

**I) LESSON 10, TEXTS 121-138: PURIFYING AND NOURISHING
POWER OF DEVOTION, WHICH IS NIRGUṆA**

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

**III) LESSON 12,
TEXTS 149-164:
PARTICIPATION
ONCE IN BHAKTI
LEADS ONTO
PERFECTION**

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**LESSONS 10-12,
TEXTS 121-164:
THE NATURE OF BHAKTI**

III) **LESSON 12, TEXTS 149-164: PARTICIPATION ONCE IN BHAKTI LEADS ONTO PERFECTION**

- **THE POWER OF A SINGLE ACT OF DEVOTION—IT BEARS FRUIT IN THE OFFENSELESS HEART [TEXTS 149-157]:** . **And what is that fruit?** The Supreme Lord awards such a person complete freedom from fear. JivaG exemplifies this fact by citing numerous scriptural references
- **SOMETIMES THE LORD PROVOKES ONE THRU DESIRES [TEXTS 158-164]:** This is to intensify the normal prārabdha-karma of such devotees just to increase their hankering to attain Him. JivaG illustrates this fact by citing examples of Bharata Maharaja and Nārada Muni.

THE POWER OF A SINGLE ACT OF DEVOTION—IT BEARS FRUIT IN THE OFFENSELESS HEART [TEXTS 149-157]

Texts 149-150: The power of a single act of devotion

- Śaunaka Ṛṣi: One’s entire life becomes successful merely by once serving the Lord [2.3.17]
- Any sort of bhakti destroys all sins and the devotee attains liberation [Laghu Bhāgavata, Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa, Skanda Purāṇa, Brahma-Nāradiya Purāṇa. Padma Purāṇa].
- Devahūti: “A person who casts off lethargy and chants the name of Lord Nārāyaṇa even once, becomes pure in heart and attains liberation.” [Padma Purāṇa]

- “If one surrenders to the Lord just once, entreating the Lord with the words, ‘I am Yours,’ the Lord awards such a person complete freedom from fear.” [Garuḍa Purāṇa]
- Śaunaka Ṛṣi: “If a person, who has fallen into this fearful material existence, helplessly chants the names of the Lord, which is feared by fear personified, he is immediately delivered by the power of the name.” [1.1.14]
- Citraketu to Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa: “O Lord, it is not at all astonishing that those who see You become free from all sins, because even an outcaste person becomes liberated from material existence simply by hearing Your name just once.” [6.16.44]

Texts 151-152: Bhakti remains potent under all circumstances—even indirect or a semblance of devotion [भक्ति-आभास] ⇒ destroys all sins, liberates from material existence, and then transports one to the supreme abode—the glories of bhakti are thus real indeed!

- “It is better to live for 5 days as a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu than to live for millions of years devoid of bhakti to Lord Keśava.” [Viṣṇu-dharmottara Purāṇa]
- How does JīvaG resolve an apparent contradiction?
 - On one hand, the devotee is freed off his sinful reactions—liberation, and then attainment of the supreme abode—overwhelming scriptural evidence
 - On the other hand, however, the same scriptures also says that the Jīva, while offering prayers in the womb of his mother, becomes bound to material existence as soon as takes birth [3.31.12-21]

- **Explanation:** The experience of the Jīva’s praying in the womb is not necessarily universal—knowledge of the Lord does not manifest to all the Jīvas within the womb, unless those whose knowledge had been awakened by the association of devotees in his/her past life ⇒ get to pray to the Lord within the womb, while a vast majority of the Jīvas remain bound in material existence ∴ bhakti remains potent under all circumstances
- **Even indirect or a semblance of devotion [भक्ति-आभास] ⇒ destroys all sins, liberates from material existence, and then transports one to the supreme abode**
 - “Even sinners attain the supreme goal merely by being glanced upon by those who are dedicated to the service of the unattached devotees of Lord Viṣṇu.” [Brahma-Nāradiya Purāṇa]
 - Yama to his servants: “If one has installed a deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa with devotion, then 90,000 of his future generations are outside your rule.” [7.10.18]

- Lord Nṛsimhadeva to Prahlāda: “O, sinless saint, your father has been cleansed along with 21 generations of forefathers because of you, the purifier of the dynasty, have taken birth in his family.” [7.10.18]
- **Even भक्ति-आभास ⇒ ⇒ transport one to the supreme abode**
 - Illustrated in two stories from Brahma-Nāradiya Purāṇa: i) Because of under the influence of intoxication with wine, they imagined that they’d become cuckoo birds, they danced in an old temple of the Lord while holding a strip of worn cloth tied to a pole ⇒ this action was resembling to one installing a flag on a temple ⇒ attained the abode of the Lord. ii) A bird was shot by a hunter, but then before the hunter could get hold of it, the bird was snatched by a dog in his mouth, and then circumambulated around the temple ⇒ attained the abode of the Lord.
 - Another story of Prahlāda’s pervious life when he was an ordinary person who had a relationship with a prostitute, but once had a fight with her. As a result of being so upset that he was unable to eat or sleep the whole day and night. By coincidence that day was the appearance day of Lord Nṛsimhadeva ⇒ in the next life, received the mercy of Nārada and then became a great devotee of the Lord.

