the four-fold Mokṣa (शान्तीय , सार्धि , साम्राज्य and सारूप्य); as revealed in the Bhāgavata.⁵

4. P.N. Menon : "Nārāyaṇeeyam" - Introduction - Page 6.

5. शान्तीयसार्धिसाम्राज्यसारूप्यैकत्वमप्युत ।
दीयमानं न गृह्णन्ति विना भक्षणेन जनाः॥ १
नैकात्मतां मे शृणुन्ति केचिन्मत्पाद सेवाभिरता मरीराः । ?
येऽन्योन्यतो भागवताः प्रसज्य समाजयन्ते मम चौरुषाणि॥
Bh. 3-29-13.
Bh. 3-25-34.

They ever wish to drink the nectar of the lotus feet of the Lord. The Pādasevā alone is able enough to grant all the fourfold desires of man viz. Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa.⁶ Whether the devotee be a Deva or an Āsura, a Yakṣa or Gāndharva, he will earn his happiness by serving at the feet of Mukunda.⁷ The lotus feet of the Lord are the boat to cross the -

6. धर्मार्थकाममोक्षारूपं च इच्छेच्छ्रेय आत्मनः । ?
एकमेव वरीष्ठतमं कारणं पादसेवनम् ॥

Bh 4: 8: 41

7. दैवी ऽ शूरी मनुष्यो वा यक्षो गन्धर्व एव च ।
भजन् मुकुन्दचरणं स्वस्तिमान् श्याद् यथा वयम् ॥

Bh. 7-7-50

ocean of Pragmatism,⁸ and the perennial source
of peace and pleasure, and hence the votaries
cling to them for all time to come.⁹ Once the
mind sticks to the lotus feet like a bee, their
intrinsic sweetness is so seductive that they
do not allow the mind to wander away in worldly

- १ ८. त्वय्यम्बुजाङ्गाखिलसापधाञ्चि समाधिनाऽऽवैशित्येवसैके।
१ त्वत्पादपोतेन मरुत्कृतेन कुर्वन्ति गोपत्सपदं भयाव्द्यम्॥

Bh - 10 - 2 - 30.

- १ कृच्छ्रो भयानिह भयान् विमलवैशां
१ घट्पङ्क्तिरुपम सुखैर्न तिलीरसन्ति।
तत् त्वं हरौर्भगवतो भजनीयमृद्धिः
कृत्वौपं व्यसनमुत्तर दुस्तशर्म॥

Bh. 4 - 22 - 40.

9. अथात आनन्ददुधं पदाम्बुजं,
तंसाः श्रवणैर्निरवन्द्यलोचनं।
सुखं नु विश्वेश्वर योगकर्म-
त्रिस्तपन्माययाम्नी विहता न मानिनः॥ १

Bh. 11 - 29 - 30.

objects. God's lotus feet open up new horizons of spiritual attainments - the essential - knowledge and glory of the Lord. The devotee wishes to have the great good fortune either in this life or in any other even if he be born among lower animals, to serve God's Lotus feet.¹⁰ The devotees clinging to the Lotus feet of the Lord attain everlasting peace and - beatitude, and become detached from all the fleeting objects of this world.¹¹

10. अद्यपि तौ देवे पदभुजद्वयप्रसादुर्लभौ शान्तिं गच्छन्तौ ।
जानन्ति तत्त्वं भगवन्महिम्नो न चान्ये ह्येकस्मिन् धिरे - १
विशिष्यन् ॥
तदस्तु मे नाथ स भूविभागो भव्योऽत्र पान्यत्र तु वा तिरश्चात्
येनात्मनोऽपि भवज्जनात् भूया निघ्नये तव पादपद्मम् ॥
Bh. 10: 14: 29 & 30.

11. इत्यच्युत्तादृष्टिं भजतोऽबुद्ध्या भक्तिर्विरक्तिर्भगवत्प्रबोधः ।
भवन्ति वै भागवतस्य राज्ञस्ततः परां शान्तिं पुष्पैर्न साक्षात् ॥
Bh. 11 - 2 - 43

सजाभिलाषी पदपद्मवत्सवं भट्टमपदं पुण्ययशोपुरारः ।
भवाभ्युदिवत्सपदं परं पदं पदं पदं यद् धिपदां नतोलो ॥
Bh. 10-14-58

Pandit Sri Govind Narhari equates Guru with God and insists on serving the Lotus feet of the Guru (the preceptor) who gives the saving-word (Gurumantra) with a spiritual insight. He holds that a Sadguru is a necessity for freeing the soul from the round of birth and death. God is beyond the ken of the mind and the senses and hence, God is realisable through the embodied God in the form of the Guru; for Guru is believed to be the saviour of man.¹² Saint Kabīr who was devoted to the devotion of the Formless God speaks very highly of the Pādasevana Bhakti. He believes in mental devotion and in the meditation on the Lotus feet of the Lord seen in the interior. He advises the devotee to meditate on God constantly, if he wishes to be

12. पंडित श्री गोविन्द नरहरि : "रामेश्वरी और
दासबोधने" मर्यादा - कल्याण मर्यादा अंक -

free from the bondage of *Mayā* and to realise
God.¹³

Saint *Tulsīdās* too believes that a
devotee can cross over the worldly ocean
(*Samsāra*) and attain to beatitude by clinging
to the Lotus feet of Lord *Rāma*.¹⁴

13. चरन केवल चित लाइये, रामनाम गुन जाई। पृ. ८३ पद-३
हरि चरन चित राखिये, लौ अमरापु छोई॥ पृ. ८९ पद-५.
कबोर हरि चरन चल्या, माया मोह देखी। पृ. ४६ दोहा-९.
गगन मंडल आसप किया, कालाया सिरकंठि पृ. ७६ दोहा-३
डॉ. मुंशीराम शर्मा-"भक्तिका विकास"
पृ. ४७५.

14. बिचर छि अवनि अवनीस चरन सरोजमन मधुकर किये।
यिनय - १३५.
प्रनल पाल प्रन लौदे मोर प्रन जिअउं कमल पद देखे।
यिनय - ११३.
मार्थन सिध राम पद नेहू। मोही लख परत भरतमत येहू।
अयोध्य - २९०
डॉ. मुंशीराम शर्मा-"भक्तिका विकास"
पृ. ७४५.

All the above mentioned are the different forms of serving the Lord's feet, as revealed in the Puruṣa Sūkta of the Rg-Veda.¹⁵ In fact Pādasevā metaphysically consists in the enjoyment of all the four Pādas, revealed in the Śruti,¹⁶

9. 15. तं यत् ब्रह्मिणि प्रोक्तं पुरुषं ज्ञातमग्रतः।
तेन देवा अयजन्त साध्या ऋषयश्च ये ॥

RV. 10:90:7.
आयानयं वै पुरुष इयत्तावयवैः पृथक् ।
लायानसाविति प्रोक्तः संस्थावयवयानिव ॥
अजः सृजति भूतानि भूलात्मा यदनुग्रहान् ।
पुरुषावयवैर्लोकाः सपाळाः पूर्वकल्पिताः ।
लोकैरमुष्यावयवाः सपाळैरिति शुश्रुम ॥
Bh. 2-8-8, 9, 11.

