

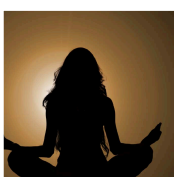
The flow of Prana

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What is Prana?



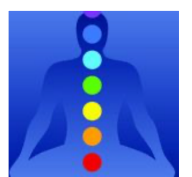
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Prana in human
being,
Panchaprana



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Chakras & Nadis



What is Prana?

Prana means “energy”, “life force”, the power that kindles “livingness” in all.

Prana is present in every aspect of creation, giving life to all living and non-living beings, - the planets, humans, plants, asteroids or mountains. It is the very matrix of energy particles.

This whole world originates from the cosmic force, **MahaPrana**:

“This whole world - what ever there is - vibrates having originated from prana”

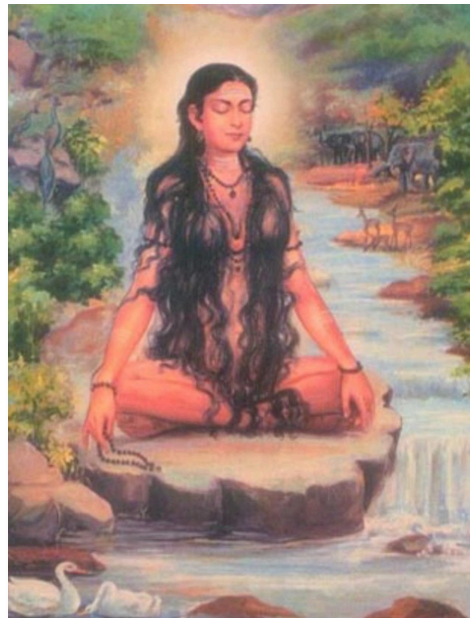
(Kathopanishad, 2:3:2)

Thus Prana existed eternally as a potential in the universal consciousness (**ParaBrahman**), and has first manifested itself as a primordial impulse of creation (the “willing” of ParaBrahman):

“That Being willed, “May I become many, may I grow forth”

(Chāndogya Upanishad, 6.2.3)

This primary creative impulse gave rise to a vibration, an energy, the very first manifestation of prana (also known as Mahamaya, Mahashakti, or Devine Mother). MahaPrana has awakened as a self-projection of the infinite consciousness so that it could experiences itself through the movement of prana.

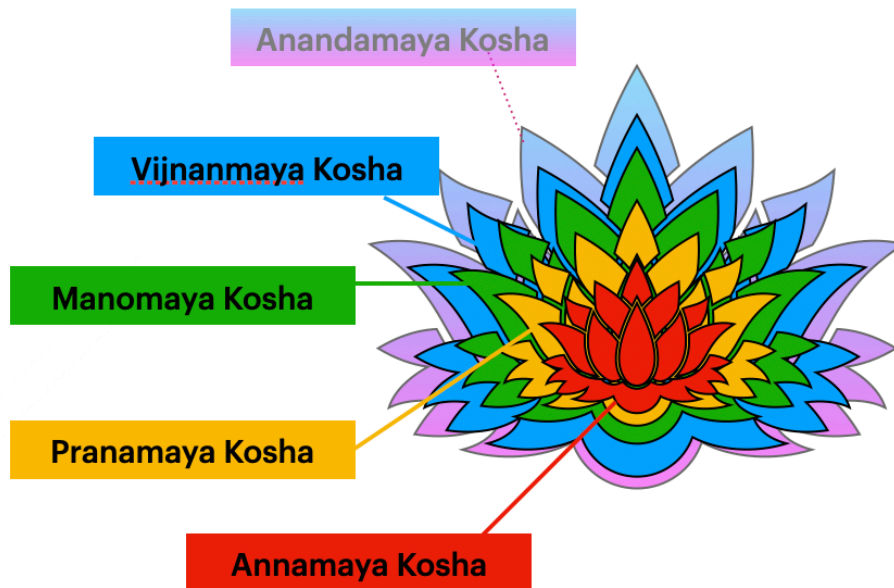


Consciousness and energy are inseparable. For life to exist both have to be present:

“When prana moves, chitta [consciousness] moves. When prana is without movement, chitta is without movement”

(HYP, 2:2)

‘Prana’ in human being



Did you know that Prana manifests in human body and vibrates as **3 bodies** and **5 ‘*pansha koshas*’**?

