

# Ayurveda and Its Philosophical Background

*by Prof. Dr Bruno Renzi*



Prof. Dr Bruno Renzi is a psychiatrist specialising in Ayurvedic medicine, Director of Maharishi College of Perfect Health International and Co-director of the Maharishi AyurVeda Health & Prevention Centre in Milan, Italy.

## Part 1

Ayurveda is profoundly associated with the mystery of life. The flow of life and the stream of intelligence are intimately linked by their origins: in this sense Ayurveda, or “knowledge of life”, harks back to the very first manifestation of cosmic existence.

Charaka defines existence with the term *śāvasta*, meaning “eternal”: in support of that theory, he believes that since there is no interruption in the flow of life nor, consequently, in the stream of intelligence or in its becoming, this confirms the eternal nature of knowledge.

Ayurveda deals with those primordial expressions of nature that emerge from a basic level, which contains them all in an innate manner: since the source of material is eternal, it lays down its origins within the very depths; the same laws that have governed nature since its primordial levels, are eternal and intrinsic laws in the Science of Life and are its load-bearing structure.

In order to define the origin of Ayurveda in historical and chronological terms, we often refer to the beginning of an understanding and systematized drafting of Ayurvedic knowledge, as it was then handed down; with respect to the essence of knowledge, as an expression of the laws of nature, Ayurveda has always been in existence ever since the original becoming of cosmic existence.

Sushruta maintains that Ayurveda, in its essence, is linked with the origin of creation and is, therefore, prior to the manifestation of biological life forms; this assumption again refers to those laws underlying the basic principles of Ayurveda. Given that it describes the diversification of creation in rhythmic and phonetic terms, Vedic literature itself is considered to be an eternal knowledge whose deep-rooted origins are embedded in an unmanifest reality at the basis of life. The chronological definition of Ayurveda, in the sense provided in the first editions of the texts, requires Vedic literature to be examined in detail and, although there are numerous references to diseases and their treatment using Ayurvedic preparations, Ayurveda itself is never actually mentioned. The term *Ayurveda* first appears in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* by Pāṇini: it is one of the first Sanskrit grammars, drafted in a period between the 7th and 3rd centuries BC.

The *Vedas* often talk about medicine and the existence of a considerable knowledge of drugs for the treatment of diseases: for example, the *Rgveda* and *Atharvaveda* describe the existence of doctors and thousands of therapeutic remedies.

At this stage, I would like to set out a reference framework which will allow us to contextualise the origins of Ayurveda with increasing effect, because the actual understanding of the historical evolution of Vedic knowledge will clear the way to a greater understanding of the Ayurvedic approach to psychopathology.

*Atharvaveda* is referred to as *atharvani* and with this meaning, an emphasis is placed on the “magical” sense of the evocations and rituals found in Ayurvedic ceremonies: in this way, we obtain an important piece of information, since *atharvani* refers to the evocations within mystical rituals, while the term *angirasi* emphasizes the evocations that aim to create negative elements against the enemies. Over and above the specific characteristics and purposes of *Atharvaveda*, two implicit realities actually emerge.

The first reality relates to the vibrational aspect, i.e. the particular phonetic and rhythmic structure of the *Veda*, which generates effects on other structures with specific vibratory densities: as pointed out by Prof. Tony Nader in his book “Human physiology. Expression of Veda and Vedic Literature” it is the parallelism between the structure of human physiology and the structure of *Veda*, which allows us to understand the deep relationship and order among the objective structures in the material world. “Self-referral, primordial intelligence supports all the objective manifestations with their different qualities and governs their dynamism within the infinite multiplicity in the perfect universal becoming; in its abstract subjectivity, it supports the entire creation of the objective material world. This aspect underlines the constant connection between the material world and the primordial base of all existence: it is a level of unmanifest intelligence, of which the entire universal becoming is an expression; this process of creation and evolution is eternal and eternally governed by pure intelligence in its unified value”.

