

Chapter 11: Prapatti

1. You have already explained to me about bhakti yoga. Now, please tell me something more about the second means of attainment of moksha, namely prapatti.

Prapatti is also called Saranagati, Bharanyasa, Bhara Samarpana and Nyasa. Here, we seek the Lord as the sole refuge, for salvation. We surrender ourselves unto Him; and pray for salvation.

2. How frequently is this prapatti to be performed?.How is it different from bhakti yoga?.

Prapatti has to be performed only once, in the life time. Bhakti Yoga, on the other hand, has to be performed throughout one's life. May be in sub-sequent lives also.

3. What are the accessories (angas) for Prapatti?

There are five accessories. One, who does prapatti, must do the following:

1. He must decide to do hereafter, only what will be pleasing to the Lord, as laid down by the sastras.
2. He must avoid doing, whatever will be displeasing to the Lord; namely, what is prohibited by sastras.
3. Faith is most important. He must have absolute faith that the Lord will save him and grant him moksha.
4. He must be aware that he does not have the capacity or capability, to attain salvation, by his own efforts.
5. He must positively pray to the Lord, to save him and grant him salvation.

4. When a man performs prapatti, how are his sins or karmas destroyed?

There are two types of karmas.

(1) The first type are those which have started yielding fruits. In other words, the person has to experience the pleasures and pains, for the past karmas, which have started yielding fruits (Prarabdha Karma).

(2) The second type of karmas are those which have been kept aside by the Lord. They have not yet begun to yield fruits, good or bad (Sanchita karma).

So, when a man does prapatti, the second type of karmas, namely, those which have not begun to yield fruits, are destroyed altogether.

The first type of karmas, namely, those which have begun to yield fruits, good or bad, will continue, only so long as the person's present life lasts.

At the time of death, the balance of karmas, are distributed to his friends and enemies (I have described this earlier). So, one, who has done prapatti, attains moksha, immediately at the end of this life itself. There are two types of karmas:-

1) Those which have started yielding fruits; 2) Those which have not yet started yielding fruits.

For a person, who has done prapatti,

1) those which have started yielding fruits – he will experience these only till the end of this present life. 2) Balance of karmas, out of (1) above, are distributed to his friends and enemies, at the time of his death. 3) Those, which have not started yielding fruits, are destroyed completely.

5. Please summarise.

There are two types of karmas:

- 1) Those which have started yielding fruits;
- 2) Those which have not yet started yielding fruits.

6. You is said that at the time of prapatti, a person should resolve, that he will not do anything, displeasing to the Lord. In other words, he should not commit any sins.

What happens, if a person commits sins, after doing prapatti?

For a person, who has done prapatti,

- 1) Those which have started yielding fruits – he will experience these only till the end of this present life.
- 2) Balance of karmas, out of (1) above, are distributed to his friends and enemies, at the time of his death.
- 3) Those, which have not started yielding fruits, are destroyed completely.

The person, after performing prapatti, may commit sins 1) either deliberately or 2) by oversight (without being aware that he is committing sins).

- 1) If a person commits sins, without being aware of the same, then these sins will be ignored by the Lord: since these sins were not committed purposely or deliberately.
- 2) If the person commits sins deliberately, due to the weakness of human nature, then he should do prayaschitta or atonement, for having committed them.

7. How should he do the prayaschitta in this case?

The prayaschitta or atonement for having committed the sin, is another prapatti, for this purpose. So, if the person atones for having committed the sin, by doing a prapatti for this purpose, then he is granted pardon by the Lord.

8. What happens, if he commits the sins deliberately after prapatti and still does not do prayaschitta?

Then the Lord will punish him in this life itself, before his death, in some way or other.

9. What will be the type of punishment in such cases?

The punishment can be that the person becomes lame or blind. Or, he may lose children or grandchildren or near relatives.

In fact, even inability to go to temples and worship the Lord there; or inability to bathe in holy rivers, are also punishments. In any case, one who has done prapatti, will definitely attain moksha, at the end of this life.

Incidentally, it may be said that once a person does prapatti, he becomes near and dear to the Lord. So, even for deliberate sins committed after prapatti, the punishment by the Lord will be comparatively minor.

Even in the world, if a mistake is committed by somebody close to the king, the king merely warns him; or gives him a lighter punishment. In the same way, God also gives comparatively lighter punishment, even for deliberate sins committed after prapatti.

10. What are the different types of prapatti?

There are two types:

- 1) Dripta Prapatti
- 2) Artha Prapatti

People, who want to live this life, as long as it lasts; and want to attain moksha, only at the end of this life: they do dripta prapatti.

People, who do not want to live even till the end of this life, but want to attain salvation immediately, at this very moment: they can resort to artha prapatti.

11. How is prapatti done?

This is a rite, which is performed, with the prescribed mantras and as per the procedure laid down in sastras.

12. How many types of prapatti are there?

There are four ways of performing prapatti:

- 1) Doing prapatti oneself (sva nishta).
- 2) Where a disciple repeats the prapatti mantras, as taught by the acharya (ukti nishta).
- 3) Where the disciple does not repeat the mantras, but the acharya performs prapatti, for the disciple (acharya Nishta).

4) Where a learned Sri Vaishnava does prapatti, on behalf of the person (bhagavata nishta). So, one of these methods has to be adopted, for performing the prapatti.

13. YOU said that, apart from the five accessories for prapatti, there are no other rites or duties to be performed by one who has done prapatti. Then, after prapatti, why should he continue to do karmas like sandhyavandana and tarpana?

It is true that these rites, as ordained in the sastras, are not required for the efficacy of prapatti. But these are ordained by the Lord, through sastras and so the Lord's commands have to be obeyed.

If these rites are not performed, this will be a violation of the Lord's command. So the person will be punished by the Lord, for the sin of not doing his duties, laid down in the sastras.

Further, the person does these things for the pleasure of the Lord.

14. We have discussed at length, about the means of attaining salvation. Now what are the hindrances or obstacles, a man faces, in the efforts for attaining salvation?

1) Being in this world, because of the association with a body, and with the three qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas; there are several temptations which try to distract the person's thoughts from performing good deeds.

2) The person is carried away by the senses. He gets distracted by the worldly pleasures and runs after them.

3) His knowledge becomes perverse. He thinks that Narayana is not the supreme Lord. He thinks that all the deities are equal; or, he thinks there is no God at all.

4) Again, he does not realise the difference between the body and soul.

5) He does not study the sastras and perform the duties expected of him, as laid down in the sastras. As Krishna says in the Gita, sastras are only the divine command of the Lord.

6) Led away by the five senses, the person gets attached more and more to the worldly pleasures.

7) He spends his time in useless things. He does not recite the Vedas, or live an ideal life in detachment?

8) He does all forbidden things, for the sake of petty pleasures. So, all the worldly things and the five senses of a man, are the hindrances in his realising the truth.

15. So, what should we do, to get over these?

It is very necessary to completely conquer the senses; and direct one's attention only towards the Lord.

Supposing you have to leap over a well. Whether you leap only half the well or you leap three-fourths of the well, it does not make any difference. You fall into the well, all the same.

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Similarly, unless you conquer the senses completely, it does not make any difference.