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**II) LESSON 11,
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**LESSONS 10-12,
TEXTS 121-164:
THE NATURE OF BHAKTI**

II) **LESSON 11, TEXTS 139-148: BHAKTI IS A UNIQUE ASPECT OF THE INTERNAL POTENCY, AND BESTOWS INCONCEIVABLE RESULTS**

- **THE UNIQUE ASPECT OF THE INTERNAL POTENCY [TEXTS 139-144]:** Bhakti is self-manifest, blissful, bestows love of God, and the supreme aspect of the delight-giving potency. Besides, bhakti magnifies inherent bliss of the Lord, who is the sole cause of devotion.
- **BHAKTI BESTOWS INCONCEIVABLE RESULTS [TEXTS 145-148]:** Bhakti is the sole basis of God realization and enables one to attain the Lord. Even bhakti in practice captivates the Lord. Furthermore, it promotes even karma to the level of supreme dharma, and transports a devotee well beyond the jurisdiction of Yamaraja.

BHAKTI IS THE UNIQUE ASPECT OF THE INTERNAL POTENCY [TEXTS 139-144]

Text 139: Bhakti is self-manifest

- Even though in the body of a deer, Mahārāja Bharata did not forget the Supreme Personality of Godhead; therefore when he was giving up the body of a deer, he loudly uttered the following prayer:
- “The Supreme Personality of Godhead is sacrifice personified. He gives the results of ritualistic activity. He is the protector of religious systems, the personification of mystic yoga, the source of all knowledge, the controller of the entire creation, and the Supersoul in every living entity. He is beautiful and attractive. I am quitting this body offering obeisances unto Him and hoping that I may perpetually engage in His transcendental loving service.”
- Uttering this, Mahārāja Bharata left his body.

- At the time of death, even more so in the body of a deer [the same was true for Gajendra in the body of an elephant], it is absolutely impossible to offer such eloquent prayers. According to JīvaG, this proves the self-manifesting nature of bhakti.

Text 140: Bhakti is blissful

- This characteristic of bhakti manifests even @ sādhanā-bhakti stage
- “We have just begun the performance of this fruitive activity, a sacrificial fire, without certainty of its result due to the many imperfections in our action. Our bodies have become black from the smoke, but we are factually pleased by the nectar of the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead, Govinda, which you are distributing.” [1.18.12]
- While everything else invariably ages to its ultimate demise, bhakti is immune to the influence of time. [9.4.67]

Text 141: Bhakti bestows love of God

- Prahlāda Mahārāja: “By these activities [sādhana-bhakti] one is able to cut down the influence of the enemies, namely lust, anger, greed, illusion, madness and jealousy, and when thus situated, one can render service to the Lord. In this way one surely attains the platform of loving service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” [7.7.33]
- A doubt may be raised though because of the following statement of Śuka [5.6.18]: “My dear King, Lord Mukunda sometimes awards liberation to those who render service to Him, but not love.”
- However, as JīvaG explains, this is due to improper understanding of the verse and incorrectly assuming “na karhicid,” to mean “not at anytime.” Its correct interpretation should mean “sometimes.”

- Conclusive meaning of the verse: While sometimes the Lord does not award love to those who worship Him; nonetheless, if such a devotee remains steadfast in his bhakti, the Lord eventually grants love for Him.
- Prahlāda conveyed the same idea in his prayers to Lord Nṛsimhadeva: “One may possess wealth, an aristocratic family, beauty, austerity, education, sensory expertise, luster, influence, physical strength, diligence, intelligence and mystic yogic power, but I think that even by all these qualifications one cannot satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead. However, one can satisfy the Lord simply by devotional service. Gajendra did this, and thus the Lord was satisfied with him.”

Text 142: The Lord is fully and eternally blissful, and thus bhakti unto Him also bestows bliss to the bhakta, or devotee

- This may then raise another question: “How could bhakti give Him pleasure?”
- JīvaG resolves this dilemma by pointing out that it is the bhakti itself that is the cause of His pleasure: The Lord is the embodiment of supreme bliss and He has this pleasure potency [hlādinī-śakti], which is part of His svarūpa-śakti, the potency that constitutes His very nature. And this is what that gives bliss to the devotee as well, just as the light emanating from a luminous source illuminates itself and other objects.
- “When the Supreme Lord is pleased by a person’s actions, automatically all the demigods, human beings, animals, birds, bees, creepers, trees, grass and all other living entities, beginning with Lord Brahmā, are pleased. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Supersoul of everyone, and He is by nature fully pleased. Nonetheless, He came to the arena of Mahārāja Gaya and said, “I am fully pleased.” [5.15.13]

Texts 143-144: Bhakti magnifies the inherent bliss of the Lord, who is the sole source of that bhakti unto Him

- Sūta exemplifies this very feature, while describing Kṛṣṇa's returning to Dvārakā after long absence: “The citizens arrived before the Lord with their respective presentations, offering them to the fully satisfied and self-sufficient one, who, by His own potency, incessantly supplies others. These presentations were like the offering of a lamp to the sun. Yet the citizens began to speak in ecstatic language to receive the Lord, just as wards welcome their guardian and father.” [1.11.4-5]
- Mārkaṇḍeya's prayers to Lord Nara & Nārāyaṇa: “O Almighty Lord, how can I possibly describe You? You awaken the vital air, which then impels the mind, senses and power of speech to act. This is true for all ordinary conditioned souls and even for great demigods like Brahmā and Śiva. So it is certainly true for me. Nevertheless, You become the intimate friend of those who worship You.” [12.8.40]

