

Book Distribution- Very dear to the heart of Srila Prabhupada

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Vrindavan [22:49]

You can please Srila Prabhupada by distributing Srila Prabhupada's books. Book distribution service was very dear to his heart. The service was given to Srila Prabhupada by Bhakti Siddhana Saraswati Thakur. Right here on the banks of Radhakunda, when Srila Prabhupada had come from Allahabad to join his guru Maharaja, Prabhupada was asked, 'If you ever get money, what you should do? Print books!' And in the same Vrindavan, later on of course, Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur said, 'You preach in the western world, in English language. In same Vrindavan, at Radha Damodar, life time in preparation, he was preparing, preparing, preparing to go to the west. And how he would go to the west? He would go with the books, books in English language. So he was translating the books, the first canto.

So Prabhupada was translating, and that time he had no help. Prabhupada was translating, typing, editing, proof reading, travelling to Delhi in the third class train. Now that train does not even exist these days, third class. It was so low class, it has been abandoned. Prabhupada used to travel on that kind of class and getting his books printed there. He had a place called Chippiwada, near Red fort. Prabhupada was promoting that this is my office.

That was his office, the Chippiwada, little place, Radha Krishna temple, where he was allowed to use that facility.

That was his office and one place in Vrindavan, that was not Radha Damodar temple, the other one, Bamsi Gopal temple, that was his home or something. And then Prabhupada was getting his books printed. Sometimes he would carry the papers on his head from where he would buy, purchase paper, to the printer, just to save riksa money and getting the books printed. Sometimes he would be coming to the printing press without eating; again he had no money or he would save money so that he could invest that money in book printing.

After the books were printed, the printer would not give all the books. 'Oh take hundred books. You sell these and when you have money, you pay and then we will give you more books.' Like that whole thing started. Like that Prabhupada took so much trouble to translate and print, publish his books; that was the instruction of his spiritual master.

And then he went overseas with those books. And on the Jaladuta boat he was selling books. He ended up selling to captain Pandya. He sold books worth 20 dollars. So Prabhupada had in fact 40 Rs when he arrived in New York and he also had 20 dollars from the sale of books and then book distribution continued in New York. Of course Prabhupada was personally selling books in the book stores on 'sell or return' basis. He would drive on a bus and check how many books have been sold, not sold and so transactions were going on. And then gradually, gradually the book distribution was picked up by his followers.

Initially there were some Bhagavatam, but not so many copies, 'Back to Godhead' were printed in million copies. I think the target was, the times magazine prints, hundreds and thousands of copies, 'Back to Godhead should also become popular like that.' And he used to call back to Godhead as the backbone of ISKCON, backbone, BTG. And then smaller books and bigger books and then the books were being distributed all over the planet and I think in 76, within one year 7 million books were distributed by his followers from around the world.

Like that Prabhupada was pushing book distribution, 'distribute books, distribute books, distribute books,' that was his instruction, emphasis. Of course he also wanted his books to be read, 'read my books, read my books, read my books', he did not say in those words, but he did complained, 'I have one complaint about you my disciples.

Complaint is, what is the complaint? You don't read my books or not read enough. So Prabhupada wanted, his books were meant for reading and first one to read those books, Prabhupada was expecting that his followers, his disciples, his grand-disciples, his family members would read those books and also then distribute his books. So that book distribution which is also considered our, Gaudiya Vaishnavas' consider that as family business. The business that we do and that is printing and selling and distributing books.

Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur had his printing press right in the temple, I don't know where exactly, but the Deity could see the printing press, while the rolling, printing, the Deities were able to see the printing press and he called that as 'Brihad mridanga'. Brihad, the sound of this mridanga the sound that is packed in these books would reach far and wide. That is Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur. So Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati, he was in the book distribution, printing books, distribute books. So Srila Prabhupada took that very seriously and that is later on number one service, business, seva, worship that is distribution of Srila Prabhupada's books.

Prabhupada used to say, he will not die, he will stay alive in his books forever. And he would feel very very enthusiastic with those who were doing correspondence secretarial job, during last days. Big pile of mail coming through, there was no email those days everything the postman would deliver the big bundle. And Prabhupada would prefer to hear, 'open that, oh this sankirtana report in here, something from Rameshwar, something from Gopal Krishna Gosvami or this is from this temple, some book score, Oh open that.' So giving priority to

such mails and Prabhupada used to hear those book scores.

I remember in 77 November, just one week before Prabhupada's departure, we were also distributing books. Whole world was distributing books, each one of us were into book distribution, yes Maharaja, remember? Absolutely! Everyday of the year, not only the marathon, every devotee, every Tom, Dick and? Harry would be distributing books. Only pujaris would stay behind during the marathon. They would also rotate.

