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A Critical Analysis of Panchakosh Theory

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Abstract: Vedanta divides its investigation of human uniqueness into five koshas, or strata. It reveals the underlying building blocks of the macrocosm and the universe. It reveals to us the body as a tool for the mind and the soul, from the obvious features of the physical body to the more subtle aspects of the psyche and awareness. It distinguishes each component, demonstrates its functionality, and demonstrates the interrelationships of the several components. It is commonly referred to as Pancha-kosha-vishleshana, which is the study of the five sheaths and is based on the Taittiriya Upanishad, as the model of the individual or conceptualization of the person.

Keywords: Pancha kosha, Taittiriya Upanishad, Mind

I. INTRODUCTION

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* (Sri Aurobindo, 1981) brilliantly explains the concept of *Panchkosha* through the discourse between the sage Varun and his son Bhrigu. The functioning of the body and mind is seen and understood as an interconnected mechanism in the *Panchakosha* idea.

The words *panch* and *kosha* are the foundation of the *pancha kosha* theory. *Panch* signifies five, and *Kosha* denotes sheaths, layers, wraps, a cocoon, etc. It is stated that, similar to how a silk worm uses its cocoon as a protective covering,

A human person is encased in the same five sheaths that surround it, ranging in coarseness to the most nuanced.

According to Sinha and Naidu (1994), contemporary psychology viewed each sheath as a component of the self. These Five sheaths make up the human self, and these various layers work together to shape how people behave.

These five sheaths are:

- 1) *Annamaya Kosha*: which refers to the physical body
- 2) *Pranamaya Kosha*: The life-giving sheath
- 3) *Manomaya Kosha*: deals with feelings and emotions.
- 4) *Vignanamaya Kosha*: is the sheath of intellect and rationality.
- 5) *Anandamaya Kosha*: the condition of spiritual consciousness or the sheath of unending happiness.

II. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To understand the concept, health percepts and development and nourishment of *Pancha Kosha*

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

- 1) On the basis of textual reference available in ancient text.
- 2) Magazines, journals, periodicals. Internet material and research papers.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW-

The *Taittareeya Upanishad* explains the idea of *Pancha Kosha* by delineating five levels of intricacy for the human being, ranging from the most obvious, *Anandamaya Kosha*, to the least obvious, *Annamaya Kosha*.

The *Pancha Kosha* refers to the five sheaths of man, which are ordered from the top of our physical bodies to the bottom of our unconscious minds.

Koshas determine our ideas, feelings, words, and behaviours in every scenario and at every time.

These *Pancha Koshas* are thought to reside in *Trisareera*, according to *Vedanta* tradition.

There are three bodies that make up *Pancha Koshas*

- 1) Gross body, or *sthula sarira*-The physical elements make up *sthula sarira*, Both *Annamaya* and *Pranamaya Koshas* make up this body.
- 2) Subtle body, or *suksma sarira*-*Manomaya Kosha* and *Vijanamaya Kosha* make up this body.

3) Causal body, or *karana sarira-Ananadamaya Kosha* make up this body.

A. *Annamaya Kosha: The Food Sheath-*

Annam translates to "food" or "*bhojana*." *Annamaya Kosha* (Food Sheath) is the name of the outer layer of our physical body. According to the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, food (*anna*) is the best medicine. The gross *Sharira* (physical body) is represented by *Annamaya Kosha*. This sheath is seen as the medium for *ulasa*, or enjoyment, of coarse things through the senses. This concept holds that all living things in this world are created from *Anna* (food), and they all depend on *Anna* (food) to survive. Even after a person passes away, their body may still be used as food by animals, insects, or other creatures. Where the physical element is concerned, the entire process is natural, a structure which begins with food and turns back into food. This is referred to as a food sheath.

The same nutrients found in meals turn into our bones, muscles, veins, and blood cells. A person's *Annamaya Kosha* will grow healthily if they follow a balanced diet and engage in appropriate activity, and they will be fit and in good health as a result.