The second reality refers to the phylogeny of human thought, in the sense that, at the dawn of its manifestation, it was characterised by the correspondence between sign-vibration-sound and the initial semantic structure: in a primordial sense, *Veda* is the description in vibratory terms of the gradual manifestation of Consciousness or *Ātman* where the identity exists between vibration and form of basic manifestations.

These primordial vibrations are the shared heritage of humanity’s collective unconsciousness and represent the basic building blocks of the becoming of the various regions of the cosmos: it is unsurprising, therefore, that the first intuitions emerge from humanity’s collective unconsciousness and thus we find surprising similarities among the traditional medicines from various parts of the world that are far from each other and incapable of having any contact.

It is precisely this evocative or vibratory peculiarity of the medical act, based on intuition-revelation, that places the physician in a pre-scientific era as a descendant of the natural healer; in this sense, the *Atharvaveda* contains descriptions for the treatment of certain diseases through the recitation of *mantras*, and also in the *Suśruta* and the *Charaka* there are several sets of instructions on the treatment of diseases with mantra associated with traditional Ayurvedic therapies.

The theory of the three guṇas of the *Sāṃkhya darśana* was used in Ayurveda in the formulation of the philosophical assumptions and, on an application level, also in the structuring of man's constitution, of the organisation of the constitutions from the psychological point of view and as regards the treatment of psychological disorders. Before going into the merits of the pragmatic aspects related to the three guṇas, we will briefly summarise some assumptions belonging to the school of *Sāṃkhya*.

The primitive level of existence, the primordial nature or *prakṛti* is characterised by the three guṇas: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. We find references to the three guṇas in Vedic literature and in the *Upaniṣad*, in which they are defined as *aia* or “non manifest”: in fact, an archaic term for the three guṇas was *ajam*.

The three guṇas are not intended in the sense of qualities, as expressed in the *Vaiśeṣika darśana*: so, not in the sense of qualities that characterise a substance, but they are themselves subtle substances, basic elements, primordial organisers in the make-up of the *prakṛti*. The guṇas are considered as substances with integrative and dynamic potential, subtle or infinitesimal elements which have no gravity (*gurutva*): therefore, they are intangible, even if they possess an energy *quantum* (*parimāṇa*) and extension (*paricchinnavatva*). The primordial substance or *prakṛti* is regarded as a *continuum* of real infinitesimal elements and the three guṇas, that emerge from it, are seen as primordial organisers of the entire animate and inanimate universe, as well as themselves being real infinitesimal elements<sup>1</sup>.

Even Suśruta observed that *Avyakta*, the primordial nature characterised by the three guṇas, is the basic stage of all creation and represents that level leading to the diversification of all creation on a manifest plane.

Accepting the vision of cosmological evolution and, thus, the evolution of man as presented in the *Sāṃkhya*, Charaka emphasises even further the importance of the three guṇas in connection with the cycle of rebirth by stating that *puruṣa* is impregnated with *rajas* and *tamas* to the same extent that he is involved in a continuous process of reincarnation; therefore, Ayurveda recognizes the importance of a primordial nature and of the influence of the three guṇas in the process of cosmogenesis and in establishing life.

Suśruta indicates a further extension to these philosophical assumptions and defines the correlation between the three guṇas and the *pañcamaḥabhūta*, i.e. the five elements: he states that *sattva* is prevalent in *ākāśa* and *rajas* is prevalent in *vāyu*; in addition, *sattva* and *rajas* are present in *agni*, *sattva* and *tamas* in *jala* and *tamas* in *prithvi*.

So, we can see that the three guṇas take part together in the formation of the primordial nature and, at the same time, exert an influence over the nature of the five *pañcamaḥabhūta*, thus laying the foundations for the whole universal evolution and considering all resulting manifestations as an expression of consciousness and, therefore, animate.

