

SEMINAR ON THE ART OF DYING :

PART 3

THE FOLLOWING IS A SEMINAR CLASS GIVEN BY HIS HOLINESS BHAKTI CHARU SWAMI ON THE ART OF DYING PART THREE.



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Hare Krishna. So the last couple of days we have been discussing about 'The Art Of Dying', the way to immortality. If we know how to die, then we become immortal that means if we know how to die, then we can conquer death. And that is what Srimad Bhagavatam is teaching us. Srimad Bhagavatam or the Vedic scriptures are actually showing us the way to immortality. So Amrtitayaya kalpate. Amritatya means immortality. Amrita means non-death, or immortality and amritattaya means the way to achieve that immortality. So the first day, that is the day before yesterday, we discussed about what death actually means and we concluded that death is to the body but the soul never dies. Therefore, as long as we identify ourselves with the body we become susceptible to death. But when we recognize ourselves as the spirit soul, then we immediately transcend death or conquer death. And that is what Srimad Bhagavatam and other Vedic scriptures are teaching us. One of the first things that the Vedas are teaching us is that there are two things that we perceive in this world. One is inert matter and the other is living beings. Like if we analyze the world around us, then we can immediately consider that there are these two things. Some things are inert, and some things are living.

BCS: "Right? Are you living, or are you inert?"

Devotee: "Living."

BCS: "Very good. And this table is it living or inert?"

Devotee: "Inert."

BCS: "Now what makes something inert, and what makes something living? Okay, let us put it this way. Say somebody is alive, somebody is living. And when that person dies, is he living or is he inert?"

Devotee: “Inert”

BCS: Yes, the body becomes inert. Now what causes something to be alive and something to be dead? The presence of the soul and absence of the soul. Now this is a science that we must try to understand. And this is what the Vedas are actually teaching. The Vedic wisdom is mainly dealing with this science. The science of the spiritual reality. We have informations about material nature – like in different schools and colleges and the universities, we learn about this material world. But there is an acute lack of the informations about the spiritual reality, which is the most important thing. The Vedas consider that that is the most important knowledge. And not only the Vedas, the wise men, the wise people in the past, both in the East and West, both went to that area, like the science of the spiritual reality. Beyond this material nature there is another reality that is the spiritual reality. And the Vedas and other scriptures provide information about that reality. And when you receive proper information from those realities or when you understand that reality then we become situated in real knowledge. And what that knowledge does to us? That knowledge gives us immortality. Just by getting proper information we can very easily conquer death and become immortal. Nobody wants to die, nobody wants to die, but no one can avoid death. That is the mystery. Everybody or rather nobody wants to die, but everybody will be subjected to death, everybody will die. Now one simple question here is, or one simple consideration here is that why nobody wants to die? Why nobody wants to die? What will be the simple answer to that question? Why nobody wants to die? Yes Sita [Inaudible answer.]

Right, because the soul is immortal. Soul never dies, and we are spirit souls. But the problem is that when we identify ourselves with the body, when we begin to think that this body is ourselves, and then we cannot avoid death. But the simplest way to avoid death, or conquer death, is by recognizing the fact that we are not this body but we are spirit souls. Our bodies are alive because the soul is in the body. As long as the soul is in the body then the body remains alive. As soon as the soul leaves the body, the body becomes dead. Isn't it? I presume that everyone present here believes in the existence of soul. Does everyone believe in soul, the existence of the soul-please raise your hand. Okay, so it becomes easy for me to make my presentation. Okay, then yesterday we discussed about, we actually narrated the incidents or anecdotes of different personalities from Srimad-Bhagavatam who have mastered the art of dying. Do you all remember who they are, who are the ones that we discussed yesterday? Yes, Sita, Gajendra-very good. Gajendra is an elephant – isn't it amazing – even an elephant can master the art of dying? Right? Cintamani? Ajamila. Ratnavali? – Citraketu or Vrtrasura Tulasi. Prahlad Maharaja – very good Lalita? Druva Maharaja-okay (laughing).

