

Kṛṣṇa

✿ The Blessed Lord ✿



A Case Study in Posthumous Editing of
Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*

Kṛṣṇa, “The Blessed Lord”

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Bhagavad-gītā As It Is

Ajit Krishna Dasa

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Title: *“Kṛṣṇa, The Blessed Lord”: A Case Study in Posthumous Editing of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*

Author: Ajit Krishna Dasa

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Dedication

Dedicated to

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,

who gave Bhagavad-gītā As It Is to the world,
and whose published words should be preserved with fidelity,
gratitude, and care.



Preface

This short book began as a focused study of one phrase in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*: “The Blessed Lord said.” In the revised edition, this phrase was replaced with “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said.” Such a change may appear minor. After all, no devotee should object to identifying Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That is the very foundation of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s presentation of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

But this book is not primarily about whether “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” is theologically true. Nor is it about whether *Bhagavān* can be explained in that way. The real question is whether later editors were authorized to remove “The Blessed Lord said” from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published book after his departure.

That question opens a much larger issue. How should the published words of a departed ācārya be treated? What is the proper relationship between evidence, editorial judgment, and authorization? When does explanation become alteration? When does restoration become replacement? And who has the right to decide that the published wording of the spiritual master should no longer stand?

This book examines one change as a case study. The phrase “The Blessed Lord said” becomes a lens through which the larger principles of posthumous editing can be seen more clearly. The point is not that every textual question is simple. It is not. Manuscripts, lectures, early editorial work, word-for-word meanings, authorial approval, and later

explanations all matter. But evidence must be handled in its proper place. Evidence may justify notes, appendices, and scholarly discussion in a separate book clearly identified as an annotated edition of the original *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. It does not automatically justify replacing the published words of the ācārya in the body of the original text.

For that reason, this book argues for a simple principle: preserve the original text unchanged, and place later explanations only in a separate annotated edition, clearly presented as such. The editor may speak, but he should speak from the margins of an annotated edition.

The purpose of this book is therefore not merely to defend one phrase. It is to defend a principle of preservation. If “The Blessed Lord said” can be removed after Śrīla Prabhupāda’s departure on the basis of later editorial reconstruction, then the same logic can be applied elsewhere. One change becomes precedent for another. The original text becomes unstable, awaiting the next argument, the next manuscript theory, the next consistency rule, or the next theological improvement. That is not preservation. That is replacement by installments.

This study is offered for devotees, scholars, and serious readers who wish to understand the book-change issue.. The matter deserves careful thought, not emotional shortcuts. The question is not whether we value theological precision. The question is whether theological precision gives later editors the authority to overwrite Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published words.

I argue that it does not.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Among the many changes made to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, one may at first appear small: the replacement of “The Blessed Lord said” with “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” as the translation of *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*. To many devotees this change may even seem harmless, or perhaps an improvement. After all, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s entire mission was to establish that Kṛṣṇa is not an ordinary man, not a symbolic teacher, not an impersonal manifestation of Brahman, and not merely a great religious personality. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

At the outset, one linguistic misunderstanding must be eliminated. “The Blessed Lord” does not mean that Kṛṣṇa has received a blessing from someone superior to Him. In traditional religious English, “blessed” can mean holy, glorious, praiseworthy, or worthy of reverence. Similarly, “to bless the Lord” means to praise, glorify, and worship Him—not to confer a blessing upon Him. The expression therefore neither diminishes Kṛṣṇa’s supremacy nor implies that He depends upon anyone else. This point is examined more fully in Chapter 10.

So why object?

The answer is simple, but it requires careful thought. The issue is not whether Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is. Nor is the issue whether *Bhagavān* can be explained as “the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” It certainly can, and Śrīla Prabhupāda repeatedly does so. The real issue is whether later editors had sufficient authority to remove “The

Blessed Lord said” from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* after his departure.

That distinction is crucial. A phrase may be theologically true and still not be authorized as a posthumous replacement. “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” is true. It is doctrinally precise. It directly expresses the central point of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s presentation of the *Gītā*. But truth alone does not settle the editorial question. The question is not only, “Is this phrase accurate?” The question is, “Did Śrīla Prabhupāda authorize later editors to remove the phrase that appeared in his published book and replace it with this one?”

This book will argue that he did not.

This must be understood carefully. I am not arguing that “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” is wrong. I am not arguing that *Bhagavān* should not be explained in that way. I am not arguing against notes, manuscript comparisons, lecture references, or theological clarification. Such material can be valuable. But it belongs in a separate annotated edition, clearly presented as an annotated edition of the original. It does not belong as a replacement in the body of the original text itself.

The original edition should remain original. If an annotated edition is prepared, it should preserve the original text unchanged and place all later explanations, variants, and editorial discussions in notes, appendices, or commentary. The reader should be able to see clearly where Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published text ends and where later editorial explanation

begins. That distinction is not a technical nicety. It is the difference between preservation and replacement.

The evidence commonly presented in favor of the change deserves to be heard carefully. BBT International and Jayadvaita Swami have argued that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s manuscripts generally used “The Personality of Godhead said” or “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said”; that the word-for-word sections of the 1972 edition render *śrī-bhagavān uvāca* in that way; that Śrīla Prabhupāda once objected to “The Blessed Lord said”; and that “The Supreme Personality of Godhead” is a more doctrinally explicit rendering of *Bhagavān*. These are not trivial points. A serious presentation should not pretend that the opposing argument consists only of weak evidence or careless reasoning.

But the question remains: What do these points prove? Do they prove that “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” is a valid and important explanation of *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*? Yes. Do they prove that a note explaining the fuller theological meaning of *Bhagavān* could be useful in an annotated edition? Certainly. But do they prove that later editors had the right to remove “The Blessed Lord said” from the verse translations of the 1972 *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*? That is a very different question.

As Graham M. Schweig, known among devotees as Garuda Dāsa, has argued in his scholarly work on the posthumous editing of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, evidence relevant to a wording may justify an informative annotation, but that does not automatically justify altering the published text of a departed spiritual master. Schweig is especially relevant here because he is not merely commenting in passing. He edited

the 2024 scholarly volume *Posthumous Editing of a Great Master's Work: Special Focus on the Writings of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda*, and his work directly addresses the principles involved in this controversy. [Graham M. Schweig / Garuda Dāsa, ed., *Posthumous Editing of a Great Master's Work: Special Focus on the Writings of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda*, Lexington Books, 2024]

This distinction between annotation and alteration lies at the heart of the matter. One may explain Śrīla Prabhupāda's text without replacing it. One may clarify the meaning of *Bhagavān* without erasing the phrase through which Śrīla Prabhupāda's published *Gītā* was read, studied, distributed, and heard by thousands.

The case becomes even stronger when we consider the full historical evidence. Śrīla Prabhupāda heard "The Blessed Lord said" read aloud in lectures. He used the phrase himself. In one lecture, after quoting the verse, "The Blessed Lord said, 'I instructed this imperishable science of yoga to the sun-god Vivasvān,'" he asked, "What is difficulty there?" He then explained, "The Blessed Lord. He is Lord. He can say." In that context, "The Blessed Lord" did not weaken his theological argument. It carried it. [Śrīla Prabhupāda, lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.1]

Nor was Śrīla Prabhupāda unaware that the Macmillan translations differed from earlier forms. On December 24, 1969, Hayagrīva directly told him that the translations in the Macmillan edition had been "somewhat changed" and asked whether he liked them. Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "Whichever is better, you think. That's all. You can follow this Macmillan." When Hayagrīva said that the translations were good, Śrīla

Prabhupāda confirmed, “Yes. You can follow that translation. Simply synonyms he can add, transliterations.” [Śrīla Prabhupāda, “Discussion with BTG Staff,” Boston, December 24, 1969]

This conversation is highly significant. It shows that Śrīla Prabhupāda did not treat the Macmillan verse translations as a mere accidental corruption to be discarded. Rather, he allowed them to be followed while adding the Sanskrit apparatus. This also helps explain why the word-for-word section may render *śrī-bhagavān uvāca* as “the Supreme Personality of Godhead said,” while the running verse translation reads “The Blessed Lord said.” These two layers need not be enemies. The word-for-word gives the technical theological meaning; the verse translation gives the literary devotional rendering.

Thus, one may defend “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” as a true and powerful explanation of *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*. But that defense does not cancel the authority of the published 1972 wording. The existence of evidence for an alternate rendering does not automatically authorize its insertion into the body of the original text.

This book will therefore examine the evidence on both sides and argue for a simple conclusion: “The Blessed Lord said” should have been preserved in the verse translations of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. If later editors believed the phrase required explanation, the proper place for that explanation was not the body of the original text, but a separate annotated edition clearly identified as such. Preserve the original text. Explain in annotation. Do not replace the ācārya’s published words after his departure.

That is the principle. And on this principle, the change from “The Blessed Lord said” to “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” cannot be justified.

Chapter 2 – The Strongest Argument for the Change

A fair evaluation requires that the case for the revision first be presented in its strongest form. The issue cannot be responsibly assessed by answering only a weak or simplified version of BBT International’s position. If the replacement of “The Blessed Lord said” was unauthorized, this must be shown even after the best evidence in favor of the change has been given its full weight.

The BBT International/Jayadvaita Swami argument may be stated as follows: the second edition did not really change Śrīla Prabhupāda’s meaning; it restored it. According to this argument, “The Blessed Lord said” was not Śrīla Prabhupāda’s preferred rendering of *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*, but an early editorial substitution introduced into the first edition. Jayadvaita Swami has argued that from the Second Chapter onward, whenever Kṛṣṇa speaks, the Sanskrit reads *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*, and Śrīla Prabhupāda rendered this as “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said.” In the first edition, however, this became “The Blessed Lord said,” allegedly through the work of an early editor. The second edition, therefore, claims to restore what it regards as the fuller and more exact wording. [Jayadvaita Swami, “Bhagavad-gītā Revisions Explained,” discussion of *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*, BBTedit.com]

The first strength of this argument is manuscript evidence. Jayadvaita Swami explains that the “original manuscripts” differ according to different parts of the *Gītā*. For the first five or six chapters, they refer to

manuscripts apparently typed by Śrīla Prabhupāda himself; for the middle six chapters, to original transcriptions of his tapes; and for the final chapters, to older retyped manuscripts from which the 1972 Macmillan edition was produced. According to Jayadvaita Swami, these are the oldest and most reliable manuscripts in the BBT files. [Jayadvaita Swami, “About this conference and about the manuscripts,” BBTedit.com] If these sources generally contain “The Personality of Godhead said” or “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said,” then BBT International can argue that the second edition is not moving away from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s words, but back toward them.

The Review/Revisions Panel document broadens this point. It argues that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s intention should not be determined solely from the 1972 edition, but from an “aggregate history” that includes the original manuscripts, the 1968 and 1972 editions, the testimony of editors and others present at the time, and the complete body of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published works. From this perspective, the 1972 published text is not treated as the primary or exclusive repository of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s will. Rather, it is one piece of a wider evidentiary field. On that basis, the Panel concludes that “The Supreme Personality of Godhead” better represents Śrīla Prabhupāda’s intention than “The Blessed Lord.” [Review/Revisions Panel document, “‘The Blessed Lord’ or ‘The Supreme Personality of Godhead’?”]

