

Love Conquers All

Caru Das: Thanks to everyone for coming out this Sunday afternoon at five o'clock in Spanish Fork, Utah, and thanks to those who download these as podcasts from iTunes. We invite your comments, correspondence and feedback. Email us at utahkrishnas@Gmail.com.

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

Today we'd like to talk on the subject, "Love Conquers All." Too often, we judge people without knowing their history. We don't know the struggles they've been through, how they've been raised. All we know is that, "he's unfriendly, she wears weird clothes, or he has a tattoo. She has an attitude problem."

The truth is, people are the way they are for usually a very, very good reason. If we took the trouble to know their stories. We'd be much more forgiving.

If we took the trouble to know the battles they've fought, the pain and the heartache that they've endured, the people that have them wrong, we would cut them a lot more slack and exercise a lot more mercy. Instead of seeing people through the eyes of judgment, the challenge is to start seeing them through eyes of love.

SrilaPrabhupada puts it in this way, in a purport in the SrimadBhagavatam , "A person who goes to the temple and worships with great devotion but does not show sympathy to people in general is considered third class." A devotee who is Krishna conscious is compassionate.

He's not satisfied that only he is a devotee, but he tries to distribute the good news of devotional service to everyone else.

Too often, we rush to judgment based on our own backgrounds. We all have strengths and we all have weaknesses. I'm strong in some areas and sometimes I tend to jump on a person who's weak in those same areas.

I say, "Well, I would have never done that. I would have never gotten into debt. I would have never overspent. I would have never gotten divorced. I would have never married that person in the first place."

The truth is you don't know what you would have done had you been in their situation. You weren't raised in their environment. You haven't been through what they've been through.

We need to learn to believe the best in people. We all have strengths and those strengths are not of our own doing, those strengths are within us by the grace of God. Some people

are secure and confident because they had a great family life. They had great, supportive family members and parents.

We cannot judge the actions of someone who wasn't favored in that same way. If the roles were reversed, we can't say with certainty that we wouldn't have handled the situation as good as they did. Maybe we'd be struggling with an addiction. Maybe we'd be insecure and angry all the time.

In any case, we're not going to be critical and judgmental. Someone complained to me once about his boss having jumped down his throat. He overreacted to something and he just chewed off this employee right in front of the whole office staff. The employee was understandably upset.

Later, he learned that the man was going through a tough time in his life. He was experiencing a divorce. That knowledge gave the employee a whole new perspective. Instead of taking the boss's criticism personally, he started to make allowances.

Most of the time if someone is grouchy, snippy, short tempered, not up to par, there's going to be a reason for it. We don't know what's going on behind closed doors. We don't know the heartache and pain that that person maybe pushing down.

For all we know, it's all they can do just to keep it together. Krishna puts people like that in our lives not for us to judge them but to love them back into wholeness. Where are the healers?

Where are the sensitive people who can tell and recognize when someone's hurting, who will step up and say, "Can I do anything? Can I help out in anyway?"

Let's stop judging people and start healing people. I heard about a lady who was a cashier in a grocery store. She was rude and impolite to the people who were in her line. She made no bones about sending out signals she didn't really want to be at work that day.

The people were reacting in kind and the situation was escalating. It wasn't helped when her register malfunctioned. She had to call the manager in to make it right. The lines got longer, tempers got shorter. Then to exasperate everything on top of everything else someone had to do a price check.

There was a minister in the line. He wasn't excusing her rudeness, making apologies for her bad behavior. But he could tell that something extraordinary was bothering her. He decided that he was going to try to be part of the solution rather than add to the problem.

When he came up to check his items out, he said, "Young lady, I can tell that there is something deeply troubling you. Can I tell you it will all work out, that God has you in the palm of His hand." When the cashier heard these words, tears burst from her eyes and began streaming down her face. She confessed to everybody there that her daughter was in the hospital and yesterday her husband had been laid off.

The minister said, "Can I give you a hug"? He reached over the counter, she reached over to give him a big hug. Everybody else in the checkout line who heard her story, the whole

situation which had reached the boiling point became diffused and everybody wanted to step up and hug her.

Even one lady in the line said to her, "My friend is the Head Nurse at the hospital. I'll give her a call and have her look in on your daughter."

The point is, as soon as people learned her story, they put aside their eyes of judgmentalism and they saw her with eyes of love.

It is said that a gentle tongue brings healing. When someone is rude to you and you respond in love, you are not excusing their behavior. What they're doing may be wrong, they may be experiencing the result of bad choices, getting a negative karmic reaction from something they've done in the past. But what I've learned is - - I am not here to judge them, I am not here to straighten everyone out, I am here to bring healing where I can.

I heard about a farmer who had a sign along the side of the road which said, "Puppies for sale - - two dollars." A little boy came up, started pulling out from his pocket quarters, and nickels, and dimes, and put them on the table, and then finding pennies. He had two dollars, he said, "Can I see the puppies"?

Farmer brought out his box and he tipped it over and four of them, cutest little balls of fur that you ever wanted to set eyes on rolled out, they all started wrestling, just ingratiating themselves. After a few seconds, a fifth puppy came out. He couldn't run and jump like the other puppies. He'd been born with the defect that left his rear legs paralyzed. They were atrophied. They dragged along behind him and he pulled himself with his front legs.

