

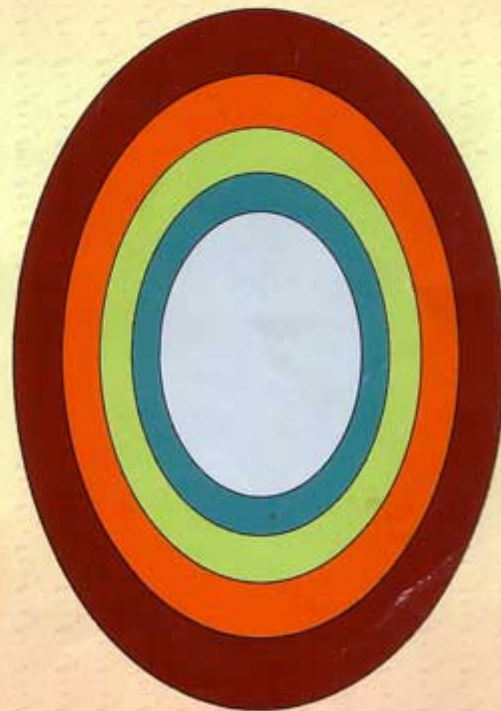


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**The Five Kosas
Role in Sadhana
Under
Pranahuti Aided Meditation**



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PREFACE

In the practice of Rajayoga, Kosas(Sheaths) which have been discussed in this presentation by [IMPERIENCE](#) is one of the lesser known subjects and people do not have much clarity regarding the same. The Kosas have been referred to in the Minor Upanishads but never have been discussed fully and not much material is available to the seeker as to have any detailed reference. [Dr.K.C.Varadachari](#) while discussing the "Moksa Purusartha"(Complete works of Dr.K.C. Varadachari Vol III) presents the vedantic point of view when he states that "Man has been gradually becoming aware(in evolution) of his several kosas(sheaths) so to speak. Of the real nature of himself as spirit(Atman), he has only rarely become aware. The ancient rishis in their advanced evolution had seen these formulations of nature as Spirit(atman). The realization of the Spirit as the essence of oneself is freedom from the lower formulations of nature such as physical (annam), vital(Pranam), mental (manas), intellect(buddhi). Each movement upward to a deeper and extensive layer of being is a movement towards freedom or release(moksa). But the ultimate and final or Absolute freedom, that is from which there is no further urge to freedom, is Brahman, spirit Vast and Complete(Purnam)".

The Principles of existence are generally called as five layers or pancha kosas named as Anandamaya, Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya and Vijnanamaya kosas. From the traditional point of view it is generally contended that the five sheaths are one above the other and they can be peeled off one by one. As against this point of view the five kosas need to exist simultaneously and while the urges and the effects of the kosas can be moderated they can never be done away totally. The interplay of the five sheaths and the moderations and adjustments required thereof is what is discussed in this presentation. The interplay of the components of Self is understood as the drama of Life. There is continuous effort on the part of every individual to abalnce the five sheaths and it

is akin to juggler balancing five balls. A more apt example would be to picture a balance having five axis's.

The material discussed in this volume is an original contribution and does not draw substantially from traditional literature. A phenomenal effort has been put in by the writer to bring out the intricacies of the Panca Kosas (the five sheaths) with specific reference to the practical aspects of sadhana. We hope the seekers derive benefit of the same.

About Kosas

It is an accepted fact that all life in particular and all existence in general is all organized with several layers of essence classified variously according to the needs of the particular science of study for purposes of understanding. In all that exists, broadly five layers of existence is identified and they are recognized as being maintained in balance or harmony in all of its layers. The principle of harmony or balance is basic to all existence. This is known as the layer of Peace or Balance known as Ananda in esoteric sciences. It is dynamic and always pulsating. In the gross form of all existence called matter the pulsation is least visible. This gross form of essence is called Anna. In forms of existence called Life three more principles are more clearly observed and they are Vital life principle called as Prana in esoteric psychology which is responsible for preserving and persevering the forms of life: aiding this principle are the resources of mental and intellectual essences called as Manas and Vijnana in esoteric sciences. These principles of existence or generally called as five layers or pancha kosas named as Anandamaya, Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya and Vijnanamaya kosas.

The soul or individual self consists of a mixture of these layers and when these layers are unwrapped they gain total freedom is the core theory or understanding of the yogis. But before this freedom is acquired it is necessary that the components of the Individual Self or Atman namely Buddhi (intellect), Manas (affective and conative faculties), Ahankar (self identity) and Chit (consciousness) are purged out of impurities and are totally oriented to the purposes of the Divine.

The interplay of these components of Self with the layers of the Self is understood as the drama of Life. If the curtains are to be drawn down for the drama, we need to understand the dynamics of these categories.

Research

In an effort to highlight this play, 'Imperience' conducted workshops on the nature of the pancha kosas in the context of sadhana under the system of Pranahuti Aided Meditation and Sri Ramchandra's Rajayoga. It is humbly stated that this is one of the serious studies on the subject where there is enormous confusion and sadhakas have been seeking clarity. It is hoped the material of the workshops presented herein would be highly useful for seekers of Liberation from the cycle of rebirths and acquire state of Realisation.

1 Annamaya Kosa

By the Grace of our Master we all have had many occasions to feel the vastness, unlimited and free nature of consciousness that we are able to describe only as Void or Nothingness. This is best expressed by the word Imperience. But we are also aware that the moment we come out of that state of consciousness, we find ourselves to be something. The relationship that subsists between the Nothingness and this Something is what makes us ponder over the very nature of consciousness.

It is stated in our tradition that Pure Consciousness because of the operative principle of Prakrti forms into 4 functional parts called Mahat (Simple Awareness), Buddhi (Awareness of endowment), Ahamkar (Awareness of being a doer), Chitta (Awareness of performance). But due to the continued activity of the operative principle of Prakrti on Chitta there is the formation of five different kosas or layers of consciousness. In order to understand the capabilities of different individuals it is necessary to appreciate the functioning of these kosas. This enables us further to adopt ways and means, spiritual and otherwise, designed to perfect these layers.

Purification of these layers is very important for those who seek to know their real nature. The nature of the kosas decides the purificatory process to be adopted. It is conventional to divide the chitta or performing mind into five different kosas named Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandamaya kosas.

The first and foremost layer of the mind is Annamaya Kosa. It is the physical body that 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 Anna-maya. It is the Sthula Deha, the gross body,

which suffers grief and exults in joy. It has another name also called "Bhogaayathanam."

By understanding that the body is the base of the mind we are enabled to avoid the duality of mind and body which haunts the philosophers of the West. The need to integrate a concern for the body in an over all program to develop the mind is obvious: however in certain systems of Yoga the importance given to body development has over shadowed their concern for spiritual union with the real self. It is to be understood that the physical body or the sthula sarira is the Annamaya Kosa, while the subtle body or sukshma sarira is the Pranamaya Kosa, Manomaya Kosa and Vijnanamaya Kosa and the causal or karana sarira is the Anandamaya Kosa. It is the wisdom of the Seers of the Upanishads that enabled them to comprehend the Anna, Prana, Manah, Vijnana and Ananda as forms of Brahman or Ultimate reality or expressions of the same Divine Consciousness.

It is customary in schools of Vedanta to consider these as superimpositions on the Self, while in fact they are the ways of expression of the Consciousness/Self itself for realizing its potential. It is also considered necessary to break these sheaths to know the real Self by several systems of Yoga and Vedanta. In certain systems it was considered that Anandamaya itself is Brahman. Our Master does not agree on these points and holds that every sheath has capacity to impose limitations on us for experiencing the Ultimate and we have to only make ourselves freed from these limitations. Only when we are free from the limitations imposed on us by these sheaths can we consider ourselves as liberated.

During meditation we hold the thought of the Divine Light without luminosity in the place where the heart beats unmindful of the thoughts that come up for fruition. How is it possible to leave our thoughts alone and be indifferent to them? Though we are asked to ignore them as uninvited guests it has not been possible for many in practice to achieve that state. It is clear that thoughts are quickly

changing patterns. Awareness has a natural tendency to notice change. Attention is automatically drawn to the running succession of thoughts. The nature and content of these thoughts we know relate to ourselves or matters in which we are involved or interested. To consider these thoughts as “simply thoughts” not owned by us as advised in several systems of meditation, is impossibility and one ends up with total disillusionment in meditational practices.

These thought patterns due to the fact that we do not give attention to them cease to be capable of forming karmic matter. This is an important factor that we should note, as any thought owned and accepted is capable of forming impression. It may be that we value certain things more than peace or rest during meditation and therefore our attention is diverted to them. Because of this only there is a tendency to run after the thought during meditation also. The effect of Pranahuti is such that though we tend to run after the thoughts some times during the process of meditation, we are not aware of them at the end of meditation session. This is one of the greatest boons of this system and needs to be appreciated by all.

We are asked to note our condition at the end of meditation. We many times have nothing to report except that ‘I had many thoughts but I do not remember them’. However we are having occasions when we feel the presence of certain thought patterns after meditation. It is the nature of such thought patterns that does reveal to us our binds. In this context the nature of the thought reveals the Kosa that is binding us.

As we have observed earlier the Self is trying to express itself through the five sheaths. We identify ourselves more naturally with the physical body than other sheaths. It is one reality that clearly lays our boundary and does not permit any intrusion into it. Thus the Annamaya Kosa is the most predominant one in our thoughts. Majority of our thoughts relate to it and its needs. It demands and gains full attention from us all the time and while we do resist its demands we cannot

postpone them always and many times cannot deny attention to them. There are certain natural characteristics of the physical body that is essentially a product of Earth and Water elements of Matter. Matter has a natural tendency for inertia and torpor. Our body left to its elements would seek rest. It is Life or Prana in us that causes activity and gains a lead over inertia, as long as Prana is enabled to function in the body. Finally the drama of individual life ends with the principle of Matter gaining superiority over the principle of activity or Prana and Prana moves into another body where it can express itself better if it has failed in the present body to achieve its goal. It is the Sarira or the body or the Annamaya Kosa that is the means of achieving the Dharma. It needs no stress to say that Swadharma is nothing but achieving ones' goal of Oneness with Oneness or Nothingness and for achieving that the body is the means (Sarira maadhyam khalu dharma sadhanam). Therefore no system of Yoga can afford to neglect the role of the body.

