

## Knowing What To Magnify

**Caru Das:** Thanks, everyone, for coming out this Sunday evening to Spanish Fork, Utah.

Thanks to those who download these talks through podcast and iTunes. We invite your comments, correspondence, and feedback by email at [utahkrishnas@gmail.com](mailto:utahkrishnas@gmail.com). We also have a membership class at our website, [utahkrishnas.org](http://utahkrishnas.org). We'd like to thank those who've 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.

Today, we'd like to talk about knowing what to magnify.

We all have problems in our lives. Maybe some people are talking against us at work, we have a legal situation, we have a health challenge...question is, "Do we unnecessarily magnify our challenges? Make them bigger than they are? Go around with a defeatist attitude?"

"Nothing good ever happens to me. I always get the short end of the stick."

Do we view our challenges as impossible? Meant to sink us, to finish us? Are we telling ourselves, "I'll never get out of debt? I'll never get well? I'll never meet the boy or girl of my dreams?"

My question to you today is, "Could it be that our perspective is keeping us from going where we're supposed to go?"

Prabhupada, our Founder, when he was in India announcing to friends and well-wishers his intention to go to America and start the Krishna Consciousness Movement, these so-called "friends" and "well-wishers" tried to dissuade him, to talk him out of it. Their methodology was to magnify all the problems that they imagined he would encounter going to America at an elderly age.

One refrain that often kept coming up was, "They only eat meat in America. Prabhupada, you're a vegetarian. There won't be anything to eat there. America has no fruits, no vegetables. The only thing they have there to eat is meat and maybe, if you're lucky, you'll get a few potatoes."

Another argument was, "They don't have a high-class culture there. They don't have a Brahminical culture. They smoke, they drink, they have addictive personalities, they chase women, they display it on the TVs and the DVDs. You'll never be able to reach the young people in the Western countries and make a positive difference."

In fact, in India, there's a belief that, if you're a Brahman who doesn't eat meat, doesn't take intoxicants, doesn't gamble, and doesn't have illicit sex...if you take a boat across the ocean to the Western countries, you're no longer a Brahman. Indian society will ostracize you and you'll no longer be accepted as a Brahman.

His dissuaders were not only trying to talk him out of going to America by saying that the Westerners were incorrigible, they'd never lend an aural reception to the message of the Bhagavad Gita. But they were also hinting that Prabhupada himself would be contaminated by associating with such low class people.

The secret of the Prabhupada's success - if you didn't know it, there are five hundred Hare Krishna temples all over the world - was he didn't focus downward at the problems, but he focused upwards on his God. He didn't get obsess with the disqualifications of the Americans, but he magnified the qualifications of Krishna, his God. He kept things in perspective.

I heard about a boy who grew up in Tennessee and from his childhood he heard this legend about a 'black racer' snake. He never saw one. He never met any other young boys who had seen one. But, the adults, especially around Halloween time, would talk about the 'black racer' snake. It was very fast. It could outrun any young boy. Apparently, it would only attack boys around his age and only at night.

One day late afternoon his mother told him to walk about a mile or so to their neighbors' house and borrow the iron. He went there, he borrowed the iron, and as he was proceeding back it was getting dusk. He imagined that every tuft of grass concealed a 'black racer' snake. There was one under every rock, lurking behind every tree, just ready to pounce out and chase after him.

When he reached about halfway home, he had a distinct feeling that he was being followed. He even heard a suffling sound behind him. He looked over his shoulder, and low and behold, he was absolutely convinced that he saw this twisty wiggly 'black racer' snake just ready to bite his right heel.

He took off running. His heart was pounding three hundred beats a minute. Sweat was flying off of him. He was scared to death. By the time he got to his front yard he was out of breath. He bent down. Put his hands on his knees and looked over the opposite shoulder and saw that...It was not a 'black racer' snake at all. It was the cord and the plug of the iron that was bumping along behind him. He thought, "Oh my gosh, I ran from that thing. I almost scared and gave myself a heart attack because I lost my perspective. I let my imagination run wild. I didn't discipline myself."

