

# **Brahma`s Prayers For Creative Energy**

The proper Consciousness of a Leader

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For VIHE Bhakti Vaibhava Study of Canto 3 - Chapters 1-19



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Content: Lessons drawn from the Prayers of Lord Brahma at the beginning of Creation  
Study Aim: Understanding & Personal Application

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# **Brahma's Prayers for Creative Energy**

## **The Proper Consciousness of a Leader**

### **Part 1 : Lesson from Lord Brahma**

Sitting at the lotus feet of a Sadhu, someone who I feel a strong, personal connection with, I open my heart regarding an issue that has brought up many doubts in my mind. In reply to my questions that Sadhu picks up the Srimad Bhagavatam and recites the following sloka and purport:

śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
mā veda-garbha gās tandrīm  
sarga udyamam āvaha  
tan mayāpāditam hy agre  
yan mām prārthayate bhavān

„The Supreme Personality of Godhead then said: O Brahmā, O depth of Vedic wisdom, be neither depressed nor anxious about the execution of creation. What you are begging from Me has already been granted before.“

In his purport Srila Prabhupada says:

„Any person authorized by either the Lord or by His bona fide representative is already blessed, as is the work entrusted to him. (..) Fortunate is he who is so entrusted, and if he is always fixed in the sense of being subordinate to the will of the Supreme, he is sure to come out successful in the discharge of his work.“ 1

I was deeply impressed by how accurate this verse and Srila Prabhupada's purport answered all my questions and brought clarity to my mind. I was reflecting on how wonderful it is that the person Bhagavat and the book Bhagavat are working together to enlighten the conditioned souls.

While studying the third canto and coming across the same text again, I remembered this incidence and decided to explore its meaning deeper. Before doing so, let's first take a closer look as to why the Lord spoke this sloka to Brahma.

### **Setting the Scene: Brahma's Birth, His Tapasya and The Darshan of the Lord**

In the eighth chapter of the third canto of Srimad Bhagavatam, we find beautiful descriptions of how the Lord in the form of Garbhodakasayi Vishnu lays down on Ananta Sesa for a thousand yuga cycles and how then a lotus flower grew from His navel on which Lord Brahma was born. Brahma, situated in the center of the lotus, could not see the world. Brahma was bewildered and did not understand the creation, the lotus or his own position. He was asking himself „Who am I situated on the top of this lotus? Where from has it sprouted? There must be something or someone from which it has originated?“ The

acaryas commented that from this incident we can understand that it is not possible to understand the mystery of creation by mental speculation. Personal endeavors are not enough. Only by the Lord's mercy, which can be attracted through Bhakti, will enable one to see things as they are. Brahma who heard the sound of `tapa` decided to perform austerities and meditated for one hundred years. Pleased by Brahma's tapasya and devotion, the Lord revealed Himself. At the end of the eighth chapter we find beautiful descriptions of the Darshan that Brahma got:

„Brahmā could see that on the water there was a gigantic lotus-like white bedstead, the body of Sesha-nāga, on which the Personality of Godhead was lying alone. The whole atmosphere was illuminated by the rays of the jewels bedecking the hood of Sesha-nāga, and that illumination dissipated all the darkness of those regions.“ 2

„As a sandalwood tree is decorated with fragrant flowers and branches, the Lord's body was decorated with valuable jewels and pearls. He was the self-situated tree, the Lord of all others in the universe. And as a sandalwood tree is covered with many snakes, so the Lord's body was also covered by the hoods of Ananta.“ 3

After seeing this most wonderful form of the Lord, Brahma started to offer a series of prayers which are described in the first twenty-five slokas of the ninth chapter. Brahma first glorified the Lord as the supreme knowledgeable object, as the origin of all forms, as the supreme person and most auspicious form as well as the dweller of the devotees' hearts. After describing the unfortunate situation of those who are conditioned by material nature, Brahma then glorifies the Lord's reciprocation with various devotees. After offering obeisances, Brahma then concludes his prayers with several requests, which will be interesting for our analysis.

