

# Ahaṁkāra

## Letter Sadānanda 30.12.60

Into English, notes © Kid Samuelsson 2014

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Dear Vāmandās, Hella, friends [...]

Concerning *ahaṁkāra*: *guṇa-maya*<sup>1</sup>-*ahaṁkāra*<sup>2</sup> or the “I-maker” is different from *avidyā-maya-ahaṁkāra*<sup>3</sup> or *ahaṁ-tā*<sup>4</sup>, although the word *ahaṁkāra* is often used in this *second* sense. *Prakṛti*<sup>5</sup> places at our disposal the ability to walk (feet), to see (eyes), to decide (buddhi), to experience (manas) as well as the ability to know ourselves as a *person* (*ahaṁkāra*). When I am turned away from God I use these abilities in my willingness to enjoy, and *ignorance* (*avidyā*) overwhelms me; I regard body, soul, etc., as *myself*, as *mine*, and abuse feet, eyes, etc., as well as my ability to know myself as a person, and I have an *avidyā-maya-ahaṁkāra* = *ahaṁtā*.

When I serve in *bhakti* I use everything in *sevā* and have a *cin-maya-ahaṁkāra*<sup>6</sup>, I know who the *ātmā* is and use the *guṇa-maya-ahaṁkāra* in *sevā* – hence I know myself as the *bhakta Vāmandās* and also know that the *ātmā* has a personality of his own that will gradually make itself known to me and that commences when I enter God’s realm. As long as I am *not* there I make use of my feet, etc., and my *guṇa-maya-ahaṁkāra* in serving *here*, but I have no *avidyā-maya-ahaṁkāra*, which, as opposed to *guṇa-maya-ahaṁkāra*, is often called *ahaṁtā*, *asmitā*<sup>7</sup> etc. [...]

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<sup>1</sup> Here the suffix “-maya” means “consisting of”.

<sup>2</sup> *Ahaṁkāra* formed by *Māyā*’s *guṇas*, a *real* concrete layer and a function of the subtle physical body.

<sup>3</sup> *Ahaṁkāra* formed by *Māyā*’s aspect as *ignorance* (*avidyā*), is an *illusory* concept of I.

<sup>4</sup> The *erroneous* concept of I that consists in that the intellect (*buddhi*) believes itself and the gross and subtle physical body to be the true, real I, the *ātmā*.

<sup>5</sup> *Māyā* as *causa materialis*, the primordial substance of all matter and its manifestations.

<sup>6</sup> A *true* concept of I, i.e., “I am *Bhagavān*’s *bhakta*”, formed by *cit*, God’s Own power of serving, cognizant love.

<sup>7</sup> *Asmi* = I am; *asmitā* consists in the delusion of the intellect (*buddhi*), which believes itself to be the *ātmā*. This delusion (*asmitā*) is *unreal* – in contrast to the subtle, psychic (*guṇa-maya*)-*ahaṁkāra* – and consists of *avidyā* (*ignorance*). *Buddhi* considers itself to be

Yours Sadānanda

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the thinking subject (cf. Descartes: “I think, thus I am” or: “I is something that thinks”) of the unity of ātmā (jīva), subtle and physical covering. This asmitā is removed through saṁvit-śakti, bhakti, God’s Own power, through which He knows Himself and which makes others know Him.