It follows that every form on the manifest plane is characterised by a *triguṇātṃika* nature in the sense that every form contains the three guṇas, in an integrated way, and these shall provide information about and determine their qualities.

Ayurveda is deeply influenced by Indian philosophical thought: so in order to understand the basics of the classification of psychopathology in Ayurveda, which in its literal sense means “knowledge of life” I think it would be appropriate to outline the relationship between

Ayurveda and the Indian philosophical schools, with particular reference to the *Sāṃkhya* and *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*.

The concept of life presented in these schools of thought is included within a single cosmological view, in which the phenomenal aspects in the relative field are made up of progressive organisations of the basic levels of cosmic existence.

The organisation of life, in a phylogenetic and ontogenetic sense, is influenced in the Ayurvedic structure by the *Sāṃkhya-darśana* and by the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika darśana*. We will see how, over the last century, the development of scientific knowledge in the field of physics has put forward an increasing number of ideas to confirm Indian philosophical thought, with a profound effect in particular on the metaphysical dimension of human life, on the possible speculations and on the reorganisation of knowledge, as regards the higher psychic functions and psychodynamic aspects and, therefore, for an unc customary way of looking at psychopathology.

Surendranath Dasgupta<sup>2</sup> declared: “Medicine was the most important of all physical sciences cultivated in India during the Vedic period and was intimately connected with the physics proposed by the *Sāṃkhya* and *Vaiśeṣika*, and probably provided the grounds for those subsequent speculations found in the *Nyāya-sūtra*.”

In his work entitled *The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, Brajendra Nath Seal<sup>1</sup> said that the most important Ayurvedic schools in the field of medicine and surgery, based their knowledge on the teachings of the *Sāṃkhya* using the methods derived from the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* and founded a theory on organic and inorganic compounds. These *darśana* or schools of philosophical thought assumed prevailing importance in the development of the basic principles of Ayurvedic medicine: as a result, I shall give a brief outline here of their fundamental contribution.

It is well-known that many doctors in the West, including some of the most technologically-minded ones, foster to a greater or lesser extent a passion for the metaphysical or philosophical aspects of existence. In the traditional, ancient systems of knowledge – such as those from Egypt, Greece, Persia, India and Asia in general – medical knowledge was intimately bound to theological and philosophical knowledge; in this sense, certain characters who charismatically represented these synergies immediately spring to mind, such as Hermes Trismegistus and Pythagoras.

Nowadays, metaphysical aspects are of interest to only a fringe, though thankfully a broad-based fringe, of medical scholars, especially those in the field of neuroscience. Thanks to the evolution in science, many neuroscientists are re-evaluating the assumptions of Oriental medicine, trying a new decoding through physics: this type of work is leading to the creation of new paradigms within a unitary cosmological view.

Suśruta, the author of the *Suśruta Samhitā* says that in order to understand Ayurveda, a student needs to have some preparation in a number of different branches of knowledge, including philosophy; although the various *darśana* mainly focused on metaphysical aspects, they are to be considered as the basic knowledge of Ayurveda.

- 1) B. Seal. *The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*. New York, Longmans, Green and Co., 1915.
- 2) S. Dasgupta. *A History of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1922.

## Part 2

The noun *Darśana* comes from the root *drs-* and indicates “the act of looking, seeing, observing, knowing, understanding, perceiving, examining”: it relates to direct perception and intuitive perception as a form of knowledge.

Ayurveda is the science of life and, within it, the concept of life (*Ayus*) and the definition of health (*Svasta*) refer to a panoramic vision that includes the psychophysical balance as well as the spiritual dimension of existence. Within this discipline, life is conceived as the dynamic integration of soul, mind and body: an individual is in good health, when they fully enjoy the harmonious integration of all these elements. According to the generally mistaken popularization in the West, Ayurveda, in the sense of science of life, is aimed at achieving a positive mental and physical balance and sound condition of health: this kind of popularization is an adaptation to the Western reality or an attempt to incorporate it into technological thought, but it is, in fact, a distortion of the aims of Ayurveda. In its proposition of profound, Indian philosophical thought, Ayurveda does not actually consider perfect health as the aim but as a means. Charaka says that: “Health is the supreme foundation of *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *mokṣa*.”

