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**Govinda dasi and Jayadvaita Swami in Honolulu on Jan 19, 2003**

**Govinda dasi:** …that in 1966, ’67 and ’68, Hayagriva spent many, many hours alone with Srila Prabhupada, discussing the different aspects of the editing work. They went over each verse extensively, and Srila Prabhupada was actually quite clear in expressing what he wanted. He, even in the case of legal matters, or something else that he might not know how things worked, he knew what he wanted. So he had an uncanny ability to see through any situation. That’s an understatement, and I’m putting that so that people can appreciate it.

So, when the later [*Gita*](http://prabhupadabooks.com/bg) was edited, the manuscript had already been gone over, how many times? We don’t really know, I don’t really believe, I mean, joined after Hayagriva. I joined in Frisco as soon as Srila Prabhupada came to Frisco, and then I went back to LA with him. I think, Javadvaita Maharaja, didn’t you say you joined in Boston in…

**Jayadvaita Maharaja:** New York.

**Govinda dasi:** …in May of ’68?

**Jayadvaita Maharaja:** Yes.

**Govinda dasi:** I thought it was in Boston.

**Jayadvaita Maharaja:** I came up to Boston right after I joined. I was a devotee in New York for two months.

**Govinda dasi:** So I was there at your initiation then.

**Jayadvaita Maharaja:** Yes.

**Govinda dasi:** So my point here is that already Srila Prabhupada had been working on this, I don’t know how many years before, but Hayagriva had been working on this with Srila Prabhupada, and they went over things. They would discuss things. Hayagriva, he’s no longer present in this world, and I’m not, I’m just pointing out that Hayagriva was the person sent in at that time. And Hayagriva was, interestingly enough, an English professor with a PhD, and his specialty was poetry. And *Bhagavad-gita* means ‘Song of God,’ it’s a poetic treatise in Sanskrit. So somehow or other by Krsna’s arrangement, a specialist in poetry with a big bushy beard—and he as a rather far-out fellow, but he was a good writer, an excellent writer—was sent to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Prabhupada spent many, many hours with him.

Now, for example there’s a simple change, “the Blessed Lord said.” That’s been removed, because you [Jayadvaita Maharaja] say that the original manuscript didn’t have that. But how do we know that in the two years, and the hours that he [Srila Prabhupada] spent with Hayagriva discussing things, that they didn’t discuss this point, that ‘the Blessed Lord’ sounds better than ‘[the Supreme Personality of Godhead](http://prabhupadabooks.com/kb),’ or so many points that we really don’t know. We can’t possibly know; we weren’t there. We don’t really know that. We just know that *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* has, in 1968, ‘the Blessed Lord said.’ I’m taking that as a very simple, innocuous example. And we don’t really know where it came from. You [Jayadvaita Maharaja] say that you have the original manuscript, but yet the person who worked with the original manuscript isn’t here anymore, he’s deceased. I mean Hayagriva; I don’t mean Srila Prabhupada. I don’t refer to Srila Prabhupada like that. And so I don’t know whether or not… that’s one question.

Now, how do we know that… Srila Prabhupada went over things very thoroughly. He went over this drawing. He corrected me, he watched what I was doing, many things. *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, we also worked on the drawings for that while we were in Los Angeles, and I’m bringing this up because there’s a similar change in this regard. *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* originally had five or six black-and-white drawings. In those days we couldn’t afford to print color. So, Gourasundar and I did five or six black-and-white drawings, and Srila Prabhupada very meticulously went over them. He told us exactly what to put. I had never been in the Jagannath temple, I had never even been to India, and I wasn’t allowed in anyway. And he told me everything that was inside, where the *pujari* sits, Jagannath was up on this thing, it was dark all around—he gave me specific instructions on how to do that drawing; that drawing and all the rest that are in there.

So that’s how meticulous he was. I didn’t work with Hayagriva; Srila Prabhupada was busy working with Hayagriva. I was typing his letters, editing his letters, cooking his chapattis and stuff like that. But Srila Prabhupada was working on his books, OK? Now, those drawings were all removed from the subsequent edition of *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, the drawings that Srila Prabhupada personally oversaw. He was quite distressed by this. He said, “Why have you removed those drawings? I had those done. Why did you remove them?” And they put some very nicely, highly beautiful, technically accurate paintings in there. Being an artist, I can relate to this from the artistic point of view. Also the *Krsna Book*, the artistic paintings, the early paintings were technically not as proficient as the ones that were later substituted for the early ones. But Srila Prabhupada was very distraught. He said, “Why did you remove those early paintings? They were full of *bhakti*.”

OK, this is my point. Number one, he made corrections according… for two years, before we were even around, Maharaja and I, I don’t know, I was in college and he was doing… I think you’re younger than me, so you were probably in high school, I don’t know. So basically, we weren’t around. While this is going on, a lot of things could have been occurring between Hayagriva and Srila Prabhupada that we don’t know about; that we can’t possibly know about. We just can’t know about them. However, given the way he managed the artists and the way the artwork was done, and the way the editing work was done later on, I would say he probably had a hand in it.

