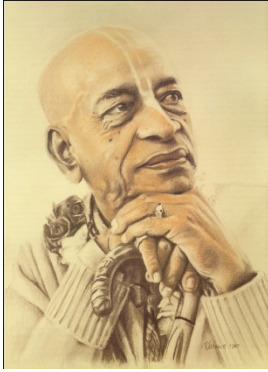


International Society for Krishna Consciousness
Founder-Acarya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



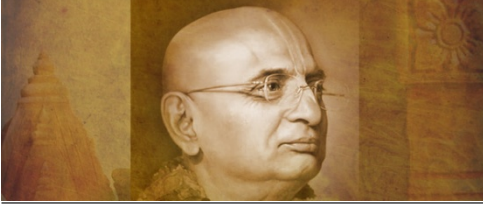
Ocean of Nectar

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1. Art of Dying

Thank you all for coming here very much, this evening. Actually the seminar, I originally thought of giving this time was on Srimad Bhagavatam and the other day in New Vrindavan. When you are in New Vrindavan, I was discussing with mother Krsna Priya about the seminar, then I realized to cover or to do justice to Srimad Bhagavatam in four days, two hour sessions will not be possible. Therefore I was thinking, I have to give a seminar on some topic rather instead of presenting the entire Srimad Bhagavatam, I thought of selecting some specific topic from Srimad Bhagavatam and give the seminar on that. Then it occurred to me that recently, in South Africa, I saw there was a big advertisement, many billboards and many posters announcing the seminar that to be given by someone from India, a spiritualist from India and the title of that seminar was "The Art of Living". When I saw that posters, I was thinking a Sadhu's business was not to give seminars on Art of Living, because whenever one takes to spiritual life, one thing one realizes is that the real goal of life is not here, it is beyond this material nature and then it occurred to me why don't I give a seminar on Art of Dying and then it occurred to me that actually Srimad Bhagavatam is extensively deep dealing with this topic the Art of Dying and that Art of Dying is actually leading to the way to immortality.

↓ If one knows how to die, then he attains immortality

If one knows how to die, then he attains immortality, he attains immortal life. So that is the ultimate objective of spiritual persuasion, spiritual pursuit. It occurred to me at that time, that actually this would be an appropriate topic, to give a seminar on, the Art of Dying, the way to immortality. And Srimad Bhagavatam is actually teaching us that art. Although Srimad Bhagavatam originated when Vyasadeva was summarizing the teachings of the Vedas and trying to present it in such a way that the disturbed and distressed short living entities of this age of Kali could understand the purpose of Srimad Bhagavatam or the purpose of the Vedic wisdom and he systematically analyzed the Vedic wisdom. First he divided the Vedas into four then he wrote different aspects of Vedic wisdom like dharma *Shastra*, *Itihasa*, *Puranas* and *Upanishads*. These are different branches of *Darshans* and these are all different branches of Vedic wisdom and finally he

presented the summary of the essential understanding of the entire Vedic wisdom in the form of Vedanta sutra, the aphorism of Vedanta and still when he was not feeling totally content, then Narada Muni appeared to him and instructed to him to present Srimad Bhagavatam which is the unalloyed glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And in this way, Srimad Bhagavatam was presented by Srila Vyasadeva as the summary and the essence of the entire Vedic wisdom. *Nigamaha kalpa tarur* the ripe fruit of the desire tree of the Vedic wisdom. So that is what Srimad Bhagavatam was, as it was presented by Srila Vyasadeva. But then this Srimad Bhagavatam became further, God's nectar aspect due to the presentation of Sukadeva Goswami. So the real presentation of Srimad Bhagavatam was actually made by Srila Sukadeva Goswami. But what was the occasion? It's very interesting. What was the occasion of the presentation?

↓ The King of this planet Maharaja Pariksit was cursed

The King of this planet Maharaja Pariksit was cursed by Kali, the personality who is predominating this age, whose business is to establish religiosity, whose business is to introduce sinful activities and promote sinful life. That personality, Kali, considered Parékñit Mahārāja, to be the arch enemy; his arch enemy and he realized that in order to establish his purpose, in order to establish himself, or his objective, he has to get rid of this King Parékñit Mahārāja. And he did not have the means or the ability to get rid of Parékñit Mahārāja, but Parékñit Mahārāja was too powerful for him. Therefore he arranged that a Brahman boy for cursing and this boy were so powerful although he was just a boy of 7 or 8 yrs old but he cursed Parékñit Mahārāja. That's a long story and I am skipping the details and I am sure all of you know what the occasion was and so this Brahman cursed Parékñit Mahārāja that he would die within 7 days and when Parékñit Mahārāja got the news that he has been cursed, that he is going to die in 7 days or he has only 7 days left. So Parékñit Mahārāja did not try to counteract the curse, he just left everything, left his kingdom, left his palace, left his family, left everything, and he went to the bank of Ganges in order to prepare himself for this occasion of dying. He has 7days to die so okay, let me take advantage of the 7days and prepared myself to die. And he just sat down, although he was a king and not just a king, he was a king of the entire earth planet including the ocean. That is how it has been described *sa sagara*, *sagara* means ocean, *sa* means along with or including. So he was a ruler of the earth planet including the ocean, the entire planet. But he became completely detached because he knew to begin with he knew that some day he has to leave this world. A person who is situated in knowledge, he knows that one day he will have to die.