16. 20. 5 यमात्मा यत्तुष्पान् ।

आगम प्रकरणम् — Verse- 2.

and for that the votary cannot stop at one or the other Pāda but has to move forward until he reaches the fourth and the last Pāda i.e. the Absolute. Each step of the votary is a new phase of emancipation, indicative of the progressive deepening of relationship between the devotee and his adorable.¹⁷

Human body is a rarity in the countless series of births and deaths and so if a man plays the game of self-deception by whiling away his time in worldly trifles, he misses the rare chance and is involved in the round of infinite births and deaths.¹⁸ One is born with a human appropriate body for devotion to God and thereby

17. Siddheśvara Bhaṭṭācārya : "The Philosophy of The Śrīmad-Bhāgavata." - Vol. II - P. 128 and 129.

18. ये के चात्महुनो जनाः ।

I. U. Verse: 3

इह चेदयेदीदृश सत्यमस्ति न

येदिह।येदीन्मइती विनष्टिः ।

Kn-U-2:5.

for realising God. Having obtained this God-given human incarnation, the man who has not subjugated his passions nor worships God's feet, has simply cheated himself. He is an object of pity.¹⁹ The devotee will never forsake the lotus feet of the Lord and waste his life by neglecting God.²⁰

19. देवदत्तमिमं लब्ध्वा, नृलोकमजितैन्द्रियः ।
यौ नाद्रियैतं त्यक्त्यादौ, स शोच्योऽसौ त्रयः ॥
Bh. 10-63-41

20. कौ तु त्वं चरणभोजमैवं विदुः विमृजते पुमान् ।
निष्कञ्चेन्नानां शान्तानां मुनीनां यस्त्यमात्मनः ॥
Bh. 10-86-33.

कस्त्यत्यदाह्जं विजराति पण्डितो यस्त्येऽवमान
त्ययेत्राने केनेनः ।
विशङ्कयास्मद् गुरुर्यति स्म यद्विनीषणं मनवश्चतुर्दश ॥
Bh. 4-24-67.

The devotee who has found shelter under the blessed dust of feet of the discus-holder Nārāyaṇa, does not hanker after the heavenly regions, nor the sovereignty of the earth, nor the position of Brahmā nor the domain of Pātāla, neither the superhuman powers of Yoga nor even Mokṣa. One can therefore ill-afford to squander it away.²¹ With his superior intelligence, man

21. न कामयैऽन्यं तप पादे सेवेनाद किञ्चेन प्रार्थित भाव वरं विभो |
आराधये कस्त्वां त्यक्तवर्जं हरिं शुचीं आयोधिरात्म कन्धनम् ॥
Bh. 10-51-56.

न नाकं पुष्टं न च सार्वभौमं न पारमेष्ठ्यं न रक्षादिपत्यम् |
न योगिनिधिं पुनर्भयं वा वाञ्छन्ति यत्पादरजः प्रपन्नाः ॥
Bh. 10-16-37.

न वरं शार्दूल साराज्यं स्वराज्यं भौज्यमप्युत |
वैशज्यं पारमेष्ठ्यम् य आनन्द्यं वा हरिः पदम् ॥
कामयागह उतस्य भूमिपादरजः ~~काम~~ प्रियः |
कुयकुकुभगन्धाद्यं मूर्ध्नि वीरुं गदामृतम् ॥
Bh. 10-83-41 & 42.

has to choose between the humdrum of endless life of misery and the ever-lasting peace of the Life Divine. The devotee does not desire any boon other than the service of the feet of the Lord.²²

Till man has not found the refuge of Lord's feet, he will remain subject to the fear of the loss of property, friends and his body; he will be subject to hankerings, thwartings, greed and griefs. Till then will remain also the root of all sufferings and distresses viz. the false belief in "Me-ness".²³

9

22. लब्ध्वा जनौ दुर्लभमेव भागुर्धनं कथञ्चिदप्यङ्गं मयःकृतौ न च
पादार्चनं न भजत्यसन्मतिर्गुणैश्च कूपैः पतितौ यथा पशुः॥

Bh. 10-51-47.

23. लायक्यं प्रविण्मूलसुहृन्निमित्तं शक्तिः स्फुरा परिभयो
पिपुलाय लोभः।
लायक्यमेत्यसद्वर्ग आतिशयं यावज्जीवोऽङ्गमेभयं
प्रवृत्तिर्लोकः॥

Bh. 3-9-6.

Mortal man, afraid of the serpent (death), takes to flight and finds no security in all the worlds. But he who takes refuge in God's lotus feet, sleeps in ease. Death flies away from him.²⁴ Therefore, what person, that is in possession of his sense, would not worship the feet of Mukunda, adored by the greatest Gods ?²⁵ Man should therefore, take to the service of the lotus feet of Nṛsimha and leave worldly life, the home of passion, attachment, sorrow, anger, pride, desire, helplessness,

24. मृत्योर् मृत्युर्व्यालभीतः पलायनं सर्वान् निर्भयं
त्वत्पादाब्जं प्राप्य यदृच्छयाद्ये स्वस्थः शैते मृत्युरस्मादपैति॥
Bh. 10: 3: 27.

25. कीं नु राजश्लिन्द्रियवान् मुकुन्दचरणाम्बुजम् ।
न भजैत् सर्वतो मृत्युरुपास्य मम शीतमेः ॥
Bh. 11: 2: 2

fear and mental distresses - leading men to move in the circle of incarnations.²⁶ Even a Cāṇḍāla, if he has consecrated his mind, speech, desires, wealth and life to the service of the Lord, is superior to the Brāhmin even if the latter is possessed of the dozen great mental excellences but who turns his back to Nārāyaṇa.²⁷

The pure desire for the service of His lotus feet increasing every day, washes away the impurities of the heart that accumulated in the course of numberless incarnations, just as

26. लब्ध्वाद्यौगन्धविधादभन्युमानस्पृहाभयदंभ्याधिभूलम् ।
रित्या गृहं संसृतिचक्रवाते नृसिंहपादं भजताकुलौभयमिति ॥
Bh. 5-18-14 .

27. विप्राद् द्विषद्गुणयुतादरविद्वज्जामपादारविन्दविमुखाच्छ्रवणै
मन्यै तदपि तन्मनोवचनै रितार्थप्राणं पुनरिति स कुलं न तु
परिमाणः ॥
Bh. 7-9-10.

the holy river Ganga issuing from the toe of His foot, washes away the sins of men. The man whose impurities of the heart have been washed away is not subject to the miseries of successive births and deaths. He is firm in his realization of non-attachment. He abides at the feet of the Lord.²⁸

Man must be awakened to the fact that unreserved dedication of the mind to God will lead to the total annihilation of all evils by the active intervention of God Himself.²⁹

28. यत्पादसेवाभिरुचिस्तपस्विनाम शीघ्रजन्मोपचिंतं मलं विधायः
सर्वं क्षिणोत्येवमेवेति स्मृती यथा पदाङ्गुलिनिःसृता सर्पः॥
विनिर्धुता शीघ्रमनोमलः पुमानसङ्गः विज्ञानविशेषो दीर्यवान् ।
यदङ्घ्रिभूमे कृतकैतेनः पुनः न संसृतिं क्लेशवलां प्रपद्यते ॥
Bh. 4: 21 : 32-34

29. स्वप्नयमूलं भजतः प्रियस्य त्यक्ता न्यभावस्य हरिः परेश
विकर्म यच्चोत्पलितं कथंचिद् धुनौति सर्वं यदि
संनिविष्टः॥
Bh. 11: 5: 42.

