

*An insight into the book changes controversy*

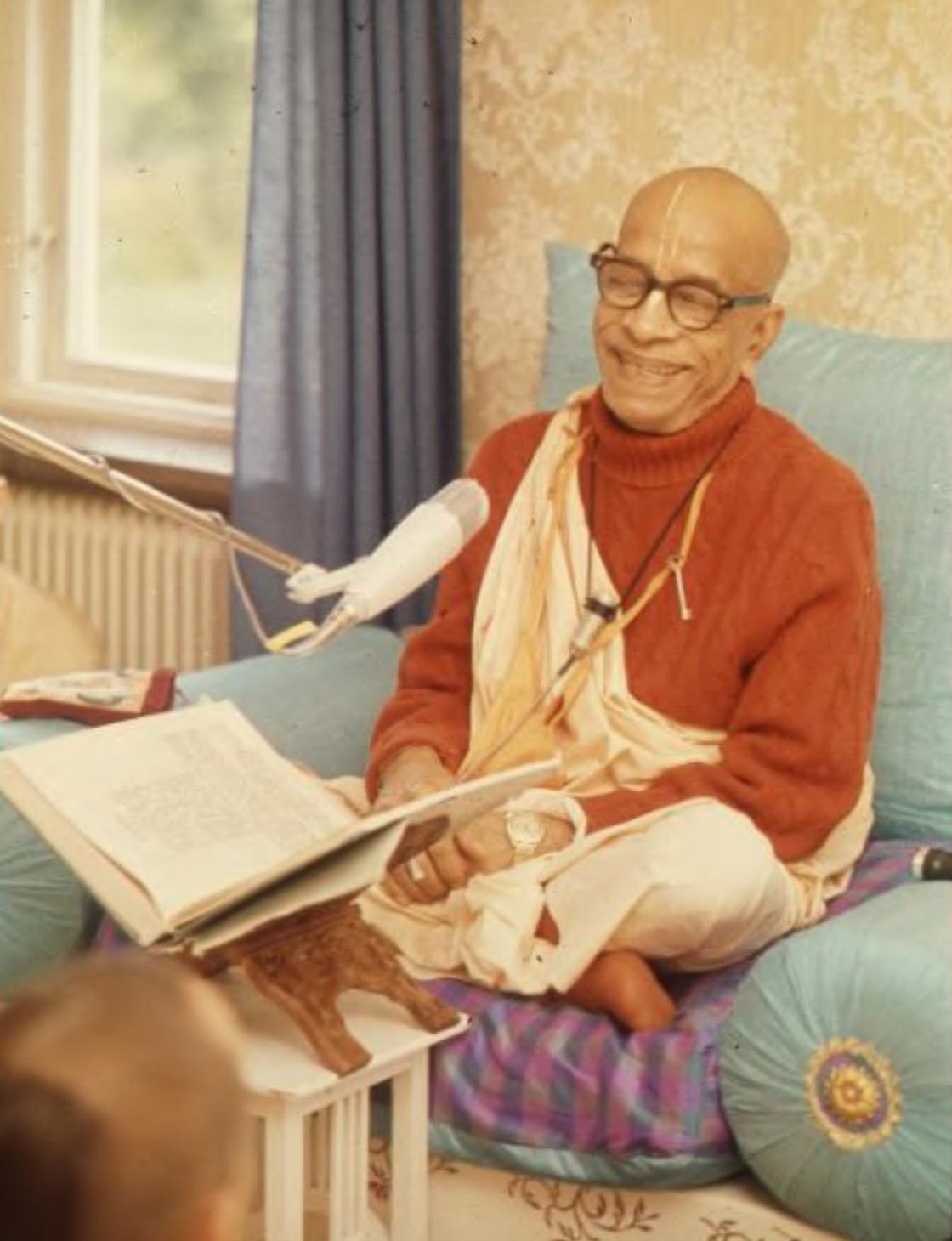
# WHY ARE THE ORIGINAL BOOKS CHANGED?



*by Makhancora Dāsa*

# Why Are The Original Books Changed?

An insight into the "Book Changes" controversy  
by Makhancora dāsa ©2019



His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda

the Founder-ācārya of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness



“My understanding of the issues involved in relation to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books is enriched and expanded from reading your article [Why Are The Original Books Changed?]. I appreciate your attention to detail and your dedication to authentically represent Śrīla Prabhupāda and his teachings. Your efforts definitely meaningfully add to the important conversation regarding preserving, continuing and expanding Śrīla Prabhupāda’s legacy. As your article indicates, we might expect that as decades and generations go on, additional editions of Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, and Śrīla Prabhupāda’s other books, will be available.”

Dhīra Govinda dāsa  
(David B. Wolf, PhD.)  
the founder of Satvatove institute,  
author of “Relationships That Work”

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## WHY ARE THE ORIGINAL BOOKS CHANGED?

For many years we have been developing a more clear understanding in regards to the controversy that has arisen around the books of our spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. BhaktiVedanta Swami Prabhupāda. This article is the result of that endeavor. Those who sincerely try to follow his instructions cultivate and fully accept the idea that his vāṇi cannot be adulterated, because the pure message descending from the ācārya on his disciples is the essence of the *paramparā*, disciplic succession.

Let me say a bit about my personal history. When I first heard that Śrīla Prabhupāda's books had been changed without his authorization, I was alarmed. Over the years, in my humble endeavour to preserve Śrīla Prabhupāda's books as they are, I have collected the complete set of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* printed before 1978, the complete set of 1975 *Śrī Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*, the 1972 *Bhagavad-gītā*, the 1974 *Kṛṣṇa* trilogy, the 1970 *Nectar of Devotion* and many of the small books (first printings). I have also translated a few of them into my native Slovak language, including the 1972 *Bhagavad-gītā*, 1969 *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, *Beyond Birth and Death*, *Perfection of Yoga*, *Elevation to Kṛṣṇa Consciousness*, *Rāja-vidyā*, *The Nectar of Instruction*, etc. My understanding at that time was that the editing of the original text for the sake of translation should be nil or as minimal as possible even at the risk of compromising the clarity of the text. So I fanatically stuck to the English wording, and although the Slovak result was often an awkward material to read, I just couldn't allow myself any sort of compromise, fearing the inevitable changing of the sacred text in the process of translation to another language. When I look back at these first Slovak translations, they bring smile to my face. They blend innocence on one side, which is always appreciated but naivety on the other, which may not necessarily lead to the desired progress in our undertakings. Realizations developed, and in the light of our research we see the shadows of, for many,

unpalatable facts. The reason why I am stating this is to emphasize that the following exposition is not a mere theoretical, political, or a social media type of viewpoint. I am speaking from a position of a translator who is trying to approach this problem from the practical side.

A great tug of war has raged amongst the devotees of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement over the past years concerning the books of the ISKCON Founder-Ācārya, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda. Should they be edited after Śrīla Prabhupāda's physical departure or should they be left completely intact? What is authorized editing, and what is unauthorized tampering with the message? Is it at all possible to work on these books anymore? And if so, who is authorized to do this? What are the original books? Does anyone ask this question? Is there such a thing? Is it the first printing? Or does all this not matter at all?

As usual, there exist two opposing paradigms or standpoints from which this issue is approached. The “Do not change even a comma” policy vs. The freedom to edit on and on. And on and on and on. Correcting mistakes in the text vs. the *ārṣa-prayoga* principle. “The books are perfect as they are” vs. “we need to make them better” etc. From the extreme positions thus adopted, two kinds of fanaticism/deviation arise. Either one becomes overly and unnecessarily attached to the external feature or form at the cost of neglecting the content (as we have seen in the 1972 *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is reprint, where they ignored Prabhupāda's complaints about the “cattle raising” (Bg.18.44) or “the knower of the field as one who identifies with the body”(Bg.13.1-2) and many devotees justifying keeping the obvious blunders in the text about which even Śrīla Prabhupāda complained as “sacred”) or one comes to the point of tampering the meanings to suit particular political/philosophical agendas, when one wants the *guru* to speak what one wants to hear (as was admitted by one of the BBTi editors in case of *Śrī Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*):

“Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura accepted Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, who initiated Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who in turn initiated Śrīla Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī” (CC, Chapter 1)

In the new edition, the same passage reads:

“Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura accepted Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, the spiritual master of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who in turn **accepted** Śrīla Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī”

The editor says: “On the side of not changing the “initiated” phrases we have the strong bias against changing the books unless absolutely necessary and the fact that Śrīla Prabhupāda did indeed say that Jagannātha das Bābājī initiated Bhaktivinode.”

So although it is admitted here that Śrīla Prabhupāda “indeed said that Jagannātha das Bābājī initiated Bhaktivinode,” the word “initiated” was changed to “accepted.” And the explanation by the editor is as follows:

“Leaving one or both “initiated”(s) will strongly imply that the use of the phrases “direct disciple” and even “accepted [as his disciple]” indicate formal initiation as we know it in ISKCON, which is far from the truth.” This last was the weightiest argument, in my view, for changing the passage.” (BBT Editor, Dravida Das)

The *siddhānta* lies somewhere in the middle, and the issue should be approached with an open and unbiased mind, leaving behind all the politics, propaganda, paranoia or self-centred motivations. Ultimately, just as the vast and deep ocean is not disturbed by bubbles rising from the bottom, or as the beauty of the Moon is not diminished by dark spots on its surface, for those who regularly hear Śrīla Prabhupāda from all available sources including the letters, recorded classes and conversations, even the various mistakes or adulterations which can be found in his books will not obscure the final conclusion on who is Kṛṣṇa, what is the soul, what is devotional service and how to perform it.



## WHAT ARE THE “ORIGINAL” BOOKS?

The knowledge of the *Vedas*, the purpose of which is to know the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa (*Vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyam* (Bg. 15.15), comes down through an unbroken chain of disciplic succession. Disciplic succession means that the message of Godhead is being carried from the spiritual master to the disciple without any adulteration, as it is. It is therefore offensive to change or adulterate the words of the Ācārya, because that means termination of *paramparā*. The disciplic succession and its’ representatives are present as long as the vibration of transcendental sound, or, to be more specific, it’s meaning, which they transmit, remains intact – original. This is the key word - original - the one that rings the bell. The “original books.” “Prabhu, you should read the original books, not the changed ones.” Many devotees believe the first ISKCON PRESS or the first BBT editions to be the original words of Śrīla Prabhupāda, with zero or only minimal editorial changes that do not change the meanings Śrīla Prabhupāda intended to convey to us. But by closer examination one can clearly see that this is not so. Therefore, a question arises: what actually are the original books of Śrīla Prabhupāda?

Many devotees who wish to preserve the original teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda assume that original, unedited and unadulterated books written by Śrīla Prabhupāda are the first editions printed in his physical presence, for example the 1972 McMillan edition of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, the 1972 BBT edition of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1st Canto) and all other first printings, the 1975 edition of *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* etc.

In the last few years, the 1972 edition of the *Bhagavad-gītā* grew in popularity. Many devotees see it as the example of the most authentic, unchanged, original edition of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books. This was mainly due to the sincere endeavour of a few devotees who propagate it as the unadulterated and unchanged version. The logic behind this viewpoint is that the books edited during

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s presence were authorized by Śrīla Prabhupāda himself, whereas after his departure the editors were left without supervision, and so their editing is highly questionable and cannot be verified. Let us glimpse into the Introduction to the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 1972 McMillan edition. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s dictation of this particular passage is recorded and can be downloaded off the internet. In fact, it is the first historical recording of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s spoken word available to us. This very recording was the source material which had served as the basis for the 1972 book. In his dictation Śrīla Prabhupāda states:

“The modern scientists, they are trying for years and years together for reaching the moon planet, and they have no approach as yet. But here in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, here is a suggestion. Suppose a man lives for another fifty years and he... So nobody tries to elevate himself in the spiritual ideas for fifty years.”

(transcript of the earliest Recording of Śrīla Prabhupāda in the Bhaktivedanta Archives)

However, in the 1972 version the same passage reads:

“Modern man has struggled very hard to reach the moon, but he has not tried very hard to elevate himself spiritually. If one has fifty years of life ahead of him, he should engage that brief time in cultivating this practice of remembering the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This practice is the devotional process of: ...”

(Bg – 1972: introduction)

On close observation, it is seen that the remark about having no approach to the moon as of yet has been removed from the 1972 *Bhagavad-gītā* edition. Was there a reason for this? Śrīla Prabhupāda boldly declared on many occasions that the American expedition on the moon was simply a hoax and actually no man of this earth has ever been there. Here are some of the quotes in this connection:

**Reporter:** In other words, you don't... How do you yourself feel? Do you feel that if the United States or the Soviet Union were to attempt a landing and their spacecraft went down, what do you yourself expect...

**Prabhupāda:** No, so far our calculation goes, from the books, nobody can do so. That is impossible.

**Reporter:** Well, does the book say that it would be impossible for anyone to even approach it? At what point would it be impossible...

**Prabhupāda:** Impossible means the process by which you are trying to reach there.

**Reporter:** To live there.

**Prabhupāda:** No, to reach there.

**Reporter:** Oh, to live there.

**Prabhupāda:** Live there and reach there also. Reach.

**Reporter:** Reach, I see. But would the flight that was just completed, that doesn't contradict with anything in this book? I mean they were within, I don't know, so many miles...

**Prabhupāda:** But so far we have got information, no flight has been successful to land there till now. So I do not think how they are going to be successful in the future. This process, just like we are going from one place to another by motor car or by airplane, this process will not help us to go to the moon planet. The process is different as described in the Vedic literature. One has to qualify.

(Interview with LA Times Reporter About Moon Trip -- December 26, 1968, Los Angeles)

Someone may argue that when Prabhupāda dictated his introduction to the *Bhagavad-gītā* in 1966 it was true, but after 1969 (the year NASA supposedly landed on the moon) the passage did not make sense. Prabhupāda, however, never changed his attitude towards the moon missions even after 1969. He was consistent. Please note some of his statements in this regards in the following years:

**Devotee (3):** Prabhupāda, when they said they went to the moon, and they showed films of them landing and walking on the moon, was this all a bluff?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes. Clearly... All laboratory work, that's all.

**Devotee (3):** They all made it up?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes.

(Morning Walk at Waikiki Beach -- June 4, 1975, Honolulu)

**Devotee (2):** The first moon landing was 1961.

**Prabhupāda:** That is beginning. First of all they sent dog. [laughter]

**Madhudvisa:** Space dog. Space mouse.

**Prabhupāda:** Huh? Space mouse.

**Paramahansa:** Space monkey also.

**Prabhupāda:** So since 1955 even. So twenty years, what they have done?

**Paramahansa:** Spent billions of dollars.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes, simply they have brought little dust, that's all.

**Madhudvisa:** Now they have found that that same dust is here on the earth.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes. Simply propaganda. They are not going. Now the Russian scientist and American scientist are combined. Because both of them thieves, so one thief is asking, "Don't expose me; I will not expose you, so that our business will go on." This is the way. "Let us combine together and cheat these rascals, and otherwise, if you expose me, then I will expose you. Then our business will stop."  
(Morning Walk - May 21, 1975, Melbourne)

Just like they are concluding, "In this moon planet there is no life." No. Every planet is full of living entities, either in the Vaikuṅṭhaloka or in this material world. Sarva-gaḥ sthānur acalo 'yam. Living entities are everywhere. Therefore we cannot believe that these people went to moon planet, because they say there is no living entity. That is not possible. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.33 -- July 18, 1975, San Francisco)

**Hari-Śauri:** When they originally started sending sputniks to the moon, they couldn't even land them properly. They would crash. They said that they were crash-landing spaceships into the moon's surface.

**Prabhupāda:** Crashed?

**Hari-Śauri:** Crash-landing. The spaceship was supposed to just smash into the surface of the moon, like that.

**Prabhupāda:** They have never gone. Simply propaganda. Even they have gone, what is the result? Simply to give report that it is inhabitable?

(Room Conversation -- July 2, 1976, New Vṛndāvana)

Śrīla Prabhupāda never dismissed his claims about the moon landing being a hoax even up to his departure from this world. From the available testimonies we have gathered, overwhelming evidence points to the fact that the editor himself had serious doubts about these claims and that his editing was purposefully aimed to delete these statements for the sake of avoiding a controversy in the eyes of the public. The following is an excerpt from the diary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal servant Hari Śauri Dāsa:

“Several days ago Prabhupāda was preaching to me about the defects of modern science. He spoke about the bluff of modern space travel, referring me to *Easy Journey*. “I have written there that the attempts to go to the moon are simply childish. You have read? he asked. I could not recall it specifically and I excused myself by saying I had not read the book since I had first seen it in 1972. Prabhupāda looked thoughtfully at me for a second and then asked me to get him a copy. I did so, and he has read the whole book through himself in the last few days. He discovered that his statement was actually edited out.

So when Prabhupāda questioned him now, Hayagrīva admitted having omitted it. He tried to defend himself, “Well, that was written before they went there, and afterwards I left it out.”

Prabhupāda was very, very upset. He spent most of his morning walk criticizing Hayagrīva for thinking the spiritual master an ordinary man subject to mistakes, and for accepting the words of the scientists above the word of the *guru*. “This means I cannot trust you.” he told him.

Later, back at the temple during breakfast I went into Hayagrīva's room. “What's he so angry at?” he asked me sullenly, referring to Śrīla Prabhupāda. He was petulant, like a child, his ego stung by the chastisement of his father. I didn't like it, and I told him so. We began to argue, me angrily berating him for his overly familiar

attitude, and he sulkily defending his actions, declaring that no one would believe the statement that you can't go to the moon. I condemned him for not relying on his spiritual master and for watering down the philosophy to suit the mentality of the nondevotee masses.

"The masses won't accept a book that declares it impossible to journey to the moon," he pouted testily. "They simply won't accept Prabhupāda's statements. They're only going to believe the scientists."

"We don't care what people believe," I snapped back. "People believe one thing now and in twenty years time they'll believe exactly the opposite. We don't care what they accept. We accept what Prabhupāda says, and our only business is to present Prabhupāda's exact words without altering them or imposing our own concocted ideas about what is or is not acceptable. It is not our business to pander to the whims of the masses."

I left him to eat his breakfast and returned to my room next to Śrīla Prabhupāda's. A few minutes later Hayagrīva went past in the corridor, entered Prabhupāda's room, and with tears welling in his eyes apologized to His Divine Grace. Prabhupāda was pleased and accepted his penitent regrets. Still, the book needs to be changed. Prabhupāda gave instructions to inform the BBT that *Easy Journey* has to be re-edited to include the missing passage."

(Hari Śauri dāsa, Transcendental diary 2-4: Honolulu)

According to Hari Śauri's memory Śrīla Prabhupāda gave an instruction to re-edit the passage in the *Easy Journey*. This corresponds to a recorded conversation between Śrīla Prabhupāda and his disciples on the 22nd of June 1977, wherein Śrīla Prabhupāda says:

**Prabhupāda:** To find out some job to fill up the belly. Otherwise he'll starve if he doesn't get any job. And he's finding out *guru*. Job *guru*. Now do the needful. Otherwise everything will be spoiled. These rascal editorial... That *Easy Journey*, original, this [indistinct] Hayagrīva has changed so many things.

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** He actually took out the whole part about their going to the moon being childish. He deleted the whole section. The whole thing. He said it is [indistinct].

(Conversation, “Rascal Editors,” and Morning Talk -- June 22, 1977, Vṛndāvana)

Also there is a conversation where the same episode is discussed here:

**Prabhupāda:** No, they think in so many way, nonsense rascals. What is the value of their thinking? Rascals, all number one rascals. They say, “Why do you...?” But they, how they can believe? Their whole life is belief, no factual knowledge.

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** How they will believe that man didn’t go to the moon? When Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote that in Easy Journey, Hayagrīva took it out of the book, saying that “How will they believe this?”

**Prabhupāda:** Believe. “I believe.” You can say also, “I believe.” You can say, “I believe.” Where is the standard?

(Room Conversations -- August 11, 1977, Vṛndāvana)

The logical question arises: If Śrīla Prabhupāda did not like the edited passage in the Easy Journey to Other Planets, and if he indeed instructed to put the missing portion back in, should not the same justice be done to the Introduction of the *Bhagavad-gītā*? Why would anyone want to see such a change as authorized?

