



Changes to Srila Prabhupada's Books

His Divine Grace
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Prabhupada
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ISKCON and BBT

BBT's Responsibility

- "I specifically formed the BBT to invest in it exclusive rights for the printing of all literature containing my teachings, writings and lectures." (letter Mar, 1973)
- BBT has an enormous responsibility to publish the teachings of Srila Prabhupada in an authoritative manner.
- There should be no question whatsoever as to the authority and authenticity of BBT books.
- "As soon as you interpret or change the scripture, the scripture loses its authority." -- Srila Prabhupada

Problems in need of solutions...

- Some BBT books contain many changes never revealed to anyone, even the BBT trustees.
- Many of these changes significantly alter the meaning of the text from Prabhupada's original books.
- A significant number of BBT customers have lost faith in BBT books because of the changes.
- The result is a huge reduction in book distribution and BBT sales.

A Question of Authority

- ISKCON is in a unique position because of the unquestionable authority of Srila Prabhupada's books.
- Srila Prabhupada personally read and gave all his classes from his original books and did not request changes. The original books are completely authorized and approved by Srila Prabhupada.
- One individual making thousands of unauthorized and undocumented changes without any system of checks and balances destroys this authority. He then becomes the authority...

Prabhupada did not want change

- "Regarding your editing, I would very much like it...Please be careful not to change the ideas." (letter Feb, 1967)
- "...do not try to change it. The Americans may like it or not like it... Do not try to change anything without my permission..." (letter Aug, 1976)
- "...regarding the purport, 2nd paragraph to Bhagavatam 2.2.38, it is clear. Do not try to change anything." (letter Sep, 1976)

"Rascal editors" (conv, Jun 77)

- "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... So how to check this? How to stop this? ...they are doing without any authority... 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..."

Next printing the original way

- Write to Satsvarupa that “This is the position. They are doing anything and everything at their whim.” The next printing should be again to the original way. Write them immediately that “The rascal editors, they are doing havoc, and they are being maintained by Ramesvara and party...” So you bring this to Satsvarupa. They cannot change anything... These dangerous things are going on. How to check it?... They are doing very freely and dangerously. And this rascal is always after change, Radha-vallabha. He's a great rascal.

Next printing not original way

- The next printing was not the original way.
- Rather, soon after Srila Prabhupada left his body a BBT editor started a massive revision of *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, released in 1983 as the “Revised and Enlarged” edition.
- It contains more than 5,000 changes and completely changes many philosophical points, and the style and feel of the book is very different.
- This presentation will explore a few of these 5,000 changes.

The Revised and Enlarged Ed...

- “...the Sanskrit editors were by now accomplished scholars. And now they were able to see their way through perplexities in the manuscript by consulting the same Sanskrit commentaries Srila Prabhupada consulted when writing *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*.” (from *A Note About the Second (Revised and Enlarged) Edition*)

Changes were not revealed to anyone, even the BBT!

- A “complete list” of changes was distributed to senior devotees, however this was far from a complete list, it only listed of changes to translations, and in a very cryptic form which no one could understand...
- Nobody, except the editor, was aware of the magnitude of the changes.
- Even so the GBC only approved of printing the changed book by a very slight margin.

Types of Changes

- Corrections of real typographical errors. [A very small percentage of total changes]. These are the changes we hear about from the proponents of editing; “Planet of the trees,” “cattle raising,” etc.
- Pedantic pointless changes that make no improvement to the book and do not correct any error in the original book.
- Style changes, replacing the original editor’s style with a different style.
- Changes to the philosophy presented in the original books.

Justification for Changes

- Editor justifies changes to text which very rarely contains any errors or incorrect philosophy by claiming the changed version is closer to the “original manuscript.”
- No author wants his book returned to the original manuscript.
- Authors appoint editors to present the original manuscript nicely.
- Prabhupada appointed editors to present the *Bhagavad-gita* nicely and approved of the editing. He did not want it returned to the original manuscript.

