

# Ahaṁkāra

Letter from Sadānanda 30 December 1960

Into English, within square brackets and footnotes

© Kid Samuelsson 2010

Latest changed 29 September 2020

Dear Vāmandās, Hella, friends [...]

Concerning the Structure manuscript and Your lectures – in short: The principal structure is the following: Manas comes from sāttvika ahaṁkāra<sup>1</sup>, buddhi from rājasika ahaṁkāra etc. and in principle there is *not* a great difference (‘atibhinna’ Jīva Gosvāmī) between *citta* and *manas*, which is sāttvika. However, this ideal, principal *structure* only exists in *theory*, because in *practice* it is the *rājasika* element that predominates in man – rajas and tamas – except in a character dominated by sāttvika, which means that *manas* is not *pure* but *overpowered* by rājasa- and tāmasa-vāsanā-s<sup>2</sup> etc.

This is why the *Gītā* and the *Bhāgavatam* say that on the marga-s [paths] of karma and jñāna one shall try to overcome tamas and rajas and strive to acquire a character dominated by sāttvika. On the bhakti path, however, it is God’s Own cit potency, which like fire makes the three guṇa-s red-hot and brings about functions that are *nirguṇa*, beyond the guṇa-s, creating the impression that the eyes, hands, buddhi, manas, etc. *serve Him*, whereas it is God’s Own power of bhakti that works and makes use of the eyes etc. [...]

Concerning *ahaṁkāra*: guṇa-maya<sup>3</sup>-*ahaṁkāra*<sup>4</sup> or the “I-maker” is different from avidyā-maya-ahaṁkāra<sup>5</sup> or ahaṁ-tā<sup>6</sup>, although the word ahaṁkāra

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. [http://sadananda.com/txt/de/text\\_downloads/de/tattvams-de.pdf](http://sadananda.com/txt/de/text_downloads/de/tattvams-de.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Seeds of lust and hate, deeply hidden in the citta. Cf.

[http://sadananda.com/index.php?action=text\\_downloads\\_vamandas\\_0\\_02\\_en\\_f](http://sadananda.com/index.php?action=text_downloads_vamandas_0_02_en_f)

<sup>3</sup> Here, the term ‘maya’ with short a’s means ‘consisting of’.

<sup>4</sup> The ahaṁkāra formed of Māyā’s guṇa-s is a concrete layer and function of the subtle physical body, i.e. citta, *ahaṁkāra*, manas, buddhi, the ten senses of perception and action, and the individual ātmā, which gives them life; cf. footnote 2.

<sup>5</sup> The ahaṁkāra formed of Māyā’s aspect as ignorance (avidyā) – the illusory I-concept.

<sup>6</sup> The erroneous I-perception, which consists in the intellect (buddhi) holding the view that together with the gross and subtle physical body it is the true self, the real I, the ātmā.

is often used in this *second* sense. Prakṛti<sup>7</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 averse to God and His sevā, I employ 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 have an avidyā-maya-ahaṁkāra = ahaṁtā.

When I serve in bhakti I employ everything in sevā and have a cin-maya-ahaṁkāra<sup>8</sup>, I know who the ātmā is and use the guṇa-maya-ahaṁkāra in sevā – hence I know myself as the bhakta *Vāmandās* and I also know that the ātmā has a personality of his own, which will gradually make itself known to me and be employed 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 His service *here*, but I have no *avidyā-maya-ahaṁkāra*, which, as opposed to guṇa-maya-ahaṁkāra, is often called ahaṁtā, asmitā<sup>9</sup> etc. [...]

Your Sadānanda

---

<sup>7</sup> Māyā as causa materialis, the primordial substance of all matter and its manifestations, ‘Mother nature’.

<sup>8</sup> Guṇa-maya-ahaṁkāra permeated by cit, God’s Own power of serving, cognizant love. Fire, God’s saṁvid-śakti, transforms iron, guṇa-maya-ahaṁkāra into its own nature and makes the iron identify itself with it. In other words, we have four different notions of the I: a) guṇa-maya-ahaṁkāra b) avidyā-maya-ahaṁkāra c) cin-maya-ahaṁkāra (in sādha-deha, i.e. “I am the bhakta Vāmandās”) d) the ātmā’s own I-concept (in siddha-deha, i.e. “I am the eternal servant of God, with my own name, character, sevā etc.).

<sup>9</sup> ‘Bewilderment’ (moha; asmitā), which makes one incapable of realizing that the intellect (buddhi) is not the true I, which is the opposite of Descartes’ well-known statement: “I think, therefore I am”.