### **Brahma's Requests**

#### **1) Request: Empowerment — Lesson: Humility, Understanding One's Shortcomings**

The first request that Brahma expresses to the Lord is that he desires to become empowered to perform his service. This is very significant because it shows Brahma's humility. He understood that on his own he can't do anything. Humility means to see things as they are. By understanding his position, the difficult task that was awaiting him and, most importantly, the greatness of the Lord he naturally took shelter of the Lord and prayed:

„Let the Supreme Lord be merciful towards me. He is the one friend and soul of all living entities in the world, and He maintains all, for their ultimate happiness, by His six transcendental opulences. May He be merciful towards me so that *I*, as before, **may be empowered** with the introspection to create, for I am also one of the surrendered souls who are dear to the Lord.“ 4

For a leader to be humble and to seek help and empowerment from higher authority is a great quality. This is the first lesson we can learn from Brahma. Although humility is sometimes misunderstood as weakness, it is actually a great strength. A fact that is more

and more recognized also in today's business world. Here are some examples as to why humility in a leader is appreciated by those subordinated:

- Humanity - A sense of humility is vital to great leadership because it authenticates a person's humanity. We are all human, and therefore, all flawed and vulnerable in our own unique ways. Being self-revealing is what brings people into connection. It is what makes people feel safe and accepted.
- Balanced authority - We are the most repulsed by loud, egotistical authoritative figures who lead from narrow mindedness, my-way-or-the-highway fear tactics. When humility is present, leaders act more like a "player's coach." Their position of authority is used to establish order and discipline between team members.
- Acknowledge others - We all need to feel a sense of our own significance from a genuinely respected source. Humble leaders focus on the strengths in their team members and acknowledge them with an unwavering belief. 5

It is interesting that Krishna Himself is a very humble authority! Although it is really He who is behind everything, He always hides and is fond of empowering and glorifying His own devotees.

Definitely, Brahma attracts the Lord's mercy by these kinds of prayers, because it is humility that is very pleasing to the Lord. Srila Prabhupada beautifully describes the loving mood of Krishna and His relationship to the surrendered souls like Brahma:

„He is the life and friend of all because there is eternally natural affection and love between the living entities and the Lord. He is the one friend and well-wisher for all, and He is one without a second. (..) Brahmā prayed to the Lord because He is very much dear to the surrendered soul. The surrendered soul knows nothing but the Lord, and therefore the Lord is very affectionate towards him.“

Srila Prabhupada himself offered a most beautiful prayer to the Supreme Lord with the request for empowerment on the Jaladuta just before arriving in America:

How will I make them understand this message of Krishna consciousness? I am very unfortunate, unqualified, and the most fallen. Therefore I am seeking Your benediction so that I can convince them, for I am powerless to do so on my own.

Somehow or other, O Lord, You have brought me here to speak about You. Now, my Lord, it is up to You to make me a success or failure as You like.

O Lord, I am just like a puppet in Your hands. So if You have brought me here to dance, then make me dance, make me dance. O Lord, make me dance as You like.

I have no devotion, nor do I have any knowledge, but I have strong faith in the holy name of Krishna. I have been designated as Bhaktivedanta, and now, if You like, You can fulfill the real purport of Bhaktivedanta. Signed—the most unfortunate, insignificant beggar

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami,

The essence in this humility and seeking empowerment is to understand one's own shortcomings. This is very crucial, the more one advances, the more one is empowered and promoted to a high leadership position, the more one should always be aware of one's own shortcomings. This is the first lesson we can learn from Brahma's prayers.

## 2) Request: Protection from False Ego — Lesson: Honesty, Giving Credit to the Lord

In the next sloka we learn about Brahma's second request, to be protected from the false ego:

„The Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, is always the benefactor of the surrendered souls.(..) I pray only to engage in His service in the creation of the material world, and I pray that I not be materially affected by my works, for thus ***I may be able to give up the false prestige of being the creator.***“ 7

This prayer of Lord Brahma again shows his humility. We could also call it honesty. He is honest with himself and with others that „I am just a servant, it is the Lord who deserves to be glorified, it is He who is the actual creator!“

If one takes up higher responsibilities, a leadership position whereby one gets certain power and influence then there is a great danger that one starts to fall into the illusion of being the doer, being the supreme controller. One can begin to think that „yes, it is due to my great leadership that we have achieved success. I am making the decisions here, I am in control, whatever direction I take everyone else is following!“ As we know from Bhagavad Gita, to think like that is a great illusion. „The spirit soul bewildered by the influence of false ego thinks himself the doer of activities that are in actuality carried out by the three modes of material nature.“ kartāham iti manyate - I am the doer he thinks. 8 It is the jiva who desires, the Lord who allows and the material nature that acts. In this sense the jiva is also the doer, having the desire and therefore it is also the jiva that is responsible for his action. But the jiva is not the only doer or not the independent doer. Nothing can take place without the sanction of the Lord. And as the Lord says in Bhagavad Gita: I am the ability in man! Whatever great quality we may possess it is due to the Lord's grace. An intelligent person, therefore, replaces pride with gratitude.