Dharma is the ethical striving for the purpose of our lives, while artha is richness in the sense of accomplishing those economic opportunities that allow us to fully satisfy our needs; kama is the achievement of pleasure as a result of satisfying our needs and, lastly, mokṣa is spiritual liberation.

Another point that Ayurveda owes to the Indian darśana is the concept of similarity between the universe (*loka*) and the individual as a living being, called *puruṣa* in Sanskrit (C.S. IV, 5.5): Ayurvedic physicians achieved a greater understanding of the complexity of the individual in all physical, mental and spiritual dimensions through knowledge of metaphysical cosmology and philosophy.

According to this concept, the universe and man are both the result of the synergistic co-existence of a transcendental reality and the five elements that make up the basic building blocks of the becoming of the universe. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi<sup>4</sup> describes four levels of consciousness which are also the four levels of revelation:

- 1) *Parā*, which is the unmanifest level of life, pure existence, the transcendental level that structures the dynamism of natural law;
- 2) *Paśyanti*, which is the subtlest level of intellect, intuition, which corresponds to the subtlest level of manifestation;
- 3) *Madhyama*, which represents the level of thought, the structure of the natural law available at the level of the mind and the dynamic structure of thought, word and action which correspond to more highly expressed levels of creation;
- 4) *Vaikhari*, which represents the level of the word corresponding to the structure of the natural law more highly expressed on a sensory level in the unitary structure of the universe and that is available to each individual within their own physiology.

Cosmological metaphysics in Indian philosophy is one of the cornerstones of the anthropic principle, which according to an incorrect reading by Western thought maintains that the whole universal evolution is aimed at the manifestation of life on Earth, thus placing man at the centre of the universe. Personally I do not support this description of the cosmological

anthropic principle, because I believe that it represents a tolemaic legacy: Man is not physically and morally at the centre of the universe nor is he the ultimate goal of creation. I believe that humankind should face up to this disappointment and overcome this reductive narcissistic viewpoint.

I think that the following interpretation of the anthropic principle may be more correct: since the structure of Man reflects the structure of the universe, the same laws that harmonise the universe operate within Man's total being; the harmonising influence of a life lived in compliance with these laws leads Man to a cosmic dimension and allows humanity to progress towards the elevation of its consciousness through more subtle planes and reach the realisation of God.

In this sense, I agree with the physical theory<sup>3</sup> of the "Omega point" put forward by the physicists Tipler and Barrow. It states that biological evolution is the result of an innate and spontaneous tendency of matter and the universe: the objective of this evolution is the elevation of consciousness to reach the Absolute or God or Omega Point.

In fact, this concept may be further extended according to the cosmogenesis of Indian philosophy: Brāhman is Absolute Being, totality, transcendent, unmanifest and manifest, the basis of every manifestation of phenomena; it tends to manifest itself spontaneously and to generate in vibratory terms the basic bricks of existence which together give rise to every manifest form in the universe. The *Veda* are generated from Ātman and the *Visva* is generated from this within the complexity of the universal becoming.

The phenomenal forms of the universal becoming constantly strive towards the realisation of Brāhman in an eternal and patient game of manifestation in the balance and perfection of all possible universes. This type of concept implicitly proposes a paradigm that revolutionises the anthropic concept: I think it will be – and already is – the fundamental paradigm for the third millennium, the paradigm of consciousness, as it is emphasized by Prof. Tony Nader.