↓ One who is born is bound to die

One who is born is bound to die. The word *druva* means fixed, unwavering, or you can say absolute, truth. This truth is unavoidable isn't it? In the material nature, although this material nature is a relative reality, here everything is relative. But there is only one absolute truth in this material nature. What is that absolute truth? That everybody has to die. So even in this relative reality, there is one absolute truth that is death. So one who is situated in knowledge knows that he has to die. But those who are ignorant, they try to avoid death. Well, it's natural, one does actually in reality, and one does not want to die. But in order to understand how to attain immortality, one must first know what death is.

↓ What is death?

What is death? Then only we can understand how to conquer it. If you don't know who your enemy is, is there any question of defeating him. Can you defeat or conquer an enemy whom you do not know? Therefore in order to conquer your enemy, what do you have to do? First of all you have to recognize who he is, what he is, what his strength is, and how he can harm me and then you take the action to counter that influence. So those who are situated in knowledge, they know that death is inevitable some day or other. Therefore one who is situated in knowledge he does not get bewildered with this issue of death. Rather he prepares for that. Just like Parékñit Mahārāja did and this is an indication that he was situated in knowledge. Parékñit Mahārāja was a king; he could have made so many arrangements to counteract that. Actually if he wanted, he could have.

↓ Parékñit Mahārāja was cursed that he would be killed by being bitten by a serpent

You know how, just to give one example: Parékñit Mahārāja was cursed that he would be killed by being bitten by a serpent, celestial serpent called Takshaka. So there was one, you can say, a snake doctor, the expert of counteracting poison, his name was Kaçyapa, a sage, a saintly person, a Brahman. So he heard that the king was going to be bitten by a snake. So he said fine, I will come to counteract. So he was going to Parékñit Mahārāja, at that time Takshaka was also coming, so Takshaka came in the disguise of a Brahman, although he is a serpent, although he is a snake. But he has, the celestial serpent, the celestial being having the ability to transform themselves in different forms. Takshaka took the shape of a Brahman and he was coming and on the way they met. Takshaka and Kaçyapa said ok let's travel together, so then they started to talk

Takshaka: "Where are you going?"

Kaçyapa: "I am going to Hastinapura."

Takshaka: "Why are you going there?"

Kaçyapa: "I heard that the king is going to be bitten by a snake and he is going to die, so I am going there to save the king."

Takshaka became very angry. He immediately assumed his form as a serpent, a snake, a huge gigantic snake and he said "I am Takshaka; I am going to bite him. Do you think you can counteract my poison?" Takshaka immediately just bit a banyan tree, a huge banyan tree. And the tree immediately turned into ashes and he said: "See this is the power of my poison, and do you think you going to counteract that? Immediately the king's body is going to burn into ashes as soon as I bite." So Kaçyapa did not say anything. He took some water from his water pot, did his achaman, and cleansed his mouth before chanting the mantra and then he took some more water on his palm. He chanted some mantras, sprinkled some water, on the heap of ash and immediately came to live. The tree was regenerated. So Takshaka was surprised. And then he took another course to convince him, he said: "Look, you may counteract my poison, but you won't be able to counteract the curse of a Brahman. So you go back home. And I will give you all these most precious gems. So you go back home." So Kaçyapa considered that is true like the curse of a Brahman is irretraceable. So he went back. And now we can see that there are more personalities who could have counteracted the curse. But Parékñit Mahārāja did not take that course. He considered that

↓ Whenever the Lord will desire me to leave this planet, I will leave

"Whenever the Lord will desire me to leave this planet, I will leave. So, now if that is His desire then in seven days time, I am going to die, ok, at least, I am fortunate that I have got the information that I am going to die in seven days time. I have seven days to prepare myself." He considered that to be a very very great fortune that he had seven days to prepare. We can consider that most of the time, we don't actually want to prepare and sometimes death comes without our knowing about it. All of a sudden we die. So in that respect, Parékñit Mahārāja was fortunate and he considered himself very fortunate that at least he has 7 days to prepare himself. So he did that. He, as I mentioned earlier, he left his kingdom, he went to the bank of Ganges, he sat down without taking any food, water, without sleeping. He just was preparing himself for his final moment. And at that time, all the greatly saintly persons from the universe gathered there. They all came there in order to help the king at a difficult time like that. So many saintly

