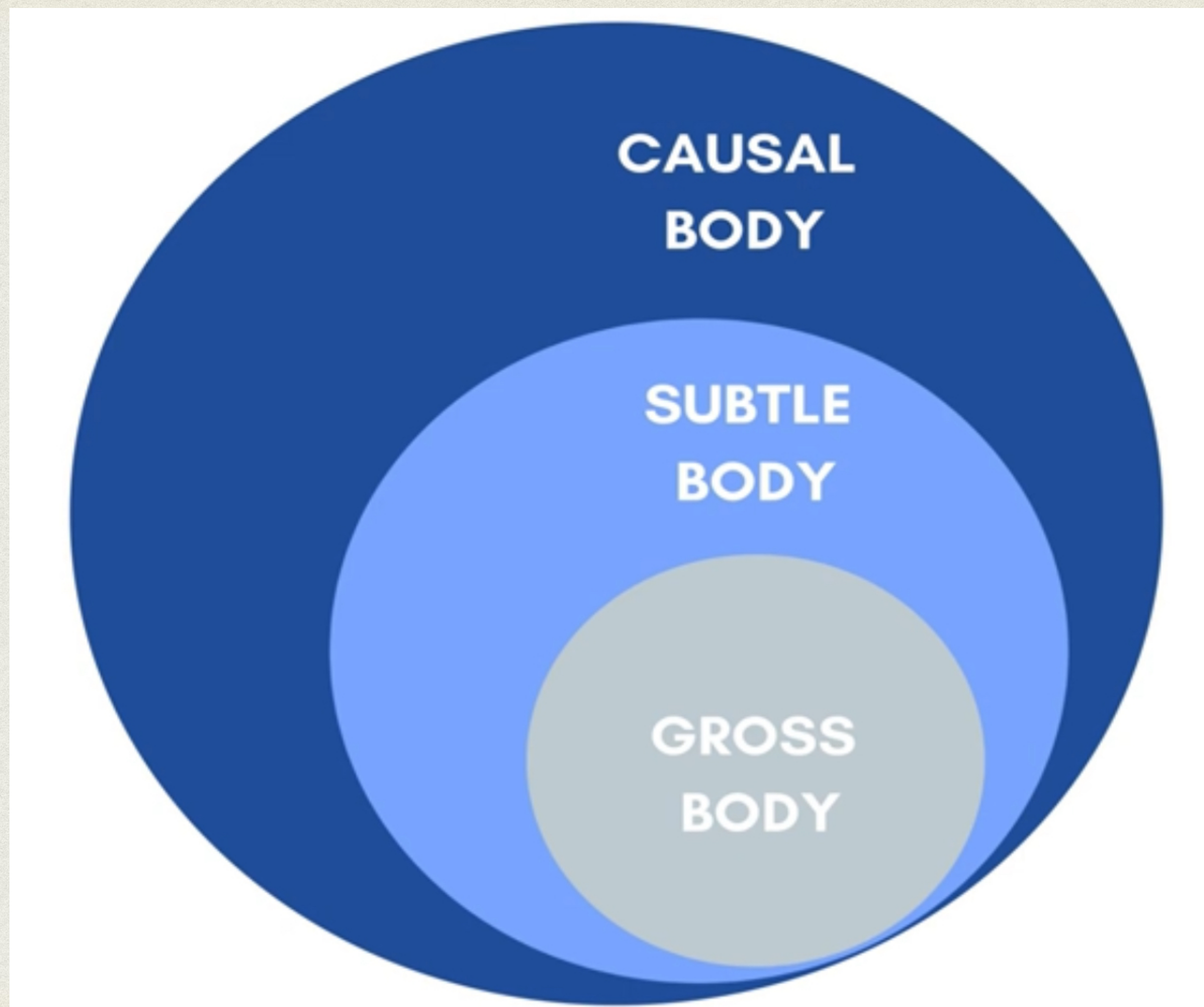


# THE DOCTRINE OF 3 BODIES, PANCHA KOSHAS AND PANCHA MAHABHUTAS



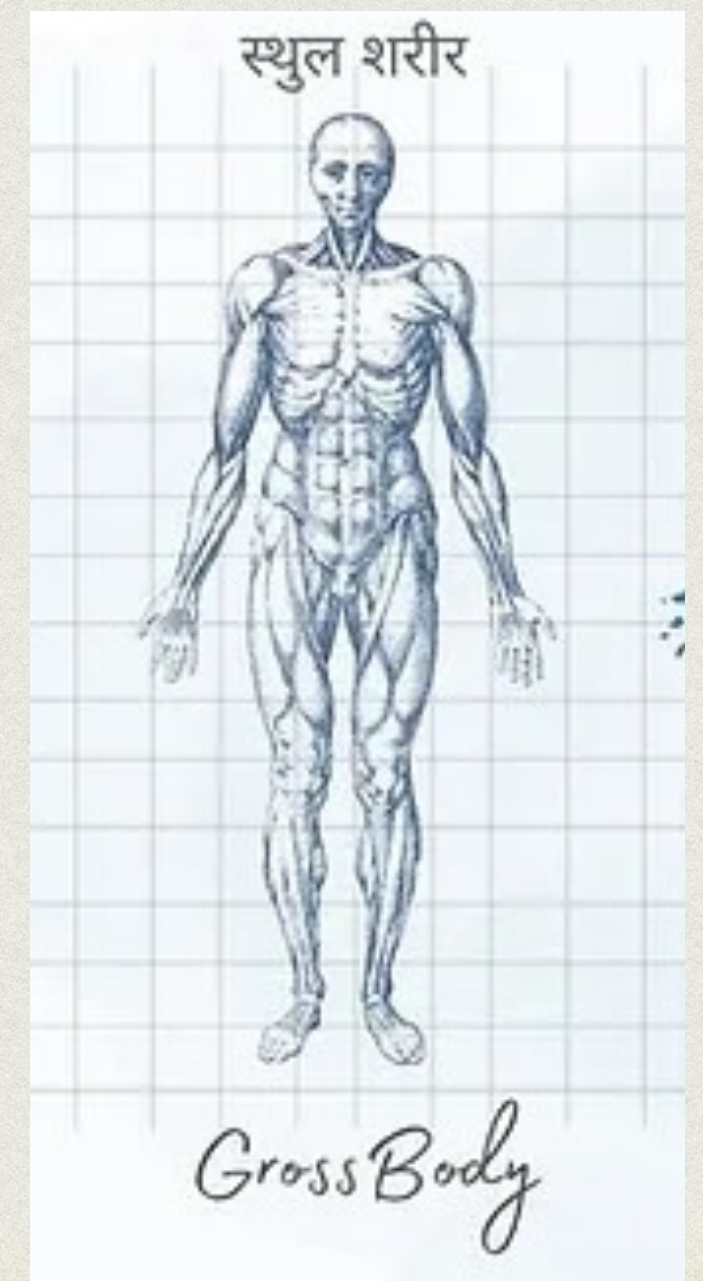
# THE DOCTRINE OF 3 BODIES





# GROSS BODY

- *Sthula Sharira* or the 'gross body' is the material, physical mortal body that eats, breathes and moves (acts). It is composed of many diverse components produced by one's *karmas* (actions) in past life.
- It is the instrument of the living being's experience, which attached to the body, uses the body's external and internal organs of sense and action. The living being, identifying itself with the body, in its walking state enjoys gross objects. On its body rests man's contact with the external world.
- Made up of the five Jnanendriyas or sense organs: ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose; by five karmendriyas or the organs of action: vocal cords, hands, feet, and the excretory and reproductive apparatus.
- The gross body embodies the five cardinal elements (Pancha Mahabhutas).
  - Space
  - Air
  - Fire
  - Water
  - Earth
- It is subject to a sixfold change: birth, subsistence, growth, maturity, decay and death.
- Gross Body = Annamaya Kosha.