This broader argument also includes a historical claim about how “The Blessed Lord” entered the text. The Panel document points to Hayagrīva’s account in *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, where Śrīla Prabhupāda is said to have allowed him, when editing questions became

too persistent, to “just copy the verses from some other translation,” because the purports were more important. From this, the Panel suggests that Hayagrīva likely appropriated “Blessed Lord” from Dr. Radhakrishnan’s translation. This suggestion gains some plausibility from the fact that Dr. S. Radhakrishnan’s *The Bhagavadgītā* does indeed use “The Blessed Lord said” as a recurring rendering of *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*, apparently around thirty times. Radhakrishnan also uses expressions such as “blessed Nārāyaṇa” and “blessed one,” showing that “blessed” was part of his religious English vocabulary. Thus, from the Panel’s perspective, “The Blessed Lord said” was not merely a random English choice, but part of an existing English *Gītā* translation tradition that may have entered Śrīla Prabhupāda’s book through editorial borrowing. The Panel document also refers to correspondence in which Hayagrīva asked Jayadvaita to use “Blessed Lord” consistently throughout the *Gītā*, while claiming that Śrīla Prabhupāda had approved the phrase. [Review/Revisions Panel document, “‘The Blessed Lord’ or ‘The Supreme Personality of Godhead’?”; Hayagrīva Dāsa, *The Hare Krishna Explosion*, chapter 12; Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgītā*, occurrences of “The Blessed Lord said” as a rendering of *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*]

This reading is further supported, from the revision side, by Jayadvaita Swami’s own statement that the translations were, in one sense, “the least important part of the book,” since other scholars had already translated the *Gītā*, while Śrīla Prabhupāda’s unique contribution lay especially in his purports. Jayadvaita Swami also states that Śrīla Prabhupāda allowed the original editor some freedom in editing the translations to convey a

poetic flavor, while warning him not to make needless changes in the purports. [Jayadvaita Swami, “To Senior ISKCON Devotees,” Appendix B of *Responsible Publishing*, cited in Paratrikananda Dāsa, “It is clear. The Blessed Lord said...”]

This is an important part of the case. If the author’s own draft or dictated wording says one thing, and the published edition says another, an editor may argue that restoring the earlier wording better represents the author’s intended meaning. If, in addition, the alternative wording can plausibly be traced to an editor borrowing from another translation, BBT International can argue that the revision removes an editorial layer rather than adding one. That argument cannot simply be dismissed. It has real force, at least at the level of evidence.

The second strength is theological precision. “The Blessed Lord” is not false, but it is less explicit. It does not convey, with the same force, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s central theological point: that the speaker of *Bhagavad-gītā* is not a symbolic teacher, not an impersonal divine principle, not merely a saintly or exalted being, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Since Śrīla Prabhupāda’s entire presentation of *Bhagavad-gītā* is meant to defeat impersonalist and speculative readings, BBT International can argue that “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” better serves the purpose of the book.

This point becomes especially important at *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.2, the first place in the main dialogue where Kṛṣṇa speaks after Arjuna’s collapse. Jayadvaita Swami points out that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purport to this verse explains at length what “the Supreme Personality of Godhead” means

and why Kṛṣṇa must be understood in that way. The Panel document makes the same point sharply, arguing that this purport becomes disconnected from the translation if “The Supreme Personality of Godhead” is not used in the verse translations themselves. From BBT International’s perspective, the translation should therefore agree directly with the theological explanation given in the purport. If the purport establishes Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, why should the verse translation use the softer expression “The Blessed Lord”? [Jayadvaita Swami, “Bhagavad-gītā Revisions Explained,” discussion of *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.2 and *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*, BBTedit.com; Review/Revisions Panel document, “‘The Blessed Lord’ or ‘The Supreme Personality of Godhead’?”]

The third strength is Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own spoken objection to “Blessed Lord said.” Jayadvaita Swami cites a July 3, 1970 initiation lecture in Los Angeles, where Śrīla Prabhupāda says that *bhagavān uvāca* means “Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa,” and then directly criticizes the alternative rendering: “Sometimes they say, ‘Blessed Lord said.’ No. Why you say? The Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa said.” [Śrīla Prabhupāda, initiation lecture, Los Angeles, July 3, 1970, cited by Jayadvaita Swami in “Bhagavad-gītā Revisions Explained,” BBTedit.com] This is the strongest single piece of evidence for the change. Taken by itself, it appears to show that Śrīla Prabhupāda did not want “Blessed Lord” to stand as the standard translation of *bhagavān uvāca*.

The Panel document adds another piece of related evidence: while checking the galley proofs of the 1968 Collier abridged *Gītā*, Śrīla

Prabhupāda reportedly crossed out “Blessed Lord” at *Bhagavad-gītā* 10.1 and replaced it in his own handwriting with “Personality of Godhead.” From the revision side, this handwritten correction is important because it appears to show Śrīla Prabhupāda acting not merely as a preacher making a contextual remark, but as an author/editor correcting the text itself. Therefore, BBT International can argue that the later revision follows a correction Śrīla Prabhupāda personally made, rather than merely imposing a later preference. [Review/Revisions Panel document, “‘The Blessed Lord’ or ‘The Supreme Personality of Godhead’?”]

The fourth strength is consistency within the structure of the book. In the 1972 edition, the word-for-word section may render *śrī-bhagavān uvāca* as “the Supreme Personality of Godhead said,” while the running translation gives “The Blessed Lord said.” BBT International may argue that this creates an unnecessary inconsistency. If the word-for-word gives the actual meaning of *Bhagavān* as “the Supreme Personality of Godhead,” then the verse translation should not appear to weaken or blur that meaning. From this perspective, the revision simply brings the translation into harmony with the Sanskrit equivalents. The Panel document also emphasizes that in the 1972 *Gītā*, “Blessed Lord” is not found in the word-for-word meanings or purports, which strengthens the consistency argument from their side. [Review/Revisions Panel document, “‘The Blessed Lord’ or ‘The Supreme Personality of Godhead’?”]

The fifth strength is the broader BBT International theory of restoration. In *Responsible Publishing*, BBT International argues that its revised editions were prepared by consulting “original tapes, manuscripts, and

transcripts” in order to restore material that previous editions had “lost, obscured, or distorted.” [BBT International, *Responsible Publishing*, section on how the editors serve Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books] Within that framework, “The Blessed Lord said” is viewed not as Śrīla Prabhupāda’s authorially accepted wording, but as one more case where an earlier editorial layer obscured his intended expression.

BBT International also appeals to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s trust in his editors. *Responsible Publishing* argues that Śrīla Prabhupāda trusted both Hayagrīva Prabhu and Jayadvaita Swami in their editorial service, and it cites Śrīla Prabhupāda’s statement regarding Jayadvaita Swami: “Concerning the editing of Jayādvaita Prabhu, whatever he does is approved by me. I have confidence in him.” [Śrīla Prabhupāda, letter to Rādhāvallabha Dāsa, September 7, 1976, cited in BBT International, *Responsible Publishing*] From BBT International’s point of view, Jayadvaita Swami’s later work on the *Gītā* was not an arbitrary intrusion, but a continuation of editorial service already approved by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Thus, the strongest argument for the change is not that “The Blessed Lord” is necessarily heretical or that “The Supreme Personality of Godhead” is merely stylistically preferable. The strongest argument is that manuscripts, theological emphasis, word-for-word renderings, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purport to 2.2, his handwritten correction in the 1968 galley, at least one direct spoken statement, the possible editorial borrowing from Radhakrishnan, and the aggregate evidence of his wider usage all point toward “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” as the fuller and more exact rendering of *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*. Therefore,

according to BBT International, the second edition restored Śrīla Prabhupāda’s intended meaning and protected readers from what it regards as a weaker editorial substitute.

This argument should be taken seriously. It contains real evidence. But the decisive question is not whether the evidence is relevant. It is. The decisive question is whether it is sufficient to authorize the posthumous removal of “The Blessed Lord said” from the published 1972 edition.

More precisely, BBT International’s case must establish two levels of authorization. First, it must show that posthumous editorial reconstruction of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published books is legitimate in principle. Second, it must show that this particular change, from “The Blessed Lord said” to “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said,” is specifically justified by the available evidence. BBT International’s case attempts to do both: first by appealing to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s trust in his editors and the theory of restoration, and second by appealing to manuscripts, word-for-word renderings, the 1968 galley correction, the July 1970 lecture, and the wider use of “Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

Even if the evidence deserved to be presented, the question remains whether it belonged in the body of the original text or in a separate annotated edition. That is a different question, and it is precisely at this point that the argument for the revision begins to fail.

Chapter 3 – Evidence Is Not Authorization

The argument for the revision has real evidentiary force. It should not be dismissed as if it were merely a matter of arbitrary preference. Śrīla Prabhupāda did often explain *Bhagavān* as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The manuscripts may support that fuller rendering in many places. The word-for-word sections often give precisely that meaning. And the July 3, 1970 statement, in which Śrīla Prabhupāda objected to “Blessed Lord said,” must be taken seriously. [Śrīla Prabhupāda, initiation lecture, Los Angeles, July 3, 1970] A responsible treatment cannot simply brush this evidence aside because it is inconvenient. To do so would be to begin with a conclusion and then merely decorate it with reasons.

But the crucial point is this: evidence for another possible wording is not the same as authorization to alter the original published text.

This distinction is easily missed, but it governs the whole issue. One may produce evidence that “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” is a valid, precise, and even preferable explanation of *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*. That still does not settle whether a later editor may remove “The Blessed Lord said” from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s already published *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. The first question is lexical and theological. The second is authorial and editorial. They are related, but they are not identical.

This is where the discussion must become more careful. The BBT International argument often moves from “this other wording has evidence behind it” to “therefore the published wording should be replaced.” But that conclusion does not automatically follow. A manuscript variant, a lecture statement, or a word-for-word equivalent may show that another rendering deserves attention. It may justify discussion in an appendix. It may justify a scholarly comparison of the manuscript, the 1968 edition, the 1972 edition, and Śrīla Prabhupāda’s lectures. It may justify a note in a separate annotated edition. But none of that by itself grants authority to revise the body of the original text after the author’s departure.

Graham M. Schweig, Garuda Dāsa, makes precisely this point in relation to “The Blessed Lord.” He does not deny that BBT International’s evidence is relevant. Rather, he says that such evidence would make “an informative annotation for the reader,” but does not justify the major editorial decision to remove and replace a phrase that appeared in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published books and from which he lectured for years. [Graham M. Schweig / Garuda Dāsa, ed., *Posthumous Editing of a Great Master’s Work: Special Focus on the Writings of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda*, Lexington Books, 2024, discussion of “The Blessed Lord”] That is the sober scholarly position. Explain the evidence. Do not erase the text.

The difference matters because *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* is not an unpublished draft lying on an editor’s desk. Nor is it a private notebook awaiting reconstruction. The 1972 edition was published, distributed, praised, used in preaching, read by devotees, and lectured from by Śrīla

Prabhupāda himself. [Śrīla Prabhupāda’s recorded lectures from the Macmillan / 1972 *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*; see also Austin Gordon / Bhūtatma Dāsa Prabhu’s discussion in Schweig, *Posthumous Editing of a Great Master’s Work*, 2024] It had entered the world as his book. Therefore, the burden of proof for changing it after his departure must be extremely high. It is not enough to say, “We found an earlier wording.” One must show that Śrīla Prabhupāda authorized the later removal of the published wording.

This is especially important in sacred literature. In ordinary publishing, posthumous revision is already ethically delicate. With the work of an ācārya, the matter becomes far more serious. The editor is not merely adjusting a literary product. He is handling the received form of the teacher’s instruction. In such a case, restraint is not cowardice. It is fidelity.

The proper principle is therefore simple:

Where evidence is complex, preserve the original published text unchanged and explain the complexity only in a separate annotated edition clearly presented as such.

That approach would have allowed readers to see everything: that *Bhagavān* means the Supreme Personality of Godhead, that Śrīla Prabhupāda often used that fuller expression, that he once objected to “Blessed Lord said,” that he also heard and used “The Blessed Lord,” and that the published 1972 translation reads as it does. Nothing would be hidden. Nothing would be erased. The reader would receive both the

original text and the evidence, without confusing the author's published words with the later editor's conclusions.

That is responsible publishing. The alternative is to let the editor silently decide which layer of evidence cancels the others. And once that principle is accepted, the published words of the ācārya are no longer stable. They become provisional, waiting for the next editor with another argument, another manuscript theory, another consistency rule, or another theological improvement. That is not preservation. That is replacement by installments.

Thus, BBT International's evidence may be relevant, but relevance is not authorization. The most it can justify is annotation in a separate annotated edition. It does not justify removing "The Blessed Lord said" from the original published text of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

Chapter 4 – Śrīla Prabhupāda Approved Following the Macmillan Translations

One of the strongest pieces of evidence against the revision is the December 24, 1969 conversation between Śrīla Prabhupāda and Hayagrīva. This conversation is important because it directly concerns the status of the Macmillan translations. It shows that Śrīla Prabhupāda was not unaware that the translations had been changed from earlier manuscript forms. The matter was explicitly brought to his attention.