The little boy said, "I want that puppy." The farmer said, "Why in the world would you want that puppy? Why don't you take one that's cuter, one that's better and healthier"? The little boy pulled up his pant legs and he showed braces - - metal braces on his legs - - and he said, "I think that puppy needs someone who understands him."

Give people a little room. If you took time to learn their stories you wouldn't be so critical. In dealing with thousands and thousands of people over the years, I can say one thing - - 99.9 percent of the people are not bad people. They may have made bad choices, they may have made mistakes, but in their hearts they're good people and they would like to do what's right.

Churches should not be museums putting on exhibitions of perfect people. Churches are hospitals for people who need healing in their souls. The closest thing to the heart of Krishna or God, is loving him in reciprocal, intimate, devotional service, and then spreading the good news that God wants an intimate, personal, and loving relationship with everyone.

We chant "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare. Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare." It elevates us back to our original constitutional position. We were all made as eternal spirit souls part and parcel of God for one purpose - - and that purpose is to love him.

That's our nature, that's intrinsic to us. But somewhere along the way, we got distracted, we got covered, and we forgot who we are and what the most important thing that we're supposed to do in life is.

When we chant the names of God, "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare. Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare," what it does is revive our original consciousness - - which is Krishna or God consciousness.

Just like in the morning when the Sun rises, it dissipates the fog which obscures our vision. So when the Sun of the Holy Name of the Lord rises within the heart, it dissipates our forgetfulness and our ignorance of God.

Those who are Krishna conscious, they see everybody as a devotee; it's just that they don't know it. They don't see in terms of sectarianism, denominationalism. They don't see in terms of 'us and them, devotees and non-devotees, devotees and karmis (fruitive workers)."

They see with an equal vision that everybody is by their original nature a lover of God. The question is, how can we revive that? And the answer is to be generous with your mercy.

When we chant, we're being generous to ourselves by reviving that primeval relationship with God. Let's be generous with our mercy both for ourselves and others, and sparing in our criticism.

If you read about the past times of Krishna when He was a descendant on the planet 5,000 years ago, it was amazing some of the people He showed mercy to. He showed mercy to Shishupal who was a demon. He showed mercy to Putana who was a baby killing witch.

The reason that God is so inclined to show mercy to people who we would think were totally disqualified, who we would have totally written off, is that God knows everybody's story in full, past, present, and future.

He often shows mercy to someone and we cannot figure out why He did that. The answer is He knows their story. Even HiranyaKashipu, if you're part of our tradition, you would just label HiranyaKashipuas evil. He has been described as a case of meningitis in the head of the universe.

But when you know his whole story, he was a gatekeeper to the kingdom of God. He was a guardian of the pearly gates. God was going to descend and he asked HiranyaKashiputo also descend simultaneously and play the role of his enemy.

Another enemy of God was Ravana. Not too long ago we celebrated the festival of India and we burned a 20 foot high effigy of Ravana.

Ravana was asked in his afterlife, "Why did you fight to the bitter end against Rama? By digging in your heels and refusing to surrender, you caused your generals, your relatives, your family members. You caused everyone that you know that was close to you to

perish in the battle for Sri Lanka.

Why didn't you have the chutzpah to go out and face Rama upfront, lay your life on the ground, and then at least all of your friends and relatives would have survived?"

Ravana gave a very interesting answer. He said, "All my friends, all my relatives, all the generals; they're all meat eating cannibals.

They were never going to make the choice to revive their God consciousness, so I arranged to do it for them. I knew that anyone who's killed, who lays down their life when Rama the Supreme Personality of Godhead is present on the battle field, gets the benefit of liberation.

Every one of them got salvation which they didn't deserve, which they would have never achieved on their own. That's why I fought until the very last moment.

Another person who the whole world condemned in that same past time of Ramachandrawas Keikeyi. On the very morning that Ram was to be coronated king of Ayodhya, she caused him to be exiled into the forest for 14 years.

The day that he was supposed to accept the crown, and sleep on silken bed sheets, and be served in love and affection by all the inhabitants of Ayodhya, due to her treachery, that was the day that Rama went to the forest, took the cold hard ground as his bed, and instead of wearing royal finery, he wore the barks of trees and kept matted locks and endured the attacks of creatures of the night, creatures of the wood, all because of Keikeyi.

The whole world condemned Keikeyi even now we think of Keikeyi as an evil sorceress. But, if you know Ramayana, the whole story, before Ram descended to Earth, he took Keikeyi aside in the spiritual world and He said, "You're a great devotee. I'm going to ask you to do something that most devotees would shirk from doing.

I'm going to ask you to endure the censor, the judgmentalism, the criticism of the whole world, in order to pry me out of Ayodhya and get me into the forest. My mission is primarily to confront and kill Rama and secondarily to rule over Ayodhya. Unless you do this, I will not be able to fulfill my mission."

It's interesting. The first thing Ram did after spending 14 years of exile and killing Ravana, the first thing he did, he came back to the palace and he offered Keikeyi His prostrated obeisances. Why would he do that? The answer is that He knew her whole story which others did not know.

