

Caru Das: Thanks to everyone for coming out this Saturday night. Thanks to those who downloaded these talks as podcasts from iTunes. We invite your comments, correspondence and feedback by emailing us at utahkrishnas@Gmail.com.

We also have a membership class online at our website, www.utahkrishnas.org. We'd like to thank those that have become members. We couldn't do what we do without your help and support.

Everything is inspired by the teachings of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who is the founder Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Start with something a little funny. There was an eccentric rich man who was hosting a party at his backyard by the swimming pool. In this swimming pool, he had put dangerous fish, like crocodiles, sharks and piranhas.

He announced, "Anybody who can swim the length of the swimming pool, I'll give them whatever they want."

No sooner had the words come out of his mouth than there was a splash, and sure enough, there was a man there going 0 to 90, dodging sharks, alligators. Just barely made it to the other side. Pulled himself up, and the rich man came to him and said, "You're the bravest man I've ever seen in my life." He said, "I'll give you whatever you want. Just tell me."

The man said, "Right now, what I'd like more than anything else in the world is to know the name of the person that pushed me in."

Today, we'd like to talk about blooming where you're planted. Have you ever had the experience, hiking in the Uintas or the Wasatch Mountains, going through an area with just dry dead leaves and all kinds of unwanted, unsightly, ugly weeds? Then in the most unexpected place, amongst all that, you come across a beautiful blooming flower.

Now, in your life you may feel like there are a lot of weeds, weeds amongst your co-workers. Some of you might feel like you're married to a weed. But just like that flower growing amongst the weeds, similarly, none of that needs to hold you back from blooming and becoming all that God wants you to be.

Too many people in the world today are negative. Because they don't like where they are, they don't like their spouses, they don't like their jobs, they don't like where they live. They're always fighting something, thinking and daydreaming about going somewhere else. Thinking about changing their circumstances and

imagining that things would be so much better if this were tweaked and this were altered and this were adjusted.

Here's the key. Krishna, God, is far more interested in changing us than in changing our circumstances. As long as we're sour because we're not getting our way, and discouraged because we're single, upset because our business isn't growing -- that attitude will keep you stuck right where you are. It'll keep you from moving forward to where you would most like to be.

If you want to see change, and you want to see new doors and new opportunities open up, the key is to bloom where you are planted. You can't wait until everything becomes better before you decide to have a better attitude. You have to be the best that you can be right exactly where you are now.

Wherever you are, you can sow seeds for God. You could put a smile on your face. You can be good to people. You can be grateful where you are even though it's not where you want to be. As long as we're in faith, where we are is exactly where God wants us to be at that particular point and time.

"Well, Caru, that couldn't be right. I'm so uncomfortable at work. People are sneaking behind my back. The boss doesn't like me. They're not treating me right." Yes, it may be difficult, but Krishna wouldn't put a challenge into your life unless he had a divine purpose for it.

I've learned nothing happens TO us, everything happens FOR us. That person at work who's hard to get along with, that's not happening to you, that's happening for you. You're developing character. Like sandpaper, it rubs out the rough edges, so you're learning to be good to people who are not being good to you.

The fact is that if Krishna removes some of the challenges that we're facing on a day-to-day basis, we would not be prepared for the great things that he has in store for us in the future.

Let's have the attitude, "Lord, I may not feel right about this. It may not feel good right now, but I know that it's helping me to grow and to become all that I want to be."

Lot of people don't realize that the way to happiness is not through combativeness. You can't fight your way to happiness.

"If I could just find a bigger house. If I could just find new friends. If I could move to a better job or at least another department in the company." Here's a better approach, "This is where Krishna wants me to be right now, and until he moves me, I'm going to be happy right where I am."

You're stuck in traffic. Obviously, you're not where you want to be, but you can

still relax. You can still stay in peace.

The boss has asked you to work late. You had other plans. "It's all right, that's where Krishna wants me. I'll stay and I'll enjoy it."

When you know that wherever you are, Krishna has you there for a reason, your mood won't go up and down according to circumstances or dependent upon how someone treats you. You'll be stable. You'll be consistent. You'll wear a smile. You'll be in a great mood and you'll be friendly.

These are all the signs of a spiritually mature person. What I like about this approach is it takes away all of our self-serving, self-pitying, blaming-other-people excuses and it puts the responsibility to be happy squarely on each and every one of our shoulders.

How many people do you know who dread the drive to work, dread dealing with coworkers, dread the work itself, the vocation, the career? What a shame to be somewhere 40 hours a week and not enjoy it.

Quit telling yourself you can't be happy there with those people and that work. Quit marking time, waiting for something else to come along, something else to open up. Quit making yourself miserable and start telling yourself, "I have the power. I have the choice to be happy right here."