Our message today is that if you going make anything bigger, don't make your problems bigger...that medical report...those critics at work. Make your God bigger. Don't talk to God about how big your problems are. Talk to your problems about how big your God is.

If you're familiar with the Mahabharata, Durydhone brought three great maha rathas, three great warriors, against Arjuna and the righteous Pandavas. Those were Bhishma, Dronacharya, and Karna.

Maha ratha means they are able to contend with 10,000 soldiers at a time. Durydhone was so proud. Here's Bhishma. Here's Dronacharya. Here's Karna. He glorified them. He counted on them. He valued them to defeat the forces of righteousness.

Arjuna did not ignore but neither he did he magnify these three champions. He acknowledged their prowess, their expertise, the fact that they were lethal martial artists, but he didn't dwell on it. He knew that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of God, was descended as an Avatar, and was driving his own chariot. He knew these were dangerous, opponents, but he also knew that whatever strength they had, came originally from Krishna, who creates millions and millions of universes. In fact, whatever strength or talents or abilities that any of us have, they come from Krishna. Arjuna wasn't intimidated by these formidable opponents because he knew that his God was bigger than his challengers.

Sometimes we think, "Oh, my challenge, my obstacle, it looks so big. This is it. I am finished. It could easily overwhelm me," and we start to think that we don't have a chance. Keep your perspective. Try to snap back into your perspective and don't be intimidated. If you're keeping God first place in your life, and your purposes are lined up with His, you need to know that the forces that are for you are greater than those which are against you.

You're not weak. You're not defeated. You're not powerless. You are a child of that almighty Lord who created millions and millions of universes. You're equipped. You're anointed. You're loveable. Don't you dare drag around thinking that "I am never going to overcome this addiction. My house is never going to sell. I am never going to accomplish my dreams." No. Get the right perspective. Get yourself full of "can do" power. The greatest force of the universe, if you keep him first place, is breathing in your direction and there's no challenge too great for you.

Krishna uses opposition to get us higher. Maya, the enemy, whose job it is to keep us in this material world, would not be fighting you so hard, if it weren't for the fact that you're close to something great. You're on the threshold. It is said that the size of the challenge indicates the size of your destiny. Krishna uses opponents like Bhishma, Dronacharya and Karna to take you to a higher level. That giant was never meant to defeat you. He was meant to promote you.

Sometimes it seems like we're literally buried with problems, not one but two or three. It said, "When it rains, it pours." Don't think of yourself as buried. It may be dark down there right now underneath the legal problem, health problem, marriage problem.

Think of yourself as planted. Think of yourself as a seed, which is deep in the soil, germinating, getting warmth and nutrients, and know that sooner or later, you will burst up into the sunlight and produce a harvest, produce fruits. The more the opposition is, our

attitude should be, the more that we're going to bounce back, the more that we're going to increase, and the more that we're going to come up higher and stronger.

I read about how during the 19th century the immigrants from Europe were all processed at this big huge facility at Ellis Island in New York. I wonder what that facility looked like to 19th century immigrants. Who knows what they went through? What persecution, what atrocities they saw back in Europe? Who knows what loved ones they lost? Then they spent weeks, if not months, in boats crossing the Atlantic, enduring storms, seasickness, cramped quarters, with not sufficient foodstuffs. They would have seen a portion of their fellow immigrants pass away due to diseases and weakness.

Then they come to this Ellis Island facility, a huge open area with bunks in the middle, sinks against the wall, showers and toilets at the end of the hall. Some of them, after being on the boat and after going through what they went through in Europe, that facility must have looked pretty grand. In fact, for some of them it might have been the grandest room they had ever seen.

Let's imagine that one of them is so overwhelmed with the greatness of the room that he decides to stay there forever. When he is processed and he is invited to go through out other side into the greater continent of America, he digs his heels in. He unpacks all of his stuff. He hangs pictures on the wall. He makes shelves and cabinets. His plan is to stay right there, and not move on.