The more compassion, the more sensitivity, the more love that we show to other people, according to the law of Karma, the more that we receive and comes back to us.

Healing, seeing others through eyes of love, translates into others seeing you and treating you in the same way as you treat others.

Bill was a college student who was known for his wild hair and sloppy dress. He was a

straight A student. He was very sharp, but just a little bit different.

One day he became inspired to find out more about God. He went to a very conservative church which was right across the street from the campus. He entered into the back door, and he was looking for a place to sit.

The church was packed, so he gradually moved up the aisle looking right and left and he didn't find any place. He came to the front row, not having a single place to sit so he just sat down cross legged in the aisle. He wasn't being disrespectful.

That's what you do when you walk into a lecture hall at the University. Am I right? And all the seats are taken; you sit down in the aisle.

The senior deacon, very distinguished 80 year old plus gentleman, wearing an extremely expensive suit, silver hair and a walking cane, started walking also from the back of the church up to where Bill was sitting. As he passed row after row, people looked and their attention was caught.

The preacher right in the middle of his sermon saw this drama playing out and he realized, "This is a distraction. Nobody is listening to what I have to say. Everybody's waiting expectantly with bated breaths to see what happens when the deacon reaches Bill."

The last thing they expected was for the deacon to show any sympathy or any sensitivity whatsoever to this wild haired college student wearing a tattered T - shirt, jeans and open toed sandals.

The minister stopped his sermon and the whole church waited with bated breath. When the deacon got to where Bill was, he put his cane aside and very painstakingly lowered himself down on the floor and sat cross - legged with Bill so he wouldn't feel alone and isolated.

The congregation went wild. Everybody clapped and erupted in applause. The preacher said, "My sermon you may remember for a few days, but what you just saw, you'll remember for the rest of your lives."

One more story. Teddy was a fifth grade student. He wouldn't participate. He was moody. He was hard to get along with. His teacher Mrs. Thompson always said that she loved all of her students but was to admit later that she hardly cared for Teddy at first.

Christmas time came around and a lot of students put gifts on her desk, and amongst the expensive gifts was an old cheap rhinestone bracelet. Half the stones were out of it and half a bottle of perfume. All the kids knew this had come from Teddy and they were making fun of him and whispering under their breaths and giggling.

In order to protect Teddy, Mrs. Thompson put a big show of splashing the perfume on and putting the rhinestone bracelet on and admiring it.

The day was over, the students had gone. Teddy remained. He went up to Mrs. Thompson. He said, "Mrs. Thompson; I'm so glad that you can wear my mother's

rhinestone bracelet and enjoy her perfume. You look as beautiful as she used to look when she was wearing it.” He went home.

Mrs. Thompson's curiosity was aroused to learn Teddy's story. After school she went to the principal's office, she went to the filing cabinet, where records were kept of each and every student. She opened and she flipped through the files until she came to “S.” Teddy Stoddard.

The first file she pulled out were the comments of Teddy's first grade teacher who said, “The boy has promise but he has a bad home situation.”

She went to the second grade file where the second grade teacher had said, “Could do better but distracted by his mother's illness.”

She went to the third grade file where the teacher had made a note that during his third grade year, Teddy's mother had died.

In the fourth grade file, this comment she found. “Teddy is a slow learner. His father shows no interest in him.”

At this point alone at about seven at night in the school in the principal's office, Mrs. Thompson starts to cry and cry and cry.

The next morning the students were greeted by an entirely different teacher. She'd exchanged her eyes of judgmentalism for eyes of love. She had come to understand why Teddy was so distracted and so unmotivated. She made the boy her personal project, showing love and encouragement, tutoring him and mentoring him. Gradually she changed the course of his life.

He went on to high school. After four years of high school a letter came. “Dear Mrs. Thompson, thank you so much for all the time and attention and tutoring you gave me. I just graduated high school second in my class.”

She didn't hear from him in another four years. Then another letter came. “Mrs. Thompson, thank you again for all that you have done for me. I have just now graduated number 1 as a valedictorian of my class.”

Five or six years she didn't hear anything about Teddy. One final letter came. “Dear Mrs. Thompson, I just finished Medical school and my residency and now I can call myself Dr. Teddy Stoddard. And I'm going to marry a beautiful girl on such and such date at such and such church next month. Would you be kind enough to come and sit in the chair that my mother would have sat in had she still been alive?”

Make sure you see people through eyes of love and not judgment. Don't be critical, don't cubbyhole people. Don't categorize them, don't write them off; give them the benefit of the doubt.

Consider they might be going through incredible difficulties and doing the best they can. Be a person who helps to lighten the load. You can be a Mrs. Thompson in someone's life.

You can be a difference maker. You can be a catalyst for change.

If you can see people through eyes of love, you will live as a healer, lifting people up, restoring the broken. Let me assure you that when you help others come higher; Krishna will make sure you always come higher. He will pour out his blessings and favor on you in this life and the next life and take you back home, back to God.

Thank you very much for your kind attention. If you have received this message, please repeat after me;

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare. Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.