

vivekac'ya'maōi

The PrANamayakosha

Verse 167

Having shown that the annamaya-kosha (the gross material body) is not the Atman, the guru, following the order of the shruti, goes to show that the prANamaya kosha, the sheath of the vital airs also is not the Atman.

Karmedriyaih pancabhirancito'yam prANo bhavet prABamayastu koshaḥ |
YenAtmavAn annamayonupUrNah pravartate'sau sakalakriyAsu ||

This prANa in -combination with the five organs of action constitutes the prANamaya kosha. Permeated by it, the annamaya kosha gets its life by the prANa entering into it and engages in all kinds of action.

karmendriyaih pancabhih: by the five karmendriyas: organs of action called the speech, hands, feet, the excretory organs and the genitals which are responsible respectively for speaking, taking, moving about, excretion and sexual pleasure. These are born of the rajoguNa of the five elements beginning with AkAsha.

ancitah: made up of.

The effect of the combination of the five elements in their rajas aspect is prANa or breath. It is the wind (vayu) which moves about inside the body. The prANamayakosa is named after it. kosha: sheath. Covering the Atman with the urges (dharma) of hunger and thirst, it is the obstacle for the awareness of the Atman which is ever free from hunger and thirst. It makes the man feel: I am thirsty; I am hungry. (i.e., instead of realising that thirst or hunger are prANa-dharma, he attributes them to the 'I', the Atman).

YenAtmavAn annamayonupUrNah: Here the guru refers to the meaning of the shruti: tenaiSa pUrNah, sa vA eSa puruSavidha eva, tasya puruSavidhatAm, anvayam puruSavidhah (Taitt.): The annamaya, prANamaya, manomaya, vijnAnamaya and Anandamaya-koshas form a successive series. Whatever happens in the annamaya-kosha is wrongly identified as belonging to the Atman by reason of its being pervaded by the prANamayakosha. So too with each successive kosha by reason of the kosha next to it pervading it. By the shruti: tasmAdvA etasmAd annarasamayAt anyo'ntara AtmA prANamayah (Taitt.): The prANamaya kosha is different from the annamayakosha, but its Atma is imbedded in it. It is by prANamayakosha that the annamayakosha becomes AtmavAn; if the prANa envelops the body fully, the Atma too is said to envelop it likewise. tasya puruSavidhatam anvayam puruSavidhah: so enveloping the body, the prana assumes the form of purusha and the Atma too is said to be likewise.

AtmavAn: AtmapratiphalanavAn: reflects the Atman, making the man identify it with the Atman. The ground for this is that the prANamayakosha is anupurNah: i.e., it fills the preceding annamayakosha being accessory to it. Vide the shruti sa eSa iha praviSTa a nakhagrebhyah, i.e., it has here entered into every part of it, from the nails.

Being of that nature, it embarks on all actions for getting what is good and for avoiding what is evil. For the unintelligent (the acetana) always functions by its being acted on by what is intelligent (the cetana). If there is no connection with prana in any part of the body, as is well known, it ceases to function as a normal limb. In a dead body, as there is a total disconnection with prana, it becomes non-sentient. The prANa as a whole is a collective combination; while it functions in the elements which constitute the body it is a distributive pervasion. But, both cases are effects of the action of rajoguNa which goes to prove that the organs of action, karmendriyas are moved by the prANamaya-kosha.

vivekac'ya~maõĩ

Verse 168

Now, that the prANamayakosha is not the Atman is explained.

naivAtmAyam prANamayo vAyuvikAro gantAgantA vAyuvad antarbahireSah |
yasmAt kincit kvApi na vettISTamaniSTam svam vAnyam vA kincana nityam parantarah ||

This PrANamaya kosha can never be the Atman. It is the effect of the wind. Like wind it goes in and comes out. As it is not aware of good or evil anywhere or at any time, either of itself or of others, and as it is dependent (on some thing also,), it cannot be the Atman.

vayuvikArah: This prANamayakosha is the effect of the activity of vAyu: so it is not the Atman. That is the conclusion of the argument, what is to be proved. Reason for it: Like vAyu, this prANamaya kosha goes in and out. When there is inhalation, it goes in; when there is exhalation it goes out. This is like the wind outside. This vAyu which is the prANamayakosha is characterized by activity and is delimited. It cannot be the Atman which is all-pervasive and actionless. The reason is: because it is active and delimited. The example is: like vAyu, which is outside.

By the latter half of the verse it is conveyed that, its being non-intelligent and extra-dependent are similarly the reasons for the prANamayakosha not being the Atman. For, it does not apprehend anything dear or otherwise, joy or sorrow at any time or place, itself or any other. Hence it is always dependent on something else. It is also well known that the breath is controlled at the time of prANAyAma.

Therefore, as the prANamayakosha is characterized by activity, is delimited, is non-intelligent and is extra-dependent, it cannot be the atman which is different from these features. If the prANamaya kosha were the Atman, as it is 'awake' in dreamless sleep, it must be aware of the intrusions of thieves etc. The atman is supreme above all. To say that it is awake when its servants like the eyes etc., are asleep is improper. Therefore, this prANamayakosha can never be the Atman.