So in this way we can see that Srimad Bhagavatam is actually giving a very very definite understanding of the individuals who conquered death and how they conquered death. Now comes the next question; what is the way to conquer death? What is the art of conquering death? Remember, the surrender to the lotus feet of the Lord. When we take shelter of Krishna, then we immediately conquer death. And Krishna takes care of that. We cannot take care of death-he is too strong of an enemy for us. He is too strong an enemy for us. So when you have a very strong enemy what's the best way to defeat him? You join somebody or approach somebody who is stronger than your enemy and ask him to fight for you, right? Then very easily you can defeat your enemy. So the best way to defeat and conquer this enemy death is by taking shelter of Krishna.

So today we are going to discuss about, I will tell you about how Prabhupada ... How we saw Prabhupada teaching us how to master the art of dying and conquer death and attain immortality. And I'll also tell you some other incidences that we have practically experienced and then, you all remember what I suggested yesterday. Then I will request you all to narrate some experiences that you may have. Like yesterday mother Krishna Priya narrated one incidence of some devotee's mother how she actually conquered death. How many of you prepared yourself? Please raise your hands. How many of you have some stories to tell? Mother Krishna Priya, who else? Yes? Okay. Devaki, you have? Okay. So Accordingly I will make my presentation.

So we actually learned about this science or this art because of Srila Prabhupada. Personally, I can say that if I didn't come across Srila Prabhupada I wouldn't have known anything about this subject. Immortality of soul, surrendering to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, these were all very strange topics to be even been considered. But then somehow or other we came in contact with Srila Prabhupada and then by coming in contact with Srila Prabhupada and his devotees and reading Srila Prabhupada's books we have been able to master this science. So Prabhupada is the first person who actually taught us this science. And Srila Prabhupada was a perfect teacher. How does a perfect teacher teach? The perfect teacher teaches by his own example. That's why he is called 'Acharya'. Acharya: acharan means to act, and one who teaches by his own action is called Acharya. He just doesn't simply say do this and do that, but he practically demonstrates how to act. I will first narrate how I saw Srila Prabhupada teaching this very important subject.

In 1977 Srila Prabhupada's health condition became quite bad and it started to deteriorate. Then one admirer of Srila Prabhupada, not one, two of them, they're very important people, one was a governor of Madras and the other person was his brother in law, who was a very big industrialist in India. Ramakrishna Bajaj, he is the chairman of the Bajaj industries and his brother in law, Sriman Narayana, he was the governor of Madras. They came to see Srila Prabhupada in Bombay and when they saw Srila Prabhupada's health condition was not so good, so they just suggested that Prabhupada went to Hrishikesh, on the bank of the Ganges at the foothills of the Himalayan Mountains. Prabhupada liked the idea and they made the arrangement for Srila Prabhupada to go there. They arranged one of the best houses there at that time, right on the bank of the Ganges, called 'Ganga Darshan'. So few of us accompanied Srila Prabhupada.

And then we were having a beautiful time with Srila Prabhupada there. One night, at about one o'clock, I was attending to Srila Prabhupada. One of us used to be with Srila Prabhupada all the time. Especially at night we used to have our shifts and my shift was from twelve to two to be with Srila Prabhupada at night. Just in case Prabhupada needed something. So Prabhupada called me. He was lying in his bed and he called me and he told me that, "The time has come for me to leave my body, so I want to leave my body in Vrindavana. So please make arrangements for me to go to Vrindavana immediately." So I ran downstairs and woke up Tamal Krishna Maharaja and told him what Prabhupada said. Tamal Krishna Maharaja immediately ran upstairs to Srila Prabhupada and Prabhupada told him the same thing that, "The time has come for me to leave my body and I want to leave my body in Vrindavana. So make arrangement for me to go to Vrindavana immediately."