A false premise

- The “Revised and Enlarged” edition is based on the premise that: “If I feel like changing it and I can find something different in the original manuscript I am justified in changing it. Even if what appears in the original published book is perfectly good English and presents the philosophy perfectly well.”
- This is a mistake, a false premise. If there is no error in the printed book it should not be changed
- Out of 5,000 changes perhaps less than 20 of these changes actually correct errors...

The most famous change [4.34]

- Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because **he has** seen the truth.
- Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because **they have** seen the truth.

1936 translation of 4.34

- In 1936 in Bombay Srila Prabhupada presents an offering to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta where he translates this verse as:
- “Just approach the wise and bona fide spiritual master. Surrender unto him first and try to understand him by enquiries and service. Such a wise spiritual master will enlighten you with Transcendental knowledge, for he has already known the Absolute Truth.”

Do not practice [teachings] regularly [3.32]

- But those who, out of envy, disregard these teachings and do not **practice them regularly**, are to be considered bereft of all knowledge, befooled, and **doomed to ignorance and bondage**.
- But those who, out of envy, disregard these teachings and do not **follow them** regularly, are to be considered bereft of all knowledge, befooled, and **ruined in their endeavors for perfection**.

Prabhupada’s class

- Prabhupada hears the original verse read by a devotee and then quotes the original verse himself in his class:
- “Everyone is claiming... “What is the use of becoming servant of God? I am God.” This is enviousness. So if one refuses to serve God and becomes envious, ‘...disregard these teachings and do not practice them regularly are considered bereft of all knowledge.’ Because he is servant, but he is thinking, ‘I am master. I am not serving anyone.’ This is *maya*, bereft of all knowledge.”

Controlling the Senses? [3.7]

- “...On the other hand, **he who controls the senses by the mind and engages his active organs in works of devotion**, without attachment, is by far superior.”
- “...On the other hand, **if a sincere person tries to control the active senses by the mind and begins *karma-yoga* [in Krishna consciousness]** without attachment, **he** is by far superior.”

Prabhupada's class

- “On the other hand, he who controls the senses by the mind and engages his active organs in works of devotion, without attachment, is by far superior.”
- Prabhupada: “Yes. Instead of artificially trying to meditate and control the senses, just engage your senses in the activities of Krishna consciousness and gradually you will be happy. Your senses will be controlled. Go on...”

Constant practice? [6.35]

- **The Blessed Lord** said: “O mighty-armed son of Kunti, it is undoubtedly very difficult to curb the restless mind, but it is possible by **constant** practice and detachment.”
- **Lord Sri Krishna** said: “O mighty-armed son of Kunti, it is undoubtedly very difficult to curb the restless mind, but it is possible by **suitable** practice and by detachment.”

Confusing everything... [14.6]P

- **By acting in the mode of goodness, one becomes purified. Works** done in the mode of passion result in **distress**, and **actions** performed in the mode of ignorance result in foolishness.
- **The result of pious action is pure and is said to be in the mode of goodness. But actions** done in the mode of passion result in **misery**, and **action** performed in the mode of ignorance results in foolishness.

Reading many books

- **...One need not read many books on different subject matters; the ability to remember a few and quote them when necessary is another opulence.**
- **...And the ability not only to read many books on different subject matters but to understand them and apply them when necessary is intelligence (medha), another opulence.**

- “The summary is that instead of diverting our attention to read such unauthorized books, better pay our attention to more authorized Vaisnava literature.” (letter Nov, 1969)
- “There is no need by any of my disciples to read any books besides my books--in fact, such reading may be detrimental to their advancement in Krishna Consciousness.” (letter Jan 1972)
- “It is a waste of time, paper, money, ink and labor. There is so much work to do for spreading this Krishna consciousness... You should spend more time reading my books very carefully.” (letter May, 1975)

The eternal soul?

