

## Chapter – 2

# LITERARY RESEARCH ON ORIGIN, FUNCTIONS AND BIOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION OF *PRĀṆA*

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## 2 LITERARY RESEARCH ON ORIGIN, FUNCTIONS & BIOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE *PRĀṆA*

### 2.1 BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

The concept of *Prāṇa* (subtle/vital/life energy) is described as *Vāyu*, *Shakti*, *Kundalini*, etc., in Sanskrit language, yoga philosophy and Indian traditional medicine. *Prāṇa* is an ancient concept described in many ancient *Hindu* scriptures such as the *Vedas and Upanishads*. The concept is well described in many ancient *upaniṣads* including *Praśna upaniṣad*, *Chāndogya upaniṣad* and *kathā upaniṣad*. The concept is also discussed in *Haṭhayoga* and *Ayurveda* texts. According to those scriptures, *Prāṇa* originated from the universal self (*Atman*). The term *Prāṇa* is also used to refer to all the form of energy in the existence. The *Prāṇa* is considered to be present in all living beings and inanimate objects. The universal principle of the *Prāṇa* is also believed to be responsible for the body's life, maintenance and death. In the energy body (*Prāṇamaya Kosha*), the *Prāṇa* is believed to flow through energy channels known as *Nāḍīs*. Traditional *Yogis* used to gain a greater understanding of *Prāṇa* to improve their health, wellness and longevity of life. *Prāṇa* was traditionally studied in relation to holistic health through energy channels (*Nāḍīs*) and energy centres (*Chakras*). It is considered that when the *Prāṇa* flows freely through energy channels and energy centres, someone has positive physical and mental health. Whereas, if there are blockages or imbalances in *Prāṇa* flow, one will have physical or emotional disorders. Hence, it is important to understand the *Prāṇa* and balance it through scientific yogic procedures.

### 2.2 SUMMARY OF EARLIER WORKS ON PRANA

Ramakrishna (2007) conducted a literary research study on *Prāṇamaya Kośa*. The study provides the names of *Prāṇa* based on various ancient yogic texts. *Atharvaveda* calls it as *Vāyu*

and *Mātariśvānam*. *Praśnopaniṣad* call it as *Vāta* and *Mātariśvāna*. *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* calls it as *Udgītaḥ*, *Sama*, *Bṛhaspati*, *Brahmanaspati*, *Angīrasa*, and *Uktam*. *Āyurveda* calls it as *Āyu*, *Jīva*, *Dhārī*, *Nityaga*, *Anubandha*, and *Cetana*. Ramakrishna (2007) also provides a table showing the variation of *Prāṇa* and *Anna* in different entities. Keshvana (2005) conducted a literary survey on different layers of the body according to ancient texts. The study presented the details about *Pañcakośa* (*Annamaya Kośa*, *Prāṇamaya Kośa*, *Manomaya Kośa* and *Vijñānamaya Kośas*) and concepts of three bodies (*Sthūla*, *Sukṣma* and *Kāraṇa*). The study presented the science of subtle energy (*Prāṇa*) under the topic of *Prāṇamaya Kośa* and *Sukṣma Sarira*. Bhawna Sharma (2013) did literary research on *Prāṇamaya Kośa* and Diabetes Mellitus. The study saw the association between the energy body and metabolic disorders. The study tried to provide a new perspective on the progression of Diabetes Mellitus based on subtle energy theories. Vandana Suresh (2015) conducted the literary research study on *Prāṇa* and presented the definition of *Prāṇa*, components of *Prāṇamaya Kośa*, type of *sariram* (body), the relations between different *sariras* and between *Prāṇa* and health.

### 2.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To compile the information related to the origin, function and biological distribution of *Prāṇa* from ancient yogic scriptures.

### 2.4 MATERIALS AND METHODS

A literature survey of ancient yogic texts on the origin, function and biological distribution of *Prāṇa* was done. We conducted the ancient literature survey on ancient texts *Praśna Upaniṣad*, *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, *kathā Upaniṣad* and *Haṭhayoga Pradipikā* as these ancient texts describe the details of *Prāṇa* scientifically. ‘Sanskrit 99’ font was used for Sanskrit words and ‘URW Palladio IT’ was used for the transliteration using ‘I translator 99’ software.

## 2.5 ORIGIN, FUNCTION & BIOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRANA

### 2.5.1 Origin of Prāṇa

आत्मन एष प्राणो जायते ।

यथैषा पुरुषे छयैतस्मिन्नेतदाततं मनोकृतेनायात्यस्मिञ्शरिरे ॥ प्रश्न उपनिषद् ३-३ ॥

*Ātmana eṣa prāṇo jāyate* |

*Yathaiṣā puruṣe chayaitasminnetadātataṁ manokṛtenāyātyasmiñśarire* || *Praśna upaniṣad 3-*

3||

The *Prāṇa* is born of the *Atman* (The universal soul). Like the shadow in the man, the *Prāṇa* is in the atman. This comes into the body by the action of the mind.

