



44. Ānandamaya kośa (Bliss sheath) (207-210)

आनन्दप्रतिबिम्बचुम्बिततनुर्वृत्तिस्तमोजृम्भिता
स्यादानन्दमयः प्रियादिगुणकः स्वेष्टार्थलाभोदयः ।
पुण्यस्यानुभवे विभाति कृतिनामानन्दरूपः स्वयं
सर्वो नन्दति यत्र साधु तनुभृन्मात्रः प्रयत्नं विना ॥ २०७ ॥

*ānandapratibimbacumbitatanurvṛttistamojṛmbhitā
syādānandamayaḥ priyādiguṇakaḥ sveṣṭārthalābhodayaḥ,
puṇyasyānubhave vibhāti kṛtināmānandarūpaḥ svayaṁ
sarvo nandati yatra sādhu tanubhṛnmātraḥ prayatnaṁ vinā. (207)*

207. The ānandamaya kośa (bliss sheath) is that modification of nescience which is kissed by a reflection of the Ātman, which is Bliss Absolute. Pleasure and so on, are its attributes and it springs into expression when an object agreeable to it presents itself. The fortunate feel it spontaneously when the fruits of their good actions manifest. Every being, without the least effort, derives great joy from it.

Now the ānandamaya kośa is being described. Ānandamaya kośa is also a vṛtti, a mental disturbance; 'vṛtti' means 'thought'. Even during deep sleep there are thought waves. The prāṇa, the mind and the intellect are annihilated or transcended. During actual moments of samādhi, there are no physiological functions in the physical body, clinically one is supposed to be dead. Śrī Aurobindo's and Svāmī Paramahansa Yogananda's bodies were kept for some days after their mahāsamādhi, with the expectation that they would come back. When the body starts rotting, it is disposed off. When one is in samādhi, it is God's and nature's job to protect it. If one's karma with the body is not finished, it will be protected and preserved by nature for one's future use. Samādhi is a state wherein all thought

waves have totally stopped. Deep sleep is not samādhi; during deep sleep there are yet subtle vṛtties in the intellect.

These vṛtties can be said to be bliss thoughts (ānanda vṛtti). Happiness experienced in a man's bosom is inversely proportional to the amount of agitation in his mind. Ordinarily, we are used to the endless stress and strain in our daily life. That moment in our life when our agitations are comparatively less, is a relatively happy moment. So the happiest moment is that in which there are but negligible agitations in our bosom. These small thought waves are said to be 'bliss thoughts'. At these moments, the bliss of Infinitude is tasted a little. Śaṅkara, in his poetic exuberance says, "The ripples of thought waves arising out of tamas in our mind, kiss the reflection of the bliss of Infinitude. This is the characteristic of the ānandamaya kośa."

From the non-apprehension of Reality, soft ripples of thoughts arise in the mind and when these ripples are 'kissed by', meaning, 'illuminated by', the light of divine Bliss, it is called ānandamaya kośa. Even during our waking state, we sometimes experience this bliss sheath. Depending upon our relationship with the object of our liking, we feel different degrees of happiness – they are priya, moda and pramoda.

Priya, moda and pramoda are different degrees of happiness experienced when we come in different degrees of contact with the objects of our liking. When we are near an object of pleasure or contemplating upon it, we feel happy. A lover sitting in his home and thinking of his beloved feels happy. Though the beloved is far away, to think of the beloved is happiness. In English, we may call this pleasurable emotion felt in the bosom as 'pleasure' (priya).

When the beloved, the object of our liking is in front of us, the pleasure is intensified and that intensified pleasure is called 'moda', in English let us call it 'joy'.

And when we are actually indulging in or enjoying, when the object of our pleasure is in our possession, that pleasure is