So Brahma is aware of the danger of identifying himself as the only doer and wants to be very clear about it: I am just Your servant, an instrument in Your hands. Please protect me from false pride, because that would spoil everything.

Also here Srila Prabhpada gives a powerful purport: „Brahmā, who is only an assistant in the modes of creation, wanted to remain in his actual position as an instrument of the Lord instead of becoming puffed up by the false prestige of thinking himself the creator. That is the way of becoming dear to the Supreme Lord and receiving His benediction. Foolish men want to take credit for all creations made by them, but intelligent persons know very well that not a blade of grass can move without the will of the Lord; thus all the credit for wonderful creations must go to Him. By spiritual consciousness only can one be free from the contamination of material affection and receive the benedictions offered by the Lord.“

## 3) Request: Protection from Deviation — Lesson: Sincerity, Praying for Protection

Lord Brahma continues his prayer with another request, Oh Lord, please let me be a sincere servant and never deviate from Your path:

„The Lord's potencies are innumerable. As He lies down in the water of devastation, I am born as the total universal energy from the navel lake in which the lotus sprouts. I am now engaged in manifesting His diverse energies in the form of the cosmic manifestation. I therefore pray that in the course of my material activities ***I may not be deviated*** from the vibration of the Vedic hymns.“ 9

Srila Prabhupada comments: „ Every person engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord in this material world is prone to so many material activities, and if one is not strong enough to protect himself against the onslaught of material affection, he may be diverted from the spiritual energy. (..) This is a warning for one and all in the spiritual advancement of life. Unless one is sufficiently protected by the Lord, he may fall down from his spiritual position; therefore one has to pray constantly to the Lord for protection and the blessing to carry out one's duty.“

Once Srila Prabhupada was asked what he is praying for while standing in front of the deities. Srila Prabhupada answered, „ I am praying for protection from maya“. The devotees were surprised and commented, „But Prabhupada, you are a pure devotee, you are never bewildered by maya“. „Yes, because I always seek shelter. The problem with you Western devotees is that you don't have a healthy fear of Maya.“ 10

A sincere devotee understands that the path of spiritual life is like the edge of a sharpened razor, a little inattentiveness may at once create great havoc. Therefore, he is always seeking the shelter of the Lord, always praying for protection. Especially in a leadership position one can easily commit many mistakes and Vaishnava Aparadhas if one is not very careful. Therefore, one should always pray for protection. To offer personal prayers is a very important part of one's devotional practice. Brahma shows by his own example from the very beginning of creation how we should offer prayers to the Lord.

Besides prayers, there should of course also be a strong sadhana, spiritual practice. If we are deeply absorbed in our bhajan then we are automatically protected. Srila Prabhupada stressed this point again and again, especially for the leaders. Most important quality of a leader is that he has a strong spiritual practice in order to get the required strength to carry out his allotted work and also to give an example for others:

„It was said about Lord Caitanya, He personally used to practice Himself the injunctions and then He used to teach others. That is our principle: Unless one is perfectly behaved person, he cannot teach others. My only request is that all the GBC members should be strictly to the standard of life, and see that others are also following them. Then our centers will be well-managed.“ 11

So from this prayer we can learn that an exemplary leader understands the need for a strong spiritual practice and always takes shelter of the Lord by praying for protection.

### **The Supreme Lord's Reply to Brahma**

After Lord Brahma speaks a fourth prayer requesting the Lord for benedictions, Brahma becomes silent and the Lord begins to reply.

In summary we have thus far analysed the requests of Brahma, mainly from text 22-24, where we learned that:

**Brahma requested the Lord for:**

- 1) Empowerment
- 2) Protection from False Ego
- 3) Protection from Deviation

**From this we draw the qualities:**

- Humility, being aware of one's shortcomings
- Honesty, giving credit to the Lord
- Sincerity, praying for protection, strong sadhana

Now we shall hear about the Lord's reply:

In the verses 29 to 43 we find the extremely encouraging reply of the Lord to Brahma. First of all the Lord lets Brahma know that „be neither depressed nor anxious about the execution of creation. What you are begging from Me has already been granted before“ (29). The Lord instructs Brahma to „situate yourself in penance and meditation and follow the principles of knowledge to receive My favor. By these actions you will be able to understand everything from within your heart.“ (32) Doing so will guarantee that he will remain free from all illusion. Then the Lord confirms that He is very pleased with Brahma's prayers and that „My causeless mercy upon you will always increase for all time“ (34) In conclusion, the Lord then reminds Brahma that it is He who is the ultimate Object of Love and that what ever we do should be done to please Him (41-43).