Let’s move to the 1st chapter 1st verse. This is an excerpt from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s personally written manuscript which Hayagrīva (the editor) used as his source material. The manuscript is now available for download on the internet and its hard copy is stored in the Bhaktivedanta Archives, North Carolina. One passage, these are raw transcriptions, reads as follows:

“Dhritarastra became very much doubtful about the influence of the place. The influence of the place was however manifested in the person of Arjuna but there was no influence on the other

party. Dhritarastra knew it very well that it would influence the sons of Pandu because by nature they were all virtuous.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda’s hand-typed manuscript)

However, in the 1972 MacMillan edition the same passage reads:

“Dhṛtarāṣṭra became very fearful about the influence of the holy place on the outcome of the battle. He knew very well that this would influence Arjuna and the sons of Pāṇḍu favorably, because by nature they were all virtuous.”(Bg.1.1 1972, purp.)

There is a significant difference of meanings here. In the 1972 edition Dhṛtarāṣṭra fears that the place of pilgrimage could have influence on the outcome of the battle and would favour the Pāṇḍavas, who would thus win the battle. In the manuscript, however, Prabhupāda says that the place could have influenced the minds of the fighters on both sides. The place of pilgrimage could have influenced even Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s sons to admit their fault in dealing with the Pāṇḍavas and thus they could possibly even settle-up the conflict and not fight. That was the actual source of Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s anxiety. We understand the manuscript to be closer to what Śrīla Prabhupāda intended to say in the light of the following statements from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s recorded lectures. Please note:

“Now, both the parties were desiring to fight, and they assembled. Why he is asking question, *kim akurvata*: “What did they do”? Because he was little doubtful that “These boys, after being assembled in *dharma-kṣetra kuru-kṣe...*, they might have changed their ideas. They might have settled up.” Actually, the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra might have admitted, ‘Yes, Pāṇḍavas, you are actually the owner. What is the use of unnecessarily fighting?’ So he was very much anxious whether they had changed their decision. Therefore he is asking. Otherwise there was no question of asking, *kim akurvata*. He... Just like if you are given food, if I ask somebody that “Such and such gentleman was served with nice dishes. Then what did he do?’ This is foolish question. He would eat. That’s all.

(laughter) What is the question of ‘What did he do?’ Similarly, when it is already settled up that they were to fight, there was no such question as *kim akurvata*, ‘What did they do?’ But he asked this question because he was doubtful whether they had changed their opinion.”

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 1.1 -- London, July 7, 1973)

“The suspect was that because the parties assembled in the *dharma-kṣetra*, so they might have changed their ideas. Still, in India, if there is two fighting parties, they go to a temple and ask that “You say the right thing.” So in the temple, still, in the villages, they do not dare to speak lies. Yes. The fighting and the misunderstanding becomes settled up. So Dhṛtarāṣṭra was thinking whether the two parties, they have settled up. He did not like that.”

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.1 -- Ahmedabad, December 6, 1972)

“But another thing is the *dharma-kṣetra*, effect of *dharma-kṣetra* was visible in Arjuna. *Dharma-kṣetra*. He, because he’s devotee of Kṛṣṇa... *yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiṣcānā sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ* [SB 5.18.12]. Because he’s devotee of Kṛṣṇa, therefore he felt: “What is this? Why shall I kill these, my brothers?” Because he was devotee. This sentiment came into the mind of Arjuna, not on the other side, Duryodhana. He never thought. Although they were placed, both of them placed at *dharma-kṣetra*. The effect of *dharma-kṣetra* was manifest in the body of Arjuna, not Duryodhana. This is the... If one is pure, then the effects of *dharma* becomes manifest very quickly.”

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.1 -- Ahmedabad, December 6, 1972)

“So the effect of *Kurukṣetra*, *dharma-kṣetra*, was visible in the person of Arjuna, not in the person of Duryodhana. That is the difference.”

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.1 -- Ahmedabad, December 6, 1972)

Thus we see that these various statements from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s recorded classes confirm the version of the manuscript. The 1972 editing has no basis. Is it therefore considered authorized?

Next example:

“He also knew that those two generals had some sort of affection for the Pandavas and that may be now completely given up by them as they had had it done during the gambling performances.” (Bg.1.11 Prabhupāda’s hand-typed manuscript)

“Although he knew that the two generals had some sort of affection for the Pāṇḍavas, he hoped that all such affection would now be completely given up by them, as was customary during the gambling performances.” (Bg. 1.11, 1972 version)

The manuscript refers to the game where the Pāṇḍavas lost Draupadī, and Droṇa, along with Bhīṣma, gave up their affection towards them. By unnecessarily adding words “as was customary,” which do not appear in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s manuscript, the 1972 version states that giving up affection in gambling is a general principle, which is a completely manufactured meaning without any basis in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s original words:

“So they defeated, they were defeated in the chess play, and the wife was taken by the other party.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 1.36 -- London, July 26, 1973)

Next example:

“As Lord of all He is always on the superior position of becoming the Master of every one and yet the Lord accepts to be a friend a son a lover of the devotee who wants Him in such calibre.” (Bg.2.10. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s hand-typed manuscript)

“As Lord of all, He is always in the superior position as the master of everyone, and yet the Lord accepts one who wishes to be a friend, a son, a lover or a devotee, or who wants Him in such a role.” (1972 Bg 2.10 purp.)

While in the manuscript the devotee wants Kṛṣṇa to become his friend, son or a lover, in the 1972 edition the devotee in addition wants Kṛṣṇa to become his devotee. It is very difficult to understand what this means. Kṛṣṇa should become our devotee? Should we desire that Kṛṣṇa worships us? Of course, we know from Śrīla Prabhupāda that it is indeed a transcendental pleasure for Kṛṣṇa to become a servant of His pure devotee. On the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, Kṛṣṇa voluntarily agrees to become the chariot driver of his friend Arjuna, but to say that a devotee wants to have Kṛṣṇa as his devotee, or in other words his servant is certainly wrong, and it contradicts the whole Vaiṣṇava philosophy. A true devotee wants to serve Kṛṣṇa. Although Kṛṣṇa happily agrees to take an inferior position with His devotee, the devotee never desires Kṛṣṇa to become his devotee. Śrīla Prabhupāda says:

“You should not simply make God as your order-supplier, but you should be order-supplier. When I become order-supplier to God, that is my perfection. And so long I keep God as my order-supplier, that is not *bhakti*.” (Śrī Caitanya-*Caritāmṛta*, Madhya-līlā 20.137-142 -- New York, November 29, 1966)

**Prabhupāda:** So instead of becoming devotee, he wants to become God. And that is the problem. But it is the most confidential part of knowledge. Instead of carrying out the orders of God, he wants to order God. You see? Even in the lower stages of devotion, that mentality continues, that “God is order-supplier. If God carries my order, then I accept God. Otherwise I reject Him.” (Garden Conversation -- June 9, 1976, Los Angeles)

There are elevated stages of Kṛṣṇa consciousness where one indeed becomes a very intimate servant of the Lord in the mood of parenthood, and Kṛṣṇa then becomes subjected to such devotees and serves them obediently as their son. It is, however, warned that one should not imitate such associates. Imitating such devotees can result in impersonalism. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:  
“In the development of becoming either the father or friend of the Lord, there are two varieties. One method is that one may try to

become the father of the Lord directly, and the other is that one may follow Nanda Mahārāja and cherish the ideal of being Kṛṣṇa's father. Out of these two, the attempt to directly become the father of Kṛṣṇa is not recommended. Such a development can become polluted with *māyāvāda* (impersonal) philosophy. The *māyāvādīs* or monists think that they themselves are Kṛṣṇa, and if one thinks that he himself has become Nanda Mahārāja, then his parental love will become contaminated with the *māyāvāda* philosophy. The *māyāvāda* philosophical way of thinking is offensive, and no offender can enter into the kingdom of God to associate with Kṛṣṇa." (Nectar Of Devotion: Parenthood or Friendship)

Why was this portion edited in such a nonsense way? The manuscript is clear and siddhāntic. In the 1972 edition this portion is tinged with *māyāvāda* philosophy.

Another example can be found in the 2nd chapter:

"If somebody gives up his occupational duties and work in terms of Kṛṣṇa c consciousness and then again fall down on account of not being complete in such activities, still what is there loss on his part..." (2.40 manuscript)

"If someone gives up self-gratificatory pursuits and works in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and then falls down on account of not completing his work, what loss is there on his part? And, what can one gain if one performs his material activities perfectly?"  
(Bg 2.40 1972)

Here we see in the 1972 "occupational duties" from Śrīla Prabhupāda's hand-typed manuscript are turned into "self-gratificatory pursuits." That is quite a difference. What is "self-gratificatory" in the first place anyway? Isn't Kṛṣṇa consciousness giving the real satisfaction to the self? Śrīla Prabhupāda never uses such an expression. However, he does use the expression "sense gratificatory":

“The living being’s constitutional position being one of serving the superior, he is obliged to serve by force the dictates of illusory material energy in different phases of sense gratification. And by serving the senses he is never tired of or even though he may be tired, the illusory energy forces him to do so without being satisfied perpetually. There is no end of such sense gratificatory business and the conditioned soul becomes entangled in such servitude without any hope of release.”

(SB 1.10.11-12)

So “sense gratificatory” would make sense. Anyway, this same passage is already translated in the Delhi edition of the *Bhāgavatam* which was personally typed by Śrīla Prabhupāda himself. The version there corresponds to the Bg. manuscript:

“One who might have forshaken one’s material occupational engagements and be engaged in the devotional service of the Lord, may sometimes fall down in immature conditions and still he has no risk of being unsuccessful. On the other hand a nondevotee may be fully engaged in his occupational duties and yet does not gain anything.”

(SB Delhi edition 1.5.17)

Again we are left with doubt. Would this be authorized by Śrīla Prabhupāda? Why this unnecessary change?

The list goes on:

“The demons are not clean, either externally or internally. One should always be careful to keep his body clean by bathing, brushing teeth, changing clothes, etc. As far as internal cleanliness is concerned, one should always remember the holy names of God and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. The demons neither like nor follow all these rules for external and internal cleanliness.”  
(1972 Bg 16.7 purp.)

What does Śrīla Prabhupāda say in the tape transcript of the 16th chapter?

“The demons are not clean, either externally or internally. They do not take their bath properly, they do not clean their teeth properly, they do not shave properly, they do not change their clothes properly: these are some of the rules for external cleanliness. So far as internal cleanliness is concerned, one should be always remembering the Holy Name of God, chanting Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna...”

Why was the “demons not shaving properly” issue omitted? Someone liked to keep a big beard maybe?

And here, for example, Hayagrīva Prabhu inserts a portion of his own article from the early BTG into Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purport. Śrīla Prabhupāda types:

“The science of Anthropology is based on this philosophy. If Arjuna did not believe in the existence of the soul like the Baibhasikas...”  
(Bg. 2.26 purport manuscript)

In the 1972 we read:

“The science of anthropology is based on this philosophy. Currently, many pseudo-religions—now becoming fashionable in America—are also adhering to this philosophy, as well as to the nihilistic nondevotional Buddhist sects. Even if Arjuna did not believe in the existence of the soul—as in the Vaibhāṣika philosophy”  
(Bg 2.26 purp. 1972)

This is the piece from the original article by Hayagrīva, published in the BTG in 1969:

“Currently, many pseudo-religions, manufactured by drug-taking messiahs, have become fashionable in America, and they adhere to this philosophy. It is not surprising that they often find themselves

sharing much common ground with certain nihilistic non-devotional Buddhist sects (such as Zen) that also deny an Ultimate Controller. Of course, their assertions are directly opposed to Lord Krishna's instructions in the Gita:"

(BTG no.24, 1969; Krsna, the Chariot Driver)

So, what may happen is that you read the "original book" in good faith that you're hearing from Śrīla Prabhupāda while in fact you are giving your submissive aural reception to a conditioned soul smuggling his own creations into the text.

And now some of the "corrections" of Śrīla Prabhupāda's cosmology by Hayagrīva Prabhu. Śrīla Prabhupāda types:

"Of this millenium the Sungod is known as Vivasvan the King of the (?) planet and the origin of all other planets within the universe."

Here Prabhupāda says that the sun planet is the origin of all other planets within the universe. Hayagrīva Prabhu nevertheless changes the section and the result is as follows:

"In this millennium, the sun-god is known as Vivasvān, the king of the sun, which is the origin of all planets within the solar system."  
(Bg 4.1 purp. 1972)

The "universe" turns into a "solar system." Why?

"It appears from this verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that the sun is the source of light for all the planets in the universe. The modern scientific theory which states that there are many suns in each universe is not supported by this verse. It is understood that in each universe there is only one sun, which supplies light to all the planets. In *Bhāgavad-gītā* the moon is also stated to be one of the stars. There are many stars, and when we see them glittering at night we can understand that they are reflectors of light; just as moonlight is a reflection of sunlight, other planets also reflect sunlight, and there are many other planets which cannot be seen by our naked eyes." (SB 3.15.2)

“So the sun planet is the king of all planets and the sun god (at present of the name Vivasvan ruling over the sunplanet and controlling over all other planets by supplying heat and light is rotating under the order of Kṛṣṇa...”

Here Prabhupāda says that it is Vivasvān, the sun-god, who controls the other planets by supplying heat and light. Hayagrīva Prabhu edits differently:

“The sun is the king of the planets, and the sun-god (at present of the name Vivasvān) rules the sun planet, which is controlling all other planets by supplying heat and light.” (Bg 4.1 purp. 1972)

After his editing, the sun planet and not the person of Vivasvān controls all the other planets. But we know that controlship belongs to a conscious person, not an object. Just like Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person is the Supreme Controller, similarly, His part and parcel and servant Vivasvān is the controller of all the planets.

“The supreme controller is Kṛṣṇa. *Īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ*. But the impersonalists will say, ‘The Supreme Controller is not a person.’ He’s a person. But Brahmā says, ‘No, He’s a person.’ *Īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*. *Vigraha* means person.”  
(The Nectar of Devotion -- October 17, 1972, Vṛndāvana)

“The demigods are different administrators appointed on behalf of the Supreme Lord. Just like the sun-god, he is also called god because he is godly. So he is supplying us heat and light. Similarly, there is Indra. He is supplying us water. Candra is supplying us moonlight. Varuna is supplying us air. There are different controllers. Don’t think that there is no controller. There is controller. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said, *mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sac-carācaram*: [Bg. 9.10] ‘All these natural rules and regulations, they are being conducted under My superintendence.’ It is foolishness to understand that there is no director or no supreme controller or superintendent in these affairs. This is scanty explanation, that ‘Nature is doing.’ No. Nature cannot do. Nature is dull. Nothing

can move without spiritual touch. Matter is dull. A stone, however great it may be, without touch of a spiritual individual soul, the stone cannot move. So similarly, the whole gigantic material cosmic manifestation is being moved by the spiritual touch, and there are different departments, and they are called *vidhi-karāḥ*. *Vidhi* means regulative, and *karāḥ* means the performers. So he says, *sarve hy amī vidhi-karās tava sattva-dhāmno brahmādayo*. And he specifically mentions now, *brahmādayo*, headed by Lord Brahmā.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.13 -- August 21, 1968, Montreal)

And to conclude, quite a serious one:

“From this verse we can understand that the sun is illuminating the whole universe. There are different universes and there are different suns, moons also, but in each and particular universe there is one sun, that is clear here. The moon is considered one of the stars. *Naksatranam Aham sasi*. It is stated in *The Bhagavad Gita* that the moon is one of the stars. But the sun, there is only one sun in each universe, so the sunlight is due to the spiritual effulgence in the spiritual sky of the Supreme Lord.” (Bg 15.12 purp. Prabhupāda’s dictation transcribed)

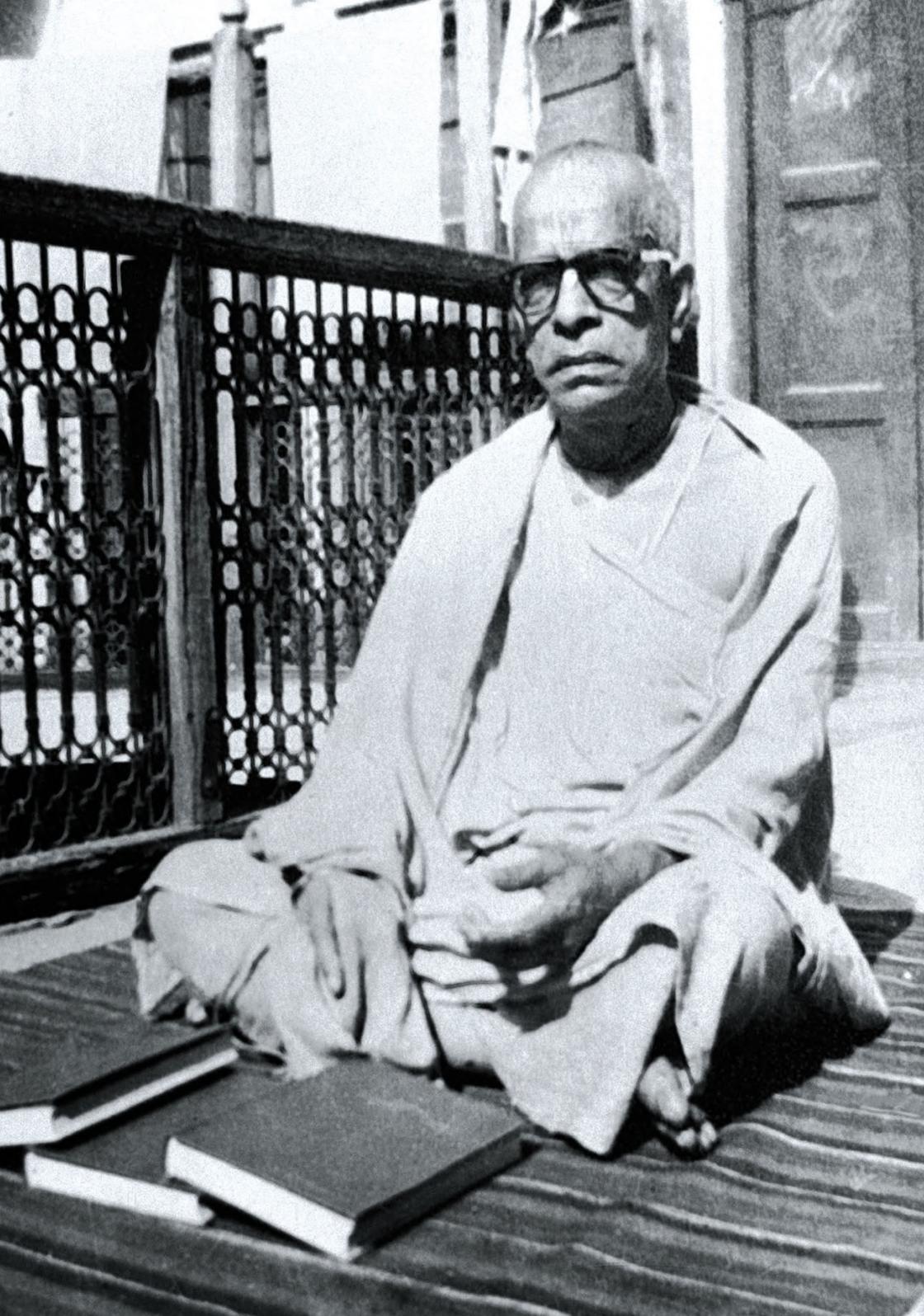
“From this verse we can understand that the sun is illuminating the whole solar system. There are different universes and solar systems, and there are different suns, moons and planets also. Sunlight is due to the spiritual effulgence in the spiritual sky of the Supreme Lord.” (Bg 15.12 purp. 1972)

Here again the “universe” is changed into “solar system,” a whole portion stating that the Moon is considered to be one of the stars and that there is only one sun in each universe is completely omitted by Hayagrīva. Moon being a star? Maybe it was an uncomfortable statement in the light of modern astronomy. “The masses will not accept...” That was apparently his concern while editing the words of his spiritual master, as is evident from the abovementioned diary of Hari Śauri Prabhu.

Prabhupāda: But just like Kṛṣṇa says, “They are just like moon.” Just see. *Nakṣatrāṇām ahaṁ śaśi*. So *śaśi* means the moon. Moon is like one of the stars. So if you say the stars are *sūrya*, then there is contradiction. How the moon and the sun can be equal? But actually, that is not. According to our Vedic astronomy, there is one sun only in one universe, although there are millions of universes. We cannot count. So there are millions of suns. That is another thing. But within the universe there is only one sun, and by the brilliance of sunshine, all these stars and moons are glittering. Just like moon shining, being reflected by the sun, similarly, all the stars they are glittering, being reflected by the sun, not that all of them are different suns. This theory is refuted.” (Morning Walk -- April 3, 1974, Bombay)

“According to Western theory, all the stars are different suns, but according to Vedic information, there is only one sun within this universe. All the so-called stars are but different planets. Besides this universe, there are many millions of other universes, and each of them contains similar innumerable stars and planets.”  
(SB 4.29.42-44)

These are only a few examples hundreds of changes we have found in the 1972 edition of the *Bhagavad-gītā*.



# ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Many devotees believe the first ISKCON PRESS, or the first BBT editions, to be the original words of Śrīla Prabhupāda, with only zero to minimal editorial changes that do not change the meanings Śrīla Prabhupāda intended to convey to us. But by closer examination one can clearly see that this is not a fact. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself complained about these “original books” in an exchange very well known as the “Rascal Editors conversation” which took place on June 22nd, 1977 in Vṛndāvana, India. There Śrīla Prabhupāda detects the rascal change in his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.5:

**Prabhupāda:** That... Find this verse, *munayaḥ sādhu pṛṣṭo 'ham...* [SB 1.2.5].

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** There's no index. It's not a new *Bhāgavatam*. There's no index in this *Bhāgavatam*. *Munayaḥ sādhu...*? “The Effects of Kali-yuga” chapter? Is that the verse, about the effects of Kali-yuga? No. (background talking, looking for verse)

*munayaḥ sādhu pṛṣṭo 'ham bhavadbhir loka-maṅgalam  
yat kṛtaḥ kṛṣṇa-sampraśno yenātmā suprasīdati*

“*munayaḥ* -- OF the sages; *sādhu* -- this is relevant; *pṛṣṭaḥ* -- questioned; aham...”

**Prabhupāda:** No? What is that? *Sādhu*? What is that? *Munayaḥ*?

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** Says, “*sādhu* -- this is relevant.”

**Prabhupāda:** Relevant?

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** That's what it's translated as, “this is relevant.” May be a mistake.

**Devotee (1):** It's a mistake.

**Prabhupāda:** *Munayaḥ*?

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** “*Munayaḥ* -- OF the sages; *sādhu* -- this is relevant...”

**Prabhupāda:** The nonsense, they are... They are correcting my trans... Rascal. Who has done this? *Munayaḥ* is addressing all these *munis*.”

In his 1962 Delhi *Bhāgavatam* Śrīla Prabhupāda gives the synonyms as follows: “*Munayah*—OH the sages, *Sadhu*—this is just relevant, *Pristo*—questioned...”

When I was collecting the volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for our B.L.I.S.S. temple in Slovakia, by some good fortune I found the 1st Canto, 1st volume from 1970 printed by ISKCON PRESS, which means it is a printing that came out even prior to, let’s call it the “official” 1972 first printing by BBT. Wow! How much more original can you get, so far the books printed in the west are concerned? And guess what... in the synonyms it says “*munayaḥ* - OF the sages”.

The same goes for the 1972 edition, the first BBT printing, which some people call the “original.” It says there: “*munayaḥ* - OF the sages.” Tamāla Kṛṣṇa says - “it’s not a new *Bhāgavatam*,” so it is clear that they read from the “original” book. Still, the rascal change which infuriated Prabhupāda so much is there already. This should put a bug into our minds, and we should justly inquire: “What, then, is the original?”

While having *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* classes from the 1st Canto in our *āśram* in Slovakia, remembering the “of the sages” issue, I purposefully, from a certain point, started to compare what I heard from the Delhi edition with the 1970 ISKCON PRESS edition which I would read simultaneously in the class, just to see whether there are any other changes in the text. Of course, deeper study and comparison is required and we invite interested devotees to do this service, but these few examples will tell us something about the “originality” of the first western printings:

“When He was five years old He was initiated for learning and He showed Himself a naughty boy. And When He was a mere baby crawling on the yard, one day it so happened that a snake appeared before the baby and the Lord began to play with it.” (SB Introduction, Delhi edition)

“When He was a mere baby crawling in the yard, one day a snake appeared before Him, and the Lord began to play with it.” (SB Introduction 1970, 1972)

Here, besides the point that the whole sentence is left out apparently for no reason, one of the meanings of initiation is also covered from the reader. As Śrīla Prabhupāda many times mentions, initiation is not the end or the goal, but it is an admission to the study of *Vedānta*. It is not a ritual, but an entrance to the process of understanding transcendental knowledge:

**Prabhupāda:** All right, you... Let your... Beginning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness means first of all faith. *Ādau śrāddha*: “The beginning is faith.” What is that faith? Faith means firm conviction that “If I become transcendently engaged in the service of the Lord, then my life becomes successful.” This is called faith. And that conviction must be firm, not tottering faith. So when this faith is created, then actually the initiation begins.”

(Initiation of Bali-mardana Dāsa -- Montreal, July 29, 1968)

**Prabhupāda:** Initiation means beginning or spiritual activities. Initiation means just to begin.

**Guest:** What were your activities after that?

**Prabhupāda:** Don't you see what are our activities? Is it very secret? You can see what are our activities. We are discussing about Kṛṣṇa. We are talking about Kṛṣṇa. We are chanting about Kṛṣṇa. We are eating about Kṛṣṇa. We are typewriting about Kṛṣṇa. We are dictaphoning about Kṛṣṇa. Don't you see it? Then? Everything engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness -- that is our activity. The same thing will be there; nothing will be changed. Here we are staying in also big apartment and the down, they are also staying in the similar apartment. But this is called temple, and that is called factory. Why? Here the consciousness is different from the consciousness down. That's all. Nothing has to be changed. Simply the rubberstamp has to be changed. Somebody is signing, 'for, on behalf of such and such,' and the rubberstamp is changed. We have to change our rubberstamp on behalf of Kṛṣṇa. That's all.”

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.1.2-5 -- Montreal, October 23, 1968)

**Prabhupāda:** So initiation means the beginning. The very word initiation means if you are engaged in some work, just in the beginning, that is called initiation. Initiation is not the end. Initiation means you agree to enter into the world of enlightenment. And if you make progress, then more you make progress, more you become enlightened. Initiation means the beginning. This is the dictionary word meaning, initiation. What is that meaning, Hayagrīva? Is that...?

**Hayagrīva:** Yes. Beginning.

**Prabhupāda:** Beginning. If you begin, agree to execute Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that is called initiation.”

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.40-45 -- Los Angeles, December 13, 1968)

**Prabhupāda:** Formal initiation means to accept, officially, to abide by the orders of Kṛṣṇa and His representative. That is formal initiation. Officially accept, “Yes, sir, I shall accept. I shall do whatever you say.” This is initiation, official acceptance of the job. That’s all. Now, you formally accept, and if you do not do the duties, then where is the question of other function? There is no question. Initiation means this is the beginning of accepting the orders of Kṛṣṇa and His representative to carry out. This is the beginning. That is initiation. Just like if you enter in an office establishment, so you accept the terms of service. That is initiation. Then you go on serving, you become promoted, you get salary increase. You become recognized. You become officer. You become big officer, like that. That very word initiation suggests, “This is the beginning.” *Dikṣā, dikṣā. Di... Divya.* There are two words, *Divya-jñāna. Divya-jñāna* means transcendental, spiritual knowledge. So *divya* is *dī*, and *jñānam, kṣāpayati*, explaining, that is *kṣā, dī-kṣā*. This is called *dikṣā, dikṣā*, the combination. So *dikṣā* means the initiation to begin transcendental activities. That is called initiation. Therefore we take promise from the disciple that “You chant so many times,” “Yes, sir.” “You observe these rules and regulations,” “Yes, sir.” That is initiation. He has to observe; he has to chant. Then everything comes automatically. In the beginning he is faulty; then how he can make progress? There is no question of in..., what is called? What you were asking?

**Madhudviṣa:** Inspiration.

**Prabhupāda:** Inspiration. What is that inspiration? If you have got inspiration, first of all execute this. Inspiration there is. Because we are, by nature, we are servant of Kṛṣṇa, we want to serve. But that should be regulated. That should be regulated. That is initiation. Yes?" (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.15 -- Auckland, February 22, 1973)

By transcendental activities, a.k.a. devotional service, the transcendental knowledge is revealed within the heart of a devotee:

"By the process of applying devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead Shri Krishna, the immediate result is that causeless knowledge and detachment follow." (SB Delhi 1.2.7)

Next example:

"That should be the standard of recitation of Bhagwatam so that the real purpose can be served and Lord Sri Krishna can be realised without any difficulty." (1.4.1 purp. Delhi edition)

"That should be the standard of recitation of *Bhāgavatam*, so that the real purpose can be served without difficulty." (1.4.1 purp. 1970, 1972)

The notion that the real purpose of *Bhāgavatam* is to realize the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is left out in the first western edition(s). *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the ripe fruit of Vedic literature, the natural commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, which summarizes the four *Vedas*; and as Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the purpose of the *Vedas* is to know Him. Omitting this portion leaves the "purpose" vague. Prabhupāda is always very clear, why should that clarity be clouded by such unnecessary omission?

"The brāhmaṇa's business is to speak about the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Just like Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is speaking about Himself... Because the purpose of *Vedas* is to understand Kṛṣṇa. *Vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah* [Bg. 15.15].

That is the purpose of *Veda*. If you become a very great scholar in *Vedas*, but you do not know what is Kṛṣṇa, it is useless. Because *Vedas* means... *Veda* means knowledge. And *Vedānta* means the ultimate end of knowledge.”

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.27 -- Vṛndāvana, November 7, 1972)

“The prayers of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, however, aim for the *āśraya-tattva*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The great souls expert in describing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* have very diligently delineated the other nine categories, sometimes by direct narrations and sometimes by indirect narrations such as stories. The real purpose of doing this is to know perfectly the Absolute Transcendence, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, for the entire creation, both material and spiritual, rests on the body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

(CC *Ādi* 2.91-92)

“So the purpose of education means to know God, to know Kṛṣṇa. That is the ultimate purpose. But they do not know. These rascals, they do not know. *Na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇum* [SB 7.5.31]. They do not know the ultimate goal of life is Viṣṇu. They are trying to be learned scholar simply by material acquisition. Therefore it is called *durāśrayā*. What is the purpose of education? Purpose of education to know the supreme cause, *sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam* [Bs. 5.1], and become happy.”

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.45 -- Los Angeles, May 7, 1973)

Next:

“The remedial measure to cure a patient by medical treatment is useless if it is not sanctioned by the Lord. To cross the river or the ocean by suitable boat is no remedial measure if it is not sanctioned by the Lord. The parents cannot protect their children if it is not sanctioned by the Lord. We should know it certainly that the Lord is the ultimate sanctioning officer and we must therefore dedicate our attempts to the mercy of the Lord for ultimate success or to get rid of the obstacles on the path of success.”

(SB 1.5.32 Delhi edition)

“The remedial measure to cure a patient by medical treatment is useless if it is not sanctioned by the Lord. To cross the river or the ocean by a suitable boat is no remedial measure if it is not sanctioned by the Lord. We should know for certain that the Lord is the ultimate sanctioning officer...”

(SB 1.5.32 1970 ISKCON PRESS edition & 1972 – 1st BBT edition)

Where did the whole sentence about parents unable to protect their children if not sanctioned by the Lord go?

And, faithfully helping to cover up the moon-landing hoaxers:

“Common men on the earth are very much fond of reaching the the heavenly planets because they have heard it that comforts of life are far greater there than on the earth, they are now trying to reach Moon planet by sputniks although it will never reach there.”

(SB 1.10.27 purp. Delhi)

“Common men on the earth are very much fond of reaching the heavenly planets because they have heard that comforts of life are far greater there than on the earth. They are now trying to reach the moon by spacecraft.” (SB 1.10.27 purp. 1972)

Prabhupāda says, prophesizes, that they will never reach the Moon by sputniks, the spacecraft. Hayagrīva hides that.

The following is a hint of the standard that Śrīla Prabhupāda expects from his editors when they work with his books:

“Regarding Srimad-Bhagavatam, please send me the chapters which you have already revised. I want to see it, how it is being done. I am glad that you are not omitting anything, but just making grammatical correction, and phrasing for force and clarity, and adding Pradyumna’s transliteration, that is very nice.”

(Letter to: Hayagrīva - Los Angeles 18 November, 1968)

Yet we see omissions in the version edited by Hayagrīva Prabhu, and that goes against this instruction of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Now, what is the original? Is it that which Śrīla Prabhupāda typed himself or that which the editors have created (and about which Prabhupāda complained so vehemently)? In the “Rascal Editors” conversation Śrīla Prabhupāda picked up a single letter changed - “OH the sages” changed to “OF the sages” ... he got angry. “Rascals!” he said. In the purports and *ślokas* shown above the whole sentences are missing... This is just a small sample. It doesn’t stop here.



## BEYOND BIRTH AND DEATH

Śrīla Prabhupāda would always be ready to utilize whatever was there at his disposal to prompt his movement and was also liberal and left his editors to manoeuvre with the text. Actually he left them a lot of space and liberty, and that can be very nicely seen in the book entitled “*Beyond Birth and Death*,” when one takes the pleasure (or trouble; depends on where you’re at) to do a little research and compare the book’s text with the original class given by Śrīla Prabhupāda (Bg 8.21-22 -- New York, November 19, 1966). The order of what Prabhupāda said is heavily shuffled in such a way that the words by which Śrīla Prabhupāda begins the class are to be found at the very end of the book. Furthermore, the concluding sentence about Kṛṣṇa’s “worlds beyond birth and death” is simply Hayagrīva’s own lyric creation. Śrīla Prabhupāda simply didn’t say anything like that in the mentioned class at any time.

“Here Kṛṣṇa says that the purpose of all Vedic instructions is to achieve the ultimate goal of life -- to go back to Godhead. All scriptures from all countries aim at this goal. This has also been the message of all religious reformers or *ācāryas*. In the West, for example, Lord Jesus Christ spread this same message. Similarly, Lord Buddha and Muhammad. No one advises us to make our permanent settlement here in this material world. There may be small differences according to country, time, and circumstance, and according to scriptural injunction, but the main principle that we are not meant for this material world but for the spiritual world is accepted by all genuine transcendentalists. All indications for the satisfaction of our soul’s innermost desires point to those worlds of Kṛṣṇa beyond birth and death.”

(Beyond Birth & Death 5: Associating with Kṛṣṇa)

Still, we need to ascertain the line between editorial manoeuvres and changes that bring about alteration of meanings. This shuffling of the order of what was said wouldn’t be THE crime on its own. There are more serious changes. Just to show one to the revered readers; Śrīla Prabhupāda says in the class:

“One who is spiritually realized, his symptom will be full satisfaction. He’ll no longer be hankering after this nonsense material enjoyment. That is spiritual realization. *Param̄ dṛṣtvā nivartate. Rasa-varjam̄ raso ’py asya* [Bg. 9.59]. *Raso ’py asya*.

Now, just like... It is very clearly stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Just like a diseased man, he’s forbidden by the doctor, “Oh, you don’t eat. You don’t have sex life. You don’t, don’t...” So many don’t’s. But he is forced to accept that don’t, but inner side he feels, “Oh, if I get, I’ll be happy.” Inner side is want. But a spiritualist, inner side is strong. He’s not impotent, but he’ll don’t like sex intercourse. Doesn’t like. He hates. That is spiritual life. Inner side is strong enough. He can marry thrice, but he has got a detachment. That is spiritual life. *Param̄ dṛṣtvā nivartate*. Just like if you get something superior, naturally, you give up all inferior things.

So we want enjoyment, but this atheism or this voidness, this impersonalism, they have created such an atmosphere that we are simply speculating, but we are addicted to these material enjoyments. That is not the process. Here it is said, *purusah̄ sa paraḥ̄ pārtha bhaktyā labhyas tv ananyayā*. If you accept this principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the devotional path, and if you worship that Supreme Personality of Godhead, then you can have the spiritual realization and you prepare yourself and you become detached from this material enjoyment. Your life becomes sublime. Oh. That is the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 8.21-22 -- New York, November 19, 1966)

In the *Beyond Birth and Death* you will find:

## 5. Associating with Kṛṣṇa

If one gets something superior, he naturally gives up all inferior things. We want enjoyment, but impersonalism and voidism have created such an atmosphere that we have become addicted to material enjoyment. There must be enjoyment in connection with the Supreme Person (*purusah̄ sa paraḥ̄*), whom we can see face to face. In the spiritual sky we are able to speak personally with God, play with Him, eat with Him, etc. All of this can be attained by

*bhaktiyā* -- transcendental loving service. However, this service must be without adulteration, that is to say, we must love God without expecting material remuneration. Loving God to become one with Him is also a form of adulteration.

( BBD 5: Associating with Kṛṣṇa)

A similar stunt was performed by Hayagrīva Prabhu in case of Bg. 5.21. Śrīla Prabhupāda types in his manuscript:

“The whole world is moving under the spell of sex pleasure. A materialist cannot work at all without the facility of sex pleasure. But a person engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can work with greater vigour without any sex pleasure which hated by such self realised man.”

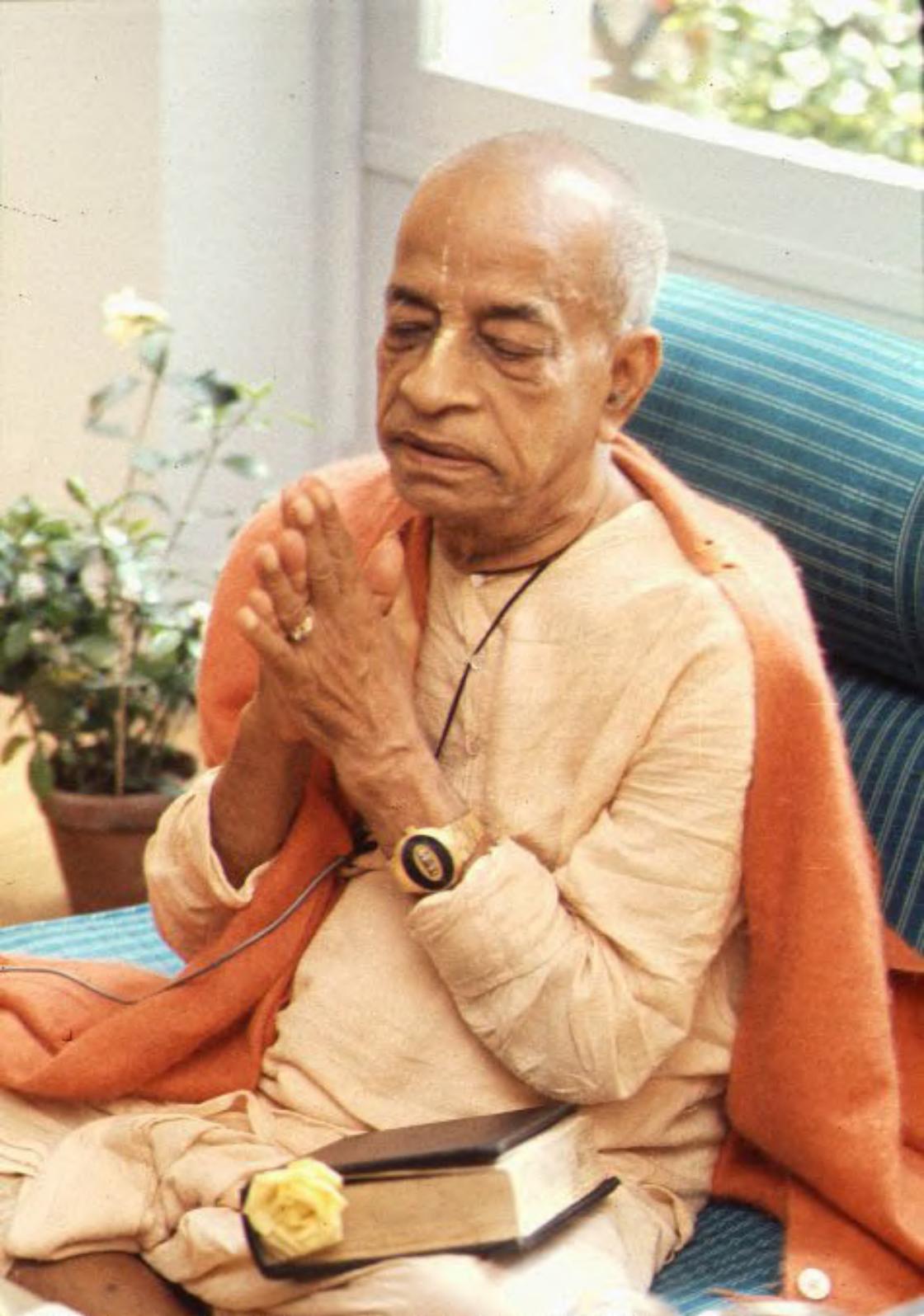
Hayagrīva Prabhu renders:

“The highest pleasure in terms of matter is sex pleasure. The whole world is moving under its spell, and a materialist cannot work at all without this motivation. But a person engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can work with greater vigor without sex pleasure, which he avoids.”