In the technological age some metaphysical questions, like the anthropic cosmological principle or anthropocentric position of Man or the evolution of consciousness, may appear to be philosophical speculations without any practical implication, but considering these aspects as pure speculations depends on the perspective one uses and on the expansion of the observer's consciousness. Man can continue his existence and remain within a superficiality that will lead humanity towards the continuous search of forms that can give meaning to existence, or he can recognise and make the most of his cosmic nature and evolve towards the higher planes of consciousness and awareness achieving that consciousness of God, which will enable him to vibrate on the highest planes of spirituality.

The cosmological and cosmogonic vision, as well as the anthropic cosmological principle, appears to be a philosophical speculation lacking in any practical implication: this perception may now be largely overturned, because the understanding of principles such as the darśanic doctrine of the triguṇa and the panchamahabhuta – basic principles of Ayurvedic knowledge – must be included in the organisation of a cosmogonic vision; such principles represent the link between observable reality and the vibratory reality of existence or, if you will, the link between a quantifiable biophysical dimension and the purely psychological or energetic dimension of superior functions, as well as with a spiritual dimension of man.

Since the last century scientists in the field of physics have been conducting in-depth research into the subtlest dimensions of reality, similar to those investigated intuitively by the Vedic

rishi. We are increasingly witnessing a correlation between the basic principles of Ayurvedic knowledge and the quantum fields of quantum mechanics.

Einstein devoted the last ten years of his life to demonstrating a theory that saw a unified level of the natural laws as the basis of cosmic existence: this concept that matches the structure of Vedic knowledge, in which the origin of phenomenal manifestation is Ātman which potentially contains every possible manifestation in the field of material existence ranging from the subtlest vibrations and quantum fields up to the densest of realities – atomic, molecular and macromolecular structures – and beyond, within the evolutionary scale; this kind of knowledge is leading to a review of the scientific viewpoint in various fields, bringing new paradigms to light such as that of consciousness.

The philosophical systems that have greatly influenced Ayurveda are the *Sāṃkhya* and *Vaiśeṣika*, *Nyāya* and *Yoga*. The pragmatic value of this discipline derives from the way the systems of *Vaiśeṣika* and *Nyāya* are organised and each of the various darśana takes part in the structuring of a reference framework that is needed to gain an effective understanding of Ayurvedic knowledge.

The principle of causality is found in the various schools of thoughts in Indian philosophy and, although it needs to be understood within the context of the darśanic period, it has affected the way that Ayurvedic thought is structured: in light of a technological approach, Man is seen as the integrated coexistence of systems and billions of cells in an ongoing process of regeneration, but this immense and dynamic biophysical complex is harmonised by a basic level of life, which in turn is the transition point with the transcendent dimension of totality; the turning to a metaphysical plane and the connection with the spiritual reality of life become the fulcrum of an existence lived in health and happiness.

So, according to the Ayurvedic concept, mental and physical balance is not in itself enough to guarantee Man a total state of health: indeed, this is logical if we consider that Man, disconnected from what is the ultimate base of his existence, is victim of the restrictions of his ego and the various demands made by the latter; even worse, as occurs with the latest generations, Man has become prey to a sort of sensory kidnapping at the hands of the *media* and *social networks*. This losing oneself within the evolution of one's internal configurations often leads to losing one's way within one's own existence: in this way, one comes to what I call the "disconnection syndrome" which I believe is the first cause of the various disharmonies that we observe in the human being.

This concept is found within the Vedic culture and is expressed by the term *Praghyaparad*, an individual and social context in which Man has forgotten the experience of the transcendental, thus losing its guiding hand and harmonising influence; following the same viewpoint, Charaka states that pain (*vedanā*) is totally eliminated by yoga (oneness) and mokṣa (liberation from an egoic dimension) and this concept is perfectly in line with the way the *Sāṃkhya* is structured.

