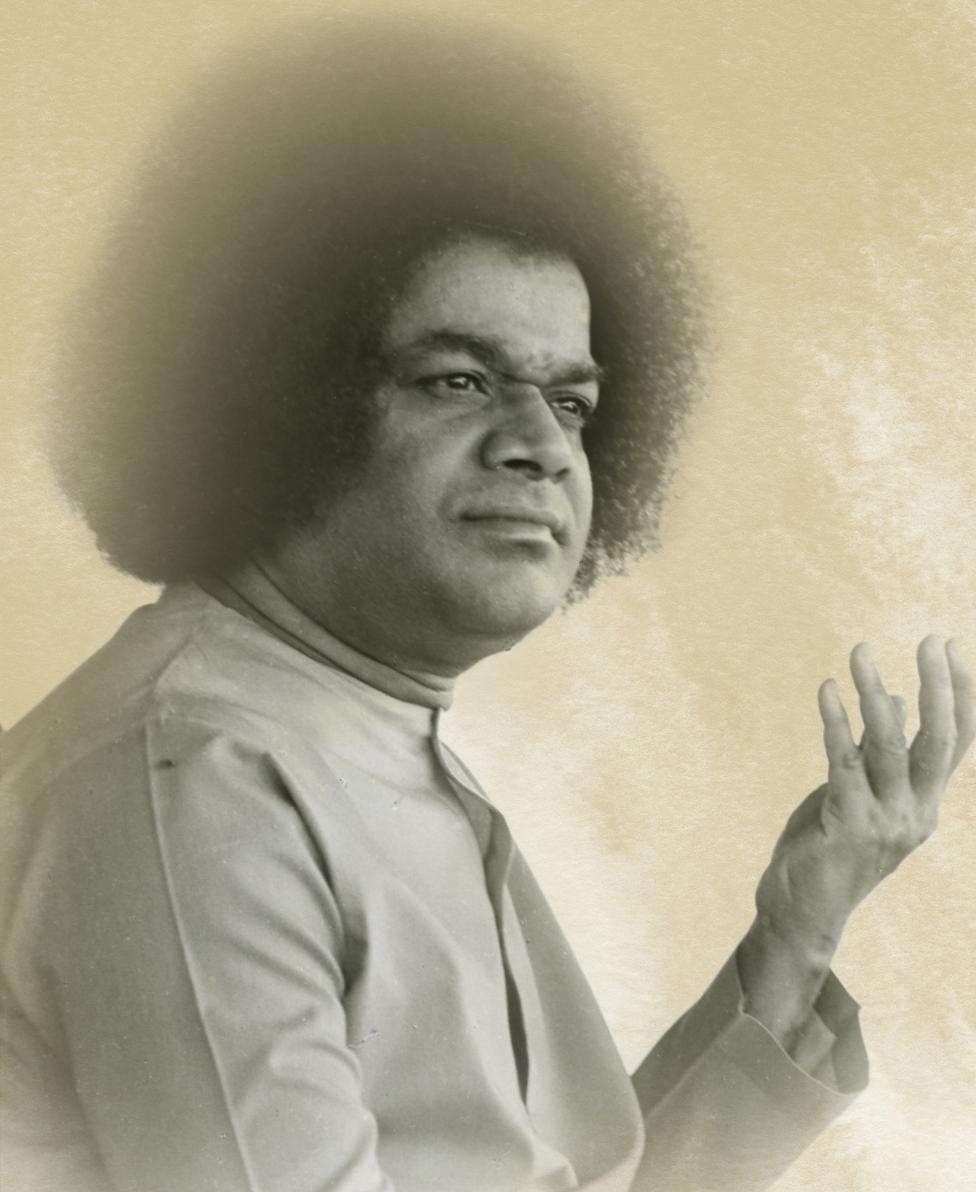


ARADHANA CONTINUOUS WORSHIP

— Study Guide 2 —

Aradhana Mahotsavam
April 24, 2021



“

Who is Radha? People consider her to be an ordinary woman and distort the facts. She had no attachment to her body. She had attachment to Krishna alone. This nature (*dharā*) itself took birth as Radha. This *dharā* is the basis (*ādhār*) for the creation. In the name Radha, R stands for Radha, ‘A’ stands for *Ādhār*, ‘Dh’ stands for continuous (*Dhārā*), and ‘A’ stands for *Arādhanā*. It means that continuous worship (*ārādhanā*) is the basis (*ādhār*) for Radha. She was in constant contemplation of Krishna. Even in her sleep, she would chant Krishna’s name.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks Vol.31/Ch.38: 12 October 1998
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/install-gods-feet-your-heart>

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Faith

God IS! IS! IS !

God is present as the Indweller in every living being belonging to each of these very large number of species. How come? Because He is the One that became many. When the forms of God are so numerous, in what particular form should we worship God? By what name should we call Him? Forms are the result of our physical perception, and names are what we have given to these various forms. By Himself, God is just Truth.

Here is a flower, a pad, and a cloth [Swami points out to various objects on the table before Him]. To the eye, they all appear quite different. The flower is a flower, the cloth is cloth, and the pad is a pad. Despite the varying names and forms, there is common underlying factor – they all exist. This existence is the basic Truth. It is the unifying substratum behind the different names and forms. IT IS! It is the same with God. God there certainly IS, and visible also He is! God IS, IS, IS! He exists!! You should have complete and total faith in His existence. If you have this faith, you can see Him everywhere.

Summer Showers 2000/Ch.11: 24 May 2000
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/how-become-dear-lord>

Only eternal true form of God is Atma

God is formless and attribute-less. It is the devotees who attribute some names, forms, and attributes to God and feel satisfied. All names and forms are evanescent and false (*anitya and asatya*). The only eternal and true form of God is Atma. Everything in the world may change; but the Atma will never undergo a change. The entire universe is contained in the Atma. This is also called Divine consciousness or aham or Brahman. People misunderstand this eternal truth, ascribing several names and forms to it.