I'm made of "satcitananda" -- in Sanskrit, that means, "I am made full of knowledge, bliss and eternity. I am made in the image of God. I am a divine spark, a divine emanation from him. I existed before the creation of the universe. I'll exist after the creation of the universe. Although my body is born, it grows and gets old, it gets sick, it dies, I am eternal, imperishable, immortal. I share the same quality and the same nature of God."

If you think this way and you define yourself and see yourself this way, then nothing temporary, nothing material is going to steal your joy or spoil your day. "I am more than my circumstances. I am part of, not the material nature, but the higher, eternal, spiritual nature."

You'll see a lot of times in Eastern cultures the lotus flower. The lotus flower grows within water, and yet however much you splash it, a few seconds later, it'll be bone-dry. It could be said of the lotus flower that it's in the water, but it's not of the water.

Similarly, we need to see ourselves as in the world, but not caught up in the world, not conformed by the world, not altered by the circumstances of the world that's around us. We need to see all that as temporary and not worthy of losing our joy.

When we put the red dot on the forehead, everyone always wants to know what the red dot is. Well, the lotuses are mostly red and they have a little bit of a dust on them. If you were to put your head at the feet of a lotus, you would get a red dot.

When Krishna came 5,000 years ago, He was called lotus-eyed, lotus-haired, lotus-feet. Inasmuch as He descended from the spiritual world in a self-same form, He manifested his pastimes on the planet for 125 years and then He went back to the spiritual world.

What he was doing was giving us a glimpse, whetting our appetite for the world after this world. When this world is finished, we have the opportunity to transcend and to transfer ourselves to that eternal, spiritual kingdom.

Don't be morose. Don't allow circumstances to mold you or to chagrin you. Transcend it. You may not agree with the owner. You may not see eye to eye with him. You may not want to do it his way, but if you submit with a good attitude and a wide perspective seeing the big picture, I'll bet you that one day, you'll be the boss.

Prabhupada said this, "Although living in our material condition of life, we can get out of the entanglement of material contamination without leaving our positions."

Lord ChaitanyaMahaprabhu advises, "One does not have to change his position. One simply has to hear from the perfect source. This is called "parampara." Follow the principles for practical application in life. Liberation. Go back home, back to Godhead."

In other words, the change required is a change in consciousness, not the external surroundings. He told this once to George Harrison of the Beatles. George Harrison came to Prabhupada and he said, "Prabhupada, should I shave my head, wear robes and move into the temple?"

Prabhupada said, "No. You don't have to change your circumstances to be Krishna conscious. In fact, your circumstances are ideal for making people Krishna consciousness all over the world. Keep your hairs, keep your job, keep your music and just make it Krishna centered. In that way, you'll be perfect without having to shave your head, wear robes and live as a monk in the temple."

There is an interesting story that illustrates the same point. In the 11th century, King Henry III of Bavaria grew tired of court life and the pressures of being a monarch. He made application to Prior Richard at a local monastery asked to be accepted as a contemplative and spend the rest of his life in the monastery. "Your Majesty," said Prior Richard in response, "Do you understand that the pledge here is one of obedience? That's going to be hard for you to follow because you are a king and you are not used to taking orders, you are used to

giving orders."

Henry said, "I understand fully and I promise you the rest of my life I will be obedient to you as Christ leads you." Now, he had just fallen into the Prior's trap without realizing it because then the Prior says, "Then I will tell you what to do. Go back to your throne and serve faithfully in the place where God has put you." When Henry died, a statement was written "The King learned to rule by being obedient."

When we tire of our roles and responsibilities, it helps us to remember that God has planted us in a certain place and told us to be a good accountant, a good teacher, a good mother, a good father, a good executive head. He expects us to be faithful where he puts us, and in that place, He will work with us to take us higher.

When you pass those tests of keeping a good attitude, even though you don't feel like it, stay calm even when you don't get your way, honor authority even when you don't agree with them, you are sowing a seed for God to promote you in the future. In the meantime, he puts you there to be a good example, he puts you there for your light to shine, to brighten others' days and to make a difference where you are.

You are not in a position for Krishna to advance you unless you are the best that you can be right where you are now.

Again from the Bhagavad-Gita it is written, "Following this advice of Krishna's, one should not be morose or unhappy because of circumstantial changes. This is the symptom of a devotee. A devotee carries out his duty in Krishna consciousness and is never unhappy in awkward circumstances. He has full faith that in such circumstances, Krishna protects his devotee. Therefore, a devotee never deviates from his prescribed duty of devotional service."

When you are in an uncomfortable situation, Krishna puts you there either to do a work in you or to be an example to someone else. There is nothing wrong in asking Krishna to change a situation, but until that happens, you have to trust him, that where you are is where you are supposed to be.

Sometimes we have to suffer being treated unfairly, being very uncomfortable, keeping our patience and our tolerance in order to sow a seed for someone else so that they can become what Krishna created them to be.

Sometimes Krishna will ask us to put up with another obnoxious or rude, awkward or unloving person just to help them out and to be a role model for them.