Ayurveda seems to be mainly influenced, within the organisation of the cosmological view, by *Satkaryavada* that refers to the *Sāṃkhya*: according to this theory, the becoming is a continuous transition of state, whereby the effect is an alteration in the state of the cause, while the identity of the substance remains. Charaka, in fact, defines birth as a pure transition of state of a living being: this affirmation implicitly involves a karmic vision of existence within a unitary cosmic concept. I will not be dealing here with the karmic concept of life, since it is not relevant to the context.

In the first chapter of the *Sharira Sthana*, Charaka says: “Man rises up on the manifest plane and then plunges back into the unmanifest; when he falls victim to passion and disappointment, he is forced to engage in a cycle of birth and death.” (C.S. IV. 1, 69)

Suśruta also supports the principle of causality, when he states that the supreme and latent level of nature, prakṛti, is the basic level of creation and the process of evolution of the universe.

Therefore, the causal concept of the *Satkaryavada* and *Sāṃkhya* is widely used in Ayurveda, but we can also observe a synthetic vision encompassing the concept of the other philosophical trains of thought in formulating the basic principles; the principle of causality underpins the fundamental principles of Ayurveda and the concept of the cosmic becoming of life.

Also according to Charaka, the Transcendental Being lies at the base of the cosmic manifestation (C.S.IV.1,68.): he uses the term *Avyakta* to indicate the unmanifest and uses the word *Ātman* with the meaning of *ksentrajna* or “Knower of the field”; this translation of the Sanskrit word is surprising, if we refer to the latest theories on physics that speculate that the source of the entire cosmic manifestation lies in the unified field.

Charaka uses a process of synthesis among the various approaches found in Indian philosophy: initially he seems to resort to a monistic principle which is inconsistent with the dualism of the *Sāṃkhya*, although Charaka’s description is strongly influenced by this system. In the *Sāṃkhya* the subtlest level of existence is the puruṣa and the thing that emerges from it as the first manifestation is prakṛti or the primordial level of nature; the latter has three intrinsic qualities or guṇa, known as sattva, rajas and tamas. Later on, we will discuss and understand the sense of the three guṇas: what I would like to emphasise is that this dual aspect of puruṣa and prakṛti, in line with the concept of the various levels of diversification in nature, is synthesized in a monistic concept by Charaka, who identifies the first two levels of existence, i.e. puruṣa and prakṛti within a unitary structure – *Avyakta*.

Charaka adopts a vision which aims to bring together various principles in an effort to reconcile different perspectives, wishing to emphasize a metaphysical dimension, a cosmogonic dimension and a more materialistic dimension directed towards the aims of medicine. In its various perspectives, *Ātman* is identified with *Brāhman* (totality), *Kartr* (primordial agent, creator), *Karana* (first cause), *Akṣara* (the hyper irascible), *Pradana* (universal soul), *Pugdala* (egoic dimension), including the perceptual aspect, *indriyātman*, the one linked to the various mental configurations, *antarātman* and also the purely neuro-physical dimension, *bhūtātman*. (C.S. IV. 4. 8.)

As mentioned above, Charaka reconciles various perspectives: he mainly refers to puruṣa in its qualified dimension, *saguṇa*, which is more useful for the purposes of Ayurvedic therapies, as opposed to the concept of *nirguṇa* i.e. its unqualified dimension, without attributes.

*Avyakta*, the primordial substance, cannot be perceived via the senses, but we can gain awareness of it through a process of inference.

In the cosmogonic process, Ayurveda fully adopts the concepts of the *Sāṃkhya*: *Mahat* (intellect) emerges from *Avyakta* and *Ahaṃkāra* emerges from *Mahat*; both are of the same nature. *Ahaṃkāra* can assume a sattvic, rajasic or tamasic prevalence. The five senses of the intellect or *buddhīndriya* originate from the dynamic interaction of the sattvic and rajasic qualities of *Ahaṃkāra*; tamasic qualities, together with the rajasic qualities, give rise to the

*panchatanmatra* (five subtle elements) and these give rise to the *panchamahabhuta*. (S.S. III. 1. 18.)

