

Science of Panch Kosha and Its Importance for Healthy Life Style in Present Scenario

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Abstract:

Objective of the study: The purpose of the study was to give the knowledge about science of Panch Kosha and its importance for healthy life style. In present scenario, people adopt yogic life style and its principle for their health & wellness. The yogic principles give the inner satisfaction and connection to the nature, so researcher wants to know the fact of science of Panch kosha. Kosha is referred to as "sheath", one of five coverings of the Atman or Self, according to Vedantic philosophy. According to the Kosha system in Yogic philosophy, the nature of being human encompasses physical and psychological aspects that function as one holistic system. **Conclusion:** The Kosha system refers to these different aspects as layers of subjective experience. Layers range from the dense physical body to the more subtle levels of emotions, mind and spirit. Vedic texts mention that human body is only the physical abode of soul. The soul is considered to be enveloped in five koshas if we go in more details of vedic texts sheaths which we call as Pancha kosha. The Atman is at the center of the Bliss sheath. The soul is enveloped in five sheaths. Development of all the five sheaths is fully necessary for human complete spiritual evolution.

Annamay Kosh (Food Sheath)

The outermost of the Kosha is called the sheath of food (Annamaya kosha). This is the sheath of the physical self, named from the fact that it is nourished by food. Annamay Kosh is matter in the form of physical body sustained by intake of food. It includes five organs of perception (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch), and the five organs of action (prehension, locomotion, articulation, excretion, procreation). This sheath has the most dense and slow vibrational frequency. This body cannot exist without contact with the other koshas. Personality of the individual i.e., physique as well as traits depend on the condition of annamaya kosha, the formation of which continues life after life. The physique in the next birth is decided by the state of annamaya kosha of earlier births.

Importance of the Annamaya Kosha:

Ancient Hindu wisdom proves that man, his personality and destiny (fate) are determined in his subtle bodies, which he brings from previous births. Kosh is materialistic realization of the Supreme. Living through this layer, man identifies himself with a mass of skin, flesh, fat, bones, and filth. This is considered as cage of flesh and blood in terms of spiritual world. Purification, Refinement and development of Annamaya kosha is possible through the methods of: Upavas (fasting), Physical Asanas, Tatvashudhi (Inner Purification) and Tapashcharya (Practice of austerity). Freeing our soul from the attachment and identification with the food sheath (Annamaya kosh) or physical body is the first objective of spirituality. All medicines prescribed in modern (western) medicine (allopathic medicine) act on this Kosh. Thus western medicine is extremely superficial and rarely acts on the root cause of major issues (disease) that are generated or settled in the koshas other than Annamay Kosh.

Pranmay Kosh (Vital Air Sheath)

Pranmay Kosh (the life force) is the pranic sheath composed of prana, the vital principle or the force that holds together the body and the mind. Its physical manifestation is the breath. As long as this vital principle exists in the organisms, life continues. Vital energy, Prana which according to its location, movement and purpose has been divided into five major and five minor components. Yogic literature mentions the presence of 72,000 pathways along which the Prana moves in human body. These pathways cannot anatomically be seen but the existence of some of them seems to have been proved indirectly by using acupuncture needles tipped with radioactive phosphorus. The pathways have been named as Nadis in Yoga. These 72,000 Nadis interconnect the energetic centers, or chakras in human body. Even though, the form of this sheath is subtle, it is very similar to the form of the physical body. Nadis are astral tubes that carry pranic currents. They cannot be seen with the naked eye. They are not the ordinary nerves, arteries and veins.

Importance of Pranmay Kosh

Three of them are important - Ida, Pingala, and Susumna. Susumna is the most important because kundalini passes through this Nadi only. The kundalini system consisting of 72,000 nadis and the Sushumna, Ida and Pingala are the locations of Pranmay Kosha. Coupled with the five organs of action (hands, feet, and organ of speech, organs of evacuation and the organ of generation.) it forms the vital sheath. Supreme Lord in the living symptoms or life forms. Acupuncture, Reiki and Magneto-therapy seem to be working on this Kosh. Homeopathic medicines in moderate potencies (extremely high dilutions) also act on this Kosh.

Manomay Kosh (Mind Sheath)

Manomaya means composed of manas or mind thinking, feeling and willing. The mind along with the five sensory organs taste (tongue), smell (nose), vision (eyes), hearing (ear), and touch (skin), is said to constitute the manomaya kosa or "mind-sheath". It is the cause of diversity. Man's bondage is caused by the mind and liberation too is caused by that alone.

Importance of Manomay Kosh

The Manomaya Kosh is the mental faculty that receives all the sensory inputs, interprets them as good or bad and desires the good. This Kosha is much more powerful than the preceding two Koshas and governs them and is, in turn, governed by the two Koshas superior to it. It is thus central to human existence. Many modalities of treatment like aroma, music, color, placebo therapy, and shamanism work in this Kosh. Homeopathic medicines in the higher potencies also influence this Kosh.

