

Anahañkāraḥ

absence of self-importance

Anahañkāraḥ

Ahañkāra is the Sanskrit word that indicates the sense of concept of one's own individuality, the individualised I-sense expressed as 'I do', 'I own', 'I enjoy' and so on.

'An' is a prefix which negates the meaning of the word it precedes. Therefore, **anahañkāra** means the absence of the sense of '**ahañkāra**', freedom from an individualised '**I-identification**'.

Total destruction of **ahañkāra** is self-knowledge. Only the one who knows the truth of the self is completely free from **ahañkāra**, identification with an individualised 'I'.

Lord Kṛṣṇa could not have intended the primary meaning of self-knowledge, total destruction, as the meaning of **anahañkāra**. Instead, the word has a relative meaning in which it is a preparatory means for knowledge.

WHAT IS MEANT BY RELATIVE ABSENCE OF AHAÑKĀRA ?

Ahañkāra is ego.

How can you bring about relative absence of ego?

By understanding what causes the presence of ego. Presence of ego is the result of sheer ignorance. Ego gains its status because I never think of examining its reality.

THE EGO

The aggrandizement of ego comes about purely due to lack of thinking on my part. When I clearly, objectively examine the claims made by the ego, it cannot but deflate.

The claim made by the ego will not hold up, either to knowledge or to ignorance or to power, possessions or accomplishments.

In a given lifetime, the essential characteristic of the individualised sense of I, in its infancy, is ignorance. **Ignorance is the capital with which the 'I', ego begins life.**

Later, I maintain that capital and spend it very carefully throughout my life.

IGNORANCE - KNOWLEDGE

Ignorance is not an ego inflator. **Ignorance** is not something to which I proudly lay claim.

Knowledge, however, is a different matter. I gladly claim title to **knowledge**, although it is a spurious claim.

Knowledge is not created by me, but only discovered in the wake of the removal of **ignorance**. **Knowledge** is always there; no one owns or creates **knowledge**.

Hence, I cannot assign to the ego, a personal credit for the skill or speed in shedding **ignorance**.

AHAÑKĀRA, EGO - MĀNITVA, PRIDE

When this individualised sense of 'I' came to manifest, it was endowed with a certain kind of physical body, born into a particular set of circumstances or environment, both preset factors that condition the learning opportunities. Parents, teachers, neighbours, schools, and various experiences, contributed to the removal of my ignorance.

Ahañkāra did not create the people or circumstances, yet claims the result.

Ahañkāra, ego, and **mānitva**, pride, are closely related, almost synonymous effects born of the same cause, ignorance of the relationship of the individualised sense of I with the world.

We previously saw, when **mānitva** was examined, that pride in anything is a logical absurdity.

Although, graced by free will, I have the power to choose my actions, I have no power over the actual result of the action chosen; the result I anticipate can never be more than a probability among possibilities.

I do not produce the result. The result of any act of mine, occurs both as the product of materials that I have not authored as well as the outcome of many circumstances, past and present, known and unknown, which must operate in concert for the given result to occur.

Pride and ego, when examined, become so silly that humility really cannot be considered a virtue. Humility is simply understanding the world, including myself, because I am part of the world, just as it is.

SELF-CONDEMNATION

When I understand things as they are, I will be neither proud nor will I be **self-condemning**. **Self-condemnation** also is an expression of the ego, **ahañkāra**.

Self-condemnation is an impurity in the mind, to be cleansed by the understanding that there is no locus for condemnation other than a particular thought.

In the correct understanding of myself, of my relationship to the world, there is no room for either pride or **self-condemnation**.

I see the world that includes me, as it is. I see the world is filled with wonderful opportunities. Therefore, I make use of these opportunities as a source of learning. I make use of this vehicle, the body-mind and so on, to the best of my ability.

It is my means to shed ignorance. I see that personal credit for anything is irrelevant and cannot be substantiated.

I simply enjoy the world as a field for the discovery of knowledge, without pride, without egotism.

This is the attitude of **anahañkāra**.