

Without You, My Lord, I Am Nothing

THE FOLLOWING LECTURE ON SRIMAD-BHAGAVATAM, THIRD CANTO, CHAPTER NINE, "BRAHMA'S PRAYERS FOR CREATIVE ENERGY", TEXT 29, WAS GIVEN BY HIS HOLINESS BHAKTI CHARU SWAMI ON 15 FEBRUARY 2009 IN ISKCON UJJAIN, INDIA.



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Srimad Bhagavatam, third Canto, chapter nine, text twenty nine.

sri-bhagavan uvaca

ma veda-garbha gas tandrim

sarga udyamam avaha

tan mayapaditam hy agre

yan mam prarthayate bhavan

Synonyms: sri-bhagavan uvaca — the Lord, the Personality of Godhead, said; ma — do not; veda-garbha — O You who have the depth of all Vedic wisdom; gah tandrim — become dejected; sarge — for creation; udyamam — enterprises; avaha — you just undertake; tat — that (which you want); maya — by Me; apaditam — executed; hi — certainly; agre — previously; yat — which; mam — from Me; prarthayate — begging; bhavan — you.

Translation:

The Supreme Personality of Godhead then said: O Brahma, 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.

Purport:

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. Brahma 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.

[End of Purport]

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The Supreme Personality of Godhead then said: O Brahma, 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.

So in the last few verses we saw how Brahma prayed to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When Brahma saw the Lord he was offering his prayers and the sum and substance of the prayer was that now that he has been entrusted with a very important responsibility to create, that the Lord bestows His mercy upon him, that he can always maintain a devotional attitude and remain submissive to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

So that is the prayer of a devotee. A devotee recognizes that he has an important responsibility and that responsibility is entrusted to him by the higher authorities. In case of Brahma, the Lord Himself entrusted him with the responsibility. "Okay, Brahma, now you do this." And with other personalities, they're entrusted with a responsibility by the representatives of the Lord. Either the spiritual master tells them or the temple authorities tell them. Whenever someone gets a responsibility whether small or big, one – as a devotee – must recognize that he is not capable of executing it himself, therefore he must depend upon the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that's how one makes spiritual advancement.

We have seen Srila Prabhupada. He was entrusted with the responsibility by his spiritual master, "Spread Krishna consciousness all over the world through English language." So it was a big responsibility and Prabhupada accepted that responsibility and dedicated himself completely to that responsibility. In this way one becomes entrusted with different responsibilities in devotional service.

But what is the difference between a devotee and a non-devotee? When a non-devotee gets a position, actually position is related to responsibility. Position is related to some assignments. Big positions get big facilities. In the material world we see big positions come with big facilities, big money, big facilities, big name and fame, and people tend to become proud. They think that, "I am getting these responsible positions because of my ability." And actually in the material platform that is the case. They get position because of their ability. Somebody did very well in his studies, then he gets into IIT or IIM and he gets a good job. And along with the good job comes a big salary, big facilities and then he also proves himself. He does some nice service for his master, the boss, the proprietor of the company, and the master becomes pleased and gives him a bigger and bigger position. Ultimately he becomes a director or a CEO or the chairman of the company. So along with that, as he gets promotion he gets more money, he gets more facilities, he gets more honor. But these facilities or these positions come according to his ability.

In the material platform, unless one is very qualified generally people don't hire him. People hire because he has qualification. And people also think that, "Yes, I am qualified, that's why I got the job. I did my MBA from Indian Institute of Management therefore I got this job", or "In order to get a good position I must get into IIM", or such institution. Or in the other countries there are other institutions like MIT, big universities. Like in America they have the Ivy League Colleges like Stanford, Harvard. They are all very well known colleges and it is understood that when they pass out from these colleges they'll get big, big jobs, good jobs.