The *Prāṇa* is considered to be born from the atman or the highest *Purusha* or the universal soul. The physical body of the human being has its figure consisting of the head, hands, legs etc. The shadow is produced because of the physical structure of the human body. Similarly, it is said, that the *Prāṇa* is connected with *Purusha*. Further, it is said that the *Prāṇa* comes into the human body because of the act of the human mind. Here, the act of mind refers the *Karma* (activities: which is always initiated by the mind), wish, etc.

या प्राणेन संभवत्यदितिर्देवतामयी ।

गुहं प्रविश्य तिष्ठन्तीं या भूतेभिर्यजायत् । एतद्धै तत् ॥ कथा उपनिषद् २-१-७ ॥

*Yā prāṇena sambhavatyaditirdevatāmayī* |

*Guhaṁ praviśya tiṣṭhantīṁ yā bhūtebhirvyajāyat* | *Etadhdai tat* || *Kathā upaniṣad 2-1-7* ||

The *Aditi*, spirit of all deities, she was born in the form of *Prāṇa*, she was created with the elements and she, entering to the heart, abides therein. This verily is that.

*Aditi*, the goddess of energy, born through vitality, source of all the universal forces, who stays in the heart of every life and expends all over the body. Every life is originated from the same *Prāṇa* and the *Prāṇa* returns to its original form after the death or destruction of the physical form. The *Prāṇa* who is born along with *Prāṇa* manifested as all *Prāṇa*, the eater, seated, having entered the heart, who was born with the elements.

तस्मै स होवाच प्रजाकामो वै प्रजापतिः स तपोऽतप्यत स तपस्तत्त्व स मिथुनमुत्पादयते रयिं च प्राणं चेत्येतौ मे  
बहुधा प्रजाः करिष्यत इति । प्रश्न उपनिषद् १-४ ॥

*Tasmai sa hovāca prajākāmo vai prajāpatiḥ sa tapo'tapyata sa tapastatva sa  
mithunamutpādayate rayim ca prāṇam cetyetau me bahudhā prajāḥ kariṣyata iti| praśna  
upaniṣad 1-4||*

To him answered the *Pippalada*, “the eternal father desired his children, therefore he put energy. The twin creatures, *Prāṇa* (the life who is male) and *Rāyi* (the matter who is Female) were produced by the heat of his energy. He said ‘these creatures make different types of children for me’.”

The creator had the desire of having children. So he used his energy to fulfil the desire. By his penance, by the heat of his energy, he created the pair, matter and energy (*Prāṇa*) as he believed that the energy and matter together would produce children or the creatures for him. As he thought, all the creatures including human being were developed by the proper combination of energy and matter. According to the concept, not only creatures, but the whole universe is existing because of the combination of energy and matter.

स एष वैश्वानरो विश्वरूपः प्राणोऽग्निरुदयते ।

तदेतद्वाभ्युक्तम् ॥ प्रश्न उपनिषद् १-७ ॥

*sa eṣa vaiśvānaro viśvarupaḥ prāṇo'gnirudayate|*

*tadetadrcābhyuktam|| praśna upaniṣad 1-7||*

Therefore the *Prāṇa*, of universal life and universal form, the fire, rises. Following *Rik* describes it.

The sun and the fire both are manifestations of the same life energy (*Prāṇa*) which is universal and immortal. All form of life, movements and transformations are taking place because of the *Prāṇa*. In other words, those all events are the manifestations of the same universal force, the *Prāṇa*. The *Rik*, mentioned above, is a particular kind of hymn.

### 2.5.2 Functions of *Prāṇa*

प्रणस्येदं वशे सर्वं त्रिदिवे यत्प्रतिष्ठितम् ।

मातेव पुत्रान्रक्शश्च शिश्व प्रज्ञां च विधेहि न इति ॥ प्रश्न उपनिषद् २-१३ ॥

*pranasyedam vāśe sarvaṁ tridive yatpratiṣṭhitam |*

*Māteva putrānrakśaśva śriśca prajñāṁ ca vidhehi na iti || Praśna upaniṣad 2-13 ||*

Everything is within the control of the *Prāṇa*, including everything in the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven. Please protect us like the mother and give the power of affluence and knowledge.

Every movement and transformation is taking place under the control of the *Prāṇa*. The *Prāṇa* also controls the enjoyment of *devas* (higher souls) in the third heaven (higher dimension of the universe). The *Prāṇa* itself is the operator and protector. Hence, the *Prāṇa* protect us as a mother protects her children. All the grace of the meditator and courage of the fighter are due to the *Prāṇa*, so it is asked to give that status of affluence and knowledge radiating on the *Prāṇa*. It has been therefore considered that the *Prāṇa* is the source of greatness and glory.