So that night only we packed everything up and in the morning we left for Vrindavana. On the way we stopped in Delhi and the next morning we left for Vrindavana. The devotees in

Vrindavana were very, very happy that Prabhupada came back all of a sudden. There were hundreds of devotees at that time and they were ecstatic that Prabhupada came back to Vrindavana. And then Prabhupada had the darshana of the Deities and after the darshana of the Deities Prabhupada went to his room and went to his house. There was a big room where Prabhupada used to give darshana and all the devotees followed Srila Prabhupada and there Srila Prabhupada broke the news why Srila Prabhupada came to Vrindavana. The ecstasy of all the devotees immediately turned into agony and they started to cry. And Prabhupada very mercifully kept on explaining that how this body is always changing. Prabhupada quoted this verse, Prabhupada first explained how death is inevitable for everyone and then Prabhupada quoted the verse from Bhagavad Gita, dehino'smin yatha dehe kaumaram yauvanam jara tatha dehantara praptir dhiras tatra na muhyate [Bg. 2.13]. This body goes through different changes, from childhood to boyhood, to youth, to old age, but although the body changes, the person remains the same. We do not change. The body changes, but in spite of the change of the body, we do not change. But in spite of the change of the body, we do not change. Similarly, when we change this body all together, we continue to exist. We simply "tatha dehantara-praptih": we get into another body. In this body the body goes through different changes. With time from childhood to boyhood to youth to old age. And then, when the body becomes old, and uninhabitable for the soul, then the soul leaves the body in order to take up another body. Srila Prabhupada explains "dhiras tatra na muhyati". One who is dhira, one who is situated in real knowledge, he doesn't become overwhelmed with these affairs of birth and death. Death doesn't perturb a person who is situated in knowledge, in real knowledge.

When everyone left, Srila Prabhupada called me and told me not to force him to eat, and not to cook for him. He said, "what is the use of eating when there is no appetite?" So Srila Prabhupada just gave us the ultimatum, so as to say "don't force me to eat anything". That means Srila Prabhupada was going to fast. To me it occurred at that time that like Pariksit Maharaja now Srila Prabhupada was going to stop eating and in this way Srila Prabhupada would give up his body. There was nothing that we could do. I told Tamala Krishna Maharaja who was Srila Prabhupada's secretary at that time, his main assistant. Both of us felt extremely helpless. What can we do, Srila Prabhupada just said that he is not going to eat anything. Srila Prabhupada is going to fast, and in this way Srila Prabhupada is going to give up his body.

Then devotees came from all around the world. The leading devotees gathered in Vrindavan. In just two, three days time they all converged in Vrindavan. They had a meeting. Since I was serving Srila Prabhupada I was not in that meeting. But after the meeting they all came, all the GBC's and sannyasis, all the leading devotees. They came to Srila Prabhupada's room.

[- Jaya Sri Sri Radha Golokananda ki Jaya -].

Kirtanananda Maharaja presented to Srila Prabhupada. In a meeting it was discussed and decided that Srila Prabhupada is a pure devotee of Krishna. So if Srila Prabhupada desires something or wants something, then Krishna will comply. If Srila Prabhupada wanted to stay, then Krishna would let Srila Prabhupada stay. They considered if Srila Prabhupada left at that time, then what would happen to all of us. Already we were just like a bunch of children. If Srila Prabhupada left, we would become orphans and what would happen to us? Kirtanananda Maharaja presented that to Srila Prabhupada, he as the spokesman of all the devotees told Srila Prabhupada: "We are

your little children. We are so young in our spiritual life, and if you leave us at this time, then what will happen to us. Please stay, please don't leave us. You're a pure devotee of Krishna. If you want to stay on, then Krishna will obviously grant your desire." Then Srila Prabhupada smiled and said "OK, then I'll stay". And all the devotees became so joyful. Srila Prabhupada also said at that time "but you all pray to Krishna – that Krishna, if You so desire then let Srila Prabhupada stay on with us."

Srila Prabhupada, for the last three days didn't eat or drink anything. But from time to time I used to make some fruit juice, just in case Srila Prabhupada wanted something. And Srila Prabhupada sat up and said "give me something to drink". I had some grape juice ready, so I just gave it to him. Srila Prabhupada was very happy. He decided to stay. Srila Prabhupada started to eat also and I started to cook for Srila Prabhupada.