personalities gather, assemble there and many of them gave different advice to Parékñit Mahārāja, but Parékñit Mahārāja was not interested in their advice. They, with all good intention tried to give him good advice but Parékñit Mahārāja considered that these advices were pertaining to the material facilities, material benefits. What kind of benefit? The benefit of elevating to higher planetary system. The earth planet is not the only planetary system in this universe. There are many higher planetary systems. Now, there are possibilities of elevating to higher planetary systems where the facilities are better. But Parékñit Mahārāja was not interested in these kind of advices because he considered the ultimate goal of life is not to enjoy this material nature, whether in higher planetary systems or lower planetary systems, because this material nature is temporary, no situation in this material nature is going to be permanent and this material nature ultimately is a place of misery. So what's the question of enjoyment in a place of misery! So he was not interested but, at that time Sukadeva Goswami appeared there.

↓ A very wonderful personality

A very wonderful personality. He was a sixteen year old boy, very handsome, very very handsome, a personality who was endowed with all the symptoms. He was so absorbed in spiritual consciousness. He was so absorbed in thinking about the Supreme Personality of Godhead and his pastimes that he did not have any external consciousness. He did not have any body consciousness so much so that he did not care to wear anything, he was naked. And he just arrived there and when he arrived there, everybody, all the exalted saintly personalities could immediately recognize that this is a very special person and they stood up out of respect. Although he was a 16 year old boy. And then they considered that this is the most exalted personality meaning, this personality has the highest spiritual knowledge and Parékñit Mahārāja also recognized he and he offered him the exalted seat of a teacher and he questioned him. Parékñit Mahārāja asked him many relevant questions dealing mainly with this particular topic.

↓ Only seven days...

His main question was: I'm going to die within seven days, tell me how to prepare myself for that occasion. I have only seven days left and how must I utilize these seven days and then Sukadeva Goswami started to instruct him. And that is what Srimad Bhagavatam is. Therefore while we are covering this topic, we are actually covering Srimad Bhagavatam. The essential teachings of Srimad Bhagavatam. Generally, when I give a seminar, I like to write on the board and walk about and I thought of doing that and I got this board here but I am little concerned that many of you are taping and if I stand up then you won't be able to tape.

Therefore I thought of one simple solution to this problem. Babai how is your hand writing on the white board? I am making some points, the points that I make, you can just write them. I will just make these few points, those who are taking notes, so the few points that I was making, I already made, I will just give you those points. Like one point is Parékñit Mahārāja's approach to death.

↓ How did Parékñit Mahārāja approach his imminent death?

How did Parékñit Mahārāja approach his imminent death? Did he try to call some doctors and try to save himself? No, rather he faced, he prepared himself to face it. And, then when he decided to face it, he was confronted with two possibilities. One is the apparent goal and the other is ultimate goal. So what is the apparent goal? The apparent goal is elevation to higher planetary systems and what is the ultimate goal? Ultimate goal is total freedom from material bondage, and elevation to spiritual world. The higher planetary system is also part of this material nature.

↓ Prisoners in the prison house

Like if we consider this material nature to be a prison house, then elevation to higher planetary systems are something like from lower grade of prison existence to a higher grade of prison. Like, I don't know if you have it here, but in some countries in India, they have things like you know third class prison. The worst I think is vigorous prisoner. They have to work very hard. I mean, then, in this way it comes to second class prisoner, and then comes a first class prisoner. Now, if a prisoner, thinks, I am in third class, let me be elevated to second class and then to first class. Is it an intelligent endeavor? To try to be elevated to a higher level of prison systems. No, what would be the intelligent thing to do? Get out of the prison, who wants to be in a prison? So, what did you write Babai? So, maybe you can make a point here. The material nature is like a prison house, for some and to some others, this material nature is like a boarding school. Ok we will discuss about this point now. Now, who are put into prison? The prison is design for whom? The criminals. Does a gentleman go to a prison? He may go for an occasional sightseeing, but he does not go to live in the prison. The prison is meant for the criminals. What is the definition of criminals? What is crime? Breaking of law, to break the law. The state or the king has given some laws. And those laws are meant to be followed or abided by. Now, those laws have to be followed. Why? Because, the law is actually meant for peaceful and prosperous living of the citizens of the state or the kingdom. When somebody breaks the law, it creates some disturbances. People who have perverted mentality of not abiding by the law of the king, has a perverted mentality. When somebody has a perverted