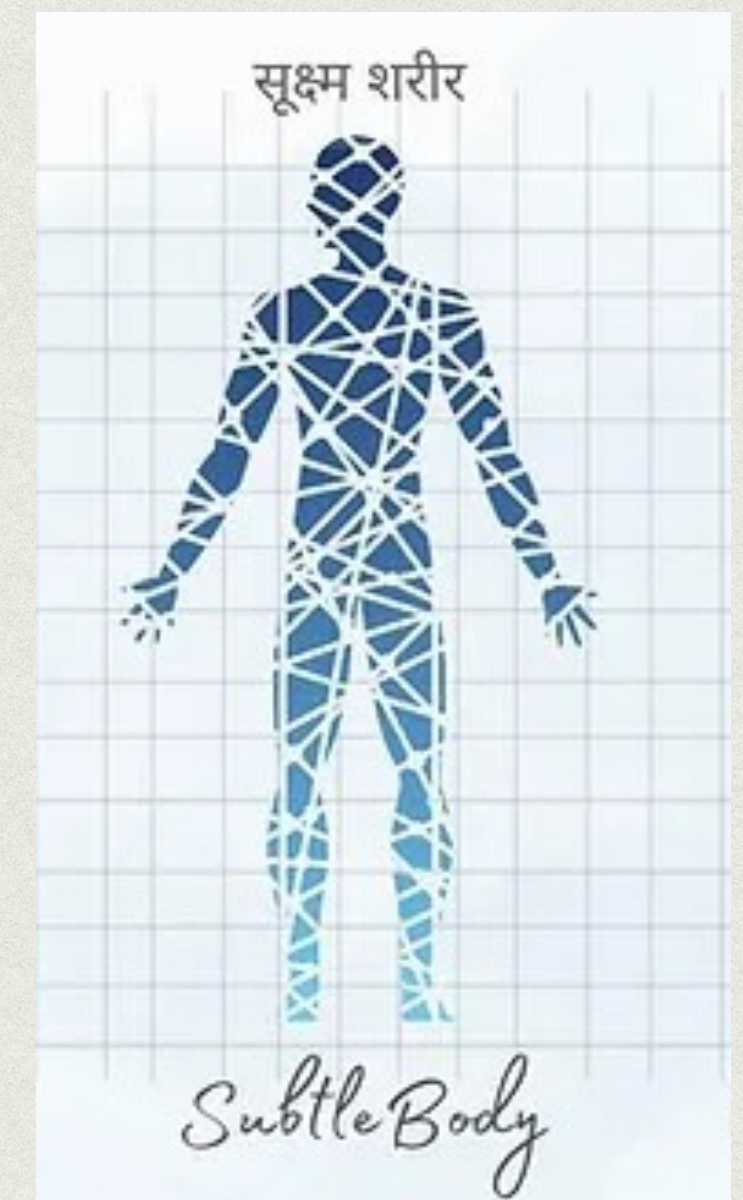


# SUBTLE BODY

- *Sukshma/Linga Sharira* or the subtle/astral body is not a physical or material thing, but it is made up of subtle elements that the eyes can't see.
- The astral body is composed of *prana* (the vital life force) that keeps the physical body alive and directs its activities. The mind is full of emotions and thoughts that affect the movement of *prana* in our bodies. The astral body relates to the senses and the way we feel or act.
- This body consists of five perceptive organs, five organs of action, five vital breaths, the mind and the intellect.

## Functions:

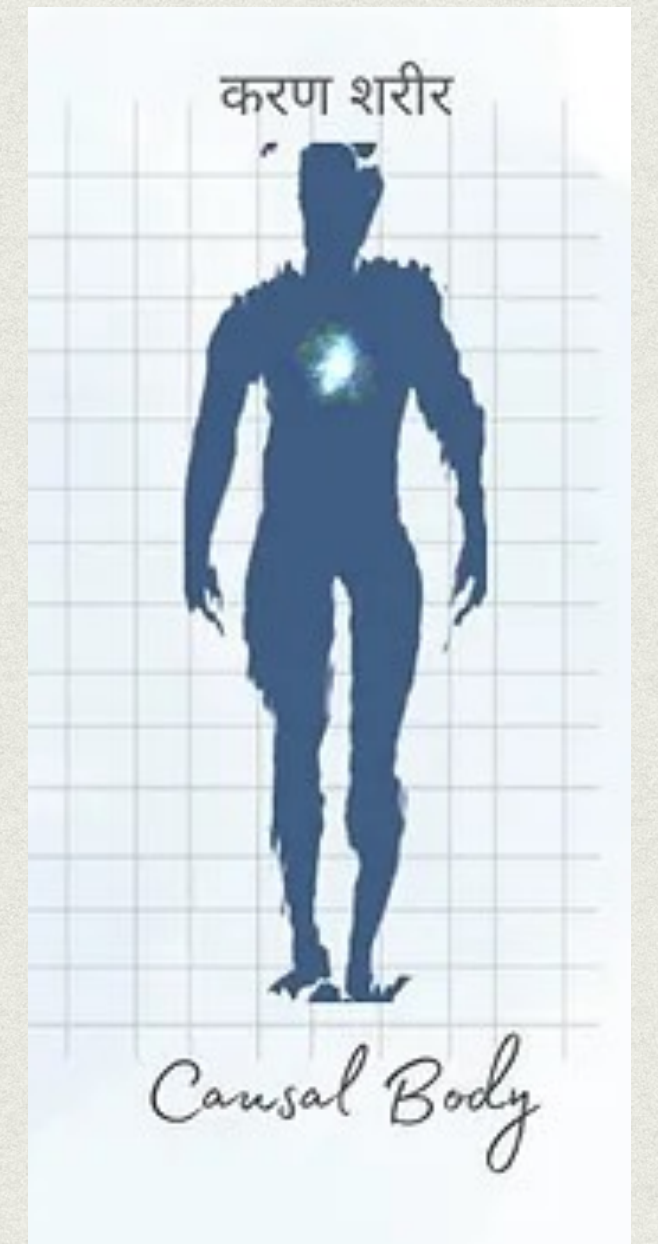
- Breathing
- Digestion
- Metabolism
- Circulation
- Muscular
- Neural and Skeletal etc...
- Subtle Body = Pranamaya Kosha + Manomaya Kosha + Vijnanamaya Kosha.





