

# Seva and Dasyam

Letter from Sadananda  
16 February 1954

Into English, within square brackets, footnotes and

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My dear Hella, [...]

Your question about the relation between *seva* and *dasyam* is good. On the whole, *seva is everything* that a bhakta can do, from the beginners' level to the highest form of *seva* Radha can do for Krishna.

*Motive for seva is "a sense of duty" – later in raganuga-bhakti – a liking to serve one's ideal parishada, the one chosen in one's heart; and in its highest sense: prema or pure Love, which attracts, compels Him and Her to reveal Themselves, to come out from Their concealment and make Themselves available for direct experience (in prema-seva). Seva is done with body, heart, senses and words, i.e. with one's whole being and all of one's abilities.*

*In the wide sense of the word, dasyam is to know oneself to be subordinated to Godhead in loving service, and accordingly do seva. Consequently, more or less, dasyam is inherent in all forms of bhakti and prema.*

*In the narrow sense of the word, dasyam signifies an explicit, permanent sthaya-bhava<sup>1</sup> between Krishna and His dasa-s [servants], who can be and know themselves to be older and also younger than He is. This relation is expressed in the following way: "He is my Lord", which is different from vatsalyam [the parental relation]: "He is my child"; and from madhuryam [the relation between a loving wife and her husband or between a loving mistress and her beloved]: "He is my Beloved".*

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<sup>1</sup> An eternal, indestructible, living relation between the atma and Bhagavan.

Considering these specific four forms of relations: dasyam, sakhyam, vatsalyam and madhuryam, one should always have in mind that the sadhaka (the adept, who has *not* been present in His realm and served Him there since eternity) for his part – in dasyam – only knows himself to be and feel as someone who – according to his choice – wish to serve a specific [male] servant of the Lord in his service of Him [or a specific female servant of Her, Radha, in Her service of Him.]

It is a pyramid of seva, where the foundation is to know oneself to be dasa-dasa-anudasa<sup>2</sup>. On this foundation the whole lila will develop, and this is why Radha-Krishna love the dasa-dasa-anudasa-s so much. We must always take care, not to inflate ourselves [with megalomaniac pride] to a Raktaka or Rasala (servant), a Subala or Sudama (friend), a Yashoda (parent) or a [Lalita or Vishakha] (sakhi; female friend), and this is why Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami in a prayer [Vilapa-Kusumanjali, verse 16], in an inner dialogue with Radha prays: “The thought of wanting to become one of Your sakhi-s or female friends – this [service as a sakhi] I honour from a distance; may I have love for, a special liking for becoming one of Your *dasi-s* [female servants]!” [...]

From my heart, Your Sadananda

Radhe! Radhe!

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<sup>2</sup> To be a servant of a servant of a servant, who serve Bhagavan.