On a gross level, prana manifests as physical body, on a subtle level as astral body and on the most subtle level as causal body. *Panchakoshas* are like ‘sheaths’ that cover our true nature (infinite consciousness) from our subjective experience.

STHULA SHARIRA (physical body) consists of 5 elements ‘*pansha mahabhutas*’ (earth, water, fire, air, ether).

ANAMAYA KOSHA (‘food’ sheath) is in our gross body.

SUKSHMA SHARIRA is astral or subtle body. It contains:

PRANAMAYA (vital energy),
MANOMAYA (mental), and
VIJNANMAYA (intuition, wisdom) koshas.

KARANA SHARIRA is the causal body, the cause of other bodies, also known as Prakriti (in Sankhya Philosophy) or Atman (according to Vedanta).

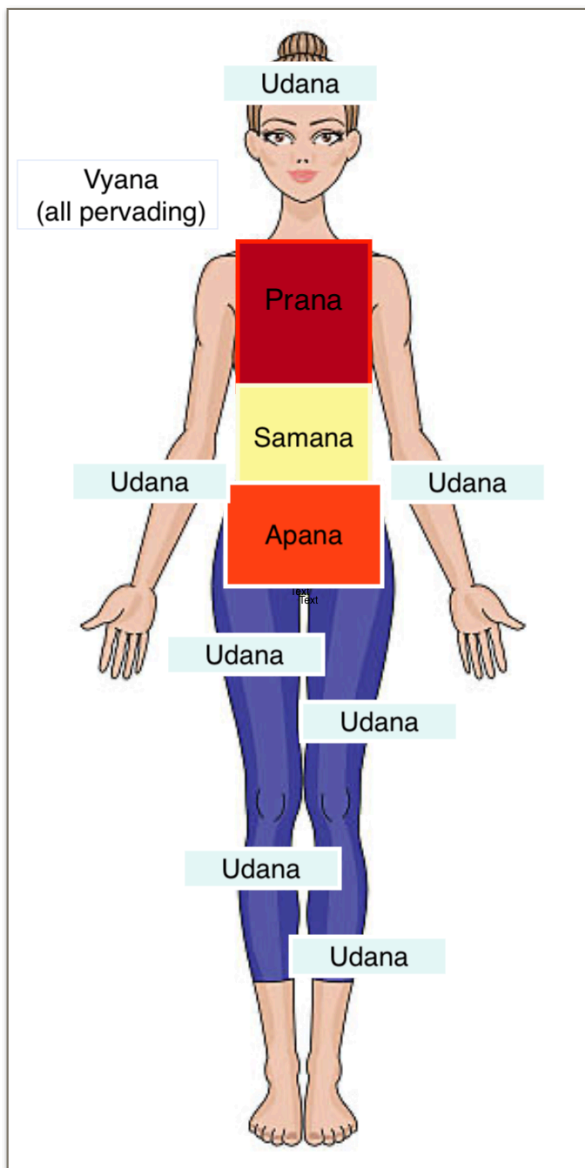
ANANDAMAYA kosha (pure bliss), the abode of the most subtle prana, is in Karana Sharira.

The 3 bodies and 5 ‘koshas’ are interdependent and pinned together by the same source of energy (prana) vibrating at different levels, from gross to the most subtle. The movement (piercing) from one kosha to another is also achieved with a help of prana. With yogic practices (*sadhana*), we learn to raise our vibration and become aware of more & more subtle layers of existence.

Pancha Prana

Did you ever observe how positive thoughts, higher feeling and yogic practices can increase the level of energy, and - vice versa - how negative environment, stress can reduce the flow of it? Every human being is pervaded by prana and the quantity and quality of prana is changing continuously in us.