5. ARCANA - Worship of the Lord.

From Pādasevā, we shall now pass on to Arcana Bhakti. Once the love for the Lotus feet of the Lord has been able to instal God in the temple of Man's mind, worship (अर्चने) begins. The Bhāgavata recognises three types of worship - purely vedic, purely Tāntrika and the mixture of the two. The Bhāgavata is in favour of the third kind in so far as the best of each may be brought to bear upon its whole process. Just as the watering of the root feeds the trunk and branches, so the worship of Viṣṇu serves as the worship of all the Gods. Worship purifies and ennobles the interior of the worshipper and fulfils all his desires.³⁰

30. यथा हि स्कन्धशारवानां लशूर्मुलावसथेनम् ।
एवमारधनं विष्टौः सर्वेषामात्मनश्च हि ॥

Bk. 8:5:49.

यथा लशूर्मुलनिधेयेनैव तृप्यन्ति तत्स्कन्धभुजोपशाखाः ।
प्राज्ञोपशस्य यथैन्द्रियाणां तथैव सर्वार्हजमच्युतेज्या ॥

Bk. 4:13:14

Arcana really means the worship of the Lord. It should be done methodically as prescribed in the scriptures. It may be done with body, speech and mind, as well as with all the available materials, with a pure and sincere heart. It may be five-fold (पंचोपचार) or sixteen fold (षोडशोपचार) or sixtyfour-fold (षष्ठ्यष्टौपचार) or infinite fold (अक्षय्य उपचार). In the case of the worship of an external symbol, the symbol should as far as practicable, be bathed, cleaned and annointed. Thus does a man who worships God according to Vaidic and Tāntrika rites earns his wished for success in both the worlds.³¹ Therefore, with

31. एवं क्रियायोगपथैः पुमान् वैदिकतान्त्रिकैः।

अर्यन्नुभयतः सिद्धिं भक्तो विन्दत्यभीप्सताम् ॥ ९

Bh.-11.27.249.

materials available according to the means of the worshipper, it should be worshipped.³²

32. अर्थापि यद्येव यत्र श्रद्धा मां तत्र चार्यव्रतं ।
सर्वभूतेष्व्यात्मनि च सर्वात्मन्यवस्थितः ॥
अर्थायां स्थण्डिलेऽनौ वा सूर्ये वायुसु दक्षि दिशि ।
द्रव्येण भक्तिशुक्तोऽर्थेन स्वगुरुं माममायया ॥
Bh. 11-27-48
Bh. 11-27-9.

नब्धानुशर आचार्यात् तैन संदर्शिताग्रमः ।
भटापुरुषमभ्यर्च्यैव ल्याभिमतया ५५ त्यनः ॥
शुचिः सम्मुखभासीनः प्राणसयमे नादिभिः ।
पिण्डं विशौध्य सन्ध्यासकृत्तरक्षो ५६ र्थयेद्भुक्तिम् ॥
अथर्थात्यग्रे चार्पि यथा लब्धापचारकैः ।
द्रव्यभित्यात्मनि कृत्वा निष्पाद्य प्रोक्ष्य चासनम् ॥
पादादीनुपकल्प्याथ सञ्चिद्येयं समाहितः ।
हृत्वादिभिः कृतन्यासो भूतमन्त्रैश्च चार्पयेत् ॥
साङ्गोपाङ्गो सपार्श्व्यां तांतां श्रुतिं स्यमन्त्रतः ।
पाद्याध्यायमनीयाद्यैः स्नानवासौ विभूषणैः ॥
गन्धमाक्त्या क्षतस्रग्भिर्धूपदीपे परारकैः ।
साङ्गं संपूज्य विधायत् स्तवैः स्तुत्यानभेद्भुक्तिम् ॥
आत्मानं लेन्मयं ध्यायन् श्रुतिं सम्पूजयेद्भुक्तिः ।
क्षैत्राभार्थाय शिरसि स्थेयाम्बुद्वास्य सत्कृतम् ॥

Bh 11:3:48-54

Worship may be mental too. Guru too may be worshipped like God as shown above.³³

It should not however be reduced to the exhibition of one's pomp. Mere tips of grass or a leaf or water, fruit, flower are quite adequate to incur God's pleasure.³⁴ Arcana is thus the worship of God whether through an image or a picture or a mental form, it can be done either with external materials or merely through interior sentiment (भाव).

33. जै. श्रीगोविन्द नरहरि : "शान्तेश्वरी और दासबोध" - में
भक्ति - कल्याण। भक्ति उँक . पृ. 205

पत्रं पुष्पं कलं लीयं यौ मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति।
34. तदहं भक्त्युपहतमश्नामि प्रयत्नात्मनः॥

गीता 9-26.

यत्पादयोरशट्क्षः सलिलं प्रयाथ
दुर्वाङ्गुरैरपि पिधाय सतीं सपयामि।
अप्युत्तमां गतिमस्मा भजते त्रिलोकीं
दाश्वानविफलवपनाः कथमार्तिमृच्छेत्॥

Bih. 8:22:23.

The latter is specially meant for advanced souls whose minds and intellects are purified and illumined. The main purpose of worship is to purify the heart through egolessness and thus to please God. De facto God is all pervasive and manifests Himself in all forms of being. In essence the whole universe is the Viśva-rūpa of God and hence selfless service of the world is service of God, provided the devotee has the subjective attitude of seeing God in all beings, as revealed in the Upaniṣads.³⁵

Worship can be done either in a temple or in one's own house or at any other place. During worship, the mind of the devotee should always be concentrated on the divine form of God. King Pruthu and Ambariṣa pleased God by practising

35. ईशावास्यनिर्देशं सर्वं,
यत्किं च जगत्यां जगत् ।

I. U. Verse : 1.

Arcana Bhakti. They were immersed in the love of God and they wanted nothing but God. They did not crave for worldly things from God but wanted only His grace. They wanted to please God and serve God. Nothing else did they want. God demands complete self-surrender from His devotees. Such should be the devotion of all Bhaktas of selfless motive. Yogakṣema of the devotee is vouch-safed by the Lord. God protected King Ambarīṣa from the curse of sage Durvāsā and gave him emancipation. Likewise God appeared before king Pruthu and blessed him with plenty. What counts in worship is the spiritual insight and the feeling of love for God, and not the materials that are offered to Him; for God is perfect and needs nothing but Love. The Bhog offered to the Lord during worship is actually taken away by Him when it is offered with sincere feeling. There are cases where devotees with burning love for

God offered food to God and God actually -
appeared before them in His Supreme form and
partook of the food offered to Him. These are
rare cases, but it must be known that true
devotees are very rare in this world. Offerings
to God need not necessarily be rich and costly
things. What did the Lord of elephants -
(Gajendra) offer? Only a flower from the tank.
Draupadī offered a vegetable leaf and Śabarī
some wild plums. But the Lord was pleased. It
is the feeling of love for God that God takes
into account and not the material that is
offered. He is pleased even with leaves and
mere water.