Hayagrīva said:

“I know the translations themselves, they were somewhat changed in *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* as it came out in Macmillan. Did you like those translations?”

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied:

“Whichever is better, you think. That’s all. You can follow this Macmillan.”

Hayagrīva then said:

“They’re good. I think they’re very good.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda answered:

“Yes. You can follow that translation. Simply synonyms he can add, transliterations.”

[Śrīla Prabhupāda, “Discussion with BTG Staff,” Boston, December 24, 1969]

This exchange is highly significant. Hayagrīva did not merely ask a vague question about publishing policy. He specifically mentioned that the Macmillan translations had been “somewhat changed.” In other words, Śrīla Prabhupāda was not being asked to approve an abstract ideal edition. He was being asked about the actual published Macmillan translations, the translation tradition in which “The Blessed Lord said” appeared.

Śrīla Prabhupāda did not respond, “No, restore the manuscript wording.” He did not say, “Do not follow those translations.” He did not instruct Hayagrīva, “Wherever *śrī-bhagavān uvāca* appears, it must be translated as ‘The Supreme Personality of Godhead said.’” Rather, he said, “You can follow this Macmillan.” When Hayagrīva affirmed that the translations were good, Śrīla Prabhupāda confirmed: “Yes. You can follow that translation.”

This does not prove that Śrīla Prabhupāda personally inspected every line of every Macmillan translation with equal attention. No responsible argument should claim that. But it does prove something very important: the Macmillan translations cannot be dismissed as a mere unauthorized corruption that Śrīla Prabhupāda would certainly have rejected if only he

had known. He did know that they had been changed. He was asked about them. And he permitted them to be followed.

The final sentence is especially important: “Simply synonyms he can add, transliterations.” Here Śrīla Prabhupāda distinguishes between the running translation and the added Sanskrit apparatus. The translation may be followed; synonyms and transliterations may be added. This is exactly the structure of the complete edition: Sanskrit text, transliteration, word-for-word equivalents, translation, and purport. Therefore, the later presence of “the Supreme Personality of Godhead said” in the word-for-word section does not automatically cancel the running translation “The Blessed Lord said.” The two may belong to different layers of the presentation Śrīla Prabhupāda allowed.

This point directly weakens one of BBT International’s arguments for the revision. BBT International may argue that because the word-for-word gives “the Supreme Personality of Godhead said,” the translation should be made identical. But Śrīla Prabhupāda’s December 1969 instruction allows for a different reading. He approved following the Macmillan translation while adding synonyms and transliterations. That means the word-for-word section can provide the technical theological meaning of *Bhagavān*, while the verse translation can retain the literary-devotional form “The Blessed Lord said.”

This is not necessarily an inconsistency that must be corrected. It may simply be the natural result of a layered edition. The word-for-word is analytical. The translation is literary. The purport is theological and explanatory. To demand that all layers use identical phrasing is to flatten

the structure of the book. It treats the translation as if it must mechanically reproduce the synonyms. But a word-for-word equivalent and a verse translation do not perform the same function. One gives lexical meaning; the other presents a readable English rendering. This point will be examined more fully below, but it already matters here because Śrīla Prabhupāda himself permitted the translation and the Sanskrit apparatus to coexist.

The December 1969 conversation also affects how we understand Śrīla Prabhupāda's later July 1970 objection to "Blessed Lord said." That later statement cannot be isolated from this earlier approval. If Śrīla Prabhupāda had already permitted the Macmillan translations to be followed, then the July 1970 comment is not automatically a standing editorial order to replace the phrase everywhere. It may show that in that preaching context he wanted the fuller meaning of *Bhagavān* emphasized. But a contextual emphasis is not the same as posthumous authorization for global textual revision.

The burden of proof remains with the editor. If Śrīla Prabhupāda had wanted "The Blessed Lord said" removed from the Macmillan translation, the December 1969 conversation provided an obvious opportunity to say so. Instead, he approved following that translation and adding the Sanskrit apparatus. That fact must carry substantial weight.

Therefore, the Macmillan wording cannot be treated as an orphaned editorial accident with no authorial sanction. It had, at minimum, Śrīla Prabhupāda's permission to stand as part of the developing complete

edition. That does not end every question about the phrase, but it strongly supports the central conclusion of this book: if later editors believed the phrase required explanation, the proper place was a note in a separate annotated edition clearly presented as such, not a replacement in the body of the original text.

Chapter 5 – Śrīla Prabhupāda Heard and Used “The Blessed Lord”

The strongest evidence against treating “The Blessed Lord said” as an intolerable editorial error is not merely theoretical. It is historical. Śrīla Prabhupāda heard the phrase, lectured from it, and in some cases used it himself. This does not prove that “The Blessed Lord said” is always the most literal rendering of *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*. It proves something more relevant to the present question: Śrīla Prabhupāda did not consistently treat the phrase as something that had to be removed.

This is especially important because BBT International’s argument relies heavily on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s July 3, 1970 statement, where he objected to the rendering “Blessed Lord said” and insisted that *bhagavān uvāca* means “The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, said.” That statement must be taken seriously. It is real evidence. But it cannot be treated in isolation, as if it were the only time Śrīla Prabhupāda encountered the phrase. [Śrīla Prabhupāda, initiation lecture, Los Angeles, July 3, 1970]

An earlier version of this book incorrectly treated the English rendering of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.17.27 in the 1969 Back to Godhead republication as though it had appeared in Abhay Charan Das’s original 1936 address in The Harmonist. I had been directed to the 1936 address but had not yet located the original issue, and I relied instead on what I believed to be a faithful reproduction of the original text. Examination of the original publication shows, however, that the sentence beginning

“One should understand the spiritual master to be as good as I am,” including the words “said the Blessed Lord,” was not part of the 1936 address. The original gives the Sanskrit verse and then continues, “that is, the Acharya has been identified with Godhead Himself.” The English rendering was added when the address was republished in Back to Godhead. The phrase therefore cannot legitimately be cited as Abhay Charan Das’s own wording from 1936. This error has been corrected here.

This correction should not obscure a separate and genuine piece of evidence from the same issue of The Harmonist. Immediately before the prose address, The Harmonist printed Abhay Charan Das’s signed poem “Sree Vyas Puja Offering,” which contains the words “Blessed than heaven, sweeter than May.” That expression is authentically present in the 1936 publication and remains valid evidence of his own devotional use of “blessed.” The poem and the prose address must, however, be kept bibliographically and evidentially distinct. [Abhay Charan Das, “Sree Vyas Puja Offering,” The Harmonist, vol. XXXII (1935–36), pp. 290–291; “Sree Vyas Puja Homage,” pp. 291–298.]

The 1969 republication remains relevant, but its evidential force is more limited. On Jun 29, 1969 , Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed Rayarama that “my old homage address to my Guru Maharaja” was to be published in issue no. 27. When the completed issue reached him, he wrote on Sep 9, 1969 that “BTG no. 27, it is nicely done,” while also making several specific criticisms of its presentation and contents. The English rendering of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.17.27 with “said the Blessed Lord”

appears on page 25 of that issue. This does not prove that Śrīla Prabhupāda read or specifically approved those words. It does show that the wording appeared in an issue whose publication of the address he had personally requested and which he later reviewed in some detail. It should therefore be treated as contextual corroboration, not as direct evidence of his authorship. [Śrīla Prabhupāda, letter to Rayarama, Jun 29, 1969 ; letter to Brahmananda, Sep 9, 1969 ; Back to Godhead, vol. 1, no. 27 (Aug 1, 1969), p. 25.]

The same editorial rendering was retained when the address was published again as “The Universal Teacher” in Back to Godhead, vol. 10, no. 8 (1975), where it appears on page 26. Śrīla Prabhupāda later referred to another passage in precisely that issue by volume, number, page, column, and paragraph. That establishes his knowledge of the issue but not his reading or approval of the wording on page 26; indeed, he stated elsewhere that he could not see every article. The 1975 occurrence is therefore further evidence of editorial continuity, not a separate proof of personal authorization. [Back to Godhead, vol. 10, no. 8 (1975), pp. 24–26; Śrīla Prabhupāda, letter to Jagannātha-suta, Aug 28, 1976 ; letter to Rūpānuga, Sep 23, 1976 .]

The direct evidence is stronger than this publication history. Austin Gordon, Bhūtatma Dāsa Prabhu, drew attention to examples in which Śrīla Prabhupāda either accepted, used, or explained the phrase “The Blessed Lord.” One of the most important appears in the purport to Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 6.132: in every verse Vyāsadeva says śrī-bhagavān uvāca, “the Supreme Personality of Godhead said,” or “the

Blessed Lord said,” and “the Blessed Lord is the Supreme Person.” This is crucial. Śrīla Prabhupāda does not here treat “The Blessed Lord” as a denial of Kṛṣṇa’s personality. He explicitly identifies the Blessed Lord as the Supreme Person. [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 6.132, purport; Austin Gordon / Bhūtatma Dāsa Prabhu, discussion of “The Blessed Lord,” in Graham M. Schweig, ed., Posthumous Editing of a Great Master’s Work, 2024.]

Even more striking is the lecture evidence involving Bhagavad-gītā 4.1. Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes the verse translation:

“The Blessed Lord said, ‘I instructed this imperishable science of yoga to the sun-god Vivasvān.’”

He then asks:

“What is difficulty there? Is there any word which you cannot understand? Is anyone here who cannot understand these lines? It is clear. ‘The Blessed Lord said, “I instructed this imperishable science of yoga to the sun-god Vivasvān.”’”

Then he makes the theological point directly:

“The Blessed Lord. He is Lord. He can say.”

[Śrīla Prabhupāda, lecture on Bhagavad-gītā 4.1–2, Columbus, May 9, 1969 ; cited/discussed by Austin Gordon / Bhūtatma Dāsa Prabhu in Schweig, Posthumous Editing of a Great Master’s Work, 2024.]

This is not a casual occurrence. In this passage, “The Blessed Lord” is not functioning as a weak substitute for Kṛṣṇa’s divinity. Śrīla Prabhupāda uses the phrase itself to establish Kṛṣṇa’s authority. His argument is simple: the verse is clear; the Blessed Lord is the Lord; therefore He can speak to the sun-god. The phrase “The Blessed Lord” carries the very theological force the revision supposedly needed to restore. Gordon rightly presents this passage as evidence against treating the phrase as something that had to be replaced. [Austin Gordon / Bhūtātma Dāsa Prabhu, discussion of *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.1, in Schweig, *Posthumous Editing of a Great Master’s Work*, 2024]

Nor is this the only example. Paratrikananda Dāsa’s compilation points to several further instances. The phrase was read three times in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s presence in the Los Angeles lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.46–62 on December 16, 1968. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself repeated “The Blessed Lord said” in his Glasgow lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.11 on August 1, 1972. He asked for the translation of *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.1 in Jakarta on February 27, 1973, where “The Blessed Lord said” was read aloud. In Stockholm on September 10, 1973, he himself said, “The translation reads, “The Blessed Lord said...”” These examples show that the phrase was not merely hidden in print. It was part of the living preaching use of the book. [Paratrikananda Dāsa, “It is clear. The Blessed Lord said...” , examples from lectures and conversations]

This has major implications for the chronology. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s 1970 objection cannot honestly be presented as though he had never previously encountered the phrase and then finally discovered its defect. In lectures before December 1969, he had already heard “The Blessed

Lord” read aloud and had himself used the phrase. [Śrīla Prabhupāda’s pre-December 1969 *Bhagavad-gītā* lectures where “The Blessed Lord” was read or used; see also Austin Gordon / Bhūtātma Dāsa Prabhu’s discussion in Schweig, *Posthumous Editing of a Great Master’s Work*, 2024] And after this period, on December 24, 1969, he explicitly permitted Hayagrīva to follow the Macmillan translations while adding synonyms and transliterations. [Śrīla Prabhupāda, “Discussion with BTG Staff,” Boston, December 24, 1969]

That chronology matters. If Śrīla Prabhupāda had first encountered “The Blessed Lord said” in July 1970 and immediately rejected it, BBT International’s case would be much stronger. But that is not what happened. The phrase was already part of the lecture and publishing environment. Śrīla Prabhupāda did not react to it as an intolerable theological corruption. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.1 lecture, he used it positively and did not find that it prevented the reader from understanding Kṛṣṇa’s position.

