

Reply To Purujit And Bliss Re. Going Back To The Manuscript

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by
His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Edited according to the original manuscript by Purujit Dāsa

Image: Purujit's edited e-book version of the Bhagavad-gita As It Is

Recently a devotee named Purujit das has appeared in a video interview defending his new undertaking to edit some of Srila Prabhupada's books. The interview, which reads on their website "Purujit Prabhu Smashes PADA's Book Editing Objections", is a 45-minute response to PADA, who challenged this maverick editing venture of Purujit's. In this article, key excerpts of Purujit's reply to PADA are addressed in connection with the legitimacy behind making further edits to Srila Prabhupada's books.

BLISS is happy to announce on their website their editing of Srila Prabhupada's books, which so far includes the Bhagavad-gita As It Is, Sri Isopanisad, and Easy Journey To Other Planets. Their website reads:

the e-books of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
edited by Purujit Dasa according to the original manuscripts, transcripts, lectures and articles

Here is an example of the changes Purujit has made to the Gita:

"Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized master will initiate you by knowledge because he has seen the truth."
(Purujit's version of Bg verse 4.34)

Purujit has also added an awkward sentence to Srila Prabhupada's purport to that verse:

“Neither by self study of the book of knowledge can help one to progress in spiritual life.” (Purujit)

Throughout this article, key excerpts of Purujit’s words from the video will be indented with the author’s comments interspersed.

Purujit: Unfortunately, devotees in general are not aware that Prabhupada’s books have been edited and this is what Prabhupada wanted. Just like Hayagriva was the first editor and Jayadvaita was also the editor in Prabhupada’s times. Prabhupada gave a raw manuscript or transcriptions or dictation tapes and this raw material was edited so these editors would add their own style, their own form of how to present what Prabhupada is saying. So it was a cooperation between Prabhupada and his editors and they’ve done a lot of changes to the original material. So the real question is which changes are wrong and which changes are OK, are fine. This is the real controversy, not whether Srila Prabhupada’s words are changed or not.

Jayadvaita and now Purujit like to say that they are going back to the “original manuscript” to make changes to Srila Prabhupada’s books. Not only is such a course of action completely unauthorized in itself, but the term “original manuscript” is misleading as it gives the impression that they are going back to the way Srila Prabhupada had “originally” wanted it. The “original manuscript” they use is an early version of the manuscript. The final version of the manuscript that was carefully worked on by Srila Prabhupada and Hayagriva and then presented to MacMillan for printing – said to have been nearly identical to the 1972 version of the Gita we use today – may be substantially different from the “original manuscript” we have available from the BBT. For the sake of discussion, though, we will use the general term “manuscript” in this article. No matter what manuscript we are speaking of, the point stands that no where has Srila Prabhupada requested or authorized his 1972 Gita to be “revised” according to “the manuscript”.

So which changes from the manuscript are wrong and which changes are OK? This controversy can be (and has been) easily resolved: any changes made from any version of a manuscript which resulted in the printed edition of a book personally accepted or approved of by Srila Prabhupada (e.g., the 1972 Gita) are authorized changes.

Purujit: So the thing is, yes Prabhupada actually himself said that the early editors, they have done changes which he did not approve and this was recorded in the Rascal Editors conversation June 22, 1977. There Prabhupada actually confirms that he was not completely aware of the editing process. He just gave them the empowerment and he had faith that they were going to edit nicely.

Purujit appears to be exaggerating the scope of the Rascal Editors conversation. He assumes that Srila Prabhupada was referring to changes made directly from a manuscript. However, the changes being

discussed in that conversation pertained to the earlier *printed editions* of his books. In the Rascal Editors conversation, these printed editions themselves were being edited further, and this is what Srila Prabhupada had an issue with.

Prabhupāda: The nonsense, they are... They are correcting my trans... Rascal. [...]

Prabhupāda: Now here is "O sages," and the word meaning is "of the munis." Just see.

In this conversation, it was not any changes made from a manuscript that Srila Prabhupada had a problem with. Rather, it was changes made to an already printed version of the Srimad Bhagavatam. Srila Prabhupada had it translated one way, and some rascal editor whimsically changed that translation. Therefore, we cannot use this as evidence that Srila Prabhupada took issue with changes made from a manuscript. That the scope of the Rascal Editors conversation pertained to changes made to already printed versions of his books is further evidenced by the following excerpt from the same conversation.

Yaśodā-nandana: In the Gurukula we were teaching Īśopaniṣad class to the children. So we took original, maybe first edition... [break] ...Prabhupāda and the words which the recent edition of the Press is wrong. Many changes were brought. They were trying to make better English, but sometimes, to make better English, I think they were making philosophical mistakes also. There is no so much need of making so much better English. Your English is sufficient. It is very clear, very simple. We have caught over 125 changes. They're changing so many things. We are wondering if this is necessary. I will show you today. I have kept the book.