So people make themselves qualified and then they get position. And naturally they think that, "It is because of my effort, my endeavor." But a devotee's attitude is different. A devotee, he is not recognized according to his material qualification. There may be some recognition. Like, for example, yes, in ISKCON also, when devotees join from a successful background, we give the recognition because along with that successful background comes his experience and eligibility and qualification. But ultimately we don't really look at the qualification. Like we look at his performance, how he performed, how he executed his responsibility. That is the main consideration, and the ultimate consideration is that a devotee, he doesn't think that, "I got this position because I am qualified. I got this position because I am competent." Or a devotee to be properly situated in devotional service should always think, "It is by the mercy of Krishna and the mercy of the devotees that I got this assignment." And still he feels unqualified. "I do not know how I'm going to do it. My spiritual master or my authority or Krishna has given me this assignment but I do not know how to do that, how to execute." His attitude is *yogyata-vichare kicchu nahi pai, tomara karuna-sara* [Srla Bhaktivinode Thakura, *Saranagati* song *Gurudeva, Kripa Bindu Diya*] That is the mood of a devotee. As far as qualification is concerned I have nothing, I have none. It's all your mercy that I'm made of, *tomara karuna-sara*. Your mercy is everything that I am dependent upon.

Like here we are seeing, Brahma, actually who can be more qualified than Brahma? And everybody knows Brahma has been assigned with this responsibility to create. The Lord got Brahma to do this job and qualification, look at the qualification of Brahma: who can be more qualified than Brahma? He came directly from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Brahma's body came directly from the Lord. From the navel of the Lord Brahma appeared, directly from the body of the Lord. Such an exalted personality! And why did the Lord send Brahma to this universe? Because the Lord already has the plan that, "Well, the universe needs to be created, needs to be organized, so Brahma is the person."

So he created, but we see Brahma's mood. Brahma, first of all he doesn't know what he is expected to do. Then from within the Lord instructs him what he is meant to do. And then Brahma, when he is instructed in this way by the Lord Himself, Brahma is praying to Him that, "I do not know how I'm going to do that. It's only by Your mercy that I can do it, I can do anything." The same point, *yogyata-vichare kicchu nahi pai, tomara karuna-sara*. Brahma's prayers are actually depicting that very mood. "As far as qualification is concerned I have none." Brahma is not thinking, "Oh, I am Brahma, so I will do it. I'll do it." No, that's not the mood of Brahma, meaning that's not the mood of a devotee. But at the same time the devotee endeavors. A devotee doesn't sit down idly. A devotee is not lazy. A devotee is not incompetent. A devotee is very, very qualified. And the qualification of a devotee is his surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

We will see that, time and time again, with all the devotees it's the same mood, the same attitude that has been always depicted. Here we are seeing Brahma, we discussed about Srla Prabhupada. We saw him, what he did. We saw him how impossible a task he has accomplished, but Prabhupada was never proud. Prabhupada was always aware of the mercy of the Lord. If Prabhupada was proud, Prabhupada's pride was in his being a devotee of the Lord. Prabhupada's pride was that he is surrendered to the Lord, he is a servant of the Lord. That is the pride of a devotee. "I am a servant of the greatest master."

And time and time again we see that. Like Arjuna in the battle of Kurukshetra. Arjuna is also saying, "Krishna, it is only by Your mercy that I'll be able to do anything." Yet Arjuna was fighting. Not that, "Well, Krishna, by Your mercy only I will do something. Now let me just sit down. You drive the

chariot and I'll sit on the chariot, and because You have already done everything." No, Krishna wants His devotees to be active. Krishna wants His devotees to do things and because of that everybody sees how capable a devotee of Krishna is, although it is by the mercy of Krishna a devotee is doing anything. As a matter of fact, it is only by the mercy of Krishna that everybody is doing anything. It is only by the mercy of Krishna that a blade of grass moves. Without Krishna's approval even a blade of grass doesn't move, so what to speak of doing anything ourselves?