Text 153-157: The glories of bhakti are real, but offenses obstruct devotion

- Bhakti performed just once with slight effort is instrumental in bringing the Supreme Lord under one's control.
- Lord Śiva: “O best of the dvijas, when a person looks upon the form of the Lord, the Lord also looks at that person every day. When a person takes shelter of the Lord, the Lord reciprocally takes refuge in that person, and when one worships the Lord, the Lord eternally worships her or him in return.” [Brama-Purāṇa]
- Numerous such scriptural descriptions shouldn't be taken as trivial, because these types of results are renowned in the pastimes of Ajāmila and several others.

■ Offenses, however, obstruct devotion

- At present, it is generally the case that people don't experience the result of chanting due to offenses.
- A representative illustration is the story of King Nṛga, who said: “O Keśava, because I was devoted to the brāhmaṇas, munificent in offering charity, devoted to You and anxious to obtain a direct vision of You, the memory of my past life has not been lost, right up to the present.” [10.64.25]
- King Nṛga had to accept the body of a chameleon due to his offense of inadvertently offering the same cow in charity to two different brāhmaṇas. Besides, he was guilty of considering the glories of bhakti as exaggeration, otherwise he would not have been transferred to the abode of Yama, in spite of having performed bhakti. In fact, his being sent to Yama contradicted his own order to his servants.
- There is a story of King Śatadhanu in Viṣṇu-Purāṇa, who had to be born as a dog, although he was dedicated to the worship of the Lord, just because he had a brief conversation with a critic of the Vedas and Vaiṣṇavas.

- **Repetition of devotional practices, such as hearing and chanting, is prescribed in bona fide scriptures to eliminate offenses**
 - “Repetition [of the practices to obtain the Absolute] is necessary because the Upaniṣads repeatedly instruct one to do so.” [4.1.1]
 - This is because it produces unprecedented bliss at every step. This is especially recommended to neophyte devotees, who have yet to attain perfection, as offenses must still be present that are causing obstacles.
- **Among many, the following five are most prominent effects of offenses**
 - i. Crookedness—mere show of their own devotion, but would criticize sincere devotees
 - ii. Faithlessness
 - iii. Absorption in objects that erode one’s faith in the Lord—distraction
 - iv. Slackness in devotion
 - v. Pride arising from one’s own bhakti

INTERMISSION

SOMETIMES THE LORD PROVOKES ONE THRU DESIRES [TEXTS 158-164]

Text 158: The Lord personally intensifies the normal prārabdha-karma of such devotees just to increase their hankering to attain Him

- The intensification of Bharata's desire to attain the Lord in his next life, when he had to accept a deer's body in his next life, and thereafter in his 3rd life as Jaḍa-Bharata
- Another example is the past life of Nārada as the young son of a maidservant. Although he had attained the love of God, **the Lord preserved a trace of material desire in him** to magnify his efforts to attain Him. [1.6.22]

■ **Texts 159-160: Slackening of devotion**

- The elephant Gajendra [formerly a great king and devotee named Indradumna, but due to his offense to the sage Agastya Muni, he was cursed to take birth as an elephant], during his stage of sensual engagement, is an example of a devotee who became absorbed in objects that hindered his devotion because of an offense.
- Despite knowing well, how does a devotee end up committing an offense?

Despite possessing sufficient discrimination, the devotee is unable to check his slackness

Continues to periodically engage in ds of his liking

Profound insincerity of heart

Constitute an offense

- **A single act of devotion bears fruit in the offenceless heart**
 - The principle stated earlier that bhakti performed even once bring forth the fruit of devotion is certainly true, **PROVIDED** there are no offenses, past or present.
 - **EXCEPTION**, however, at the time of death if somehow the devotee manages to perform any type of ds even once, it is sufficient regardless of the circumstances.
 - Nonetheless, at the time of death only a person who has perfected his or her worship of the Lord, either in this or past life, manages to chant and remember the holy name [अन्ते-नारायण-स्मृति] ⇒ after giving up the body, he is rewarded with direct vision of the Lord.
 - Ajāmila: “Although I am most unfortunate, I must have performed some pious actions in the past by which I have been blessed with the vision of these exalted devotees. By seeing them, my heart has become filled with joy.” [16.2.32]

■ **Texts 161-162: Direct vision of the Lord is positive attainment of His abode**

- Why was it that in his birth as a deer, although Bharata chanted the name of the Lord while giving up his deer body, he did not go directly to the abode of the Lord, but obtained another body?
- It should be understood that, despite taking another body, he attained direct vision of the Lord in that very same body, because the Lord is always manifest in the heart of such devotees. The same is true with Ajāmila.
- All of Ajāmila’s sins were eradicated from the very first utterance of the name as Devahūti proclaims: “I offer obeisances unto the Lord who is the embodiment of pure consciousness. Simply by remembering His name, whether at the time of death or while living, all sins of human beings are immediately destroyed.” [Padma-Purāṇa]

■ **Texts 163-164: Bhakti manifests in proportion to a devotee's qualification**

- Uddhava: “O Lord Kṛṣṇa, human beings who have tasted Your extraordinary pastimes, which are like nectar for the ears and which are the peak of auspiciousness, give up the craving for all other objects.” [11.6.44]
- Parīkṣit: “Although I have even given up drinking water, I am not at all afflicted by the hunger that is excruciatingly difficult to bear, because I am drinking the ambrosia of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes flowing from your lotus mouth.” [10.1.13]