

Your very dear devotees worship. You have many other forms, but I wish to see Your form that is especially liked by the devotees. Please be merciful and show me that form, for only that form worshiped by the devotees can perfectly satisfy all the demands of the senses.”¹⁹

In his *Bhakti-sandarbha*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī points out that this *dhyāna* should be on the form of the Lord situated in His eternal abode, not-as for the *yogīs*-on the form of the Lord in the heart.

Internal Worship (mānasa-pūjā)

After meditating on the form of the Lord, you should engage your mind in worshipping that form. *Dhyāna* is the preparation for *mānasa-pūjā*; whereas *dhyāna* is passive, *mānasa-pūjā* is active. Whatever items you offer externally you should first offer internally with full devotion and attention. Also, whereas the items offered in external worship may be simple due to modest means, in the course of *mānasa-pūjā* one may perform very opulent worship of the Lord. *Mānasa-pūjā* is the culmination of *dhyāna*. The *śāstra* points out that for one performing *sādhana-bhakti*, the *pūjā* with paraphernalia is ineffective without *mānasa-pūjā*. *Pūjā* performed with paraphernalia but without *mānasa-pūjā* may be the cause of offense for the neophyte, for he will tend to see the deity as a material object. Thus *mānasa-pūjā* is essential in all types of deity worship. Elevated souls (especially *sannyāsīs*, who are always traveling) often perform only this type of worship, as exemplified by Nṛsiṁhānanda Brahmācārī.

Usually *dhyāna* and *mānasa-pūjā* are performed for the main deity, but may also be performed for the spiritual master and Lord Caitanya in preliminary worship.

The Main Worship

Receiving the Lord

Offering the items of *āsana*, *svāgata*, *pādya*, *arghya*, *ācamana*, and *madhuparka* are all traditional Vedic ways of welcoming a king or other distinguished guest. Pure water may be offered in place of any or all these items. One may put flowers or *tulasī* leaves into water and offer it, thinking of the absent items.

[5] Inviting the Lord by offering Him a seat (āsana) and seeing to His comfort (svāgata)

Āsana means the situation or sitting place in which the person being wor-

Mānasa-pūjā: It is recommended that *mānasa-pūjā* include the same number or more items as the external worship will include, not less. Thus, if worshipping with sixteen items in the external worship, the *mānasa-pūjā* would also include sixteen items.

➤ See *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, Chapter 1, text 155–161)

➤ See *The Nectar of Devotion*, Ch. 10, for the story of the *brāhmaṇa* devotee who burned his finger on *mānasa-pūjā* sweet rice.

Svāgata, the second item in the list of sixteen *upacāras*, is not mentioned as a separate *upacāra* in the list of sixty-four given in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*.

shipped is offered a certain type of worship. In the list of 64 items given in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains the āsana in relation to the spiritual master:

There must be an *āsana*, a sitting place before the altar. This *āsana* is for the spiritual master. The disciple brings everything before the spiritual master, and the spiritual master offers everything to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.²⁰

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained to the *pūjārīs* in Mayapur that this *āsana* being offered to the spiritual master refers to the *bhoga āsana* (offered during the *bhoga* offering).

At other times during the worship an *āsana* is offered to the Lord. Therefore in this *paddhati* the *āsana* mentioned here will be understood to refer to offering an *āsana* to the Lord.

In situations where it is not practical to offer an *āsana*, or where there are no mats or cushions for *āsanās*, meditate on offering the deities an *āsana* and place a few flowers or flower petals as *āsanās* where the deities' would stand or sit to receive a service

When offering an *āsana* to the deities, escort Them to the *āsana* with a gesture of the hand.

Svāgata means “welcome.” With affection meditate on welcoming the Lord and satisfying Him nicely.

Āsana as Situation of Worship

Sometimes the offering of *upacāras* is divided into groups according to the deity's change of location or situation of worship. Below is a list of these groups, each of which is designated as an *āsana* in *pāñcarātra*.

- 1) ***mantrāsana***: The Lord is received with *āsana*, *svāgata*, *pādyā*, *arghya*, *ācamana*, *madhuparka*, and *punar-ācamana*. The concluding elements of worship such as chanting *mūla-mantra-japa*, offering prayers to the Lord, asking forgiveness for offenses, circumambulation, and obeisances are also offered in this *āsana*. *Mantrāsana* is the basic *āsana*, to which the deity returns several times within the course of elaborate worship.
- 2) ***Snānāsana***: The Lord is offered shoes and led to the bathing area, where He is offered a toothbrush and tongue scraper (if they have not been offered when He was first awakened). At this time oil is rubbed on His body and He is bathed, dried, and offered a *gāmchā*

Gesture of the hands:

Whenever moving the deity from one position to another, indicate where you would like each deity to sit (the *āsana*).

This is done by holding the hands together, palms up, indicating the direction toward which you will carry the deity.

Only small metal or wood deities can be moved, not marble deities.

(a fine cotton towel) and *ācamana*.

