

Caitanya-Bhagavata

Letter from Sadananda, 6 August 1955

Into English, within square brackets and

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Latest change 20.1.20

Dear Vamandas, dear Hella, Günther, Barbara and all friends,

Something *terrible* has happened! During the three weeks I did not get any post from You, I made a few notes, because I had in mind to give You some important things from Caitanya Deva's lila (to strengthen Your hands). Then I opened Brindaban Das' Caitanya Bhagavata (written between 1545–50), which I studied thoroughly 19 years ago. This made me go into such terrible raptures that I took Barbaras' smooth, lovely airmail paper and began to translate 18 hours a day. I have done this for 20 days now. Here is really *everything* that is necessary – except for some geographical details and the usual pranama verses ending the chapters and in the beginning. Of 12 300 shlokas I have already translated 4 800, in 65 pages (with explanations).

It is an *incredibly exciting* work, one forgets to eat, drink and sleep. I don't know if the body holds out until the end, but I hope I can send it to You as a *registered* airmail letter *by the end of this month*. *Everything You have read "about" Caitanya Deva so far, from sources and books, is a pale reflection of the shining moon* of this work. *Believe me, without this text You cannot have any idea of what lila [God's play] is, especially His lila with His Own co-players. It is not an exaggeration*. The work is written in an old form of Bengali, very different from C.C. [Krishnadasa Kaviraja's Caitanya-Caritamrita] (ca. 1620) and its language, and it presents many difficulties. It gives the whole theology of the Caitanya-lila, but with *events of His life*, not abstractly. *I have translated it literally, word for word*, with technical words within brackets. It may be my last

bequest. I began with Caitanya-Bhagavata when I came to India [1935] – will it be the end?

Please, think now, and do not forget what You read on the previous pages! Vamandas, *I beseech You* – read *every* line together with Hella, without impatience and missing something out, *thinking: “This I know already”*. *I beseech You* – read it *thoroughly and without apprehensions*: “Would this be appropriate here in the West?” Give what is completely strange, unfamiliar, completely against human thinking, *with full strength!* It is not beneficial to the people to spare them the “shock”! This work is *just as much a nuisance to the solid Indian middle-class religiosity* – of those days and of today.

Please tell me if You will be at home in Bergslund during the first week of September, so that the parcel does not have to be redirected, and write to me immediately when You have received it. I have wrung it out of me with my last ounce of strength. I had the intention to make it very short, as a continuous summary, and let it come to You by 11 August, Krishna’s day of arrival. But I could not, it is an *unprecedented drama*, no easy-going reading like Murari Gupta’s Caitanya-Caritamritam or Krishnadasa Kaviraja’s Caitanya-Candrodaya-Natakam. The writer is *completely free*, since he does not have to observe any rules of artistic writing, yet it is an unheard-of drama that he has written.

You can publish it separately some time – after some revision and with some explanations – *as an incredibly vivid source*. Then people will *feel a tremendous blow*, so very different from the Christian overintellectual and sentimental monastic world in the West, and so *incredibly different from the life of Christ!!* When You *read* the Caitanya-Bhagavata, then *You can understand the whole Krishna-lila* and the other works on Caitanya. What M. writes in his stupid book, or G., is simply unbearable, when one reads the Caitanya-Bhagavata. People have spared, have withheld the readers the *drama*. *You cannot do the West a worse favour than to make things palatable, to suit their mentality*. The truth is just as *“revolting to the Indian general religiosity and mentality”*. [Sadananda

probably quotes Bhaktisiddhanta's own words here: "revolting to the Indian general religiosity and mentality".] He and His Own companions are no *human beings*; they come and go, become *visible* in time and space, and again *invisible*, in the realm beyond time and space (Vaikuntha), which *is present everywhere*, but not *visibly manifested* – as long as we are not on the highest level of true knowledge and serving love (bhakti).

You are my true child, Vamandas. For Your sake, I have read and translated this during these days. You must not imagine and present a sickly sweet Caitanya. There are only a chosen few who understand something through His Own potency of mercy and true knowledge, unless He makes His presence known [become avatara]. Thousands have read and read it, but don't understand. Please, Vamandas, *commence the spiritual revolution!* With best wishes and blessings for the birthday = the day of *arrival* = Krishna's *avirbhava* 11 August.

Vamandas, Vamandas! The world is not what it seems to be!!

Always from my heart, the bottom of my heart,

Your *Sadananda*