You just want to grab this guy and shake him and tell him how foolish he is, that there is something beyond this transitional processing place, which is greater than he could ever imagine. Doors are open, opportunities are there. Compared to what is on the other end of it, this place is actually just a dump. America, has so much more to offer him, and yet, how often do we do the same thing? This earth...this life...some of us take it as all in all. Some of us take this temporary world...this family, these friends, this country, as the ultimate destination. In fact, this is just like Ellis Island, it's not a destination, it's just a place of transit.

If we try to make a permanent situation in this impermanent world, we would of the same mind set, as that emigrant who wanted to stay, and settle right there in the Ellis Island's dormitories. Let's ask ourselves, could it be that it is we who are talking ourselves out of our dreams.

Are we are saying 'the opposition is too big, I don't have the right connections, my health is not up to it, I don't have what it takes. I will never be at that level?' No, snap into a new perspective, take the limits off of God. Quit telling God what he can't do. He has ways to increase you that would never ever occur to you. He has already lined up the right people, opened the right doors, and sent the right breaks your way.

You're not limited by your background. You're not limited by how you were raised. You're not limited by a lack of education. You're not limited by lack of financial resources. The only things that really limit us are our mode of thinking. If you think you've reached your limits then, you have. If you think the promise is too big then, you're already defeated.

Our suggestion is to change your perspective. Here is a verse from Srimad Bhagavatam, one of our scriptures. From the third Canto 25th Chapter 18 verse, "In that position of self realization, when one sees everything in the right perspective, he becomes indifferent to material existence, and the material influence acts less powerfully upon him. As the contamination of germs of a particular disease can influence a weaker person, similarly, the influence of material nature can act on the weaker, or conditioned soul, but not in the liberated soul."

You know, probably, that we have bacteria in us all the time, and we have cancer cells in us all the time. If your immune system is strong, you eat right, you exercise, you think right, those cancer cells, those bacteria cannot get the best of you. On the other hand, you make yourself vulnerable when your immune system goes down: by keeping irregular hours, not eating properly, not being active. Our method of keeping our spiritual immune system pumped up, of keeping ourselves healthy, and so therefore, although negative thoughts come to everybody from time to time, we keep them in perspective. They may come but we don't magnify them because we chant the names of the Lord; Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Hare, Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama, Rama, Hare, Hare. If you do this on a regular basis, I guarantee you that the depression, defeat, ideas of being sub-par, second best, they may come, but they'll not stay.

There was a conversation 500 years ago between Haridas Thakur and one Caste Brahman, someone hypocritical, his name was Gopal Chakravarty.

He asked, Haridas, and he was known as the Namacharya. He used to chant about 300 thousand times a day. "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Hare, Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama, Rama, Hare, Hare." Gopal Chakravarty said, "At what point in your chant, what stage in the chanting, do you get salvation. Do you get liberation?"

Haridas Thakur said, "You get it right away. You get salvation, you get freedom from fear, you get freedom from intimidation, you get confidence, you get strength, even as a neophyte chanter."

To give an example: "This is appropriate because we just had Halloween on Friday." They all celebrate Halloween at noon. They don't celebrate Halloween at three o'clock in the afternoon. You celebrate Halloween after dark. That's the time we consider the ghosts, and hobgoblins, and the thieves, and the boogeyman come out. However, soon as there is the first glimmering of light, like it's still as earlier as three o'clock in the morning, and it's still a couple of hours before dawn, before you see the fullness of the sun, just at that point at which the sky begins to lighten...

All your fear goes away... isn't it? We are no more concerned about who is in the closet, who is under the bed, the bogeyman. It's not even dawn, we don't even see the sun, it's just the first glimmer, the first light lightening in the sky. Similarly even at the beginning stage, the names of God are so powerful that even chanting as a neophyte: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Hare, Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama, Rama, Hare, Hare. All fear, all intimidation goes away just like all fear of ghosts, hobgoblins, witches disappears with the pre dawn.