When the formless God assumes a form, it is natural for human beings to meditate and worship that form. People derive great satisfaction and experience bliss by doing so. It is alright as long as that form remains. Once that Divine form ceases to exist, what will you do? The happiness and bliss derived from the worship of a particular form of God are born out of your illusion only. The physical vestures last for a particular period and then cease to exist. Divinity takes different forms later.

For example, you are now attached to this physical body. You worship this body and derive great satisfaction and bliss thereby. But, after sometime, this body may disappear like the earlier Avatar. Then you should not feel sad. When the Divine Atma embodied in this physical body reaches its eternal abode, it is a matter of joy, not sorrow.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 42/Ch.5: 23 February 2009
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/love-god-and-meditate-him>

Faith is the basis of worship

A sculptor creates an idol out of a rock. Because of the form given to it, it is installed in a temple and worshipped. In fashioning the idol, the sculptor chisels away many chips of stone. The chips may proclaim verily their kinship with the idol worshipped in the temple. They may say: “You and we are one. The only difference is, you have a form and we have none.” Thus, the Divine exists both in the form and in the “formless”. It is because this concept of the Universe is not understood that faith has declined. Faith is at the root of spirituality. If you believe that God exists, He exists. If you have no belief, so far as you are concerned God does not exist. When you believe in God, you develop faith in the divinity of all things. Faith is the basis of worship. Worship leads to oneness with the Divine. The sense of separateness will persist as long as there is no God realization. Separateness ends with Realization.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 28/Ch.4: 27 February 1995
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/idol-worship-and-god-omnipresence>

Questions

- Swami says, “God is Truth”, “God is Atma” and “God is the Indweller”. How do we deepen our understanding of these and strengthen our faith in these declarations?
- How do we understand and practice - “Divinity exists both in the form and in the formless”?
- What should be the goal of our worship?

Practice

Since ancient times, many people have been making efforts to attain God by practicing four types of worship (*ārādhana*) as prescribed by the culture of India (*Bharat*): worships that are truth-based, manifestation-based, symbol-based, and step-by-step based (*satyavatī ārādhana*, *angavatī ārādhana*, *anyavatī ārādhana*, and *nidhānavatī ārādhana*).

