

A newly discovered insertion for Bhagavad-gita As It Is (What should we do with it?)

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Summary

In a manuscript page for *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* given to the Bhaktivedanta Archives within the last year or so, we have discovered a sentence – a strong comment – handwritten by Srila Prabhupada for insertion but somehow left out of the book. Now that we have found it, what should we do with it? The BBT welcomes thoughtful comments.

What did we find?

Going through some items acquired within the last year or so by the Bhaktivedanta Archives, I came upon a manuscript page for *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* I had never seen before. And on the page was an insertion, in Srila Prabhupada's handwriting, that never got into the book.

The page (included at the end of this file) gives the full text for chapter 10, text 36. As published in both the first and second editions, here's how the translation reads:

I am also the gambling of cheats, and of the splendid I am the splendor.
I am victory, I am adventure, and I am the strength of the strong.

And here is the first paragraph of the purport (again the same for both editions):

There are many kinds of cheaters all over the universe. Of all cheating processes, gambling stands supreme and therefore represents Krsna. As the Supreme, Krsna can be more deceitful than any mere man. If Krsna chooses to deceive a person, no one can surpass Him in His deceit. His greatness is not simply one-sided—it is all-sided.

Now, on the newly found page of the manuscript, towards the end of that paragraph, Srila Prabhupada has written something between the lines. Here it is:

The unfortunate commentator, who wants to cheat Krsna and the public by saying that there is something greater than Krsna, is cheated by Krsna and the commentator cannot understand Krsna at any length of time.

Clearly, Srila Prabhupada is disparaging the views of the illustrious commentator Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, who wrote, “It is not the personal Krishna to whom we have to give ourselves up utterly but the unborn, beginningless eternal who speaks through [Krishna].”

I had seen Srila Prabhupada make a similar insertion before. In 1971 (February 9), while the first edition of *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* was in production, Srila Prabhupada had written to Satsvarupa in Boston, then the home of ISKCON Press:

I hope that everything is going on well there with the production of Bhagavad-gita. In this regards please make the following addition to the text:

Chapter IX, The Most Confidential Knowledge, in the purport of the 34th verse you will read “Krishna is not an ordinary human being; He is the Absolute Truth, His Body, Mind and He Himself are One and Absolute”. Immediately therefore you can add the following: In the Kurma Purana, as it is quoted by Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami in his Anubhasya comments of Caitanya Caritamrta, 5th chapter Adilila, verses 41-48, “deha dehi bibhedo ’yang nesvare vidyate kvacit” which means that there is no difference in Krishna, the Supreme Lord, between Himself and His body.

This evidence is given here to show that there is no distinction between Krishna’s body and Himself since such commentators as Dr. Radhakrishnan make such distinction.

So when I saw the newly found manuscript page, with its additional handwritten lines, I saw Srila Prabhupada doing something I had seen him do before: insert a strong swipe at Dr. Radhakrishnan’s impersonalist views.

How did it get lost?

Now, why didn’t that handwritten insertion get into the book?

For this chapter the Archives has another, retyped manuscript, for which the text for this verse and purport closely match our newly found page – but without the inserted lines. Why without them? My guess would be this:

The copy on which Srila Prabhupada inserted them was a carbon copy, and the retyping was done from the original, which of course didn’t have those extra lines. When Hayagriva Prabhu edited the book, he

worked either from that same original or from a retyped version of it, and either way the page he worked from didn't have those lines for him to see. Hayagriva Prabhu *had* the carbon copy (the Archives received the page from among his personal papers), but he must not have referred to it, and so those lines were simply forgotten.

What should we do?

Now the question is: Now that we have those lines, what should we do with them?

The manuscript page is undoubtedly authentic, and the handwriting is undoubtedly Srila Prabhupada's. It seems clear this was an insertion he wanted. So what should we do?

Though perhaps there are other choices, I see three:

1. Leave the book the way it is. The reader won't get the benefit of those extra lines – the point Srila Prabhupada made will simply remain lost -- but we will preserve the page the way the author saw and approved it.
2. Add the extra sentence as a footnote, something like this: "Editor's note: In 2011 we discovered a manuscript for this page with the following additional sentence (here slightly edited) handwritten by the author for insertion: 'The unfortunate commentator who wants to cheat Krsna and the public by saying that there is something greater than Krsna is cheated by Krsna, and the commentator cannot understand Krsna after any length of time.' "

This would leave the original text intact, retrieve the lost sentence, and tell the reader some of its history as well, at the cost of diverting some of his attention from the point being made to the history of its being found. For a critical edition this would be entirely appropriate. But for a popular edition that nowhere else notes readings from variant manuscripts, this treatment is not what scholars would insist on, because it would be unnecessary and inconsistent. (It would be the only footnote in the book and the only direct comment by the editor.)

3. Simply insert the lost text: "The unfortunate commentator who wants to cheat Krsna and the public by saying that there is something greater than Krsna is cheated by Krsna, and the commentator cannot understand Krsna after any length of time." The text will differ from the earlier editions, the reader won't get any editorial history, but Srila Prabhupada's point will be delivered, smoothly and in its proper place.

I attach a copy of the newly found page. If you'd like to express an opinion about which choice would be the best, please write to editorial.decisions@pamho.net, telling us as concisely as you can which choice you would recommend and why. The BBT's editors, and ultimately its trustees, will make the final decision.

Thank you. Hare Krishna.

TEXT 36

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ENGLISH SYNONYMS

dyutam-gambling, chalayatham-of all cheating, asmi- I am, tejas-splendour, tejasvinam-of everything splendid, jayo-victory, asmi-I am, vyasvasayo-adventure, asmi-I am, sattvam-strength, sattvatam-of all strong, aham-I am

TRANSLATION

Amongst the cheaters I am gambling; amongst the splendid I am the splendor, amongst the industrialist I am the adventure , I am victory and I am strength among the strong

PURPORT

There are many kinds of cheaters all over the universe . Of all cheating ~~process~~ process, gambling is the best cheating process and therefore on account of its supremacy amongst all cheating gambling is also a representation of Krishna. This means that those who are deceitful, Krishna *the unfortunate commander, who wants to cheat Krishna and the public by saying that there is something* is more deceitful of them. If Krishna should want to deceive any person, *greater than Krishna, - is cheated by Krishna and the commander cannot understand him at any length of time.* nobody can surpass him in his greatness. Greatness is not one-sided, it must be all-sided. Amongst the victorious, he is the most victorious: amongst the enterprising industries, he is the best industry, the best adventurous, amongst the strong he is the best strong man. When Krishna was present nobody could surpass in his strength in his childhood he lived in the Govanden Hill. Nobody can therefore can surpass his cheating business, nobody can surpass in splendor, nobody can surpass him in victory, nobody can surpass him in enterprising and nobody can surpass him in strength also.

TEXT 37

ENGLISH SYNONYMS

vrshnimam-amongst the descendents of the Krishna, vasudevo-Krishna and Duvorka, pandavanam-of the Pandavas , dhanamajayah-Arjuna, mininam-