Reading this section is extremely encouraging for any leader. The Lord is very pleased with Brahma's prayers and showers him with benedictions and wonderful instructions. This is so enlivening to hear because it shows as to what we can expect if we follow in Brahma's footsteps by applying the principles we have learned from his prayers.

## **Part 2 : Reflections on My Own Leadership (PA)**

How to apply these principles in my own life? Let's analyze my own leadership qualities.

### **1.) Searching for empowerment — humility, being aware of ones shortcomings**

#### *Searching for Empowerment*

I believe I do regularly seek advice and blessings from seniors and with that also empowerment. I have several siksa gurus with whom I stay in contact and get guidance from. Of course, if I really would understand the value of Sadhu Sanga, I would most probably seek the advice and empowerment of my seniors more often.

### *Humility*

I guess that people, in general, would say that I am quite a humble devotee and leader. Although I personally feel that what appears as being humble is maybe more part of my introverted personality. Just because someone is shy and does not speak too much does not mean he is humble. True humility is a very deep and exalted quality which I definitely still need to improve on a lot. Srila Prabhupada defines humility as „not being anxious to have the satisfaction of being honored by others.“<sup>12</sup> This is not so easy to give up. It seems like such a natural desire to receive recognition from others. And even if I might not hanker for it so much anymore, still when it comes my way I enjoy it. Someone may say “Prabhu, this was a fantastic lecture” and I reply “Hare Krishna, thanks Prabhu. My Gurudeva's Mercy!” But how much do I actually remember my Gurudeva? How much have I actually realized that it is, in fact, his mercy that I am able to touch the heart of others? No, there is still a lot of pride there. Still, a long way to go!

### *Being aware of one's shortcomings*

I try to always be open for feedback and I am interested in the various ways that may help me understand my personality and shortcomings better. But of course, still being influenced by the false ego, receiving feedback that points out my weaknesses is not always so palatable. But in general, I understand that from the material point of view I am not very qualified to manage or lead. I would not consider myself a born manager. I guess I am much more a natural teacher, communicator but not necessarily a good manager.

From my side I would say the following are some of my shortcomings as a leader:

- being tolerant in the mode of ignorance, seeing things but not getting involved in it.
- being an observer, so much so that I miss the proper time where action would be required.
- not giving enough time, attention, and care to those working under me, with the excuse of being too busy in my service.
- still trying to satisfy everyone and looking good in the eye of people, instead of doing what is necessary.
- and of course, so many other things like maintaining attachments and still having so many different anarthas in the heart

## **2.) Praying for Protection from False Ego — Honesty, Giving Credit to the Lord**

### *Honesty, giving credit to the Lord*

I try to be honest with myself and others, but as mentioned in regard of true humility, which means to be free from the desire to be honored, as long as this impurity is in the heart it becomes difficult to really acknowledge that whatever we do is possible due to the Lord's mercy. Krishna says in Gita that He is the ability in man.<sup>13</sup> Still, I believe it is due to my own endeavors that I have been able to be successful. That's my unfortunate position. Hearing more about Krishna, studying Srimad Bhagavatam, slowly realizing more and more the greatness of the Lord helps me learn to remember Him in all circumstances, not only when I am suffering but also when I am successful.

## **3.) Praying for Protection from Deviation — Sincerity, Praying for Protection**



### *Sincerity, praying for protection*

I try to be a sincere devotee. I understand that `purity is the force`. If I want to achieve anything in my spiritual life I need to focus on a deep bhajan, good quality chanting, attentive hearing, studying of sastra and respectful dealings with other Vaishnavas. Unfortunately, my mind still has many ideas on how to enjoy in this world. Hopefully one day my intelligence will become strong enough to turn my mind into a devotee!

Regarding prayers, I do have a practice of offering personal prayers, but it could improve by doing it more regulated. At the moment I pray whenever I am `in the mood` to do so. That's sometimes more, sometimes less. I hope that I will one day be able to understand how important it actually is to always take shelter of the Lord, to constantly pray for His mercy. Also here I have a long way to go.