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 29/Ch.5: 20 July 1996
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/develop-your-faith-love-god>

Truth-based Worship

World is the effect and God is the Cause

The first is truth-based worship (*satyavatī ārādhana*). In this type of worship, the devotee worships God with the faith that He is immanent in every particle of the universe, just as butter is present in every drop of milk. Like oil in sesame seeds and fire in wood, God pervades the entire manifest creation. The devotee worships God with the awareness that Lord Vishnu pervades the entire world (*Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat*) and believes that the world is the effect and God is the cause.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 29/Ch.5: 20 July 1996
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/develop-your-faith-love-god>

God is both Being and Becoming

God is the material cause of creation, of the cosmos, of the universe. He is the substance, the basis, the material cause. God is also the efficient cause. He is both transcendental and phenomenal, both Being and Becoming. Like silver in the cup, the cosmos is all God. He has been manifesting Himself as all this. He has willed to become all this. In everything (*padārtha*), He, the highest Truth (*Param-artha*), is immanent. In the absence of this highest Truth, nothing can exist. Each one is sustained by the all-comprehensive Reality.

Sutra Vahini Ch.7
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/divine-will-cause-all-causes>

Manifestation-based Worship

Worship the five elements as manifestation of God

There is another subtle path by name manifestation-based worship (*angavatī ārādhana*). Those who follow this path consider each of the five elements, namely, ether, air, fire, water, and earth, as the manifestation of God and worship them. These five elements are represented in the human body as senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell. Even today, people worship water as Mother Ganga, air as Vāyu Deva, and rain as Varuna Deva. In this manner, Indians (*Bharatiyas*) have been worshipping the five elements in accordance with their ancient culture. This is *angavatī ārādhana*.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 29/Ch.5: 20 July 1996
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/develop-your-faith-love-god>

God Permeates the Entire Creation

God permeates the entire universe in the form of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*). The five elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether are the embodiments of God, who manifests in the entire creation as Truth, Auspiciousness and Beauty (*Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram*). Every human being is therefore a manifestation of *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. God manifests as sound, touch, form, taste and smell in the elements – ether, air, fire, water and earth, respectively. Since He permeates all the five elements and the entire creation, the Upanishads declare, "the entire world is permeated by God (*Īshāvāsyam idam jagat*).” God is omnipresent. There is no place in the world where He does not exist. With hands, feet, eyes, heads, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe (*Sarvataḥ pānipādam tat sarvato 'kshi shiromukham, sarvataḥ shrutimalloke sarvamāvṛutya tishṭhati*).

Summer Showers 2002/Ch.11: 26 May 2002
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/sense-control-highest-sadhana>

Sanctity of the five elements must be preserved

The human being is like a bottle. If evil thoughts dominate, the body indulges in bad actions; if good thoughts prevail, the body performs good actions. The body is not responsible for the actions; the thoughts that propel the body are. Bad feelings, bad thoughts and bad company provide the stimulus for bad actions. You must understand this basic fact. You should have good thoughts and aim at purity in character. Recognizing the five elements as God's gifts, their sanctity must be

preserved. They must be made use of in a proper and befitting manner. Why do you sing bhajans? Enquire deeply into the meaning of this practice. Bhajan singing provides an opportunity to chant the Lord's name in a sweet and pleasant manner. The vibrations associated with the divine Name then suffuse into the atmosphere and cleanse it; the pollution present is wiped out. Thus, the basic purpose of bhajans is to convert bad into good.

Summer Showers 2000/Ch.2: 15 May 2000
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/sanctity-five-elements>

Symbol-based Worship

Realize the unity of Name and form

The third path is the symbol-based worship (*anyavatī ārādhanā*). People who follow this path ascribe to God various names and forms with specific attributes, just as the one who wields the kodanda bow (*kodanda-pāni*) symbolizes Rama and the one who sports Ganga in his matted locks (*Gangadhari*) denotes God (*Ishwara*). Similarly, Vishnu holds conch, disc, mace, and lotus in His four hands. Krishna sports a peacock feather on His head and plays on His divine flute. In the same way, Saraswati is considered as the one who holds the musical instrument Vīnā in her hand (*Vīnā-Pāni*).