- 3) ***Alaṅkāṛāsana***: The Lord is again offered shoes and led to the *alaṅkāṛāsana*, where He is offered cloth, *upavīta*, ornaments, sandalwood paste, flower decorations and garlands, incense, and lamps. (The *pūjārī* may meditate that he is offering Kṛṣṇa many types of beautiful shoes befitting each occasion.)
- 4) ***Yātrāsana***: After decoration the Lord may go out of the temple on procession in a palanquin. This is sometimes done by meditation.
- 5) ***Bhogāsana***: The Lord is again offered shoes, and then He is led to the *bhogāsana*, where He is offered *āsana*, water for washing His hands and mouth, *pādyā*, *ācamana*, *arghya*, and water for His hands. Then He is offered a meal, drinking water, water for washing His hands, mouth, and feet, *ācamana*, and finally *tāmbūla*.
- 6) ***Paryāṅkāśana***: The Lord gives *darśana* during the day in *pari-āṅkāśana*. *Paryāṅka* means “couch.” Thus the Lord relaxes, receiving the various offerings of the visiting devotees.
- 7) ***Śayanāsana***: Placing the Lord in a bed to take rest is called *śayanāsana*.

In elaborate worship, before offering the items particular to a given *āsana*, one generally offers the Lord the first five of the sixteen: *āsana*, *svāgata*, *pādyā*, *arghya*, and *ācamana*.

[6] Offering a twig for brushing the teeth (*danta-kāṣṭha* or *danta-dhāvana*)

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

After *maṅgala-ārati*, the deity is supposed to wash His teeth by using a twig; therefore a twig must be offered.²¹

The same type of twig you use for brushing your own teeth you may offer to the Lord. You may also offer a tongue scraper at this time.

Ingredients

In accordance with the Vedic tradition, twigs or leaves of certain trees should be used for brushing the teeth, because they contain natural cleansing agents that keep teeth and gums healthy. It is said that a person gains long life from brushing his teeth with a twig that comes from a tree which oozes white sap, while a bitter twig yields good health, a pungent twig yields strength, and an astringent twig yields a comfortable life. (Twigs from the highly antiseptic *nīm* tree are most commonly used.) The twig should be

Danta-kāṣṭha: Alternatively, you may offer *danta-kāṣṭha* just after waking the Lord, before performing *maṅgala-ārati*.

In many parts of the world twigs that are suitable for cleaning the teeth are not available, therefore offer a twig by substitution using either water or flower petals and *mantra*

the diameter of the middle or little finger, twenty-three to twenty-five and a half centimeters long (nine to ten inches), with bark intact. One should not brush one's teeth with twigs from the *palāśa*, banyan, or *pippal* trees, as these trees are worshipable. One should also avoid using twigs from the *mālatī*, *bilva*, *karavī*, *arka*, *khadhira*, and mango trees. (When Śrīla Prabhupāda was in the Western countries, he frequently used twigs from the eucalyptus tree for brushing his teeth.)

In Jagannātha Purī Lord Jagannātha is offered twigs from either from the Muturi tree and sometimes from the Kumbhatuaa tree. The sticks are scented with camphor and sandalwood powder.

How to offer

While ringing the bell, hold the smaller end of the twig in front of the deity's mouth and chant *eṣa danta-kāṣṭhaḥ* and the *mūla-mantra* of the deity being worshiped.

[7] Washing the Lord's feet (pādya)

Now the Lord is seated we are starting the worship. So now is a good time to remember that we are worshiping his lotus feet and they are our ultimate goal. We are starting at this point.

Pādya, water for washing the Lord's lotus feet, may be offered before and after the Lord eats, as a reception after *āsana*, after waking the Lord, and before putting Him to rest.

Ingredients

Fill the *pādya pātra* with water then add ingredients from one of the following lists:

- Lotus petals, *tulasī* leaves, *darbha* grass, and *śyāma-dhānya* (grain).
- It may also contain lotus flowers *dūrvā* sprouts, *aparajita* and *sya-maka*
- Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī gives references from Vedic literature stating that the water meant for bathing the feet should be combined with millet seeds, *dūrvā* grass mixed in water, *viṣṇukrānta* flowers and other items.²²
- Alternatively, you may simply add rose water or rose-petals to fresh water.

Crush the grains so that the essence of the grain is emulsified into the water.

If lotus flowers are unavailable
you may offer crushed lotus
seeds.

How to offer

You may offer *pādyā* either using a spoon of water from the *pādyā pātra* or the *pādyā* can be prepared in a conch and offered using the conch.

While ringing the bell in your left hand, hold the *pādyā* water near the feet of the person being worshiped. Chant the *pādyā upacāra mantra*, *etat pādyam*, and the *mūla-mantra* of the person being worshiped once. If you are worshipping a *śālagrāma-śilā* you may hold the *pādyā* water in front of the deity. Discard the water into the *snāna vedī* or the *visarjanīya-pātra*. You may offer one or two spoons of *pādyā* water.