The yoga teachings assist us in comprehending the significance of fulfilling human connections and a *sattvic* (vegetarian diet that includes dairy products) diet for the growth of the body and mind. Meat, alcohol, and drug use weaken our bodies and spirits and send out negative energy. Because the foods we consume have a substantial impact on our physical health, a person's diet can be used to assess his or her personality.

B. *Pranamaya Kosha: The Fundamental Sheath*

तैत्तिरियउपनिषद् 2: 2

तस्मादवाएतस्मादन्नरससमयात् | अन्योअन्तरआत्माप्राणामयः |

The second layer of our personality is known as *Pranamaya Kosha*. The term "*prana*" signifies "source of energy." Energy is necessary for all physical activities. Breathing, heartbeats, circulation, digestion, and other bodily processes are among the vital processes that the *Prana* predominantly controls. According to the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, this aspect of our personalities resembles the *Annamaya Kosha*'s soul in many ways. We exist as a result of this *prana*. Five major and five minor components of *prana* have been identified based on its *sthiti* (location), *gati* (movement), and *uddeshya* (purpose). The 72,000 routes that *Prana* travels on in the human body are mentioned in yogic literature. All actions come to a stop at the *Kshana* (moment), when *Prana* departs from the *Sharira* (body).

The physical body is encircled by a contained sheath of extraterrestrial energy. It is the outer sheath of space energy that enters and envelops the human body's outer layer. It develops our "aura," the radiance that emanates from us. In addition to food and drink, one of the essential nutrients for our survival is *prana*. The *Prana* enters our bodies together with the oxygen as we breathe. All food provides us with nutrition and *prana*. Other elements, such as our thoughts and emotions, have an impact on the *Prana* and other *Koshas*.

The basic Sheath is represented by the five physiological systems that correlate to the *Pancha Pranas* as they are described in Ayurveda. The following is a description of the 5 *Pranas* that make up this sheath:

- 1) *Prana* (Sense of Perception): It regulates the five different types of stimulation that the human body's five sense organs get from the outside world.
- 2) *Apana* (Sense of Emission): All bodily wastes—such as urine, faeces, and other excretions—that are rejected by our bodies are referred to as *apana*.
- 3) *Samana* (Sense of Digestion): It regulates our stomach's digestive mechanism.
- 4) *Vyana* (sense of circulation) The natural process by which all of the nutrients from the food we eat are distributed throughout the various areas of our bodies through the blood stream
- 5) *Udana* (Sense of Assessment) One's ability to elevate their thinking

so that you can envision the potential for new growth or the conception of an idea

As someone ages, the aforementioned five senses progressively deteriorate.

Control and uniformity are provided by the basic sheath over the food sheath. An impact is felt on the physical body if the *pranas* aren't functioning properly.

The emblems of *Pranamaya Kosha* growth are zeal, effective communication skills, physical flexibility, leadership qualities, and discipline.

C. *Manomaya Kosha: The Mind Sheath-*

तैत्तिरियउपनिषद 2: 3

तस्मादवाएतस्मात्प्राणमया।अन्योअन्तरआत्मामनोमयः।

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* claims that *Manomaya Kosha* is the soul of *Pranamaya Kosha*. Our *Manomaya Kosha*, also known as our mind (Citta), is a component of our personality. The Sheath of *Manomaya Kosha* addresses the *Mansika*, or mental, perceptive, or emotional, portion of the body, which includes both the mind and the organs that make up the *Sharira* (body).

In comparison to the *Pranamaya Kosha*, this sheath is wider and more potent. This *Kosha* has an infinite range. In less than a second, our mind can travel to any location. As a result, thinking control is challenging. The person with mental control has influence over his or her destiny. The ideal method for Positive thinking and manage the mind one should abide by the *Yama* and *Niyama* norms, which are the 10 moral tenets of *Raja Yoga*. Among these ten rules are nonviolence, self-control, purity of thinking, generosity, comprehension, honesty, non-stealing, non-accumulation, and practicing the Holy Bible, a commitment to God.