mentality, then that mentality has to be rectified therefore the prisons are designed. Prisons are the place to rectify the perverted mentality of the law breakers, criminals. In the prisons, the individuals get punished. They not always get punished. They also get rewarded. In this way, they know what is right and what is wrong. And when they do the right thing, in the prison also they appreciate the rewards. And when they do something wrong, then they get a stick. So the purpose is to rectify, to correct and to reform them. Now those, who are the law breakers, and whose law is it here? There is the ultimate law that has been given by the Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And the law given by the Lord is actually called religion. Whenever we consider religion, whichever religion it is, whether it is Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hindus, whichever religion we approach, we see in all the religion, we are speaking about God and the laws that He has given and how should one abide by those laws isn't it? Doesn't all religion speak about God? Doesn't all religion give the injunction of what the Lord's instructions are? Or motivate one or direct one or instructs one to follow those instructions of the Lord? When somebody abides by the laws of the Lord, then actually they become rewarded but when they break them, they become punished. That is the ultimate consideration of imprisonment. For the criminals, this material nature is like a prison.

↓ Boarding school another side

But the material nature also, has another aspect or another side of it. And that side of it is something like a boarding school. In the boarding school, parents sent their children to the boarding school. They are away from home. But what they learn in the school, they learn how to become qualified to live in the free world, a life of prosperity. Those who abide by the law of the Lord, for them, this material nature are like a boarding school. Those who are there in the boarding school, they are away from their home. But actually, they are preparing themselves to go back to home and lead a life of prosperity, become successful individuals there. Now, it's up to us, to turn this place into a prison house or a boarding school. The advantage of a boarding school is when you finish your term, when you finish your education, then you go back home. It is just taken for granted. And that we will go home. You are not here to stay forever. So, the Lord, also, is present in the hearts of every living entity and he is actually considering or determining how an individual is living his life or what is going on inside. Inside, means what is going on in his consciousness. Externally, we may bluff, cheat or fool others, but internally we can't.

↓ Supreme Personality of Godhead is situated in everyone's heart

Now the Supreme Personality of Godhead is situated in everyone's heart, as the Supersoul and He is witnessing everything. Now, there as the super soul also, the Lord has two ways to deal with the individual, like to the criminals, He is acting as a witness and He is seeing how they are acting accordingly and punishing them or rewarding them. And those who have accepted this place as the boarding school, the Lord sitting in their heart are acting as the teacher. He guides them from within. Now those who lead a materialistic life, those who think that the ultimate goal of life is to enjoy in this material nature and do not really want to accept the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, or another reality beyond this material nature which is the spiritual reality and those who do not have any information about the spiritual reality and they do not know, that they actually came from the spiritual reality, therefore the spiritual reality is actually their home. They simply keep on wandering in the material nature from one cell to Another and the Lord in their heart access the witness. The Lord is seeing every action of every individual. Those who are fortunate enough to understand that beyond this material nature are another reality, the spiritual reality. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the center of that reality. He is the Supreme Creator, the Supreme Proprietor, the Supreme Maintainer, and that Supreme Personality of Godhead is our dear most friend or He is our dear most father. When you recognize the individuals, those who recognize that, to them this material nature becomes like a boarding school. And they take advantage of the situation in the school by learning, they learn and who is the teacher? The Lord and his associates and his devotees. They are helped by those exalted devotees of the Lord and ultimately they are helped by the Lord Himself. And they simply prepare themselves to get out of the school and go out to their home and become a successful individual.

↓ The final examination

Now that is something like the end or that is the time of final examination. And the life is the span of time, the span when we get the opportunity to prepare ourselves for the exams. We study throughout the year for what? We prepare ourselves for the year in school for what? They sit for the exams, and when we prepare ourselves well, then we pass with the flying colours straight A's and when we fail to prepare ourselves then we flunk. So now a person who has prepared well, will he be afraid to sit in the exams, rather he looks forward to the exams. A good student, I am sure all of you are, or had been, did you look forward to exams? Well certain degree of nervousness may be there, before the exam, but when you get the question papers, when you get the papers and you see you know the answer to all the questions, then how do you feel? Don't you feel excited and in bliss, in ecstasy? Therefore those who prepare themselves, they get into ecstasy when the exams

come. Although some initial nervousness may be there, and now consider what actually happens, when a person who has prepared himself well, preparation means what does that preparation mean for this exam? This preparation is actually preparing to establish our relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The real preparation is to recognize the Lord, to recognize the Supreme Personality of Godhead and establish our relationship with Him. Throughout our life, we are actually preparing for that, how shall I face the exams? Throughout our life if that becomes our only concern and then the time comes for the final exams and what is that exam? That is the time when we are going to leave this body. So at that time what do we do? We are waiting for this moment to come and we are out of this body. Will it happen or will it always remain in this body. Well, there is another consideration; a third possibility is losing your consciousness. Lose your consciousness means something like you fall asleep, no more consciousness, no more awareness. Now to a devotee, that is the most undesirable situation. A devotee doesn't want to lose his consciousness, rather at that time, he wants to fix his consciousness onto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. That's spiritual endeavor has been described as Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So throughout our life we are trying to be Kṛṣṇa conscious. And then the final moment comes and then we see Kṛṣṇa, how will you feel? How will you feel that your entire endeavor, throughout your life has been successful? Now you are face to face with Him. Or you are in a situation, when you have been taken to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Anyway these aspects we will discuss tomorrow, today we are just, today we won't get into the examples of individuals leaving the bodies and how they left their body. Like today, we are just covering the basic understanding of this aspect of what life is, what death is. Now let us again for clarity, let us go back to that point what is life? What is the definition of life? You are alive what makes you think you are alive? Consciousness.