But the difference between a devotee and a non-devotee is that a devotee knows that, "Whatever I am doing is by the mercy of Krishna." Whereas a non-devotee thinks, "Well, I am the doer."

prakriteh kriyamanani

gunaih karmani sarvasah

ahankara-vimudhatma

kartaham iti manyate

[Bg 3.27]

In the material nature everything happens by guna and karma and being bewildered by his false ego one thinks that he is the doer. Now the question may arise that in one hand you are saying that everything is done by Krishna's mercy, Krishna's arrangement, but here you are saying by gunaih karmani sarvasah, by the modes of the material nature and the karma, now why is that? How Krishna is doing? It is our karma that we are doing anything and it is the modes of material nature. But the point is, this guna and karma has been set by Krishna. It is an arrangement of Krishna. Like, there is an expression called autopilot. In an aircraft you set the aircraft in a certain mode and then you don't have to do anything. The autopilot does everything. It flies the aircraft, the autopilot. So this guna karma is Krishna's autopilot, Krishna is not involved directly. He set the guna, three modes of material nature, and karma, a living entity's individual endeavor to do something, individual capability of doing something, and when he does something that produces the reaction. Karma produces the reaction. Action generates reaction. And then he becomes subject to the reaction and he acts according to that reaction. That produces more reaction and in this way a living entity is independently responsible for his actions. That is the material nature. But in the spiritual nature there is no guna and karma. In the spiritual platform there is no guna and karma. Why not? Because everyone is surrendered to Krishna. Because everyone is submissive to Krishna, everyone is surrendered to Krishna, no one is actually responsible. No one is responsible for his action. They are doing it for Krishna and everything is happening by Krishna's divine arrangement, Yogamaya's arrangement. Independently they are not responsible.

So that is the difference between material platform and spiritual platform. That's the difference between material mentality and spiritual mentality. The material mentality is, "I am the doer." Okay, you are the doer so you become responsible for the reaction. You are the doer so you become responsible for the reaction. But in the spiritual platform, "I am doing it for Krishna. I am doing it for Krishna." Therefore, because you are doing it for Krishna you are not responsible. Even if you commit a heinous crime you are not responsible, because you have done it for Krishna. Like who will ever not consider, who will ever not think that killing his own grandfather is a heinous crime, but Arjuna did that, killed his grandfather. But there was no reaction. Why? Because he did it for Krishna. So this is what makes the difference between karmic action and devotional service.

So a devotee is one, a devotee is he who is simply dependent upon Krishna and who does everything for the sake of Krishna's pleasure, and he is completely controlled by Krishna, completely controlled by Krishna. And as a result of that he is always blissful. He is never morose. He is never in anxiety. Spiritual sky means Vaikuntha, no anxiety. Why no anxiety? Because Krishna is in control. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the Supreme Controller. He is the Supreme Proprietor and He is omniscient – He knows everything. So He is the most powerful, He is the Supreme Proprietor, He is the most capable, so He will do everything and I am simply serving as His subordinate. And even if there is failure, it's not my mistake. It's not my shortcoming. It's not my fault. I tried, I tried but I failed. What to do? When you fail then you have to understand that Krishna didn't want it that way. So a devotee just accepts it with that spirit. A devotee who is properly situated in spiritual life

he will never think, "Why it didn't happen the way I wanted it?" meaning, "Why didn't I become successful? Why didn't I become successful?" Now if we think that, "Why didn't I become successful?" that means I am thinking that I am the doer. I am not thinking that Krishna is the controller. I am thinking I am the doer. Rather, the devotee's attitude is, "Let me try my best. Let me try my best. And then the result is up to Krishna. What Krishna wants that will happen. On my part I will try my best. I will use the last drop of my energy to serve Krishna and if Krishna doesn't want to accept it, what can be done?"