यदिदिं किंच जगत्सर्वं प्राण एजति निःसृतम् ।

महद् भयं वज्रमुध्यतं य एतद् विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति । कथा उपनिषद् २-३-२ ॥

*Yadidim kiñca jagatsarva prāna ejati niḥsṛtam |*

*Mahad bhayaṁ vajramudhyataṁ ya etad viduramṛtāste bhavanti | kathā upaniṣad 2-3-2 ||*

All this universe move in the *Prāṇa* and it also evolved from the *Prāṇa*; the mighty terror is him, a thunderbolt uplifted. Those who know him are the immortals.

All this universe was evolved from the *Prāṇa*. *The universe* moves because of the *Prāṇa*. Here, the *Prāṇa* is considered as the source of every energy, matter and movement. It is the basic energy of existence, from which, the physical world was evolved. The *Prāṇa* is universal and immortal. The universal energy *Prāṇa* is the source of all energy existing in the existence. The person who knows the *Prāṇa* becomes one with the *Prāṇa*. Then he becomes immortal as the *Prāṇa* never die.

विश्वरूपं हरिणं जातवेदसं परायणं ज्योतिरेकं तपन्तम् ।

सहस्ररश्मिः शतधा वर्तमानः प्राणः प्रजानामुदयत्येष सुर्यः ॥ प्रश्न उपनिषद् १-८ ॥

*Viśvarupaṁ hariṇaṁ jātavedasaṁ parāyaṇaṁ jyotirekaṁ tapantam |*

*sahasraraśmiḥ śatadhā vartamānaḥ prāṇaḥ prajānāmudayatyeṣa suryaḥ || praśna upaniṣad*

*1-8 ||*

The wise knows him, *Prāṇa* who is in the universal form, full of rays, omniscient, the source of all form of life, effulgent and great giver of light. There, the sun of a thousand rays rises, who is manifold in the universe and the life of all.

The *Prāṇa*, which is with golden coloured, the knower of all, the object of study, the one light, the result of austerity, with a thousand rays, who exists in a hundred forms, the life in all beings,

because of him the sun rises. He is the highest form of the universal spirit. He presents himself in every creature with different rays.

भयादस्याग्निस्तपति भयात्तपति सुर्यः ।

भयादिन्द्रश्च वायुश्च म्रित्युर्घावति पञ्चमः । कथा उपनिषद् २-३-३ ॥

*bhayādasyāgnistapati bhayāttapati suryaḥ |*

*bhayādirāśca vāyuśca mṛityurghāvati pañcamah | kathā upaniṣad 2-3-3 ||*

From the fear of him (*Prāṇa*), fire burns. From the fear, the sun shines. From the fear, *Indra*, wind, and death hasten in their courses.

The world lives from his fear. The fire burns from the fear of him. The sun shines from the fear of him. From the fear, *Indra*, wind, and death run. The *Prāṇa* is the energy that existed in every life and movement. Fire burns because of *Prāṇa*. The sun shines because of *Prāṇa*. *Indra* (the controller/rule of manifested existence) works on the power of *Prāṇa*. The movement of the wind is possible because of the same energy. Death also happens because of *Prāṇa*; death comes into existence when *Prāṇa* leaves the body.

यतश्चोदेति सुर्योऽस्तं यत्र च गच्छति ।

तं देवाः सर्वेऽर्पितास्तद् नृत्येति कश्चन । एतद्धै तत् । कथा उपनिषद् २-१-९ ॥

*Yataścodeti suryo'staṁ yatra ca gacchati |*

*Taṁ devāḥ sarve'rpitāstadu nātyeti kaścana | etadhdai tat | kathā upaniṣad 2-1-9 |*

He from whom the sun rises and to whom the sun sets, and in him are all the Gods depend, none passes beyond him. This verily is that.

The *Prāṇa* from which the sun rises and where the sunsets. Every transformation of the energy is the movement of *Prāṇa*. All the energy centres of the universe and the higher dimensions of



life depends on the same universal life energy *Prāṇa*. Nothing can defeat the immortal energy *Prāṇa* but, in fact, everything comes from him. He is the father of nature; the source of all creatures.

एषोऽग्निस्तपत्येष सूर्य एष पर्जन्योमधवानेष वायुरेष

पृथिवी रयिर्देवः सदसच्चामृतं च यत् ॥प्रश्न उपनिषद् २-५ ॥

*Eṣo'gristapatyēṣa sūrya eṣa parjanyaomadhavāneṣa vāyureṣa*

*ṛthivī rayirdevaḥ sadasaccāmṛtaṁ ca yat |Praśna upaniṣad 2-5||*

He (*Prāṇa*) burns as fire, he himself is the sun, he is the cloud, he himself is the *Indra*; he is also the wind. The bright one is the earth and matter. He is everything existed, what is not existed and what is immortal.