(Bg 5.21 1972 edition)

Śrīla Prabhupāda in his purport to Bg 5.21 says, just like in the above-mentioned Bg class which served as the basis for *Beyond Birth and Death*, that a self realized personality hates sex life. In both cases Hayagrīva dealt with this apparently uncomfortable statement by either compromising the language—like in the Bg 5.21 or by deleting a whole passage—like in *Beyond Birth and Death*. If this was a mistake by Hayagrīva, he would not repeat the same mistake twice. Apparently he made up a whole system of how to correct Śrīla Prabhupāda and his statements.

Now it's up to everyone to decide whom he wants to hear from: Hayagrīva or Śrīla Prabhupāda?



## EASY JOURNEY TO OTHER PLANETS

Let us now take a look at the *Easy Journey to Other Planets*. In the version printed by Śrīla Prabhupāda in India there is the following description of one of the five essential items preparing one for the journey back home, back to Godhead (we show the three relevant for our case):

“3. One should hear the transcendental topics enunciated in the Bhagwat. This hearing is made possible through platform lectures as well as through press propaganda. And this item includes the other two items as above mentioned.” (EJtOP Delhi edition)

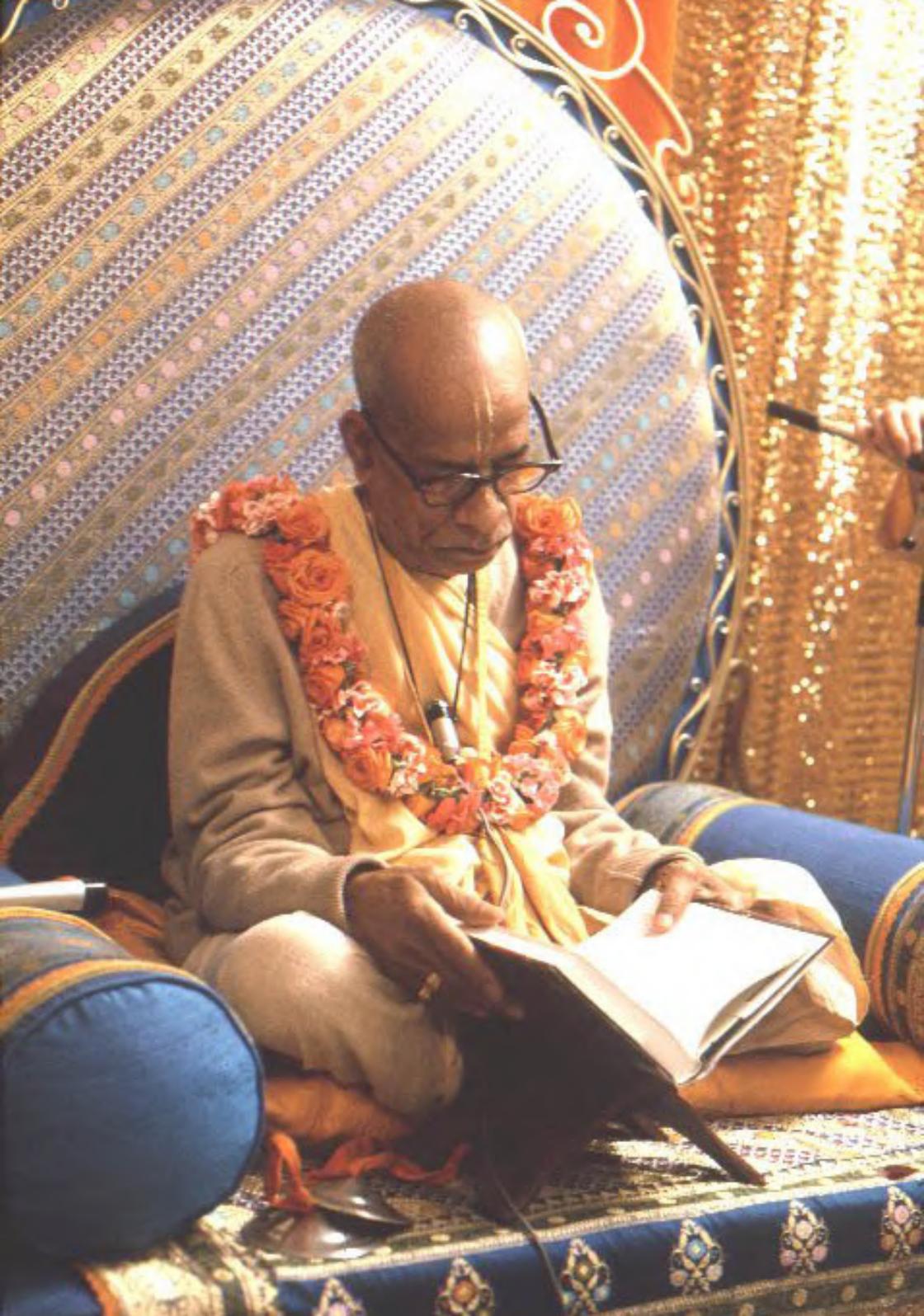
The “above mentioned” items are associating with devotees and chanting of the holy name of the Lord. However, in the 1972 first printing, the “original,” it says:

“3. One should hear the transcendental topics enunciated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This hearing is made possible through platform lectures by bona fide devotees and by authorized translations of the *Bhāgavatam*. (EJtOP 1: Antimaterial Worlds, 1972)

Isn't the information about the inclusion of associating with devotees within the hearing process essential for understanding the transcendental nature of the relationship—based on hearing—between the spiritual master and the disciple? That by hearing, through the medium of transcendental sound, one can directly associate with pure devotee of the Lord? Yet it is omitted in the 1972 version and also in the later ones. Śrīla Prabhupāda complained:

“Now do the needful. Otherwise everything will be spoiled. These rascal editorial... That *Easy Journey*, original, this (indistinct) Hayagrīva has changed so many things.” (Conversation, “Rascal Editors,” and Morning Talk -- June 22, 1977, Vṛndāvana)

These were just a few samples of changes in the “original books.” Although the idea that the first printings are the originals has been relentlessly pushed forward by vigorous propaganda, from these few examples we can understand that, unfortunately, the first printings are just not what many devotees would wish them to be—pure and unadulterated vibrations coming from Śrīla Prabhupāda.



# THE ORIGINAL

Śrīla Prabhupāda would sometimes refer to the Oxford Dictionary as an authority on English words:

“*Śrī bhagavān uvāca. Bhagavān* means the Supreme Being. That is also dictionary word. In the... I consulted the Oxford Dictionary, “God.” God means “the Supreme Being.” And the Supreme means... That is also stated in the dictionary, “the greatest authority.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.1 -- Uppsala University, September 8, 1973, Stockholm)

Prabhupāda: Yes, every..., everyone is representation of God. Sun is more powerful representation. You are also representation of God. God is also a living being. That is said in the dictionary, Oxford Dictionary. God means, “supreme being.” So we are all beings, and God is the Supreme Being. We are limited by our power; God is unlimited by His power.” (Room Conversation with Mr. Tran-Van-Kha -- June 15, 1974, Paris)

*Nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām.* He is singular number living entity, and we are plural number living entity. Therefore in the dictionary you’ll find, this Oxford Dictionary, “the Supreme Being.” God means “the Supreme Being.” He’s a being. He’s not a stone. He’s a living being.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.23 -- October 3, 1974, Māyāpur)

So, let’s consult with the authority...

The Oxford Dictionary defines the word “original” in this way:

NOUN:

1: The earliest form of something, from which copies may be made.

## ADJECTIVE:

- 1: Present or existing from the beginning; first or earliest.
- 2: Created personally by a particular artist, writer, musician, etc.; not a copy.
- 3: Not dependent on other people's ideas; inventive or novel.

Strictly speaking, "original," in accordance with the definition from the Oxford Dictionary, should refer to that which comes from the lotus lips of Śrīla Prabhupāda directly or which is written by him personally; his recorded speech (classes, conversations, *Kṛṣṇa Book* dictations..., other dictations), the Delhi *Bhāgavatam*, first six chapters of the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* (manuscript hand-typed personally by Prabhupāda), the pre-1965 *Back To Godhead* magazine (containing for example the first 12 ślokas of Śrī Īśopaniṣad, essays which constitute *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, *Easy Journey* printed in India, translations and purports to the ślokas of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* or the first chapters of *Śrī Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*). These are the originals, coming directly from Śrīla Prabhupāda.



## IS THE MANUSCRIPT AN AUTHORITY?

Śrīla Prabhupāda had a transcendental anxiety over his movement and indeed, he was ready to publish the *Bhagavad-gītā* immediately, as soon as 1966. In fact, he had the whole translation and purports ready before he left India for America, but it got stolen...

“After he passed away, I started the fortnightly magazine *Back to Godhead* sometime in 1944 and tried to spread the cult of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu through this magazine. After I took *sannyāsa*, a well-wishing friend suggested that I write books instead of magazines. Magazines, he said, might be thrown away, but books remain perpetually. Then I attempted to write *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Before that, when I was a householder, I had written on *Śrīmad-Bhagavad-gītā* and had completed about eleven hundred pages, but somehow or other the manuscript was stolen. In any case, when I had published *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, First Canto, in three volumes in India, I thought of going to the U.S.A. By the mercy of His Divine Grace, I was able to come to New York on September 17, 1965. Since then, I have translated many books, including *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* (a summary) and many others.”

(*Śrī Caitanya-Caritāmṛta Antya-līlā* Concluding Words)

Nevertheless, Śrīla Prabhupāda was ready to print the *Gītā* immediately upon his arrival to the U.S:

“Thank you very much for your enquiry about the printing of my books. I beg to inform you that the printing work is now suspended on account of my being absent from India. The books manuscript are ready for printing. I was printing them with great difficulty by collecting small amount of money and due to my absence they are not being printed. If your good self or somebody else come forward to cooperate in this connection the printing work can immediately be revived. In the meantime I have also prepared a commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* purely on Bhakti principle and when published it will be an unique publication of *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is.”

(Letter to: Sumati Morarjee - New York 26 November, 1966)

“Also please send him all the copies of Back to Godhead and other literatures so far published. He is very anxious to get my commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*. So let me know if there is any possibility of publishing this book from U.S.A. otherwise I shall immediately arrange for its printing in India. The translation and commentary is already finished.”

(Letter to: Brahmānanda - San Francisco 25 January, 1967)

Some devotees say that the hand-typed manuscript is just a “draft.” As if Prabhupāda doesn’t know what he’s doing, saying, thinking or writing, he needs to write something first, then go through it again (or have someone else to do it) and clear out possible nonsense which by some chance appeared there (why? Because of imperfect senses? Illusioned mind? The propensity to cheat?)... No. Whatever Śrīla Prabhupāda writes is an authority.

A pure devotee doesn’t need to draft when he comments on the *Vedas*. He is above all illusion, imperfection of the senses, mistake making and cheating propensities. Śrīla Prabhupāda doesn’t need Hayagrīva or anyone else to perfect his work or what to speak of subtracting and omitting portions of his speeches or writings.

“So under the instruction of Nārada Muni, Vyāsadeva first of all made his life perfect. Yes. How he made his life perfect? Because if you write books without any perfection, that will not be effective. One has to become perfect before he writes some books. Just like nowadays especially in the western countries they write any rascal ideas under the name of philosophy or science, “Perhaps,” “It may be.” That is not the system in the Vedic civilization. Vedic civilization, people, those who are advanced in Vedic knowledge, they’ll write. Vedic knowledge is called *śruti*, and if you write following the principles of *śruti*, then it is *smṛti*.

*śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi-pañcarātra-vidhiṃ vinā  
aikāntikī harer bhaktir utpātāyaiva kalpate*

[Brs. 1.2.101]

That is the advice, instruction, given by Rūpa Gosvāmī. “Without reference to the *śruti*, without reference to the *smṛti*, *Purāṇa* and *pañcarātriki-vidhi*, if you pose yourself as a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa, that is simply disturbance.”

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.6 -- Vṛndāvana, April 18, 1975)

“Suppose you write one book, or anything. If it is just according to the Vedic conclusion, then it is also... It is called *smṛti*. By remembering the Vedic conclusion... You cannot go beyond the Vedic conclusion. Then it is useless writing. Vedic conclusion must be there. The guide must be there. On that conclusion, if you write something, that is right, and if you deviate from that conclusion, then it is wrong. So we want to read authorized, right books. Not by imagination. You can write so many nonsense things by imagination. That is useless. You must remember what is the Vedic conclusion. So *śruti-smṛti-pañcarātra-vidhim...*”

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.24 -- Los Angeles, June 22, 1972)

“Transcendental literature that strictly follows the Vedic principles and the conclusion of the *Purāṇas* and *pañcarātrika-vidhi* can be written only by a pure devotee.

It is not possible for a common man to write books on *bhakti*, for his writings will not be effective. He may be a very great scholar and expert in presenting literature in flowery language, but this is not at all helpful in understanding transcendental literature. Even if transcendental literature is written in faulty language, it is acceptable if it is written by a devotee, whereas so-called transcendental literature written by a mundane scholar, even if it is a very highly polished literary presentation, cannot be accepted. The secret in a devotee’s writing is that when he writes about the pastimes of the Lord, the Lord helps him; he does not write himself. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.10), *dadāmi buddhi-yogam tam yena mām upayānti te*. Since a devotee writes in service to the Lord, the Lord from within gives him so much intelligence that he sits down near the Lord and goes on writing books.” (CC Ādi 8.39)

“One has to abide by superior dictation, therefore when one’s mind is fixed on the superior nature, he has no other alternative but to follow the dictation of the Supreme. The mind must have some superior dictation and follow it. The effect of controlling the mind is that one automatically follows the dictation of the Paramātmā or Supersoul. This transcendental position is at once achieved by one who is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thus the devotee of the Lord has no longer any concern for dualities of material existence, namely distress and happiness, cold and heat, etc. This state is practical *samādhi*, or absorption in the Supreme.” (Bg.6.7 purp.)

“The Personality of Godhead, being situated in everyone’s heart, specifically gives a devotee intelligence to describe Him. It is therefore understood that when a devotee writes or speaks about the Supreme Personality of Godhead, his words are dictated by the Lord from within. This is confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā*, Tenth Chapter: to those who constantly engage in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, the Lord, from within, dictates what to do next in order to serve Him.” ( SB 4.9.4 purp.)

The proposal that the material typed by Śrīla Prabhupāda personally is ultimately a non-authoritative or irrelevant draft, is outrageous. Prabhupāda doesn’t need to draft. Writing transcendental literature is not guess work, a trial/error enterprise. Then what about the early *Back to Godhead* magazine where he gives translations and purports to the verses of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Śrī Īśopaniṣad* and writes so many essays and articles? And what about the Delhi *Bhāgavatam*? That was written by Śrīla Prabhupāda personally and was not edited by anyone. Is it a draft? No, it is an authority and Śrīla Prabhupāda gets very angry when he hears about the change in the synonyms section (the “Rascal Editors” conversation). Śrīla Prabhupāda brought these three volumes of the 1st Canto that he printed in India to America and was distributing them personally before things started to move on. Later he got it edited, but for the purpose of “force and clarity” and not because it is a draft written by a conditioned author which has to be fixed by another conditioned soul serving as an editor.

Even Hayagrīva refers to the, as some people call it, “rough draft,”—the original hand-typed material of Śrīla Prabhupāda—as a “manuscript”? This is also our understanding of what Prabhupāda’s manuscripts are. Hayagrīva Prabhu speaks out himself:

“The next morning, when I go alone to see the Swami, he seems to be expecting me. Directly and simply, he begins to explain that he needs help in spreading Krishna consciousness around the world. Noticing that he has been typing, I offer to type for him, and he hands me the manuscript of the First Chapter, Second Canto, of Vyāsadeva’s *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

“You can type this?”

“Oh yes,” I say.

He is delighted. We roll a small typewriter table out of the corner, and I begin work. His manuscript is single spaced without margins on flimsy, yellowing Indian paper. It appears that the Swami tried to squeeze every word possible onto the pages. I have to use a ruler to keep from losing my place.

The first words read: “O the king.” I naturally wonder whether “O” is the king’s name, and “the king” stands in apposition. After concluding that “O King” is intended instead, I consult the Swami. “Yes,” he says. “Change it, then.”

As I retype another paragraph, I notice certain grammatical discrepancies, perhaps typical of Bengalis who learned English from British headmasters in the early 1900s. Considerable editing is required to get the text to conform with current American usage. After pointing out a few changes, I tell the Swami that if he so desired, I could make all the proper corrections.

“Very good,” he says, smiling. “Do it! Put it nicely.”

Thus my editorial services begin.”

(Hayagrīva dāsa: *The Hare Krishna Explosion* ch.2: *Transcendental Invitations*)

Prabhupāda is self-sufficient and he knows it. As is stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.5.11):

“On the other hand, that literature which is full with descriptions of the transcendental glories of the name, fame, form and pastimes of the unlimited Supreme Lord is a transcendental creation meant

to bring about a revolution in the impious life of a misdirected civilization. Such transcendental literatures, even though irregularly composed, are heard, sung and accepted by purified men who are thoroughly honest.”

The argument may be given that as part of his transcendental pastimes Śrīla Prabhupāda might have edited his manuscript himself while working with Hayagrīva. He would give suggestions on how to edit the text. Thus correcting the editing of Hayagrīva would mean correcting Śrīla Prabhupāda.

To that we say that even it MIGHT have been so, this is a platform of speculation only, and not a solid argument. Śrīla Prabhupāda made it clear that we should stick to that which is written and not to hearsays. What we have in writing is the manuscripts or other original materials. What we mean by the “original” is explained already. This is the authority to which we should adhere.

“My Dear Omkara dasi:

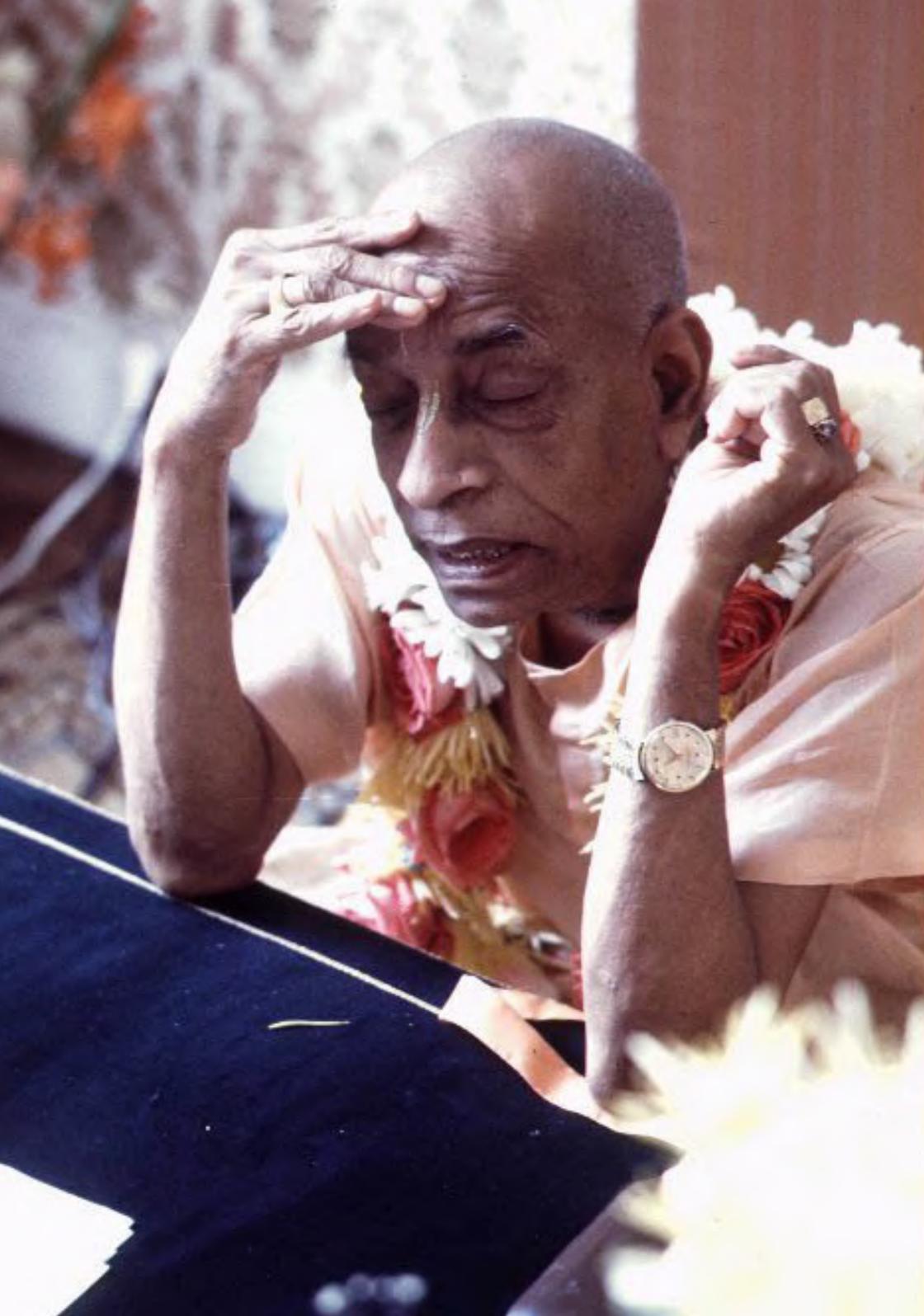
Please accept my blessings. I have seen your letter dated August 17, 1975 and have noted the contents. I never said there should be no more marriage. By all means legally you can get married. How can I object? They misunderstand me. Unless it is there from me in writing, there are so many things that “Prabhupāda said.”