↓ What is consciousness?

What is consciousness? Consciousness is the awareness of being. I am, therefore I am alive. When I fall asleep and I do not have any awareness, whether I am alive or dead, then, what happens? do I exist? No. When you are fast asleep. Sleep also has two aspects. One is dreams and the other is dreamless. Like in dream, dream is actually a situation in a subtle existence. When the subtle body is active, that is called dream. When both the subtle and gross bodies are active, then it is called wakeful state. When you are awake, then both the gross bodies and the subtle bodies, anyway for clarity I was saying gross body, we have 2 types of material bodies. Cintamani can you tell us what are those 2 types of material bodies, gross and subtle? What does the gross body comprise of? Earth, water, fire, air and ether. And subtle bodies are

comprised of? Radhika do you know subtle body? Ok I will ask your mother. What is the subtle body? Subtle body is made up of mind, intelligence and false ego. The mind is also matter, subtle matter. These are the 3 subtle elements. Earth means a solid substance; water means liquid, fire means fiery, air and ether. These 5 are gross material elements. With these 5 gross material elements, we have this gross body. Beyond this gross body we have a subtle body made of mind intelligence and false ego. When you are awake, then both the gross and subtle body is active. Like, our body is also active or aware and we are also aware of our subtle body. When you fall asleep, then the gross body becomes inactive. We become unconscious of the gross body, but the subtle body remains active and the subtle activities of the subtle body appear to us like a dream. When the subtle body also becomes inactive that is the state of deep sleep. At that time we don't have any consciousness of this material nature. Let us consider the situation between death and sleep or the other way round. Sleep we know what sleep is like. Sleep and death.

↓ What is the relationship between sleep and death?

What is the relationship between sleep and death? When we are asleep, although we are not conscious of our existence, our consciousness is completely inactive that state is sleep. Even at that state the soul is in the body. And in sleep we wake up in the same body. Death also is like sleep. But it is a prolonged sleep. And in death we don't wake up in this body. We wake up in another body. And that is called the transmigration of the soul. The soul transmigrates from one body to another. The body is constantly changing. In this body also, the soul is going from One body to another for example continuous changes are taking place and since the changes are taking place in the body continuously, we don't register it. But we do, when we somebody after a long time. Like you see a little child, and then you come after 7 years, what will you see? That he has completely changed. Does he have this child body anymore? No he has got another body, his body has changed completely. Then you see him after another 10 years. Now he is a man, it is impossible to recognize him, he has got a beard, moustache, he has got long hair, and he has got a big body. So in this body also the soul transmigrates from one body to another. The body changes from boyhood to youth, to old age. So Kardama Muni you agree with me? Do you remember yourself when you were a 5 year old? So when you were 5 years old, what kind of body did you have? Do you have a picture? So where is that 5 year old body today? It is not there? Today you have a completely different body. Are you the same person? You are the same person, although your body changed but you are the same person. In spite of the change of the body, the soul is the same. But will it be a logical

conclusion that in spite of the change of the body, the soul doesn't change? The existence of the soul has nothing to do with the body. Now let us consider, when the soul leaves the body, then what happens? That is what is called death.

↓ Death is actually the soul's departure from the body

Death is actually the soul's departure from the body. When the soul leaves the body, the body becomes dead. When the soul leaves the body, then what happens to the body? To begin with this is the dead body. This body is made of what? Earth, water, fire, air and ether. Is earth just regular earth? Is it dead matter? Or earth is alive. Earth is dead matter. Earth, water, fire, air and ether, all these are actually inert matter. Now this body is made of inert matter or dead matter? Will it be illogical to conclude that this is a dead body? Actually it is a dead body, but why this body is alive because of the presence of the soul. So it is due to the presence of the soul that the body is alive. So now who are we? So let's make a very simple consideration who are we? Are we this body or are we the soul? We saw the body changes, but I remain the same so who is that I? When I say I, who do we actually indicate? Due to our conditioning of this body, we identify ourselves with the body. But actually we are the spirit soul. When the spirit soul leaves the body, and I am the spirit soul, would I continue to exist? Do I continue to exist or do I die with the body?

↓ When the body dies, do I die?

