

The content of the ego-concept

by Svāmī Sadānanda dāsa

translated into English by Katrin Stamm

Annotations as footnotes by Katrin Stamm,
based on the works of Walther Eidlitz:

Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya,
Sein Leben und Seine Lehre, Uppsala 1968;
Der Sinn des Lebens,
Freiburg im Breisgau 1974

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The content of the ego-concept

- a** = ātmā
b = inner subtle covering
c = outer gross covering
A = Paramātmā¹

1. The most primitive man:



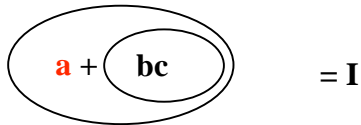
2. Man has realised, that he is composed of **b** and **c**:



3. Here, man separates his psychic organ from his physical organ.
 At the point of death **b** is kept; **b** becomes idealized, is named “soul”, will last forever, will exist with or without a (**c**)-body. Cf. the Jewish religion, Christianity, Islam and the concept of individual immortality:



4. Man has heard, that there is also, apart from what he naturally considers his **bc**-identity, an ātmā – **a**. Now it depends on whether he has any sat-vāsanā-s² and a-prākṛta (guṇafree)-sukṛti³ or not. Then, there is a true chance for śraddhā⁴ to develop .



¹ ātmā: individual true self (eternal; latent ability – when freed from nescience and granted with bhakti by a bhakta – to know himself and his coverings and to know and serve God; being himself a tiny spark of Divinity, consisting of the three concomitants: the Blissful, the Substantive and the Cognitive (sat-cit-ānanda) – which are also the basic qualities of Divinity – to a corresponding extent).

inner covering: transient, subtle mental covering; contains active and cognitive senses; prāṇa (life-force); citta: passive, receptive consciousness (aptitude to experience sth.); manas: desire, pondering (willingness, to experience sth.); buddhi: judgement, intellect (ability to know the object of experience); ahaṁkāra: I-maker, personality (basis for any sense of “I” or identification).

outer covering: perishable gross body; sense-organs and organs for performing actions; prāṇa.

Paramātmā: Highest Self or personal Oversoul (eternal, the knower of all ātmā-s and their coverings; the immanent manifestive portion of the transcendental icon of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the world; the blended entity of eternal Presence of Felicitous Cognition to a limited degree; „silent Witness“ and eternal Friend of the ātmā on his endless journey on which he acquires manifold bodies and discards them again.

² Sattvic/virtuous “imprints” in the receptive consciousness (citta), resulting from the striving for successive emancipation in earlier lives on the path of karma- or jñāna-yoga, that stimulate the desire to get to know the truth, to achieve inner peace and to become pure.

³ Sukṛti: the sum total of all sat-vāsanā-s or elevating results of karma. A-prākṛta, viz. bhakti-vāsanā-s or cit-“imprints” in the citta, originating from service, done according to the scriptural injunctions on the first stages of the discipline of bhakti-yoga or knowing loving service of Godhead as a means and an end.

⁴ Inner conviction that certain actions and a respective frame of mind are conducive to what I consider to be my goal in life. Tāmasika-śraddhā: to believe, that doing the opposite of what the śāstram-s (scriptural revelation) prescribe, promotes the fulfilment of my aims. Rājasika-śraddhā: restless performance of man’s duty as expected and required by the śāstram-s. Sāttvika-śraddhā: clear knowledge of the ātmā (Paramātmā and Brahma). Nirguṇa-śraddhā: loving knowing service of God as a means and an end, to solely please Him, without expecting any gain for myself.

5. The person concerned has heard that the aggregate of the **ātmā** – **a** and **b** and **c** constitute his being and that their existence is guaranteed by **A** .

$$A + \textcircled{a + b + c}$$

6. The person concerned has realised that the physical body **c** can be either there (+) or not, can be changed, discarded or newly acquired (–), but isn't able to distinguish his **ātmā** – **a** from his psyche **b**, yet.

$$A + \textcircled{a + b} \quad +/ - c$$

7. The person concerned has understood theoretically that his **ātmā** is different from his psyche and that it can exist seperatedly from and independently of the mental and the physical body.

$$A + (a) \quad +/ - b \quad +/ - c$$

The stages 4 – 7 are progressive levels of understanding, the sādḥaka-s⁵ can reach in the course of their respective spiritual discipline.

