

What is Gods Plan for MY Life?

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

We also have a membership class at our website, utahkrishnas.org. I'd like to thank those who have taken the membership class, 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, the Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Today, because it is football season, we entitled our talk, "Game Plan." Is that all right with you?

What is the game plan for our life? A lot of you had this experience. Your mom, or your grandmother, maybe a friend of your mother or your grandmother's, sat you down, called you by name when you were six or eight or ten years old, looked into your eyes and with all the sincerity and believability in the world, said to you, "Sarah...Jim...Bob..Sidney... there is a God and He has a great plan for your life".

Today, we're going to talk about that. "What is God's plan for our life"? When we were little kids that sounded pretty good, that sounded pretty exciting. That wasn't a bad thing to hear and we believed that and we should have believed that. It was a question, "What's the great plan for my life?" that we wrestled with. It was a question that intrigued us. We processed that question. We wondered about it.

Then, as we got older, we got to be a little frustrated about it. Decisions kept forcing themselves upon us. "How do I figure out which college to go to? Should I stay in-state and live at home and save money or should I go out of state where I get a scholarship but then there's dorm fees, travel and all those expenses? What's my major going to be? Well, I love the Humanities but the money's in Science and Technology. What am I going choose which way am I going go? I'm dating a girl and I really like her but my mom is telling me, 'Find someone else.'"

Every time we make a decision we know that's a turn in a road that eliminates other possibilities, other turns in the road. And we don't know if our decisions are in line with that great plan that God has for us.

If we're down here, God's the coach, and we're supposed to perform according to a universal game plan, it seems like there are few indicators, there are no cues telling us which way to go, no signals seem to be coming in from the Coach. Finding out what's God plan for our lives seems more mystery than certainty. God seems more silent than vocal.

I remember I grew up in a rural town in Pennsylvania with about 200 people in it. Christmas Eve was a big deal in my home. It was my brother's birthday and all of our relatives would come for Christmas Eve dinner. Everybody would help decorating the tree.

With all this bustle going on, and in what seem to me the ideal circumstances to do what I did, I went out back late at night 10:30, 11:00 o'clock at night. I went up to the top of the hill behind our house. It was a clear night. It was a sky full of stars. As a 12-year-old boy, I threw the question out "What is Your purpose for my life?" I thought if there was any time or circumstances under which an answer would come back to me, it would be then, Christmas Eve. Nothing was forthcoming at the time.

Imagine you're Tom Brady down on the field and you're facing your most dangerous rivals. You know there's a game plan and you know you should be calling your plays according to the game plan. But you're not getting the signals from the coach. For some reasons he's not forthcoming. He's intentionally not communicating with you or maybe there's a technical malfunction.

What do you do? You're left on your own. You're feeling your way in the dark. You call plays. Some of those plays do gain yardage, but you don't seem to be scoring like you should. The outcome is not as certain as it would be if you're acting according to the game plan, which was very carefully crafted and took into consideration specific weaknesses of your opponents. The outcome is totally uncertain.

How we going get this knowledge for our lives? How we going to make our life count? Is God going to come to me in some dramatic, unmistakable way as a bolt of lightning? Is He going to speak to me from a burning bush or He appear to me in a dream?

Will He come to the foot of my bed one night? After all, Halloween's coming up?
[jokingly]

In the meantime, my life is slipping away - every decision, every turn in the road means I can't pursue this alternative destination. I'm forced to make decisions which will not be easy to unmake if I end up going in a different direction. Am I doing something wrong here? Did I miss something?

We all come to this crossroads of life. Destination way. Inspiration drive. "Should I stay in my job and do what I'm always doing? Or should I take that higher paying job in a new city where I don't know anybody?"

Destination way. "Should I continue to deal with my teenager that way I always dealt with them or considering their present bad choices, should I take a left or right on inspiration drive?"

God, what do You think about all this? What's Your answer? What are Your cues? If You're out there, how do I go about finding these plans for my life? What is Your will for

my life? What am I suppose to do with my life and where do I go from this point forward?

We have a premise and we have a promise. The premise is, "there is a God, there is a Supreme Being," and the promise is that "God or Krishna will show it to you." Now, by the end of this talk, you will know what that plan is for your life. Not only will you and get the general answers that you're searching for, but those answers will also lead you to the details; the specifics of your life that you might be facing. To get there you've got to start at the right place.