Manomaya Kosha controls *Pranamaya Kosha*. The operations of our body, for instance, are impacted when our mind is irritated due to a problem. As a result, we should keep in mind the positive things that have happened to us, keep our minds active by regularly praying, and approach issues with humour.

D. *Vignanamaya Kosha: The Rational Sheath-*

तैत्तिरियउपनिषद 2: 4

तस्मादवाएतस्मात्तमनोमयात।अन्योअन्तरआत्माविज्ञानमयः।

The soul of *Manomaya Kosha* is *Vijnanamaya Kosha*.

The reasoning part of who we are is called *Vignanamaya Kosha*. Either a positive or negative orientation is possible. Our social interactions, our society, and the things we learn from our surroundings all play a role in this. It grows as a result of events, upbringing, and education throughout one's life.

Although reason can be an extremely helpful tool, it can also be a major hindrance. Because of this, it's crucial to use both *Buddhi* and *Viveka* when making decisions.

Our past experiences and acquired information are kept in our minds. The main resource for making decisions is this. The mind delivers instructions to the organs for action after receiving inputs from our senses (sense organs). The five senses pick up diverse stimuli from each other, but our mind uses them all together to make a conclusion. The reasoning ability of a person is the discernment mechanism that analyzes and evaluates the stimuli they are exposed to. Though a rational decision may be different from a mental one, it is nevertheless generally advantageous to the individual making it.

E. *Anandamaya Kosha: The Peaceful Sheath-*

तैत्तिरियउपनिषद 2:5

तस्मादवाएतस्मात्विज्ञानमयात।अन्योअन्तरआत्माआनंदमयः।।

The soul of *Vijnanamaya Kosha* is *Anandamaya Kosha*

The happiness a person can experience through any channel is referred to as *Ananda*, and it is the final layer. The *Anandamaya Kosha* is thus the transcendental body or happy body, which is composed of the causal body of *Brahma*.

The "body of peace" is the *Anandamaya Kosha*. The desire for delight and comfort is a strong motivator, making it the most superior of the five sheaths and the most challenging to overcome. There are two kinds of joy:

- 1) the fleeting, constrained joy and
- 2) the endless, unbounded sensation of sublime delight.

The first results from fortunate circumstances, whereas the second is unconditional and independent of outside factors. The best delight is *Maha Ananda* (infinite bliss), whereas all other joys are finite and transitory. We can liberate ourselves by *Gyaan* (wisdom), and *Bhakti* (devotion to God) can guide us to the destination, but the final step that leads to *Moksha* (freedom) is through knowledge of the truth.

We experience the harmony between the inner self and the external environment when all the *Koshas* are fully developed. Happiness and joy are brought by this balance. The five sheaths resemble several layers of clothing on a human. The *Aatma*, or true self, is distinct from the five *Koshas*.

F. *Pancha Kosha's tenets of health*

All medical systems recently agreed that more than 80% of today's illnesses, such as type II diabetes, cancer, peptic ulcers, arthritis, and digestive disorders including Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, and IBS, are somatic illnesses (*Adhija Vyadhi*), or illnesses brought on by the mind. *Yoga* is known to be able to treat the majority of diseases by balancing and harmonising the mind through a variety of techniques and practises.

As worldly affairs interact, the mind (*Manomaya Kosha*) becomes troubled by feelings of envy, hatred, worry, dissatisfaction, bewilderment, etc. When a state of disturbance lasts for a long time, it eventually seeps into the physical body and manifests as diseases. Similar to how unhealthy physical conditions negatively impact the mind, these issues eventually manifest in the body as a disease. The significance of maintaining all *Koshas* in a healthy and balanced state is clear from this foundational notion on *Koshas* and disorders.

G. *Development of Kosh-*

The growth of *Koshas* results in the overall development of the personality. Starting from the *annamaya kosha*, this evolution gradually proceeds towards pure consciousness while releasing its five protective sheaths. Here, the metaphor of an onion is used to equate the five layers that surround our heart's centre to the layers of an onion. Thus, our soul's core is only partially covered by the body, our beliefs, our feelings, and our intellectual understanding.