When the body dies, do I die? No, rather when I am in this body, the body became alive. The body remains alive. So birth, life and death, they are actually indicate the birth is the soul acceptance of a new body. When the soul accepts a new body, we call it birth, and when the soul leaves the whole body, what do you call it? Death. And the period of the soul existence, from the time of birth to death is called life. So do you understand now what life is? Sitarani describe what is life? So now let us consider, we are in boarding school and when the exams will be? And preparation time is? Lifetime is the time to preparing ourselves for the final exams. And when we fare well in the exams, then what happens? We find that Krsna is standing there. He said ok, you did very well. All your life you have been trying to understand Me, recognize Me and establish your relationship with Me, so I am very happy with you, so come on, let's go home. My boy did very well. I am very happy that I sent you to boarding school. So that is our ultimate objective of existence in this material nature.

↓ The story of Puraījāna in Srimad Bhagavatam

Now this has been very wonderfully described through an allegorical story that was the story of Puraījāna in

Srimad Bhagavatam. How many of you remember the story of Puraījāna? Ok how many of you don't? I explain briefly. There was a great personality, a great king called King Prācēnabarhi. So King Prācēnabarhi had 10 sons. When his children grew up, King Prācēnabarhi advised them to get married and take up the royal responsibility. So, the children felt that in order to enter the household life, in order to take the responsibility we have to prepare ourselves properly. So they went to the forest to perform austerity. Then they came across a beautiful lake. The lake was filled with, decorated with many beautiful flowers like blue, red and white lotus and there were beautiful and colourful singing birds that were there, flying around. And then to their great amazement they saw Lord Shiva coming out of the water. And then Lord Shiva gave them the instruction how to meditate, how to glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead and meditate upon Him. So in this way being blessed by Lord Shiva, they got absorbed in meditating upon the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And at that time Narada Muni, considered that these ten boys are becoming so serious about their life and look at the father, he is completely absorbed in sense gratification, performing all kinds of materialistic activities, to acquire piety so that he can enjoy. So, Narada Muni thought that I must give example, good advice, but he also considered that this king, he is so gross. When people become absorbed in sense gratification their intelligence becomes quite blind. A person with blunt intelligence, in English there is an expression called dunderhead. So dunderhead cannot understand the necessities of life. So Narada Muni instead of giving him a straightforward advice, he told him a story. And the story is the story of Puraījāna. Actually when Narada Muni was describing the situation of a living entity in this material nature. Puraījāna means one who dwells in a body. So this body is like a city, Pura means city or dwelling place. Puri means a house. So the soul lives in the house, this body. Not only this body. This is one type of body, the human form is one type of body there are 400,000 different types of human bodies and there are 8 millions other types of bodies, aquatics, plants, worms, insects, reptiles, birds, animals and then finally human beings. In the process of spiritual evolution, not organic evolution, the process of spiritual evolution, the human form, is the highest form of existence in this material nature. So Puraījāna means a spirit soul, he told the story as I described first, there was a prince, he was wondering around in different places, then finally he came to a land between the tract of the Himalayan mountain and the salty water ocean. That's the land of India. While wondering there he came across a city, a beautiful city with 9 gates. Then he saw, there was a beautiful woman, an extremely beautiful woman and she was attended by 10 very powerful and efficient attendants and there was a five headed serpent that was protecting this lady, this queen. She was the queen of the city. And then

Purāijana came so attracted by her beauty that Purāijana approached her and wanted to marry her. Eventually they got married, they started to live in the city of 9 gates and Purāijana was quite happily living. Sometimes he used to feel very depressed, sometimes he used to fight with his queen. Sometimes he had different types of adversaries. Once a very big onslaught came upon the city. The Javana king attacked the city. And a very very big fight ensued and they were fighting to protect the city and the serpent who was actually used to protecting the city was becoming gradually weaker and weaker, couldn't really withstand all onslaught. And then the Javana king's sister Talakanya came and embraced Purāijana. And when she embraced Purāijana, he lost completely all his power. He lost all his ability to fight. And then all the soldiers of Javana king dragged him out of the city. And the Purāijana took birth as a woman in his next life. So here Purāijana die. So next life Purāijana is born as a woman. So when her Husband died. Her husband at some point left home. She was a princess; she was married to a king. But the king left her kingdom and went to vanaprastha, went to the forest. So when the king died, this Puranjani, Purāijana is now a woman. She lit the funeral pyre. Placed her husband there and lit the fire and then she was also considering to enter into the fire and give up her life. So at that time one Brahman came and told her that he was her friend from the long past and this time of difficulty, he came to help her. So in this way the Brahman actually rescued Puranjani and led her to the ultimate goal of life. So the king could understand that it was an allegorical story. So he asked Narada Muni why did you tell a story like that? What is the hidden meaning behind this story? So then Narada Muni explained that this Puranjani is actually a spirit soul and the spirit soul wanders in different types of bodies. Sometimes he is elevated to the higher planetary systems. Sometimes he goes to lower planetary systems. In this way, he is wandering around this universe and then he comes into the land of India or we can say the land of wisdom. A land where knowledge is available. And there he comes across this city of nine gates.