Two plus two equals four. If you start with two plus two equals five, no matter how expert you are, everything else will be wrong from that point on. We need to pick the right starting point, and the first thing to realize is that we didn't create ourselves. I didn't manufacture myself. You didn't manufacture yourself.

It's the manufacturer, it's the Creator to gets to say what the purpose of the created item is. The manufacturer of this laptop built into it a certain purpose. Because I didn't manufacture it myself, I don't get to make up or imagine the purpose for my life.

Another thing we need to realize is that we're not going to get the answers to purpose from society. Society does not value significance. Society values success. The values of success do not address my inner self, neither do they bring satisfaction. If you don't believe me, ask Robin Williams, Tiger Woods, Michael Jackson, going back a little further Marilyn Monroe, Howard Hughes.

You're not going to get the answer to the question 'what's the game plan for my life' from society, or from a consumerist culture. You're not going to get it by watching TV. You're not going to get it by watching DVDs. You're not going to get it by reading newspapers.

Material success will simply not give you the satisfaction that you're hungering for. God, up there, He must be scratching His head wondering, "What's all this ambiguity? What's all this uncertainty? What's all this confusion about? It's very, very clearly stated right there in the Bhagavad Gita."

If we cull all the scriptures we will come up with some bullet points of what God wants for our lives. I'll go down five of them really very quickly.

'Pray without ceasing.' That's why we chant, "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Ram, Hare Ram, Ram Hare Hare." Krishna is the name for God, as is Rama. God is Absolute, and when you associate with God through His Name, you associate with His mercy, His compassion, His wisdom, His strength and His stamina.

Second point is, 'be thankful.' Give thanks in everything that we do.

Third is, 'submit to authorities', hence the system of the guru, the spiritual example to model perfect God courteousness in our lives.

Fourth point is – ‘avoid immorality.’ We eschew illicit sex, gambling, intoxication and meat eating.

The fifth point is ‘be filled with spiritual purpose.’

These are, in general, what God would like us all to do with our lives. On one level, unfortunately, there's something emotionally unsatisfying about this list, because it seems that specific questions, ‘where do I live, who do I date, who do I marry, what's my job going to be,’ get only general answers and moral platitudes.

We might conclude that God's not really interested in the details of our life. However inspired we are on Sunday, we're still on our own to figure out how to act on Monday or Tuesday. When you reach an impass like this, it's good to get back to fundamentals. It's good to get back to your starting point.

Let me put this out for your consideration. We are not the starting point. If you don't get anything else today, get this: It's not about you. It's not about you. It's about He who created you. If you are hiking in the Wasatch mountains. You have a certain destination to reach. You should have reached it a long time ago. You are perplexed and frustrated, and you meet someone coming down the mountain from the other direction and you say, "How come we've not reached Lookout point yet?" The person answers, "You can't reach it from this trail. There is no way. You are on the wrong trail. The way you're going to reach Lookout point is if you go back to the trail head, get into your car, drive round the other side of the mount, and take the right trail head."

Satisfaction, knowing what's the plan, getting specific answers to the specific questions that we have...you're not going to get it if the starting point is your. That's your trail head. I don't care how many success books there are in Barnes and Noble. (That's the reason there are so many books, cause no one book gives you the answer.) No one book actually gives you the satisfaction that you bought the book for in the first place, cause the starting point is wrong. It's not about us, it's about our Creator.

Vince Lombardi, the legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers. Aside...I'm trying to give you guys some consolation for missing the football games this afternoon, is that OK? The first day of season Coach Lombardi would get his team together and say "Guys, this is a football. Pass it around from one to another. Get the feel of its texture, the strings, re-familiarize yourself after the off season."

He's given a football to Bart Starr, who threw thirty-five touchdown passes last season as a league MVP. To Paul Hornung, one of the greatest running backs ever. To Ray Nitschke, all future Hall of Famers. And they must all be rolling their eyes, "I know it's a football. What's his point?" He's saying, “we're going to go through a long season and we are going to have to communicate with each other.” If we don't start off the season at the right trail head, at the right point, we are going to be all over the map half way through the season. We're going to get beat up by the lowest team in the league. We have to start at the beginning.