# CAUSAL BODY

- *Karana Sharira* or the causal body is one of the most subtle bodies and is a combination of the physical and astral bodies.
- It records our past thoughts, habits and actions in all its state of existence and carries the spirit of the person from one life to another upon reincarnation.
- Thus it is the foundation of the physical and astral body and connects you to your true self. Beyond the mind and consciousness and can only be experienced through deep introspection using meditation as an instrument.
- Causal body = Anandamaya Kosha.





- The chanting of mantras creates an environment of positivity and sacredness. Mantras have an impact at the subtle level also.
- Our physical body is the gross body, while our subtle body is 1.5 times larger than the gross body. And the causal body is 1000 times finer and subtler than the subtle body itself. So we have 3 kinds of bodies.
- When the subtle body contracts and becomes smaller than the gross body, then a person becomes restless and miserable. When the subtle body diminishes even further, then a person loses mental balance and feels like committing suicide. This is the root cause behind suicides.
- By the practise of chanting mantras, pranayama and meditation, the subtle body grows larger in size and also gets strengthened. When the subtle body becomes strong, then one appears normal (physically). And when the subtle body expands much more than its normal limits, then one feels that they are soaked in bliss. And as the subtle body expands further, it becomes finer and finer and merges or becomes one with the causal body - that is when one gets *moksha* - liberation/salvation).



# WAYS TO CLEANSE THE THREE BODIES

- Yoga asanas
- Proper Nutrition
- Pranayama
- Meditation
- Positive Thinking
- Self-realisation
- Truthfulness
- Contentment
- Charity
- Selfless work



# PANCHA KOSHAS

*five* *sheath/layer*

Pancha Koshas are the layers of body that seemingly cover the self or consciousness. They are discussed in the Taittiriya Upanishad of the Yajur Veda.

All of the koshas mean that even though we are embodied, we are not and never have been separate from the source. They can be understood as the layers from which awareness flows from the outer body to the inner self.





# ANNAMAYA KOSHA

*food/physical matter      illusionary*

- The first sheath makes up the physical body. 'Anna' refers to food that nourishes the physical body. It is the transformation of food that is consumed.
- What is this body? It is skin, flesh, blood, bone, muscles, tissues and organs. Annamaya Kosha often links to the first thing we look at when we connect ourselves to the outer world.
- On the other hand, *Maya* (illusion) prevents us from seeing the truth. It is the carrier for the other koshas. We have no control over our biological processes as it is controlled by the laws of nature.
- However we can delay our ageing process and reduce the chances of getting sick. We have a choice to allow evolution to continue at the level of the senses, mind, intellect, emotion or on the level of self.
- Relies on *shad bhava vikara* (6 changes)
  - Birth
  - Existence
  - Growth
  - Change
  - Decay
  - Death
- The following methods can be adapted to purify and develop the kosha.
  - Fasting
  - Yogic postures
  - Inner unification
  - Practise of austerity
  - Letting our soul free from worldly attachments from the physical body.