We're not created to live average and have a defeated mentality. To go around being intimidated and being buffeted around by our so called problems. We were created with seeds of greatness inside us. God's destiny for each and every one of us is to live a life of victory, a life of overcoming, and to leave our mark on our generation.

Right now you may be facing a big challenge. I'm not asking you to stick your head in the sand. I'm not asking you to go into denial, but what I'm asking is you don't magnify your problem, magnify your God.

I heard about a boy who complained to his father that there was a bully who lived on their block and of harassed him all the time. The father gave his son a telescope, he said, "Look at the bully through the telescope." The boy said, "He still looks pretty tough." Father said, "Turn the telescope around." The boy looked at the bully from that perspective and then he said, "He doesn't look so tough, I'm not going to let him push me around anymore." Turn your telescope around. You have magnified the problem enough.

We read from scripture, there was a five year old boy, Prahlad, who was very devoted towards Lord Krishna, all the time chanted: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Hare, Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama, Rama, Hare, Hare.

It so happened that his father was a huge, powerful, demoniac, atheist king, who had conquered the upper planets of this universe. His father so much resented the fact that his son was pious that he tried to kill his own son. This powerful wizard, powerful warrior picked on his own five years old son: tossed him off a cliff, put him in a pit with cobras. He tried to get a war elephant to crush him by stepping on him, threw him in boiling oil; put him in the fire.

It looked very bad. What five year old boy would stand a chance against such powers of darkness. Prahlad knew his father was mean and nasty, but he also knew a secret. He knew that whatever powers his father had, came originally from Lord Krishna and so he was not unduly upset about it. He knew that what was facing him was big, but he also knew that his God was much, much bigger and much more powerful.

When the Lord appeared as a half Man half Lion incarnation to save Prahlad, a fight took place between Nrsinghadeva and Hiranya Kashipu, his father. During that fight the scriptures describes that this powerful demon Hiranya Kashipu was like a moth rushing into the fire. Wasn't it interesting that just when things look darkest, just when things looked the most hopeless, Prahlad was the closest to his destiny.

The Lord can turn things around on a dime within a second, Hiranya Kashipu u was stretched across the lap of Nrsinghadeva. Prahlad himself, after the demise of his father. ascended to the throne and ruled not just one planet but many planets in Krishna consciousness, with piety, and with righteousness.

Similarly, whatever it may be that you are facing and that you will face in the future, God is such that he can all turn it around in a moment. One phone call, one person comes across your path, is all He needs to get you where He wants you to be.

When you brag about God, your problems get smaller and smaller. The bigger is your God, the smaller are your problems. We are asked to perform 'sraavanam, kirtanam' 'hearing, chanting,' I say the names Hare Krishna and then I hear and the result is 'smaranam,' remembering. The result is I remember God. I remember Him coming and going, in the past, in the present, and in the future. In happiness and in distress, I remember the Lord by this technique of hearing and chanting.

Few years ago, we were trying to build this temple and one of the ways, interesting enough, of raising money were selling llamas. In those days, there was a short supply of llamas and large demand. You could buy llamas at auction and could sell them five or six times more. We went to an auction in Macon, Missouri to buy some llamas. We had a Mazda pickup truck with a camper shell, and a 30-year-old Uhaul trailer. We bought six llamas. There were three in the trailer and three lying down in the pick up truck bed under the camper shell. We were driving back through Wyoming. It was May. Vaibavi was at the wheel early in the morning, about 7 am. I was sleeping with my knees up on the dashboard.

Quite unexpectedly, we hit a patch of black ice. The whole rig started doing a 360 on the freeway. The Uhaul trailer, the Mazda pickup, the people, the llamas, and what a mess it could have been. By the protection and by the grace of the Lord, we weren't trampled by an eighteen wheeler trailer, we didn't go off into the ditch on one side or another, we didn't jack knife. When we had finished spinning, we were facing in the direction that we had been traveling. Of course the engine was stalled, but all we had to do was restart the engine and continue on.