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 29/Ch.5: 20 July 1996
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/develop-your-faith-love-god/>

In this manner, our ancients worshipped God by attributing various symbols to them. One is the form and the other is the name. They worshipped God by attributing a specific name and form. Only when you realize the unity of the name and form can you experience divinity. This is a matchbox (Swami materialized a matchbox). The same power is present in the matchbox and also in the matchstick. One symbolizes the form and the other the name. Just as fire is produced when a matchstick is struck on a matchbox, likewise the fire of wisdom (*Jnānāgni*) is manifested when name and form combine. The same power is present in the name as well as in the form. The name points to the form and the form reminds of the name. The same principle of unity and divinity is present in both. When the name and form combine, divine principle manifests there.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 29/Ch.5: 20 July 1996
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/develop-your-faith-love-god/>

Idols are pointers to Divinity

Do not have any doubts that the Divine is present here and not there. He is Omnipresent. You can find Him wherever you seek Him." What Prahlada declared millennia ago, the scientists of today are discovering, namely, that the energy that is present in the all-pervading atom is divine. I point my finger at the mike and tell you: "This is a mike." After you have seen the mike, you don't need the finger to point it out. I point to a flower and say: "This is a flower." After you have seen the flower, there is no need for the finger to point it. Likewise, idols were used to point out God. Until God-realization comes, idols are essential. After God-realization there is no need for idols.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 28/Ch.4: 27 February 1995
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/idol-worship-and-god-omnipresence/>

Nine-fold Devotional Worship

The fourth type of worship follows nine paths of devotion (*nidhānavatī*). This spiritual exercise (*sadhana*) is performed by:

1. Listening to the sacred word (*Shravanam*)
2. Singing the Glory of the Lord (*Kīrtanam*)
3. Chanting the Name of the Lord (*Vishnu smaranam*)
4. Service to the Lotus Feet (*Pāda sevanam*)
5. Offering salutations to the Lord (*Vandanam*)
6. Offering worship (*Archanam*)
7. Service to the Lord (*Dāsyam*)
8. Being the Lord's friend and companion (*Sākhyam*)
9. Surrender (*Atma nivedanam*)

By following these nine paths of devotion, people contemplated on God and attained the goal of life. One can attain the goal of life by the power of upāsānā (worship). One should never forget the goal of life or deviate from the chosen path; one should attain it by one-pointed devotion.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 29/Ch.5: 20 July 1996
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/develop-your-faith-love-god/>

Recognize the true significance of the nine-fold path

To attain Divinity, to sanctify their body, time, and life, people perform countless good actions and makes various efforts. Despite ceaseless spiritual practice (*sādhanā*), people are unable to achieve the purity they desire. Why? They do not recognize what spiritual practice means, its results, its goal. First recognize what spiritual practice means, and you can achieve your objective (*sādhyam*). One wastes one's entire life by not

grasping the true significance of the nine-fold path.

What is meant by spiritual practice? Recitation of the Name, meditation, devotional singing yoga, good deeds - do these constitute spiritual practice? Not at all. To transform bad into good is true spiritual practice. To turn sorrow into happiness is spiritual practice.

Summer Showers 1991/Ch.13: 01 June 1991
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/spiritual-discipline-sadhana>

Listening (Shravanam) is the most important first step

In every field, listening (*shravanam*) is the most important first step. Even in the nine paths of devotion, listening is the first step. You begin with listening and gradually reach the stage of total surrender (*atma-nivedanam*), which marks the completion of the journey.

That is full, this is full.
When the full is taken out of the full, What remains is again the full
(*Pūrnamadah pūrnamidam, Pūrnat pūrnamudachyate,*
Pūrnasya pūrnamādāya, Pūrnamevā vashishyate).