Bhakti is the natural flight of the soul
towards the Lord. It is not that the Lord is
benefitted by it but the truth is that the
glorification and beautification of the Lord
come in glory and loveliness back to the soul

which is the image of Lord. ³⁶

According to the Bhāgavata, there are eight kinds of images of God. They are - those made of stones, wood, metals, earth, sands and jewels, and those painted and conceived in the mind.³⁷ These images of God are mainly two fold - movable and immovable; and these are temples of God. While adoring the immovable image, there is neither invocation (आर्चन) nor the act of putting away the idol (विमर्जन). In the case of movable images, these (आर्चन and

36. नैवात्मनः प्रभुरयं निजलाभपूर्णां मानं
जनादपि पुनः करुणो वृणीते।
यद् यज्जनेन भगवते विदधात मज्जं
तद्योत्मेनै प्रतिमुखस्य यथा भुक्वतीः॥
Bh. 7:9:11.

37. शैली चारुमयी लीली लेख्य लेख्या य सैकली।
मनीमयी भणिमयी प्रतिमाहृदिधास्मृता॥
Bh. 11:27:12.

विसर्जन) may be observed or not. ³⁸

Worship makes for the inner excellence of the worshipper. The Upaniṣadic worship of symbols degenerated into idolatry, when the physical locus was mistaken for God Himself. The - Bhāgavata approves of the worship of image only in so far as it is employed as a stepping stone to the realisation of the soul, as the all-embracing Reality. Image worship should be in conformity with the universal or divine outlook. That is why the Bhāgavata in the three-fold classification (उत्तम , मध्यम or अधम) of devotees considers the image worshippers as of the third category (अधम or प्राकृत).³⁹

38. चलाचलेति द्विविधा प्रतिष्ठा जीवमन्यरम् ।
उद्वासावारणे नस्तः स्थिराया भुक्त्वा चर्चने ॥
Bh. 11-27-13.

39. अययामैव हरये पूजां यः भुङ्क्ष्वैतै ।
न तद्भक्तैषु यान्येषु सभक्तः प्राकृतः स्मृतः ॥
Bh. 11-2-47.

6. VANDANA - Bowing down to God.

Vandana (वंदन) literally means bowing down to God, or साष्टांगं नमस्कार i.e. humble prostration touching the earth with the eight limbs of the body before the form of God with an attitude of reverence and love. The Bhāgavata opens with the glorification of Lord Kṛṣṇa who is addressed as Sat, Cit and Ananda (सच्चिदानन्द-रूपाय), as the greatest cause of the universe (विष्णोत्पत्त्यादिहेतवे), the destroyer of the three-fold pain (तापत्रय विनाशाय).⁴⁰ In her prayer, Kuntī addresses God as Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva, Devakīnandana, Nandgopakumāra and

40. सच्चिदानन्दरूपाय विष्णोत्पत्त्यादिहेतवे ।
तापत्रयविनाशाय श्रीकृष्णाय नमः ॥
Bh. M. 1:1:

जन्माद्यस्य यतो ऽन्यथावितरतश्चार्थैर्ध्यातृभिः
स्वराट्तेने प्रसूतत्वाच्च आर्क्ष्ययैर्भुज्यन्ति यत्पुरयः ।
तेजोवोरिमृदां यथा विनिमयो यत्र त्रिसर्गो ऽमृता
धाम्ना स्थौन सदा निरस्तकुलकं सत्यं परं क्षमति ॥
Bh. 1:1:1:

Govinda and bows down to Him in reverential attitude.⁴¹ God is all pervasive, because God is all in all. He is wind (वायु), death (यम), fire (अग्नि), water (वरुण), moon (चन्द्र), the creator (प्रजापति) and the Great Grand Father (प्रपितामह), and so, the devotee should bow down before every body thinking that he is bowing down before God Himself. In the Gītā, Arjuna is represented as bowing down before the Cosmic Form (दिव्यरूप) of God in a most reverential attitude.⁴²

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41. कृष्णाय वायुदेवाय देवकीनन्दनाय च ।
 नन्दगोपकुमाराय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः ॥
 नमः पङ्कजनामाय नमः पङ्कजमालिने ।
 नमः पङ्कजनैत्राय नमस्ते पङ्कजाङ्घ्रये ॥
 Bh. 1: 8: 21-22.

42. वायुर्ब्रह्मो ऽग्निर्वरुणः शशङ्कुः प्रजापतिस्त्वं प्रपितामहश्च ।
 नमो नमस्ते ऽस्तु सरसकृत्स्नः पुनश्च भूयोऽपि नमो नमस्ते ॥
 नमः पुरस्तादथ पृष्ठतस्ते नमो ऽस्तु ते सर्वत एव सर्व ।
 अनन्ते वीर्यामिति विक्रमस्त्वं सर्वं सञ्चाक्रीषि ततोऽसि सर्वः ॥
 Gita II - 39-40.

It means -

" Salutations to Thee in front,
Salutations to Thee at back;
Salutations to Thee on every side.
O All † Unlimited in power and
immeasurable in prowess,
Thou pervadest all and therefore,
Thou art all. "

Knowing all things to be the body of Hari,
making no difference between them and Hari,
man should bow down to the sky, the air, the
water, the fire, the earth, the luminaries,
the living beings, the trees, the rivers and
seas.⁴³ Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Uddhava, " Giving no
attention to those who laugh in ridicule,
forgetting the body and insensible to shame,
one should prostrate and bow down to all beings,
even to the dog, the ass, the Cāṇḍāla and the

43.

स्वं वायुमग्निं सलिलं भरीं च
ज्योतींश्च सत्त्वानि दिक्षोऽप्यादीन ।
सर्वस्वभूतानि ह्येते शरीरं
यत्किञ्च भूतं प्रणम्येद न्ययः ॥

Bh. 11-2-41

cow. All is Myself and nothing is but Myself".

He who lives ever thinking of God's mercy,
enjoying the fruits of his own acts, making
obeisance to the Lord with his speech, body
and mind - such a man earns a title to Mokṣa.⁴⁴
When falling or slipping, when in pain, when
sneezing, if as man voluntarily or involuntarily
ejaculates the words "Salutation to Hari "
(हरये नमः।), He drives away all evils.⁴⁵

44. ततोऽनुकम्पां सुसमीक्षभाजौ शुञ्जन एवात्मकृतं व्रिषाकम् ।
दृष्ट्वाऽवपुर्भिर्विदधन्ने प्रस्तौ जीवेत यौ मुक्तिपदे सदायभाक् ॥
Bh. 10-14-8

45.