(Letter to: Omkara — Vrindaban 2 September, 1975)

Even if the original hand-typed material by Śrīla Prabhupāda would be edited by himself, the manuscript remains an authority. The self realized soul never says anything that has no meaning, as confirmed in the *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*:

“They knew that since a perfectly advanced spiritualist never says anything false, all his words are reasonable and agree with the Vedic version. A highly realized person never says anything that has no meaning.” (CC *Ādi* 7.105)

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s editing of such a material in that case would be only a transcendental elaboration on an already siddhāntic manuscript.



## WHY DID ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA AUTHORIZE THE EARLY EDITORS?

Śrīla Prabhupāda had his reasons not to be overly on the editor's case, and to approve of the 1968 and 1972 versions of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the way they were presented by his early editors. He would even approve of Ginsberg's and Levertov's appreciations of the *Gītā* despite their being "all nonsense":

"Allen Ginsberg and Denise Levertov's appreciation, they are all nonsense, but in both the appreciations there is little substance -- that Allen Ginsberg has praised my activities and has chanted Hare Krishna. But the other one is still more rascaldom, but she has appreciated my students' behavior. That means indirectly she has appreciated our movement. If you think their names will actually increase the sale of the book, and MacMillan also thinks so, then never mind, you can add their appreciation. So far their study of *Bhagavad-gītā* is concerned, that is completely nil." (Letter to: Brahmānanda -- San Francisco 6 April, 1968)

Śrīla Prabhupāda simply wanted to print as soon as possible. The house is on fire, and if your neighbour is not from your country and doesn't speak your language properly, it doesn't really matter.

Someway or other you get the message through and work together on putting the fire out. A blind uncle is better than no uncle... In the state of emergency, the message of Lord Caitanya has to be distributed in any possible way. Śrīla Prabhupāda was aware of the frailties in the materials to be urgently printed, but he disregarded them for the time being, just to push the mission on. The conclusion of the philosophy will be understood by intelligent people. The form can be adjusted later on. For example, while preparing the printing of *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

"Too much editing is not required. If Satsvarūpa has already edited it, there is no need of further editing." (Letter to Rāyārāma, December 21, 1967, San Francisco)

"I also do not like too much editorial work. This too much editorial

work on Gitopanisad has created some misunderstanding between the editorial staffs. Anyway, in future, one man should edit it and be sufficient for our printing. And I do not want that Lord Caitanya's Teachings should be edited again and typed again and waste time in that way. I have also informed Rayarama of this, and you can also inform him like this." (Letter to Satsvarūpa - San Francisco 23 December, 1967)

In both of these letters he expresses disapproval of prolonged editing and urges devotees to print the book as soon as possible. However, in January Śrīla Prabhupāda reveals why he did so:

"I wanted Teachings of Lord Caitanya to be immediately printed, therefore I said that it may not be delayed by further editorial work, but if you think that it needs further editorial work, please do it through Satyavrata, and forthwith prepare the manuscript ready for printing." (Letter to: Rāyarāma - Los Angeles 11 January, 1968)

Here is another instance where Śrīla Prabhupāda urges the printing, even at the cost of printing with some mistakes:

**Hamsadūta:** And another thing I wanted to ask you about, Prabhupāda, is that Maṇḍalībhadrā, he wants to make your literature perfect, which is natural because we want to make the nicest presentation. But the devotees are saying that the translation... For instance, this *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, has been in the process so long, it has so many times been reworked, that it's no longer palatable to them. They don't even read it. They'd rather have the English version. So I know that Your Divine Grace has said you have full faith in his ability to do the work...

**Prabhupāda:** No, no. If you... you find out somebody else. He can also do.

**Hamsadūta:** Because my opinion is that he's becoming overworked, it's becoming strained, so much so that we're not even able to bring it to the printer because he insists on making every time more and more corrections.

**Prabhupāda:** (chuckles) It never comes to perfection.

**Haṁsadūta:** It never comes to perfection. It can, you know. For instance, this little booklet, *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, one of the things that has been holding it up is because the diacritic marks, to get the diacritic marks in there perfectly... We took it to a professional composer. Of course, they're not experienced, so they didn't, at first they didn't want to do it and then... At any rate, my opinion was first let us print it without the diacritic marks, and then the second edition make it with diacritic marks. Improve it by editions rather than wait until it's completely perfect before we put it on the market because...

**Prabhupāda:** But if once it is made perfect, then it will be easier to print more and more.

**Haṁsadūta:** That's true, but see, what has happened is the entire sum has been lost...

**Prabhupāda:** He could not finish any one?

**Haṁsadūta:** No, not even the magazine was finished. The magazine before this recent one, I put it together myself from old magazines.

**Prabhupāda:** There are so many German students. They cannot do?

**Haṁsadūta:** They can do, but the thing is that you have said that he is the chief and unless it goes through him, it can't be printed.

**Prabhupāda:** No. No, no. No, no. No, no.

**Haṁsadūta:** Everything is bottle-necked around him.

**Prabhupāda:** Now, the important subject, he may do slowly, but...

**Haṁsadūta:** Like *Bhagavad-gītā* or *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes. Others may be done by others. You print it. Even there is some mistake, that doesn't matter."

(Room Conversation -- August 21, 1971, London)

In case of *Śrī Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*, the epic book publishing marathon took place, where all the 17 volumes of cca 400 pages each were to be printed in 2 months. Prabhupāda insisted on that and even threatened that if devotees didn't catch up with his translations, he would stop translating altogether. To edit such a volume of manuscripts, typeset, proofread, lay out, shoot, and produce full colour paintings for one volume every 3 days seemed like an impossible task to the BBT managers. To that Prabhupāda replied the famous: "Impossible is a word in a fool's dictionary."

A transcendental frenzy took over devotees who were working day and night practically without eating and sleeping. In such a haste and pace it was natural for devotees to make blunders or mistakes, but Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't mind too much. For example, one day, Rāmeśvara came into Śrīla Prabhupāda's room carrying canvases by one of the artists whose proficiency the more experienced artists questioned. The artist in question, Gaurī-devī dāsī, was a book distributor with artistic talent, pressed into emergency service for the book production marathon. Rāmeśvara showed Śrīla Prabhupāda her painting of the Guṇḍicā temple. Prabhupāda's verdict: "Oh, this is very nice." One of the senior artists was present and pointed out several technical errors, but Prabhupāda replied, "A blind uncle is better than none." Another disciple, Jadurāṇi Devī Dāsī, remembers:

"Prabhupāda was telling us that whatever we knew of the artistic language, we should use it to express Krishna consciousness, because it was an emergency. Prabhupāda did not want to wait for us to become talented.

This amazed me because even though we were young devotees, we knew the powers of a pure devotee. We had read enough books and heard enough lectures to know the mystic and spiritual powers of a pure devotee. Prabhupāda was Krishna's associate. He could have asked a demigod or gotten some big, powerful person on the earth to paint for him. Yet he engaged people who had extremely little or no talent. On top of that, he wasn't interested in waiting for us to get talented before we started painting for his books. The 1969 Krishna Book was our first attempt at our own compositions, and they were extremely crude. Still he wanted it done at that time."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was similarly very eager to publish his *Bhagavad-gītā* as soon as possible, but the history is that the manuscript was at one point stolen by Hayagrīva, who left ISKCON with Kīrtanānanda and didn't want to return it. Then it was being passed from one person to another, and on top of that, the editors were taking too much time with the editorial work... all this delayed the actual printings for a considerable time.

“Now coming to the question of Gitopanisad, I am sorry that the book is not yet ready for printing although I have finished the book I want to get it immediately printed either there in U.S.A. or in India but the editing is not yet finished. Howard wants to do it but he has no time to finish it or to type it. You are also engaged in various ways and I do not know how to make it ready. Both you and Howard want to edit it but nobody takes charge to finish the job quickly say within a month. The matter is already there simply it awaits the finishing touch. I want to print also the Teachings of lord Caitanya. We must publish our books as much as possible because that will create our position. Back to Godhead should be the life and soul for the Society. Please let me know your program. Have you taken back the First Chapter of Gitopanisad from the publisher whom you delivered? I have asked you several times about this but I have received no reply from you. Please take it back.”  
(Letter to: Rāyarāma - San Francisco 16 March, 1967)

“Regarding Kirtanananda, I cannot allow him to become Keith again. He is my spiritual son and I shall never allow him to fall down. When I return I shall drag him forcibly and make all right again. Anyone who has once come to me has become my beloved son; temporarily one may display some Mayic affliction, but that can not prolong. I thank Lord Krishna for Satyavrata (Moskowitz) and Woompati and I hope sincerely that Kirtanananda will also come back again with renewed energy. I am glad that Hayagriva has returned the manuscript of Gita and I understand from Brahmananda’s letter that they are being made ready by professional typist. From Madhusudana’s letter it is understood that MacMillan has agreed for paper back printing. Anyway get it ready and print it immediately anywhere you like without delay.”  
(Letter to: Rāyarāma - Navadvipa 2 November, 1967)

“Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter dated. Oct. 28, 1967. It certainly is very good news that MacMillan Co. may now agree to publish Gita Upanisad in a soft cover edition and is considering the hard cover very seriously. In one other letter Brahmananda writes that there is not yet contract signed.

So I do not know what exactly is the position. But under any circumstances, the MSS must be made ready. I do not follow you when you write to say that Hayagriva won't deliver the MSS. If he does not return it then how are you going to publish it and how are you going to edit it. In two previous letters you write that he has already returned it. In letter of Oct. 21, you write "Hayagriva has left the manuscript of Gita with me and I am going to have it typed and sent to you, a few chapters at a time." In letter of Oct. 25 you write "I've been working on the manuscript which Hayagriva returned to me". In this letter you wrote to say that he is trying to obviously punish us by not returning same. The quarrel amongst yourselves, the Godbrothers is not very much palatable. I am now thinking about our society. We were very smoothly going on but this disruption created by Kirtanananda has plagued and disturbed the situation. The best thing is to do our duty nicely with faith in Krishna and everything will be adjusted."

(Letter to: Rāyarāma - Calcutta 9 November, 1967)

"The editing of Gita Upanisad is already much delayed. I think it was in this month of November last year my compilation of Gita Upanisad was finished. The editing work was first entrusted with Rayarama, but as he could not finish it the work was transferred to Hayagriva. In this way even within one year the editing work could not be finished. This is not very encouraging. Now it must be finished within three weeks and hand it over to MacMillan Co."

(Letter to: Brahmānanda - Calcutta 18 November, 1967)

Hayagrīva was obviously motivated as well:

"I think Hayagriva is anxious in having his name printed in the publication of Gitopanisad. I do not have any objections that his name may be mentioned as one of the editors helping in the editing of Gitopanisad, just to encourage him and keep him in our camp, in case that he may come back and accept our philosophy and resume his editing talent. He has committed a blunder, but just so that he may be encouraged to come back you may mention his name also along with Rayarama's."

(Letter to: Brahmānanda - San Francisco 29 December, 1967)

After all, Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't mind all the improper conduct and childish blackmails of his various disciples, just for the purpose of engaging the fallen conditioned souls in devotional service to the Lord. We should always remember that and never think that Prabhupāda needs anyone's help to achieve his goals. He simply tries to engage us in devotional service...

**Viṣṇujana:** Śrīla Prabhupāda, what did Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura mean when he said, "I am going, my work unfinished?"

**Prabhupāda:** Hmm?

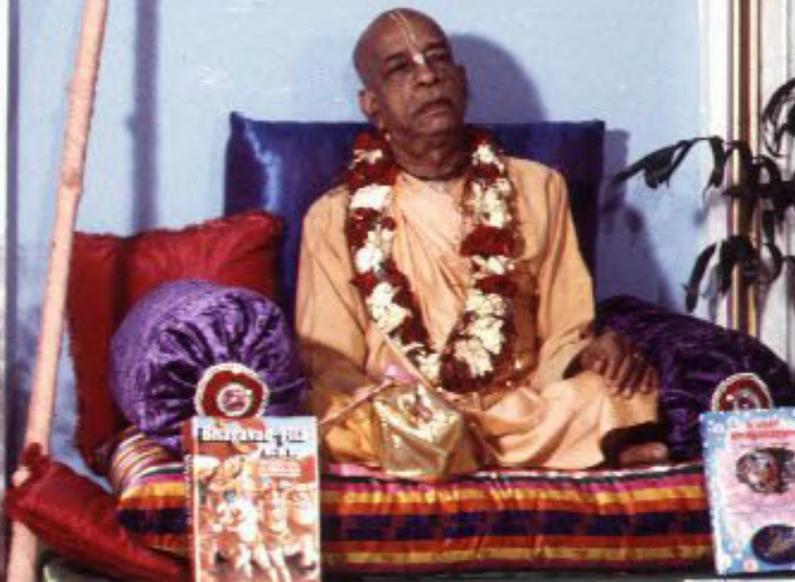
**Viṣṇujana:** When Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura stated that he was leaving this planet with his work unfinished.

**Prabhupāda:** Then let us finish. We are descendant of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. So he kept unfinished so that we shall get the chance to finish it. That is his mercy. He could have finished immediately. He is Vaiṣṇava, he is all-powerful. But he gave us chance that "You foolish people, you all also work." That is his mercy. So we should pray to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura that "We are your grandchildren, great-grandchildren, so we have got some right to beg some mercy from you. The grandchildren get some indulgence from the grandfather. So I pray like that." It is Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's mercy. A Vaiṣṇava can... Kṛṣṇa doesn't require anyone's help. Still, He is asking, "Surrender to Me." He doesn't require anyone's surrender. But it is for him good, one who surrenders. Not Kṛṣṇa is in need of anyone's service. He is complete. But He comes as if He is in helpless condition and asking for us to surrender. So that is for his good. One who is surrendered, he'll get the result. Kṛṣṇa is self-sufficient. Similarly, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is self-sufficient. But if he said that "I (am) keeping unfinished," that means he gave us the chance, the opportunity. So we should always pray to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to be merciful upon us so that we can execute his unfinished task. That should be our... And never we should think that "What Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura could not finish, I have finished." Don't think like that. It is not like that.

(Arrival Conversation -- Los Angeles, June 20, 1975)

Śrīla Prabhupāda in his *līlā* didn't speak or write grammatically perfect English. That's why he engaged the editors to shape up his books. However, that does not mean that Śrīla Prabhupāda depends

on anyone to present his ideas. He is self-sufficient and so are his books. There was an “unfinished task” of presenting Prabhupāda’s hand-typed manuscripts, dictations or recorded classes to a book form appreciable by the general English-speaking mass, so the early editors got engaged, and now there still remains an “unfinished task” to do the editing properly. It is an opportunity to render devotional service. Otherwise, Śrīla Prabhupāda and the sound emanating from him are perfect and complete.



## DID ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SUPERVISE ALL OF THE EDITING?

Many devotees maintain that Śrīla Prabhupāda's books should remain intact after his disappearance and that they shouldn't be edited any more. Śrīla Prabhupāda is not here to check whether it is properly done. Is that to imply that Śrīla Prabhupāda was personally supervising the production of all his books prior to his departure? Partially that might be so, but it was not a rule. Otherwise how come the gross mistakes or meaning alterations appeared in the books?

**Prabhupāda:** It is starting. What can I do? These cannot... These rascals cannot be educated. Dangerous. Little learning, dangerous. So how to correct? The leader of these dangerous – Rādhā-vallabha.

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** Rādhā-vallabha?

**Prabhupāda:** Hm. He's a dangerous, who maintains these rascal with this work. He'll always have questions and alteration. That is his business. That is American business. They take that always. What can I do? Ultimate, it goes for editorial. They make changes, such changes.

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** Your original work that you're doing now, that is edited by Jayādvaita. That's the first editing.

**Prabhupāda:** He is good.

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** He is good. But then, after they print the books, they're going over. So when they reprint...

**Prabhupāda:** So how to check this? How to stop this?

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** They should not make any changes without consulting Jayādvaita.

**Prabhupāda:** But they are doing without any authority.

**Svarūpa Dāmodara:** I think we should make whole survey, all books already printed, before printing the next batch and check any mistakes so that it should be all corrected. Otherwise, if the scholars find out that there are so many mistakes in the books, then the quality and the appreciation will be reduced.

**Giriraja(?):** (indistinct)

**Svarūpa Dāmodara:** Yes. We find so far that they are appreciating so much within the scholarly circle, and we want to maintain that actually.

**Prabhupāda:** Very serious feature. It is not possible for me to check, and they are doing all nonsense, freedom. (pause)

**Yaśodā-nandana:** Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda.

**Prabhupāda:** What to do?"

(Conversation, "Rascal Editors," and Morning Talk -- June 22, 1977, Vṛndāvana)

Śrīla Prabhupāda produced his books in a way that he would dictate his translations and purports, the tapes were sent to be transcribed, and those transcripts were then edited and prepared for printing. Prabhupāda expresses his transcendental frustration here, that his editors do things without any authority and change his words. What is interesting is that Svarūpa Dāmodara, like Tamāl Kṛṣṇa in another instance, proposes that ALL the already printed books should be subject to a survey, checked for mistakes and everything should be corrected. Śrīla Prabhupāda doesn't protest this idea at all, but practically confirms it by saying that he is not able to check this whole thing on his own.

Someone may argue that Prabhupāda might not have been able to supervise in 1977 but he would supervise the production of his books before, and thus the first editions are approved by him in this way. Well, let's not forget that the discussion and Śrīla Prabhupāda's disapproval in this conversation concern the first printings of *Bhāgavatam*, 1st Canto—whether it was the 1970 ISKCON PRESS or the 1972 BBT edition.

Some devotees claim that Hayagrīva Prabhu personally consulted the *Bhagavad-gītā* 1972 edition with Śrīla Prabhupāda. But then how did the "planet of trees" (Bg 10.29) (by the way, that is to be found in the 1968 edition as well), "sea journey" (Bg 10.27) (also in 1968 edition), "knower of the field identifying with the body" (Bg 13.1-3) (1968 as well) or "cattle raising" (18.44) (in 1968 also...

interesting) made their way into the text, for example? This is not very clear.

