

The function of the intelligence, the vijñānamaya kośa is ‘to know’. Jñāna is its main function. It gives rise to the concept of ‘I, the knower’.

The mind projects the world of objects and the intellect illumines them with its intelligence which is reflected in the light of Consciousness and there arises the notion of, ‘I know’. This process of mental projection and intellectual recognition goes on at all times and the feelings of ‘T’ and ‘mine’ are created. The feeling of ‘T’ is with reference to the body, the sense organs, prāṇas, and the mind. The feeling of ‘mine’ is with reference to the world of objects.

This intellect, due to the light of Consciousness playing in it, develops the capacity to illumine things projected by the mind and as a final result of all these, it comes to identify with the body, the sense organs and so on. It becomes the restless ego, the ‘I-ness’ and identifying with the objects perceived by the sense organs, it provides the ‘my-ness’. Thereafter, starts the ‘T’ and ‘my’ play which we call ‘saṃsāra’.

This great tyrannical power which enters our bosom, loots our discrimination and ties us down to our limitations, is none other than the vijñānamaya kośa. If a person withdraws from this sheath, he shall have neither this ‘I-ness’ nor this ‘my-ness’. Nor will he identify any longer with the body, the sense organs and so on, and have the feeling of ‘mine’ regarding the world of objects around him.



अनादिकालोऽयमहं स्वभावे
जीवः समस्तब्यवहारवोदा ।
करोति कर्माण्यपि पूर्ववासनः
पुण्यान्यपुण्यानि च तत्फलानि ॥ १८६ ॥

*anādikālo' yamahāṁ svabhāvo
jīvah samastavyavahāravodhā,
karoti karmāṇyapi pūrvavāsanāḥ
puṇyānyapuṇyāni ca tatphalāni.* (186)

भुद्भूते विचित्रास्वपि योनिषु ब्रजन्
आयाति निर्यात्यय उर्ध्वमेषः ।
अस्यैव विज्ञानमयस्य जाग्रत्-
स्वप्नाद्यवस्थाः सुखदुःखभोगः ॥ १८७ ॥

*bhuṅkte vicitrāsvapi yoniṣu vrajan
āyāti niryātyadha ūrdhvameṣaḥ,
asyaiva vijñānamayasya jāgrat-
svapnādyavasthāḥ sukhaduḥkhabhogaḥ.* (187)

186 & 187. *It is without beginning, is of the nature of the ego and is called the ‘jīva’, which carries out the entire range of activities on the relative plane. It performs good and evil actions according to its previous vāsanās and experiences their results. It comes and goes, up and down, taking birth in various bodies. The waking, dream and other states and the experiences of joy and sorrow, belong to this intellectual sheath.*

The concept of ‘I’ is beginningless. It started even before the beginning of time. Before one recognises an object, there must already be an ‘I’. If there be an object, and the ‘I’ is not present, there cannot be an experience. For every experience, the I-factor representing the subject is indispensable. I, the ego, myself am the subject. So the first object that emerged at the beginning of creation must have been the first thought at zero time. When I arrogated the first thought to myself, the concept of ‘I do’ arose thus the ego is beginningless (anādi). This ‘I-ness’ (aham-svabhāva), which is beginningless, is the jīva, the individuality. All activities on the relative plane are carried out by this jīva. The light of Consciousness conditioned by thought carries out all the activities in the world. When the last thought is ended, there is no more an ego and so no more any actions. To realise consciously and dynamically this state of actionlessness is called ‘samādhi’.