On the 7th level the person concerned has reached *Jñāna*⁶, but not *Vijñāna*⁷ yet.

8. The **ātmā** in the person concerned is awakened and has realised his own true identity and his connection with **A**; **b** and **c** are still existing but he considers them and their inward processes as something disconnected from him and alien to his nature. Now the **ātmā** has become a disinterested and detached spectator of the processes in **b** and **c**, a *sākṣī* or *kṣetra-jñā*⁸.

This is the condition of the mukta⁹, who hasn't abandoned his subtle and gross coverings yet. He is named *jīvan-mukta*, i.e. the **ātmā**, now freed from nescience, whose presence animates and inspires both coverings (*jīvayati* = he animates).

$$A + (a) \quad +/ - [b + c]$$

- 9.a) The free **ātmā** discards the coverings.

$$A + (a) \rightarrow$$

⁵ Those who follow a spiritual discipline as prescribed in the śāstram-s, the revelational scriptures of the Hindu religious tradition.

⁶ Theoretical knowledge of ātmā, Paramātmā and Brahma.

⁷ Realization of the impact of the Pure Knowledge.

⁸ "Knower of the field". The body, consisting of the inner and the outer covering, is the „field“ of experience for the conditioned ātmā.

⁹ The liberated ātmā.

9.b) The mukta who was a jñānī¹⁰ before, realises his qualitative identity with the formless Absolute and is apt to lose his own identity in it. The jñānī had been seeking to take sanctuary in the formless Brahma¹¹, which is devoid of any expression of līlā-śakti¹².

(a) > Brahma

9.c) The ātmā, who has followed the path of Bhakti, receives **b** and **c** consisting of cit¹³.

These **b** and **c** are substantially not different from the ātmā and form a genuine union with it.

Consequently the true ego-concept of the ātmā embraces:

(a + b + c)

The processes in **b** and **c** are seemingly the same as in **b** and **c**, but whereas in **b** and **c** they are without any secondary objects and are rooting in God-consciousness, in **b** and **c** they are pragmatic and originate in ignorance about the nature of the ātmā and God .

a + b + c partake in Bhagavān's¹⁴ nature and His līlā. The character of **b** and **c** is determined by the sort of sthāyī-bhāva¹⁵, that slowly takes shape from level 5 onwards as śraddhā up to 9c.

When the bhakta, progressing from level 5, has focussed on the Paramātmā = Viṣṇu in a mixture of jñāna and bhakti, **A** remains till level 9a and the ātmā + **b** + **c** then join the līlā of Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu's¹⁶ later on.

When the ātmā has focussed on Bhagavān with exclusive bhakti, Bhagavān enters the heart-lotus, made ready by bhakti, through the ear, and **A** (the Paramātmā) integrates into Bhagavān.

¹⁰ One who followed the path of jñāna-yoga, of realizing the formless aspect of the Absolute.

¹¹ Indistinguishable formless magnitude, which is an indolent, lax, presentment of cognitive Bliss but merely the penumbra of the intensely blended glow of the Blissful, the Substantive and the Cognitive (= Bhagavān; cf. ann. 14). It is cognisance but without any subject or object of cognisance.

¹² God's Power, that gives shape to His Divine Play.

¹³ Pure Cognisance.

¹⁴ The sole Supreme Godhead, depending only upon Himself. He is the very intensely blended entity of eternal presence of felicitous Cognition (sat-cit-ānanda), personal, expressing the fullness of His own Power (cit-śakti), but without any direct relation to the worlds within time and space.

¹⁵ A personal, everlasting relationship with God, individually determined by the character of the ātmā, a permanent unchanging prīti (love, friendship, cordiality towards Bhagavān), that has become one with the nature of the personality completely. At first, there is a union between the prīti and the empirical personality, i.e. union between the prīti and the consciousness and subconsciousness. Gradually, the sthāyī-bhāva turns into a union between the prīti and the eternal ātmā.

¹⁶ When omnipotence and glory (aiśvarya) prevail in Bhagavān, He appears as Nārāyaṇa.