Another fact is, that since 1968, after the printing of the 1st version of the *Gītā*, on which he indeed worked with Hayagrīva and Rayarāma Prabhus, up to 1972 Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't spend any significant amount of time in San Francisco to work on the 1972 edition with Hayagrīva personally there as some propose. This idea is simply a myth. Here is the chronology of Śrīla Prabhupāda's stays in San Francisco from his first visit in January 1967 up until October 1972:

Jan 20th to April 9th 1967 - circa. 2,5 months  
June 25th to July 7th 1967 - circa. 2 weeks  
Dec 14th 1967 to Jan 6th 1968 - circa. 3 weeks  
Mar 8th to Apr 17th 1968 - circa. 1,5 months

Rāyarāma's Foreword to the 1968 *Bhagavad-gītā* edition is dated August 16th 1968. After that, Śrīla Prabhupāda visited San Francisco as follows:

Sep 8th to Sep 21st 1968 - 13 days  
Mar 31st to Apr 6th 1969 - 6 days  
Jul 25th to Jul 28th 1969 - 3 days  
Jul 4th to Jul 7th 1970 - 3 days  
Jun 27th to Jun 29th 1971 - 2 days  
Jun 29th to Jul 2nd 1972 - 4 days  
Oct 5th to Oct 8th 1972 - 3 days

Hayagrīva Prabhu may have worked on the 1968 *Bhagavad-gītā* with Śrīla Prabhupāda, but ultimately the 1968 edition was finished by Rayarāma Prabhu after Hayagrīva left the movement for the time being, as early as November 1967. After 1970, when the movement really took off (as is evident from Śrīla Prabhupāda's correspondence), there was no such a thing as Prabhupāda sitting down together with Hayagrīva to prepare the 1972 edition. Rather, Hayagrīva seemed to be all over the place, having difficulties with

following the basic *sādhana*. Prabhupāda’s letters from 1972 through 1973 confirm this. On top of that, Hayagrīva went to Vṛndāvana in 1972. He writes about this trip in his book “Vṛndāvana days.” So far the editing of the *Bhagavad-gītā* is concerned, Hayagrīva apparently went through the 1968 edition again and made the 1972 edition on his own. Otherwise, if Hayagrīva simply revived the portions which had to be abridged due to the printer’s unwillingness to print a 1000 pages volume in 1968, why do the *śloka*s and purports in the 1972 *Gītā* differ in many places from the 1968 edition? For example:

“Samjaya said: O King, after looking over the military phalanx arranged by the sons of Pandu, King Duryodhana went to his teacher and began to speak the following words:” (Bg 1.2 - 1968)

“Sañjaya said: O King, after looking over the army gathered by the sons of Pāṇḍu, King Duryodhana went to his teacher and began to speak the following words:” (Bg 1.2 - 1972)

“Now all of you may give full support to Grandfather Bhīṣma, standing at your respective strategic points in the phalanx of the army.” (Bg. 1.11 - 1968)

“Now all of you must give full support to Grandfather Bhīṣma, standing at your respective strategic points in the phalanx of the army.” (Bg 1.11 - 1972)

“Be steadfast in your duty, O Arjuna, and abandon all attachment to success or failure. Such evenness of mind is called Yoga.” (Bg. 2.48 - 1968)

“Be steadfast in yoga, O Arjuna. Perform your duty and abandon all attachment to success or failure. Such evenness of mind is called yoga.” (Bg. 2.48 - 1972)

One example for the purports:

Those in the modes of passion and ignorance deride the scriptures, deride the holy men, and deride the proper understanding OF THE SUPREME PERSONALITY OF GODHEAD. They disobey

the instructions of the spiritual master, and they do not care for the regulations of the scriptures. (Bg.16.24 – 1968 purp.)

Those in the modes of passion and ignorance deride the scriptures, deride the holy man, and deride the proper understanding OF THE SPIRITUAL MASTER, and they do not care for the regulations of the scriptures. (Bg 16.24 – 1972 purp.)

That which was prepared by Hayagrīva and Rayarāma under personal supervision of Śrīla Prabhupāda before the 1968 *Gītā* printing was redone by Hayagrīva outside of Prabhupāda’s direct supervision before the 1972 edition was printed.

Furthermore, the *Bhagavad-gītā* manuscript is authorized to be used for translations by Śrīla Prabhupāda:

“PS: When you come here, please also bring with you the original manuscripts for *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is. Mandali Bhadra will translate into German.”

(Letter to: Hayagrīva - Hamburg 27 August, 1969)

“My dear Hansadutta,

Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter dated May 30, 1975 and have noted the contents. I don’t think that Hayagriva is at fault. He has not changed the meaning or the philosophy in any way. But if you like to use the original manuscript, then if it is possible, you can use it.”

(Letter to: Hansadutta - Honolulu 8 June, 1975)

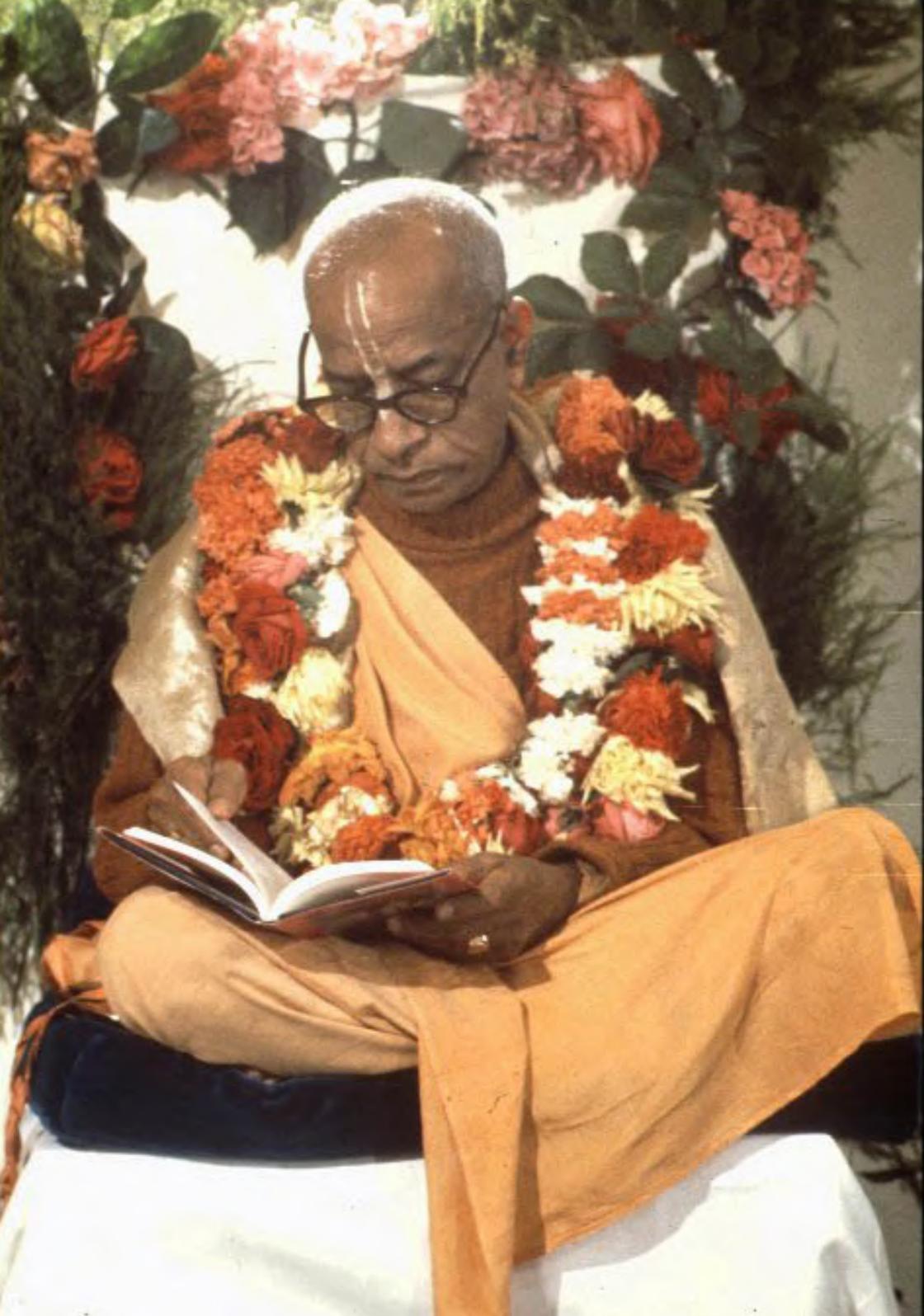
In the same way he instructs Rāmeśvara to supply the original manuscripts to the translators as needed:

“In general, if any translator of my books requires the original manuscripts for his work, he should be supplied them by you.”

(Letter to Rāmeśvara - September 18, 1976)

I have read an argument that the manuscript is the final version which is given to the publisher to print, and what we consider to be the manuscript (Prabhupāda's hand-typed and recording-transcribed material) is a draft to be corrected etc., by the editor. But why would Prabhupāda authorize the manuscript to be used for translation instead of the already printed version of the *Bhagavad-gītā* if the manuscript is that which is given to the publisher for printing? If the "manuscript" is that material from which the book is printed, then there is no difference between the manuscript and the printed book. So in this case the manuscript must be different from the printed version, in other words, it must be a version previous to the printed one. Otherwise Prabhupāda would just tell devotees to use the 1972 or any already printed edition for translations. The question is why Prabhupāda allows the original manuscript to be worked with for translations. Why doesn't he order the translation to be made from the printed book? Prabhupāda authorizes the original manuscript to be used for translations.

Something to think about...



## VARIOUS EDITIONS POSSIBLE AND AUTHORIZED

Concerning the Rascal editors conversation in a letter to Rādhā-Vallabha, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa writes:

“So far as who is “authorized” and “unauthorized,” it is the same as when the GBC spoke with Śrīla Prabhupāda about “legal” and “illegal” distribution. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s definition of what is legal is “whatever sells my books.” In the same way, as long as the editors edit everything perfectly they are “authorized” and when they make mistakes, whatever the reason is then they become “unauthorized.” When you do everything nicely you are praised and when some mistake is there, you are a “rascal.” (From: Tamāl Kṛṣṇa to Rādhā-Vallabha, July 22nd, 1977)

We are not sure if this is a paraphrase of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s words on this matter, or Tamāla’s own realization. Anyhow, it is a well-expressed understanding of the editors’ level of authority. It is conditional. Since every conditioned soul is subjected to the four defects of human frailty, his decision should be always subject to scrutiny. In his preaching, Śrīla Prabhupāda many times described such conditional authority of his disciples. Here are a few examples:

“If Kirtanananda Maharaja speaks what I speak, then he can be taken a siksa guru.” (Letter to: Satyabhāma, Paramānanda -- New Vrindaban 20 July, 1974)

“They promised before me to follow the principles. If they are not, then they are not allowed to initiate, but if they are actually following, then they are allowed.” (Letter to: Madhudviṣa - Bombay 7 November, 1975)

“Keep trained up very rigidly and then you are bona fide *Guru*, and you can accept disciples on the same principle.” (Letter to: Tuṣṭa Kṛṣṇa - New Delhi 2 December, 1975)

“A person who is liberated *ācārya* and *guru* cannot commit any mistake, but there are persons who are less qualified or not liberated, but still can act as *guru* and *ācārya* by strictly following the disciplic succession.” (Letter to: Janārdana - New York 26 April, 1968)

“So if we work sincerely, the Krishna Consciousness Movement is non-different from Krishna. As Krishna killed all the demons, we should also be able to kill all demons if we remain faithful in the discharge of our mission.” (Letter to: Yaśomatinandana - Vrindaban 24 September, 1976)

All these authorities; whether Kīrtanānanda, the *ṛtviks*, the *śikṣā-gurus*, the non-liberated *ācāryas* or even the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement itself have conditional authority. They are an authority only if they follow the principles, speak as Śrīla Prabhupāda speaks, strictly follow the disciplic succession, work sincerely and remain faithful. The same therefore should be applied to the editor. If he changes the meanings of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s words his authority becomes questionable. And since Śrīla Prabhupāda in his manifested *līlā* did authorize conditioned souls to edit his literature, it is not a crime to correct their editing. To say that the work of the conditioned soul is not subjected to revision is dangerous. If one conditioned soul once edited Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, another conditioned soul can re-edit. Provided they keep the meaning intact, both editions are bona fide. Let us not fall into a trap of elevating the editor into the current link spiritual master, who has exclusive V.I.P access to the hidden mysteries of the *paramparā*, and let us again quote an instance of Śrīla Prabhupāda explaining the principle of conditional authority of his disciples:

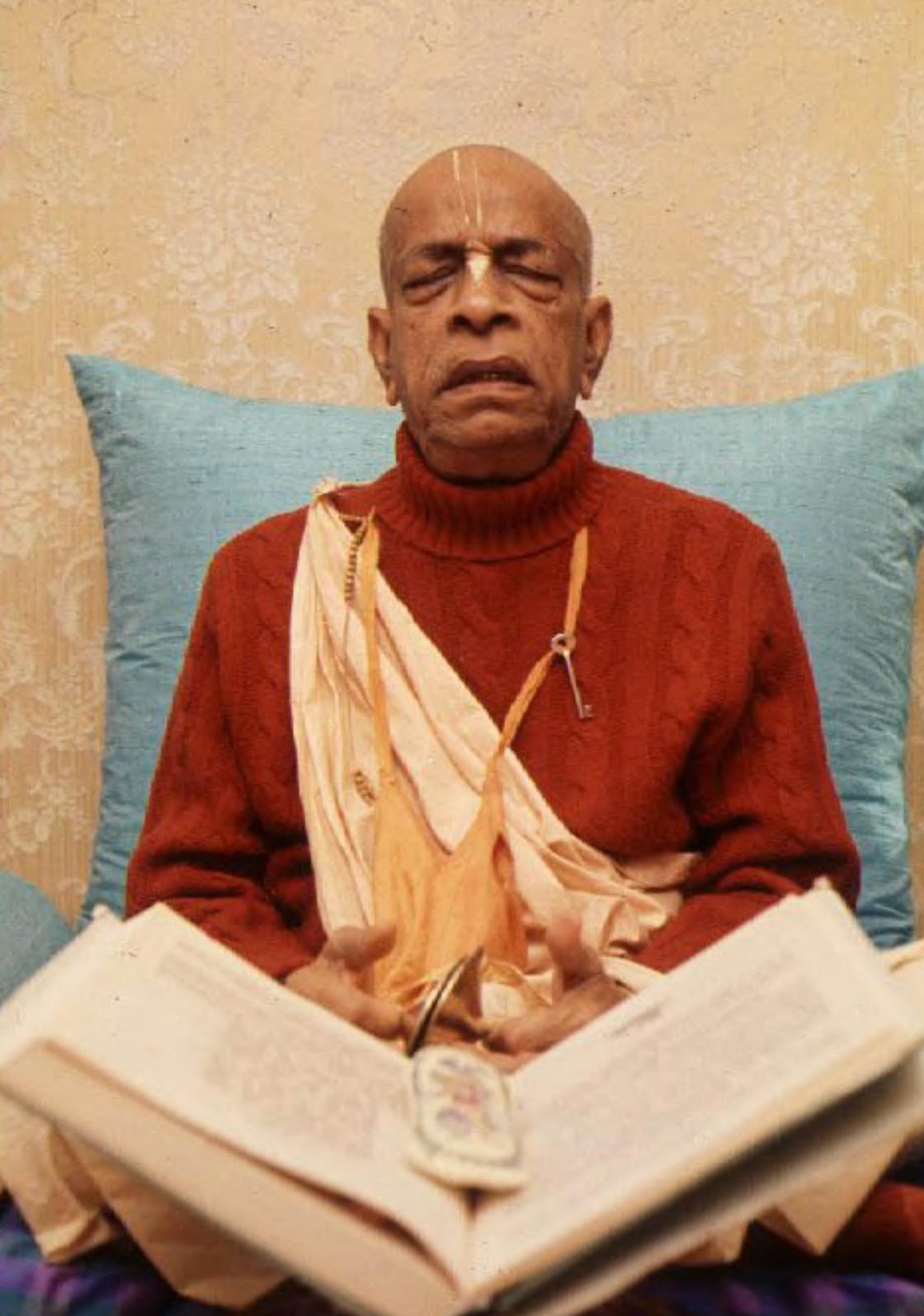
“You have written that the devotees here say that you cannot know me, but only Kirtanananda Maharaja can know me. But, if Kirtanananda is a disciple and he can know me, and you are also a disciple, why you cannot know me?” (Letter to: Satyabhāma, Paramānanda - New Vrindaban 20 July, 1974)

There may be a variety of approaches to the service of the spiritual master, editing included. On one hand Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't want to waste time and saw that "too many cooks were spoiling the broth." On the other hand he approved improvements in English, if it was possible. The priority was always a good quality editing, whoever may be able to do the job.

"If there is good English it is welcome but we should not edit as Hayagrīva has replaced "devotional service" with "knowledge of self." Knowledge of self is not complete until one is actually engaged in devotional service." (Letter to Brahmānanda - Calcutta 12 December, 1967)

"For the time being I can send you tapes of my lectures which you can transcribe either directly or through the dictaphone, as it is convenient. Both yourself and Gaurasundara or any other educated boy or girl can edit the transcriptions for being printed. (Letter to Govinda dāsī - Los Angeles 7 April, 1970)

Anyone and everyone can read the original words of the *ācārya* and understand the meaning directly. The editor is required simply to adjust the language Śrīla Prabhupāda uses into a more commonly used English so the readers can understand better. But the editor himself does not add any further meaning to Śrīla Prabhupāda's words. The meaning is clear and complete even from the raw, unedited manuscripts. Therefore his work is only supplementary.



## PLURALITY OF EDITIONS

Whatever was done by Rāyarāma, Hayagrīva or Jayādvaita Prabhus so far is part of the history of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. But time didn't stop and Śrīla Prabhupāda's movement is dynamic. All the versions of his books exist simultaneously. In the case of *Bhagavad-gītā* there is the manuscript, the 1968 version, 1972, 1983 and all the different translations. Some devotees claim that if we edit or re-edit the books then the "original" books will vanish, will become inaccessible or something horrible like that will happen. However, we're not in the 5th century; it's not that there exist only 3 handwritten copies of a book somewhere in a remote mountain monastery and if that is edited or changed and the originals are lost, then the whole thing is gone and finished. It is our great fortune that in this cyber-age of information everything is available. Let people come, open their minds and examine carefully what is what in relation to the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

We have to transcend the indoctrination pushed forward by individuals who's motivations may not always be purely in connection to Prabhupāda's desire. We should also not remain *śūdras*. A *śūdra* is one who laments unnecessarily and who depends on the mercy of others. Why simply lament that the books were changed and depend on what is given to us by questionable "authorities"? Devotees should be brahminical, able to critically examine and evaluate the subject matter on their own and not be dogmatic and blindly accept certain editions as "originals" just because some so-called senior devotee said so.

### **“BUT ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA GAVE CLASSES FROM THE FIRST EDITIONS!”**

The 1972 edition of the *Gītā* is authorized by Śrīla Prabhupāda. He gave lectures from it, yes. On the other hand, the fact that he

lectured from it doesn't mean that it is the final version for eternity. Śrīla Prabhupāda is the source of his books, he is complete. He does not depend on his editors to be able to lecture from his own books. That is an offensive thinking. For example, in 1966, Śrīla Prabhupāda would often give his classes from Dr. Radhakrishnas's *Bhagavad-gītā*, which he himself criticized on numerous occasions, especially in connection with the infamous passage wherein the commentator urges the readers not to surrender to Kṛṣṇa, but to the "unborn within" Kṛṣṇa. Please note:

**Prabhupāda:** This is thirteenth śloka. You can open it. The Sanskrit word is

*dehino 'smin yathā dehe kaumāram yauvanam jarā  
tathā dehāntara-prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati*  
[Bg. 2.13]

**Student:** This is thirteenth?

**Prabhupāda:** Thirteen, yes.

**Student:** "Just as boyhood, youth and old age are attributed to the soul through this body, he, the soul, obtains another body. The wise man does not get deluded about this."

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.13 -- New York, March 11, 1966)

Śrīla Prabhupāda can give a class from *Śarīraka-bhāṣya* of Śrīpad Śaṅkarācārya if he wants, we should not imitate the actions of the *ācārya*, but follow his instructions. He wanted his books be presented in their original way as he dictated them without changes. We should arrange for that.

"So far your telling me that some devotees consider that because there may be some grammatical discrepancies in my *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, first canto, then they may also be allowed to translate with errors accepted, that is just like imitating Raslila. When you do all other things like Krishna, they you can do Raslila. So if these other writers can do like me and spread Krishna Consciousness all over the world by becoming big Vedic scholars, then they can do."  
(Letter to: Mandali Bhadra - Jaipur 20 January, 1972)

“So far translating, I have made Mandali Bhadra as Chief of translating department. He shall translate comfortably and all other translations must be checked and edited and approved by him, with grammatical corrections. It is not that we may present anything crude translation and that is acceptable. No, even though the transcendental subject matter of Vedic literature is still spiritually potent despite the crudest translation, still, because we have got facility to make it perfect, that is our philosophy. When I translated Srimad-Bhagavatam I had not the facility so you may notice grammatical discrepancies. But because Mandali Bhadra is now Head of the translating department you have got all facility to translate our books in perfect German language.” (Letter to: Hamsaduta - Jaipur 20 January, 1972)

“It is not our philosophy to print errors. Of course, our spiritual subject matter is transcendental and therefore it remains potent despite mistakes in grammar, spelling, etc. But this type of translation may only be allowed if there is no other way to correct it, then it is all right. But if you know the correct order, then you must make it perfect. That is our philosophy: everything perfect for Krishna.” (Letter to: Mandali Bhadra - Jaipur 20 January, 1972)

The point is that the books should not be sealed with all the misspellings, philosophical mistakes and missing the portions which Śrīla Prabhupāda himself wrote or spoke but which were left out by his editors, or including portions which were added by the editors but not written or spoken by Prabhupāda. And the foremost reason is that Śrīla Prabhupāda gave an order to fix all this in the “Rascal Editors“ conversation.