Bhīṣma speaks very highly of Vandana Bhakti. He says, " One bend of the head (Vandana) to Lord Kṛṣṇa is equal in merit to the performance of ten horse-sacrifices (अश्वमेध). The latter does not bring about liberation, but the former makes one God Himself. It is even superior to the अश्वमेध , because it leads to Mokṣa i.e. the cessation of round of birth and death." ⁴⁶ Saint Tulsīdās too speaks very highly of Vandana Bhakti, and advises the devotee to bow down to God and Guru for pleasing them. ⁴⁷ Akrūra - practised Vandana Bhakti and divine grace -

46. एकोऽपि कृष्णस्य कृतः प्रणामो दशाश्वमेधा वष्टुधेन तुल्यः।
दशाश्वमेधो पुनरोति जन्म कृष्णप्रणामिनी न पुनर्भविष्य ॥
भीष्मस्तवराज . ९१.

47. लैउ सुनि सरन स्नामुलै आलै ।
सकल प्रणामे किएँ अपनाए ॥
ते स्मिर कहु तुमरी समतुला ।
जौ न नम्रत हरि गुरपद मूला ॥

भक्ति अंक . पृ. ९२

descended upon him. Akrūra says, " This day my ill luck has disappeared, my life is blessed for I shall bow to the feet of the Lord which is the object of meditation by Yogis. " 48 Overwhelmed with his devout love, Akrūra quickly jumped down from the chariot and fell prostrate like a pole at the feet of Balarāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The ego or अहंकार is effaced out completely through devout prayer and prostration to God.

It is said in the Mahābhārata that there is nothing which is more auspicious than Bhagavān Vāsudeva, there is nothing more purifying than Vāsudeva and there is no Deva, worthy of being worshipped higher than Vāsudeva. He who offers

48. ममाद्यमङ्गुलं नष्टं कर्त्तव्यं श्यैव मे भवः ।
यज्ञमस्यै भगवतो योगिद्यैयाङ्घ्रिपङ्कजम् ॥
Bh. 10-38-6

स्तवैरुच्चावयै स्तोत्रैः पौरुषैः प्राकृतैरपि ।
स्तुत्या प्रसीद भगवन्निति वन्दैत दण्डयत् ॥
Bh. 11-27-45

his salutations to Vāsudeva suffers no afflictions.

In fact, Vandana Bhakti means salutations to God, His Form, one's Guru and Saints methodically as prescribed in the Śāstras. It leads to humility, dissolves doubts, steadies faith and purifies the heart. Even the fallen rise by virtue of Vandana Bhakti. It illumines the intellect. However, Vandana should be without any kind of hypocrisy and with a good will and pure heart towards the object of reverence.

Vandana Bhakti is said to be the very best means to please God among the fourfold means viz.

Vandana (वंदन), Vinaya (विनय), Viveka (विवेक) and Śevā (सेवा). Vandana is compared to heaven and its fragrance never fades.⁴⁹

The object of purpose of this form of Devotion is to realise God through exclusive love. The Divine grace descends upon the devotee and man becomes God.

49. श्री हृत्केशिंदर शास्त्री : "श्रीमद् भागवत
तत्त्वसुधाविष्णु" - पृ. २ .

7. DĀSYA - Servitude of God.

Pādasevana, Arcana and Vandana (i.e. taking shelter in God's lotus feet, followed by His worship and salutations) sublimate devotion to a point when the votary feels that he belongs to God. Nothing is wanting to the servants of the Lord.⁵⁰ As a result of six-fold devotion, the sense of servitude is generated in the devotee. Once this sense of service (दास्य) dawns upon the votary, the higher stages of devotion are bound to appear. Dāsyā Bhakti literally means devotional love for God through servant sentiment (दासीभाव) i.e. Dāsyā bhāva is the servant bhāva entertained by the devotee towards the Lord. In the Dāsyā Bhakti, the devotee considers himself a slave (किंकर) of God, the Supreme Master. It is dominated by the

50. यज्ञात्मश्रुतिमात्रेण पुमान् भवति निर्मलः।
तस्य लीर्षपदः किंवा दासनामकशिष्यते॥

the Master-servant relation. To a Dāśya-Bhakta, Kṛṣṇa is his Lord and saviour. The Dāśya-Bhakta always considers himself as inferior to God. He considers it his duty to worship and love God, for God is his master. The master should take care of the servant.

The Dāśya Bhakti includes service and worship of the images of God in temples, sweeping the temples, serving the saints and sages, the poor and the sick with Ātmabhāva, meditating on God and acting according to the injunctions of the Veda. The purpose behind Dāśya Bhakti is to be ever with God in order to offer service to Him, and win His Divine Grace and thereby to attain immortality.⁵¹ In the Gītā, Arjuna prays to Lord Kṛṣṇa with the sentiment and attitude of a servant and a disciple.⁵² Hanumān, Bharata,

51. Swāmī Sivananda : "Essence of Bhakti Yoga"
P. 41.

52. कर्पल्यदौघौपरतस्येभावः
पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंभूदयैताः।
येच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं कुरु नन्मे
शिष्यस्तैर्दृष्टं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम्॥

Angada, Lakṣmana, Vidura who embraced the servant attitude are the towering examples of Dāsyā Bhakti. Hanumān spent his whole life in serving Lord Rāma, and his total self-surrender has been the ideal of Dāsyā Bhakti. In fact, the servant loses nothing, but gains everything through the service of God either in his transcendent aspect or - immanent aspect. In course of time, the attitude of दासोऽङ्गु ultimately leads to सोऽङ्गु , and then in the last analysis the attitude of सोऽङ्गु leads to the state of नाङ्गु i.e. egoless state as beautifully revealed in the popular verse.⁵³ Hanuman's excellence of service

53. देहदृष्ट्या तु दासोऽङ्गु जीवदृष्ट्या त्वदंशकः ।
वरत्तुस्तु त्वमेवाहम् इति मे निश्चयः प्रीतिः ॥
- हनुमन्नाटकम्

is highly spoken of by Saint Tulsīdāsa in the following words.⁵⁴ Saint Tulsīdāsa believes that one cannot be freed from the round of birth and death without developing the sense of master and servant relationship between the Jīva and Īśvara.⁵⁵ It is shown in the Bhāgavata that the devotees of God wish for nothing but servitude.⁵⁶

54. लभुभान समान वडीभागी। नही पगेउ राम चरन अनुरागी ॥
गिरीजो नम्रु प्रीति सैवकारि। बारबार प्रभु निज मुख गार्ई ॥
भक्तिका विकास पृ. 98६

55. सैवक सैव्य भाय किनु भव न तरिय उरगारी।
भक्तिका विकास पृ. 98६
उत्तर 208.