*Prāṇa* is one same force which is working as different vital energies. As every river is connected to the ocean, every flow of *Prāṇa* is connected to the universal force. Therefore, through the *Prāṇa*, we touch the cosmic border and connect with the universal Being. In meditation, there is an effort for universal satisfaction, but not for some individual pleasure. When the *Prāṇa* or the universal force is satisfied, according to *Upanishads*, the eyes are satisfied because of an inward connection with the universe.

प्राण इति होवाच सर्वाणि ह वा इमानि भुतानि प्राणमेवाभिसंविशन्ति प्राणमभ्युज्जिहते सैषा देवता प्रस्तावमन्वायत्ता  
तां चेदविद्वान्प्रास्तोष्यो मुर्धा ते व्यपतिष्यत्तथोक्तस्य मयेति ॥ छान्दोग्य उपनिषद् १-११-५ ॥

*Prāṇa iti hovāca sarvāṇi ha vā imāni bhutāni prāṇamevābhisamviśanti prāṇamabhyujjihate  
saiṣā devatā prastāvamanvāyattā tāṁ cedaviddhānprāstoṣyo murdhā te  
byapatiṣyattathoktasya mayeti|| Chāndogya upaniṣad 1-11-5||*

It is *Prāṇa* (life force). All things around us (moving and stable), disappear at the time of their destruction in the *Prāṇa*, and they appear at the time of their appearance from the same *Prāṇa*.

*Prāṇa* is the deity to whom the *Prastāva* is addressed. Despite of being warned, if you sung the hymn without knowing the deity to whom it was addressed, your head would surely have fallen.

The *Prāṇa* is the life force. Everything, existing in the present moment, disappear at the time of destruction and merge with the same life force *Prāṇa*. At the time of the beginning of life, every creature appears *from the Prāṇa*. The *Prāṇa* is the deity of creation. One should know the existence and characteristic of the *Prāṇa* before singing the hymn about you.

### 2.5.3 Biological Distribution of *Prāṇa*

प्रजापतिश्चरसि गर्भे त्वमेव प्रतिजायसे ।

तुभ्यं प्राण प्रजास्त्विमा बलिं हरन्ति यः प्रणैः प्रतितिष्ठसि ॥ प्रश्न उपनिषद् २-७ ॥

*Prajāpatiścarasi garbhe tvameva pratijāyase |*

*Tubhyam prāṇa prajāstvimā balim haranti yaḥ praṇaiḥ pratitiṣṭhasi || Praśna upaniṣad 2-7 ||*

As the lord of creatures, you move in the womb and you are afterwards born (as a child). O *Prāṇa*, for you alone, who dwells in the organs, all these creatures bring their sacrifices.

Life begins from the *Prāṇa*. The fetus becomes alive because of the *Prāṇa*. In, other words, *the Prāṇa* himself starts a new life of physical manifestation in the fetus. After the birth of a child, The *Prāṇa* himself live in the child and moves in every organ of the child. So, all the creatures carry their offerings for *Prāṇa* as the *Prāṇa* dwells in the body and make the body alive. The *Prāṇa* is the life of every creature.

यथा सम्रादेवाधिकृतन्विनियुङ्क्ते । एतन्ग्रामानोतान्प्रामानधितिष्ठस्वेत्येवमेवैष प्राण इतरान्प्राणान्पृथक्पृथगेव  
सन्निधते ॥ प्रश्न उपनिषद् ३-४ ॥

*Yathā samrādevādhikṛtanviniyuṅkte| Etanḡrāmānotānprāmānadhitiṣṭasvetyevamevaiṣa  
prāṇa itarānprāṇānprṥhakprṥhageva sannidhate|| Praśna upaniṣad 3-4||*

As an emperor appoints officers, saying "Govern over this activity and this village," similarly, the *Prāṇa* allots separate duties to the other *Prāṇa* (at their respective posts in the body)

The *Prāṇa* is like the sovereign and commands the officers under him (other secondary *Prāṇas*). In this physical world too, the sovereign himself posts officers under him for different cities. The chief *Prāṇa* commands other *Prāṇas* to work in a unique type of activities on different physical areas of the body such as the abdomen, chest, head etc. The other *Prāṇas* are also considered as the different manifestations of the same chief *Prāṇa*.

पायुपस्थेऽपानं चक्षुः श्रोत्रे मुखनासिकाभ्यां प्राणः स्वयं प्रातिष्ठते मध्ये तु समानः । एष ह्योतद्भुतमन्नं समं नयति  
तस्मादेताः सप्तार्चिषो भवन्ति ॥ प्रश्न उपनिषद् ३-५ ॥

*Pāyupasthe'pānaṁ cakṣuḥ śrotre mukhanāsikābhyāṁ prāṇaḥ svayaṁ prātiṣṭate madhye tu  
samānaḥ| Eṣa hyotaddhutamannaṁ samaṁ nayati tasmādetāḥ saptārciṣo bhavanti|| Praśna  
upaniṣad 3-5||*

The *Apana* stays in the two lowest apertures. The *Prāṇa* stays in the eye, ear, nose and speech. *Samana* stays in the middle to distribute the food supplied equally, so these seven flames arise.