One may object that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s positive use of the phrase in a lecture does not amount to a formal editorial approval. That is true. But the point cuts both ways. If a positive lecture use does not amount to formal editorial approval, then a critical lecture remark does not automatically amount to formal editorial disapproval authorizing global posthumous revision. Both kinds of evidence must be weighed together. Once they are weighed together, the matter becomes too complex to justify a simple replacement in the text.

The Review/Revisions Panel document replies that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s failure to object when hearing a phrase read aloud is not by itself proof of approval. That caution is reasonable. But the present argument does not rest merely on silence. It rests on a larger pattern: Śrīla Prabhupāda heard the phrase, used it himself, used it positively in argument, and later approved following the Macmillan translations while adding synonyms and transliterations. That is materially different from a mere argument from non-objection. [Review/Revisions Panel document, “‘The Blessed Lord’ or ‘The Supreme Personality of Godhead’?”]

The July 1970 objection shows that Śrīla Prabhupāda could object to the phrase in a particular context when he wanted the full theological meaning of *Bhagavān* stressed. That is not surprising. His whole preaching movement centered on establishing Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But that statement does not prove that he gave a general editorial order to remove “The Blessed Lord said” from the published translation. The earlier lecture evidence shows that “The Blessed Lord” was not, for him, automatically unacceptable. He could use it while making precisely the same point: Kṛṣṇa is not an ordinary speaker; He is Lord.

The context of the July 3, 1970 statement also matters. In that lecture, Śrīla Prabhupāda was criticizing impersonalist ways of avoiding Kṛṣṇa’s name and personality. He mentions editions that say “Paramātmā uvāca” or use impersonal expressions instead of directly saying Kṛṣṇa. In that context, his objection to “Blessed Lord said” appears as part of his broader rejection of impersonalist evasions. But that is not the same as saying that “The Blessed Lord said,” as used in his own *Bhagavad-gītā* As

It Is, had the same impersonalist function. His own book names Kṛṣṇa constantly and establishes His personality throughout. [Śrīla Prabhupāda, initiation lecture, Los Angeles, July 3, 1970; Paratrikananda Dāsa, “It is clear. The Blessed Lord said...”]

This should caution us against flattening Śrīla Prabhupāda’s language into a single standardized formula. The fact that he used more than one expression may reflect context, audience, rhetorical purpose, or the layered structure of his *Gītā* presentation. Sometimes the fuller technical expression was needed. Sometimes the published literary rendering was used. Sometimes both could stand together. The editor’s task is not to erase such variation merely because one phrase is more explicit than another.

The published 1972 edition itself confirms that “The Blessed Lord” was not marginal. It appears not only in the verse translations but even in the picture captions connected with the *Gītā*’s visual presentation. For example, the caption to the illustration for *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.1 reads: “The Blessed Lord first instructed this imperishable science of yoga to Vivasvan.” [A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 1972 edition, picture caption for *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.1] This was part of the book’s public form, its devotional atmosphere, and its preaching presentation. The phrase was not hidden in some obscure corner waiting for a later editor to rescue readers from it.

The handwritten correction at *Bhagavad-gītā* 10.1 is real evidence, but it must not be made to carry more weight than it can bear. If Śrīla Prabhupāda crossed out “Blessed Lord” in one place, that may show that

in that context he preferred “Personality of Godhead.” But it does not automatically prove that he wanted the phrase removed everywhere. According to Paratrikananda Dāsa’s response to the Review/Revisions Panel document, “The Blessed Lord” appeared fourteen other times in the 1968 abridged edition, and there is no evidence that Śrīla Prabhupāda crossed those out or gave a general instruction to remove the phrase universally. This is significant because a single correction is not the same as a standing order. It may also suggest that Śrīla Prabhupāda could accept different renderings in different contexts, which is precisely the point at issue. [Paratrikananda Dāsa, “It is clear. The Blessed Lord said...”; Review/Revisions Panel document, “‘The Blessed Lord’ or ‘The Supreme Personality of Godhead’?”]

Therefore, the lecture evidence does not merely add one more quotation to the file. It changes how the entire issue must be read. It shows that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s relation to the phrase was not reducible to one critical remark or one handwritten correction. He heard it. He used it. He preached from it. He identified the Blessed Lord as the Supreme Person. And only after such usage did he permit the Macmillan translations to be followed.

The conclusion is not that “The Blessed Lord said” is always a more precise translation than “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said.” That is not the issue. The conclusion is that the phrase cannot honestly be dismissed as a mere unauthorized theological defect. The evidence is mixed, and because it is mixed, the proper editorial response should have been restraint. A note in a separate annotated edition could have explained that *Bhagavān* means the Supreme Personality of Godhead and

that Śrīla Prabhupāda sometimes preferred or emphasized that fuller rendering. But the published phrase itself should have been preserved in the original text.

That is the difference between allowing the evidence to illuminate Śrīla Prabhupāda's text and using the evidence to overrule it. The first is scholarship. The second is editorial domination dressed up as restoration. This historical evidence also prepares the way for another point: the difference between the word-for-word and the verse translation need not be treated as a defect.

Chapter 6 – The Word-for-Word and the Verse Translation Serve Different Functions

One of BBT International’s arguments for changing “The Blessed Lord said” is based on consistency. In the 1972 edition, the word-for-word section renders *śrī-bhagavān uvāca* as “the Supreme Personality of Godhead said,” while the running verse translation reads “The Blessed Lord said.” BBT International can therefore argue that the translation should be brought into agreement with the word-for-word. On the surface, this sounds reasonable. If the word-for-word tells us what the Sanskrit means, why should the translation say something different? [A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 1972 edition, example: *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.2, word-for-word and translation]

The problem is that a word-for-word equivalent and a verse translation do not perform the same function.

The word-for-word section is analytical. It breaks the Sanskrit into individual terms and gives the reader a more direct lexical and theological guide to the original language. In that context, rendering *Bhagavān* as “the Supreme Personality of Godhead” is natural. It gives the doctrinal force of the word as Śrīla Prabhupāda understood and taught it. It makes clear that *Bhagavān* does not refer merely to a powerful being, an abstract divine principle, or a revered teacher. It refers to Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Person, possessing all opulences in full.

The running verse translation, however, has a different purpose. It is meant to present the verse as readable English. It must carry meaning, rhythm, tone, and devotional atmosphere. A running translation often renders the force of a phrase rather than mechanically reproducing every lexical equivalent. If it merely repeated the word-for-word equivalents in smoother order, it would cease to be a translation and become a rearranged glossary. That may satisfy a certain type of editorial mind, but it would not necessarily serve the reader better.

This distinction is built into the very structure of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s complete edition gives the Sanskrit text, transliteration, word-for-word equivalents, translation, and purport. These are not redundant layers. Each has its own function. The Sanskrit gives the original text. The transliteration allows the reader to pronounce it. The word-for-word gives a more direct analytical sense of the Sanskrit. The translation gives the verse in readable English. The purport explains the meaning according to paramparā. [A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 1972 edition, standard verse format]

Once this structure is understood, the difference between “the Supreme Personality of Godhead said” in the word-for-word and “The Blessed Lord said” in the translation need not be seen as a defect. It may simply reflect two different functions within the same pedagogical presentation. The word-for-word gives the technical theological meaning of *Bhagavān*. The translation presents the phrase in a literary-devotional form. The first defines; the second renders.

This does not require us to prove that every difference was consciously designed in detail. It is enough to show that the difference is not automatically an error. A layered edition may contain different kinds of rendering for different purposes. To insist that the verse translation must always reproduce the word-for-word terminology assumes precisely what needs to be proven.

Nor is this unusual in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books. Paratrikananda Dāsa rightly points out that there are many examples where words appear in the translation that do not appear in the word-for-word section. That is not, by itself, evidence of error. It is simply how translation works. The word-for-word section gives lexical guidance; the translation gives the meaning in readable English. If every word or phrase in the translation had to be directly present in the word-for-word section, many accepted translations would suddenly become “inconsistent.” That would be a mechanical standard, not a literary or theological one. [Paratrikananda Dāsa, “It is clear. The Blessed Lord said...”]

This point becomes especially important in light of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s December 24, 1969 conversation with Hayagrīva. When Hayagrīva mentioned that the Macmillan translations had been “somewhat changed” and asked whether Śrīla Prabhupāda liked them, Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “You can follow this Macmillan.” When Hayagrīva said the translations were good, Śrīla Prabhupāda confirmed, “Yes. You can follow that translation. Simply synonyms he can add, transliterations.” [Śrīla Prabhupāda, “Discussion with BTG Staff,” Boston, December 24, 1969]

That instruction is directly relevant. Śrīla Prabhupāda did not say that the running translations must be replaced wherever the synonyms give a fuller or more technical meaning. He allowed the Macmillan translation to be followed while adding synonyms and transliterations. This means that a difference between the translation and the word-for-word is not automatically an error. It may be precisely the result of the structure he permitted.

Therefore, BBT International’s consistency argument is not decisive. Consistency is useful when it preserves meaning. But consistency can also become destructive when it flattens distinct literary and pedagogical functions into one uniform expression. A cookbook and a chemical analysis may describe the same food differently. Only a bureaucrat would demand that the recipe read like a lab report.

The same point answers the claim that the purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.2 becomes disconnected unless the verse translation itself says “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said.” That argument assumes that the word-for-word, translation, and purport must all use the same expression in order to function coherently. But the 1972 structure already gives the reader the theological meaning in the word-for-word and purport while preserving the literary rendering in the translation. The purport does not become disconnected simply because the translation uses a reverential English phrase. Rather, the purport explains who the Blessed Lord is: Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The purport explains the identity and theological significance of the speaker; it does not require the translation line to reproduce the same technical phrase in order for the passage to be coherent.

In the case of *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*, the 1972 structure already gives the reader both dimensions. The word-for-word makes the theology explicit: Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The translation preserves the devotional English phrase: “The Blessed Lord said.” The purports then repeatedly establish beyond doubt that the Blessed Lord is not a vague deity or impersonal absolute, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person.

Thus, the presence of “the Supreme Personality of Godhead said” in the word-for-word does not require the removal of “The Blessed Lord said” from the verse translation. The two renderings can stand together. Indeed, they may work better together than when one is made to eliminate the other. The reader receives both theological precision and literary devotional expression.

The proper response, again, would have been annotation in a separate annotated edition clearly presented as such. A note in such an edition could easily have explained that *Bhagavān* is more fully understood as “the Supreme Personality of Godhead,” while preserving the published translation unchanged in the original text. That would honor both accuracy and authorial restraint. Replacing the phrase, however, assumes that the word-for-word layer has the authority to cancel the translation layer. That assumption is not demonstrated. It is merely imposed.

Chapter 7 – Austin Gordon: Variation May Be Meaningful

Austin Gordon, Bhūtatma Dāsa Prabhu, is important here because he challenges one of the hidden assumptions behind the revision: that variation is necessarily a defect. BBT International’s argument tends to treat the difference between “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” and “The Blessed Lord said” as an inconsistency to be corrected. Gordon suggests another possibility: in the language of a great spiritual teacher, variation may carry meaning, emphasis, and pedagogical purpose. [Austin Gordon / Bhūtatma Dāsa Prabhu, discussion of “The Blessed Lord,” in Graham M. Schweig, ed., *Posthumous Editing of a Great Master’s Work*, 2024]

This is not a sentimental argument that every variation must have been consciously planned in every instance. That would be too much. The stronger argument is more modest and more difficult to dismiss: where a departed ācārya’s published work contains variation, and where the ācārya himself used that variation in preaching, later editors should be very slow to flatten it into uniformity. To standardize sacred language after the author’s departure is not a neutral act. It may remove nuances the editor does not perceive.

