



(d) Vijñānamaya kośa (Intellectual sheath) (184-188)

बुद्धिर्बुद्धीन्द्रियैः सार्थं सवृत्तिः कर्तुलक्षणः ।
विज्ञानमयकोशः स्यात्पुंसः संसारकारणम् ॥ १८४ ॥

buddhirbuddhindriyaiḥ sārdham savṛttih kartūlakṣaṇaḥ,
vijñānamayakośaḥ syātpuṁsaḥ saṁsārakāraṇam. (184)

184. The intellect with its modifications along with the organs of perception forms the intellectual sheath (vijñānamaya kośa). It has the characteristics of 'the agent' (or doer) which is the cause for transmigration.

The vijñānamaya kośa (intellectual sheath) constitutes the intellect, the sense organs of perception and all the different modifications of the intellect. It controls the organs of perception.

This intellectual sheath in man veils the infinite Reality. It is the cause for saṁsāra. The modifications of the intellect are the awareness of 'doing' and the concept of 'I am the doer'. This concept creates more and more vāsanās. In order to exhaust the vāsanās the individual has to move from one field of enjoyment to another, so there are births and deaths, again and again. How this vijñānamaya kośa is the cause for saṁsāra is explained in the following verse –



अनुब्रजच्चित्प्रतिविम्बशक्तिः
विज्ञानसंज्ञः प्रकृतेविकारः ।
ज्ञानक्रियावानहमित्यजस्म
देहेन्द्रियादिष्वभिमन्यते भृशम् ॥ १८५ ॥

*anuvrajaccitpratibimbabaśaktih
vijñānasamjñah prakṛtervikārah,
jñānakriyāvānahamityajasram
dehendriyādiśvabhimanaye bhṛśam.* (185)

185. *Accompanied by¹ a reflection of the light of Cit, the intellectual sheath is a modification of prakṛti. It is endowed with the function of knowledge and is always completely identified with the body, sense organs and so on.*

The vijñānamaya kośa is constantly accompanied by the reflection of the light, Cit, Consciousness. Consciousness is all-pervasive at all times. The world of plurality floods up within it, as it were. Consciousness reflected in the intellect is intelligence, just as the electricity reflected in or functioning in the bulb is light, in the fan is rotation, in the heater is heat and in the refrigerator is cold. In Śaṅkara's and the Vaidika times, there was no electricity so he has taken the example of the sun being reflected in, conditioned by, functioning through, playing in, a bucket of water.

This mighty power of eternal Consciousness, God, which is the Spark of Life in everyone of us, is not confined to the within. It is present everywhere at all times. This Consciousness playing in the pools of thought is the individual, in whom It generates the doership idea. Where the doership has ended, there the individuality has also ended. This idea is explained in the Upaniṣads through the 'reflection theory' (pratibimbavāda).

The matter vestures cannot function by themselves in the absence of Consciousness. They are, after all, composed of inert cells. The intelligence is there only because of the Consciousness playing through the intellect in us. The matter equipment, the intellect, becomes brilliant because of the light of Consciousness. The intellect by itself has no intelligence, it is like a mirror in darkness.

¹ 'vraja' means 'roaming about'.

anu-vraja is constantly roaming about always at the head of, constantly accompanied by or followed by.