Systems of Yoga demand that the body is perfect and do not allow persons with infirmities and deformities in the body for the practice. This is obvious for the reason much stress is laid on the Asanas and Mudras that the aspirant has to learn before practicing meditation. However since training in Pranahuti Aided Meditation works only in the astral plane we do not insist on a perfect body and we do admit persons with deformities. In astral plane the deformities get covered up and the full form of the person is visualized. This was also proved in the Kirlian photographs. However we expect good health on the part of the aspirant for doing sadhana. While deformities are there to stay and the individual has already learnt to manage the same, sickness can be quite disturbing in meditation for oneself and the group in case he is meditating in a group.

It is necessary that the body is maintained in good health and for this good food habits are required apart from necessary exercises. In order to achieve this, tradition prescribed many Asanas to be practiced and also insisted on detailed food prescriptions to be followed. The insistence on the quality and type of foods

made even persons like Swami Vivekananda to remark that ours is a kitchen religion. Notwithstanding this, it is a fact that the type of food we take determines our nature. Lord Buddha is stated to have said 'what you eat that you become'. For effective performance of sadhana it is necessary that one has to eat food that is wholesome and essentially sattvic.

In nature three principles are always intermingled. They are rest, activity and balance called in Sanskrit as Tamas, Rajas and Sattva. The harmony among these three is what is aimed at in all occasions. But due to predominance of one or the other of these characteristics disharmony exists. According to Ayurveda these three principles get exhibited in the human life as Kapha, Vaata and Pitta and when any of these is disturbed disease occurs.

Food has been classified as Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic and sadhakas are advised to partake only Sattvic food as far as possible. Tamasic food leads to lethargy and Rajasic food leads to irritability and combative temperament. Very detailed and elaborate instructions on how to prepare and partake food have been given. The most important of them is never to partake of food that is not offered to God. All food is to be taken as only Prasad.

The food we take should be such as to bring harmony within and we should be at ease. Purity of food is essential for good health. Master insists that we take food in the thought of the Master and it should also be prepared by persons thinking about God/Master. In the Commandment VIII he has elaborately described about this. This one aspect of attending to Annamaya Kosa is more important than others. It may safely be said we should know not only the place where the food is made but also by whom. Serious sadhakas know the problem of eating food indifferently.

It is necessary not to eat much if we want to have early rewards from the practice of meditation. Heavy stomach can not only upset the digestive process but can affect the state of mind during meditation. It is also necessary that we should not

normally meditate with empty stomach as our mind would get distracted towards food. We should observe balance in this matter very much.

If we follow the above guidelines the chances of our getting thoughts related to food may not be there during meditation. Thus we can see that we are not bound by the Annamaya Kosa to that extent.

How is man to realise that he is separate from, beyond and above the Annamaya-kosa? The philosophers are accustomed to say that it is obvious that 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 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 realize that he is beyond the Annamaya sheath.

But a person who practices PAM, and imperiences the state of Void and knows naturally that his real self is the vast, unlimited, free consciousness understands that directly his true nature is not the body. The experience of the No boundary consciousness enables him to realize that the body is only a place of action and is not his self. He understands that the body is necessary for imperience and therefore needs to be maintained and has to be given the due regard and attention. Every one of us has been indoctrinated to think that the body is our self from early childhood and is one of the earliest samskara that we all acquired in the present life. Prior to birth we were not this form that we possess and the name to which we respond to and are attached more surely to another samskara that we acquired in this life. Our direct contact with our true nature enables us to detach ourselves more easily from the body and its limitations. This direct awareness of Self had through imperience, grants us freedom from the fear of

death. One can be considered to have got out of the clutches of Annamaya Kosa only when he does not have fear of death. Any amount of intellectual appreciation of the temporary nature of all existences including that of body is not capable of removing the fear of death.

It is also necessary to note that Matter becomes Annamaya Kosa because of the presence of Prana only. This means that it is capable of being a barrier or a layer only because of life in it. Otherwise it is simply earth, water and other elements that constitute the body. Without the presence of Prana it is simply a corpse that will decompose sooner or later. So the impact of Annamaya Kosa would be better appreciated when we study it along with Pranamaya Kosa. The gross body gains more importance when it becomes the play ground for the Prana and Manas that constitute the subtle body.

The First Commandment of the Master states that we should rise early in the morning before dawn and offer Puja with a body and mind that are pure. Getting up early in the morning from bed/sleep requires a certain amount of determination to attend to meditation on a priority basis. More than that it requires the firm determination to say 'No' to sloth and indolence the basic characteristics of matter. Such of the persons who are not able to say 'No' here are surely under the control of the layers of Annamaya. The body (sarira) has to be controlled and made to discharge its function of assisting the Prana in our existence. While it is the practice in other systems to discipline it even as beasts are controlled, in PAM we find that the influx of the Pranahuti, the original force/energy disciplining the body naturally. This we find in the steady posture that is gained in moments of deep absorption during meditation which fortunately is not rare.

The purity of body has to be ensured always and more so during meditation. We are aware that the body has to finally take up the role of being a 'temple'. Temples naturally cannot be impure. Therefore the body needs to be

consecrated to the Divine, the only effective method of keeping it pure. Such a consecration naturally implies external purification also. Taking bath before meditation so that the body is pure is therefore mandatory. Further we should feel that the body – more appropriately the heart in the body – is the place where we are invoking the presence of the Divine. The purity that is demanded has to be understood in all its intensity. All our limbs and sense organs are to be dedicated to the Divine. That alone ensures purity of body. Please note the insistence of the Master in this aspect when he states that phrase “specially adhered to”. This method ensures the purification of the Annamaya Kosa to a large extent and thus having surrendered the body to the Almighty it loses its grip over the aspirant and in fact assists him in the spiritual pursuit.

In the Xth Commandment the Master asks us to pray before going to bed. Bed reminds us of rest- the natural inclination of Matter or inertia. This desire for rest we know is capable of making us perform the prayer as a routine or a ritual and makes it a mockery of prayer. This needs to be resisted by means which can best be adopted by the individuals concerned. It is necessary that we offer prayer much before our eyes droop while studying or watching T.V. It is necessary to decide the time of prayer and as we get absorbed in the condition of submissiveness to the Divine we should adjourn to the bed. This is an effective way of controlling the Annamaya Kosa which always waits to steal a march over the desire to manifest the Divine in life.

The only way for us to control the Annamaya Kosa for our spiritual progress is to, as Master puts it ‘gird up our loins’ and give priority to sadhana over all other activities.

2 Pranamaya Kosa

Earlier while studying the nature of Annamaya Kosa we have had occasion to specify broadly the difficulties in sadhana we counter due to the nature and binds of that Kosa. The Pranamaya Kosa is really the main layer that gives maximum difficulties for performing effective sadhana. While the body (Bhoutika Sarira) imposes its limitations in sadhana, the vital plane (Prana sarira) poses formidable obstacles in the path.

Even as the Annamaya Kosa is the product of Tamas or Matter the Pranamaya Kosa or the vital sheath is the product of Rajoguna (Drive, Passion, Dynamism etc.) this also has a beginning and an ending and therefore is also called a Sarira. Tradition holds that since this is also a body it is not our true nature.

This Kosa is also called Kamamaya Kosa by some. The Kamamaya Kosa is the crude mind. It is related to the ordinary conscious mind and the neo-cortex. It has three functions, 1) to sense external stimulate via the indriyas, 2) to form desires based on these sensations, 3) to perform actions through the motor organs. It controls the indriyas and the instincts and activates the body to fulfill the basic desires for food, sleep, sex and to react to danger through flight or fight.

This layer is possessed also by animals and even trees. When this layer dominates, there is no sense of awareness of Ego/self/Inness. When this Kosa is operative the mind is in a state of waking consciousness. The functions of this layer are associated with chitta.

While studying the nature of Annamaya Kosa with reference to Sadhana, we have noted that our Self is covered by several bodies and these bodies are called Kosas in Sanskrit, which means "sheath, vessel, container or layer." They are the sheaths through which the Self/Soul functions simultaneously in the various planes of existence. The kosas, in order of increasing subtlety, are: 1.

Annamaya Kosa: the sheath composed of food-the physical body, being the coarsest of sheaths. 2. Pranamaya Kosa -sheath composed of Prana (vital force) also known as the etheric or health body. It coexists within the physical body as its source of life, breath and vitality, and is its connection with the astral body. 3. Manomaya Kosa-sheath composed of Mind or the lower astral body also known as the instinctive-intellectual sheath of ordinary thought, desire and emotion or lower mind. 4. Vijnanamaya Kosa- the sheath of cognition, or cognitive-intuitive sheath. It is the vehicle of higher thought, understanding, knowing, direct cognition, wisdom, intuition and creativity and 5. Anandamaya Kosa-sheath of Bliss - the intuitive-super-conscious sheath, the foundation of all life, intelligence and higher faculties. Anandamaya Kosa partakes of the nature of Brahman to some extent but in reality is something less than the level of Brahmanda. It is Atman which shares with Brahman the qualities of expansiveness, vastness, unlimited ness and is Peace.

We have also noted that the astral body includes the Pranamaya Kosa, the Manomaya Kosa and the Vijnanamaya Kosa.

The Pranamaya Kosa is the sphere of the five senses, the five Pranas; they form this cover. There are Upa-Pranas also. They are called: Nag, Kurma, Gridhra, Devadatta and Dhananjaya. It is stated in tradition that Nag causes belching, Kurma causes blinking of the eyelids, Gridhra is responsible for sneezing, Devadatta causes the yawn, and Dhananjaya fills the body and causes it to grow fat. Even after death, these affect the body and cause changes in the corpse.