Gordon notes that Śrīla Prabhupāda did not always speak as if “The Blessed Lord” and “The Supreme Personality of Godhead” were mutually exclusive. Rather, he could identify them. He cites Śrīla Prabhupāda saying that Vyāsadeva says *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*, “the Supreme

Personality of Godhead said,” or “the Blessed Lord said,” and then explaining that “the Blessed Lord is the Supreme Person.” [Austin Gordon / Bhūtatma Dāsa Prabhu, citing Śrīla Prabhupāda on “the Blessed Lord is the Supreme Person,” in Schweig, *Posthumous Editing of a Great Master’s Work*, 2024] This is decisive against the crude claim that “The Blessed Lord” is inherently impersonal or theologically defective. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself could use the phrase and immediately define it in personalist terms.

This matters because the purpose of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* is not simply to produce a mechanically literal English equivalent for every Sanskrit expression. Śrīla Prabhupāda was preaching. He was teaching readers how to understand Kṛṣṇa. He was confronting impersonalism, atheism, sentimentalism, and speculative interpretation. In such preaching, different expressions may serve different functions. “The Supreme Personality of Godhead” gives doctrinal precision. “The Blessed Lord” carries a more literary and devotional tone. Both may be legitimate within the structure of the book.

As noted above, Gordon also points to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.1, where Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes the published translation and then explains, “The Blessed Lord. He is Lord. He can say.” [Śrīla Prabhupāda, lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.1; discussed by Austin Gordon / Bhūtatma Dāsa Prabhu in Schweig, *Posthumous Editing of a Great Master’s Work*, 2024] Here the phrase is not a theological weakness. It becomes part of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s argument against interpretation. Because Kṛṣṇa is the Blessed Lord, His statement

should be accepted as it is. The phrase does not obscure the speaker's authority; it supports it.

This suggests that the variation itself may have pedagogical value. A reader first encounters "The Blessed Lord said" in the flowing verse translation. Then the word-for-word section, purports, and Śrīla Prabhupāda's larger theological presentation clarify who that Blessed Lord is: the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The movement from reverential phrase to theological definition is not necessarily a problem. It can serve a pedagogical purpose.

The danger of editorial standardization is that it assumes the editor knows which form of expression is best everywhere. But a spiritual teacher's language is not merely a set of terms to be regularized. It has voice, rhythm, emphasis, and context. A later editor may think he is removing inconsistency when in fact he is removing texture. This is the difference between preserving a living voice and reducing it to a controlled vocabulary. The latter may look cleaner, but clean is not always faithful. A hospital floor is clean; no one wants to live there.

Gordon's argument therefore supports a principle of restraint. If Śrīla Prabhupāda used both expressions, and if he could identify "The Blessed Lord" with "the Supreme Person," then the phrase should not be removed merely because another expression is more explicit. The proper response is to preserve the original published wording unchanged and, where needed, explain the theological meaning in a separate annotated edition.

This point is essential for the larger argument. The case against the revision does not depend on denying that “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” is an excellent theological rendering. It is excellent. The issue is whether excellence in one register gives later editors authority to erase another register that Śrīla Prabhupāda published, heard, used, and explained. Gordon’s answer, implicitly, is no. Meaningful variation in the original published text should be preserved, not standardized away after the author’s departure on the basis of later editorial preference.

Chapter 8 – Graham Schweig: Annotation, Not Alteration

Graham M. Schweig, known among devotees as Garuda Dāsa, is especially important here because his treatment of “The Blessed Lord” clarifies the proper scholarly solution to this kind of textual problem. He does not simply dismiss BBT International’s evidence. He acknowledges that the evidence is relevant. But he draws the decisive line where it must be drawn: relevant evidence may justify annotation in a separate annotated edition; it does not necessarily justify alteration of the original published text. [Graham M. Schweig / Garuda Dāsa, discussion of “The Blessed Lord,” in *Posthumous Editing of a Great Master’s Work: Special Focus on the Writings of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda*, Lexington Books, 2024]

This distinction is essential. One may fully support the publication of an annotated edition of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Such an edition could include notes on manuscript variants, early editorial history, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s lectures, alternate renderings, Sanskrit details, theological explanations, and references to previous ācāryas. Properly done, this could be a valuable service. But such an edition must honestly present itself as what it is: an annotated edition of the original. It must not quietly replace the original published text and then present the result as if it were simply *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

That is the heart of the matter. There should be an edition with no changes to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published text. None. Not one. Not “only

small” changes. Not “only obvious” improvements. Not “only” theological clarifications. The original edition should stand as the original edition. If someone wants to publish a scholarly or devotional annotated edition, then let him do so openly, with the original text preserved and the notes clearly marked as notes. That is honest. That is transparent. That is how a civilized textual tradition behaves before everyone starts “improving” the ācārya like a man repainting a deity with a hardware-store brush.

Schweig’s point about “The Blessed Lord” fits exactly within this principle. The Review/Revisions Panel and BBT International present several pieces of evidence: Śrīla Prabhupāda’s handwritten correction in a 1968 galley proof, his 1970 lecture objection to “Blessed Lord said,” the theological explanation in the purport to 2.2, and the fact that the word-for-word sections render *śrī-bhagavān uvāca* as “the Supreme Personality of Godhead said.” [Review/Revisions Panel evidence on “The Blessed Lord,” as discussed by Graham M. Schweig / Garuda Dāsa in *Posthumous Editing of a Great Master’s Work*, 2024] Schweig does not say that this evidence is meaningless. Rather, he says that these points would make an “informative annotation for the reader,” but that they do not justify the major editorial decision to remove “The Blessed Lord” from the published text. [Graham M. Schweig / Garuda Dāsa, “annotation, not alteration” discussion of “The Blessed Lord,” in *Posthumous Editing of a Great Master’s Work*, 2024]

This is exactly the right distinction. In such a separate annotated edition, a note could have said something like this:

The Sanskrit *śrī-bhagavān uvāca* identifies the speaker as *Bhagavān*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the word-for-word section this is rendered as “the Supreme Personality of Godhead said.” Śrīla Prabhupāda also sometimes emphasized this fuller rendering in lectures. The 1972 verse translation, however, reads “The Blessed Lord said.”

Such a note would tell the truth. It would conceal nothing. It would allow the reader to see the complexity of the evidence. It would preserve Śrīla Prabhupāda’s original published text while informing the reader of the fuller theological and manuscript background. No violence would be done to the text. No reader would be misled. No editor would need to sit in the author’s chair after the author had left this world.

This is not a compromise with unauthorized editing. It is the opposite. It protects the original published text while allowing legitimate scholarship to function in its proper place. The text remains the text. The editor’s explanation remains the editor’s explanation. The two are not confused.

This distinction also protects the reader. When the body of the text is changed, the reader may never know that a change has occurred. The editor’s decision becomes invisible. The reader receives not Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published wording plus an explanation, but a replacement wording silently installed into the main text. That is a serious problem. With annotation in a clearly marked annotated edition, however, the reader is allowed to see the evidence and judge the matter honestly. The original wording remains available, and the editor’s reasoning is placed

before the reader rather than hidden inside the text as if it were the author's own final decision.

Schweig's broader work on posthumous editing reinforces this point. He frames the treatment of a departed author's completed work in terms of moral and textual responsibility: the natural principle is to leave the work as the author left it, or to treat it only as the author clearly instructed, "not more, not less." [Graham M. Schweig / Garuda Dāsa, general principle on posthumous editing, in *Posthumous Editing of a Great Master's Work*, 2024] This principle becomes even weightier when the author is not merely a literary figure but a spiritual master whose works function as sacred instruction for a living community.

Therefore, the proper solution is not to pretend that BBT International's evidence does not exist. It does. Nor is the solution to deny that *Bhagavān* means the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It does. The proper solution is to preserve "The Blessed Lord said" in the original published text and explain the relevant evidence only in a separate annotated edition. That is the difference between serving the text and replacing it.

In short, Schweig's principle may be stated plainly: publish the original without changes, and publish annotations as annotations. Do not merge the editor's reconstruction into the body of the ācārya's book and then call the result the original. That is precisely where the change from "The Blessed Lord said" to "The Supreme Personality of Godhead said" fails. It takes what could have been a useful annotation in a clearly marked

annotated edition and installs it into the body of the original text. That crosses the line from explanation to alteration.

Chapter 9 – “Blessed” in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Own Devotional English

The word “blessed” should not be treated as if it were foreign to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own devotional vocabulary. This point is more important than it may first appear. One possible objection to “The Blessed Lord said” is not merely that another rendering is more theologically explicit, but that “The Blessed Lord” sounds like an imported religious expression, perhaps borrowed from another translator or belonging to a vague, non-Vaiṣṇava devotional English. But the evidence from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own books, letters, lectures, and poetic language does not support that impression.

“Blessed” was a normal part of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s devotional English. It appears in several kinds of contexts: in speaker formulas, in descriptions of exalted devotees and divine personalities, in references to sacred places, in descriptions of spiritual conditions, in correspondence, and in his own poetic expression. Therefore, the phrase “The Blessed Lord said” should not be rejected merely because it contains the word “blessed.” The word itself was not alien to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s language.

The strongest examples are found in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, where “blessed” appears in formulas very close to the disputed phrase. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.4.11, the Sanskrit *devy uvāca* is rendered in the synonyms as “the blessed goddess said,” and the translation begins in the same way: “The blessed goddess said.” In

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.1.38, *śrī-viṣṇudūtā ūcuḥ* is rendered in the synonyms as “the blessed messengers of Lord Viṣṇu spoke,” and the translation begins, “The blessed messengers of Lord Viṣṇu, the Viṣṇudūtas, said.” These are not merely casual uses of the word. They are speaker formulas: “the blessed goddess said,” “the blessed messengers of Lord Viṣṇu said.” Structurally, they are very close to “The Blessed Lord said.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.4.11; 6.1.38]

This matters because the issue is not whether a goddess or Viṣṇudūta is ontologically equal to Kṛṣṇa. Obviously not. The point is linguistic and devotional. In these examples, “blessed” functions as an honorific adjective. It marks the person or persons described as exalted, auspicious, holy, fortunate, glorious, or worthy of reverence. It does not imply that they are being defined by dependence upon someone else’s blessing. If “the blessed goddess said” and “the blessed messengers of Lord Viṣṇu said” can function naturally in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published books, then “The Blessed Lord said” cannot be dismissed as inherently defective English merely because it contains the word “blessed.”

The same usage appears elsewhere in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published works. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.28.22 speaks of “the blessed Lord Śiva.” This is especially noteworthy because it shows the phrase “blessed Lord” itself functioning naturally in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published devotional English. Again, the point is not to compare Lord Śiva with Kṛṣṇa in ontological status. The point is that “blessed Lord” is not an impossible or alien English construction in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.28.22]

Other examples confirm the broader pattern. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.4.1–2 begins, “The blessed king said to Śukadeva Gosvāmī”; Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.5.21 speaks of “the blessed women in the heavenly planets”; and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.29.28 addresses Devahūti as “O blessed mother.” Further examples include Kṛṣṇa as Yaśodā’s “blessed transcendental child,” “the blessed dust of your feet,” and “fully blessed existence” in the spiritual world. Of particular importance is “Blessed Brajabhūmi,” which can be traced from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s 1964 Delhi edition of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.8.21 into the later ISKCON edition. Since the wording predates ISKCON and its Western editors, it cannot be attributed to Hayagrīva or another later editor. The exact readings are compared in Appendix 1. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.4.1–2; 9.5.21; 3.29.28; 1.8.21; 10.8.31; 3.22.6; Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 5.22, purport]

These examples show a broad pattern. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books can speak of a blessed goddess, blessed messengers, the blessed Lord Śiva, a blessed king, blessed women, a blessed mother, blessed Vrajabhūmi, Kṛṣṇa as a blessed transcendental child, blessed dust, and blessed existence. The word is not functioning in a narrow sense of “one who has received a blessing from a superior.” It is functioning as devotional English. It expresses sanctity, auspiciousness, good fortune, exaltedness, holiness, glory, and reverence.