## IN THE FUTURE WE WILL INCREASE THE TASK

The first editions are not the original books. Editing doesn't mean changing the meaning. The change in the text brought about in the editing process is to bring forth the meaning directly, the form of the text changes to clarify the meaning while change of the content obscures the meaning. This is the difference. If editing is being done sincerely and intelligently, there should be no objection against the attempt to bring Śrīla Prabhupāda's books to their best possible shape, as he desired.

Śrīla Prabhupāda says:

“So, Hayagrīva Prabhu is taking charge of pushing this movement by help in editorial work. So that is most important thing, because we are distributing books. Our writing will be gospel. Our writing will be... We have to edit in such a way, present our literature in such a way that it will be gospel truth.

**Śyamāsundara:** Ohh!

**Prabhupāda:** Authorized, that people will refer to our books. So we have to very cautiously print our literatures. It is not ordinary literature, fiction or something, stories. Just like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Bhāgavata*, they are not ordinary literature. Without any four defects of human frailties, *bhrama*, *pramada*, *vipralipsa*, also... We are following those literatures. So our writing should be so authorized that in future one may not find any fault, contradiction. We shall have to..., cautiously.

The ideas are given there now. In future, of course, it requires that we shall increase this task[?]. But this is the position. Now for the present, we have to push on this movement with positive, I mean to say, conviction, that “Here is God.” God is neither dead, nor every one of you is God, nor is He imperson. God is a person, and we give you His name, address, father's name, activities, here. So, we have to push on this movement like that.

So if you have got any doubt about it, then you cannot do it. If

you have got any doubt that whether Kṛṣṇa is positive God or not, [indistinct] then you cannot do it. That is the first qualification. If you are yourself not convinced, how you can convince others? This is our propaganda. This is our mission. [indistinct]. Whether you are all convinced on this point, that “Here is positive God”?

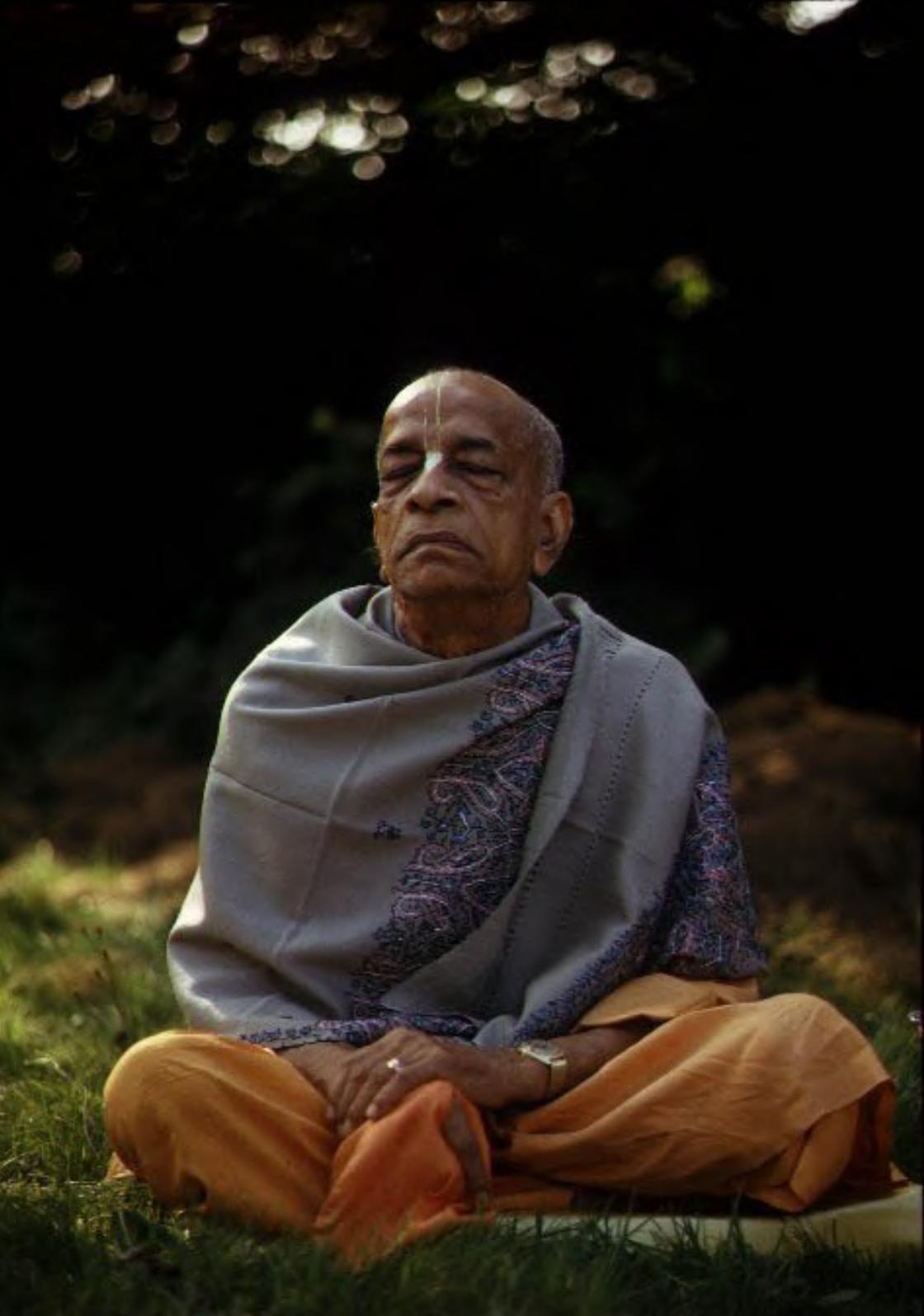
What is your opinion? So far I am concerned, I have got opinion[?]: convinced. [laughter]. And therefore I am pushing on. It is a fact. I am pushing on because I am pushing on fact, not fiction. That much I am personally convinced. Whenever there is somebody says, “You believe,” “No, I don’t believe; it is fact.” Any press reporter... That press reporter?

**Devotee:** Hmm.

**Prabhupāda:** It is not the question I believe and don’t believe; it is a fact. God is there. You believe or not believe, but God must be there. Your believing, not believing, it doesn’t matter. If I don’t believe there is no president, it does not mean there will be no president. There must be president. I do not know who is president. But [indistinct]. So people are in misconception that “There is no God,” “God is dead,” “I am God,” “You are God,” “God is not person,” so many God theories. But we have no theory; we have got a positive presentation: “Here is God.” With that conviction we have to push on.

So you must be prepared in that way. There will be so many questions, so many opposing elements. You have to face them by your arguments, by your knowledge. This is required. At least we must have faith in that way.” (Conversation with the GBC -- May 25, 1972, Los Angeles)

Here Śrīla Prabhupāda gives the standard for his books: they must be gospel, the authority, there cannot be any fault, defect or contradiction. He praises Hayagrīva for pushing on the movement by his editorial work. And that is the most important thing, the editing, because these books are for distribution, so people can hear. Ultimately, the editorial task is to render these books to the highest standard, where they will be gospel. That task, the proper editing, will be increased in the future.



## THE FINAL ORDER ON EDITING COUNTS

Further in the “Rascal Editors” conversation we find this instruction:

**Prabhupāda:** So you... What you are going... It is very serious situation. You write one letter that “Why you have made so many changes?” And whom to write? Who will care? All rascals are there. Write to Satsvarūpa that “This is the position. They are doing anything and everything at their whim.” The next printing should be again to the original way.

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** They should have a board of Satsvarūpa and Jayādvaita.

**Prabhupāda:** Hm.

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** Those two men are both in Los Angeles now.

**Prabhupāda:** So write them immediately that “The rascal editors, they are doing havoc, and they are being maintained by Rāmeśvara and party.”

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** Sometimes there’s a fear that some word will be unpopular, and on account of desire to gain popularity or acceptance, they lessen the strength of the word. They change the word. They choose a word which is more so-called acceptable.

...

**Prabhupāda:** So what to do?

**Tamāla Kṛṣṇa:** So I think we just have to be slow but sure. We have to go over all of the books and make sure that they’re perfect before they’re printed again. Not be in such a rush, print, print, and print all nonsense.

**Svarūpa Dāmodara:** One time I had a strong talk with Rāmeśvara Mahārāja about our article for printing in the *Back to Godhead*. I didn’t want them to be printed in *Back to Godhead* because they made so many changes...

**Prabhupāda:** Oh, he has dared to change yours also?

**Svarūpa Dāmodara:** Oh, yes. They change so many things in our article. And it was on the telephone. I was speaking to him

in Atlanta from Los Angeles. And I told him that “This article should not be printed because they have made so many changes.” And I didn’t like that. Then they answered that “It has already been offset, and BBT policy is always to be rushing. It’s always BBT policy.” Then I told him that “If you sacrifice quality on the strength of rushing, then it is your business, but that’s not my way, so please don’t print it.” But in any case, they have printed anyway that article. And we all had a bad reaction.

**Prabhupāda:** So you bring this to Satsvarūpa. They cannot change anything. (Conversation, “Rascal Editors,” and Morning Talk -- June 22, 1977, Vṛndāvana)

Śrīla Prabhupāda says, “The next printing should be again to the original way.” Then he asks: “What to do?” and Tamāl suggests, that they “have to go over all of the books and make sure that they’re perfect before they’re printed again.” I want to emphasize the word ALL. All the books, no exclusion. Śrīla Prabhupāda doesn’t exclude, for example, the *Bhagavad-gītā* from the list. All the books means all the books and there is a reason for this.

Now, this exchange takes place in June 1977, not long before Śrīla Prabhupāda’s final *līlā*. As the knower of past, present and future, Prabhupāda was very well aware of the upcoming course of happenings. Still, he does not protest against Tamāl’s suggestion for going over all the books and re-editing them to perfection, in a “slow but sure” manner. Prabhupāda might have just directly cut him by saying: “Are you crazy? You want to re-edit all my books in my absence? No! I reject this nonsense idea! Leave them as they are, never mind the changes of meanings that had already been done!” Or he could say: “Ok, but don’t touch the *Gītā*.” But he doesn’t say anything in this spirit. He only emphasizes that “they cannot change anything.” And this is the idea, the difference between editing and changing. To edit the text for bringing up the proper meaning is not a crime. But to adulterate the meaning and thus tamper with the message, that is certainly an offense, even if it’s done in the first edition.

Devotees will argue that Śrīla Prabhupāda approved of the 1972 *Bhagavad-gītā*, gave classes from it etc., and that goes for other books as well. Yes, that is so. But here we see Śrīla Prabhupāda giving a different instruction. He orders re-edition. “Again to the original way.” They are reading from the “original” *Bhāgavatam* and Prabhupāda orders it to be re-edited again to the ORIGINAL way? How does this make any sense? It makes sense only if we kick out this indoctrination idea that the first printings are the originals. They are just not.

Furthermore, it is the instruction of the *ācārya* that is to be followed, not our sentiments. If Śrīla Prabhupāda orders the books to be brought back to the original way and doesn’t protest against the proposal for their re-editing (which indicates his approval) – this is the instruction to be followed regardless of his previous approval of the first editions or any other printings...

**Acyutānanda:** (reads questions put by audience) Kṛṣṇa says in the end of the *Gītā*, *sarva-dharmān parityajya* [Bg. 18.66], but in another place in the *Gītā*, twice it is mentioned *śreyān sva-dharmo, para-dharmo bhayāvahaḥ*, one should perform his own duty rather than another’s duty.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes.

**Acyutānanda:** How can we...

**Prabhupāda:** I may say many things to you, but when I say something directly, “Do it,” your first duty is to do that. You cannot argue, “Sir, you said me like this before.” No, that is not your duty. What I say now, you do it. That is obedience. You cannot argue. Of course, Kṛṣṇa never said anything contradictory, but if when one thinks foolishly that Kṛṣṇa said something contradictory, no, that is not to be. You could not understand. So even though you could not understand, you take My direct orders now. *Sarva-dharmān parityajya mām e...* [Bg. 18.66], that is your business. The master says like that, and the servant’s business is to accept it as it is, without any argument. That’s all right. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.5.3 -- Hyderabad, April 15, 1975)

Śrīla Prabhupāda might have said many things about his books before, read from them, had his disciples read from them for him, lecture from them etc., but it is not our duty to oppose or disobey his order which he gave later. He directly orders “next printing should be again to the original way.” That’s it. This is the instruction of the spiritual master and able disciples should take it up and execute it.



## HAYAGRĪVA BREAKS THE ĀRṢA-PRAYOGA

There is another common misconception in connection to the *ārṣa-prayoga* principle, which is being used to justify the “no-editing” policy. *Ārṣa-prayoga* pertains to the authority of the spiritual master or *ācārya*, not to the “authority” of conditioned souls who edit the literary works of such an *ācārya*. Devotees opposed to book editing often use the example where Śrīla Prabhupāda forbids his disciples to change the words of his Guru Mahārāja Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in his translations and purports on the *Brahma-saṁhitā*.

That instruction stands particularly for the *Brahma-saṁhitā*, but devotees tend to take it out of context and apply it universally for all of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books. And, as Śrīla Prabhupāda points out here, the actual element which is against the *ārṣa-prayoga* principle is the tendency to correct the *ācārya* when one, by the works of his fertile brain, “discovers” a so-called mistake in the writings of the *ācārya*. That is certainly offensive, to correct the spiritual master. If one knows better than the *guru*, then why is he accepting him as *guru* in the first place? So, editing the text and correcting the *ācārya* are not exactly the same thing. Neither is it the same to try to correct the *ācārya* and to correct the editor, who made a mistake in his editing.

**Rādhā-vallabha:** Now Jagannātha had some questions on corrections in the book. In verse twenty-eight it says, “Then he worshiped Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the essence of all *Vedas*, with this hymn.”

**Prabhupāda:** Where it is? *Brahma-saṁhitā*?

**Rādhā-vallabha:** Yes.

**Prabhupāda:** What is that?

**Rādhā-vallabha:** So it says, “Then he worshiped Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the essence of all *Vedas*, with this hymn.”

**Prabhupāda:** Where it is?

**Rādhā-vallabha:** It’s verse twenty-eight, “Then he worshiped Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” So Jagannātha said it should be, “Then he worshiped...”

**Prabhupāda:** No, no. Jagannātha cannot correct. That bad habit he must give up.

**Rādhā-vallabha:** So we should just leave it exactly.

**Prabhupāda:** Oh, yes. You should not be more educated.

**Rādhā-vallabha:** He wasn't changing any of the words. He was just...

**Prabhupāda:** Nothing of the... This of should be strictly forbidden.

**Rādhā-vallabha:** So no corrections. That makes it simple.

**Prabhupāda:** They can divide the synonyms. That's all.

**Rādhā-vallabha:** Synonyms. So even...

**Prabhupāda:** That is his tendency, to correct. That's very bad. He should not do that.

**Rādhā-vallabha:** So I'll just forget this, then.

**Prabhupāda:** The system is: whatever authority has done, even there is mistake, it should be accepted.

**Rādhā-vallabha:** Oh.

**Prabhupāda:** *Ārṣa-prayoga*(?) That is ha... He should not become more learned than the authority. That is very bad habit.

**Rādhā-vallabha:** He was always wondering how he should think. So I'll tell him that. He thinks, "If I think I see a mistake, what should I think?" I'll tell him what you just said.

**Prabhupāda:** He cannot see mistake. He is mistake. (laughter) He should... That is being done by this rascal. I don't want. And the Hayagrīva has..., the *Easy Journey*, he has changed so many things. That... He is now bad character. You should not maintain him.

**Rādhā-vallabha:** We should stop maintaining him.

**Prabhupāda:** No. He has no responsibility even on his family.

**Rādhā-vallabha:** His wife just came to meet him in L.A.

**Prabhupāda:** What she said?

**Rādhā-vallabha:** Well, she was asking me whether he would want to live with her. I told her that I didn't think so.

**Prabhupāda:** Why? Why did you advise?

**Rādhā-vallabha:** He's not very responsible.

**Prabhupāda:** Responsible or not responsible, they should live together.

**Rādhā-vallabha:** Yes, I know. So I've...

**Prabhupāda:** But actually he's bad. He has gone out.

**Rādhā-vallabha:** So after he finishes the philosophy book, no more.

**Prabhupāda:** Hm?

**Rādhā-vallabha:** He is still working on the philosophy book. So when he finishes that, that will be the last.

**Prabhupāda:** Why finish it? Whatever is done is done. No more. I understand that he is intoxicated.

**Rādhā-vallabha:** All right.

**Prabhupāda:** We cannot pay for his intoxication.

**Rādhā-vallabha:** I was thinking of stopping anyway. Now that you have said it, it makes it very simple. I can find a way that it will be done nicely. Practically there's nothing for him to do, very important, anyway.

(Room Conversation -- February 27, 1977, Māyāpura)

It's very clear – dividing the synonyms (in this case) is editing work and that can be done. Correcting the *ācārya* is an offense. That should not be done.

“So far your telling me that some devotees consider that because there may be some grammatical discrepancies in my *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, first canto, then they may also be allowed to translate with errors accepted, that is just like imitating Raslilā. When you do all other things like Krishna, they you can do Raslila. So if these other writers can do like me and spread Krishna Consciousness all over the world by becoming big Vedic scholars, then they can do.”

(Letter to: Mandali Bhadra - Jaipur 20 January, 1972)

Here we see that devotees were very eager to follow the *ārṣa-prayoga* principle by translating the text of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with grammatical discrepancies and considering it authorized, but Śrīla Prabhupāda smashed that idea as “imitating *rasa-līlā*.” Here it is obvious that the *ārṣa-prayoga* principle doesn't apply to the editors, translators or anyone else than the *ācārya*. To say that the *ārṣa-prayoga* principle applies to the editors means to put them on the same level with the *ācārya*, and that is undoubtedly a great offense.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted his books to be perfect and to convey the proper message. Although it is taken by many devotees as a fact that the first printings are approved by Prabhupāda, the order

of the spiritual master is of the utmost importance. What is the practical use of a so-called approved book if it contains mistakes made by editors or unclear statements etc.? At the end of the day, that approval is questionable, because in 1977 Prabhupāda ordered to bring them back to the original form. This instruction rules over the previous approvals. We simply want to pursue the desire of our spiritual master and please him. *Yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasāda...* Śrīla Prabhupāda gave an order; that order still stands, so let's follow that order and bring the books back to the original way. The *ārṣa-prayoga* principle—keeping the apparent mistakes of an *ācārya* as sacred and transcendental—applies to the apparent mistakes of an *ācārya*. *Ārṣa-prayoga* doesn't apply to the actual mistakes of *ācārya's* editors, in our case conditioned souls. If they made mistakes in their editing work, it should be fixed so the text expresses what the *ācārya* intended to express.



## TRANSCENDENTAL MISTAKES

It is clear that the words of the *ācārya* should never be changed, but what about the transcendental mistakes in technicalities that Śrīla Prabhupāda himself made in his dictations or manuscripts which remained undetected by the early editors? For example, this discrepancy can be found in the 1972 edition of the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, which is also found in the original manuscript Śrīla Prabhupāda himself hand typed:

Kṛpācārya married the twin sister of Dronācārya.  
(Bg 1.8, 1972)

Here Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that Dronācārya's sister was married to Kṛpācārya. However, in his Delhi edition of the *Śrīmad-Bhagāvatam* Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

Kripacharya is the son of the great Rishi known as Sardban born in the family of Goutma. The birth is said to be accidental. By chance the great Rishi Sardban met Janapadi a famous society girl of the heaven and the Rishi Sardban discharged semina in two parts. By one part immediately a male child and by the other part a female child were born as twins. The male child was later on known as Kripa and the female child was known as Kripi as brother and sister. Maharaj Santanu while engaged in chase in the jungle picked up the children in the forest and brought them up to the Brahminical status by proper purificatory process. Kripacharya later on became a great general like Dronacharya and his sister was married with Dronacharya.