There is a story in the SrimadBhagavatam of a king who was touring with his

army and he had his young adolescent daughter with him. So while they were out on maneuvers she was wandering around and she saw a curious blue orb glowing just beneath the surface of the earth. Being a young girl, she took a little piece of straw and she pierced that blue orb. No sooner had she done that than all the thousands and thousands of soldiers and officers of her father's army, they became constipated. They couldn't pass. And this went on for one day, two days, three days. It was getting pretty dramatic. It was like septicemia hovering over them.

Everyone was worried, "What could be the cause of this apparent curse. Who has offended who here?" So the little girl, her name was Sukanya, she said, "I did something the other day and there might be a connection. Now, she didn't have to open up but she was of good character, good upbringing, she had an attachment for doing the right thing, no matter what the cost."

They went to the site where she had seen the blue orb, and, lo and behold, that had been one of the eyes of a sage who had been meditating underground for many, many years. His name was Chyavan and she had poked his eye out and then he had mentally cursed all of her retainers and all of her soldiers.

In order to propitiate the saint, the king offered his 13-14 year old daughter in marriage to the saint. Now, those of you girls out there... The guy has been underground for maybe 100s of years. He doesn't smell good, he is already old. I mean, "Dad, this is so unfair. Why should I, a fair young lady, be married to an old codger." Moreover, he didn't have a very good temperament. He was irascible, angry, demanding, even verbally abusive, all the more so because he blamed Sukanya for having put out one of his eyes.

But she did what I am telling you to do. She bloomed where she was planted. She served him. He was unappreciative, he had nothing good to say for her, he was old, he was crotchety, he was ugly, he smelt bad, he was misanthropic, but she never let on, she never let herself be affected by the circumstances. She smiled, she had good words for him, she cooked for him and she served him with all of her heart.

Interestingly enough, as time went on, his heart softened, and he began to appreciate her qualities. He started to feel ashamed of his crotchety and meanness and all.

Within his heart, there was born a love for her and a desire to make wrongs right. Now, he was a sage and he contacted two of the demigods, the twin Ashvins. They are medical practitioners, but more than medical practitioners, they knew the art of making an old person youthful.

Chyavan said, "I really want to be the kind of husband that Sukanya should have. Can you make me young?" The Ashvins, they said, "We can, we can do that. All

you have to do is get into this lake with us and hold our hands and then when we come out you will be as beautiful as we are.”

He did that. When the twin Ashvins came out holding their hands with Chyavan, he was as young and beautiful as they. But when they saw Sukanya for the first time, they fell for her beauty, and they wanted her to choose them. She's looking at three beautiful 'look alike's' and all three of them want her to think that they are her husband.

She's looking from one to the other. Each is declaring, "I'm your husband. I'm your husband. I'm your husband." She's trying to figure it out and she notices that of the three, one of them one of them blinks occasionally, that of the three, one of their garlands is starting to fade slightly.

A lesser person would have said, "These two are immortals. I'd be better off getting married to them and skipping over my husband. No one would blame me in the case of a mistaken identity." She chose her husband. She chose knowing that only a mortal would blink, only a mortal's garland would fade. She chose him.

Because of her choices, she is famous. She is heroine, a person of character, someone who was not cowed or crest-fallen by her circumstances. She acted in such an exemplary way.

She sowed such seeds of cheerfulness and goodness and kindness and obedience to her father that those seeds ultimately bore fruit and she got the best mortal husband that a girl could ever possibly get.

Krishna rewards people who are unselfishness enough to say, "Lord, I don't like it. Lord, it's not fair but, Lord, I am going to trust you. I'm not doing it because I feel like it but I'm doing it for your sake, to honor and to glorify you."

Such people can be described as roses amongst thorns. We don't have to spend all of our time changing our circumstances, changing our wife, changing our co-workers, pulling up weeds. No. That will keep us from becoming everything that we should become. Spending all of our time preoccupied with external things.

The best thing that you can do is bloom as big, as beautiful as you can without changing the weeds but AMONG the weeds.

You're responsible to people for encouraging them and guiding them, but if they want to make poor choices, complain, live in the pits, you don't have to be responsible. You can't force a good attitude on someone else. You can't spend all your time encouraging someone else trying to cheer them up.

That will drain your time and energy. At some point, you have to say, "You want

to be a weed? You be a weed. But I'm a flower. I'm blooming. I'm smiling. I'm happy wherever I am."

When you bloom in the midst of weeds, you inspire and challenge the people around you to come up higher and then Krishna will take you up higher.

If you bloom where you're planted, develop your talents and your gifts doing whatever you're doing to the best of your ability, reflecting Krishna's spirit of excellence in your life, then He will give you breaks that you don't think you deserve.

He will cause people to be good to you for no apparent reason. He will open doors that no man can shut. His favor will shine on you in this life and in the next life, you'll go back home, back to God.

Thank you very much and if you received the message repeat after me...=