They would also want to go and distribute books. So I had come, I had a travelling party, that would distributed books. The name of our travelling party was Narada Muni Sankirtana Party. And we would be travelling all over like Narada Muni. So we had come one week before to see Srila Prabhupada and as we were allowed in his quarter. Prabhupada was of course in bed. And guess what? We gave report, I gave report of my travelling party to Srila Prabhupada and he was so anxious to hear, so happy to hear, 'Oh which book is selling the most?' There was hardly, barely he was able to speak, but he was enquiring, enthusing me to go on. Say more about the book distribution; say more about the book distribution. And I remember I had said one thing to Srila Prabhupada, that time I had returned from Badrikasram, distributing books. We had gone all the way to Badrikasram and then returned to see how Srila Prabhupada is doing health wise. So we reported to Prabhupada. 'Srila Prabhupada,' I said, 'While we were at Badrikasram we had gone to see the Vyasagupha, the cave of Vyasadeva. So there we showed your Bhagavad Gita As It Is to Srila Vyasadeva.

Little bit humorous way of saying this, because I thought you know, Srila Vyasadeva resides in the cave. We did not see him but for sure he is seeing us and for sure the books, Prabhupada's books we were carrying, he must have seen, Srila Vyasadeva must have seen. So we said, we showed your books to Srila Vyasadeva. And Srila Prabhupada liked to hear that Bhagavad Gita was shown to Srila Vyasadeva.

So this book distribution was very, very dear to Srila Prabhupada's heart and the books are, books are what? The basis! Books are the basis and preaching is the essence, purity is the force, utility is the principle. So you could utilize all the principle strategies to distribute books. And this year is Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON's golden jubilee celebration year. And this is the last month, last chance. We had been glorifying ISKCON and glorifying ISKCON is glorifying Srila Prabhupada. They are not separable. 'ISKCON is my body,' sometimes he used to say, 'ISKCON is my body.' So this is last month. So the best thing we could do during last month is to distribute Srila Prabhupada's books.

I think it is GBC, may be book distribution ministry also was behind or may be together collaboration, there is a proposal for all of us, all the members of ISKCON, all the followers of ISKCON, including members of congregation and others, even visitors of ISKCON and those who are being benefited by ISKCON, connected to ISKCON, each of those devotees, members, associates, followers, congregation, they have to distribute 50 books this year, minimum 50 books as this is the 50 th anniversary of Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON. Haribol! Are you ready? Sleeping?

'Double it', Prabhupada used to say, 'double it, triple, quadruples'. This is the minimum, like chanting 16 rounds is minimum and when in one conversation, I asked Srila Prabhupada, 'just 16 rounds Prabhupada?' 'You could chant 16 thousand, who could stop you? You could chant 16,000. But minimum is 16 rounds, you could chant 16000.' So devotees distribute thousands of books, each devotee, there are such devotees amongst us, amongst the members of our temple devotees. So there are so many ways and means to distribute books. So get ready and I am sure this temple is doing special Istagosties to make a strategy to distribute books. And this morning I heard yesterday's scores.

They were just normal, nothing big, nothing special. I hope

from tomorrow onwards the scores have to be doubled and tripled and quadrupled. So devotees don't have to wait for the people to come here, you could go to the people. Make some plans like that. Go to Mathura, go to towns nearby, or go here, go there, go everywhere. By hook or crook, yena kena prakarena, so like that you distribute Srila Prabhupada's books during marathon.

And this is also the reason why we distribute books, more books or do marathon during December and emphasize distributing Bhagavad Gita, as December is the month that Krishna spoke Bhagavad Gita; next Ekadasi, Moksada ekadasi, on the 10 th of this month, the battle of Kuruksetra would begin. (Gm

made sound of conch) Conchshells! And that day Krishna spoke Bhagavad Gita. What time of the day?

Morning, good, very good! Krishna spoke Bhagavad Gita during morning hours, because battles used to begin in the morning and would go until sunset and then they would take a break and they would get together and even they would meet enemies and friends and next morning enemies again, battling, fighting. Yeah, so during early morning hours, Krishna spoke,

**dharmak setre kuruk setre samaveta yuyutsavah
mamakah pandavaschaiva kim akurvāt sanjaya [BG 1.1]**

gita su-gita kartavya kim anyaih sastra-vistaraih

What need is there for another sastra when Bhagavad Gita exists, Bhagavad Gita is there, this is said in Gita mahatmya, greatness of Bhagavad Gita.

ya svayam padmanabhasya mukha-padmad vinihsrita

Bhagavad Gita, emanated from the lotus mouth of Sri Krishna, that Bhagavad Gita. Something that comes out of the mouth of Krishna is also Krishna. So Bhagavad Gita is non different from Krishna. So when we distribute Bhagavad Gita, we are distributing, take Krishna, this is Krishna in the form of

speech, sound, what is spoke, this is Krishna.

So krishna se tomar Krishna dite par tomar sakati ache

So that Krishna is with you in the form of Bhagavad Gita and you could give that Krishna to others. Be kind and share Krishna to make the whole world Krishna conscious. And talking of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, He also gave instructions,

jare dakho tare kaho Krishna upadesa

What is this Krishna upadesa? This refers to Bhagavad Gita. Jare dekho tare kaho Krishna upadesa, upadesa, instructions of Krishna.

Srimad Bhagavad Gita ki Jai!

Gita Jayanti mahotsav ki Jai!

Srila Prabhupada transcendental book distribution ki Jai!