Then one day after eating, taking his lunch Srila Prabhupada was sitting. Srila Prabhupada used to take his lunch sitting on a seat like this and there used to be a table. Srila Prabhupada used to eat from that table. He was just sitting on that table and asked me whether I knew where Gopinath Bazar was in Vrindavan. That was my first visit to Vrindavan. I didn't know. I never even stepped out of the temple. But I told Srila Prabhupada, tell me what you want, and I can find out. Srila Prabhupada said: "Go to Gopinath Bazar. There is an Ayurvedic doctor called Banumalika Viraja and you ask him to come. He knows me, he treated me earlier. Ask him to come and treat me". I went and found Banumalika Viraja. He was a very old man, over 90, I think at that time he was 92 years old. When I told him that Srila Prabhupada wanted him to come, he said: "look, I can't go anywhere. I just come from house to my clinic. I just give my prescription and medicines from here, but I can't go anywhere". I told him, I will take you in a rickshaw. He said: "Rickshaw? With every bump of the rickshaw my bones will crack". He was really a very old man. Then I begged him: "Please come, Srila Prabhupada wanted you to come". Finally he agreed and complied. He came. He checked Srila Prabhupada and then he considered that the medicine that he would give, he will have to make them; make the medicine just before giving it to Srila Prabhupada. I told him: "Then you can stay in our guesthouse. We will make all the arrangements for you". He said: "No I can't stay here. I have to go back home to my place". Then I told him: "you can show me how to make the medicine and I can make it". He accepted that idea. He took me to the field and he showed me two types of leaves, two plants. One plant is called punarnava, and the other is called patharkuchi. He showed me how to take the juice out of these leaves and then he gave two salts. He asked me to mix the salt in the juice and give it to Srila Prabhupada.

Srila Prabhupada's condition started to improve. He got better. But when Srila Prabhupada got better, he was feeling restless. Srila Prabhupada didn't want to stay in Vrindavan like that lying in bed. He wanted to go to preach to the West. I told that to Banumalika Viraja that Srila Prabhupada is planning to leave. He said: "Please don't let him go now. The medicine is working. His health condition is improving. During winter I'll give him a medicine called makaratach and that will rejuvenate him. That will build him up. But it is a very strong medicine. He won't be able to digest that medicine now. By that time his health will improve and also the cold of the winter will help him to retain that medicine." So I told Tamal Krishna Maharaja that Banumalika Viraja is saying that. Tamal Krishna Maharaja told me that: "look, Srila Prabhupada wants to go, so what to do?"

Then Srila Prabhupada finally decided to go. He decided to go to London, and then from London to New York; from New York to the West Coast, and from Los Angeles to Hawaii. He wanted to stay in Hawaii and translate Srimad Bhagavatam. So when Srila Prabhupada decided to leave, one couldn't stop him actually. But of course later on I often used to lament that why didn't I become a little more forceful, and tell the other senior devotees, the GBC members that the doctor said this, that Srila Prabhupada shouldn't travel. But at that time I was very new in the movement. I was very young in that respect. And also at that time there was no way of knowing that Srila Prabhupada's condition could deteriorate so much. The day Srila Prabhupada was leaving, he asked me. Srila Prabhupada was all dressed up at night, and he was sitting in this rocking chair in his room, and I was sitting at his feet. Srila Prabhupada asked me: "aren't you coming?" I said: "No, Srila Prabhupada, I don't have my passport with me". Then Srila Prabhupada said: "ok, then you join me in Hawaii".

So at that time anyway Srila Prabhupada left and I went back to Mayapur. Actually Bhavananda Maharaja came to Vrindavan and he also went to the airport to see Srila Prabhupada off. After that he asked me: "what are you going to do now?" I said: "I didn't have any plans". He said: "let's go to Mayapur". So he and I went to Mayapur. I stayed in Mayapur for about 10 days or 12 days. Then I received one afternoon – I was giving a class of Nectar of Devotion to the new bhaktas. I received a telegram that said Srila Prabhupada was in Vrindavan. The same day, the next morning I went to Delhi, and then I went to Vrindavan. Srila Prabhupada went back, his health condition deteriorated in London. So he cancelled his plan to travel and he went back to India. First he went to Bombay, and then to Vrindavan.