1) *Developing And Nourishing Annamaya Kosha*

Adequate nutrition should be consumed to develop *Annamaya Kosha*. The ideal approach to nourish one's body is with a sattvic diet, which includes vegetarian meals. It provides a source of internal strength and spreads harmony throughout.

The tamasic diet, which comprises of foods like meat and alcohol, depletes a person's inner power and spreads negativity among those around them.

Consequently, *Annamaya Kosha* can be formed by changing regular eating habits, ingesting the ideal foods, and engaging in physical activities like walking, running, yoga poses, etc.

2) *Developing and nourishing Pranmaya Kosha*

Controlling and directing the *Prana* is essential for maintaining health. According to *Ayurveda*, energy levels come first before physicality levels when it comes to health issues. The air and food that individuals breathe and eat also serve to refine the *Pranmaya Kosha*. *Pranakosha* receives the essential elements of oxygen and food sustenance through his lungs and intestine. Since the *Prana* is developed in this way, our body and intellect are also refined by the *prana*.

As a result, the *Pranakosha* can be created by:

- a) Practicing *Pranayama* or other breathing techniques that enhance the *Pranamaya Kosha*.
- b) Practicing *Asanas* while paying attention to your breathing.
- c) Investing more time in pursuits or interactions that lift our moods.
- d) Meditating in quiet and using a calming mantra

3) *Developing and nourishing Manomaya Kosha-*

The development of *Manomaya Kosha* can enhance human mental wellness. The ideal environment, also known as *Manomaya Kosha*, is one that is calm and peaceful, where people get along well, have fascinating jobs, enjoy themselves, and live healthy, happy lives. The best mental energy comes from regular meditation and reflection.

Manomaya Kosha must be balanced, and calming *mantras* are crucial to this process. The mental vehicle for *Manomaya Kosha's* ideal operation is also these *mantras*. Reading reputable books, works of literature, myths from the past, articles, and other relevant materials is essential for the development of *Manomaya Kosha*.

In conclusion, healthy and harmonious surroundings that may have a good impact on the sensory world are some ways in which *Manomaya Kosha* can be produced-

- a) Chanting mantras while meditating.
- b) Reading books that promote motivation and moral principles.
- c) Limiting time spent engaging in activities that upset or release negative energy.
- d) Practice good intentions, converting opposition to complementarity, and cultivating stillness.

4) *Developing and nourishing Vigyanmaya Kosha-*

Vigyan Maya Kosha can be formed by meditation and *yoga asana* practise, similar to *Manomaya Kosha*. Additionally, activities like discussions, analytical work, project creation, book reviews, and interviews with well-known figures are part of the process of developing *Vigyanmaya Kosha*. Freedom of thought, speech, and action make it possible to sense the profound calm.

Continuous yoga practice results in subtle modifications. This *Kosha* can be developed significantly with the aid of mantra meditation and self-awareness.

As a result, the *Vigyanmaya Kosha* is created by:

- 1) Releasing this *Kosha*, since the *Vigyanmaya Kosha* is innate to the body and is concealed within.
- 2) So, in order to experience this *Kosha*, we must let it go. When *Vigyaanmaya Kosha* is freed, it is purified by flying on the wings of wisdom (*Viveka*) and detachment (*Vairagya*).
- 3) *Ichha Shakti* (willpower), *kriyashakti* (passion for effort), and *gyan shakti* (power of intellect) must be realized in order for *Vigyaanmaya Kosha* to progress.

The development of this *Kosha* is also aided by a peaceful environment, *sattvic* diet, meditation, and good intentions.

5) *Awakening Anand Maya Kosha:*

After realizing or developing the other four sheaths, one arrives at the *Anandamaya Kosha*. The path to *Anandamaya Kosha* is provided through our commitment to and belief in God. The genuine knowledge, often referred to as wisdom, aids in the steady growth of *Anandamaya Kosha*.