Prabhupāda: I know that these rascals are doing. What can be done? How they can be relied on?

Again we see that the issue is not with changes made from a manuscript but changes made to an already printed edition of a book, in this case, the first edition of Īśopaniṣad.

Prabhupāda: ... 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.

From understanding the actual context of this conversation, we can see that by “the next printing should be again to the original way” Srila Prabhupada is referring to an actual printed edition – not to a manuscript; He considers the earlier printed editions to be the original way. Therefore, when we speak of “original” in this context we refer to the original printing/edition, just as Srila Prabhupada had.

Purujit: Some devotees say that Prabhupada was supervising the editing very minutely, every single word. This is false propaganda. It's not true. That's why Prabhupada actually approved editors, because he was just so busy preaching that he could not possibly go over it again...

Whether Srila Prabhupada read every single word or not does not matter. What we are concerned with is the fact that Srila Prabhupada authorized those original printings. It is not our business to question the validity of Srila Prabhupada's approval of an edition of a book by way of speculating on whether he knew of or read each and every word in it. Srila Prabhupada approved of and blessed the books.

Purujit: The original Bhagavad-gita is the one with the cattle-raising, with the errors. So as soon as you change even a little thing, then you're entering the realm of non-original or your input and so on.

Yes, the 1972 edition of the Gita has "cattle-raising." But Srila Prabhupada specifically requests that to be corrected:

Prabhupāda: They are not cattle raising, that was...Cow protection. It has to be corrected. It is go-rakṣya, go. (Room Conversation—July 4, 1975, Chicago)

The issue is over unauthorized changes, not authorized changes. Srila Prabhupada's order is for the next printing to be again in the original way – obviously save and except any specific changes requested by Srila Prabhupada such as the one above to the Gita.

Purujit: If you compare with the manuscript, the original manuscript, six chapters personally typed by Prabhupada himself, how can we question the authenticity of this document? Then you see that actually it is Hayagriva who has done all these changes, not Jayadvaita. Jayadvaita is bringing it just back to the manuscript.

But where does Srila Prabhupada order for the next printing to be done directly from a manuscript by any editor? Srila Prabhupada orders the next printing to be done in the original way *in which it was printed*, as has already been shown from the Rascal Editors conversation. And since in the Rascal Editors conversation Srila Prabhupada and his disciples were discussing the editing of *all printed editions* of his books by numerous "rascal editors", the instruction by Srila Prabhupada "the next printing should be again to the original way" should be applied on the same scale.

Purujit: Why should we read something that has been changed by Hayagriva? I mean Hayagriva was approved by Prabhupada, he worked with Prabhupada, that's fine but that doesn't make him a pure devotee without any mistakes.

That is the nature of a manuscript: it gets changed. Srila Prabhupada deputed editors specifically to make changes to transcripts or manuscripts for the final printing. All this talk of Hayagriva changing things is useless because that was his specific task assigned by Srila Prabhupada. In the case of the Gita, it was the 1972 edition which he approved of, save and except any corrections he requested.

Purujit: I personally have nothing against Jayadvaita's editing or his understanding or this and that. This is just propaganda. If you have a problem with Jayadvaita, let's put it aside.

Yes, Purujit is using Jayadvaita's same arguments to justify changing Srila Prabhupada's books, and now we've dealt with these arguments once again on their own merit.

Purujit: These devotees, they say original way means to the first printing. But it just doesn't make any sense because that's the first thing Prabhupada is complaining about: about the first edition. So how can Prabhupada say print it back to the original way, exactly how it was changed in the first place, print the changed version? It doesn't make any sense. ...Original means it originates with Srila Prabhupada. Hayagriva or any editor is not the origin of the writings.

Purujit seems to have completely misunderstood the actual conversation which he is referring to. As demonstrated already in this article, in the Rascal Editors conversation, Srila Prabhupada is referring to an already printed edition, not a manuscript. Srila Prabhupada is not complaining about the first edition, he is complaining about changes made to those first editions/printings. Srila Prabhupada approved of these final works and therefore they are attributed to him as the author. This is how the publishing world works. They are the originally authorized final works of Srila Prabhupada. That is what original means.

Purujit: This is a challenge to all these different people. We challenge: If Prabhupada is in vani, if he is in sound, why can't he instruct someone like myself to edit his books? What is the difficulty to accept? It means that they don't have faith in Prabhupada.