OK, there’s another point. That’s my point as far as that’s concerned. Srila Prabhupada had a Midas touch: everything he touched turned to *bhakti*—even us. We basically had… we were kids, green behind the ears, and without a whole lot of *punya*, actually. A lot of us were taking drugs, a lot of us… I was in my fourth year of college, and I left school and met him three months later, and I felt he saved my life because I saw no meaning in anything. And I’m sure most of us feel the same way, wherever we came from. Srila Prabhupada had the Midas touch. His Midas touch—everybody knows who Midas was, the king that turned everything to gold. So, he infused, he oversaw the production of everything that happened, and he infused the artists and editors with his own *bhakti*. It was like a fever; it was wonderful, it was actually the best time in my life. Putting out those seventeen volumes of *Caitanya-caritamrta* and working around the clock; there’s probably nothing that you’ll look back on in your life that was more beautiful. It was like Srila Prabhupada’s divine presence permeated us all. It permeated our work. And you know, I look at some things that I did; I look at that painting above Srila Prabhupada’s head right there, and I don’t even think I did that painting. I look at that one, and I think, “I did that?” [note: several of Govinda dasi’s oil paintings hang in Srila Prabhupada’s room  where the meeting is being held] Srila Prabhupada’s mood infused us, it gave us the ability… What is that verse in *Caitanya-caritamrta*, that the lame can cross mountains and the blind can see? He gave us, we were warm bodies, his energy came through us, and we did incredible works.

**Devotee:** You painted that painting? [pointing to the painting of Sri-Sri Pancha-Tattva behind Srila Prabhupada.]

**Govinda dasi:** Yes, and when I painted that, there was an incident where Srila Prabhupada let me know… The whole time I painted it, I wanted to paint it so that he would like it so much, that he would touch Lord’s Caitanya’s feet. I never told him that. Years later, years later, it used to be right here. He liked having it right here [next to his desk]. I was standing at the door, he came over to the painting, put his head on Lord’s Caitanya’s lotus feet, and left for the airport. And I thought, “Oh, he has satisfied my desire.” I mean, there are the experiences that we had with Srila Prabhupada. These are real experiences. Like Satyahit said, he used to fall down, he was so overwhelmed by Srila Prabhupada’s divine presence. He opened our hearts completely.

So without getting too far off, my point here is that he guided us from within, and Srila Prabhupada didn’t want things changed. He was unhappy when we didn’t respect what he had done, and when they removed the pictures, he complained about it. But it was never corrected. To this day, I don’t think anybody even has those pictures except me, because I’ve got all the early books. So that’s one of my second points, so far as the human aspect of this, and the historical aspect of this.

There’s one other thing that’s significant here. Srila Prabhupada guided us on all our drawings. Jadurani and I used to sit in his front room, and Srila Prabhupada sat in his bedroom. There was an arched window between, and he walked in and out of the room while we were painting. And this is how close a contact the writers and the artists had with Srila Prabhupada in the early days. We were very, very… a nuclear family, almost. Srila Prabhupada would pose for us sometimes. He would walk in and he would pose. Sometimes he posed for Krsna, to give us an idea how the flute and everything, the position. He posed for Hiranyakasipu with his arms up, and he posed for Nrsimhadeva at least once a day, that was his favorite pose. He would walk in and roar, and say, “I’m jumping out of the pillar!” [laughter] Honestly! Anyone who was there can tell you this. This is what the early times were like. I’m just painting this picture so you can understand where I’m coming from.

Once in the Prahlad book, which was a children’s book that we were working on at the time, he told me to paint some demons that were poking at Prahlad while he was sitting in a boiling vat of oil. Well, I’d never seen a demon except in a comic book, so I got one of Rayarama’s comic books and managed to come up with demons, with tails, and skinny and horns, stuff like that. I kind of made them up. And then I took it to show it to him, because he approved everything. That’s my point. He approved the writing, he approved the artwork. He looked at them, and said, “Yes, that is very good. There are such demons in Africa and other places, in the jungles.” And I was in my fourth year of college; educated, right? And I said, “Oh Srila Prabhupada, I didn’t know that,” meaning that I didn’t know that such things existed on our planet, because science had taught me everything that there was. And Srila Prabhupada looked at me and said, “There are many things you do not know.”

And I think that’s the essence of how we should remain in his presence: there are many things we don’t know. Srila Prabhupada is the one who actually knows. He’s the one who actually guided all of this, in what: eleven years, how many times did he travel around the world, ten or twelve times? And in eleven years, he printed how many books? He did phenomenal things. We didn’t do this. None of us did this. We weren’t the doers; we were warm bodies who were willing to do what he wanted us to do. And his divine presence came through his books, and they were transcendental. He told everyone they’re transcendental: “Read my books. They’re transcendental.” So he accepted his books in 1972 as transcendental and perfect, and he lectured on them. He lectured on almost every verse of the *Bhagavad-gita* *As It Is* over ten years’ time. Both of these *Gitas:* this one, [the “purple *Gita*”] which is almost unchanged, the translation; and this one, [the Macmillan *Gita*] which is much fatter and has more. He lectured on these for ten years, over ten years. And he only requested two or three small changes. And believe me, if he didn’t like something, he could break up a lecture and let you know it. He certainly laid into Dr. Radha-Krsna at least a dozen times that I can think of.

So, Srila Prabhupada said that they were transcendental then, and now those same books are not good enough? Now they’re not transcendental? OK, this is one point. I consider that they’re still transcendental. And of course we discussed the authority issue: that Jayadvaita Maharaja has said that Srila Prabhupada did not specifically give him the permission to