

CHAPTER VII

THE PANCHA KOSAS

Q. How then can this delusion disappear?

A. Why, Viveka and *Vijnana* (higher wisdom) will make it disappear.

Q. For the Jivi reflected in the Buddhi and the *Kootastha* (unchanging base)—have they any superimposition, one upon the other?

A. Though there may be no superimposition for all appearances, the superimposition exists.

Q. How is that?

A. The *Kootastha* is unattached, unmoved, unaffected, ever-free. Still due to the superimposition, it appears differently. This is the result of their coexistence.

- Q. Some elders say that “*Thath*” and “*Thwam*” are the same, identical; how is that? What is its meaning? Please enlighten me.
- A. Take the pot, the house and a picture. They are distinct, is it not? They are not identical. But the Akasa that is in all of these is the same. When the *Upadhi* or Condition or Limitation is removed, the Akasa in the pot (*ghata*), house (*mata*) and picture (*pita*) all merge with the Akasa that is unconditioned, unlimited. Light too is like this. The light inside and the light outside merge.
- Q. Well, Swami, You have said that the human being in this body composed of the five elements has to realise the Atma encased in the *Pancha Kosa*. What is Pancha Kosa, exactly?
- A. Kosa means a sheath, a case, a cover. A sword is put into a scabbard. Money is kept in a treasury or Kosa. You must realise that the thing kept in this fivefold case, is the real “I.” To see one’s own truth one has to remove the five cases, the Pancha Kosa.
- Q. Which are these five, Swami?
- A. They are called the *Annamaya*, the *Pranamaya*, the *Manomaya*, the *Vijnanamaya* and the *Anandamaya* Kosas.

- Q. What does Annamaya mean?
- A. This body grew in the womb of the mother with the help of the *Anna* or food taken by the mother. Besides, even after birth, it has grown and is being sustained by food alone. After death, it becomes part of the earth which produces food. So it is called Annamaya.
- Q. Of what importance is this Annamaya Kosa?
- A. It is the *sthula deha*, the gross body, which suffers grief and exults in joy.
- Q. Is that the only name it has? Or has it any other name?
- A. It has. It is called “*Bhogaayathanam*.”
- Q. The Pranamaya Kosa; what does that mean?
- A. The sphere of the five senses, the five Pranas. They form this cover.
- Q. Swami! It seems there are not only Pranas; there are *Upa-pranas* also?
- A. There are. They are called: *Naga*, *Kurma*, *Gridhra*, *Devadatta* and *Dhananjaya*.
- Q. What is the action of each of these?
- A. Naga causes belching; Kurma causes blinking of the eyelids; Gridhra is responsible for sneezing; Devadatta causes the yawn; Dhananjaya fills the body and causes it to grow fat. Even after death, these affect the body and cause changes in the corpse.

- Q. What does *Manomaya Kosa* mean?
- A. The sphere of the five Jnanendriyas, plus the mind, of which they have become the instruments. It is inside the Pranamaya Kosa.
- Q. You say often mind, mind; please explain what that mind is.
- A. That which makes you feel you are the body and feel all things related to the body as “Mine”; that which runs out through the senses to the objects, in order to experience the pleasure therefrom. It is thus rendered very unsteady; always flitting from one object to another.
- Q. Swami! How is man to realise that he is separate from, beyond and above the Annamaya Kosa?
- A. The body is not evident before birth or after death. It is seen only during the intervening period of time. The body has a beginning and an end, growth and decay. Such things are “products,” “effects”; and effects are conditioned. So the body too is a limited, conditioned thing. The wise man tells himself, “I exist always. I am not material. I have no cause and effect. I am separate from this gross body. So, I cannot be this Annamaya Kosa. I am the knower of the Annamaya Kosa. I am the witness.” When this knowledge is well established, he knows the truth. He must realise that he is beyond the Annamaya sheath.

- Q. How is one to realise that he is beyond the Pranamaya Kosa?
- A. At night, when the individual is asleep, the Pranas, or vital airs are moving; but one does not know what is happening in him or around him. He does not fight if enemies come during his sleep. He is inert and inactive like a log. But “My nature is not this inertness. I am the ever-conscious witness. I am separate from all the sheaths.” Thus he must discriminate, reflect and know.