56. नय[॥] मुकुन्दस्य पयारविन्दयो रजोनुमस्ताम भपादेशा ननाः।
प्राञ्छन्ति तदास्यभृषैऽर्चमात्मनौ यदृच्छया लब्धमेनः
समृध्ययः ॥

Bk. 4: 9: 36

Prahlāda extols divine service above everything else.⁵⁷ The Dāśya Bhakti is beautifully revealed in the wishful utterances of Vṛtra, the arch enemy of God Indra :-

" O Lotus-eyed ", exclaimed the demon,
" my mind longs to see you in the same way
as the tiny little birds, whose wings are
yet to grow long to see their mother; as
the hungry calves tied to the post pine
for the mother's breast; or as the sullen
wife craves for the sight of her husband
gone abroad." 58

57. नैवा परावरमतिर्भयतो ननु स्याज्जन्तौ यथा ऽऽत्मसुहृदो
संक्षेपया सुरतसोरिव ते प्रसादः संधानुरूपमुदयो न
तत् तैर्ऽर्च्यम नमः स्तुतिकर्त्रपूजा परापरत्वम् ॥
कर्म स्मृतिश्चरणयोः श्रवणं कथायाम् ।
संक्षेपया त्वयि विनैति षडङ्गया
किं भक्तिं जनः परतर्कगतो लभेत ॥
Bh. 7-9-27 & 50

58. अजातपक्षा इवमातरं श्वेगाः स्तन्यं यथा पत्नसतराः क्षुधार्ताः
प्रियं प्रियेव व्युषितं दिवला मनोऽरविन्दक्षि दिदृक्षते त्याम् ॥
Bh. 6-11-26.

Jīvagoswāmī in the Satsaṁdarbha (सत्संदर्भ) reveals the progressive advance of the devotees longing for God in the above three analogies offered by the Bhāgavata. According to him, the longing of the birdlings for their mother suggests that the mother is the only prop in their - helplessness; that she is ever ready with her kindness for her babies, that such kindness is only spontaneous and that they are naturally fond of their mother as she is fond of them, yet they are after food - some insects or such other things; and so, they long for the mother. In the second example, however, the longing acquires a higher significance because it is a longing for the mother's breast which is a part of the mother and not something extraneous to her, as in the first case. The third analogy represents much deeper longing or feeling than the feeling in the first two examples. The wife who is - separated from her beloved lover for a long interval is constantly possessed by the acute sense of separation in his absence. She wistfully

pines away every moment to be locked in his embrace for ever and ever.⁵⁹ Such longing grows to a sublime pitch when twinklings are considered obstructions to God's sight, and a moment's separation is looked upon as bereavement for an era; as seen in the case of the Gopīs for their beloved Kṛṣṇa.⁶⁰ In fact, for the purpose of God-realisation the vacuum in the mind (विरक्त) has to be infinite, so that the infinite could be accommodated therein. It demands self-surrender in toto as revealed in the prayer of Vṛtra -

" O Lord, let me be the humblest servant to your Lotus feet. Let my mind be absorbed in your merits, let my tongue chant your glories and let my body be dedicated to the performance of your deeds." 61

59. Jīva Goswāmī : "Satsaṁdarbha" - P. 726 and 727.

60. गोपीनां परमानन्द आसीद् ओविन्ददर्शने ।
भ्रजं युगशतत्रयं यासां येन विजाभवत् ॥
Bh. 10-17-36.

61. अहं हरे तव पादैकमूलदासोऽनुदासो शक्तितस्मि भूयः ।
मनः स्त्रैलोक्युपलैर्गुणैस्ते गृहीत वाक्कर्म करोतु कायः ॥
Bh. 6-11-24.

" O Lord, I don't crave for heaven, nor
for the sovereignty of the upper or the
lower worlds, nor do I wish for the
perfections attained through Yoga
discipline. I only pine for Thee." 62

" I, therefore, pray that my mind be
detached from all sense objects and be
ever devoted to your Lotus feet." 63

Lord Gaurāṅga too thinks very highly of
Dāśya Bhakti. He believes that loving devotion
of master-servant relation is the only way to
attain to beatitude. De facto, the Jīva is an
eternal slave of Lord Kṛṣṇa (नित्यकृष्णदास).

62. न नाकपुच्छं न च पारमेष्ठ्यं न सार्वभौमं न रसाधिपत्यम् ।
न योगसिद्धीर्युनर्भवम् वा समञ्जसं त्या पिरत्य कांक्षे ॥
Bh. 6:11:25.

63. ममोत्तमलोकजनेषु सर्व्वं संसारयुक्ते भ्रमतः स्वकर्म्मभिः ।
त्वन्मायया ऽऽत्मात्मजदारगते ह्यस्य कंचित्तस्य न नाधि
भूयात् ॥
Bh. 6:11:27.

The Jīva is atomic (अणु), while the Lord is all-pervasive (विश्व). Hence in point of Cit, both - Jīva and Īśvara are one; but there is a difference between the two. From the view-point that the Jīva is atomic, while the Lord, the controller of all, is all-pervading. ⁶⁴ Tulsīdāsa too believes in the loving service of God Rāma and glorifies Dāsyā Bhakti in eloquent terms. He says that Hanumān devoted to Rāma was the best of devotees, and he - sincerely believes that without the sense of Dāsyā Bhakti no body can be freed from the round of birth and death. ⁶⁵ Even a devotee of the formless God like Kabīr glorifies Dāsyā-Bhakti and says that God is almighty and that he can raise an atom to a mountain and can reduce a

64. श्रीहरिपद : "श्रीमच्छैलन्यमहाप्रभुका भक्तिधर्म" -
कण्ठश्लो० भक्ति अंग - पृ २०२.

65. अस अभिप्राय जाय जनि भोरे।
मो० सौवक ह्युपति पति भोरे॥
पुमहिं लोक लागै रघुसाई।
सौ मोहिं यहु दास-सुखसाई॥ अं० २२
— भक्तिकाव्यकास पृ १४६

mountain to an atom. Hence, the best kind of devotion is that of master and servant.⁶⁶ The Dāsya Bhakti endows the devotee with inner strength and as a result of it the devotee resorts to none but God. To the devotee, God is all in all - Guru, Prophet and Master.

Before man becomes the servant of the Lord his passions used to rob him of his right - understanding. But after he becomes His servant his passions become a means of help to his devotion. His hostility towards his enemies is turned against his sins. His house is an asylum and home for saintly men and is no longer the scene of vain and troublesome labours; and his attachment to his relations becomes a means of his own spiritual uplift by reason of

66. साईं स्रूं सब रीत री, वंदी धै० कुछ नाहिं |
साईं धै० परबत करै, परबत साईं माहिं ॥ ६२, १२
— भक्तिका विकास पृ. ४७७

his leading them to the path of devotion by the loving influence he exercises over them.⁶⁷ Man should consecrate every action of his to the Lord uttering the salutation "Nārāyaṇa" every action he does with his speech, body and mind.⁶⁸

The true utility of human life lies in the reverential service of God.

67. लावद् शङ्गादयः स्तौना स्तावत् काराशुलं शुल्म ।
लावन्मौलौ ५ इन्द्रिनिगो थापत् कृष्ण न ते जनाः ॥
Bh. 10-14-36.