Division of the chief *Prāṇa* happens because of the different functioning. The *Apana*, as a part of the chief *Prāṇa*, works in the two lower apertures to expel urine and faeces. Similarly, the *Prāṇa*, as a part of the chief *Prāṇa* works in the eye, ear, mouth and the nose. In the middle,

between *Prāṇa* and *Apana* (in the navel), *Samana* works to distribute food and drink equally. The seven flames (different types of heat), as part of the same energy, work together to digest, distribute and utilize the food for the other functioning of the *Prāṇa*.

हृदि ह्योष आत्म । अत्रैतदेकशतं नाडीनां तासां शतं शतमेकैकस्य द्वासप्ततिर्द्वासप्ततिः प्रतिशाखानाडीसहस्राणि  
भवन्त्यासु व्यानश्चरति ॥ प्रश्न उपनिषद् ३-६ ॥

*Hṛdi hyoṣa ātma | Atraitadekaśataṁ nāḍīnaṁ tāsāṁ śataṁ śatamekaikasya  
dvāsaptatirdvasaptatiḥ pratisākhānāḍīsahastrāṇi bhavantyāsu byānaścarati || Praśna  
upaniṣad 3-6 ||*

This atman stays in the heart. There are a hundred and one nerves (*Nāḍīs*). Every one of these nerves has a hundred branches, and again, every one of these has seventy-two thousand sub-branches. *Vyana* moves in these branches.

It is considered that the *Atman* (the universal soul) is connected with the heart region in the subtle body of the human being. There are a hundred and one chief nerves that originated from the heart. This every chief nerve has a hundred branches. Every one of these hundred branches has seventy-two thousand sub-branches. The *Vyana* moves in these nerves. So, the *Vyana* moves in the whole body through the branches connected with the heart especially to the joints, shoulders and vital parts. These branches are not the blood vessels, they are the subtle channels through which *Prāṇic* energy flows in the body.

अथैकयोर्ध्व उदानः पुण्येन पुण्यं नयति पापेन पापमुभाभ्यामेव मनुष्यलोकम् ॥ प्रश्न उपनिषद् ३-७ ॥

*Athaikayordhva udānaḥ puṇyena puṇyaṁ nayati pāpena pāpamubhābhyāmeva  
manuṣyalokam | Praśna upaniṣad 3-7 ||*

By one of those 101 *Nāḍīs*, the upward moving *Udāna* lead by good actions to the worlds of the good, by sinful deeds to the worlds the sin, by both to the world of the men indeed.

The *Udāna*, moving down to up, leads someone having virtuous deeds to virtuous worlds, such as the abode of *Devas*. Whereas, it leads having sinful acts to sinful worlds such as birth among horizontal creatures (beasts). If somebody has virtue and sin equally, the *Udāna* leads him to the world of men (earth).

आदित्यो ह वै बाह्याः प्राण उदयत्येष ह्योनं चाक्षुषं प्राणमनुगृह्णानः । पृथिव्यां या देवता सैषा पुरुषस्य

अपानमवष्टभ्यान्तरा यदाकाशः स समानो वयुर्व्यानः ॥ प्रश्न उपनिषद् ३-८ ॥

*Ādityo ha vai bāhyāḥ prāṇa udayatyēṣa hyonam cākṣuṣam prāṇamanugrḥṇānaḥ | Pṛthivyām yā devatā saiṣā puruṣasya apānamavaṣṭabhyāntarā yadākāśaḥ sa samāno vayurovyānaḥ ||*

*Praśna upaniṣad 3-8 ||*

The sun, in reality, is the external flow of the *Prāṇa*. The sun rises favouring the *Prāṇa* in the eye. So the deity earth attracts the energy *Apana* towards down. The *Akasa* (in the middle) is *Samana*. The wind is *Vyana*.

The sun is the external *Prāṇa* which is in favour of *Prāṇa* that is present in the eye which helps eye for the perception of forms. The *Deity* of Earth favours attracting the *Apana* down in a human being. So the earth controls the activity of the *Apana* in the *Purusha*. The air in the *Akasa* (between earth and heaven) is *Samana* i.e. favours *Samana*. The external wind (*Vayu*) favours *Vyana*.

तेजो ह वा उदानस्तस्मादुपशान्ततेजाः ।

पुनर्भवमिन्द्रियैर्मनसि सम्पद्यमानैः ॥ प्रश्न उपनिषद् ३-९ ॥

*Tejo ha vā udānastasmādupaśāntatejāḥ |*

*Punarbhavamindriyairmanasi sampadhyamānaiḥ || Praśna upaniṣad 3-9 ||*

The external light *Tejas* is *Udana*. He, whose light has gone out, comes into a new birth along with his senses absorbed in the mental body.

The common external fire Tejas is the *Udana* in the human body. By its light, it favours the wind known as *Udana*. The *Udana* fire, by its nature, causes the ascent from the body. Therefore, when a man's natural fire is over, then one should know that his life is spent. He is dying and he enters another body along with the senses clinging to the mind.

यच्चित्तस्तेनैष प्राणमायाति प्राणस्तेजसा युक्तः ।

सहात्मना यथासंतल्पितं लोकं नयति ॥ प्रश्न उपनिषद् ३-१० ॥

*Yaccittastennaiṣa prāṇamāyāti prāṇastejasā yuktaḥ*।

*sahātmanā yathāsantalpitaṁ lokaṁ nayati* ॥ *Praśna upaniṣad 3-10* ॥

Based on the thought at the time of death, one goes back to *Prāṇa* with that, and the *Prāṇa* united with the light, with the self leads to the world he deserves.

At the time of death, the senses activity declines, one lives under the activity of the chief *Prāṇa*. The *Prāṇa* manifest the activity of *Udana* (*Tejas*) with the atman (with the owner; the enjoyer). The *Prāṇa* manifesting the activity of the *Udana*, leads the atman to the worlds thought of, based on the influence of *karma*.

यवद्वायुः सथितो देहे तवज्जीवनमुच्यते ।

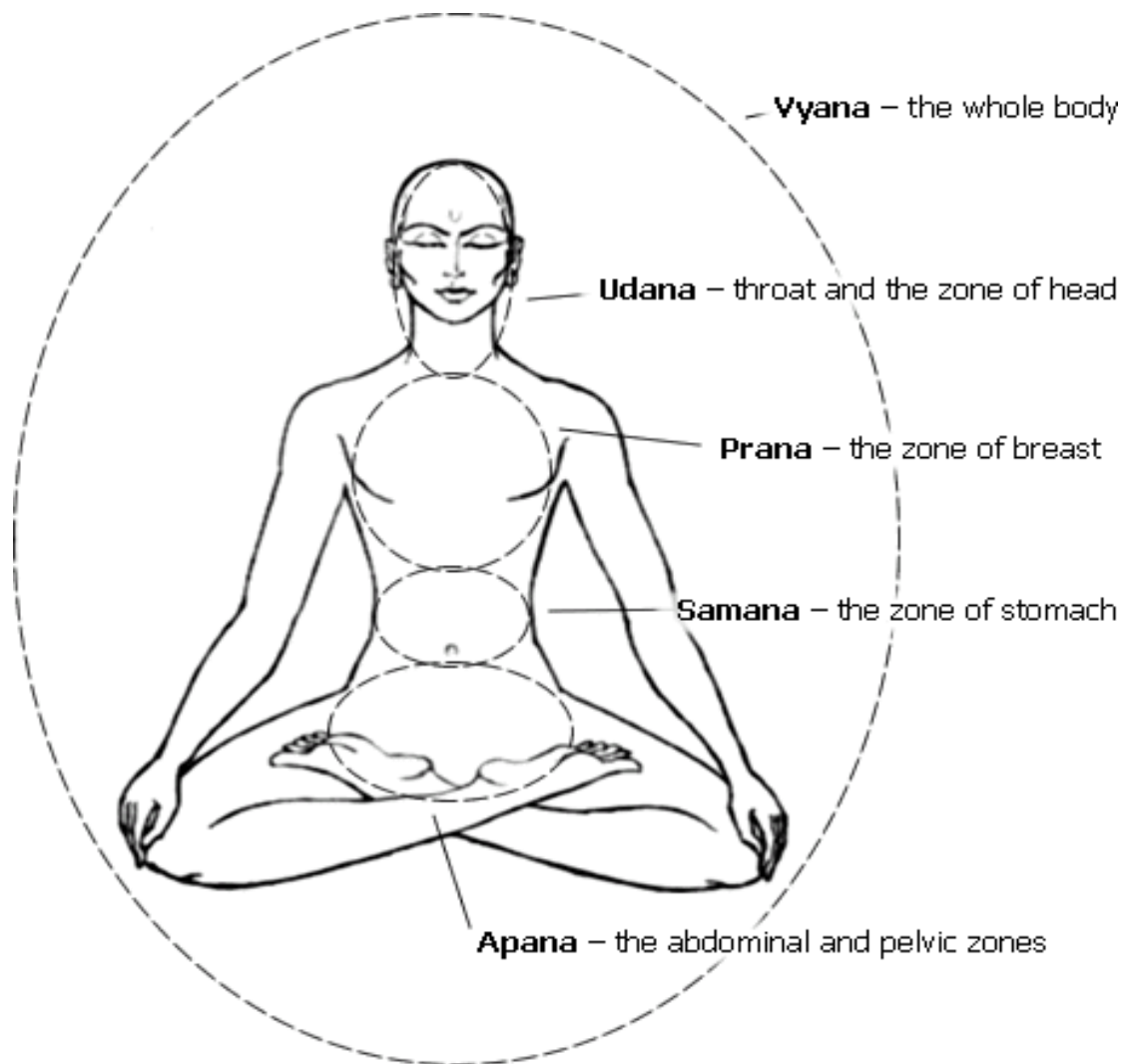
मरणं तस्य निष्क्रान्तिस्ततो वयुं निरोधयेत् ॥ हठयोग प्रदिपिका २-३ ॥

*Yavadvāyuḥ sathito dehe tavajjīvanamuchayate*।

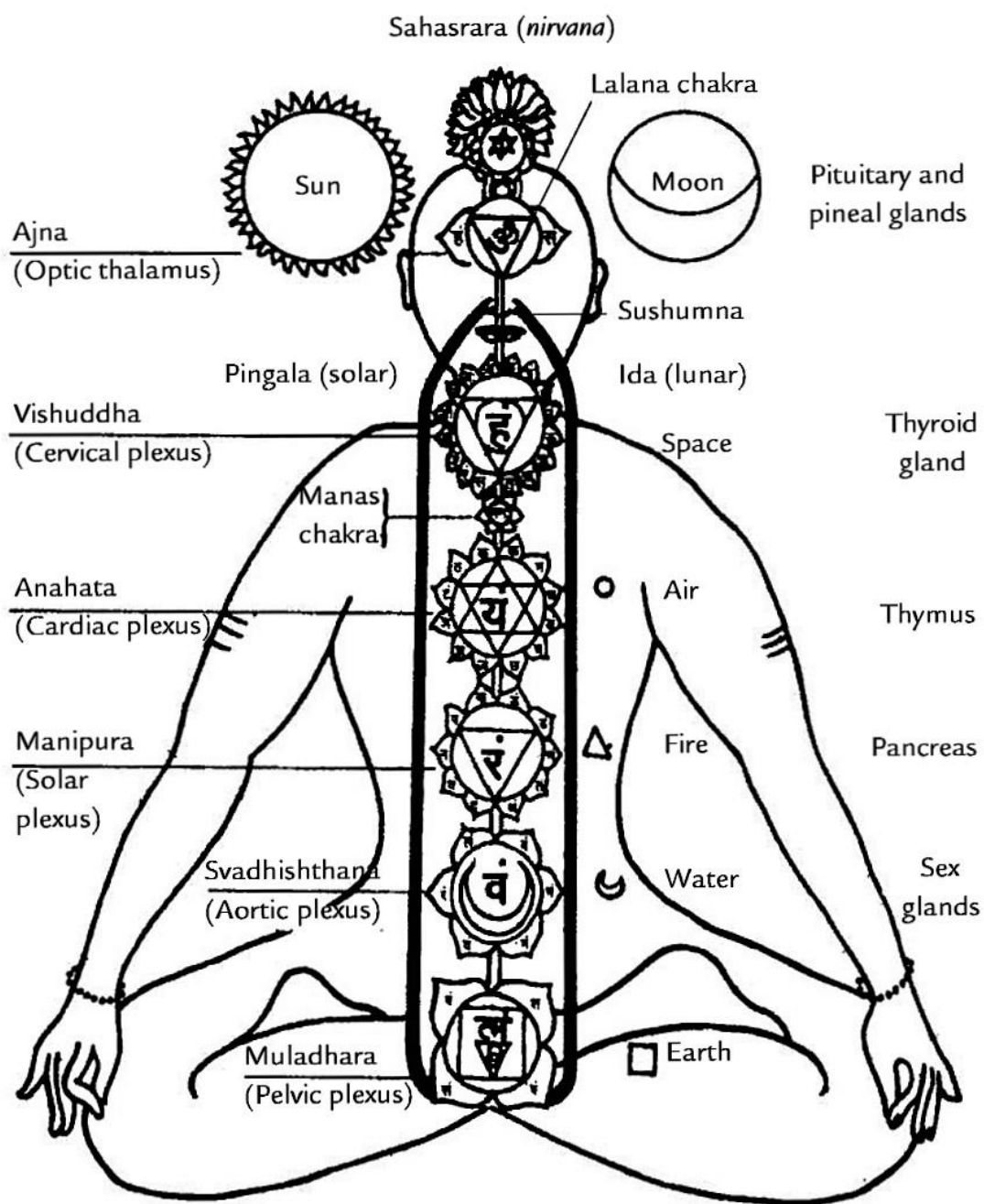
*Maraṇaṁ tasya niṣkrāntistato vayum nirodhayeta* ॥ *Haṭhayoga pradipikā 2-3* ॥

So long as the air (*Prāṇa*) stays in the body, it is called life. Death comes in the passing out of the air (*Prāṇa*). It is, therefore, necessary to restrain the air (*Prāṇa*).

The *Prāṇa* is the life energy. Because of him, life exists. Within all the creatures, the immortal *Prāṇa* himself is living. Life begins when the *Prāṇa* enters in the foetus, and similarly, life ends when the *Prāṇa* leaves the body. The same *Prāṇa* lives in different creature and changes the form of its manifestation with the rule of existence.



*Plate 1: Locations of the 5 Prāṇas in human body*



*Plate 2: Subtle energy system in human body*



### 3.5.4 Benefits of Understanding *Prāṇa*

ये ह वै ज्येष्ठं च श्रेष्ठं च वेद ज्येष्ठश्च ह वै श्रेष्ठश्च भवति

प्राणो वाव ज्येष्ठश्च ॥ छान्दोग्य उपनिषद् ५-१-१ ॥

*Ye ha vai jyeṣṭham ca śreṣṭham ca veda jyeṣṭhaśca ha vai śreṣṭhaśca bhavati*

*prāṇo vāva jyeṣṭhaśca || Chāndogya upaniṣad 5-1-1||*

The person who knows the oldest and the best becomes the oldest and the best. It is the *Prāṇa* which is the oldest and the best.

*Prāṇa* is considered to be superior to *Indriyas* (senses) and *Manas* (mind). *Prāṇa* is present even when the mind is absent during sleep or unconscious state. *Prāṇa* is also the oldest as it starts its functioning in a child even when the child is still in its mother's womb. It is active before the various organs (such as the organs of speaking, hearing, seeing, etc.) are active. *Prāṇa*, therefore, is above everything. So, *Prāṇa* is called *Jyeshtha* (oldest) and *Sreshtha*, (best) in the *Upanishads*. Through the vibrations of *Prāṇa*, the mind and emotions are maintained and thought is produced. We feel, know, and think through the help of *Prāṇa* only, therefore Upanishads say, "*Prāṇa* is *Brahman*."

य एवं विद्वान्प्राणं वेद । न हास्य प्रजा हियतेऽमृतो भवति तदेष श्लोकः ॥ प्रश्न उपनिषद् ३-११ ॥

*Ya evaṁ vidvānprāṇaṁ veda | Na hāsya prajā hiyate'mṛto bhavati tadeṣa ślokaḥ|| Praśna upaniṣad 3-11||*

The learned man who knows *Prāṇa*, his offspring does not perish, and he becomes immortal as *Sloka* says.

The offspring (the son, the grandson, etc.) of the learned man who knows *Prāṇa*, do not suffer and die sadly. When the body of the knower falls, it becomes one with *Prāṇa*, then he becomes

immortal (in a relative sense) as he becomes one with the universe and the universal flow of the chief *Prāṇa*. The individual self merges with the universal self.

उत्पत्तिमायतिं स्थानं विभुत्वं चैव पञ्चधा ।

अध्यात्मं चैव प्राणस्य विज्ञायामृतमश्रुत इति ॥ प्रश्न उपनिषद् ३-१२ ॥

*Utpattimāyatim sthānam vibhutvaṁ caiva pañcadhā*

*Adhyātmaṁ caiva prāṇasya vijñāyāmṛtamaśruta iti* || *Praśna upaniṣad 3-12* ||

By knowing the truth of birth, coming, staying and the five-fold sovereignty of *Prāṇa* and its presence in the body, one attains immortality, one attains immortality.

Human comes to human body from the universal soul by the activity of the mind. He who has known the origin of life, the entry (starting point), the place, the fivefold distribution (the five functions of the *Prāṇa*) and the internal mechanism of the *Prāṇa*, he obtains immortality. By knowing him, one become one with him and he is, of course, immortal.

## 2.5 SUMMARY

*Prāṇa* is originated from the universal self (*Ātman*). *Prāṇa* is the shadow of the *Ātman* hence cannot be separated from him. From the *Atman*, both the *Prāṇa* and the *Rāyi* came in the existence. The *Prāṇa* (the life / the energy) is male and *Rāyi* (the matter) is female. Because of the *Prāṇa*, everything in the universe is moving and changing constantly. The *Prāṇa* is present in all living beings and inanimate objects. The *Prāṇa* is responsible for the body's life, maintenance and death. The foetus gets life because of the *Prāṇa*. The *Prāṇa* himself starts a new life in the fetus. After the birth of a child, The *Prāṇa* himself live in the child and makes the child alive. The *Prāṇa* comes in human body because of the impressions of human mind. The *Prāṇa* lives in different form but never die; it is immortal. The chief *Prāṇa* commands other *Prāṇas* to work in a unique type of activities in different physical areas of the body such

as the abdomen, chest, head etc. The other *Prāṇas* are also considered as the different manifestations of the same chief *Prāṇa*. The *Prāṇas* moves in the body through different through energy channels (*Nāḍīs*) and energy centres (*Chakras*). When the *Prāṇa* flows freely through energy channels and energy centres, someone will have positive physical and mental health. Whereas, if there are blockages in energy channels, one will have physical or emotional disorders. According the ancient scriptures, one who know the *Prāṇa* becomes immortal; he/she becomes one with the immortal universal energy “*Prāṇa*”.