



## (c) Manomaya kośa (Mental sheath) (167-183)

ज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि च मनश्च मनोमयः स्यात्  
कोशो ममाहमिति वस्तुविकल्पहेतुः ।  
संज्ञादिभेदकलनाकलितो बलीयां-  
स्तत्पूर्वकोशमभिपूर्य विजृम्भते यः ॥ १६७ ॥

*jñānendriyāṇi ca manaśca manomayah syāt  
kośo mamāhamiti vastuvikalpahetuḥ,  
saṃjñādibhedakalanākalito balīyām -  
statpūrvakośamabhipūrya vijṛmbhate yaḥ. (167)*

167. *The organs of perception along with the mind form the mental sheath which is the sole cause for the 'I' and 'mine' diversity of things. It has the essential faculty of creating differences of names and so on, and it is powerful. It pervades the sheath preceding it – the vital air sheath.*

This opening verse on the discussion of the mental sheath explains what is meant by manomaya kośa in Vedānta. The mind along with its sense centres constitutes the mental sheath. The sense organs are in the body but when the mind is engrossed elsewhere, we do not perceive the things though they are within the range of our senses. This is because the sense centres are in the mind<sup>1</sup> and if the mind is not available, no perception is possible. The sense organs by themselves cannot perceive. When the mind flows through the sense organs and reaches, say, the place where the pot is, the experience of, 'this is a pot' is generated. The theory of perception in Vedānta is that the Consciousness riding on the mind as citta, flows out through the sense organs to reach the pot-place (ghaṭādeśa) and contacts the existence (Sat) of the pot.

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<sup>1</sup> ibid. verse – 92.

Thus, I become conscious of the pot, the Consciousness of the pot is the 'knowledge of the pot'.

'I-ness' and 'my-ness' are born in and maintained by this manomaya kośa. Consisting of the sense organs and the mind, the mental sheath creates two distinctions, 'me' and 'mine'. Through them the mind annihilates the peace within. It destroys the inner peace by the sense of 'me' (aham), and the outer peace by the sense of 'mine' (mama).

'My-ness' is nothing but the 'I' reflected upon certain objects outside. The extension of the ego upon the world of objects around is called 'my-ness'. So extension of 'I-ness' is 'my-ness'. This extension spreads to frontiers which can never be well-defined. All this hallucination is caused by the manomaya kośa.

Manomaya kośa is that powerful force which creates all the apparent differences in the world of pluralistic experiences. Wherever there is no plurality there is no mind. Hence mind alone is the cause for all plurality – the plurality of names, forms, qualities, activities and utilities. Where the mind is not, nothing is.

Manomaya kośa fully pervades the preceding kośa, that is, the prāṇamaya kośa. Mind can only conceive things known. What I do not know, I cannot think about. The moment I get a new knowledge, it becomes a new idea to think about. In short, the present boundaries of my knowledge are the outermost frontiers to which my mind can run and pervade.



पञ्चेन्द्रियैः पञ्चभिरेव होतुभिः  
प्रचीयमानो विषयाज्यधारया ।  
जाज्वल्यमानो बहुवासनेन्धनैः  
मनोमयाग्निर्वहति प्रपञ्चम् ॥ १६८ ॥