INTERMISSION

BHAKTI BESTOWS INCONCEIVABLE RESULTS [TEXTS 145-148]

Texts 145-147: Bhakti is the sole basis and attainment of Bhagavān realization; even bhakti in practice captivates the Lord

शृणवन्ति गायन्ति गृणन्ति अभीक्ष्णशः
स्मरन्ति नन्दन्ति तवेहितं जनाः ।
त एव पश्यन्ति अचिरेण तावकं
भवप्रवाहोपरं पदाम्बुजम् ॥

- Queen Kuntī's prayers: "Those who continuously hear Your pastimes, sing about them, describes them to others, remembers them, or who delight in the recitation of those pastimes by others, soon behold Your lotus feet, which put an end to the flow of material existence." [1.8.36]



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- “My dear Uddhava, I am the Supreme Lord of all worlds, and I create and destroy this universe, being its ultimate cause. I am thus the Absolute Truth, and one who worships Me with unfailing devotional service comes to Me.” [11.18.45]
- Krsna: “O Arjuna, that Supreme Person is attained only by unalloyed devotion.” [Bg 8.22]
- “My dear Uddhava, the unalloyed devotional service rendered to Me by My devotees brings Me under their control. I cannot be thus controlled by those engaged in mystic yoga, Sāṅkhya philosophy, pious work, Vedic study, austerity or renunciation. Only by practicing unalloyed devotional service with full faith in Me can one obtain Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I am naturally dear to My devotees, who take Me as the only goal of their loving service. By engaging in such pure devotional service, even the dog-eaters can purify themselves from the contamination of their low birth.”

Carucandra Dasa

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- Kṛṣṇa's conclusion on the glorification of bhakti in a series of verses also refers specifically to sādhanā-bhakti: “My dear Uddhava, if My devotee has not fully conquered his senses, he may be harassed by material desires, but because of his unflinching devotion for Me, he will not be defeated by sense gratification. Just as a blazing fire turns firewood into ashes, similarly, devotion unto Me completely burns to ashes sins committed by My devotees. The unalloyed devotional service rendered to Me by My devotees brings Me under their control. I cannot be thus controlled by those engaged in mystic yoga, Sāṅkhya philosophy, pious work, Vedic study, austerity or renunciation. Only by practicing unalloyed devotional service with full faith in Me can one obtain Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I am naturally dear to My devotees, who take Me as the only goal of their loving service. By engaging in such pure devotional service, even the dog-eaters can purify themselves from the contamination of their low birth. Neither religious activities endowed with honesty and mercy nor knowledge obtained with great penance can completely purify one's consciousness if they are bereft of loving service to Me.” [11.14.18-22]

- What are the symptoms when sādhanā-bhakti fructifies to its perfection?
 - “If one’s hairs do not stand on end, how can the heart melt? And if the heart does not melt, how can tears of love flow from the eyes? If one does not cry in spiritual happiness, how can one render loving service to the Lord? And without such service, how can the consciousness be purified? A devotee whose speech is sometimes choked up, whose heart melts, who cries continually and sometimes laughs, who feels ashamed and cries out loudly and then dances — a devotee thus fixed in loving service to Me purifies the entire universe.” [11.14.23-24]

Text 148:

- **Bhakti promotes even karma to the level of supreme dharma**
 - “O pious Uddhava, all worldly endeavors, although without value, like fleeing out of fear, become exalted to the level of dharma, if they are dedicated w/out motive to Me, the Supreme.” [11.29.21]
- **Bhakti transports a devotee beyond the jurisdiction of Yama**
 - “This path of devotion immediately purifies even those who are hostile to the gods or even to to all creatures if they hear about it, repeat to others, meditate upon it, honor it, or even approve of its practice by others.” [11.2.12]
 - “Even a great sinner becomes absolved of all sins by associating with those who are associated with the devotees of Lord Krsna.” [Brahma-Nāradiya Purāṇa]

- Yamarāja's orders to his servants:
 - “My dear servants, please do not approach such devotees, for they have fully surrendered to the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They are equal to everyone, and their narrations are sung by the demigods and the inhabitants of Siddhaloka. Please do not even go near them. They are always protected by the club of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore Lord Brahmā and I and even the time factor are not competent to chastise them. Paramahaṁsas are exalted persons who have no taste for material enjoyment and who drink the honey of the Lord's lotus feet. Bring to me for punishment only persons who are averse to the taste of that honey, who do not associate with paramahaṁsas and who are attached to family life and worldly enjoyment, which form the path to hell. Please bring to me only those sinful persons who do not use their tongues to chant the holy name and qualities of Kṛṣṇa, whose hearts do not remember the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa even once, and whose heads do not bow down even once before Lord Kṛṣṇa. Send me those who do not perform their duties toward Viṣṇu, which are the only duties in human life. Please bring me all such fools and rascals.” [6.3.27-29]