Nor is this usage limited to published scriptural translations. Śrīla Prabhupāda used “blessed” in his own correspondence and speech. In a letter to Revatīnandana dated March 25, 1970, he referred to “blessed Roy Richard.” In a room conversation in Los Angeles on July 1, 1971, he said, “Hawaii is blessed land,” referring to its natural abundance and

auspicious condition. These are ordinary examples of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s living English usage. They show that “blessed” was not merely an inherited translation convention appearing in isolated places. He himself used the word naturally. [Śrīla Prabhupāda, letter to Revatīnandana, March 25, 1970; Śrīla Prabhupāda, room conversation with Govinda dāśī and Gaurasundara, Los Angeles, July 1, 1971]

The same point appears in his own devotional poetry. In his 1936 Vyāsa-pūjā poem to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote, “Adore, adore ye all the happy day, blessed than heaven, sweeter than May.” The wording is poetic, but the meaning is clear: the day is a blessed day, more sacred, auspicious, and glorious than heaven. Again, “blessed” does not mean that the day is being defined by dependence upon a superior blesser. It means that the day is spiritually glorious and worthy of celebration. This is the signed poem, distinct from the prose address beginning on page 291. [Abhay Charan Das, “Sree Vyas Puja Offering,” *The Harmonist*, vol. XXXII (1935–36), pp. 290–291.]

Another important detail is that this usage was not merely hidden in print. In a lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.38 in Los Angeles on June 4, 1976, the translation was read aloud in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s presence: “The blessed messengers of Lord Viṣṇu, the Viṣṇudūtas, said...” Śrīla Prabhupāda did not stop the reading to object to the word “blessed” in this speaker formula. He proceeded to explain the verse. This does not, by itself, establish a formal editorial rule. But it does show that this kind of devotional use of “blessed” was present in his published books and in his lectures without being treated as theologically defective. [Śrīla

Prabhupāda, lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.38, Los Angeles, June 4, 1976]

Taken together, these examples show that “blessed” was not an alien term imported from outside Śrīla Prabhupāda’s devotional language. It was part of his own English vocabulary and part of the published English of his books. The forms “blessed day,” “blessed land,” “blessed goddess,” “blessed messengers,” “blessed Lord Śiva,” “blessed king,” “blessed mother,” “blessed Vrajabhūmi,” “blessed transcendental child,” and “fully blessed existence” all belong to a recognizable devotional register.

Therefore, “The Blessed Lord said” should not be dismissed as linguistically foreign, sentimentally weak, or inherently misleading. One may still argue that “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” is more explicit as a theological rendering of *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*. That point has already been granted. But the claim that “The Blessed Lord said” is unsuitable simply because of the word “blessed” is not supported by Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own usage.

The proper conclusion is more careful. “The Blessed Lord said” may not be the most technically explicit rendering of *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*, but it belongs to a devotional English pattern that Śrīla Prabhupāda himself used and that appears throughout his published works. If one wished to explain the fuller theological meaning of *Bhagavān*, that explanation could have been given in a note in a separate annotated edition. But the word “blessed” itself cannot be treated as evidence that the phrase was foreign to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s language or defective in Vaiṣṇava devotional English.

Chapter 10 – “Blessed” in Gauḍīya Devotional English

The evidence from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own usage is already enough to show that “blessed” was not alien to his devotional English. But the point can be placed in an even wider historical context. The word “blessed” also appears repeatedly in the English devotional vocabulary of the Gauḍīya Maṭha environment from which Śrīla Prabhupāda emerged.

This matters because the English vocabulary inherited by Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mission was not invented in a vacuum. Śrīla Prabhupāda did not begin preaching in English as if no Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava had ever attempted English theological expression before him. He received a living devotional and intellectual inheritance from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s mission, including its English preaching culture. Within that world, “blessed” was a normal reverential term.

In *The Harmonist*, the English periodical associated with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s mission, the word “blessed” appears repeatedly in devotional and theological contexts. In my own review of the eight-volume reprint *The Harmonist As It Is*, I found expressions such as “the Blessed Land of the Birth of the Supreme Lord,” “Blessed Feet of Him,” “Blessed Lotus Feet of the Divine Master,” “blessed Yaśodā,” “O Sun of Blessed Name,” “blessed story of Kṛṣṇa,” “blessed Jagannath Misra,” and “blessed Name of Krishna.” These examples come from issues of *The Harmonist* published in the 1920s and 1930s, including material connected with *Śrī Śrī Chaitanya Bhagabat*, *Śrī*

Namastakam by Rūpa Gosvāmī, and articles from 1935–1936. A fuller list of examples is available from the author upon request. [*The Harmonist As It Is*, eight-volume reprint of *The Harmonist* / *Sree Sajjana Toshani*, originally published 1927–1936; examples of “blessed” collected by Ajit Krishna Dāsa]

This evidence should be used carefully. It does not prove that *śrī-bhagavān uvāca* must be translated as “The Blessed Lord said.” It also does not prove that every article in *The Harmonist* was personally written by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Some articles were written by others, and some appear without named authors. The point is more limited, but still important: “blessed” was part of the English devotional register used in the Gauḍīya Maṭha environment. It was not a theological weed growing in the garden. It was a normal reverential term within that English-speaking Vaiṣṇava world.

This matters because one of the implicit arguments against “The Blessed Lord” is that it sounds too soft, too generic, or insufficiently personalist. But the *Harmonist* evidence shows that “blessed” could be used in deeply Vaiṣṇava contexts: for sacred places, the feet of saintly personalities, the holy name, the Lord’s associates, Kṛṣṇa’s līlā, and the devotional world surrounding Kṛṣṇa. In that context, the word does not imply theological weakness. It conveys sacredness, auspiciousness, grace, devotional honor, and reverence.

Does “The Blessed Lord” Mean That Someone Blessed the Lord?

A further misunderstanding should also be removed. Some devotees have objected to “The Blessed Lord” as if the phrase implies that the Lord has been blessed by someone else, as though He were the recipient of a benediction from a superior. But that is simply not how the phrase functions in religious English. In this usage, “blessed” does not mean dependent upon another’s blessing. It means holy, glorious, praiseworthy, auspicious, worthy of reverence, and worthy of praise. Similarly, when religious language speaks of “blessing the Lord,” it does not mean that the worshiper confers some higher blessing upon God. It means that one praises, glorifies, honors, and worships Him. Therefore, “The Blessed Lord” does not diminish Kṛṣṇa’s supremacy. It expresses reverence for Him. [Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. “blessed,” senses 1a–b: “held in reverence: venerated” and “honored in worship: hallowed”; s.v. “bless,” sense 4a: “praise, glorify.”]

This also fits Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own use of the phrase. When he said, “The Blessed Lord. He is Lord. He can say,” he did not treat “Blessed Lord” as a vague expression requiring immediate replacement. Nor did he treat it as if it meant that Kṛṣṇa had been blessed by someone else. He used it to establish Kṛṣṇa’s authority. Therefore, the phrase cannot be dismissed as if it were inherently incapable of carrying the personalist meaning of *Bhagavān*. [Śrīla Prabhupāda, lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.1]

The conclusion should be modest but firm. The *Harmonist* evidence does not settle the entire editorial question. Nor does the linguistic meaning of “blessed” by itself prove that the phrase must be retained. The stronger evidence remains Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own published text, his lectures, his own usage of “blessed” in many contexts, and his December 1969 approval of following the Macmillan translations. But the *Harmonist* material and the ordinary devotional meaning of “blessed” remove a false objection. They show that “The Blessed Lord said” is not alien, impersonal, or defective English. It does not mean that the Lord is dependent on someone else’s blessing. It means that He is glorious, holy, praiseworthy, and worthy of reverence.

Therefore, “The Blessed Lord said” should not be treated as a theologically defective phrase that had to be removed. At most, if one wished to explain the fuller meaning of *Bhagavān*, that explanation belonged in a note in a separate annotated edition clearly presented as such. The phrase itself had a perfectly respectable devotional pedigree.

Chapter 11 – The Published Text, Ārṣa-Prayoga, and Posthumous Editing

The issue of “The Blessed Lord said” cannot finally be separated from the larger question of how the published work of a departed ācārya should be treated. If *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* were merely an unfinished draft, the question would be different. If Śrīla Prabhupāda had explicitly instructed his editors to revise the translation after his departure according to manuscript reconstruction, the question would also be different. But the 1972 *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* was not an unfinished draft. It was a published, distributed, taught, and authorially accepted edition. It was one of the central books through which Śrīla Prabhupāda preached, nourished and expanded a worldwide movement, and introduced countless readers to Kṛṣṇa.

That fact gives the original published text a special authority. It cannot be treated as a temporary inconvenience on the way to a later editor’s improved reconstruction. The 1972 edition had entered history as Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own public presentation of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Therefore, any posthumous change to that text requires more than evidence that another wording is possible, older, more literal, or even in some respects preferable. It requires authorization.

This is where the Vaiṣṇava principle of *ārṣa-prayoga* becomes relevant. Śrīla Prabhupāda taught that the words of great authorities should not be corrected merely because an apparent imperfection is found. He

explained that even if there are discrepancies in the writings of ācāryas, they are accepted as *ārṣa-prayoga* and “should remain as it is.” He also strongly warned against the tendency to become “more learned than the authority” and instructed, “No corrections.” [Śrīla Prabhupāda on *ārṣa-prayoga*, cited in discussions of posthumous editing and book changes; see also Śrīla Prabhupāda’s “No corrections” instruction cited in *Ārṣa-prayoga* / book-change source material]

This principle does not mean that ordinary printing errors can never be identified or discussed. Nor does it forbid scholarly annotation in a separate annotated edition. But it does mean that the default attitude toward the ācārya’s published words must be preservation, not improvement. If a phrase appears in the published work of the ācārya, and if there is no clear instruction from him to remove it, the burden of proof lies heavily on the one who proposes alteration.

That burden becomes even heavier after the author’s departure. During an author’s lifetime, he may approve, reject, revise, or clarify editorial suggestions. His living judgment can settle the matter. But after his departure, the editor no longer has that recourse. He may collect evidence. He may compare manuscripts. He may consult lectures. He may write notes. But he cannot ask the author, “Is this what you want in the body of the text?” That limitation should produce humility. Instead, in the modern world it often produces the opposite, because apparently the dead author’s silence is now interpreted as consent.

Graham M. Schweig’s broader principle is therefore entirely appropriate: a completed work of a departed author, especially a spiritual master,

should be left as the author left it or treated only according to the author's clear instructions. [Graham M. Schweig / Garuda Dāsa, general principle on posthumous editing, in *Posthumous Editing of a Great Master's Work: Special Focus on the Writings of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda*, Lexington Books, 2024] This is not anti-scholarship. It is the condition for honest scholarship. Without a stable root text, scholarship becomes a moving target. One edition replaces another, editorial theories become embedded in the text itself, and readers can no longer easily distinguish the author's published words from later reconstruction.

In the case of "The Blessed Lord said," the danger is obvious. The replacement was not a correction of a typographical error. It changed the wording of a recurring phrase in the verse translations. It removed a phrase Śrīla Prabhupāda heard, used, and allowed to stand in the Macmillan translation. It replaced a literary-devotional rendering with a technical-theological rendering already available in the word-for-word and purports. Whatever one thinks of the replacement as an explanation of *Bhagavān*, it is still a replacement.

Therefore, the *ārṣa-prayoga* principle and the scholarly principle of preserving a departed author's completed work converge. Both point in the same direction: preserve the original published text unchanged, and place explanations, correction proposals, variant readings, and theological clarifications only in a separate annotated edition clearly presented as such. That is why one can strongly support an annotated edition while still insisting on an edition with no changes whatsoever. These are not contradictory positions. They are the only coherent positions.

The original should remain original. The annotated edition should identify itself as annotated. The editor may speak, but he must speak from the margins, not from inside the ācārya's mouth.

Chapter 12 – What Should Have Been Done

The proper solution was never difficult. It only required restraint, transparency, and the willingness to distinguish between Śrīla Prabhupāda’s original published text and later editorial explanation. The original *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* should have been preserved and printed exactly as Śrīla Prabhupāda left it. No changes. Not small changes. Not “obvious” improvements. Not theological clarifications inserted into the body of the text. The original should remain the original.