The completion of the journey marks full circle. If you leave the journey in the middle, then it is incomplete, like a semi-circle. When you complete the full circle, you reach the point from which you began. But if the journey is incomplete, it is like the letter C of the English alphabet; it begins at one point and ends at another. There is a wide gap between the beginning and end points. This wide gap denotes doubt.

Doubt is like a deep valley that is impossible to cross. Therefore, get rid of doubt and endeavor to complete the journey. Your learning of the alphabet is complete only when you start from A and reach Z. But if you start from A and reach only up to S or any other letter in the middle, your learning is incomplete. Once you start the journey, continue till you reach the goal. Likewise, the spiritual journey begins with faith and ends in bliss. On the nine-fold path of devotion, you begin with listening and end with self-surrender.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 29/Ch.58: 7 July 1996
<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/make-faith-basis-your-life>

Questions

- What's the important first step in Nine-fold devotional worship, and why?
- How does worship and spiritual practice help us transform bad into good ... sorrow into happiness?
- What are the four types of worship and how do they help the spiritual seeker?

Experience

Samādhi should not be foolishly understood as blankness or darkness of the mind. The state of mind which goes with japa has been described as the state of Samādhi. Here the word japa does not mean holding a chain of beads and merely turning the beads on your fingers. Japa means continual repetition of the name of the Lord. This repetition may or may not be loudly done. It should at least be done in your mind. This repetition of the name of the Lord in one's own mind is called japa.

Summer Showers 1973/Ch.7: 26 May 1973

<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/turn-your-mind-inward-atma>

Samādhi is equal-mindedness

What does Samādhi mean? Is it a state of trance? No. Is it a state of emotional utterance? No. Is it absorption in one's self? No. When people refer to a man in trance or in unconscious state as one experiencing Samādhi, they are thoroughly mistaken. It may be a case of hysteria or of epilepsy. It may be the result of some strong emotion, or one caused by excitement. The true meaning of Samādhi is: it is a state of union with Sat. Sama (equal) + Dhi (mind), equal-mindedness is Samādhi. To treat alike pleasure and pain, heat and cold, darkness and light is true Samādhi. This is the quality of Sat. It has no pleasure or pain. It is all-pervading.

Sri Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. 27/Ch.17: 26 June 1994

<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/purity-thought-leads-divinity>

Samādhi can admit nothing other than Brahman

When one knows that there is not one iota of distinction between the individual (*Jiva*) and the Atma, that they are one and the same, then it is the highest samādhi. It is the fruit of ripest meditation, the dearest moment of yogis, the destroyer of ignorance, the signal of the grace of God. Incessant thirst to know the Atma as all is worthy to be encouraged and welcomed, for it is the path through which all doubts can be eliminated.

Samādhi is of two types, differentiated and undifferentiated. In differentiated samādhi, the threefold nature of knower, knowing, and known will still persist. When it is realized that the knower is Brahman, knowing is also Brahman, and the thing to be known is also Brahman, then there is no more agitation or activity; that is undifferentiated samādhi.

Samādhi is the ocean to which all spiritual discipline flows. The seven streams of inner sense control, outer sense control, posture, regulation of the breath, mind control, concentration, and meditation on the Divine all find their consummation in samādhi. Every trace of name and form disappear in that Ocean. The server and the one who is served, the meditator and the one who is meditated upon - all such duality is dispelled and destroyed.

One won't even experience the experience, that is to say, one won't be aware that one is experiencing! Oneself alone, nothing else - that is samādhi. If there is anything else, it cannot be samādhi. It is something like a dream, a fantasy, a passing vision at best. Samādhi can admit nothing other than Brahman.

Prasanthi Vahini Ch.29

<https://saispeaks.sathyasai.org/discourse/eightfold-path-yoga>

Questions

- What's the true meaning of Samādhi?
- What do we understand by “differentiated” and “undifferentiated” Samādhi? What is the relationship between them?
- How can simple practice of continuous repetition (*Japa*) lead to state of Samādhi?



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