When I arrived in Vrindavan, it was evening. Upendra prabhu who was Srila Prabhupada's servant, he told me that Srila Prabhupada had some cold, and some medicine had been given to Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada was taking rest, he was sleeping. And he [Upendra prabhu] said : come in. So he took me to Srila Prabhupada's room. The room was quite dark, there was a dim light and it was full of frank incense. I saw Srila Prabhupada was lying on his bed, and I could see his body became so thin, that it looked as if it was on the same level with the bed. His head was propped on that pillow. At one time Srila Prabhupada woke up coughing. Upendra prabhu went to Srila Prabhupada and told him that I came. Srila Prabhupada told him to ask me to come to him. I went there to Srila Prabhupada's bed. Srila Prabhupada asked me to help him sit up. So I helped him to sit up, and then with the pillows I propped him so that he could sit. I could see that Srila Prabhupada became so thin. I told him: "Srila Prabhupada, you became so thin". Srila Prabhupada said: "yes, now this body is just a set of bones in a bag of skin". It was indeed a set of bones in a bag of skin. He became so emaciated. Srila Prabhupada became so thin and weak, at that time he couldn't even turn to his side. We had to help him to turn to his side. If we were not careful enough, then Srila Prabhupada would feel pain if we did not handle him carefully enough.

But still Srila Prabhupada was translating Srimad Bhagavatam. The last few chapters of Srimad Bhagavatam that Srila Prabhupada translated 10, 11, 12, 13d were actually in that state, lying on his bed. He used to just lie down on his bed and Pradyumna prabhu who was Srila Prabhupada's Sanskrit editor, he used to write the Sanskrit verses and Srila Prabhupada used to give the translation and the purports of the verses. And one devotee, often it was Jayadvaita Maharaja who used to hold the microphone of the Dictaphone in front of Srila Prabhupada's mouth.

Pradyumna prabhu used to recite the verses and Srila Prabhupada used to translate. This is how Srila Prabhupada taught us how to serve Sri Krishna irrespective of physical condition. The last drop of his energy was used in serving Krishna, serving His mission. In this way Srila Prabhupada actually taught us how to leave this body; how to prepare ourselves. That time Srila Prabhupada's health condition did not deteriorate that much. I used to cook for Srila Prabhupada, but Srila Prabhupada could not eat. He used to make an effort – one or two bites, but he couldn't even swallow that.

One day Srila Prabhupada told me: “why are you wasting your time cooking for me while you have so many things to do?” He said: “let somebody else cook, you don't have to cook”. I told Srila Prabhupada: “I cook with an expectation that someday you would like to eat something. Some day you would feel better and you would like to eat something”. Srila Prabhupada said: “I will only get better when I die”. And just that statement was so, it came to me with such a shocking effect that I broke down. Very affectionately, full of compassion, Srila Prabhupada started to speak. He said: “Is this what I taught you? Didn't I teach you that this body is perishable but the soul is eternal, and the soul never dies”? In this way Srila Prabhupada spoke, explaining the immortality of the soul.

When Srila Prabhupada left his body, also it was very exemplary. But I don't want to get into that. But a few things that Srila Prabhupada told, I want to mention here. One thing Srila Prabhupada said that if I become unconscious I don't want to be taken to the hospital. And he said that nothing should pierce his body, no needle, no drips, nothing should pierce his body. His body should be completely untouched. And sometimes some very strange things used to happen. Like one doctor was treating Srila Prabhupada, his name is Damodar Prasad Sastri, he was brought from Kolkata, and he was also an ayurvedic doctor. So Damodar Prasad once was telling to Prabhupada: “Prabhupada, I can't understand you.” He said; “Sometimes your heart is so feeble and faint that it seems that it is going to stop, but the next moment I see your heart is strong as a young man's heart.” He said this is all your pastimes. So in this way, this doctor also made us realize, that all Prabhupada was doing his pastimes. He was not subject to the condition of this body. This is how we can understand that a pure devotee although dwells in his body, remains in his body but he is not affected by the body; rather his body becomes spiritualized.

In this way what Srila Prabhupada thought us is actually how to die, how to leave our body. His whole teaching was based on that. His most emphatic teaching was you are not your body, you are a spirit soul. Time and time again, Srila Prabhupada made this point very clear, you are not your body you are spirit soul. Prabhupada would just stick to this one point, tenaciously. You are not this body, you are spirit soul. And now we see if we understand just this fact, if we can realize this fact, so most of our problems will be solved, and we will become situated in our spiritual identity.