# PRANAMAYA KOSHA

life-force/vital air    illusionary

- The second sheath is pranamaya kosha. *Prana* is a part of cosmic life. This force holds together our body and our mind.
- When we raise our awareness through the practises of Yoga, we may be able to see the Pranamaya Kosha in the form of an aura which surrounds the body. A person who is contented, energised and in harmony with the self is likely to have high levels of *prana*, whereas those experiencing lethargy, low energy levels or dullness may have low *prana*.
- The food that we eat can affect this. The following methods allow the prana to penetrate deeply into every cell, recharging and rejuvenating the tissues and organs and thus develop the Pranamaya Kosha.
  - Regular practise of yogic breathing
  - Kapalbhati
  - Bhastrika
  - Sheetali
  - Nadi Shodhana



# MANOMAYA KOSHA

mind

illusionary

- It contains gyanendriyas and karmendriyas for interaction with the outer world:
- **Gyanendriyas** - sense organs through which one perceives objects of the world.
- **Karmendriyas** - organs of actions through which one manipulates with the objects of the world.
- This kosha is also perishable in nature and has a beginning and an end. Through the five senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching the mind receives information and reacts accordingly based on *chitta* (impressions, personal habit patterns) or *ahamkara* (ego). It analyses, records, understands, rationalises, accepts, rejects and compares. During this time, positive and/or negative thoughts, feelings and emotion will arise.
- It is affected by both what we eat and our energy level. The trained mind can influence the entire physical body system to function well and conserve energy. The trained mind increases concentration. The purified mind overcomes selfishness and ego, increases inner strength and brings inner peace.

The following methods can be adapted to purify and develop the manomaya kosha.

- Yoga
- Meditation
- Karma Yoga (selfless service and charity work)
- Bhakti yoga (prayer)
- Knowledge (studying the scriptures)
- Yamas and Niymas (the yogic moral ethics towards the society and self-discipline).



# VIJNANAMAYA KOSHA

*intellect   knowledge   illusionary*

- Vijnanamaya kosha is the intellect/wisdom/knowledge sheath. Here the Buddhi (intellect) dominates our thinking, controls the ahamhara (ego) and makes decision.
- It links the conscious mind, the individual mind and the universal mind. The universal knowledge comes to the conscious mind through Vijnanamaya Kosha. When a person is deficient of the fourth sheath, they may not be in control of his life. They may constantly react without awareness. To purify this kosha, the intellect has to be purified and ego has to be surrendered.

The following methods can be adapted to purify and develop the kosha.

- Meditation
- Karma Yoga (selfless service and charity work)
- Self introspection
- Jnana Yoga via the study of Yoga philosophy.



# ANANDAMAYA KOSHA

*bliss*

*illusionary*

- All the step-by-step yogic practises lead us to the bliss sheath. Whether in good times or bad, in good health or facing death, we remain steady.
- We transcend from the lower self to the highest. We are involved in all the works but unattached to any. We are just the observer. All the works presented to us are opportunities to serve with love.
- It becomes a source of our unconditional love, eternal happiness and harmony. When the mind is liberated we understand what our 'real identity' is. It is our divine being.



# PANCHA MAHABHUTAS

*5 great elements of the body and universe.  
Going beyond these is yoga.*



# FIRE - AGNI

- Transformation in body.
- Short temper.
- Will help digest the food.
- Anger/arrogance/anxiety.





# AIR - VAYU

- Motion and movement in body.
- Main organ movement or physical - arm movement, legs.
- The air element has risen in those suffering with arthritis.





