



## (b) Prāṇamaya kośa (Vital air sheath) (165-166)

कर्मेन्द्रियैः पञ्चभिरञ्जितोऽयं  
प्राणो भवेत्प्राणमयस्तु कोशः ।  
येनात्मवानन्नमयोऽनुपूर्णः  
प्रवर्तते ऽसौ सकलक्रियासु ॥ १६५ ॥

*karmendriyaiḥ pañcabhirañcito'yaṁ  
prāṇo bhavetprāṇamayastu kośah,  
yenātma-vānannamayo'nupūrṇah  
pravartate'sau sakalakriyāsu.* (165)

165. *The prāṇa along with the five organs of action, constitutes the vital air sheath, pervaded by which the food sheath (physical body) performs all its activities as though it were living.*

The manifestation of life in the physical body which expresses itself in the gross body as the activities of the five organs of action, is called the vital air sheath. The five organs of action are hands, feet, the organ of speech, the organ of reproduction and the organ of evacuation. The food sheath which was explained in the preceding verses is completely pervaded by this vital air sheath. There is prāṇa in the toe as well as in the brow. If from some portion the prāṇa is gone, that portion becomes paralysed. Thus, this prāṇamaya kośa is the ‘Ātman’ of the annamaya kośa. Owing to the vital air sheath and its dynamism alone all the activities of the body take place, hence the prāṇamaya kośa is considered as the ‘soul’ of the annamaya kośa.

Some textbooks<sup>1</sup> consider it along with the gross and some along with the subtle body. Both are right because it is the ‘glue’

<sup>1</sup> *Taittirīya-upaniṣad*

which holds the subtle body with the gross body. Therefore, one part is in cohesion with the gross and the other part with the subtle body.



नैवात्मापि प्राणमयो वायुविकारो  
गन्ता ॥५५ गन्ता वायुवदन्तर्बहिरेषः ।  
यस्मात्किञ्चित्क्वापि न वेत्तीष्टमनिष्टं  
स्वं वान्यं वा किञ्चन नित्यं परतन्त्रः ॥ १६६ ॥

*naivātmāpi prāṇamayo vāyuvikāro  
gantā" gantā vāyuvadanttarbahireṣah,  
yasmāt̄kiñcīt̄kvāpi na vettīṣṭamaniṣṭam  
svām vānyam vā kiñcana nityam paratantrah. (166)*

166. *The vital air sheath cannot be the Self because it is a modification of air (vāyu). Like air, it enters the body and goes out of it, never knowing its joys or sorrows or those of others. It is ever dependent upon the Self.*

The prāṇamaya kośa is a modification of air (vāyu). As long as it is in the body, all the activities of the body go on but once it leaves the body, all the activities of the body stop. Since it is a modification of air and has the quality of coming in and going out, it cannot be the Ātman. When this ‘air’ is inside the body, it is called ‘prāṇa’ and when it is outside, it is called the ‘atmospheric air’.

Prāṇa does not know anything, neither its own joys and sorrows nor those of others. It cannot know anything, being inert by itself. The Ātman, the Self, is eternal, all-pervasive and omniscient. It has no modifications, no movements and It is the ‘Knower of all’. Therefore, the prāṇamaya kośa cannot be the Ātman. This verse is the negation of the vital air sheath. In our day-to-day living, we are not conscious of the prāṇamaya kośa.

Next, we take up the mind for discussion; it is called the manomaya kośa. Its nature and the secret technique of negating it are given in the following verses –