And we see how different individuals have been affected by Srila Prabhupada's teachings. I want to mention just two incidences. One is a very simple Gujarati lady in London, she is not a big scholar, she is not a front line devotee, and she is just a simple house wife. In 1998, the doctors detected that she got cancer and it was quite at an advanced stage, and the doctor told her husband and daughter, and did not tell her and they were quite worried how to break the news to her, that she had cancer and she had at the most six months and finally when they told her she

was completely unaffected by that. Her husband was more affected by this news than her, he was completely devastated actually. Then her condition improved from time to time and when her condition improved, she would go to the temple and render some service. Although she had cancer, she did not have much time and it was in a quite advanced stage, but she was completely unaffected by that. Not only that she travelled to Vrndavan and Mayapur and she wanted to just stay in Mayapur, then they phoned me and told me that she is planning to stay in Mayapur but the problem is, she has to go back to London to continue with the treatment, because those treatments were not available in India. So I told her and she complied, she went back to London. She was still with us till the summer of 2000 and at that time I was in New Vrndavan, shooting for Abhay Charan, New Vrndavan's episode. I used to speak to her from time to time. I used to phone her from time to time, and I was told that the doctor said that she had maximum about 7 days, that is what her daughter told me. When I was speaking to her she just mentioned that the night before she had a dream and she saw that I came, that I was there. And when I heard that it was her last desire and she was going to leave her body, I decided that I will go to see her.

So I dropped everything and I took a flight to London. So when I arrived there, those who came to pick me up, they told me that they are driving me to the place where I will be staying then I would see her at about three o'clock in the afternoon after I have rested a little. I said: "No. I will just go straight, I came to see her let me just go and see her." So I was going there, I thought she will be bed ridden and completely unable to move, but when I arrived there she just got out of her bed to offer obeisances. I tried to stop her but she would not stop. She just got out of her bed and offered obeisances. Her main consideration was that she is not the body, so she does not care what happens to the body. This is the profundity and the effect of Srila Prabhupada's teachings. She realized although she is not a very educated person, although she is not a big devotee in that sense, although philosophically she is not very knowledgeable probably, but she understood this point that she is not her body, she is a spirit soul. So she was not at all affected by the body's incompetence's.

I went there on 27th of July; finally she left her body on the 20th of August. I was not there; I had to go back to New Vrndavan because we were in the middle of the shooting. I stayed there for four to five days and then went back. I was told and I saw the picture also that, when she was leaving her body, she was chanting the Holy Name. At the time of leaving her body, she had a bead bag in her hands, and she took the bead bag, placed it on her forehead and she left her body. Now what kind of, not only conviction, but spiritual realization I would say, one must have to leave one's body in this way?

Another person that I often think of, who also left her body in a very exemplary way; a young girl she was probably 23 to 24, a girl from Pune. They used to live in Bombay before and then they shifted to Pune. She is a disciple of Radhanath Maharaja. Her name is Shyama Sundari. She was a very very vibrant young girl. I first met her in 1997 and she was like enthusiasm personified; at that time probably she was 16, she was still in school, 16, 17 maybe even younger and she had an elder sister who was very sober, calm and grave, but the younger sister was completely opposite, she was extremely vibrant and full of life, full of enthusiasm. Recently about 2 years back, she developed some sort of complication of the stomach. There was no cure for that, there was no allopathic cure. They tried everything, and then ayurvedic, homeopathic; I think there was some result from the ayurvedic or homeopathic treatment and her condition