If editors, scholars, or devotees believed that “The Blessed Lord said” required explanation, that explanation should have been placed only in a separate annotated edition, clearly presented as an annotated edition of the original. Such an edition could preserve the original text unchanged while adding notes, appendices, manuscript comparisons, lecture references, and theological explanations. But it should not present itself simply as *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, as though the annotated or editorially reconstructed version were identical with Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own published text.

In such an annotated edition, a note could explain that *śrī-bhagavān uvāca* identifies the speaker as *Bhagavān*, the possessor of all opulences, whom Śrīla Prabhupāda consistently presents as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It could mention that the word-for-word section gives “the Supreme Personality of Godhead said.” It could note that Śrīla Prabhupāda sometimes preferred or emphasized that fuller rendering in

lectures. It could even quote the July 3, 1970 statement where he objected to “Blessed Lord said.” Nothing would need to be hidden. [Śrīla Prabhupāda, initiation lecture, Los Angeles, July 3, 1970]

But such a note should also acknowledge the other side of the evidence: that Śrīla Prabhupāda heard “The Blessed Lord” read aloud, used the phrase himself, preached from it, identified the Blessed Lord as the Supreme Person, and approved following the Macmillan translations while adding synonyms and transliterations. [Śrīla Prabhupāda, lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.1; Śrīla Prabhupāda, “Discussion with BTG Staff,” Boston, December 24, 1969] A proper annotated edition would allow the reader to see the whole picture. It would not silently replace one part of the evidence with another.

That is what responsible annotation does. It preserves the original text and illuminates it from the margins. It does not pretend that the editor’s conclusion is identical with the author’s final decision.

This principle is not merely a modern scholarly preference. It also accords with the Vaiṣṇava attitude toward the words of a devotee. In *Caitanya Bhāgavata*, when Īśvara Purī asked Nimai Paṇḍita to correct any mistakes in his *Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-līlāmṛta*, Nimai refused to approach the work in that spirit. He replied that anyone who finds fault with a devotee’s description of Kṛṣṇa is sinful; even if a devotee’s poetry is imperfectly composed, it contains love for Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa accepts the devotee’s sentiment. The example is given that one person may say *viṣṇāya* while another says *viṣṇave*, but Kṛṣṇa accepts the devotional offering. The point is not that grammar, printing, and scholarship have no place. The point is that the

words of a devotee describing Kṛṣṇa are not to be handled with the ordinary confidence of a correcting mind. If this restraint applies to the writings of a devotee, how much more should it apply to the published words of the ācārya through whom Kṛṣṇa consciousness was carried throughout the world? [*Caitanya Bhāgavata*, Ādi-khaṇḍa 11.105–110; compare the supporting verses cited from *Nārada Pañcarātra* on *viṣṇāya* and *viṣṇave*.]

This would have served everyone. Readers would learn the full theological meaning of *Bhagavān*. Scholars would have access to the textual history. Devotees would retain the original published wording of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. BBT International could have shown its evidence without crossing the line from explanation into alteration. The controversy might not have disappeared, but at least the principle would have been clean.

The final conclusion is simple.

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” is true. It is doctrinally precise. It is fully in harmony with Śrīla Prabhupāda’s theology. No devotee should object to that phrase as a description of Kṛṣṇa. But the truth of a phrase does not authorize its insertion as a replacement for another phrase in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published book. The question is not whether Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The question is whether later editors had the authority to remove “The Blessed Lord said” from the verse translations after Śrīla Prabhupāda’s departure.

The evidence does not establish such authority.

At most, the evidence establishes that “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” is a strong theological rendering of *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*. But before BBT International can justify this particular change, it must first justify the larger principle of posthumously revising Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published books at all. That burden cannot be skipped. One must first show authorization for posthumous editorial reconstruction in principle, and only then show authorization for this specific replacement. Without the first, the second has no foundation.

The evidence establishes that *Bhagavān* should be understood as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It establishes that Śrīla Prabhupāda sometimes emphasized that rendering. It establishes that the manuscripts and word-for-word sections may support it. But it also establishes that “The Blessed Lord” stood in the published Macmillan translation, that Śrīla Prabhupāda approved following that translation, that he heard and used the phrase, that “blessed” belongs to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own devotional English, and that the phrase belongs to a recognized Gauḍīya devotional English register. [Macmillan translation evidence: Śrīla Prabhupāda, “Discussion with BTG Staff,” Boston, December 24, 1969; lecture evidence: Śrīla Prabhupāda, lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.1; Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own usage of “blessed” in books, letters, lectures, conversations, and poetry; Gauḍīya devotional English evidence: *The Harmonist As It Is*, eight-volume reprint of *The Harmonist* / Sree Sajjana Toshani, originally published 1927–1936]

Therefore, the correct editorial conclusion should have been preservation of the original text, with any discussion of the evidence placed only in a clearly identified annotated edition.

Preserve “The Blessed Lord said” in the original text. Explain *Bhagavān* in an annotated edition if desired. Publish that edition honestly as an annotated edition of the original. But do not remove the phrase from the body of the text and present the replacement as if it were simply Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

This is not a minor matter of wording. It concerns the basic integrity of the ācārya’s books. If a recurring phrase in the verse translations can be replaced after the author’s departure on the basis of editorial reconstruction, then the stability of the whole text is weakened. One change becomes precedent for another. Each revision may be defended as more precise, more consistent, more scholarly, or closer to an earlier source. But without explicit authorization, such reasoning has no natural stopping point.

The problem becomes even clearer in light of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s wider use of “blessed.” If “The Blessed Lord said” is to be removed because the word “blessed” is supposedly unsuitable, vague, or theologically misleading, then consistency would seem to require a much wider editorial campaign. What should be done with “the blessed goddess said,” “the blessed messengers of Lord Viṣṇu said,” “the blessed Lord Śiva,” “the blessed king,” “blessed Vrajabhūmi,” “blessed land,” “blessed day,” and the other examples found in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, letters, lectures, conversations, and poetry? Where does the correction stop? And who decides which uses of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s devotional English are acceptable and which must be replaced? This shows the danger of allowing later editors to treat an author’s published devotional

vocabulary as material for posthumous purification. Once that principle is admitted, the text is no longer being preserved. It is being managed.

This becomes still more serious when one remembers that the issue is not limited to one phrase. If the translations are treated as comparatively less central than the purports, that does not create more freedom for posthumous alteration. It raises the opposite question: why change hundreds of verse translations after Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure without explicit authorization? If 541 verses can be altered on the ground that the translations are "less important," then the argument has turned restraint upside down. Less central does not mean more available for posthumous reconstruction. It means the editor should be even more cautious about treating such changes as necessary.

The original text must remain original. An annotated edition may explain. Appendices may compare. Scholars may discuss. Editors may offer evidence. But the ācārya's published words should not be overwritten by those who come after him.

For that reason, "The Blessed Lord said" should have remained.

Appendix 1: Examples of “Blessed” in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Works

This appendix lists examples of the word “blessed” in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published works, letters, lectures, conversations, and poetry. The purpose is not to prove that *śrī-bhagavān uvāca* must always be translated as “The Blessed Lord said.” Nor is it to deny that “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” is a true and theologically precise rendering of *Bhagavān*. The purpose is more limited: to show that “blessed” was not foreign to the devotional English of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s accepted published corpus, nor to his wider spoken and written usage.

Not all these examples carry the same evidentiary weight. Where no manuscript, dictation tape, or earlier edition is available, an occurrence in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam should be treated as evidence from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s accepted published corpus rather than as certain proof of his personally dictated wording. A pre-ISKCON textual witness, as in the case of “Blessed Brajabhumi,” provides stronger direct authorial evidence. His letters, conversations, lectures, and poetry likewise document his personal use of “blessed” outside the ordinary book-editing process.

Taken together, these examples show that “blessed” was a normal devotional term within the English associated with Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mission. It could be used for exalted persons, sacred places, devotional situations, spiritual existence, and even speaker formulas structurally close to “The Blessed Lord said.” In these examples, “blessed” does not mean “dependent upon someone else’s blessing.” It functions as

reverential devotional English, expressing holiness, auspiciousness, spiritual good fortune, exaltedness, glory, and worthiness of praise.

1. “The blessed goddess said”

In the published *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.4.11, the Sanskrit *devy uvāca* is rendered in the synonyms as “the blessed goddess said,” and the translation begins: “The blessed goddess said...” Since we do not presently have manuscript confirmation for this wording, this should be treated as evidence from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s accepted published corpus rather than as certain proof of his personally dictated wording. Still, it is an important example because it shows “blessed” appearing in a speaker formula closely parallel to “The Blessed Lord said.”

[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.4.11]

2. “The blessed messengers of Lord Viṣṇu... said”

In the published *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.38, the Sanskrit *śrī-viṣṇudūtā ūcuḥ* is rendered in the synonyms as “the blessed messengers of Lord Viṣṇu spoke,” and the translation begins: “The blessed messengers of Lord Viṣṇu, the Viṣṇudūtas, said...” This is another significant example because it is also a speaker formula. Again, unless manuscript or dictation evidence is produced, it should be treated as evidence from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s accepted published corpus.

[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.38]

3. “The blessed Lord Śiva”

In the published *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.28.22, the text speaks of “the blessed Lord Śiva.” This is significant because it shows the expression “blessed Lord” itself appearing naturally in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s published books. The point is not to compare Lord Śiva ontologically with Kṛṣṇa. The point is linguistic: “blessed Lord” is not an impossible or alien construction in the devotional English of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s accepted published corpus.
[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.28.22]

4. “The blessed king said...”

In the published *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.4.1–2, the translation begins: “The blessed king said to Śukadeva Gosvāmī...” Here “blessed” functions as an honorific term for an exalted speaker. This is another example of “blessed” appearing in a formula close to a reported speech introduction.
[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.4.1–2]

5. “The blessed women in the heavenly planets”

In the published *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.5.21, the translation says: “All the blessed women in the heavenly planets...” Here “blessed” indicates exalted, fortunate, auspicious, or spiritually honored persons. It shows the term being used naturally in a devotional and cosmological context.
[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.5.21]

6. “O blessed mother”

In the published *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.29.28, Devahūti is addressed as “O blessed mother.” The term expresses reverence and spiritual good fortune. It does not imply that she is dependent on some superior blessing in a way that would make the word theologically suspicious.

[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.29.28]

7. “Blessed Brajabhumi” in the Delhi and ISKCON editions

The 1964 Delhi edition of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.21 reads:

“the blessed Brajabhumi which is ever sanctified on account of His childhood pastimes.”

The later ISKCON edition retains the expression while regularizing the spelling and lightly editing the sentence:

“the blessed Vrajabhūmi, which is very sanctified because of His childhood pastimes.”

Thus “blessed Brajabhumi” was not introduced by Hayagrīva or another ISKCON editor. It was already present in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own pre-ISKCON publication and was carried forward into the ISKCON edition.

[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.21, Delhi edition (1964) and ISKCON edition]

8. “Blessed transcendental child”

In the published *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.8.31, the text refers to Kṛṣṇa as Yaśodā’s “blessed transcendental child.” This is especially relevant because “blessed” is used in direct relation to Kṛṣṇa

Himself. Even if one treats the wording as published-corpus evidence rather than confirmed personal dictation, it still shows that the accepted published text of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books could use “blessed” in relation to the Supreme Lord.

[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.8.31]

9. “The blessed dust of your feet”

In the published *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.22.6, the expression “the blessed dust of your feet” appears. Here “blessed” describes something sanctified by contact with an exalted devotee or personality.

[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.22.6]

10. “Fully blessed existence”

In the purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 5.22, the text speaks of “fully blessed existence” in the spiritual world. Here “blessed” describes spiritual existence itself. This is another example of the word functioning as devotional English for a sacred, auspicious, transcendental condition.

[*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 5.22, purport]

11. “Blessed Roy Richard”

In a letter to Revatīnandana dated March 25, 1970, Śrīla Prabhupāda referred to “blessed Roy Richard.” This is stronger evidence than published-book examples whose manuscript history is uncertain, because it comes from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s correspondence. It shows that “blessed” was not merely a

scriptural translation convention. He used the word naturally in personal communication.