The nature of Pranamaya Kosa is studied conventionally with reference to the state of sleep. 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 do any conscious act during his sleep. He is inert and inactive like a log. This state which appears to be similar to death is different because after sleep the individual again gets up and goes to work. He therefore contemplates that his nature is not this inertness. Since I regained my consciousness I must also have

been conscious though not aware during sleep. He therefore concludes he is the ever-conscious witness and therefore separate identity.

It is necessary for us to note what happens at the point of death. It is seen that as the physical forces wane, all the gross and subtle energy goes into the mental and emotional astral body. If the person was prepared for death, sudden or otherwise, his mental and emotional astral body would have already been well schooled in readiness. It is considered that sudden death to such a soul is a boon and a blessing. At physical veiling/death, the soul slowly becomes totally aware in its astral/mental bodies, and it predominantly lives through those bodies in the astral dimension. The soul functions with complete continuity in its astral/mental bodies. It may be noted that it is with these sensitive vehicles that we experience dream or "astral" worlds during sleep every night.

When the physical body dies, this automatically severs the subtle connection that exists between the astral and physical bodies. This connecting membrane /cord is of the nature of astral-pranic thread that connects the astral body through the navel to the physical body. During out-of-the-body experiences, this connection is often seen as a cord of light connecting the physical, astral and spiritual bodies.

In fact our Master says (and it is observed) that the astral-pranic thread has its origin in the heart where the same is observed as a membrane of thought. If the person has purified himself through rigorous cleaning and kept his points A and B pure it becomes easy to sever the connection that the membrane has to the astral pranic thread and thus the individual is enabled to cross over the cycles of rebirth.

It is painful to the astral body to have the physical body cut or disturbed seriously within hours after death. The soul can see and feel this, and it tries vainly to detain the things going on. As soon as a person dear to him touches the body, the dead person tries to pass on his/her antahkarana (inner apparatus) of all

good deeds to that person. This is felt as vibrations emanating from the right toe of the person dead to the person who receives the antahkarana. However the dead person eagerly awaits for the old physical body to be consigned to flames as early as possible. That enables him to know that he has only an astral body and the physical body is no more available and he can effortlessly release from the binds of the physical body with which it was connected for long time. But if we keep the old body around, then we keep the person around, and he is aware that he has two bodies. He becomes earthbound, tied into the Pretaloka, and confused.

We have had occasion to observe that the attitude to Life of a person afflicted by the binds of the Annamaya Kosa makes him behave aimlessly. Also the life of such a person is governed by the habits and routines. We have also seen that the perspective of such a person towards himself and others is one of identification with the body. He is no more than his body or his spouse more than her body. Attention to the needs of the body is all the concern. For such a person Work is nothing but an inevitable drudgery and a routine. More particularly such a persons outlook to difficulties in life is apathy, passive indifferent resignation and many times only simple avoidance and escapism.

As compared to the above mentioned ways in which a person suffering from the binds of the Annamaya Kosa, one who is bound by the fetters of the Pranamaya Kosa behaves more actively. Prana is the life force in Matter and is the active principle operating in the field of torpor and inertia. It propels the Jiva (living being) to action and is also the source from which the energy emanates for self preservation (called as Kama) and propagation (called as Krodha).

In traditional systems of Raja Yoga the aspirant is asked to put in his best efforts to control these basic urges and it was considered that total control (bordering on suppression/repression) was considered absolute must for any progress to be made in the spiritual path. Austerities, penances, stoic discipline and segregation

from the world of men and matters were also prescribed in varying degrees by different systems. This has effectively seen to it a common householder is denied any scope of learning and entering into the spiritual path.

As compared to this picture our Master, Sri Ramchandraji Maharaj who has discovered two points in the chest region of the human frame called A and B has graciously given to us the details of the same and also suggested various meditational methods on those points to effectively deal with the problems posed by the twin principles of life called Kama and Krodha. He categorically stated that these two cannot be annihilated and have to be moderated by each aspirant.

Those who are under the binds of Pranamaya Kosa have a way of Life that is indicative of pursuit of wealth, sex, power and progeny. Various explanations are given by such persons for such a pursuit and all of them lack conviction for a serious inquirer. They are essentially governed by desires.

The problem of desires governing the common man was well recognized from ancient days and Lord Buddha was the first one to build a philosophy on it. We have seen our Master giving us a Prayer which essentially is directed against the problems created by Desires. We cannot over emphasize the importance of such a prayer in our spiritual life.

The persons suffering from the binds of Pranamaya Kosa have an identification with their impulses and emotions. They are essentially persons who see themselves as creatures seeking carnal comfort. They may be also with some reservation called hedonists. They are usually scared of any ailments in their body or mind and paradoxically are those who suffer most in these areas because their view of life. Because of the active principle in them they may appear to be having control over Annamaya Kosa but in fact they are victims of both the Kosas. These two Kosas are almost always intermingled and it is difficult to say in precise terms which govern what. But in most cases the

Pranamaya Kosa leads the Annamaya Kosa till finally torpor succeeds and brings the whole Life to stand still.

For these persons Work is a means of earning, exercising power and authority. It may also mean the work atmosphere is a place to exhibit one's skills, abilities, endowments and achievements. Essentially Work is a place for Pride and exhibition of Ego.

Their attitude to difficulties is war and struggle. The result of such an attitude is they are most of the time in tension or anxiety. Irritability and aggressiveness that they entertain causes bodily and social problems for them. These are the persons who seek mostly help through the systems of meditation if they are successful with the medicines and other means they adopt.

Pranamaya Kosa is the most troublesome of the Kosas that offers us binds from several directions. It is capable of making the Annamaya Kosa and also the Manomaya Kosa dance to its tune of pleasure seeking motifs. Pleasure principle in life is the most powerful and it dictates what to do and what not to do irrespective of whether it is dharma, healthy or wholesome.

It uses the lower mental plane to give reasons justifying all its false motives and actions and 'rationalization' is its finest invention and it is capable of making Satan's explanations for folly pale into insignificance. We can give reasons for attending late night dinners affecting harmony in family life, health etc., all for the sake of business interest or social (?) obligations.

It is capable of giving reasons (rationalizations) for greed, exploitation, jealousy, treachery and host of other similar mean qualities of human life. It can give reasons for gluttony of all types and would have cheek to suggest similar behavioral patterns for others.

The Pranamaya Kosa is the one that develops in the Annamaya Kosa, the likes and dislikes, comforts and discomforts relating to that sphere and also in Manomaya Kosa the attractions and repulsions (Raaga and Dvesha) and is thus a formidable layer of bondage. Further as this is the key for life, it is not easy to have control over the same and gaining moderation in all spheres of life is affected mainly because of the influence of this Kosa.

It is only when Viveka and Vairagya are developed reasonably well we come to grips with the bondages imposed on us by this layer. The awareness has to be three fold 1. God is the real owner and enjoyer of everything in the Universe and 2. therefore any possessive tendency and thereby enjoyment is not ethical and 3. all tendencies to enjoy the fruits of others (Gods) is wrong. Enjoying is by itself not wrong; only that it has to be known it is all God given.

Interdependence among not only humans, but understanding dependency on everything that exists in the Universe and always working for the good of all is another attitude that has to be developed for effective control of Pranamaya Kosa.

The awareness that the whole existence is dependent in an organismic manner on God and development of reverential attitude to the Divine is yet another attitude one has to develop in his efforts to control Pranamaya Kosa.

Yielding to the Divine in every sense of the term finally alone brings control over the Pranamaya Kosa.

When the above attitudes are developed one does all his actions in a spirit of dedication to the Divine, one enjoys the fruits of action as Divine blessings and one knows the real knower is He only. Thus likes and dislikes, attachments and detachments and repulsions and attractions lose their value.

Then the relation one has for ones' thoughts are neither positive nor negative but neutral. This attitude helps in controlling the Pranamaya Kosa and also the lower mental plane and the Annamaya Kosa.

Those of the serious sadhakas would have by now noted that all this requires a thorough journey in the Pind desh and living by the Commandments of our Rev. Master.

3 Manomaya Kosa

Rev. Babuji Maharaj has stated that “Saints of higher attainments are generally relieved of the ‘Manomaya kosa’ or the mind sheath. It does not mean that they lack the mind. It means they are off with the covering that serves to keep them bound to the world below. At the stage of liberation one is relieved of all the five sheaths, without which one’s naked form could not have come into view. Complete freedom from these sheaths is an essential feature of Realization and that is possible within the life-time of a man too. All these things shall be discussed during the course if only one remains adhered firmly to his final object or goal. It would be the greatest blunder to apply effort for the shattering of these sheaths because in that case one would be straying away from the real purpose”(Silence Speaks.392). The essentiality of getting cleared of the binds of the Manomaya Kosa is obvious. Let us see now, the nature of the Manomaya kosa.

Master in a letter to Dr.K.C.V. stated that “Dryness which you feel is the foundation of the state that will lead to Negation. Regarding invasion of thoughts, I want to know whether it happens all the times or at meditation hours or satsanghs. What I find is that they are only at the outer surface, the inner layer being quite clear. This process will help you in breaking Manomaya kosh.(mental sheath).

We have while dealing with Pranamaya Kosa and sadhana noted that the astral body includes the Pranamaya Kosa, the Manomaya Kosa and the Vijnanamaya Kosa. The Manomaya Kosa consists of the mind and the five Jnanendriyas that have become the instruments of the mind.

When we use the word Mind, we mean that, which makes us feel that we are the body and feel the things related to the body as ‘mine’ and that which runs out through the sensory channels to the objects in order to experience the pleasure

there from. In view of this incessant activity it is rendered very unsteady and found to be flirting from one object to another. More specifically in the context of Manomaya Kosa it means the subtle mind or in the language of Western Psychologists the 'Unconscious' part of our mind.