Just like a cook is cooking for the master. The cook tries his best to make the best food and the master comes to the table to eat and he doesn't even look at what he cooked. He eats something else. How does the cook feel? "Well, I tried my best. I cooked in the best possible way. I thought it was the most delicious food, but it's up to him whether he will eat it or not. It's up to him." So that is the point of being a master and the servant, or the servant of the master. So the devotee's attitude is just like that. Marobi rakhobi – jo ichha tohara, whatever you do with me it is up to You. [Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Saranagati, song: Manasa Deho Geho] Not that, "Oh Krishna, I have become Your devotee, why You're killing me?!" No, devotee means, "Whatever You want I will do. You have complete control over me. You have all the rights over me. So You do whatever You want to do with me." And that is the meaning of surrender. Surrender, surrender means completely dependent upon You, completely given over to You. You do whatever You want to do with me.

So that is the secret of pure devotional service: total surrender. And total surrender means try your best, but depend upon Krishna. Do it, try to execute it to the best of your ability but always remember that you are nothing without Krishna's mercy. But on the other hand, to think that, "Oh, I am so capable. I have done that, so why You are removing me from this position? I have done everything. It is my creation." That means false ego. That means maya; "I am the doer. I have done that."

Like, in this respect there is one very beautiful example. One devotee, a very competent devotee, very capable devotee, a very senior God-brother of mine actually, he was doing a very powerful preaching in America, very effective preaching in America. But his preaching at the same time was causing a lot of disturbance in the temples. He was preaching in the universities and other places. Anyway, when you read the Prabhupada Lilamrta you will see that but I don't want to mention the name of that God-brother of mine. [devotee mentions the name of the God-brother] Wise guy. I am saying I am not going to mention the name. So the temple presidents went and reported to Prabhupada. Prabhupada could see that although he is doing very powerful preaching but he is causing a disturbance to the temples, because when he'd go to the temple the brahmacharis would leave the temple and join his party and he would also inspire the devotees to leave the temple and join his party. So Prabhupada told him to stop that. He took him away from that, although this preaching arrangement was made by this devotee. It was his creation apparently. He made it. He started the program but Prabhupada removed him from that, took everything away from him. And he was giving all kinds of reasons and arguments but Prabhupada said, "It doesn't matter. I am telling; you do something else. Give it up." Then at one point he said, "But Prabhupada, I have done this." Prabhupada said, "No, you haven't done this. This is my project. It's not your project, it's my project."

So this is how we can see that a devotee, no matter how capable he is, even though he may do something, his position always should be that, "This project belongs to my higher authority. It's not my project." And ultimately we can see; what could he do without Prabhupada's mercy? First of all, whatever arrangements he made, the money that he got was Prabhupada's money. The devotees that he was engaging were Prabhupada's devotees. The institution that they were bringing, attracting these people to that was Prabhupada's institution.

So in this way we have to see things just beyond our immediate perception. We have to be farsighted. We have to see things beyond. That's a devotee and that's the intelligence. Could I do anything without the facilities that I have got? No. And we have to recognize that we are nobody. We are nobody! Who are we? One ten thousandth part of the tip of the hair. Sometimes we may be

able to achieve something great, but we have to always remember that it is simply due to the mercy of Krishna and His devotees.

And this point has very wonderfully been demonstrated by Brahma. And what is Krishna's response? What Sri Bhagavan said? "Brahma, don't worry. I made all the arrangements. There is nothing to be in anxiety. Don't think that this task is very, very difficult. No matter how difficult it is, when you function on My behalf, when you act on My behalf, when you try to do something on My behalf, I will take care of everything."

So that's why Krishna is telling Arjuna – what is Krishna telling Arjuna? Nimitta-matram bhava savyasacin. [Bg 11.33] Nimitta-matram, become an instrument in My hand. So a devotee may be in anxiety but Krishna is telling him that, "Just become My instrument and you don't have to worry about anything."

So please remember this point and become very good devotees.

Hare Krishna! Gaura Premanande Hari Haribol!

Does anybody have any question? Yes?

Devotee: Guru Maharaja, the first question is Brahma wanted to create so the question is how is that creation going to be pleasing to the Lord exactly, because creation means the living entities just come and they start engaging in karma. So how is that [unclear]?