# SPACE - AKASHA

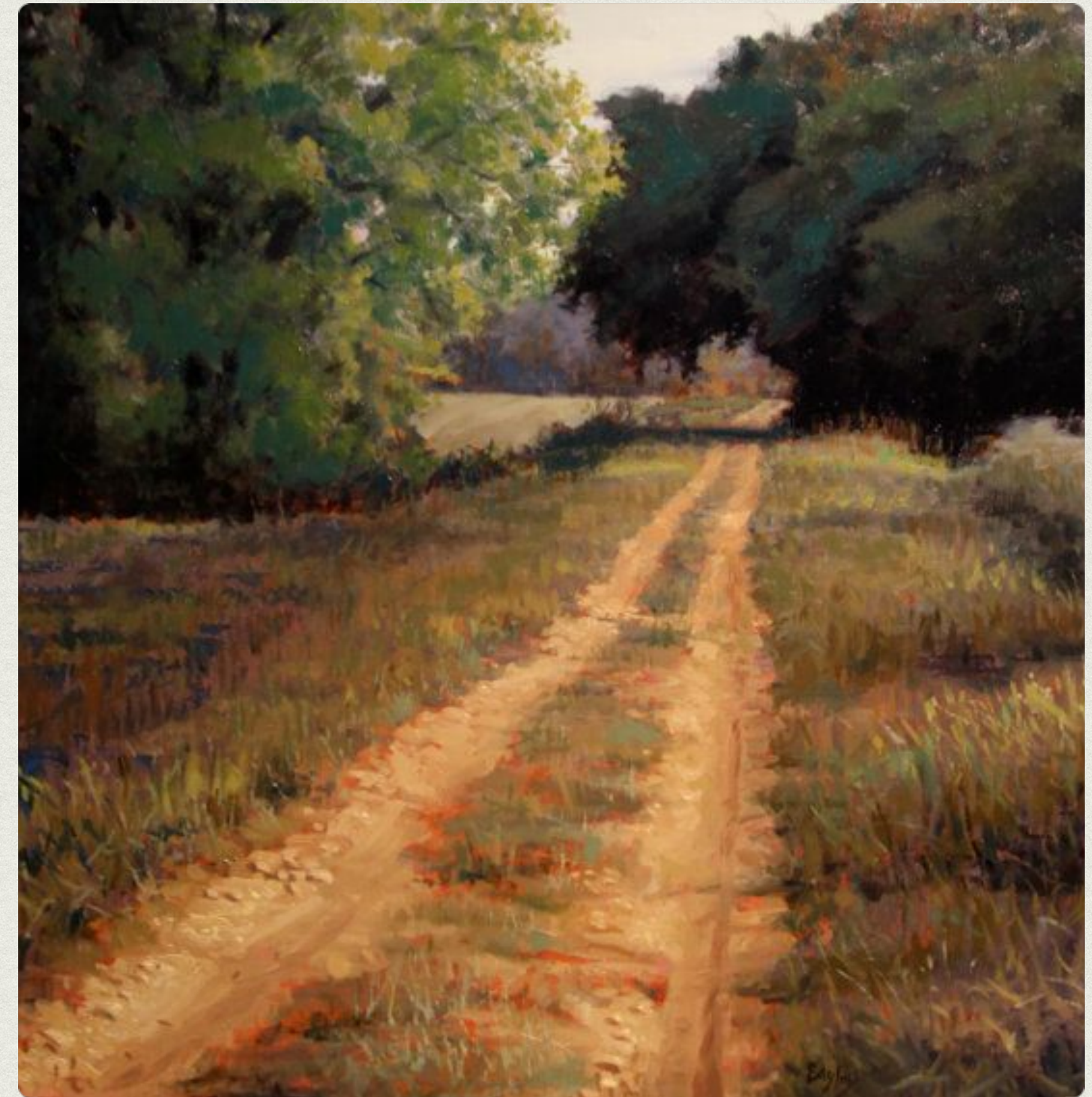
- Highest within body.
- Most dominant.
- Expanding consciousness.
- Space inside nostrils, space inside ears, space between organs, muscles.
- 90% of the body is made of the space element.