That same God who protected us then is standing by us now. We are still putting Him first place, and still doing our level best to do His work. He will protect us in the future, as He has protected us in the past.

When we first got the idea to build the temple here in Spanish Fort, we remained in Los Angeles to continue raising some of the funds. We had a non-devotee stay here, just out of convenience, as a caretaker. He was not a chanter. I got a call from Los Angeles from him warning me. "Caru ! Caru! I'm going nuts here, I'm about to have a nervous breakdown." I said, "What's wrong?" He said, "I don't know if you knew this but, this area is ninety percent Mormon." I said, "I knew that." He said, "They are not going to like you starting a Krishna Temple in a Mormon area. They are going to try to shut you down. There's going to be opposition. You don't know what you've gotten yourself into. I just heard a bunch of kids on Saturday night drive by and chant Hare Krishna." I said, "Well, that sounds pretty bad (tongue in cheek)." He said, "Caru, I want to build a chain link fence around this whole place. I don't feel safe."

I'm thinking, "You should chill out, and chant Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama." Needless to say, he didn't last very long.

Against his ill conceived advice, our policy was to be completely open, completely transparent. Our building a temple in Utah Valley was not a sectarian denominational endeavor. The temple is intended to be a place where people of all religious faiths can

come and chant the Holy names of the Lord without any consideration of sectarianism. We've always been open. We've always welcomed the fact that everyone driving back and forth can see everything that we are doing. It was our hope that in seeing what we're doing and in seeing how Krishna brought us along step by step by step from a piece of property that was all run down and an eyesore to having grass planted, to having it landscaped, to having the log house built in '87. Then to start our festival of India, and our Color festivals, our Diwali festival. Then finally to have opened this building. The community has appreciated what we're doing. They have embraced us. That was the idea.

In 1999, far from trying to oppose us, the LDS church gave us \$25,000 in order to facilitate the construction of this temple.

Another incident, one day a doctor from Salem appeared at our door with a check for \$3,000. I knew that he was a very strict LDS person giving 10 percent of his salary, giving to so many other causes, giving his time. As a doctor, he also went on missions to Africa and gave his medical expertise. I said, "Doctor Frampton, are you sure that after all the commitments that you're keeping with the LDS, are you sure that you can still afford to give \$3,000 to the construction of a Krishna temple?"

He said, "Not only can I afford it, but this is one of the best investments I could ever make. I want to be able to drive back and forth on this road with my grandsons in the car and tell them that I helped build that magnificent temple."

Another story: there was a fireside in West Salem. Cheiko Okasaki, the Former President of the LDS Womens Relief Society, told 1200 of our friends and neighbors... (We were sitting in the front row. We were the guests of honor.) She said, "Don't think of this as their temple. Go volunteer. Lay some sod. Paint a wall. Make it OUR temple."

That God who saved us on the I-80 in Wyoming. That God who supported us and brought the community together to make this temple a reality. That God has not lost his power somewhere along the way. That's the same God who's standing by our side today ready to take us into a great wonderful future. He's still on the throne.

Let me today speak confidence into you. Let me challenge you not to be intimidated, not to magnify the size of your enemy. Krishna did not create you to be overcome. He created you to overcome. He did not create you to be a victim. He created you for victory. He's not only going to bring you out of whatever is facing you. He will bring you out better than you were before. If you'll turn your telescope around, keep the right perspective...problems, critics, bullies, they may be big. Your God is much, much bigger.

If you'll stand on Krishna's promise in the Bhagavad-gita that 'My devotee never perishes but achieves everlasting joy, peace and righteousness,' you will overcome every obstacle, defeat every enemy, and become everything that Krishna intends you to become in this life, and in the next life go back home back to Godhead.



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