Vigyanmay Kosh (Intellect Sheath)

Vijnanamaya means composed of vijnana, or intellect, the faculty which discriminates, determines or wills. It is the sheath composed of more intellection, associated with the organs of perception. This knowledge sheath cannot be the supreme self for the following reasons; It is subject to change, It is insentient, It is a limited thing, It is not constantly present. A large part of this Kosh is in the realm, of the unconscious and is a major repository of information. The feeling of 'me' and 'mine', and the faculty of intelligence and reasoning constitute Vigyanmaya Kosh.

Importance of Vigyanmay Kosh

When one closes the eyes and relaxes during meditation, the functioning of the Manomaya Kosh becomes minimum. The Vigyanmaya Kosh comes in the front and gets active. In the final stages

of meditation, the intellect becomes stable and mind becomes still and this is called Samadhi. Meditation when used as a therapeutic tool works in the Vigyanmaya Kosh. All sorts of reasoning and counselling (psycho-therapy) also act on this Kosh

Aanandmay Kosh (Bliss Sheath)

The fifth or the Anandmaya Kosh is the innermost Kosh in close proximity of the Soul. In Advaita Vedanta the Anandamaya kosha is the innermost of the five koshas (Pancha koshas) or "sheaths" that veil the Atman or Supreme Self. Unlike the next three more outer koshas, it constitutes the karana sharira or causal body. It is associated with the state of dreamless sleep and samadhi. The Anandamaya kosha or "sheath made of bliss" (ananda) is in Vedantic philosophy the most subtle or spiritual of the five levels of embodied self. Anandamaya means composed of ananda, or bliss. Bliss or ceaseless joy not connected with body or mind. Anandamaya, or that which is composed of Supreme bliss, is regarded as the innermost of all. This kosha is a reflection of the three divine qualities of the Soul, namely Sat, Chit and Anand. Sat means that it believes in truthfulness and its eternalness. Chit means that it is alive and conscious and can therefore interact with various situations in an appropriate way.

Importance of Anadamaya Kosh

This characteristic separates the living and the non-living. Anand means that it is enjoy full of pleasure in itself. It does not need any outside stimulus to be cheerful, though if they are present the effect is only compounded. Being joyful is a prominent characteristic of this Kosh. Since the Soul itself is a non-doer of anything, its qualities are manifest through this innermost Kosh. The bliss sheath normally has its fullest play during deep sleep: while in the dreaming and wakeful states, it has only a partial manifestation. The blissful sheath (Anandamaya kosha) is a reflection of the Atman which is bliss absolute. Development of all the seven sheaths fully is necessary for man's complete spiritual evolution.

An Overview of the Five Koshas

Sr.no.	Kosha	Stage	Type	Actions
1.	Anna-maya kosha	Organic body	Eat-drink-and-be-merry	Download movies, Upload family pics to facebook, parties on weekends
2.	Prana-maya kosha	Energy body, vitality	Vitality seeker, Health consciousness	Sports, Attends Yoga workshops for health purpose
3.	Mana-maya kosha	Psychic body, thoughts and feelings	Philosopher, Social consciousness	Help people, participate in social activities (not parties)
4.	Vigyana-maya kosha	Intellectual body, spiritual discrimination and wisdom	Sage, scientists	Seeking knowledge
5.	Ananda-maya kosha	Body of joy, pure consciousness	Self- and God-realized	State of Blissful being, Body is still within awareness.

Illustration of Panch kosha



Summary of Pancha koshas

Hindu scriptures describe the body-mind complex of man as consisting of five sheaths, or layers: the physical sheath, the sheath of prana (the vital air), the sheath of mind, the sheath of intellect, and the sheath of bliss. These sheaths are located one inside the other like the segments of a collapsible telescope, with the sheath of the physical body being the outermost and the sheath of bliss being the innermost.

- God resides in Sat Kosha
- We think and live within Annamaya and therefore we experience fear and all nine emotions, react according to our trigunas, and continue to generate karma leading to unending cycle of life and birth.
- Freeing our soul from the attachment and identification with the food sheath '(Annamaya kosh),' or physical body is the first objective of spirituality.
- Ultimate goal of human life is to move away from the Anna-maya kosha and remain in the Vigyana-maya kosha most of the times and progressively move into the Ananda-maya Kosha (State of Blissful being), Chitta Kosha (spiritual wisdom) and Sat Kosha (the final state of merging with the Infinite)
- Development of all the seven sheaths is necessary for man's complete spiritual evolution and ultimate union with the Divine.

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