Because Srila Prabhupada already gave the order for the next printings to be done in the original way. There's no need for his books to be edited. We have such faith in Srila Prabhupada that we accept his order as is. If we didn't have faith, we might disregard that order and attempt to make a new edition/printing.

Related articles and resources:

[Purujit's book editing project](#)

[PADA's reply to Purujit's book editing project](#)

[Purujit's reply to PADA](#)

[Rascal Editors Conversation](#)

[The so-called manuscript](#)

[Jayadvaita undoes Prabhupada's work on Gita Manuscript](#)

[Madhudvisa dasa re ISKCON original manuscript scam](#)

[Hayagriva spent hours every day with Srila Prabhupada going over every verse](#)

[BBT's response to manuscript scam allegations](#)

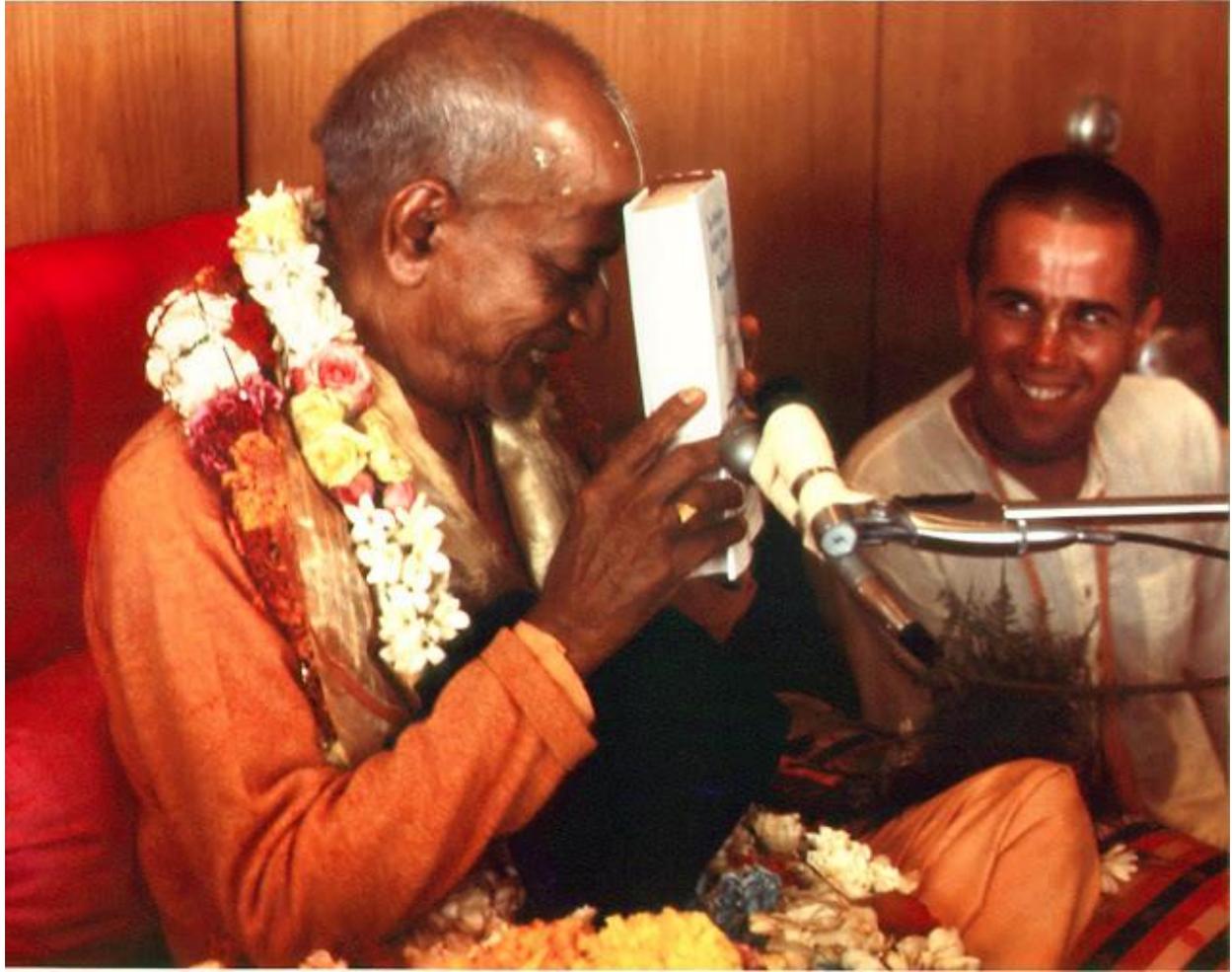


Photo: Srila Prabhupada honoring his 1972 edition of Bhagavad-gita As It Is