Before you do life, start at the beginning. Which is: it's not about you, it's about God who created you. If you don't get this fundamental right, nothing, no self success, no self promotion pursuit will give you what you're looking for and what you're hankering for.

The Bhagavad Gita is Krishna's football speech. It's the fundamentals. Like I've said, Bhagavad Gita is the 'ABCD' of spiritual life. What do we find when we consult the Bhagavad Gita, Song of God, spoken by Krishna five thousand years ago? Ninth chapter Fourteenth Verse: Krishna says to Arjuna "He who abides in me with great and transcendental faith is most certainly united with me in yoga and is the highest of all." Ask yourself this question. Are we fundamentally ABIDING, finding rest, shelter, respite in the Lord, or are we abiding in our problems.

When we get a problem do we go to Facebook and let everyone know about it. Do we pick up the phone and start talking to all of our friends? There's a saying, 'when you get a problem, when you get a challenge don't go to the phone go to the throne.'

There's this archaic description of people in scriptures: he was an 'upright' man of God, she was an 'upright' woman of God. There's a practical aspect to this term. If you're looking up to your God instead of looking down at the tops of your feet, you have an expanded vision. You can see a lot more. You can discern things that would not otherwise be visible if you were just meditating on your feet.

Our tendency is to exaggerate ourselves, our problems, our family, our work place, our country. And as we over exaggerate ourselves and our position, we under exaggerate, or we minimize the position of God.

In the Caitanya Caritamrta, It says that this universe with this countless planets is compared to a mustard seed in a bag of mustard seeds. Say you go to the farmers' market and you buy 50 pounds of mustard seeds in a burlap bag and throw it over your shoulder and walk a quarter mile back to your car. During that time through the course weaves of the burlap, a couple of mustard seeds fall on the ground. You don't get to your car and say, "Oh no! I lost a hundred mustard seeds." You don't even notice. You don't care.

This universe is like one mustard seed in a bag full of mustard seeds. All these universes are created by Mahavishnu. Sometimes you see when the sun is shining through the window you see the dust particles moving perpendicular. That gives you an idea so many universes have been created by Mahavishnu as He lies down sleeping. He's not working hard toiling on the scaffolding, welding girders together. He's sleeping, and millions of universes are emanating from His breathing, as sport.

Mahavishnu is an expansion of an expansion of an expansion of a portion of Krishna. Getting the idea? As your God becomes bigger, your problems become smaller. If you allow your problems to become bigger and overwhelming your God becomes smaller.

We're enjoined to set our hearts and our visions above and not below. We're not denying we're reality, not denying whatever it is that you're facing right now, but telling you to put everything into perspective. Our lives, homes, jobs, families, we've allowed them to

encroach on our spiritual self and dwarf our perspectives. For us they've become all in all.

To further our interests and the interests of the extended self, the family, the children and the country, we keep God in the mix. We want God to be our Rochester, our step 'n' fetch it. We go to the temple, or the synagogue, or the church, and we say, "God, please further my self-interests. Please further my extended self-interests, that of my family, my children, my country. If you'll bless all of this God, I'll make a deal with you. I'll even go to the temple on Janmastami. How's about that God? I'll go to the church on Christmas day. How can you God refuse such an offer on my part?" Krishna may stand there for some time as your order carrier, fulfilling your tiny little desires. He may stand as a component in our tiny little world but He loves us too much to stay there.

We stress on the future. We lose sleep over all the 'what ifs.' 'What if' this pain on my side turns out to be cancer? My grandmother died of the same thing. 'What if' my child keeps running with the wrong crowd? We shorten our lives, and we prematurely age because of all our worry about the future.

As an alternate we can be peacefully ABIDING in the shelter of He who holds the future in His hands. We come to this point, "God I have been wandering aimlessly, purposelessly, from lower planet to higher planet through hundreds and hundreds of previous incarnations, through hundreds and hundreds of species of life, and I have not been successful in finding purpose and meaning. Now I want you to guide me from within the heart." If you put that out, God will show up, and show out in your life.

When you and I understand who God is, how great He is, and where He wants to lead us, then we'll have the answer to the question, "God what's the game plan for my life?" The answer is, "God IS your life."