improved a little bit. And few months ago and then when that happened to her, she had completely changed, she became very grave, very profound also, she used to. One day I was talking to her and she was telling me, that well I have accepted that it is going to happen, I know I am going to die and it does not really matter, I am not afraid; and it was so enlivening to hear such words of wisdom from such a young girl then her condition improved; although her condition improved, but her nature, she remained the same. Like she did not get back to her vibrant self anymore, she was very composed and very serene. And recently she actually left her body and this happened very suddenly. She was alright and she appeared in her exams. She did her final year at university, that day she got her result and she was telling to her mom and her mother was telling how she was proud of her. She did very well in her studies. And all of a sudden she got this pain in her stomach, she was taken to the hospital; they could not do anything because her internal bleeding started and they could not do anything. They put her into intensive care and she was unconscious with oxygen and everything and then she came back to her external consciousness, she asked them to take off the oxygen and all that she had in her body, like drips, "Please take this out, I don't want that." She asked the devotees who were there at that time to chant the Holy Name and just for that brief moment of consciousness she gained she just made the arrangement, ask everybody to chant, she took off the oxygen, she took off the drips and she also started to chant herself and she left her body. Now this is the real proof of the authenticity of what Srila Prabhupada gave and this is how one actually attains immortality, conquering death.

There are many such others instances, two other instances. I was not there when he passed away, like is Upendra Prabhu. Upendra Prabhu was Prabhupada's servant, we served Srila Prabhupada together and he was a wonderful, wonderful servant, but he had a wild mind, he was quite wild that Prabhupada sometimes would chastise him and anyway he had problems with his mind and senses. Soon after Prabhupada left, Upendra just disappeared, no one knew. Only once I met him, he came to Mayapur and I just saw him. But he felt deep into Maya and then he developed some disease, incurable disease and when he realized he was going to die, although he was far? far away from the devotees' community, he just arrange to come to the devotees' community, he went to Murilumba, New Govardhan in Australia and devotees also were very supportive, so they took care of him very nicely and he left his body, hearing the holy Name and chanting the Holy Name.

So we can see although he was so far away from Srila Prabhupada's lotus feet at that time. And this is how the devotees actually make or create the good fortune for others. And that's why association of devotees is so important. At the time of death it's going to be very, very difficult. We lose our consciousness, we wouldn't know where to go, how to direct our mind, how to direct our consciousness. But if we remain in the association of devotees then they will help us. So in this way Upendra prabhu left, chanting the holy name, hearing the holy name in the association of devotees. There are so many such wonderful examples. Another person that I just remember is, he's a God-brother, he was a sannyasi before; Sudama Maharaja. He also left the association of devotees after Srila Prabhupada's disappearance. But when he realized that time is nearing he came back to the association of devotees and I heard that he also left his body in a wonderful wonderful way.

Devotee: “I had a question Guru Maharaja. You were with Srila Prabhupada when he left his body and you accompanied him for a long time; you were very close to him. What would you say was the greatest I (unclear) before you personally I (unclear).”

BCS: “That this material nature, our existence in the material nature and our involvement with this material objects is not important at all. Srila Prabhupada, I didn’t get into when Srila Prabhupada left his body; ah like the most important thing that Srila Prabhupada indicated through his final pastimes, was his implicit and total attachment to the holy Name. Anyways I didn’t, I thought that I wouldn’t go into describing Srila Prabhupada’s final pastimes because sometime it becomes a very painful thing to describe and narrate. But anyway I will just try to say it in brief. In the morning we got to know that Srila Prabhupada will leave his body, the doctor who came from Calcutta, Damodara Prasad, he said that Prabhupada will be with us for about ten hours. No I’m sorry, fourteen hours, it was five o’clock. It was quite precise actually, and Srila Prabhupada stayed with us for another fourteen hours; and he said something like twelve to fourteen hours Prabhupada would be with us. Generally Prabhupada’s room was kept very, very quiet and peaceful like very few people were allowed in Prabhupada’s room those days. And in groups some devotees would come and chant and the chanting would also be very soft. And but that morning it was decided that let everybody come. And so the room was packed with devotees.

There were hundreds of devotees in Vrindavan at that time. Many, many devotees were just standing there, those who couldn’t come in they were watching from outside through the window. In my experience that was the sweetest and the most profound kirtan I had ever heard, it was out of this world. And I was actually standing by Prabhupada’s bed, towards the head of Srila Prabhupada and from time to time I was giving him the water, Yamuna water. Prabhupada would open his mouth. See at five o’clock from the morning till the evening for fourteen hours I just stood there. I didn’t feel any other, you know, need of the body and I don’t also know that how time actually went by, as if I was transported to another reality where the body didn’t exist.