68. लज्जन्म तानि कर्माणि तदा युस्तन्मनो वयः ।
नृणां यैर्नष्टे पिश्यात्मा सैव्यते हरिरीश्वरः ॥
Bh. 4-31-9

कायेन वाचा मनसैन्द्रियैर्वा बुद्ध्याऽऽत्मनो
करोति यद् यत् सकलं परस्मै नारायणायैत
समर्पयेत्तत् ॥
Bh. 11-2-36.

8. SAKHYA - Intimate companionship and friendship of the Lord.

From Dāśya Bhakti, we shall now pass on to Sakhya Bhakti. Sakhya means friendship and - accordingly Sakhya Bhakti is the cultivation of the friend-sentiment with God. Once God is sure of man's humility, He allows Himself to be handled freely. God is for ever the friend of all. Though he is worshipped by all the celestials with all humility, yet He was so gracious as to make the monkeys His friends.

Whether he be a deva or a daitya, a man or lower than man, can worship God with a whole-heart. It is wonderful that God identified Himself with His servants who took refuge in Him. He chose a monkey (Sugrīva) for His friend and ally - though mighty kings placed their crowned

heads at his feet.⁶⁹ He gives Himself up to the votary. The votary is thus introduced to the privilege of His chosen friend. The inmates of the family of Nanda-Gopa cultivated this Bhakti. Blessed were Nanda, the Gopās and the residents of Vraja who had as their friend, the Eternal Infinite Lord Himself.⁷⁰ Friendship is the stage when the votary feels that all

69. सुसौऽसुसौ वाध्यर्षे वनरीनरः सर्पात्मना यः सुकृतज्ञमुच्यते ।
भजते रामं मनुजाकृतिं हरिं य उत्तरामनपत्कोसला विवर्धते ॥ ?
Bh 5-19-8

किं चित्रमच्युते लवैतदशेषकन्धा
वासैर्घ्य नन्य शरणेषु यदात्मसात्त्वम् ।
यौऽ रीपयौतु सरमृगैः स्वयमीश्वराणां
क्षीमत्किरीट लरपीडित पादपीठः ॥

Bh. 11-29-4

70. अतो भाज्यमलोभाज्यं नन्दगौपधुजाकसात् ।
यन्मित्रं परमानन्दं पूर्णं ब्रह्म सेनात्मन् ॥

Bh. 10-14-32

his wishes are being favourably responded to by God.⁷¹ From the rung of servitude, the votary comes closer to God, when he recognises God not only as his master, but also as his dear friend, for the devotees who have centred their hearts in God and are equi-visioned win over God as a good wife wins her husband.⁷² To treat Him as one's dear most friend, to be in His company at all times, to love Him as one's own self are the chief characteristics of the Sakhya Bhakti of the Bhāgavata. Even Kabīr speaks

71. कौटिलिप्रयासोऽसुरबालका हरैरुपासने स्त्री हृदि ध्रुवत् सतः ।
स्वस्यात्मनः सख्यु रशीधरीणां सायोन्यसः किं
विषयोपपादनैः ॥

Bh- 7-7-38

72. अयि निर्वृत्त्यादयाः सार्धयः समदर्शनाः ।
वक्ष्यन्ति मां भक्त्या सत्सिन्धुः सत्पतिं यथा ॥

Bh 9-4-66.

very highly of Sakhya Bhakti.⁷³ The devotee of the friendly grade always does that which - pleases God in all respects. He does not want to leave the Lord even for a moment. He considers that his existence and the existence of what belongs to him is fruitful only if it is useful in the service of God, for he cannot live without God. To live without God is an impossibility. With the development of universal vision, he considers all as God, and treats every being of the world as his own friend, and thus becomes a Cosmic Friend.⁷⁴ He has a tender regard and

73. जाका मरल न मुनि लरै, सो दोसल किया अलेश्य ॥
पृ. १३ कोला ६२
एकज योसल एमर किया, जिस गलि काल कबाय/
सकजब धोषी धोइ मरै, तौ भी रंग न जाय ॥ १९, ११
पाखीं जी तौं जातला, धूँवां ही तौं सीतल।
पयनां वीगि उतायला, सो योसल कबीर कीन्ह ॥ २९, १२ ॥
— भक्तिका विकास पृ ४७

74. भौ कौरं यशोपसां सर्वलोक महेश्वरम्।
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ह्यात्मा मां शास्त्रिभूच्छति ॥
५. ५. २९.

good will for all and is always satisfied with what is ordained by God. He loses his " I, Me and Mine " (अहं and मम) in the love of his Beloved Friend. De facto God is the innermost and the dearest friend of all beings, here or there. All friends may desert a person, but God will never desert His devotees. The most dominant Sakhya Bhaktas of Lord Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa were Vibhīṣana, Sugrīva, Uddhava, Arjuna and Sudāmā.

9. ĀTMA NIVEDANA - Self-dedication to God.

Last of all comes Ātma-Nivedana i.e. the devotion of self-surrender or the giving up of " I, Me and Mine " (i.e. अहं and मम).⁷⁵ It is the culmination of the nine-fold devotion (Navadhā Bhakti) referred to above. Desire and egoism are two obstacles to self-surrender.

75. कायेन वाया मनसेन्द्रियैर्वा
कुर्व्याऽऽत्मना पानुश्रुतस्यभाषणम् ।
करोति यद् यत् सफलं परस्मै
नारायणायैति सन्नर्पयैन्नतु ॥

Bh. 11-2-36.

Self-surrender comes out of intense love and unshakable faith in God. God demands complete self-surrender from His devotees. In the Ātma-Nivedana Bhakti, the devotee offers everything to God, including his body, mind and soul.⁷⁶ De facto, after dedication, the devotee has no personal and independent existence. He has become part and parcel of God. God takes care of him and treats him as Himself. The devotee believes himself to be an instrument in the hands of God. His constant prayer is "Let thy will be done, not mine". He does not feel -

76. દીવાનું દીલું લુજ પ્રેમ,
વ્યદિપિત પ્રાણતનમગદન
ગુલામી કાચની લારી, સગમનો રાહ એ કીમો
ખખી જ્યુ પ્રેમમાં, સમર્પણ એ લખી કીમો
દૂર જિવું શેરીમાં લારી, લખાડું સ્વર્ગ એ કીમો.