BCS: Because Krishna wanted it, that's why it is going to [please Him]. If you do it, it will please Krishna. Like, say for example, a king wanted to make a prison. The prison house is not a very nice place, right? But the king says, "Okay, bhakta so and so, go and make it for me. You build the prison and then I will send the prisoners and you take care of the prisoners." Now how does that other person think? That, "Oh, a prison house is not a very nice place. How is it going to please my lord, the king, if I take care of the prison? Let me go and massage his feet!" So is that the right attitude? No! "Because my master wanted this to happen I am going ahead and doing it and that will please him because he wanted it." Okay?

Devotee: The other question is that Krishna has said that for His pure devotees, Krishna always has only one job, that is to fulfill the desires of the pure devotees. So a pure devotee like Srila Prabhupada, whatever he undertakes is successful. So my question is, is it that their ultimate desire, say for example, Prabhupada wanted to preach, is it that such an ultimate desire only is fulfilled or every desire is fulfilled? Like when he started the League of Devotees here in India in Jhansi, it was not successful in that sense. So is it that Krishna fulfills their plans as such or Krishna fulfills their ultimate goal only?

BCS: Yeah, the ultimate goal is the main consideration. Failures are the pillars of success. Those apparent failures were actually creating the pillars, the foundation. The main thing is that a devotee knows what Krishna wants, that's why he desires and Krishna fulfills those desires. A devotee will never desire anything that is not in line with Krishna's pleasure. That is a devotee. A devotee desires only for Krishna's pleasure and Krishna fulfills those desires.

Devotee: I have a question. Once Lord Shiva cursed Brahma that there will no temples of yours.

BCS: What's that? Oh, that was Bhrgu. When Brahma got angry with him then he told that, "You will not be worshipped." I don't think it was Lord Shiva who told that he won't be worshipped. Where did you get that? That Lord Shiva said that.

Devotee: Actually, when I started my project somebody asked me, "What are you doing?" So I just told him, "This is the laboratory for Brahma. We are creating or we are doing some innovative work." And he told me, "No, don't worship Brahma." I told him, "No, we are worshipping Lord Krishna, just we need his mercy." And he told, "Don't take the name of Brahma because he is cursed by Lord Shiva."

BCS: Now my immediate question will be: who is that person and what's his authority? Is he an exponent in scriptural understanding? Then why take him so seriously? Don't just depend on hearsays. Brahma is such an exalted personality. "Don't take the name of Brahma", what kind of attitude is that? Because I will get five paisa, that's why I shouldn't take the name of Lord Brahma? In order to get this five paisa benefit I should not take the name of Brahma? On the other hand, if

you ask me, I'll say Brahma is the adi-guru of our sampradaya – he is the original guru of our sampradaya. What to speak of take his name, we always stay at his lotus feet and we feel completely safe just being at his lotus feet. Similarly, the same with Lord Shiva, although apparently he is living in a crematorium but according to our understanding he is the greatest personality in the creation. We all came through him. He is our father. So that is the real understanding. Less intelligent people with a limited amount of knowledge, they kind of make some conclusion which is actually ridiculous.

Devotee: Just I wanted to know the details.

BCS: No, good! It was a good question.

Yes, Anshul? No question? Has it been broadcasted? It hasn't been broadcasted?!

Devotee: Initially it was for a few minutes but then it was

BCS: Why?

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: Then why don't you, I told you to change the server.

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: Okay. Today I am feeling very, very unwell. I gave the class because I was thinking that the devotees will be expecting. That's why, otherwise if it was just you all, I would have said that I am not giving the class today.

Yes, Soni?

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: So the first question will be: that work that you are doing, is it for Krishna or for somebody else?

Devotee: It's the material world and we are doing a job then we are doing

BCS: Okay, fine. If that happens then you report to your boss. You tell him that, "Look, this is the situation. How do you expect me to do anything? So isn't it natural? Like if your people are not cooperating with you, then who is your authority to report to? Your boss. So tell him and dump the responsibility on his shoulder because he is getting paid for that. Okay?

Thank you! Hare Krishna! All glories to Srila Prabhupada!