Delhi.12.13

So It was Kṛpācārya's sister who married Dronācārya and not the other way around. This is confirmed in two other instances in the *Śrīmad-Bhagāvatam*:

Wife of Dronācārya Kṛpī is the sister of Kṛpācārya.  
(SB Delhi 1.7.45)

*tad dṛṣṭvā kṛpayāgrhṇāc  
chāntanur mṛgayām caran  
kṛpaḥ kumāraḥ kanyā ca  
droṇa-patny abhavat kṛpī*

### SYNONYMS

*tat*—those twin male and female babies; *dṛṣṭvā*—seeing; *kṛpayā*—out of compassion; *agrhṇāt*—took; *śāntanuḥ*—King Śāntanu; *mṛgayām*—while hunting in the forest; *caran*—wandering in that way; *kṛpaḥ*—Kṛpa; *kumāraḥ*—the male child; *kanyā*—the female child; *ca*—also; *droṇa-patnī*—the wife of Droṇācārya; *abhavat*—became; *kṛpī*—named Kṛpī.

### TRANSLATION

While Mahārāja Śāntanu was on a hunting excursion, he saw the male and female children lying in the forest, and out of compassion he took them home. Consequently, the male child was known as Kṛpa, and the female child was named Kṛpī. Kṛpī later became the wife of Droṇācārya.  
(SB 9.21.36)

This is obviously a transcendental mistake, and as we know, Śrīla Prabhupāda is a pure devotee of the Lord; free from the mundane propensity to make mistakes. So what are these mistakes then? Should a mistake like this be corrected, or should it be preserved? In the following conversation, this point is raised:

**Jayādvaita:** ...they know everything and they're perfect in everything. But sometimes, from our material viewpoint, we see some discrepancies. Just like we think that...

**Prabhupāda:** Because material viewpoint. The viewpoint is wrong; therefore you find discrepancies.

**Jayādvaita:** So we should think that we have the defect.

**Prabhupāda:** Yes. Ācārya is explained, *bhakti-śāmsanāt* [Cc Ādi

1.13]. One who's preaching the cult of devotional service, he's *ācārya*. Then why should you find any discrepancy?

**Jayādvaīta:** Just, we see... For instance, sometimes the *ācārya* may seem to forget something or not to know something, so from our point of view, if someone has forgotten, that is...

**Prabhupāda:** No, no, no. Then...

**Jayādvaīta:** ...an imperfection.

**Prabhupāda:** That is not the... Then you do not understand. *Ācārya* is not God, omniscient. He is servant of God. His business is to preach *bhakti* cult. That is *ācārya*.

**Jayādvaīta:** And that is the perfection.

**Prabhupāda:** That is the perfection. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

**Jayādvaīta:** So we have a misunderstanding about what perfection is?

**Prabhupāda:** Yes. Perfection is here, how he is preaching *bhakti* cult. That's all.

(Morning Walk – April 8, 1975, Māyāpur)

The point is clear. The *ācārya* is flawless. What might appear to our limited point of view as a mistake is actually not a mistake, because everything a pure devotee does is directly controlled by the Lord. Even a so-called mistake of a pure devotee has some deeper meaning we might not actually see. Śrīla Prabhupāda also says here that to think of an *ācārya* as omniscient (all knowing) is a misunderstanding of what the perfection of a pure devotee is. Śrīla Prabhupāda's perfection is that he has spread the *bhakti* cult all over the world, not because of scholarly knowledge of the English language. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains the nature of pure devotees in connection with the ritualistic *brāhmaṇas*:

The Brahmins are meant for ministering some fruitive sacrifices mentioned in the Vedas but the-Parivṛjakacharyas or the learned preachers are meant for disseminating transcendental knowledge to one and all in the general way. As such the Paribrajakacharyas are not always expert in pronouncing the Vedic Mantras which are practised systematically in terms of accent and meter by the Brahmins who are meant for ministering Vedic rites. And for that

reason it should not be considered that the Brahmins are more important than the itinerary preachers...Śrīla Suta Goswami is following the foot prints of the Same liberated soul and therefore his position is not the least less important because he was not expert in chanting Vedic mantras with systematic metric pronunciation which depends more on the practice of the chanter than actual realisation. Realisation is more important than parrot like chanting. (SB 1.4.13 Delhi Edition.)

One of the reasons Śrīla Prabhupāda shows such apparent imperfections is to engage his disciples in devotional service; thus it is not a mistake. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this point in the already mentioned conversation where Viṣṇujana Mahārāja asks about the unfinished work of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

There Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that the *ācārya* is self-sufficient. We should never think that the *ācārya* depends on our help. That is offensive. But still, the *ācārya* leaves some work apparently unfinished in order to give a chance to his disciples to render devotional service. This point is further explained in the following letter:

“Whatever allocation of duty there may be, if we try to execute such specific duty sincerely, that alone can make us much more advanced in Krishna Consciousness. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, it is stated that for the fixed up devotee there is one duty. This duty is understood through the transparent medium via media of the Spiritual Master. It is better service to Krishna and Spiritual Master in a feeling of separation; sometimes there is risk in the matter of direct service. For example, Kirtanananda was giving me direct service by massaging, cooking for me, and so many other things; but later on by dictation of Maya, he became puffed up, so much so that he thought his Spiritual Master a common man, and was existing only on account of his service. This mentality at once pushed him down. Of course, those who are sincere devotee, they take direct service as an opportunity, but the illusory energy is so strong that it acts on this doctrine of familiarity breeds contempt. Kirtanananda was thinking I was existing on his service, instead

of realizing I was giving him opportunity to do me some service.”  
(Letter to: Madhusūdana -- San Francisco 30 December, 1967)

The proper mentality of a disciple should be to think that whatever Śrīla Prabhupāda left behind; his manuscripts, dictations or even books edited by his early disciples, are perfect and complete, but simultaneously give us an opportunity to render some service to him in editing out the mistakes and changes to his words. Otherwise, faulty reasoning could lead to the misguided conclusion that since Śrīla Prabhupāda is perfect and thus does not require any help, we don't have to do any service whatsoever.

Another point is that Śrīla Prabhupāda himself asked his disciples to edit and even correct his books, including the ones that his early editors have edited. If Śrīla Prabhupāda himself asks his disciples to fix various mistakes in his writing, those who do so will be protected by the virtue of following Śrīla Prabhupāda's order. To conclude this section and to see how much Śrīla Prabhupāda was keen to have his books edited properly, we would like to quote a letter of Pradyumna Prabhu To Jayādvaīta from 1972:

“Prabhupāda said that if there is one mistake in one book, then you spoil the whole book. Murder the whole book. So also besides Sanskrit errors, there have been many, many English errors also, which are very obvious, just like these two above-mentioned errors, so Prabhupāda has been emphasizing lately about the great need for making our books free from errors. “What's done has been done”\* but now we should try to do two things: make sure that errors like these won't occur again, and start a listing of past mistakes in each book so that we can correct them when they are reprinted. Concerning these two Sanskrit errors, one was not noted down before the new reprint was made I think there should be a blueprint made of each book before it goes to press because then the editors will know for sure that there weren't any errors made in layout or that something fell off. These are just my suggestions. Of course I am ab(out) the most faulty person about, but we have to do something to eliminate all errors in the book.”

\*Śrīla Prabhupāda

(From Pradyumna dasa - SL 720919A)



## WHO IS AUTHORIZED TO EDIT PRABHUPĀDA'S BOOKS?

Editing of Prabhupāda's books is, as so many other aspects of devotional service, a question of authority. If one scrutinizingly and without bias examines the editing done on the *Gītā* by Jayādvaita Swami (the 1983 version), he must admit that much of his editing just makes sense. The problem is that the trust is broken because of the position Jayādvaita Swami took regarding initiations in ISKCON. Not all devotees subscribe to the "living *guru*" theory and thus they doubt Jayādvaita's motives in his editing work. The result is that whatever he says is not accepted by devotees with the "ṛtvik understanding" who thus, having a "bad taste," become almost paranoid in regards to any editorial work being possibly done on Śrīla Prabhupāda's books after his disappearance.

But what if there is a sincere attempt to comply with the order of the spiritual master? What if someone comes and actually fulfills that order? What is the harm there? Furthermore, what is the cause of panic if someone takes up this task of re-editing the books of Śrīla Prabhupāda "back to the original way"? One may ask: "So now anyone can come and edit?" Why not? Let anyone qualified by following and spreading Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings come and try his best to bring the books to their best and let Kṛṣṇa decide what He likes. He knows what to do. *Teṣāṁ satata yuktānāṁ bhajatām prīti pūrvakam* (Bg.10.10). It is not that Kṛṣṇa is not present to give advice or that Prabhupāda is dead and gone and unable to guide his sincere disciple to fulfil his order. How can devotees ignore the influence and guidance of the Supersoul in the heart of a sincere person? The basic understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is that one sincerely engaged in loving devotional service is helped by the Supersoul from within the heart to perform his service properly. The guidance of the spiritual master exists there in the same way, because, ultimately, the *guru* and the Supersoul are non-different, the spiritual master being an external manifestation of Paramātmā.

To say that Śrīla Prabhupāda is not here to check how the editing is being done, and that's why no one is authorized to do this service any more, is simply an implication of a philosophy which is rejected by realized devotees. If Prabhupāda cannot guide his disciples, then how is he still the *guru*? Many devotees shout "Prabhupāda, Prabhupāda!" but when it comes to the real deal, that Prabhupāda guides his disciples even in his absence, they protest. They say that Prabhupāda is present in his *vāṇi*, but when devotees act on the *vāṇi* (perform *ṛtvik* initiations or edit the books) they protest. Why this hypocrisy?

Actually, the editor of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books can be guided by Prabhupāda's *vāṇi*, because Śrīla Prabhupāda himself explains how to edit his books, just like we have shown examples when we have dealt with the changes in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Just a quick one to remind ourselves:

Dhritarastra became very much doubtful about the influence of the place. The influence of the place was however manifested in the person of Arjuna but there was no influence on the other party. Dhritarastra knew it very well that it would influence the sons of Pandu because by nature they were all virtuous. (Śrīla Prabhupāda's hand-typed manuscript)

Dhṛtarāṣṭra became very fearful about the influence of the holy place on the outcome of the battle. He knew very well that this would influence Arjuna and the sons of Pāṇḍu favorably, because by nature they were all virtuous. (Bg.1.1 1972, purp.)

Śrīla Prabhupāda gives his guidance on how to understand this purport in his classes:

"Now, both the parties were desiring to fight, and they assembled. Why he is asking question, *kim akurvata*: "What did they do"? Because he was little doubtful that "These boys, after being assembled in *dharma-kṣetra kuru-kṣe...*, they might have changed their ideas. They might have settled up." Actually, the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra might have admitted, "Yes, Pāṇḍavas, you are actually

the owner. What is the use of unnecessarily fighting?” So he was very much anxious whether they had changed their decision. Therefore he is asking. Otherwise there was no question of asking, *kim akurvata*. He... Just like if you are given food, if I ask somebody that “Such and such gentleman was served with nice dishes. Then what did he do?” This is foolish question. He would eat. That’s all. (laughter) What is the question of “What did he do?” Similarly, when it is already settled up that they were to fight, there was no such question as *kim akurvata*, “What did they do?” But he asked this question because he was doubtful whether they had changed their opinion.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 1.1 -- London, July 7, 1973)

“The suspect was that because the parties assembled in the *dharma-kṣetra*, so they might have changed their ideas. Still, in India, if there is two fighting parties, they go to a temple and ask that “You say the right thing.” So in the temple, still, in the villages, they do not dare to speak lies. Yes. The fighting and the misunderstanding becomes settled up. So Dhṛtarāṣṭra was thinking whether the two parties, they have settled up. He did not like that.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.1 -- Ahmedabad, December 6, 1972)

”But another thing is the *dharma-kṣetra*, effect of *dharma-kṣetra* was visible in Arjuna. *Dharma-kṣetra*. He, because he’s devotee of Kṛṣṇa... *Yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcana sarvair gunais tatra samāsate surāḥ* [SB 5.18.12]. Because he’s devotee of Kṛṣṇa, therefore he felt: “What is this? Why shall I kill these, my brothers?” Because he was devotee. This sentiment came into the mind of Arjuna, not on the other side, Duryodhana. He never thought. Although they were placed, both of them placed at *dharma-kṣetra*. The effect of *dharma-kṣetra* was manifest in the body of Arjuna, not Duryodhana. This is the... If one is pure, then the effects of *dharma* becomes manifest very quickly.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.1 -- Ahmedabad, December 6, 1972)

“So the effect of Kurukṣetra, *dharma-kṣetra*, was visible in the person of Arjuna, not in the person of Duryodhana. That is the difference.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.1 -- Ahmedabad, December 6, 1972)

According to these statements, the editing may go as follows, in accordance with the manuscript typed by Śrīla Prabhupāda and the statements he gave in the abovementioned classes:

“Dhṛtarāṣṭra became very much doubtful whether the place will not have any influence on the minds of the fighters. Indeed, the influence of the place manifested in the person of Arjuna, but there was no influence on the other party. Dhṛtarāṣṭra knew very well that the place would influence the sons of Pāṇḍu, because by nature they were all virtuous.”

Simple for the simple. This consultation with Śrīla Prabhupāda by hearing from him through the lectures, letters, manuscripts etc. is as good as consulting with him personally, because the sound emanating from the *ācārya* is not different from him. This is the direct guidance of Śrīla Prabhupāda:

“There is no difference between the spiritual master’s instructions and the spiritual master himself.”

(CC *Ādi* 1.35)

“Lord Brahmā underwent penances for one thousand years by the calculations of the demigods. He heard this transcendental vibration from the sky, and he accepted it as divine. Thus he controlled his mind and senses, and the penances he executed were a great lesson for the living entities. Thus he is known as the greatest of all ascetics.”

## PURPORT

Lord Brahmā heard the occult sound *taṭa*, but he did not see the person who vibrated the sound. And still he accepted the instruction as beneficial for him, and therefore he engaged himself in meditation for one thousand celestial years. One celestial year is equal to 6 x 30 x 12 x 1000 of our years. His acceptance of the sound was due to his pure vision of the absolute nature of the Lord. And due to his correct vision, he made no distinction between the Lord and the Lord’s instruction. There is no difference between

the Lord and sound vibration coming from Him, even though He is not personally present. The best way of understanding is to accept such divine instruction, and Brahmā, the prime spiritual master of everyone, is the living example of this process of receiving transcendental knowledge. The potency of transcendental sound is never minimized because the vibrator is apparently absent.”  
(SB 2.9.8)

The Lord and a pure devotee are on the transcendental platform, their nature is absolute. The spiritual master guides his sincere disciples from “outside” and this guidance is confirmed by Paramātmā from within the heart. Thus the editing by a sincere disciple is done under the direct guidance of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Sometimes Śrīla Prabhupāda would leave the guidance of the disciple wholly up to the Supersoul:

“So far the vyabhicary symptoms are concerned, just now it is not possible to give you the two points missing because the reference books are left in London. So without waiting further for these minor discrepancies, you can finish the subject adding “etc.” or do it at your best discretion as Kṛṣṇa will dictate from within you. I can rely on you.” (Letter to: Jayādvaita -- Los Angeles 10 February, 1970)

If the Supersoul could dictate to Jayādvaita Prabhu how to edit Prabhupāda’s books in the 70’s, why shouldn’t the Supersoul guide a disciple who strictly follows Śrīla Prabhupāda now? The Supersoul won’t guide the disciple, because Śrīla Prabhupāda is not physically present?



## TRANSLATIONS

Another quite big topic in this context are the translations. Translating Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books from English into any other language unavoidably means editing the books, because it is impossible to translate word by word and at the same time make the text fluent and easily readable. If the translator doesn’t accommodate the text, then the translation will not be readable in his language. It will be robotic, artificial. In other words, if you translate from English to a different language and then give your translation to someone else to put it back into English, what you get after re-translation will mostly, and naturally, be a text different from the original in its FORM. The only thing you can retain is the meaning, the substance. Anyone who ever translated any text from one language to another will agree. But that is what it’s all about. The *vāṇi* must remain intact. The form is formable. This is one aspect. Sarvabhāvana Prabhu in his memories of Śrīla Prabhupāda confirms this:

“Regarding translating, Prabhupāda gave me some wonderful instructions that I treasure and try to follow. He told me there are two ways of translating. One is literal and the other is *bhavārtha* – to capture the spirit, to convey the deep spiritual and devotional mood of the *ācārya* who wrote the original work. Prabhupāda said, “I prefer *bhavārtha*, to translate the spirit and mood of these writings rather than to translate literally. I want you to read the original Bengali or Sanskrit or Hindi, understand it, formulate it in your own words and write it.

Once in Vṛndāvana when Satsvarūpa Mahārāja was there, Prabhupāda told him, “You should edit Renunciation Through Wisdom, it is a very important book.” And it truly is an incredible book – it’s a gradual unfolding of the philosophy and purport of *Bhagavad-gītā* in which, in the original Bengali writing, Prabhupāda excelled himself. In English Prabhupāda wrote simply but his Bengali writing was scholarly and erudite. To translate this work was quite challenging and every single day Prabhupāda asked me

to read the English translation to him while he read the Bengali. He liked my work and that made me blissful.” (Ref. VedaBase: memories - Sarvabhāvana)

Although Prabhupāda’s English may be simple, still, to translate literally is not as nice as when the text is rendered into a particular language with proper understanding and realization so the translator can utilize the linguistic instruments available in his language and make the text relishable rather than robotic. And that definitely requires editing. Not changing, editing.

On top of that, if there is a mistake in the English text made by the English editor, should the translator keep that mistake in his translation? Definitely not. So that again means editing. When I was translating the 1972 *Bhagavad-gītā* into Slovak language, the “sea journey” (Bg 10.27), “multicoloured like the sea” (Bg 11.5), “planet of trees” (Bg 10.29) or “philosophized Viṣṇu” (Bg 17.4) really made me tax my brain hard about what to write... and even then the translation didn’t make too much sense. I was puzzled. And what to speak of the “knower of the field as one who identifies with the body” (Bg 13.1-3). At that time I didn’t know about the conversation where Śrīla Prabhupāda categorically says that it is a great mistake:

**Yogeśvara:** In the purport it says: “The body is called *kṣetra*, or the field of activity for the conditioned soul, and the person who identifies himself with the body is called *kṣetra*, *kṣetrajña*, the knower of the field.”

**Prabhupāda:** No, no. It is wrongly written.

**Yogeśvara:** Ah. It’s everyone, everyone.

**Prabhupāda:** No, no.

**Yogeśvara:** Not just those people.

**Prabhupāda:** Identifies with the body. He’s not *kṣetrajña*.

**Yogeśvara:** He does not know.

**Prabhupāda:** No. It is wrongly written.

**Bhagavān:** That was no my question. This was my question.

**Prabhupāda:** Ah. Oh, it is wrongly written.

**Bhagavān:** From the lecture, from lecture, when one can...

**Prabhupāda:** Who does not identify, it should be.

**Yogésvara:** Who does not identify. Yes.

**Prabhupāda:** Oh, it is wrong.

**Bhagavān:** That's always questioned in *Bhagavad-gītā*.

**Prabhupāda:** It is not, has been mis-edited. If you identify with body, how you know it? Oh, it is a very great mistake. (Room Conversation -- August 11, 1973, Paris)

It has been “mis-edited”... I knew it was a mistake, because that just isn't the philosophy. “What to do? I can't “change anything”... my understanding was incomplete. Now it's all clear.

Ultimately editing is the same as translation, because Prabhupāda has his own style and the editor is translating it into “proper” English. The point is whether the editor is keeping the message intact or whether he changes the meanings. What is important? Message or form?

Not just this one and few other examples that Śrīla Prabhupāda points out, like the “cattle raising” in Bg.18.44, have been mis-edited. Even the word by word says: “go – cows; *rakṣya* – protection”, the translation says “cattle raising”... There is plenty. Now the question is what we want to read/hear.

Our point is clear – to bring the books of our spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda back to the original way as he desired; that is not the first printings, which he criticized on different occasions. Editing has been done several times; in the case of the *Gītā* there are 3 editions so far. It is not that there is only one version. So long the meaning is kept, the editing is bona-fide. If the meaning is lost or adulterated, the edition should be corrected.

There cannot be any fault or contradiction. That is authorized writing/editing. We should always strive for such perfection, to convey the message of our spiritual master as it is. That will be our success.

May Śrīla Prabhupāda bless the efforts of all devotees, who sincerely try to expand his mission for the benefit of all. Hare Kṛṣṇa!



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