સાગર: દીવાને સાગર : દૂર જિવું પૃ-૪૭૯

egoistic, for he has no ego. He has, so to -
speak, no independent existence apart from God.
He does not adore or love his body or his -
connectives, for it is God's business to see
to it. He is beyond fear (अभय),⁷⁷ for God
is there to help him at all times and places.
He has no cares and worries of life; He is
"Mr. Carenot" who cares not even for his
salvation. In the eye of the devotee, "God is
the store-house of all that is beautiful, the
Abode of the marvellous in all the worlds, of
all radiant splendours the true abiding Source,
of Bliss over-flowing the very Life, the -
Essence of ambrosia, of fair-eyed damsels,
the highest Fortune incarnate. It is to Him

77. मात्रैकमेव शरणमात्मानं सर्वदीर्घिनाम् ।
याहि सर्वात्मभावेन मया स्यात्कुली भयम् ॥
BA. 11:12:15

who is the Supreme Good, and highest Divinity
of the self-controlled that he surrenders himself.⁷⁸
He merely wants God and nothing but God.⁷⁹ God is

78. मिथिं लापत्यानां निरिपल जगदाश्वर्यनिलयं
निजापासं भासां निरपधिक निश्चयेयसरसम् ।
सुधाधारासारं सुकृतपरिपाकं मृगादेशं
प्रपद्ये प्राङ्मुख्यं प्रथमं मधिवैद्यं कृतधियाम् ॥ ४५ ॥
कृष्णकर्णामृत - पु. ८०

79. मर्त्यो यदा त्यक्तस्तमस्तकर्मा निवेदितात्मा विचिकीर्षितामे
तदाभूतस्य प्रतिपद्यमानो मया ऽऽत्मभूयाय च कल्पते वै ॥
Bh. ॥ - 29-34

मध्यर्पितात्मेनः सभ्य निरपेक्षस्य सर्वतः ।
मया ऽऽत्मना सुखं यत्तत्कृतः स्यात् विषयात्मनाम् ॥
अकिञ्चनस्य दान्तस्य शान्तस्य सन्नयितसः ।
मया संलुप्तमनसः सर्वाः सुखत्रया दिशः ॥

न पारमैष्ठ्यं न मरेन्द्रियैश्च
न शार्पभासं न रसाधिपत्यम् ।
न योगसिद्धीरपुनर्भयं वा
मध्यर्पितात्मैव हति मयि नान्यत् ॥

Bh. ॥ : 14 : 12-14

all in all to him. The devotee feels that there is more joy in loving God than in becoming God. He does not, therefore, want to become sugar, but he wants to taste sugar. This very doctrine of self-surrender is preached by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna at the end of the teaching of the Gītā. It is the firm belief of the devotee that self-surrender, total and exclusive, alone can give eternal peace and relieve the devotee from all sins. This is why Lord Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna, " Renounce all Dharmas and take refuge in Me alone. I shall absolve you from all sins; Dont grieve."⁸⁰ The devotee of the Ātma-Nivedana stage is the most blessed person, for to him the whole world appears divine and as such it becomes a source of bliss; instead of a source of three-fold pain.⁸¹

80. सर्वधर्माणि त्यज्य मामेकं शरणं प्रज।
अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः॥

ॐ 18-66

81. यद् यदि हृतमं लोके यद्वाति प्रियमात्मानः।
तत्तन्निवेदयैमं तदानन्त्याय कल्पते॥

Bh 11-11-41

Self-surrender is the annihilation of individual consciousness and the attainment of Absolute consciousness. The wave subsides in the ocean. The spark becomes one with fire. The ray is absorbed into the sun. The mind merges in the Ātmā. The individual loses itself in the Absolute. The devotee becomes one with God. Worldly consciousness vanishes into - Universal Consciousness. Man becomes God and the mortal becomes Immortal. The emperor Bali practised this type of Bhakti and attained the Supreme.⁸² In the words of Sri Rāmākṛṣṇa, the state of complete self-surrender is like the longing and taking rest after the day's hard toil. It is free from care and grief, undefinable bliss which emanates from it.⁸³

82. अली प्रणामाय कृतः समुद्यमः प्रपन्नभक्तार्थविधा॥ सप्रहितः।
यत्नोक्तपालैस्त्वदनुग्रहोऽ मरैर लब्धपूर्वोऽपसवेऽ
सुरेऽर्चितः॥
Bh. 8: 23: 2

83. भगवद्गीता By Swami Chidbhavananda
P. 962

In brief, the votary dies to his false-self to live up to his real self. He, thus becomes fit for oneness with God, enters the portals of Immortality.⁸⁴

To sum up, the above discussed nine modes of Bhakti are the ways and means whereby a devotee attains the supreme ideal of life. The nine modes of Bhakti are graded series of Divine Love. The ninefold Bhakti is common to all the sects (Sampradāya) of Bhakti-mārga. Any devotee can take up any of these paths and reach blessedness. The path of Bhakti slowly and gradually takes the individual to the supreme without self-extinction. Nine-fold devotion involves the worship of the Personal God. In order to respond to the tenderest feelings, God has been conceived in most intimate

84. मृत्यो^{९८} यदा त्यक्तमस्तकर्मा
निर्वैदितात्मा विचकीर्षितो मे।
तदा मृतत्वं प्रतिपद्यमानो
मया ऽऽत्मभूयाय च कल्पते ॥
B.R. 11-29-34

terms. From being the disinterested on-looker, God condescends to the votary as his Master, his Friend, nay his Beloved. In other words, the progress of devotion is matched by the transition of God from the impersonal to the most personal. In his Bhaktiśāstra, Swāmī Śivānanda says that the nine-fold cult of devotion follows the अरुन्धतीव्याकर शाखायव्यव्याय of logic instead of the भ्रमरकीटव्याय of the Vedāntists. It is not a direct assertion of God, but a progressive realisation of him by the withdrawal of the senses from worldly objects and focussing them on God. The Bhakti cult is not a negative way, but a positive way of God-realisation. 85

Swāmī Bhagavadācārya is of opinion that Bhakti is not nine-fold, but only one-fold (एकधा)

85. Swāmī Śivānanda :- " Essence of Bhakti Yoga " -
P. 47.

and that the above mentioned eight modes of Bhakti are external and serve only as means to the internal and true mode of Bhakti - designated as self-dedication or self-surrender. It is only through self-surrender that a devotee realises God and in no other way. ⁸⁶

In the Bhāgavata, the above mentioned nine-fold Bhakti is also spoken of as त्रिगुणी भक्ति in accordance with the pre-dominance of the quality of Sattva, Rajas or Tamas in the mode of worshipping God. If the motive behind Bhakti be malevolence or ill-will, it is termed Tāmāsa (i.e. तामस) dominated by the principle of darkness. If the motive behind Bhakti be the desire of fame, wealth, sex or any other worldly object of enjoyment, it is termed Rājāsa (राजस) i.e. dominated by the principle of activity and if the motive behind Bhakti be to do one's duty or to please God, it is termed Sāttvika (सात्त्विक) i.e. dominated by the principle of illumination.

86. Swāmī Bhāgavadācārya :- " Bhakti Śāstra " -
P. 24.

As distinguished from the above mentioned nine-fold (नवधा) or the three-fold - (त्रिगुणत्मिका) Bhakti which is secondary (दशमी), the tenth kind of Bhakti (दशधा भक्ति) or the निर्गुण or गुणातीत (i.e. beyond the three qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) is the unmotivated Bhakti (अहेतुकी भक्ति), is designated as the primary or highest devotion (प्रेमलक्षणा भक्ति or पराभक्ति). It is love for love's sake (प्रेमलक्षणा भक्ति or पराभक्ति) without any ulterior motive of profit, gain or reward or recognition or even of Mokṣa. It is the spontaneous, uninterrupted and unmotivated flow of the pure and sincere heart towards God. The detailed description is given in the sequel.