Following are some practises that can be used to awaken *Anandmaya Kosha*:

- a) *Seva* is the term for selfless service that allows one to have empathy for other beings.
- b) *Bhakti*: One's devotion to God. The *bhakti* practice ties the heart to all other celestial beings.
- c) *Samadhi*: A state of deep meditation that allows us to recognise the divine nature that lies inside each of us and in our souls.

The actual sense of harmony between the intrinsic self and the extrinsic world can therefore be felt when all the *Koshas* are properly developed, purified, or awakened. People experience joy, peace, and bliss because of this harmony. Here, the inner self recognises the existence of God (the infinite being) and is thus set free from the cycle of birth and death.

V. CONCLUSION

Due to the tight connection between the body and mind, also known as the *Annamaya Kohsa* and *Manomaya Kosha*, they must be viewed as two interconnected halves of a single whole; any disruption in one causes an instant impact on the other. As the link that connects the body and the mind, breathing (*Pranamaya Kosha*) plays a crucial function in this situation. Again, as the mind is controlled by the intellect or *Budhi* (*Viinanamaya Kosha*) through thought, *Vijnanamaya* is equally accountable for physical illnesses. The *Anandamaya Kosha* is also a component of a person's overall health because it is the primal condition of *Ananda*, or bliss.

VI. DISCUSSION

The *Yogic* concept of health and disease enables us to comprehend the root cause of physical disorders that originate in the mind and beyond. By paying close attention to one's personal history, one can always trace the origins of psychosomatic disease back to patterns of mental and emotional stress. There are numerous practices at various *kosha* levels.

Only when the underlying cause is completely removed can a long-term cure be achieved. *Yoga's* role in *Manodosha* management is described in *Ayurveda*. All three major treatment modalities in *Ayurveda*, namely *Daivavyapasraya chikitsa* (Divine therapy), *Yukthivyapasraya chikitsa* (Rational treatment), *Satvavajaya chikitsa* (Trance therapy or Psychotherapy) can be used at the *Pancha Kosha* level management.

- 1) *Annamaya Kosha* refers to the gross, physical body. It consists of the *Pancha Jnanedriya* (five perception organs) and the *Pancha Karmendriya* (five action organs). This layer of the body can be made healthy through various treatments such as *Aushadha* (drugs), *Ahara* (food), *Upavasa* (fasting), *Asanas* (physical postures), *Suddhi kriyas* (six cleansing techniques), *Tatvashudhi* (inner purification), *Tapas* (austerity practice), and others as described in *Ayurveda*, *Yoga*, and *Naturopathy*.
- 2) The energy sheath is known as the *Pranamaya Kosha*. It corresponds to the human system's physiology. We can correct *Pranamaya Kosha* imbalances by practicing proper breathing, *Suddhi kriyas*, and *Pranayama*.

- 3) *Manomaya Kosha*-A direct operation on this level is possible through mind cultivation, which begins with focusing the mind (*Dharana*), followed by relaxed dwelling of the mind in a single thought (*Dhyana*) for a longer period of time, eventually leading to super consciousness (*Samadhi*).
- 4) The *Vijnanamaya Kosha* is constantly guiding the *Manomaya Kosha* to mastery over the basic instincts. The removal of ignorance to reveal the true self will aid in the elimination of all stress. A deeper level of intellectual analysis reveals the innate source of knowledge. Psychotherapy, health education, spiritual discourses, and counseling appear to be acting on this *kosha*.
- 5) *Anandamaya Kosha* is our existence's bliss layer, and it is the most subtle aspect of our existence, devoid of any form of emotion. *Satvic* mantras like 'aum', which act against the *Manodoshas*, can provide a causal level of detoxification. *Ayurveda* employs *Mantra* therapy to treat psychological and psychic disorders. These *Mantras* help to clear subtle impurities from the nerves and *Nadis*, as well as improve concentration and creative thinking.

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