- “O descendent of Bharata, he who dwells in the body **is eternal and** can never be slain. Therefore you need not grieve for any **creature**.”
- “O descendent of Bharata, he who dwells in the body can never be slain, therefore you need not grieve for any **living being**.”

Prabhupada's class...

- “O descendant of Bharata, he who dwells in the body is eternal and can never be slain. Therefore you need not grieve for any creature.”
- Prabhupada: “...*dehi nityam*, eternal. In so many ways Krishna has explained. *Nityam*, eternal. Indestructible, immutable. It does not take birth, it does not die, it is always, constantly the same. *Na hanyate hanyamane sarire*. In this way again he says *nityam*, eternal.”

Evenness of Mind

- **Be steadfast in yoga, O Arjuna.** Perform your duty and abandon all attachment to success or failure. Such **evenness of mind** is called yoga.
- Perform your duty **equipoised**, O Arjuna, abandoning all attachment to success or failure. Such **equanimity** is called yoga.

Prabhupada's Class

- “Be steadfast in yoga, O Arjuna. Perform your duty and abandon all attachment to success or failure. Such evenness of mind is called yoga.”
- Prabhupada: “This is the explanation of yoga, evenness of mind. If you work for Krishna there is no cause for lamentation or jubilation. Jubilation is there because you are working for Krishna but there is no cause of lamentation... This is the secret of activities. Go on...”

Renouncing fruits of action?

- **The wise**, engaged in devotional service **take refuge in** the Lord **and** free themselves from the **cycle of birth and death by renouncing the fruits of action in the material world.** In this way they can attain that state beyond all miseries.
- **By thus** engaging in devotional service to the Lord, **great sages or devotees** free themselves from the **results of work in the material world.** In this way they can attain the state beyond all miseries **[by going back to Godhead].**

Prabhupada's class

- “The wise, engaged in devotional service take refuge in the Lord and free themselves from the cycle of birth and death by renouncing the fruits of action in the material world. In this way they can attain that state beyond all miseries.”
- Prabhupada: “How easy it is. You take to Krishna consciousness, you act in Krishna consciousness, you overcome the cycle of birth and death. And as soon as you overcome the cycle of birth and death, you overcome all miseries. Because birth and death means this material body...”

Controlled mind?

- One who is not **in transcendental consciousness** can have neither **a controlled mind nor a steady intelligence**, without which there is no possibility of peace. And how can there be any happiness without peace?
- One who is not **connected with the Supreme [in Krishna consciousness]** can have neither **transcendental intelligence nor a steady mind**, without which there is no possibility of peace. And how can there be any happiness without peace?

Srila Prabhupada's Class

- “One who is not in transcendental consciousness can have neither a controlled mind nor a steady intelligence, without which there is no possibility of peace. And how can there be any happiness without peace?”
- Prabhupada: “Everyone in the material world, they are after peace, but they don't want to control the senses. Just like you are diseased, and the doctor says that, ‘You take this medicine, you take this diet.’ But you cannot control, you are taking anything you like. Then how can you be cured?”

Meditate on Visnu form?

- The so-called yogis who meditate on something which is not the Visnu form simply waste their time...
- The so-called yogis who meditate on something which is not **on** the Visnu **platform** simply waste their time...

Increasing book distribution

- The greatest obstacle for the BBT in increasing book distribution is a very large percentage of the potential customers of the BBT do not approve of the principle that Prabhupada's books can be changed according to the opinions and realizations of a BBT editor.
- This is dramatically reducing the sales of BBT books.
- The single most effective method for increasing book distribution is to follow Srila Prabhupada's order: “The next printing should be the original way.

Conclusion:

- These unauthorized, undocumented and unnecessary changes destroy the authority of BBT books
- Such changed books will never be accepted by any thoughtful person as authoritative.
- “The next printing should be the original way.”
- Principle is nothing can be changed.
- Real typographical errors in the original books can be corrected. But only if there are footnotes notifying the readers of the correction.