### **Action Steps:**

- 1) Empowerment: I will try to make sure that from next year in 2019, I will write at least two letters per year to my Siksa Gurus in order to stay in touch with them and get their empowerment and blessings.
- 2) Humility: I have already started, and will continue to do so, to make regular notes, at least every Ekadasi, on how I am progressing in giving up the desire for recognition.
- 3) Awareness of Shortcomings: I shall regularly, once a month, request my counsellor to give me feedback on how I am performing my service and bhajan.
- 4) Giving Credit to the Lord: Let me glorify Krishna and acknowledge His help in my life when ever I get an opportunity to do so, in my writings, lectures etc.
- 5) Prayers: I shall continue to offer daily prayers and try to deepen my prayer practice by expressing my heart in written prayers.

### **Part 3 : A Personal Prayer `Oh Lord of my Heart`**

Dear Krishna, Oh Lord of my Heart,  
for some reason You have put me in a leadership position  
although on my own I don't have any qualification to lead others.

I am still identifying myself strongly with this body,  
I still struggle with tolerating the urges of my senses  
and my mind still tries to convince me,  
that there is some happiness to be found  
in this temporary world of suffering.  
How can I lead others?

Out of Your kindness, You allow me to serve Your devotees,  
in order to do this properly,  
kindly empower me to become a true leader!

Oh Krishna, Lord of my Heart,  
Let me understand Your desire  
Let me become an instrument of Your compassion  
Let me be a messenger of Your teachings  
Let me dedicate my life to serve You  
Let me have no other desire than to please You

Please protect me from the six enemies of the soul  
Kindly let me always remember that You are the Supreme Master and Enjoyer  
Let me find pleasure in spreading Your glories  
instead of trying to convince others about 'my own glories'  
Please make me a true Dasa, a servant always remembering his master

Please always protect me from the influence of Maya.  
You are Mayadisha, the Lord of Maya  
I am Mayadasa, the servant of Maya  
Kindly accept me as Your servant and free me from the slavery of Maya.  
Please make my intelligence as sharp as a sword  
which is able to cut through all kinds of illusion.  
Please let me become a true leader - a true servant!

## **In Conclusion**

Brahma, being the head of our Sampradaya, shows by his own example how to take shelter of the Lord. He understands his own shortcomings, requests the Lord for empowerment and protection. In reply, the Lord showers all kinds of benedictions and blessings upon Brahma and in this way confirming that a true leader is one who always remembers the supreme authority and never forgets under who`s control he is working.

Srila Prabhupada very expertly, like always, summarizes the whole matter in the following purport that has become a guideline, a daily meditation for my own leadership service:

„Any person authorized by either the Lord or by His bona fide representative is already blessed, as is the work entrusted to him. Of course, the person entrusted with such a responsibility should always be aware of his incapability and must always look for the mercy of the Lord for the successful execution of his duty. One should not be puffed up because he is entrusted with certain executive work. Fortunate is he who is so entrusted, and if he is always fixed in the sense of being subordinate to the will of the Supreme, he is

sure to come out successful in the discharge of his work. Arjuna was entrusted with the work of fighting on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra, and before he was so entrusted, the Lord had already arranged for his victory. But Arjuna was always conscious of his position as subordinate to the Lord, and thus he accepted Him as the supreme guide in his responsibility. Anyone who takes pride in doing responsible work but does not give credit to the Supreme Lord is certainly falsely proud and cannot execute anything nicely. Brahmā and persons in the line of his disciplic succession who follow in his footsteps are always successful in the discharge of loving transcendental service to the Supreme Lord.” 14

Hari Om Tat Sat, Vrindavana, 10th of October 2018 - Krishna Premarupa Dasa

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- 1 - Srimad Bhagavatam 3.9.29
  - 2 - Srimad Bhagavatam 3.8.23
  - 3 - Srimad Bhagavatam 3.8.29
  - 4 - Srimad Bhagavatam 3.9.22
  - 5 - From an article by Sherrie Campbell, psychologist and author:  
<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/299140>
  - 6 - Srimad Bhagavatam 3.9.22
  - 7 - Srimad Bhagavatam 3.9.23
  - 8 - Bhagavad Gita 3.27
  - 9 - Srimad Bhagavatam 3.9.24
  - 10 - From a lecture of H.H. Candramauli Swami, no specific reference
  - 11 - Letter to: Hayagriva - Madras 13 February, 1972
  - 12 - Bhagavad Gita, 13.8 Purport
  - 13 - Bhagavad Gita 7.8
  - 14 - Srimad Bhagavatam 3.9.29