

CHAPTER I

THE BODY AND THE INDRIYAS

- Q. Why is this human body said to be composed of the Five Elements, the *Panchabhootas*?
- A. Since it is a product of the Five Elements.
- Q. What exactly are the Five Elements?
- A. *Akasa, Vayu, Agni, Jala* and *Prithivi*, which are usually referred to as ether, air, fire, water and earth.
- Q. From where did these originate?
- A. Each subsequent element originated from the previous one.
- Q. Which is the cause of the first and therefore of all the five?
- A. Brahman, the unmodified, the fixed, the Basis.

- Q. What is the relationship between these Five Elements and this human body?
- A. From Brahman originated *Yathna* and *Mahath* (Effort and Cosmos); from these was born Akasa, from Akasa was born Vayu; from Vayu, Agni; from Agni, Jalam; and from Jalam, Prithivi. The human body is the result of the combination of all these five.
- Q. In what form do these elements persist in the body?
- A. Each element has again become fivefold and has gone into the composition of the body.
- Q. The first—Akasa, what are the five which it has become?
- A. The cogniser (*Jnaatha*), *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *ahamkaaram* (egoism), *panchakam* (existence, effulgence, bliss).
- Q. Speaking as “in the body,” how are these indicated?
- A. They are recognised as the “inner senses.”
- Q. Now, what are the five forms of the next element, Vayu?
- A. *Samaana* (balanced breathing), *Vyaana* (The life wind, diffused throughout the whole body), *Udhaana* (life wind which rises on throat and enters head), *Prana* (breath, vital airs) and *Apaana* (down breath).

- Q. And, in the body, what are they called?
- A. The Pancha Pranas, the five vital airs.
- Q. And Agni?...the Fire-element?
- A. That element became the sensory organs: the ear, the skin, the eye, the tongue, the nose.
- Q. And how are they demarcated?
- A. As *Jnanendriyas*, the organs of knowledge.
- Q. Tell me, what are the *Jalapanchakas*, the five which the Water-element became?
- A. *Sabda, Sparsa, Rupa, Rasa, Gandha*...Sound, Touch, Form, Taste and Smell.
- Q. Have they too any special name?
- A. They are known as *Panchathanmatras*...the Five Subtlenesses.
- Q. The Earth-element remains out of the Five. How does it appear in the body?
- A. The vocal organs, hands, legs, genitals and the excretory organs.
- Q. And they are known as...
- A. As *Karmendriyas*...the organs of action.
- Q. Instead of considering this human body, constituted

in this manner by the elements as a single unit, the Vedanthins say there are many units in it! Is that true?

A. There are not “many,” but three. Some say there are four!

Q. Oh! What are they? What are they called? The third and the fourth?

A. *Sthula deha* (the gross body), *Sukshma deha* (the subtle body) and *Karana deha* (the causal body). Some aver that there is a fourth, called *Mahakarana deha* (the Super-causal Body) also.

Q. What exactly is meant by Sthula deha, the gross body?

A. It means the body, constituted of the twenty-five elemental principles mentioned by me already.

Q. What then is the Sukshma body?

A. The five Jnanendriyas, the five Than-mathras, the five Pranas, the Manas and the Buddhi—these seventeen categories combine to constitute the subtle body.

Q. Is this called Sukshma deha only or has it any other appellation too?

A. Why should it not have? It has. It is known also as *Thaijasa*.

Q. And is it marked off as belonging to any state or *Avastha*?

A. Yes, it is.

Q. And what is the name of that?

A. The Dream State.

Q. Do you mean to say that the Gross Body has no state assigned to it?

A. Of course, it has.

Q. Tell me the name of that state.

A. That is the wakeful state, the *Jagrath*.

Q. What is the Causal, the Karana deha?

A. There, the *Chiththam* or Consciousness is in association with the Knower, the Knowing Principle, the *Jnaatha*.

Q. What is it known as?

A. The *Praajna*.

Q. And the state?

A. The state is *Sushupthi*, Deep Sleep.

Q. Tell me also, what they mean by the Super-causal Body, the fourth.

A. The Pure Consciousness unmixed with any *Thathwa* or elemental principle, the Witness Eternal, the Self Luminous. They refer to it as the Mahakarana Deha.

Q. Has it a name, like the rest?

A. It is known as *Hiranyagarbha*.

- Q. And the state?
- A. It is stateless, it is beyond all states of consciousness and so it is described as *Akshara Purusha*.
- Q. Coming back to this Gross Body, what are the specific products attributable to the Five Elements that have united to form it?
- A. Of the Earth, bone, skin, flesh, veins, hair.
- Q. Of water, Jala?
- A. Blood, urine, saliva, phlegm, brain.
- Q. From Fire?
- A. Hunger, thirst, sleep, sloth, comradeship.
- Q. The element Vayu produces...?
- A. Activity, movement, speed, shame, fear.
- Q. The element Akasa in the body must be responsible similarly for some consequences.
- A. Yes; for lust, anger, greed, pride and envy.
- Q. Man has many travails, is it not? Do these consequences of his composition, have anything to do with his travails?
- A. You seem to have some doubts. The reason for all his agony is this group of gross qualities. The travails, too, are not many though they may appear so. They are only of four types. They are called *Vasanas*.

- Q. What are the four Vasanas?
- A. The body, the mind, wealth and sex; though there are others, all are ultimately based on these.
- Q. Man in his pride struts about blindly. What is this egoism that prods him on? How many varieties of egoism are there?
- A. There are four types: vanity of clan, vanity of wealth, vanity of youth and vanity of scholarship. Though there are other types too, they can be grouped under these.