“Pranamaya kosha” means sheath composed of ‘prana’. Primary energy manifests itself into **five main types of pranās** (*pancha pranās*) in human beings, depending on their function and movement. *Panchapranas* are created during the first four months of gestation and are responsible for all the movement in the human body.



Prana vayu ('air flowing forward') is one of the specific functions of Prana (all-pervasive life force) in the body. It is also called *sthoola prana*. In the physical body it is located in the thoracic region, between diaphragm and the neck (from head to navel), in the area of chest, lungs and the heart. It is central to energy circulation in the body, responsible for all inward movement, - breathing, swallowing, eating/drinking, intake of ideas or impressions.

Prana is central to energy circulation in the body.

Associated Chakras & Nadi: *Anahatha & Vishudhi, Ida nadi*.

Signs of imbalance: malfunctioning of the heart or lungs, poor intake of oxygen, not positive mind, difficult to concentrate.

Apana vayu ('air that moves away') moves down and outwards. Located in the pelvic area (between navel and perineum), it is responsible for kidneys, bladder, bowels, excretions, and reproductive organs. It governs expulsion of gas, wind, faeces, urine, semen / ova. Apana Vayu also operates in child birth to expel the foetus from uterus.

Apana helps to eliminate negative impressions

Chakras & Nadi: *Mooladhara & Swadisthana, Pingala nadi*.

Signs of imbalance: poor elimination, feeling pulled down, depression, negativity.



Samana vayu ('balanced'/'equal') acts as a balancing force between Prana and Apana vayus. Located between navel and diaphragm, it activates and supports digestive organs (stomach, liver, spleen, intestines), digestive secretions, and metabolism. On a subtle level, samana helps to keep the balance between all 5 koshas.

Samana helps to digest food and "mind-stuff".

Chakra: Manipura (vitality, dynamism).

Signs of imbalance: poor assimilation of food, disturbed mind, turbulence in the body.

Udana vayu ('upward moving air') is responsible for all growth in the body, it keeps the body upright and is in charge of all anti-gravitational activities. It controls and directs activities of sensory organs (*jnanendriyas* - eyes/vision, ears/hearing, tongue/taste, nose/smell, skin/tactile sensation) & 3 organs of action (*karmendriyas* - hands, feet, speech). Udana also fuels and ignites the 5 minor pranas (*upapranas*, see below). On a subtle level, it brings positive energy, ensures flow of energy between head and heart. It brings energy up through the koshas from gross to most subtle. Location: head and extremities.

At the time of death Udana helps subtle body to leave the gross body.

Chakra & nadis: Ajna & Sahasrara, Sushumna nadi.

Signs of imbalance: breathing troubles, inefficiency at work, lack of mental clarity, expression, or cheerfulness.

Vyana Vayu pervades the whole body, it moves from center to periphery and functions as reserve of energy. It is responsible for circulation in all layers and levels (food, water, oxygen, thoughts, emotions). Vyana assists all other pranas, gives them extra boost when required.

Signs of imbalance: lack of coordination, tremors, erratic mind, inability to reach out to people.

Upa-pranas (minor pranas) and their functions:

Naga

Belching
Hiccups



Koorma

Blinking



Krikara

Yawning
Hunger / Thirst



Devadata

Sneezing
Divine smells

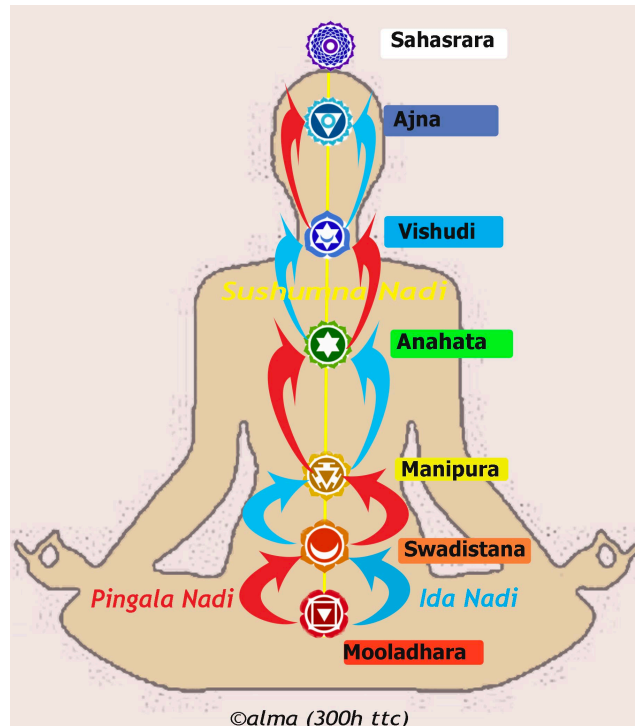


Dhananjaya

Touch, Swelling
(it leaves the body last)



Chakras & Nadis



We have an exquisite system of energy channels, called *nadis*, which are located in our subtle body. There are 14 major *nadis* further branching into 72 000 *nadis* (or even more).

Yoga focuses on 3 most important *nadis* that govern the energy flow in all energy channels:

Sushumna, Ida & Pingala

Sushumna runs along the center of the spinal cord from just below the base of the spine (*Mooladhara* chakra) up until the top of the head (*Sahasrara* chakra). *Ida* and *Pingala* weave around its central axis, crossing *Sushumna* at six points. These are energy vortexes known as **Chakras** (see more on page 7).

Ida is the 'moon' ('feminine') channel. Its nurturing and cooling energy governs mental activity, retrospection, passivity, introversion, it brings peace and calm. It starts & ends on the left side of *Sushumna*, controls the right brain and left side of the body.

Pingala is the 'sun' ('masculine') channel. Its energy is warm, stimulating, linked to physical and logic/analytical activity, extroversion. It starts & ends on the right side of *Sushumna*, controls the left brain and right side of the body.

Ida & Pingala function alternatively:
Left nostril active (*Ida*)
Right nostril active (*Pingala*)

When energy in *Ida* and *Pingala* is balanced, and *kundalini* energy rises up *Sushumna* freely, a yogi attains a still mind leading to spiritual awakening. There are three 'obstacles' on its way:

Kundalini

('coiled up power')

dormant spiritual cosmic
energy

awakened through yogic
practices

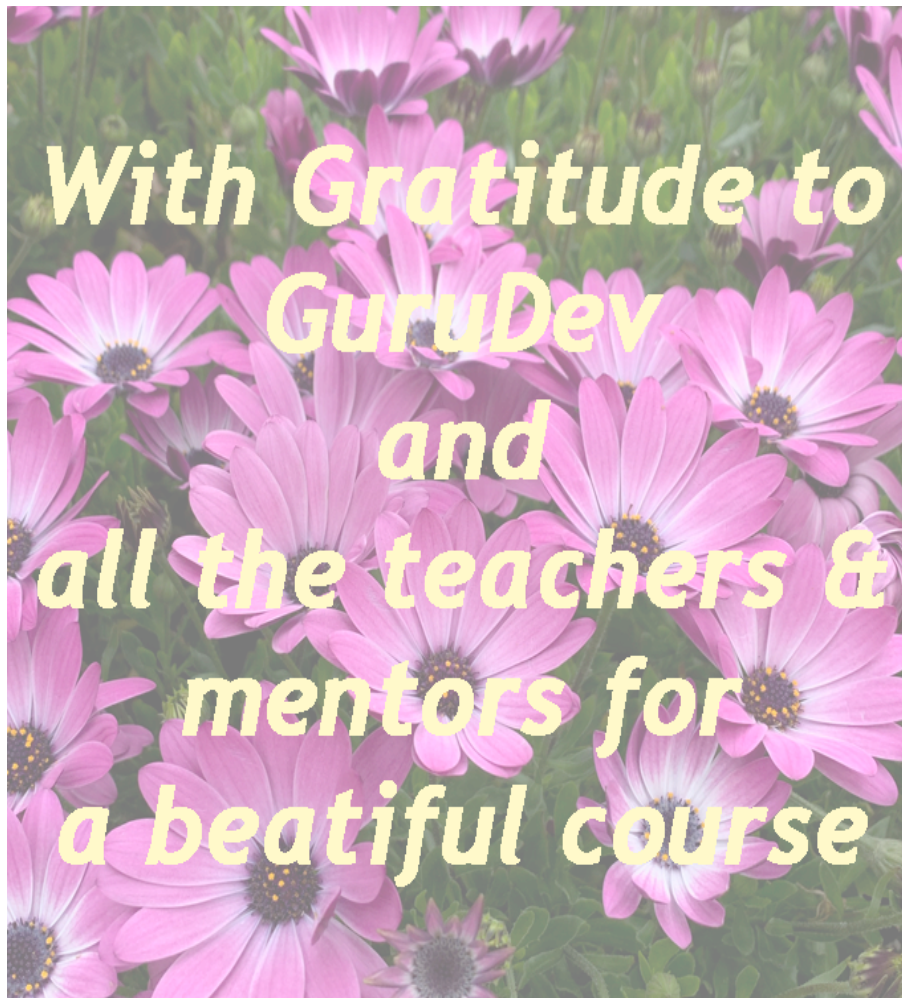
Granthis are three psychic knots on *Sushumna* that energy has to cross, as it rises from the base till *Ajna* and *Sahasrara* chakras:

- **Brahma granthi** (at *Mooladhara*), linked to physical body, sexuality, sensuality, pleasure;
- **Visnu granthi** (at *Anahata*), linked to ego (*ahamkara*);
- **Rudra granthi** (at *Ajna*), linked to mortal insecurities and material existence.

Chakras are each associated with particular endocrine glands, parts of the body, organs, predominant elements, *panchapranas* and emotions, and specific qualities.

If chakras are balanced, our life is balanced.

Meaning	Location	Element, <i>prana</i> <i>vayu</i>	Glands, organs	CHAKRA	Emotion	Qualities (when in balance)
1000 lotus petals	Above the crown	- -	Pineal gland, upper brain, nervous system	 Sahasrara	Bliss (beyond emotion)	Connection with the Divine, spiritual knowing, wisdom, bliss
Beyond wisdom	Between the eyebrows	- <i>udana</i>	Pituitary, eyes, head, lower brain	 Ajna	Awareness, knowing	Visualisation, intuition, imagination, seeing physically and intuitively, opening of psychic faculties
Pure	Throat	Ether, <i>udana</i>	Thyroid, parathyroid, neck, jaw, mouth, throat, tongue, larynx	 Vishuddhi	Gratitude / grief	Communication, speaking, hearing, ability to listen & create space, understanding inner truth & conveying it to others
Unstruck sound OM 	Middle of the chest	Air, <i>prana</i>	Thymus, heart, blood circulatory system, cardiac plexus, lungs,	 Anahata	Love / fear, hatred	Stillness, deep sense of peace, centeredness, intuition & love, integration of the opposites
Lustrous gem	Solar plexus, navel	Fire, <i>samana</i>	Pancreas, small intestine	 Manipura	Joy, generosity / greed, jealousy	Personal power, self-esteem, vitality, will, autonomy, metabolism, seat of intellect, energy & efficiency
Dwelling place of the Self	Lower abdomen	Water, <i>apana</i>	Gonads, reproductive organs, kidneys, body liquids	 Swadistana	Creativity / procreation	Emotional and sensual aspects, connection through feeling, desire, sensation, movement. Fluidity, grace, ability to accept change
Root	Base of the spine	Earth, <i>apana</i>	- -	 Mooladhara	Enthusiasm / inertia	Survival, grounding, stability, prosperity, security



*With Gratitude to
GuruDev
and
all the teachers &
mentors for
a beautiful course*