[Śrīla Prabhupāda, letter to Revatīnandana, March 25, 1970]

12. **“Hawaii is blessed land”**

In a room conversation in Los Angeles on July 1, 1971, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “Hawaii is blessed land,” referring to its natural abundance and auspicious condition. This is direct spoken evidence. It shows “blessed” functioning in his ordinary English, applied to a place.

[Śrīla Prabhupāda, room conversation with Govinda dāśī and Gaurasundara, Los Angeles, July 1, 1971]

13. **“Blessed than heaven”**

In his 1936 Vyāsa-pūjā poem to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote: “Adore, adore ye all the happy day, blessed than heaven, sweeter than May.” The wording is poetic, but the meaning is clear: the day is spiritually blessed, glorious, auspicious, and worthy of celebration. This is strong evidence because it comes from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own devotional poetry.

The quotation belongs to the signed poem, not to the prose “Sree Vyas Puja Homage” that follows it.

[Abhay Charan Das, “Sree Vyas Puja Offering,” *The Harmonist*, vol. XXXII (1935–36), pp. 290–291.]

14. “The blessed messengers...” read aloud in Śrīla

Prabhupāda’s presence

In a lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.38 in Los Angeles on June 4, 1976, the translation was read aloud in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s presence: “The blessed messengers of Lord Viṣṇu, the Viṣṇudūtas, said...” Śrīla Prabhupāda did not stop the reading to object to the word “blessed” in this speaker formula. He proceeded to explain the verse. This does not by itself establish a formal editorial rule, but it does show that this kind of usage was present in his published books and lectures without being treated as theologically defective in that setting.

[Śrīla Prabhupāda, lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.38, Los Angeles, June 4, 1976]

These examples should be weighed according to their evidential strength. The letters, conversations, lectures, and poetry provide direct evidence of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own usage. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* examples, where manuscript confirmation is not presently available, provide evidence from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s accepted published corpus. That distinction should be maintained.

But once that distinction is maintained, the conclusion remains strong. “Blessed” was not alien to the English of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s movement. It appears in his published books, in speaker formulas, in relation to exalted personalities, in relation to sacred places, in relation to Kṛṣṇa, in personal correspondence, in conversation, and in his devotional poetry. Therefore, “The Blessed Lord said” should not be rejected merely because it contains the word “blessed.” The word had a real place in the devotional

vocabulary associated with Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission, and in several cases it can be shown directly in his own spoken and written English.

Appendix 2: Examples of “Blessed” in The Harmonist

This appendix gives examples of the word “blessed” in *The Harmonist*, the English periodical associated with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s Gauḍīya Maṭha mission. The purpose is not to prove that *śrī-bhagavān uvāca* must be translated as “The Blessed Lord said.” Nor is it to prove that every occurrence of “blessed” in *The Harmonist* was personally written by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Some articles appear without named authors, and some were written by other contributors, including Western disciples or associates. That point should be acknowledged honestly.

The point is more limited but still important: the word “blessed” was part of the English devotional vocabulary used within the Gauḍīya Maṭha’s preaching culture. It was used for sacred places, the feet of divine or saintly personalities, the holy name, devotees, Vaiṣṇava narratives, and devotional realities. Therefore, “The Blessed Lord” should not be dismissed as though the word “blessed” were foreign to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava English.

A further qualification may also be mentioned. As far as I am informed, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura checked the articles that went into *The Harmonist*. Even if one does not treat that as proof of his personal authorship of each phrase, it still shows that such language appeared within the supervised English preaching environment of his

mission. This gives the word “blessed” a recognized Gauḍīya devotional context before Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own Western preaching.

1. **“Blessed Land”**

In an article titled “Sreedham Mayapur,” *The Harmonist* speaks of devotees being endowed with spiritual eyes to behold “the Blessed Land of the Birth of the Supreme Lord.” Here “blessed” is used for a sacred place, the holy dhāma connected with the Lord’s appearance.

[*The Harmonist*, “Sreedham Mayapur,” Vol. XXXII, No. 19, May 1936]

2. **“Blessed Feet”**

In E. G. Schulze’s article “Buddhism,” *The Harmonist* uses the expression “the Blessed Feet of Him.” The word “blessed” here functions reverentially, in relation to taking shelter of a sacred personality.

[*The Harmonist*, “Buddhism,” E. G. Schulze, Vol. XXXII, No. 17, May 1936]

3. **“Blessed Kali Yuga”**

In “Sree Nabadwip Dham Pracharini Sabha,” *The Harmonist* refers to “blessed Kali Yuga.” This is an especially interesting usage because Kali-yuga is ordinarily degraded, yet it becomes blessed due to the appearance and mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the revelation of divine light. The word therefore marks spiritual transformation and sacred opportunity.

[*The Harmonist*, “Sree Nabadwip Dham Pracharini Sabha,” Vol. XXXII, No. 10, January 1936]

4. **“Blessed Lotus Feet of the Divine Master”**

In E. G. Schulze’s article “Sunder Warumbe [Causeless Mercy],” *The Harmonist* speaks of the “Blessed Lotus Feet of the Divine Master.” This is directly relevant because it shows “blessed” being used in a strongly Vaiṣṇava devotional context, not in vague sentimental religion.

[*The Harmonist*, “Sunder Warumbe [Causeless Mercy],” Herr E. G. Schulze, Vol. XXXII, No. 7, December 1935]

5. **“Blessed Yaśodā”**

In “Sree Chaitanya’s Meeting With Rai Ramananda,” *The Harmonist* refers to “blessed Yaśodā,” in connection with the highest devotional love. Here “blessed” marks the exalted spiritual fortune and devotional position of Mother Yaśodā.

[*The Harmonist*, “Sree Chaitanya’s Meeting With Rai Ramananda,” Tridandiswami Bhakti Pradip Tirtha, Vol. XXXII, No. 4, October 1935]

6. **“O Sun of Blessed Name!”**

In *Śrī Nāmaṣṭakam* by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, as published in *The Harmonist*, the holy name is addressed as “O Sun of Blessed Name!” This example is important because “blessed” is used in direct relation to the holy name of the Lord.

[*The Harmonist*, *Śrī Nāmaṣṭakam* by Rūpa Gosvāmī, Vol.

7. “The blessed story of Kṛṣṇa”

In material from *Śrī Śrī Chaitanya Bhagabat*, *The Harmonist* speaks of “the blessed story of Kṛṣṇa.” Here “blessed” describes Kṛṣṇa-kathā itself, the sacred narration of the Lord’s pastimes. [*The Harmonist*, *Śrī Śrī Chaitanya Bhagabat*, Vol. XXV, No. 12, May 1928]

8. “Blessed holy Name”

In the article “The Holy Name,” *The Harmonist* refers to the “blessed holy Name.” Again, this is highly relevant because the word is used for one of the most sacred realities in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. It does not weaken the object described. It honors it. [*The Harmonist*, “The Holy Name,” Vol. XXV, No. 6, November 1927]

9. “Blessed Jagannāth Misra”

In *Śrī Śrī Chaitanya Bhagabat*, *The Harmonist* uses the phrase “blessed Jagannāth Misra.” Here “blessed” is used for an exalted devotee and associate connected with the Lord’s earthly pastimes. [*The Harmonist*, *Śrī Śrī Chaitanya Bhagabat*, Vol. XXV, No. 7, October 1927]

10. “Blessed Name of Krishna”

In another *Śrī Śrī Chaitanya Bhagabat* passage, *The Harmonist* refers to the “Blessed Name of Krishna.” This again shows the

word “blessed” used directly in relation to Kṛṣṇa’s name.
[*The Harmonist*, Śrī Śrī Chaitanya Bhagabat, Vol. XXV, No. 3,
August 1927]

11. “Blessed are the fire, water, ether and nature...”

In Aprākṛta Dāsa’s “Sree Vyasa-Puja,” *The Harmonist* says,
“Blessed are the fire, water, ether and nature...” The context
appears to glorify those elements and beings connected with the
divine service or manifestation of the spiritual master. This shows
an expansive devotional use of “blessed” for realities sanctified by
service and spiritual connection.

[Aprākṛta Dāsa, “Sree Vyasa-Puja,” *The Harmonist*, Vol. 8,
February 1933]

These examples show that “blessed” was not an alien word in Gauḍīya
devotional English. It was used in *The Harmonist* for the dhāma, the
divine master’s lotus feet, Kali-yuga transformed by mercy, Mother
Yaśodā, the holy name, Kṛṣṇa-kathā, Jagannāth Miśra, Kṛṣṇa’s name, and
elements connected with divine service. Such usage is not theologically
weak. It is reverential, sacred, and devotional.

This evidence should not be overstated. It does not prove that “The
Blessed Lord said” is the only correct rendering of *śrī-bhagavān uvāca*. It
does not prove that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura personally
coined or approved every individual occurrence. But it does prove that
“blessed” had a legitimate place within the Gauḍīya English preaching
register from which Śrīla Prabhupāda emerged.

Therefore, the expression “The Blessed Lord said” should not be dismissed as a foreign, sentimental, Christian, or non-Gauḍīya intrusion. At most, one may argue that “The Supreme Personality of Godhead said” is a more explicit theological rendering of *Bhagavān*. But that is a different argument. The *Harmonist* evidence removes the weaker objection that “blessed” itself is unsuitable for Vaiṣṇava theological English.

When this evidence is placed beside Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own use of “blessed” in his published books, letters, conversations, lectures, and poetry, the point becomes stronger. The phrase “The Blessed Lord said” belongs to a recognizable devotional English world. It may be explained, compared, and annotated. But it should not be rejected merely because it uses the word “blessed.”

Appendix 3: Main Sources

This appendix lists the main sources used in this study. It is not intended as a full academic bibliography of every related work on the book-change controversy, posthumous editing, or Śrīla Prabhupāda’s publishing history. Rather, it identifies the principal sources directly relevant to the argument of this book.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Works and Recordings

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Complete Edition. New York: Macmillan / Collier Books, 1972.

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Original Delhi edition, Canto One, including the purport to 1.8.21; and later volumes and verses cited, including 3.22.6, 3.28.22, 3.29.28, 4.4.11, 6.1.38, 6.4.1–2, 7.8.5, 9.5.21, and 10.8.31.

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta. Ādi-līlā 5.22 and Madhya-līlā 6.132, purports.

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Lecture on Bhagavad-gītā 4.1–2. Columbus, May 9, 1969 .

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Letter to Rayarama. Jun 29, 1969 .

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Letter to Brahmananda. Sep 9, 1969 .

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Letter to Jagannātha-suta.
Aug 28, 1976 .

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Letter to Rūpānuga.
Sep 23, 1976 .

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Lecture on
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.1.38. Los Angeles, June 4, 1976.

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. “Discussion with BTG Staff.”
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A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Initiation lecture. Los Angeles,
July 3, 1970.

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Room conversation with
Govinda dāsī and Gaurasundara. Los Angeles, July 1, 1971.

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Letter to Revatīnandana.
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17, 1970.

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Letter to Maṇḍalī Bhadra.
January 20, 1972.

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Letter to Rādhāvallabha.
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About the Author

Ajit Krishna Dasa is a Danish writer and preacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the line of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. He has written extensively on Vaiṣṇava philosophy, atheism, epistemology, and the preservation of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s original books.

He is the founder of Arsa-Prayoga.com, a website dedicated to documenting and analyzing the posthumous changes made to Śrīla

Prabhupāda’s books and defending the principle that the published words of the ācārya should be preserved as he gave them. His work emphasizes the importance of *ārṣa-prayoga*, authorial integrity, and the distinction between proper annotation and unauthorized alteration.

Ajit Krishna Dasa has also written books and essays on the failures of atheistic thought from a Vaiṣṇava perspective, arguing that reason, morality, meaning, and knowledge ultimately require a theistic foundation. His writings seek to combine philosophical rigor with fidelity to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s teachings.

He continues to write, teach, and publish material in service to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mission.