We have had occasion to observe that it is the Unconscious mind that controls the conscious mind. It is responsible for the functions of 1) memory, 2) contemplation, 3) experience of pleasure and pain and 4) dreaming. This sphere of the mind is governed by the pleasure principle- that it seeks always to gratify its demands.

The pleasure seeking principle of the mind gets enormous strength from the Pranamaya Kosa and Annamaya Kosa and the mind is capable of concocting reasons for whatever acts aimed at pleasure seeking.

Let us now examine the nature of memory. In spiritual discipline we classify memory into two types. One relates to the cerebral memory which consists essentially of memory of the current life and the other extra cerebral memory that relates to past lives.

The cerebral memory is stored in the brain and relates to the Annamaya Kosa and Pranamaya Kosa. Almost all the memory that is used in our life relates to this memory only. Before we enquire into the nature of memory of the past lives it is necessary that we relieve ourselves of the weight of the samskaras caused by the actions/thoughts of the present life. These thoughts are the one's that are retrievable under hypnosis without being filtered by the conscious mind. This possibility made many think that all memory including those of past lives can be recalled during hypnosis of different varieties which is not true. It is only Pranahuti that is offered by a qualified and competent person that can clear the samskaras of the past lives.

It is necessary to know that the Extra Cerebral Memory that comes from our past lives, gets recalled only when there is a component of the same being stored in this life time. This memory we know is consciously available in some cases and that too when a person is young or when a child. The information available about conscious memory of past lives reveals that the persons are emotionally involved and are attached to the places and persons of an earlier life. These memories are therefore held to be stored only in the Pranamaya Kosa component of the Manomaya kosa and when that layer is triggered we recall memories of the past lives.

However it is our experience in sadhana, that we recall events which are remotely remembered during meditations and more so during Purificatory sessions (cleaning sessions). It is the experience of the trainers that they get enabled to feel the blocks for progress in the aspirant that have their origin in the past/earlier lives.

The Manomaya Kosa is responsible for most of the thinking and contemplation. It is the sphere of reasoning, logical thought and problem solving. It is the main control panel coordinating and controlling all sensory inputs and information acquired. This plane is the one which grants a philosophy to oneself and in some cases enables systems of philosophy to be started.

When a person is involved deeply in any activity including contemplation or problem solving it is possible that the inputs of data from indriyas of the person may temporarily get cut off, which we usually call deep absorption in the task at hand. It is also possible that the person may attend to many motor responses without any external stimulus. Our beloved Master in his article on Sensitivity mentioned about this phenomena where action in the higher plane is capable of superceding the needs of the lower plane.

The Manomaya Kosa is the sphere where we experience Pleasure or Pain. These are obviously due to the memories or results of and reaction to past actions. The Manomaya Kosa responds to all sensations and selectively chooses

the ones that grant pleasure and seeks every means to avoid pain. It is because of this nature the theories of motivation adopting principles of reward and punishment have succeeded to the extent they did.

Even when dealing with experiences of higher planes the mind usually comes up with similes and metaphors relating to the sensory experiences of touch, taste, smell, sight or audition. It tries thereby to bridge the gap between the extra sensory and the sensory so that the demands of the Annamaya and Pranamaya Kosas are met.

The Manomaya kosa may be considered for all purposes as the controller of our lower self. It will always try to give some reason or the other for defending the impulsive tendencies and the consequent action. It is capable of reasons defending anger, lust, passion, jealousy, envy and host of other animal and quasi animal tendencies in us.

The lower mind is primary cause for our developing what is usually called character; if it is under control we develop what is known as good character and if not we are said to have bad character. It is to be noted that difficulties of the character persist so long as one yields to them in action when they rise. One has to make a strict rule not to act according to the impulses of anger, ego or whatever the weakness maybe that one wants to get rid off. If one does act in the heat of the moment, it is necessary that one should not justify or persist in the action. If this principle is assiduously followed the difficulty will abate or would be purely confined to the subjective movement which one can observe, detach from and succeed in controlling.

The Manomaya kosa is responsible for dreams. What usually the individual is not able to satisfy during conscious moments one enjoys during dreams. Freudian Psychology goes to the extent of calling all dreams as wish fulfillment. This of course is not totally true. We go through many samskaras or the effects of many

memory patterns stored with in us during dreams and in fact during meditations also. To classify all of them as wish fulfillment is possible only when we expand the meaning of the word. Dreaming is a state that we go through in daily life and it is experienced by sadhakas that are awakened when the Visuddha center becomes active. The Visuddha as we know is located in the junction between the body and head. It is an intermediate stage. So the dreams can be of the nature relating to the pind desh or of higher regions which are classified as super normal states of consciousness. The opinion that the super normal states also can be wished for and get satisfied during dreams cannot however be ignored.

The journey to the state of Nothingness has to be invariably through the five kosas. Our beloved Master has identified 13 knots in the human frame that work as centers or knots of obstruction in the path for our spiritual progress. He has also identified 64 points above the level of Prapanna Prabhu. (Near the knot 10).

Each of these knots has five levels relating to the five kosas. When we traverse the knots we have to invariably go through the experiences of the nature of the knot colored by the different sheaths. Each one of them has to be gone through thoroughly. Then only the complete laya in the knot is possible.

However because of the influx of Pranahuti, Yatra or journey in each knot is expedited leaving the aspirant to complete the experience in the knots. Since the aspirant does not go through the full course of experience in each knot and in matters relating to the five sheaths in the knot he finds it difficult to progress in the higher regions.

This task of completing Yatra which were passed over during the Yatra done in aksi manner is to be made good before one crosses the Sahasrara. Our Master has stated that “There are centers after it (Prapanna Prabhu) also and I have named them- a, b, c, d and so on.” “Journey is also there in the centers and x and y (both the centers I have taken together) I have found the condition of

liberation in life- Jeevan Moksha.” At J2 I found that it is shedding light on the points behind it. Afterwards there is one point K2 which is not a point itself and has an arc and afterwards there is the Brahmarandhra.Now there are 63 points plus the Brahmarandhra in all.” These points relate to the kosas and they relate to the nature of the 13 knots.

The lower mental plane or the Manomaya Kosa is governed by the pleasure principle. It understands the language of its need gratification and is just not concerned with that of others. Its main characteristics may be noted as 1. Principle of Pleasure 2. Impulsive tendency 3. Immediacy of gratification irrespective of the consequences 4. If the pleasure sought for is not forthcoming, resorting to fair or foul means to satisfy its demands. 5. If the demand is denied gratification, seek to satisfy it through vicarious means. With these characteristics it is clear for us to observe that the lower mind will stoop to any means to gratify itself and is the cause of

- Irregularity in sadhana
- Unpunctual sadhana
- Avoidance of sadhana on flimsy grounds
- Changing goals to suit ones' convenience
- Non acceptance of the guides' instructions in sadhana
- Unwillingness to part with comforts and demand conveniences
- Reveling in excesses of impropriety in eating, drinking, sleeping
- Determined with single pointed orientation to gain its objective
- Possessiveness in every field of life thereby depriving others of their due share
- Is the store house of all moha, lobha, ahankar and Kama and krodha and would use any means to satisfy the call of these fivefold obstacles for gaining happiness
- Giving arguments to claim that one is discriminated against
- Suffer from self-pity and thereby make claims for sympathetic treatment
- This is the plane from where Satan works giving arguments for every wrong act and wrong thought

- This is the plane from where arguments are advanced to justify allegedly spiritual ways by those who adopt a ritualistic approach, worship of idols and conventions
- And many more that become obvious for a sincere sadhaka

The lower mind in yogic psychology is located in the center called Manipura. According to the yogis this chakra or place of gems is described as having ten petals, red in color. It represents fire and is located at the nabhi. This center is related to expansiveness of consciousness and is the seat of the desire for power. This chakra symbolizes passionate consciousness and dynamism relating to Pranamaya Kosa. At the lower mental plane, Manomaya Kosa, it is the seat for enabling us feel ego, individuality, control and also intelligence. It is also the center from where we get energy for the development of Will. With reference to the Annamaya Kosa it is connected with the digestive processes and the activity of the organs situated in the abdomen.

The modern man has pampered this level of mind, what with the culture of dinners and lunches, dramas and cinemas, videos and cell phones, televisions and casinos, glitter and glamour squandering the precious resource of mental power. The disharmonious activation of this center, has made people struggle for personal power and recognition of one's rights even wrongfully and hurting, harming other people.

We have noted that the Manomaya Kosa is the source from where we get power for rational thinking. That thinking is the kingly thing in man cannot be denied. But the same reason is used by the lower mind to explain away many times the problems that we face in day to day life to its advantage.

Sanskrit word pasha is etymologically related to the word peace. Pasha literally means bondage. Yama pasham is a very well known knot or bondage. This bondage we know denotes the tie or pact of the Soul with the things and persons

of this world. This implies selfishness and to a certain extent sinfulness also. The lower mind desires this very much. Unless the higher mind takes charge of the lower mind the peace that is obtained by pacts will be the only peace we would understand. As things stand today, the masses are only interested in the peace depending on man-made pacts and / or memorandum of understandings.

The world is full of material, emotional, rational and spiritual ruins today. There may or may not be wars now, but that is applicable in the physical plane only. In the mental, emotional and spiritual planes the fight is on and the peace that appears to be is found only on the surface. Below the surface there remains a hunting ground of desires, passions and delusions. Peace in the psyche is known to very few.

This is an age dominated by what is understood as reason. World leaders are engaged in drafting pacts and understandings. The problems of reconstruction of the places that plunged into war and restoration of peace among humans are being tackled in the old manner similar to the ones' that were used at the time of destruction. Neither the leaders nor the led have got any faith in other things than their powers which contributed to the damages of this age. The powers of reason and those that were derived from their application in mechanics and defense including the power of money and publicity are the only things on which they rely for bartering any peace. Of all the reasons that found solutions for many problems in the present age, we find few reasonable.