↓ The city of nine gates is the human body

And the city of nine gates is the human body. So the human body has nine gates means there are nine holes through this gate one actually goes out to enjoy the senses, derive enjoyment from the objects of the senses like 2 ears, 2 eyes, 2 nostrils, mouth, anus, and genitals. So these are nine gates in the human body. And the queen is the intelligence who actually makes all the arrangements for the soul to dwell in this human body and try to enjoy. The queen has 10 attendants and they are the 10 senses, five knowledge acquiring senses, and five working senses. The serpent that protects this city is the five types of air *prana, apana, saman, vyan and udan*. These five types of air is

actually sustaining this body and making this body function. All the actions and functions of the body are controlled by these five types of air. And then, there is an attack from the Javana king. Javana king is the king of death. So a king of death comes along with his soldiers and his sister. then in his next life he became a woman. Then at the time of funeral of her husband, he came across this Brahman. Who is this Brahman? The Brahman is the super soul, the spiritual master. The spiritual master guides one towards the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead which is the ultimate goal of life and which indicates our ultimate freedom. So in this way very beautifully through many many anecdotes and incidences recorded, Srimad Bhagavatam is teaching us what is life and what is death and how to conquer it. So the Art of dying actually means how to conquer death. When we conquer death, what do we achieve, we achieve immortality. So I will stop here today if anyone has any questions please feel free to ask.

2. Questions and Answers

↓ Question 1

HH Bhakti Charu Swami answers: You see, before death when you are alive, the question of mortality does not come. You are already immortal at that time. But immortality considers actually one, we are already immortal. In reality we are immortal. But the problem starts when we forgot our spiritual identity and began to identify ourselves with the body, and then when the body dies, we think that we are dying or we are dead. But when we are situated in our spiritual identity then there is no death, then actually by nature we all are immortal. The first instructions of the Vedas are: "O son of immortality listen to the wisdom of the spiritual reality." To begin with, we are the children of immortality. If our father is immortal, then we are also immortal. And only thing is that unfortunately we are trying to identify ourselves with the body and that's the problem. Now we have to realize that we are not this body. The body is just an external covering. We are actually spiritual being. We become situated in our spiritual identity, and then there is no death. There is no consideration of death; there is no question of death.

↓ How do we become situated in our spiritual identity?

When we become connected to the Supreme spirit, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then we automatically becomes situated in our spiritual identity. So to make this point clear, very nice question you brought up and I will answer it a little elaborately. A living entity, we, the spirit soul, we are very minute spiritual entities like a spark. Spark is a part of fire, a tiny little fire, but when the spark flies out of the fire and

falls into a heap of ash, what happens to its fiery qualities? It loses its fiery qualities, it becomes ash. That aspect of fire that spark that it was, it loses its fiery qualities, it stops to be a spark and becomes ash coming in contact with the heap of ash. When that aspect is taken back into the fire then what happens, it automatically regains its fiery qualities. Similarly we are all spiritual beings, but we are tiny spiritual sparks. So when we get out of spiritual reality, spiritual nature and coming in contact with the material nature, then we lose our spiritual quality and become materialized. Just as a spark coming in contact with the heap of ash becomes ash. So that is the condition, we are spiritual but we are considering ourselves with the material, fighting to get our spiritual identity. Now tell me how can we get our spiritual identity back? If we go back to the fire again, then again we become spiritualized again when we go back to the spiritual. Therefore the way to become re-spiritualized is to re-establish our contact with the supreme spirit, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By forgetting him we are falling into this material nature and lost our spiritual identity. Now if we re-establish our relationship with Him, then we will again regain our spiritual identity. I told you by re-establishing our relationship with Krsna; we develop our relationship with Krsna. Now the way to develop is by love. Love is the thing that brings us together, hates separates us. When we develop our loving relationship, then that love is actually a force that unites us with Krsna.

Question 3

HH Bhakti Charu Swami answers: I briefly touched this point before, anyway we will try to elaborate it let's see. Consciousness in simple word is can be identified as awareness. That I am aware, that I am sitting in this room, surrounded by so many people.