[8] Offering arghya as a sign of welcome and respect (arghya)

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

According to their respective positions, they welcomed Lord Balarāma by giving Him in charity nice cows and *arghya* (a mixture of *ārati* water and an assortment of items such as honey, butter, flowers and sandalwood pulp).²³

Arghya is a mixture of auspicious items offered above the head of an honored guest as a reception.

Ingredients

Fill the *arghya pātra* with water then add ingredients from one of the following lists:

- flowers, white rice, barley, sesame, *dūrvā* grass, *kuśa* tips, white mustard seeds, and *gandha* (sandalwood paste)
- flowers, *dūrvā* grass and various new shoots
- yogurt, milk, white rice, *kuśa* tips, barley, sesame, and white mustard seeds
- Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī gives references from Vedic literature stating that the water used for *arghya* should include the following eight items: fragrant oil, flowers, unbroken barleycorns, husked barleycorns, the tips of *kuśa* grass, sesame seeds, mustard seeds and *dūrvā* grass.²⁴
- Alternatively, you may simply add sandalwood paste to fresh water. The water for the *arghya upacāra* may be *sāmānya-arghya* water.

If using grains, crush them so that the essence of the grain is emulsified into the water.

The *arghya pātra* may be a bowl or a conch.

➤ see explanation of *sāmānya-arghya*

How to offer

To offer a person *arghya* entails either sprinkling it on their head or offering it into their hands so they can sprinkle it over their own head. Therefore it is sometimes said an offering of *arghya* is made “to the hands.” Either way is acceptable, although offering to the hands is better because it is considered more respectful.

While ringing a bell in your left hand, hold a spoon of *arghya* water over the head or near the hands of the person being worshiped. Chant the *arghya upacāra mantra*, *idam arghyam* and the *mūla-mantra* of the person being worshiped once. After offering discard the offered *arghya* water into the *visarjanīya-pātra*.

[9] Offering water for sipping (ācamana)

Ācamana, water for sipping, may be offered after waking the Lord or before putting Him to bed, before and after offering food to the Lord, after bathing or dressing the Lord, and after putting on the Lord’s *upavīta* (*brāhmaṇa* thread).

According to Parāśara Muni, *ācamana* includes *pādyā*, *arghya*, and *ācamana*.

Ingredients

Fill the *ācamana pātra* with water then add ingredients from one of the following lists:

- ground nutmeg, ground clove, and *kakkola*-berry scent, which make it refreshing for the mouth
- Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī gives references from Vedic literature stating that the water for sipping should include jasmine flowers, ground cloves and *kakkola* berries.²⁵

Freshly ground spices make the *ācamana* more flavorsome.

How to offer

While ringing a bell in your left hand, hold a spoon of *ācamana* water before the mouth of the person being worshiped. You may offer one or three spoons of *ācamana* water. Chant the *ācamana upacāra mantra*, *idam ācamanīyam*, and the *mūla-mantra* of the person being worshiped once. After offering discard the offered *ācamana* water into the *visarjanīya-pātra*.

[10] Offering madhuparka, then water for sipping (madhuparka and punar-ācamana)

Madhuparka is a high-class refreshment offered to a respected person.

Ingredients

Madhu-parka, a small bowl containing *madhu* (honey, a little ghee, a little water, a little sugar, yogurt and milk) should be offered. This is called *madhu-parka-ācamana*.²⁶

- *Madhuparka*, composed of the auspicious elements of cow milk, yogurt, ghee, honey, and sugar.
- Alternatively, you may offer a mixture of yogurt, honey, and ghee.

According to some authorities, *madhuparka* should have four parts honey and one part each of the remaining ingredients.

How to offer

While ringing a bell in your left hand, hold a spoon of *madhuparka* before the mouth of the person being worshiped. Chant the *madhuparka upacāra mantra*, *eṣa madhuparkaḥ*, and the *mūla-mantra* of the person being worshiped once. After offering discard the offered *madhuparka* into the *visar-janīya-pātra*.

Some sources indicate that *madhuparka* should be offered in a cup to the right hand of the Lord for Him to accept. If you are offering *madhuparka* in this way then add it to the *caraṇāmṛta* when the worship is finished.

After *madhuparka*, again offer *ācamana*, *punar-ācamana*. In the standard list of sixteen *upacāras*, given by Sanātana Gosvāmī in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, *ācamana* offered after *madhuparka* is counted as a separate *upacāra* to emphasize that it must be offered after *madhuparka*. In his *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* purports, Śrīla Prabhupāda refers to it as *madhu-parka-ācamana*, thus emphasizing the same point.

Bathing the Lord (snāna)

[11] Offering the Lord shoes so He may come to the bathing place (pādukā or pādukārpaṇa)

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

One should place wooden slippers before the Lord.²⁷

Shoes may be offered whenever the Lord moves from one position to another by either showing them briefly prior to moving the deity or by moving the shoes to the new position before moving the deity. As Śrīla Prabhupāda explains when putting the deities to bed: