

CHAPTER FIFTY

*Human Body—A Miniature Cosmos: Departure
of the Soul to the Next World*

The guest said:

1. O boy Kamaṭha of no immature intellect, the exact thing is mentioned by you. I wish to hear about the characteristics of the body. Describe the same.

Kamaṭha said:

2. Understand that the physical body is like the Cosmic Egg. Listen how it is so. The sole of the feet is Pātāla. The forepart of the foot is Rasātala.

3. The pair of ankles is (i.e. corresponds to) Talātala; the calves, Mahātala; the knees, Sutala; the thighs, Vitala. The hip is Atala.

4. They call the navel (the surface of) the earth; the belly Bhuvanloka; the region of the chest the heavenly world; the neck the Maharloka; and the face Janaloka.

5-6. They call the eyes Tapas Loka and the region of the head, Satyaloka. Just as there are seven continents situated on the earth, so also there are seven *Dhātus* (i.e. essential ingredients of the body). Understand them from me by their names. Skin, blood, flesh, suet, bones, marrow and semen virile—these are the *Dhātus*.

7-8. There are three hundred and sixty bones;¹ three million fifty-six thousand nine tubular vessels. They take liquid secretions of the body (to the different parts) like the rivers on the earth carrying water.

9. The body is covered by three and a half crores of hair, gross and fine. They are said to be visible and invisible.

10. Six limbs are important. Listen as they are being mentioned by me, viz. two arms, two thighs, the head and the stomach.

11. The intestines are three and their length is three and a half *Vyāmas* (i.e. the distance between the middle fingers when

1. VV 7-16 give crude ideas about human anatomy.

both the hands are extended). Brāhmaṇas conversant with the Vedas say that they are three *Vyāmas* in length in the case of women.

12. The lotus in the heart is glorified as having the stalk above and face downwards. To the left of the lotus of the heart is the spleen and to the right is the liver.

13-14. O Brāhmaṇa, the cavities of marrow, suet, fat, urine, bile, phlegm, faeces and the last one the blood are said to be two *Añjalis* (cavity formed when the open hands are joined together). Functioning therefrom they sustain the body.

15. There are seven needle-like vessels of which five are in the head, O Brāhmaṇa. One is in the penis and one is in the tongue.

16. All the tubular vessels issue from the navel-lotus. The most important among them are *Suṣumnā*, *Iḍā* and *Piṅgalā*.

17. Coming to the door of the nostrils, they contribute to the growth of the body (?) *Vāyu*, *Agni* and *Candramas* (the Moon-god) are stationed in the body, each of them being of five types.

18. *Prāṇa*, *Apāna*, *Samāna*, *Udāna* and *Vyāna* are said to be the five types of *Vāyu*.¹ They say that their functions (are as follows).

19. The function of *Prāṇa* is proclaimed as follows: Inhalation, exhalation and the ingress of food and drink. It is situated from the neck (throat) to the head.

20. The discharge of faeces, urine and semen virile as well as the delivery of the child in the womb is said to be the function of *Apāna*. Its situation is above the anus.

21. *Samāna* handles food and disseminates it. It moves about unchecked through the hips and buttocks.² It enables tasting.

22. *Udāna* makes the organs of speech function. Eructation, vomiting and the main endeavour in all physical activities—these too are the functions of *Udāna*. Its situation is the portion up to the throat.

1. VV 18-23 enumerate the functions of vital airs.

2. The reading is probably *Sarvasrotasvavārīta*, 'unchecked in all the vessels'?

23. *Vyāna* is stationed in the heart. It moves continuously throughout the body. It causes the increase of the essential ingredients of the body. It causes the production of sweat and saliva and the opening and closing of the eyes.

24. The *Pāvaka* (fire) is stationed in the body in the following five forms:¹ *Pācaka*, *Rañjaka*, *Sādhaka*, *Ālocaka* and *Bhrājaka*.

25. *Pācaka* is always present in the chamber of digestion. It digests food. *Rañjaka*, stationed in the *Āmāśaya* (i.e. the receptacle of undigested food), prepares the juice and converts it into blood.

26. *Sādhaka*, stationed in the heart, instills enthusiasm in the intellect etc. *Ālocaka* is stationed in the eye. It gives the person the ability to see forms and colours.

27-28. *Bhrājaka* is stationed in the skin. On being purified, it makes the body glisten.

It is said that Soma is stationed in the body in five forms,² viz. *Kledaka*, *Bodhaka*, *Tarpaṇa*, *Śleṣmaṇa* and *Ālambaka*.

Kledaka abides in the abdomen permanently. It moistens (?liquefies) the food.

29. *Bodhaka* resides in the tongue. It enables (persons) to cognize (the different tastes). *Tarpaṇa* is stationed in the head. It is called so because it propitiates the eyes etc.

30. *Śleṣmaṇa* is present in all the joints. It produces phlegmatic secretion. *Ālamba* abides in the chest and moves throughout the body.

31. Thus the body is sustained by *Vāyu*, *Agni* and *Soma*. The vessels (carrying blood) and the empty cavity of the belly are born of *Ākāśa* (ether).

32-33. Know the following as *Pārthiva* ('evolved from the earth'): nose, hair, nails, bones, courage(?), weightiness, skin, flesh, heart, anus, navel, suet, liver, marrow, intestines, receptacle of undigested food, tubular vessels of the body, sinews and abdomen. Brāhmaṇas conversant with Vedas say thus.

1. The 'fire element' in the body and its varieties and their functions are given in vv 24-28.

2. VV 27b-30 enumerate the functions of the five varieties of *Soma* in the body.

34. The white area of the eyes (cornea) is so on account of phlegm. It is inherited from the father. The black circular area is so on account of gaseousness. It is inherited from the mother.

35-36. (The eye has five areas.¹) The first one is that of the eyelashes. The second one is that of the skin, the white area (cornea) is mentioned as the third and the fourth one is the black area (iris). The fifth one is *Dr̥ṇmaṇḍala* (circular pupil). There are two other portions of the eyes, viz. *Upāṅga* and *Apāṅga*.

37. *Upāṅga* is the border area of the eyes and *Apāṅga* (the outer corner of the eye) is at the root of the nose.

The scrotum and testicles are said to consist of suet, blood, phlegm and flesh.

38. The tongue consists of blood and flesh in the case of all embodied souls. There are six bundles of nerves in the two hands, two lips, penis and neck.

39. In this way, in this body of seven times seven (fortynine) parts abides *Jīva*, the twenty-fifth principle, pervading it. Its residence is in the head.

40. The three ingredients, viz. skin, blood and flesh are inherited from the mother and suet, marrow and bones are said to originate from the father. These six are called *Kauśika*.

41. Thus the body is evolved out of the (five) elements. I shall describe to you how this body develops by means of the foodstuffs originating from the five elements.

42-45. That food is eaten by embodied beings in morsels (consisting) of lumps of food.² At first *Vāyu* that is *Prāṇa* divides into two the undigested food in the stomach. It excites by blowing the fire slowly. The fire, being blown thus, makes the water very hot. With the hot water all round it the food is cooked once again. On being cooked, it becomes separated into two, viz. the sedimentary excretion as well as the juicy part.

46-48. The sedimentary excretion is discharged from the body in the form of twelve different impurities. The twelve seats of impurity are two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, tongue, teeth, penis, anus, nails and hair-pores.

1. It is only the front portion of the eye that is described here. The growth of the body from the elements ends with v 40.

2. The ideas about the digestive system are given in vv 42-51.

All the tubular vessels are connected to the lotus of the heart on all sides. *Vyāna* places the subtle juicy essence at the mouths (i.e. openings of those vessels). Then *Samāna* fills those vessels with that juicy essence.

49-51. Being full, they extend throughout the body. The juicy essence within the vessels is cooked by the fire *Rañjaka*. Being cooked, it is converted into blood. Thereafter the following things are produced successively: skin, hair, tresses, flesh, sinews, nerves, bones, nails, marrow, purity of the sense organs and increase in semen virile.

Thus the resultant products of the food taken in are proclaimed of twelve types.

52. This body which is produced thus is intended to be the instrument or means of merit, just as a splendid chariot is the means of transportation of burden (and passengers).

53. If it is not kept in good condition by means of various efforts such as smearing the body with oil etc. what can it do? If it does not carry burden, what function is carried out by it?

54. In the same manner, if meritorious deeds are not performed, what is the use of this body developed and nurtured by means of excellent meals? In that case it is like that of brutes.

55-57. The following verses are worth noting in this context:

‘Good and bad results are experienced by a person in accordance with what he has done, the time and the place of doing, the age and the manner in which he has done it.

Hence good deeds must always be performed by those who seek uninterrupted happiness. Otherwise enjoyment of pleasures is disrupted like the small streams (drying up) during the summer.

Since many acute pains and miseries originate from sins, they are not to be committed. Indeed it causes distress and affliction to the soul.’

58. Thus, O good Sir, your question has been clarified by me in accordance with my ability as to how a living being is born. Listen to the manner in which it dies.¹

1. VV 59-72. Ideas about death—the *Linga Śarira* and after-death conditions.