And then Prabhupada’s, some of Prabhupada’s God-brothers came and they were sitting near Prabhupada’s bed. And very close to Srila Prabhupada’s bed was Krishnadas Babaji Maharaja. He’s is a God-brother of Srila Prabhupada, a very wonderful devotee, and Srila Prabhupada was very intimate very close with him. And so Babaji Maharaja at one point just pointed out, see he’s still chanting. See, I couldn’t understand that at that time. But when Babaji Maharaja told that then I could see that Prabhupada’s tongue was still vibrating, it was not and I mean that the tongue was moving and Babaji Maharaja pointed out that Prabhupada was chanting the Holy Name. And in this way, chanting the holy Name Prabhupada left his body.

So as you asked what’s the most important lesson I learnt is that ultimately the most important consideration is to be attached to the holy Name and continue to chant the holy Name. And Prabhupada himself used to say that a devotee should chant his, chant the holy Name of the Lord at the time of death. anta-kale ca mam eva , Prabhupada pointed out time and time again. And Prabhupada personally demonstrated that, that he was chanting and also Prabhupada mentioned that the devotee leaves his body through his mouth. The sinful people leave their body through the lower part of the body, and the devotee leaves his body through his mouth. And true to Srila Prabhupada’s statement, we saw that how Prabhupada actually left his body through the mouth.

He was chanting the Holy name and his mouth was still open when he left his body. And Srila Prabhupada taught us and we can see that those who are following Srila Prabhupada's instructions sincerely, they also leave their bodies in such a wonderful way.

Like as I was speaking about Shyamasundari, as mother Devaki also heard about her, she was, her parents are, their parents live in Pune, that's why they got to know about that. And she's just a young girl, but considers that how much faith she had on the holy Name and that she, you know she took off all the, oxygen and all the things that were there to prolong her stay here, she just took them off and she took the shelter of the holy Name. And chanting the holy Name herself she left her body. Thank you all so much.

And I, I was wondering how a seminar of this nature, this the first time I gave this seminar, and it was also quite a spontaneous decision to give this seminar, because couple of weeks back when I met mother Krishna Priya in New Vrindavan, we were planning about the Bhagavatam seminar and how we would cover Srimad Bhagavatam in four days or five days. And then I just decided that I'm going to give a seminar on this topic. And I spoke to mother Krishna Priya and she also liked the idea. And I think that this was actually a real seminar on Srimad-Bhagavatam, because this is what Bhagavatam is teaching us.

Bhagavatam is not just some stories, but all that Srimad-Bhagavatam is describing is simply to give this realization that, that we have to take shelter of Krishna and the most important time that we, we display our attachment to Krishna or conviction at Krishna's lotus feet is at the time of death. And life is a period for preparation for that final test. We are preparing now to remember Krishna at the time of death. And in this way the real application of the teachings of Srimad-Bhagavatam is to constantly prepare ourselves or as often as we can remind ourselves of this importance. Like if have to die now, what shall I do? If I have to die now where shall my mind be? What shall I think of? And the answer is very simple, take full shelter of Krishna's lotus feet and not look back, not look back. Don't think of anything or anybody in this material nature, just think of Krishna and His devotees, and then our way back to the spiritual sky will be very very easy. And the gate of the spiritual sky will open up wide; will become wide open for us to go back there at the lotus feet of Krishna.

Prabhupada pointed, Prabhupada sometimes mentioned that it's something like waking up in the spiritual sky. At that time if we remember Krishna, when we are leaving our body, then we see Krishna face to face. All of a sudden at that time when we are leaving our body we see that Krishna is standing there or Krishna's Vishnudutas or Krishna's messengers are standing there. And then we feel that this is what we had been waiting for all our life and now it happened. How ecstatic that experience is going to be? All our lives we are just trying to be with Krishna, trying to see Krishna, trying to serve Krishna and there comes the ultimate opportunity. He's there, He says come, come back. So thank you all very much. I felt very content very satisfied after this or I can say that I am very happy after this seminar because I can see the result of the seminar. Thank you all very much. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Devotees: Haribol (clapping)