# EARTH - PRITHVI

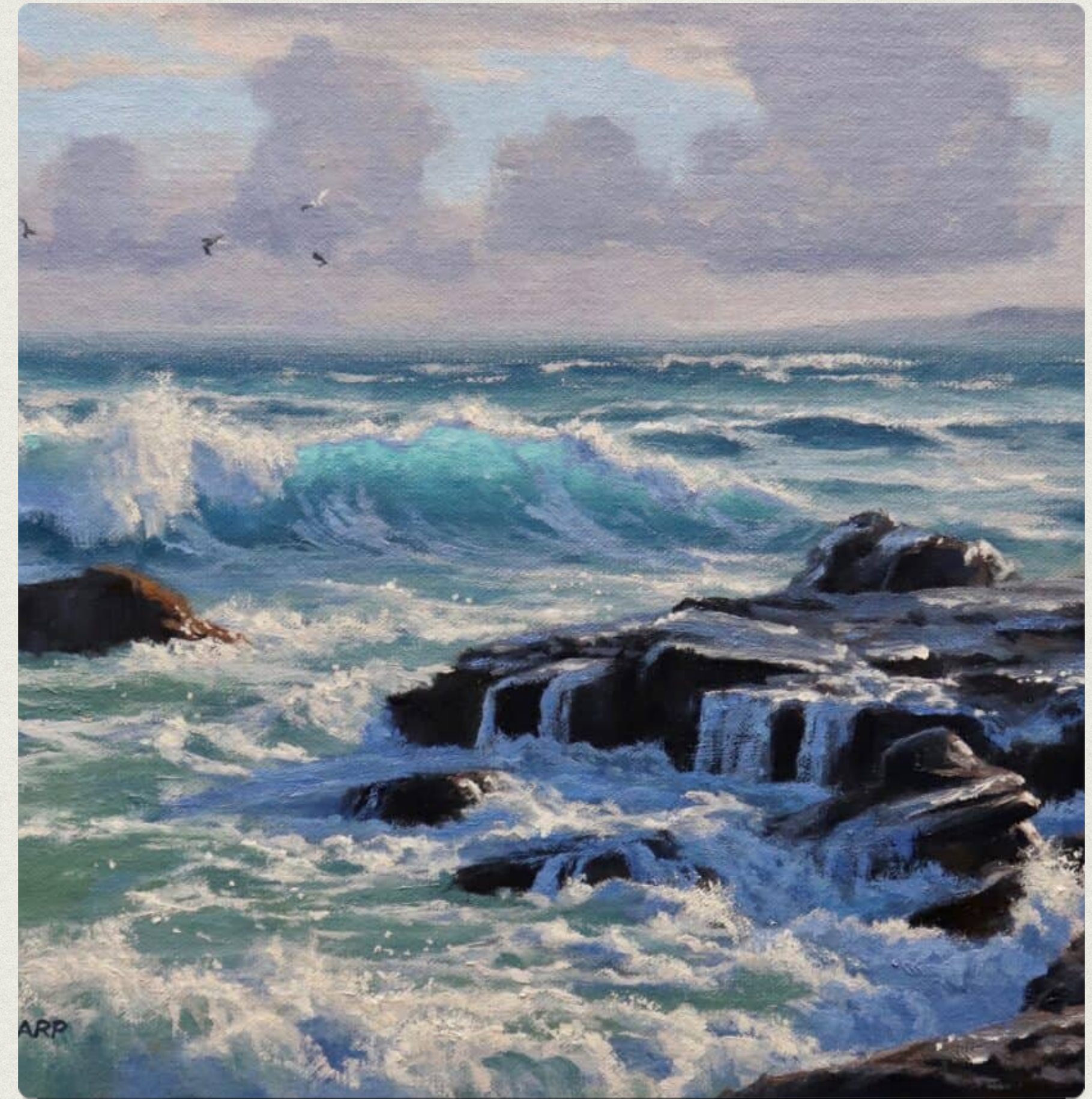
- Whatever you can touch.
- Skin, clothes, organs, ligaments, whatever is solid in nature.
- Whatever is tangible.
- Earth element is dependent on the food you eat, what you drink.





# WATER - JAI/AP

- Fluid, saliva, blood, urine.
- 70% of the body is made of water.
- Fluid in nature.





# RELATION TO TRIDOSHAS

- Everything is made up of the five elements.
- Tridoshas - building force of individual (see Ayurveda Presentation)
- Vata - Space and Air.
- Pitta - Fire and Water.
- Kapha - Water and Earth.



VATHA  
DOSHA



PITHA  
DOSHA



KAPHA  
DOSHA



# RELATION TO TRIGUNAS

Everything is made up of the five elements.

Trigunas - 3 qualities of nature.

- **Sattva** - Purity, goodness, harmony, balance.
- **Rajas** - Activity, passion.
- **Tamas** - Dullness/inertia, darkness.

- Fire = Sattva and Rajas
- Air = Rajas
- Space = Sattva
- Earth = Tamas
- Water = Sattva and Tamas



“Yoga takes you to the present moment, only place where life exists.”

*-Patanjali Yoga Sutras*