It is not realized that we are only escaping from our own Soul and that there are great worlds to be discovered or rediscovered within ourselves. But so long as the lower mental plane that specializes in attending to the needs of the lower self is dominant this situation will not change.

Our beloved Master has stressed that a new civilization based on spirituality is in the offing. It is the faith in such utterances of the Masters that can give us hope that we can effectively deal with our lower mental tendencies. We have to have

faith that in spite of our ignorance and errors and weaknesses and in spite of the attacks of hostile forces and in spite of any immediate appearance of failure, the Divine will lead us through every circumstance towards a more meaningful and abiding peace amongst us.

Lord Krishna in Bhagavad Gita stated that for one who has conquered his self by the self, the self is a friend and for a person who has not kept the lower self under control by the higher self, the self is inimical to self. The methods of yama and niyama, austerities and penances and the disciplines of Yoga darshana were suggested by him for such a control over the lower self.

Our Master in his system of raja yoga has enabled the trainers to divert the flow of thought processes from the lower plane to the higher plane by utilizing their will power. This process effectively checks the indulgencies of mind and pushes it to the realms of sublimity. Not only this flow of thoughts was diverted to the upper plane but they are further diverted further towards the Atma chakra so that the traits of viveka and vairagya develop quickly. These processes are done at the time of introduction to the system of sadhana.

In addition the sadhakas are asked to meditate on certain points that finally lead to a state of control over the functioning of the motor and sensory organs which give the inputs for the Manomaya Kosa to reflect and operate upon.

This way of managing the functioning of the Manomaya Kosa is unique to his system and the aspirants who practice the system according to the lines given by the Master have gained much advantage and their sadhana has yielded better results.

In the interest of universal peace it is necessary that every individual should try to obtain peace for himself first and work for the good of others. The Commandments that our Master has graciously granted us are to be adopted

fully if we are to control the odd ways of the Manomaya Kosa. The bondage due to this sheath is the toughest to get rid off. Therefore we have to understand the purpose and nature of his commandments.

4 Vijnanamaya Kosa

We have while dealing with Pranamaya Kosa and Sadhana noted that the astral body includes the Pranamaya Kosa, the Manomaya Kosa and the Vijnanamaya Kosa. The Manomaya Kosa consists of the mind and the five Jnanendriyas that have become the instruments of the mind.

According to this Upanishad, the five kosas fit one inside another like five socks slipped over the same foot. The outermost kosa is the Annamaya-kosa or physical sheath (literally, food sheath). Inside it is the Pranamaya-kosa or sheath made of Prana (energy), which "fills the physical sheath as air fills a bellows." Inside the Prana sheath is the Manomaya-kosa or mind sheath. Next is the Vijnanamaya-kosa or sheath of intellect, and last is the Anandamaya-kosa or sheath of bliss. Inside all five of them, as if sheltered in a cave is the Atman. It may be alright to think of the sheaths as one cover beneath the other, but that is not true. It is only a way of analyzing that led to this description. These kosas interpenetrate and when the purification process is complete the inner in the sense the finest kosa namely the Anandamaya kosa comes into fuller expression.

The intellect and the 5 sense organs of perception together form the Intellectual Sheath or the Vijnanamaya kosa. It is subtler than and pervades the former 3 sheaths. It controls them as well. The 5 senses are common to both the mental and intellectual sheaths, as perception involves both the mind and the intellect.

Thoughts in a framework of decision-making are generally considered as the intellect. Vedantins hold that ignorance of the Self manifests first in the decision of the intellect to pronounce statements such as "I am the doer, I am finite etc." It is also held to be responsible for entertaining the notions -"I am tall, I am hungry, I am happy etc." It is also agreed that knowledge of the Self also takes place in the intellect as "I am infinite, I am pure happiness etc." The intellect is the seat of

the values of life. What we value, we try to emulate, run after or cherish are all in this sheath of consciousness. The intellect discriminates between right and wrong, real and unreal, good and bad etc. To innovate, create, discover, visualize, imagine, observe, conclude, inquire, question, recognize, assimilate etc. are intellectual abilities. The mind carries the sense perception to the intellect. Based on previous experience, it recognizes, understands and decides on the course of action. It conveys the same, through the mind, to the organs of action and the body to act accordingly. Hence, the intellect is called the 'Driver' of this vehicle of the body.

We have noted earlier that the Sanskrit word kosa, means "sheath, vessel, container or layer." They are the sheaths through which the soul functions simultaneously in the various planes of existence. This should be borne in mind that the layers or kosas are expressed as such because of convenience in understanding and they are not in reality one container inside another. This misunderstanding has led many sadhakas think that they should really tear off the kosas. The kosas, in order of increasing subtlety, were observed as 1.annamaya kosa: "Sheath composed of food." The physical body, coarsest of sheaths. 2. Pranamaya kosa: "sheath composed of Prana (vital force)." Also known as the etheric or health body, it coexists within the physical body as its source of life, breath and vitality, and is its connection with the astral body. 3. Manomaya kosa: "Mind-formed sheath." The lower astral body. The instinctive-intellectual sheath of ordinary thought, desire and emotion, which is depicted in the book Efficacy of Rajayoga in the light of Sahaj Marg of our beloved Master as the portion marked as L in the heart and 4. Vijnanamaya kosa: "Sheath of cognition." The mental or cognitive-intuitive sheath. It is the vehicle of higher thought, understanding, knowing, direct cognition, wisdom, intuition and creativity partly covering the portion demarcated as U in the diagram of heart in the book mentioned above and 5. Anandamaya kosa: "Body of bliss." The intuitive-super conscious sheath, the ultimate foundation of all life, intelligence and higher faculties. Anandamaya kosa is not a sheath in the same sense as the outer

kosas. It is the tamasic state of the Atman but generally misunderstood as the Atman itself in various yogic texts.

In the Vijnanamaya kosa we observe three layers of consciousness. The first layer is that where the desire for spiritual realization originates. The initial faculties of super sensory perception or super-consciousness of the inferior type as called by our Master consisting of clairvoyance, intuition and artistic creativity etc., are the characteristics of this consciousness. It is not necessary that in all cases of persons who move into the upper portion of the heart marked as U these faculties must be observed or found, but in case of necessity to know the condition of the aspirant or oneself for purposes of spiritual growth these faculties does function and fulfill their task.

The second layer of the Vijnanamaya kosa two of the most important intuitional qualities which humans can develop are expressed. One is viveka or true discrimination; the ability to know what is permanent and what is transitory. The true sage knows that the passing show of this material world is only a relative truth and he or she is able to see the unchanging and absolute consciousness behind the panorama of the physical world. It may be surprising that we have chosen to call Viveka as an intuitional quality as it is generally held that education through which one acquires knowledge is the source of Viveka. It is an internal spiritual growth and has little to do with the intellectual understanding that one gains by repetition of scriptural texts. Viveka is the discriminative faculty of discerning what is Eternal and what is not. This is the main function of the buddhi, which is part of soul.. It is a condition that develops when one moves in the knot 1 as described by our Master in the book "Towards Infinity".

When Viveka is developed then the second intuitional quality, vairagya, gets expressed. Vairagya is the renunciation of and non-attachment to transitory physical objects. It does not mean running away from worldly objects like a hermit in a cave, but rather psychic non-attachment to objects. Vairagya or Non-attachment can only be attained after Viveka has awakened. It is not really

renunciation as it is understood by many ascetics. It arises from an attraction to the Supreme, rather than repulsion to the worldly affairs. It arises from seeing the finite world as the manifestation of the Infinite wherein the love for the finite and love for the infinite merge. The functions of this layer are associated mainly with Mahat.

This state is best expressed in the story of India's legendary sage-king, Janaka, who is said to have remarked "even if my kingdom goes up in smoke, I have lost nothing." The development of these conditions is a prerequisite for any one in the path of spirituality and who is determined to reach the goal of liberation initially and finally acquire the state of realization. Assiduous sadhana by way of observing the Ten Commandments and following the meditational methods alone cannot grant us these conditions. Absolute faith in the Master and dedication to Him with love and devotion alone can give us these attainments. Ofcourse constantly seeking Pranahuti from the trainers needs no special mention.

The third layer of the Vijnanamaya Kosa is also called as hiranmaya kosa or "golden layer". In this kosa the aspirant feels a golden yellow color and may also get carried away by its brilliance. Many aspirants in PAM who have gone through this state thought they are in the final states of sadhana. The illumination is such that it keeps us dumb fold and we enter into an ecstatic state. This state also grants us a feeling or awareness of "I" as the "Brahm." When the aspirant reaches this layer, he or she has simple awareness and may get into the delusion that only a thin veil separates him or her from the Divine. This may even be considered as one of the tough buffers we have to pass through in our Yatra to Infinity.

It is customary to compare this aspect of Vijnanamaya Kosa with that of mirror which can reflect Cosmic Consciousness. This layer is capable of grasping all existence in space and time. It is capable of perceiving the tanmatras and bhutadis unlike the Manomaya kosa. Because of this capacity it has a broader

perspective of things and situations and is capable of enabling the aspirant develop divine qualities of mercy, tolerance, forgiveness, patience, humility and many other such attributes. It is precisely because of this broadness of perspective one is capable of developing and delving into the areas of absorbcency in meditation. This is the subtlest layer of the causal mind. In this layer the sense of "I" ness is latent, and not yet fully manifest. There is golden effulgence and a great, overwhelming, attraction for the Supreme. Establishment in this kosa on a regular basis is described as Savikalpa Samadhi.

As we have earlier pointed while dealing with the Pranamaya and Manomaya Kosas, the Pranamaya Kosa may be considered as crude mind, the Manomaya kosa may be considered as the subtle mind, and Vijnanamaya the causal mind. It is to be noted that only the layers of the causal mind that survive the death of the physical body. All experiences are ingrained here only even as little reflection on how we feel pain and pleasure should enable us to understand this fact.