Question 4

HH Bhakti Charu Swami answers: The thing is if the consciousness comes from the soul. Just as light comes, or heat comes out of fire. You see when there is fire; heat comes out or light comes out. Now just as light comes out of fire, similarly, one can say that consciousness comes from the soul, now that consciousness becomes subjective or effective by various factors of this material nature like 3 subtle elements and five gross elements like those subtle elements are mind, intelligence and false ego, the mistaken concept of our identity. So when that happens, then the soul consciousness is projected towards the material direction. Just let me take one step backwards and try to elaborate it little more. The soul is from the spiritual world. The soul is not generated in the material nature due to some chemical combination. Soul is from the spiritual world. Now the spiritual world is the world of the reality. God is the center. So when we look

toward God, when we have our relationship with God, then we are in the spiritual world. But when we look away from God, then we look at his external creations, external energy, which is the material world and when we come in contact with the material nature. When we turn our face away from the spiritual reality and look towards the material nature and material nature being inferior and we being superior we develop a tendency to lord over the material nature. Now in reality our relationship with God is that he is the Supreme Master and we are his eternal servants. That is our identity actually. We are eternal servants of the Lord. But when we look at the material nature, then we forget our identity as servant but we resume the identity of the master now that is the mistaken identity and that is called the false ego, the mistaken concept of our identity. And then we begin to plan how we are going to exploit this material nature, that gives us the second covering of the subtle matter called the intelligence how we are going to exploit this world for our enjoyment and then through the mind, the consciousness constantly flows towards the material direction. So in this way, we get our subtle body or covering of mind, intelligence and false ego. Then according to the state of our subtle body, the material nature provides us with the gross body. Now through this body we virtually or practically try to exploit or enjoy this material nature. In this way the soul becomes entrapped in these two bodies, subtle and gross. As a result of that, the consciousness begins to flow towards this direction, material direction, through subtle body and the gross body, through the mind and through the senses. Our consciousness is going out to its different directions and trying to enjoy. That is the state of affairs in our material existence. We recognize the facts that it is not a desirable situation here. We want to enjoy but we can't enjoy. Enjoyment is an illusory concept. A poor man wants to be a rich man and a rich man wants to be a king. No one is satisfied in his present existing situation. Either he dwells in the past or dreams about the future. But the real situation is that we are in a miserable condition here. If we are miserable here, then why should we stay here? Let's find the right place where we can be joyful that's why we have to make the spiritual endeavor, to go back to the spiritual world. To become situated in our natural joyful state of existence. Thank you. Hare Krishna

Questions.5

HH Bhakti Charu Swami answers: Maya means the material energy of the Lord, the illusory energy which actually is manifested in the form of this material nature. It is illusory. It is not there. We are trying to enjoy, but is there any enjoyment? Like a mirage. In a desert, you see a mirage and it gives you the impression that there is water and you are very thirsty, dying of thirst. So you run after the mirage. So what happen? The mirage runs away from you. No matter how fast you ran after the mirage, the mirage will constantly ran away from you.

Our situation in the material nature is like that and it's been created by Maya, the illusory energy of the Lord.

Question 6

HH Bhakti Charu Swami answers: As long as you remain in material consciousness, you will be in Maya, But once you take shelter of Krsna then you are not in Maya.

3. Srila Prabhupada appreciation

Now you can see how perfectly Çréla Prabhupāda gave everything. Actually Çréla Prabhupāda gave the way Çré Caitanya Mahāprabhu arranged, the way Kāñëa arranged. This is the divine arrangement of Çré Caitanya Mahāprabhu and that is what Çréla Prabhupāda gave. Therefore Çréla Prabhupāda's presentation is perfect and complete. (*Srila Prabhupada quotes*)

4. Guru Maharaja's Instructions:

- ↓ So those who are situated in knowledge, they know that death is inevitable some day or other. Therefore one who is situated in knowledge he does not get bewildered with this issue of death. Rather he prepares for that;
- ↓ So what's the question of enjoyment in a place of misery;
- ↓ Ultimate goal is total freedom from material bondage, and elevation to spiritual world;
- ↓ The Supreme Personality of Godhead is our dear most friend or He is our dear most father. When you recognize the individuals, those who recognize that, to them this material nature becomes like a boarding school. And they take advantage of the situation in the school by learning, they learn and who is the teacher? The Lord and his associates and his devotees. They are helped by those exalted devotees of the Lord and ultimately they are helped by the Lord Himself. And they simply prepare themselves to get out of the school and go out to their home and become a successful individual.
- ↓ The real preparation is to recognize the Lord, to recognize the Supreme Personality of Godhead and establish our relationship with Him;
- ↓ Due to our conditioning of this body, we identify ourselves with the body. But actually we are the spirit soul;

↓ The spiritual master guides one towards the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead which is the ultimate goal of life and which indicates our ultimate freedom;

↓ So in this way very beautifully through many many anecdotes and incidences recorded, Srimad Bhagavatam is teaching us what is life and what is death and how to conquer it; and

↓ The Art of dying actually means how to conquer death. When we conquer death, what do we achieve, we achieve immortality.

(The content of this E-magazine was based on a seminar given by His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami entitled Art of Dying)

(Compilation & editing by Hemavati Radhika dasi)