Krishna's saying, "I AM your life." Whatever it is that you're enduring -- confusion, uncertainty, ambivalence - know today that does not come from Krishna. Does not come from God. His answer 'what to do with your life' is 'while eating...Krishna. While recreating...Krishna. While parenting...Krishna. Finances...Krishna. Health...Krishna. Recreation...Krishna. Job...Krishna. Krishna. Krishna. Krishna. Every moment of every day of every week of every month of every year from the cradle to the grave.

That deep satisfaction which we're all hankering for can only be achieved by undivided and uninterrupted devotional service to the Lord of millions and millions of universes. 'Paro Dharma' The highest occupation, the most super excellent activity of the living entity is to engage in devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When you get that right, all the details will fall into place. Your questions will be answered. "God what are your plans for my life." God says, "I AM your life." It will always be about Krishna. It has always been about Krishna. It has never been about anybody else but Krishna.

Someone says well "OK, true. I'm inspired. Now what? How do I go out and deal with the world throughout the week?" Well, whatever's true on Sunday is also true on Monday. It's also true on Tuesday. It's also true on Wednesday. It's also true on Thursday.

If you will make the investment to chant and to glorify the Names of the Lord Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare, your life will be sublime. Whatever name you have, that's fine. We have no problem with that. The great saints and sages have called this as the Maha Mantra the greatest of all the chants. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare,

In order to find the answer to the greatest question of life, 'what's the game plan?' If you are willing to invest a little time, a little bit of your speaking power, a little bit of your hearing power, if you're willing to look at a picture of the Lord while you are doing that and smell the incense and roses and associate with like-minded people, then God will be no longer silent. Simply by this dynamic of chanting, sravanam kirtanam, all dirty things, everything that obscures answers and directions, everything that brings darkness, is dissipated from within the heart. God waxes and illuminates every dark nook and cranny of your heart.

Everything becomes prakash, crystal clear. All we have to do is let God be God. Not only Sunday, but Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday as well. Make a plan to stay focused. Not being focused on all the 'what-ifs' that the future may hold. Be focused on the Lord who is within your heart, who will ultimately lead you to the future that He has in store for you.

Someone says, "Caru, that's great. I think that's just a great bye-and-bye statement. I'm so fired up. But I've got decisions about my finances, my family that I have to make RIGHT NOW. In fact, I have been putting them off too long already. I have to make these decisions right now." My answer to you is, 'time out.' Don't put the cart before the horse. Don't jump ahead foolishly. Get back to understanding the fundamentals.

Again we turn to Krishna's football speech in the Bhagavad Gita Chapter 11, 12th verse. Krishna says, "To those who are constantly devoted to me with love, I give the understanding by which they come to me. I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance."

Some of you are looking a little peaked out there today. You're looking a little beat up by your academic schedule, by the pressures and by the velocity with which we live life nowadays. You're looking slightly exhausted in spite of your young ages. A little bit spent. To some degree drained.

That's not surprising. It should take a lot out of you trying to be God. Trying to control your future. Trying to force outcomes. You'll feel so much peace, so much relaxation, so much restoration if you'll switch from focusing, obsessing about the future, to putting yourself into the hands of your Deliverer.

My suggestion is not to make any major decisions as a result of this little get-together. My suggestion is that you simply rest for the next week. If you've been putting those decisions off already, it won't hurt to put them off for another week.

Meditate, find restoration, refresh yourself with the knowledge that God loves you. God does have great plans for you. He's living inside of you. Take a week to let God be God. You retire and rest. Let God be God. I really don't think there's anything better for you to do right now. Let God's plans for your life unfold. In fact, He IS the plan for your life.

In conclusion, allow me to express a personal prayer. "Lord, there's a lot of uncertainty today. There's a lot of stress. There are decisions that beg and demand to be made. Give me the faith that You hold the future. You're inside of me. You have my best interests at heart. Would You give me the strength to shift my focus away from the future? Put my focus on where it should have been the whole time.

That should have been on You. Will You give me the peace in knowing that You are for me, that You are all powerful, that if we allow it and establish the right starting point which is You, Lord, You will then answer all our general questions and address the specific details of this life, and in the next life, take us back home back to Godhead.