The process of purifying and perfecting the kosas is the true subject of Yoga. This is called sadhana. Let us recall the various aspects we have considered with reference to the Kosas and their role in sadhana in the four kosas so far we have dealt upon. We have noted that 1)the physical body or Annamaya Kosa, makes us to live in the present and one has to be attentive to it and at the same time mould it in such a way that the thoughts relating to purity are promoted 2)the etheric body or Pranamaya Kosa teaches us the possibility of unconditional love through due processes of sadhana particularly relating to the points A and B meditation given to us by the great Master 3) the astral and mental body or Manomaya Kosa which has the same extent of physical expansion as the first two bodies, however is not spatially limited, allowing "astral travel" during dreams, meditations and at other times. It can move in the past, and retains many past desires which by their very nature demand satisfaction and thereby create tension. This layer of mind and thoughts is a place of confusion, of chaotic identification with one idea or one concept after another. Due to the method of

being totally indifferent to the thoughts that arise during meditation treating them as uninvited guests we cultivate what may be called as passive awareness. Passive awareness in the beginning yields to the higher aspiration and due to the influx of Pranahuti we get into states of consciousness which may be called non-concentration concentration.

Now we are dealing with the Vijnanamaya Kosa which may also be called as Intellectual body. This body mainly teaches us self-knowledge. It is the layer where we experience discontentment with the limitations of the lower planes of consciousness or bodies that seem to bind us and not allowing us to soar in the realm of love and for addressing ourselves to this problem we take the path of meditation which is considered as the medicine for this problem.

The Upanishads put it beautifully as “Om” is the bow, mind is the arrow, and Brahman is the mark to be aimed at. Brahman is to be hit or pierced by him whose thoughts are concentrated. Then he will be of the same nature as Brahman, as the arrow becomes one with the aim when it has pierced it.

This Kosa is the one that is very important for the sadhaka as it is the abode of the mental Antahkarana comprising of Manas, Chit, Buddhi and Ahankar. In fact it has all the components that form the Soul and is considered by many yogis to be such only in importance.

Mundaka Upanishad states that Meditation gives the opportunity to witness the mind, the internal instrument. Vedanta philosophy refers to this internal instrument as antahkarana. Antahkarana, witnessed by ahankar, comprises the three functions of the mind: manas, chitta, and buddhi. Ahankar is the sense of "I." Aham means "I am." Ahankar refers to ego, ranging from the less evolved 'I-ness to the higher levels of development that yogis attain in meditation.

Manas is the mental screen where all information is witnessed. Information from the senses, the memory bank, and inner guidance are all experienced on this screen of perception. Manas is also the recording instrument for the mind.

Everything received is recorded as prints and stored in the memory bank. These prints will continue to appear based on the need and attachment to them. When the prints are no longer given attention or allowed to manifest, they will eventually dissolve. This is called niruddha. This is what Master advises to cultivate through the process of thinking that it is the Master who does every thing.

Chitta serves in the mind as the memory bank. Chitta is both passive and active. As the passive side, it receives and stores all impressions. The active aspect of chitta offers information to the mental screen of manas. When manas is not receiving input or it is reduced, the screen is available to receive additional information from chitta, such as past experiences, images, and imagination. The subconscious projects these memories onto the mental screen.

Buddhi is the discriminating faculty, the intellect, comprised of three stages. The highest stage is pure intuitive discrimination. Right knowledge spontaneously appears. It is the inner voice that cuts through all maya or ignorance.

The second stage of buddhi discerns the course of action. Through reasoning and reviewing the issues involved, an answer is presented.

The third and lowest level of buddhi simply responds to the impressions on the screen of manas. It is a basic type of unconscious or instinctual action or reaction, such as when one touches a hot object and immediately retracts the hand. The functions of the mind work together so quickly that they appear as one. Manas receives the information, chitta supplies memories, and buddhi discriminates. For example, an object is perceived by the senses and projected onto the screen of manas. Buddhi determines the object. The ahankar identifies with the object. Different memories or impressions from chitta come to surface that relate to this present experience. The information is looked upon by buddhi to determine the best course of action.

If ahankar follows through with the right action, will power becomes stronger and over time it will be easier to follow the inner wisdom. If the decision is based on the lower mind, swayed by circumstances, impulse, emotion, or past habits, then the print made is a weakness that will repeat itself, weakening the power of discrimination.

In a situation where the lesser decision is made, it is said the light of buddhi's discrimination was covered by binding samskaras, prints in the mind. Therefore, it appears less evolved. But in reality buddhi does not evolve. It is only uncovered when the inner voice, which is always present for those who listen. To perceive the higher levels of buddhi, meditation is essential.

When we begin meditation practice, we are trying to become a witness to what is going on with in us. Our ahankar or ahamta, witnesses the three functions of the mind. Higher knowledge dawns during this witness state. Through sustaining the witness state, consciousness expands and the feeling of awareness (ahamta) continues from the physical level to the causal level of our body, or the sheath of bliss. One who resides in the blissful consciousness is the witness of "I AM Bliss". This is what we all actually experience during meditation as per PAM. The process of coming up to this state is speedier due to the influx of Pranahuti. This state is called asmita samadhi. In such a condition Ahankar dissolves into the bliss, realizing its source, the Atman, and its triple manifestation, Sat, Chit and Ananda. The Atman is realized as the witness in the case of almost all the aspirants in the PAM system due to the grace of the Master. It witnesses the three bodies and the three mental functions. When the Atman projects itself to the external world, it is called ahankar. When the self as witness looks within it is called the soul or Atman. During deep absorbency abiding as witness the soul reflects the non-dual witness state. One of the preliminary goals of meditation is to, realize the real witness called by many names though in reality it is only our higher Self, it is the same witness that continues till it grows into the state of being the Ultimate Witness. It should be noted however that Vijnanamaya Kosa

is not the Ultimate. It has been observed that the Vijnanamaya Kosa is a product of Sattva Guna of the Prakrti reflecting perfectly as a mirror. It is not the Witness but the Self is the witness of this sheath. Being closest to the Atman, this sheath reflects the self the most. The self here sees itself as the doer due to this sheath though actions and reactions go on, on their own. If by diligent practice the aspirant moves in the path, the Asmita samadhi develops into Sahaj samadhi in our system. Negation is the means for achieving this state.

One of the essential precautions we have to have in sadhana is not to be guided entirely by the intellectual sarira or the Vijnanamaya Kosa. It can present a view as though it is perfect and may lead us to argue with others and challenge their points of view. Both the persons in the debate are equally in illusion as they are fighting over what their intellect mirrored. The purity of the mirror is had only by constantly being in the company of evolved souls and reading their works with an attitude of assimilation rather than questioning. The questioning attitude can be ruinous in the path of spirituality. Intellect as it has been trained through various educational and mental disciplines is always likely to drag the persons into arguments and convince others of their point of view. Lessons are learnt in spirituality in the core of the heart and not the intellect. Yet intellect is inevitable as a mirror to reflect the wisdom gained to others. It is of no use what so ever in the process of realization; it has limited purpose of gaining knowledge about the reality. As Master puts it in his letter to me on 27th Mar.1971“Intellect is, of course, a great blessing, but to apply it in proper ways is the work of the intellectuals. I call him the intellectual who is inwardly talented and does the work with it, but this is the definition you are getting from a non-intellectual.”

The only way by which we can meet this formidable attraction of the intellect that may properly be called Maya also is yielding to the path of the Master with our entire body, mind and soul. Surrender to the Master in every sense of the term is the way out of the intellect to grasp the meaning of the words and letters of the Master. This is one of practical observations we have, as we read his works, hear his words we seem to understand something new every time. This process of

revelation is a unique way of the Masters. Persons who are very conscious of their intellectual abilities and memory capacity generally tend not to read or hear the Masters as often as they can and contemplate on them. This is due to their intellectual pride. Wisdom never grants pride. It is the Intellect that has this capacity and most of the persons who think themselves erudite or learned suffer from this and thus get blind folded in the path.

While the Master has given practical meditational exercises to deal with the problems of the Annamaya, Pranamaya and Manomaya kosas here while dealing with the problems of Vijnanamaya Kosa he has not specifically given any method. But in his greatness he has given the methods to be followed by the trainers.

The aspirant in the path of PAM is first enabled by the process of Pranahuti to move into the Upper portion of the heart and thus live the life of a human being. Apart from this the aspirant is also guided gently into the realms of the Atman by diversion of the inner spiritual flow. These two techniques he has given to the trainers and which he supports all the time is the unique feature of our system. Without these areas of help it will be well nigh impossible for us to have moved into the higher planes of consciousness as our experience informs us.

The obstacles to real yielding to the Master are essentially of the nature of Vijnanamaya sarira.

Those endowed with intellectual capacity are generally prone to yield to the feeling that they are competent and therefore are entitled for the results as a matter of right. Not only their 'mine-ness' is an obstacle but their expectancy of rewards is the basic barrier in the path of yielding.

The endowed also have the problem of their erudition extending to different fields and they feel that all are the same as they all lead to the same goal. It is a

confusing logic that Ganges, Jamuna, Kaveri and other rivers that lead to the Bay of Bengal finally are the same as they their destination is the same. There is a basic refusal to understand the different routes and terrains they cross and the different regions they bless. The problem of not knowing that path which actually takes them to the goal and attempting to ride different horses according to their temperament at different times is one of the major problems in this Kosa.

Vijnanamaya kosa has the problem of making one who has purified that consciousness to some extent to think that he actually knows the path and he needs no ones 'help' in the process of achieving the goal. The arrogance one has is generally a by product of competence.

One in the path is also likely to attribute the results of his sadhana to himself, or those whom he thinks should have been responsible, refusing to recognize the one who is actually helping him.

Some persons who seem to gain some prowess or power to display attribute the same to their efforts and refuse to recognize it is due to the will of the Master he has that competence. This is a sure path to fall away from the goal.

There is a general tendency to think that the Divine directly helps them and they do not yield to the will of the Master. This attitude leads them to interpret the works and messages of the Master according to their prejudice and trying to fit the thesis of the Master with what they consider as scriptural authority.

The purity of Vijnanamaya Kosa is possible only when the Annamaya, Pranamaya and Manomaya Kosas are maintained pure. There is a general notion that the discipline and control that is demanded in the earlier kosas has nothing to do with the actual capacity in Vijnanamaya Kosas. For many the intellect appears to be independent of the physical, vital and lower mental planes. This is a gross misunderstanding. Intellect will have no capacity to understand the real nature without purity in all the planes.

Development of will, which is a capacity of the aspirant gains, is in the Vijnanamaya Kosa. Will can be developed fully with perfect purity. Perfect purity in all the planes is therefore a prerequisite for those who desire to progress in the path of spirituality.

5 Anandamaya Kosa

While it is anyone's guess as to what is the purpose of Creation it has been generally accepted in spiritual tradition that the purpose of Creation is the will of God to express Himself in myriad ways and to show that all forms of life are meant for happiness and joy. In fact the Lord has been portrayed as one who revels in dance.

It has been held that Bliss is the core of all beings and all Life is meant for happiness. Further it has been graphically stated that all is auspicious (Sivam), all is truth (Satyam) and all is beautiful (Sundaram). Irrespective of the religions and cultures, for those who are keen in observing the essence in all, it is clear all is of the nature of Bliss. This principle of having bliss in every aspect of life is what we have seen while studying briefly the nature of Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya and Vijnanamaya Kosas with reference to Sadhana. Verily the principle of life is the Pleasure Principle as Psycho analysts held- only instead of pleasure we prefer the nobler and more cohesive word bliss/happiness. No one does anything for any purpose other than to derive happiness.

Satisfaction of the various desires arising out of the tendencies in these kosas was a source of happiness and therefore there has always been a desire to fulfill the desires. Happiness is the goal whether it is eating or mating or friendship or envy or jealousy, greed or avarice or charity and nobility or service or sacrifice or knowledge or technical expertise. Behind all this the only motive is happiness. Happiness is the canvas on which all aspects of life are printed or painted. The craving for different types of sources of happiness has a general and an individual content. While the general content is the dependant result of the geographic, cultural and traditional backgrounds, the personal predilections are based on vasanas. Our prayer used in sadhana, acknowledges the fact that we are totally slaves of wishes unable to understand our real nature. Here itself it may be seen that our Master is hinting our goal to be beyond happiness that accrues from satisfaction of desires.

The kosa in which the vasanas are stored is the Anandamaya Kosa the sheath of bliss or Ananda. The happiness/bliss that accrues from the satisfaction of desires however leaves us totally ignorant of the nature of happiness and does not permit us to understand while we acknowledge the different types of happiness. Rose smells sweet so is the talk of the child sweet. While both grant happiness we are not all that wise in distinguishing the difference between these two though we know the difference. The taste of Coffee yesterday was good and there was happiness but since the nature is not fully understood there is a desire that is unfulfilled and there is seeking for Coffee today. Thus this innermost sheath is made up of certain quantum of ignorance and knowledge (Sattva) is overpowered by ignorance (Tamas) and activity (Rajas). The great activity of this sheath goes on in the state of dreamless sleep, though it functions in dream and waking, also. The pleasure that one experiences in life is the result of a modification of this sheath. Its essential properties are the Vrittis of Priya or the happiness that arises in one at the mere sight of a desired object, Moda or the happiness which is felt when one is in possession of this object, and Pramoda or the happiness which one obtains from its actual enjoyment. The Anandamaya-Kosa makes itself spontaneously felt during the fruition of one's good deeds. It is common for us to say: 'I am the enjoyer,' 'I am happy,' 'I am peaceful,' 'I am contented,' or 'My happiness,' 'my happiness is experienced,' 'my happiness is dear to me' which are strictly speaking is true of this Kosa rather than the self.

It is necessary that we understand more about the vasanas and samskaras in this context. The sight of an object, the thinking of a thought, the performance of an act, the saying of a single word, leave a trace in the Atman (conglomerate of Buddhi, Ahankar, Manas and Chitta) that lasts beyond time, leaving an imprint in the subconscious mind, which then color all of life, one's nature, responses, states of mind, attitudes, etc. This subconscious imprint is called samskara. The character of a man, his attitudes, his moral or mental status, his talents, his likes and dislikes, his desires, his thoughts, all are determined by his samskaras,

which are the product of his past actions. These samskaras are related to the various kosas according to their nature till Vijnanamaya Kosa.

Samskaras are experiential impressions that combine in the subconscious to form vasanas. Vasanas are the results of subconscious impressions -samskaras- created through experience. It may be understood that the thought process, a product of mind leads to words and actions in people. The oft-repeated words and actions, end up as habits, and culminate into various tendencies or inclinations (pleasure generating inclinations)-vasanas- which again are the cause of the reaction of the mind, or influence of the thought processes leading once again to actions.

Lord Krishna stated that when we become attached (sanga) to our actions, it begets the desire (kama) to possess the object of our desire. When a desire is thwarted, it turns to anger (krodha). When angry clouds gather in our mind, they cloud our reason and logic, the result is delusion (moha of attachment). Under the spell of moha, we see things not as they really are, but in vague estimates of wild uncontrolled actions, which now rule our lives. From this delusion comes loss of memory of who we really are. With the loss of memory comes the loss of discrimination (buddhi). Here is a perfect example of how a simple stream of sensuous thoughts, moves through stages of mood swings each gathering momentum and force through kama, krodha, lobha or moha, until there is total lack of self-control.

It is clear to us who follow this path that the goal of life is freedom from the cycle of rebirth. This we consider is the minimum goal while the real goal is to realize our true nature or to become a real man. Master says in his article "Yearning to reach the Ultimate" that 'There are miseries all around for the embodied one. Even then, we remain so much attached to the body that this thing does not forsake us up to the end, and we even wish to be born again. It matters little that the wish is for being born in a prosperous home or in a royal family, since as

soon as the Name (individual Existence) has arisen my brethren, misery would start in howsoever subtle mould it might be cast.” This leads to the question as to what is rebirth etc.,

If our present birth is the beginning and our death is the end of this life, we need not worry and try to understand the problem of suffering. A moral order (Rtam) in the Universe, the reality of right and wrong may not be any significant in such a case. To enjoy and avoid suffering at any cost may appear to be the most sensible path in life. However this has no other fate than leading to mutual distrust and unending struggle amongst human beings and is essentially hedonistic. That this appears to be the way in which man given to consumerism and hedonism reacts is evident. But human psyche has always been stating that there is a moral order and that we should live in tune with it.

The principle of karma phala is the root cause for formation of samskaras and vasanas. In Raja yoga we do not accept that suffering (enjoyment included) in life is due to an external agency called God or Brahma but is the result of our karma which in its essence is volition (will). Volition is a force and is broadly classified as belonging to three types- craving for sense pleasures, continuity of existence and annihilation of existence; based on the volitions man has also been classified Artha arthi, Kama arthi, Dharma arthi and Moksha arthi. The endless play of action and reaction, cause and effect continues in perpetual motion and this is becoming a continually changing process of psycho physical phenomena of existence. The becoming or changing is the law of life and man continuously changes either for good or bad and this is entirely due to his own volition or will. Therefore it is clear that there is no life before or after birth without the basic will or karma of the individual and one is the master of ones' own destiny (life and death).

Yoga does not accept that things are unalterably fixed by an external agency and stresses the need to understand the law of karma and use it for ones' own change for the good.

As has been stated by our Masters, our self is a conglomerate of buddhi, ahankar, manas and chitta and they do get rearranged and realigned to suit the needs of karma or volition of the individual. Yoga agrees that birth precedes death and death also precedes birth so that the pair follow each other in bewildering succession. Still the soul is not a fixed and unchanging entity that passes from birth to birth. Though the individual is a composite psycho- physical unit of jiva and atma (of matter and mind), he is not a soul or self in the sense of enduring entity something that is unalterable or permanent. The soul is a force, a dynamic continuum capable of storing up memories not only of this life, but also of past lives. The psycho physiological organism called the individual, undergoes incessant change and creates new psycho physical processes every instant and thus preserves the potentiality for future organic processes allowing no gap between the moments. We live and die every moment even as the waves of the sea. This change does not end at death but continues as a dynamic mind-flux that is known as craving or thirst which is the karmic energy.

The present life the product of the craving and clinging karmic volitions of the past life and the craving and clinging of will of the present life brings about the future life. It is the clinging will and craving that is the cause of birth cycle and not any external agency. It is therefore necessary that the impressions that are stored in the individual consequent to these cravings and clinging wills (called the eeshana traya) that need to be erased out of the mind-flux of the individual through the craving for non-existence and yoga sadhana.

When we die, we carry the samskaras in the first four kosas and vasanas in the Anandamaya kosa and when we are reborn they remain in the subconscious mind, influencing our thoughts, words and actions. Just as wind carries the pleasant smell of the rose garden or the obnoxious smell of putrid matter as it blows over them, the samskaras and vasanas carried by us contains the pleasant and unpleasant (still enjoyed) actions- from our past lives.

Actions done with good intent lead to a propitious rebirth whereas those done with evil intent lead to a rebirth under unfavorable conditions. Every act must have its consequences, this is a universal law. The samskaras and vasanas transmigrate from birth to birth, being never lost, and as driving forces, color and motivate one's attitudes and future actions. Innate urges and habits of our previous births are vasanas. Their effects color our minds and our actions in the present existence. Vasanas are our unmanifest tendencies or urges. Once they manifest, they become our personality. When vasanas become manifest in our mind, they appear as thoughts. These thoughts are the desires that compel fulfillment through our actions. In other words, our vasanas create our very lives to a large extent. By attending to the problem of desires that keep us enslaved we try to solve the problem of rebirth cycle.

Thus we note that vasanas are created during the contact of our body-mind-intellect equipment with the world field. We are the persons responsible for them because of our attachment and therefore we should be also the persons to get rid off them. Precisely this is what the tradition says and asserts that one has to go through the phala of such vasanas. In our system through effective purificatory processes advised by the Master we get rid off their effect in us. Our system does not accept renunciation and tapasacharya as the means for the same. Those of the persons who try to suppress the urges or try to exhaust the effect of vasanas in that way fail to do the same and suffer more than they would if they simply gratify the same, even as some psychologists advise. Strangulation and repression lead to unhealthy mind. In contrast, if we follow the path of Pranahuti Aided Meditation and undertake to free ourselves from the clutches of samskaras and vasanas by keeping a high goal, an ideal and our actions are all centred round such a goal we weaken the vasanas. Then our contacts with the outer world become a source for exhausting our vasanas. This being assisted by the Pranahuti enables us to experience the enlightenment that is so dear to us.

Though not in so many words and so explicitly our Master in his article 'Problem and its solution' (Showers of Divine Grace), states how we attend to the problem. "The cells of the brain are the treasure house for each type of thinking and they have their nucleus in the middle. They (trainers) draw out the actual impressions formed in the centre, so that the channels or off-shoots working may not get the food for their growth. This is the natural effect when we touch the centre (through transmission/ Pranahuti). After it what have we to do? Channels are not there but some wetness is there because the water of thought has flown in for a certain length of time. For that the remedy is the same. Instead of harmonizing them, break up the channels and level the ground." "After this, something else happens. When these impressions enter, they produce a sort of electricity to keep themselves up. Of course thought is there and the habit of welcoming such thoughts is also there, of which the child or the individual is the doer. Now that welcoming attitude of the centre should also be destroyed. When it is done, all the walls of the palace get collapsed. Now comes the turn of Divinity because the ground is prepared for its working. When everything is destroyed, the people may think what will come after. Nothing but purity, which has been defined as Reality."

It is no vain claim on the part of the Master in having stated that the trainers do this service of removal of impression patterns and channels of thought, is evident to those who practice Pranahuti Aided Meditation when they find their brain totally gripped as if someone is holding it tight. Many times it is felt even as inconvenient but after the experience of being gripped abhyasis invariably feel highly relieved and lighter and happier. In the history of Yoga and spirituality this type of training where the thought patterns and impressions, which are generally called samskaras and vasanas, being removed by the trainer is not seen. On this vital service depends the claim for liberating a person from the bondages of samskaras and there by from the cycle of births.

It has been held by saints that the fifth (bliss) body or the Anandamaya kosa, which is transcendental, is beyond ordinary human experience and it is held that

very few individuals are capable of knowing it or experiencing it, as it is beyond the sensory and mental fields. It is only through restraining of the senses, the mind and the buddhi one can gain access to it. It is the very essence (rasa or ether) of our existence for who can live in this world unless there is bliss in the space? (Taittiriya II.7.1).

However it is a matter of experience of all who practice PAM to enter into this body and feel happiness or bliss. When one thinks about this, one is sure to feel highly indebted to the great Master Sri Ramchandraji Maharaj of Shahjahanpur who has made this possible for all humans who are willing to have this experience.

It may be of interest to note that the great Sri Sankaracharya considered the bliss body and Atman to be different; Sri Ramanuja regarded the bliss body and Atman together as the one pure transcendental state. The point made out by the Advaitins is that the Anandamaya-Kosa in as much as we have varied methods and ways of experiencing happiness/bliss cannot be the Self/Atman, for it is affected by changeful qualities. It is a modification of nature and feelings, and consists of the latent potencies of one's past actions. If the Anandamaya-Kosa were the Atman, one in deep sleep would enter into Samadhi and have an experience of the Absolute. Those who regard this sheath to be identical with the Atman forget that in sleep, when it has its fullest play, one does not have knowledge of the Atman, which appears to be drowned in an ignorance from which one rises again to empirical activity, propelled by the forces hidden therein.

But we owe it to our beloved Master to clarify to us that Atman is a conglomerate of buddhi, ahankar, manas and chitta and that Anandamaya is but one more layer binding us. This is the reason why the Master always said Peace is not our goal. Peace or bliss or happiness or pleasure is the display of the Anandamaya Kosa as it expresses it in itself or expresses itself through the other lower kosas. When they are purified we enter into a state of nothingness that reflects but the Divine. Anandamaya kosa is the one into which we enter into every time we have

an influx of Pranahuti and we further understand that our binds are to be cleanly and clearly removed by the process that we outlined above.

The first four sheaths, namely, the Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya and Vijnanamaya kosas, constitute the Jiva or embodied being. Atman or Self is a conglomerate and so is Jiva: in the first case it is a bundle of Chit, Ahankar, Manas and Buddhi while in the case of the second it is a conglomerate of the physical, vital, mental sheaths. Jiva is the living element, owing its biological existence primarily to the elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether). This is also known therefore as a product of Prakrti (Nature) which comes under the influence of Ahankar or the ego consciousness, the moment it gets a form and name, which gives rise to feelings of separation and alienation from the rest of the creation and starts failing to perceive its original nature. {In the Vedantic tradition the Taittiriya and Katha Upanishads are important sources of information for our understanding of the constitution of man. In the Katha Upanishad says Lord Yama, "Beyond the senses are the objects and beyond the objects is the mind. Beyond the mind is buddhi and beyond buddhi is the great self (mahan atma)".}

It is the Jiva (excluding the physical body and as Tanmatras) which together with Atman goes through the chain of repeated births and deaths. While Atman consisting of Buddhi, Chitta, Manas and Ahankar is capable of rearranging and realigning the impressions to suit the changed times and circumstances to enable fruition of the same the actual field of experience is the embodied being or Jiva, that remains at the center of desire oriented sensory activity and suffers from its consequences. Pain or pleasure is enjoyed in the brain or the mental plane only, though Medical science is yet to confirm this. In the case of persons who have stopped forming samskaras or impressions by adopting the method of surrender to the Master thinking him to be the doer, knower and enjoyer, the only task that remains to be done for coming out of the cycle of births is the clearing of the past samskaras and vasanas. Through the cleaning process, meditation on

the lines given by the great Master and constant influxes of the Pranahuti which eradicates the vasanas one is enabled to cross over the cycle of births in the system of PAM.

While in Anandamaya Kosa we feel blissful and happy, when we enter to the portals of the Brahmand Mandal there is a distinctive quality of balance or equanimity that is capable of seeing a unity in an apparent diversity of existence and in the realm of thought we feel continuity of being in all thoughts. The balance is the most important lesson that Rta teaches us and one lives according to that lesson.

We have been considering the nature of the Kosas that bind us and the basic frame of reference we have accepted so far is the traditional one having its origin in the Upanishads. We have also considered as to how the practice of Pranahuti Aided Meditation will assist us in clearing our path and enable us to move forward in spiritual life. We shall now look into the realms beyond the Anandamaya Kosa promised as achievable during our life time in this system.

Ananda is not the final state and we have to go beyond Ananda or Bliss is by itself a difficult concept to understand. Knowledge fails after the Vijnanamaya Kosa is what we have seen earlier. Understanding also fails after Anandamaya Kosa. However let us see with the super conscious impregnated buddhi that has become possible through Pranahuti what we can share beyond the realm of Bliss.

That there are bondages beyond Anandamaya kosa is for the first time revealed by the Master. Till the Advent of Sri Ramchandraji Maharaj of Shahjahanpur, U.P. India, it was considered that Sahasrara is the last resting place for the Yogi and it was described and experienced as Satchitananda. The five Kosas end before that and Bliss is experienced.

Master has described the spiritual journey of the aspirant to be through a total 23 circles or rings covering 5 rings of Maya, 11 rings of Egoism and 7 rings of splendour. He has stated that even the greatest saints like Saint Kabir could cover only 16 rings consisting of the 5 rings of Maya and 11 rings of Egoism during their life time. Master asserts that the areas of Central Region covering 7 rings of splendour were never experienced while in life by any person, during his life time and these realms are made available to the human being so that we reach the Centre or the Base for the first time in human history by the grace of the Grand Master Pujya Lalaji Maharaj.

The five rings of Maya broadly may be considered as the binds of the 5 Kosas. One who crosses these rings/binds is considered as a person liberated from the cycle of re-births. But realization of our true nature is a different chapter that starts only from here. The 11 rings of Egoism are the ones that are formidable to cross over and the help of the Master through Pranahuti is perhaps the only way for us. While Ego in its grosser aspect is covered while we traverse through the Five Kosas or five rings of Maya, Egoism per se gets attended to only in the rings of Egoism. The vast realms of Brahmand are within the realms of Ego. This ego that we are referring to here is not the crude Ahankar but the awareness of Self identity. Self identity continues through the Para Brahmand and only when we enter into the Prapanna gati there is slight load shedding in its content. Prapanna condition makes the self less assertive and more dependant on Him. This change in the core of our being gets refined further through the Prabhu and Prapanna Prabhu gati and we reach a state where we are going to meet the upadhi or karana of the grosser kosas. The bases for the Kosas are many and are distinct. They have been located by the Master beyond the Para Brahmand and he stated they are 65 in number. These 65 points including the Sahasrara are the final binds we have before we enter into the Central Region.

We have seen in Masters works that he charts our progress through 13 knots which express our states of consciousness in the journey to the Infinite, and they

start from Viveka and Vairagya to the Ajnana dasa. The 5 kosas are also tinged by the color of these knots and thus we have 13 points each referring to each of the kosas. Unless we travel through these points there is no entry into the Central Region.

It is a matter of one's own personal experience to say anything about the regions beyond the Anandamaya Kosa. That quite a few of the aspirants have actually entered into this realm is a matter of happiness to be shared and the value of this system will stand proved with the dedicated sadhana that many are putting in the field of spirituality. Wonders of Pranahuti are in the realm of the spirituality pure and simple and human destiny to live in God, by God and for God will be realized sooner or later.