The philosophical concept of the *Sāṃkhya* refers to a cosmogonic organisation and, therefore, to the first differentiations on the vibratory plane, which underlie all the other differentiations, and the subtlest and most basic levels of human consciousness. The *Vaiśeṣika darśana* provides a contribution on the more concrete and scientific and, therefore, less metaphysical aspects. In his work of synthesis, Charaka uses the contribution of the *Vaiśeṣika* to define the more biological aspects of Ayurveda, laying the foundations of what we may consider as a “natural science” for the historical period in question or as the first principles of biophysics.

In fact, emphasis is given to certain concepts including those we will meet later on among the basic principles of Ayurveda, such as the concept of *guṇa* or properties and the concept of *pīlupāka* or physical changes that illustrate the biological approach and therefore a greater attention to biophysical details which, as we shall see, will be fundamental from a practical and clinical point of view within the Ayurvedic set-up.

I think it should be made clear, as Dr. Gupta<sup>2</sup> says, that the content relating to the *Vaiśeṣika*, as expressed in the *Charaka*, represents the revisitation of many previous texts in India; in addition, the scholars of Vedic knowledge argue that the fundamental concepts of the *Vaiśeṣika* contribute to the make-up of the fundamental principles of Ayurveda, primarily from a point of view of application.

According to Ayurvedic historiography, Bharadwaja gave the knowledge of Ayurveda so as to allow mankind to be able to enjoy a long life and with physiological ageing; in this regard, Charaka says: “When the *maharishi* (wise men or men of science) received the science of Ayurveda in its true sense from *Bharadawja*, they were able to use their intuitive vision to understand the nature of concepts such as *sāmānya*, *viśeṣa*, *guṇa*, *dravya*, *karma* and *samavāya*. By understanding the true nature of these categories, they achieved the highest level of happiness and tolerance in life.” (C.S.I.1,28-29)

This *sūtra* by Charaka helps us to understand how the concept of *sat padharta* (what is adequate as a substance) is deeply rooted in Ayurveda.

What we can say is that when Charaka addresses metaphysical concepts, he uses the *Sāṃkhya* structure and, in particular, he asserts the existence of twenty-four *dhātu*; in this context *dhātu* is taken to mean *tattva* or substance, while in other contexts, when Charaka addresses topics of a pragmatic and applicative nature, in preventive and therapeutic treatments, he uses the *Vaiśeṣika* structure.

Charaka emphasised the concepts of *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa*, affording them a higher position in the hierarchy and moving away from the *Vaiśeṣika* school of thought, which focuses on the concepts of *dravya* (substance) and *guṇa* (qualities): these two concepts are of great importance as regards the prevention and treatment of diseases; *sāmānya* is that cause which determines the increase of all things at all times and *viśeṣa* is the cause which determines their reduction. The application of these principles in the use of substances for therapeutic treatment leads to the increase or decrease of the elements in the body (C.S.I.1,44): therefore, one can understand how to intervene on maintaining homeostasis within a physiological balance, a concept expressed by the Sanskrit term *dhātu amyakriya*; specifically, *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa* are the dynamic forces that maintain this balance.

As we shall see, these principles will be of fundamental importance in defining a full Ayurvedic treatment; in particular, they will be useful for dietary requirements, which refer to the constitution and the *vikṛti* or disorder suffered by the patient.

The principle that underlies the concepts of *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa* is the principle of similarity: substances which have similar qualities lead to an increase and substances with opposite qualities lead to a reduction or attenuation. There are further distinctions with these principles: indeed, in *Vaiśeṣika*, *sāmānya* has a partially different meaning from Ayurveda and refers to properties found in many substances; on the other hand, if that specific property allows their differentiation, then it is known as *viśeṣa*.

Conversely, in Ayurveda *sāmānya* is used with three specific meanings:

*sāmānya ekatvakarak* (C.S.I. 1.45);  
*tulyarthata hi sāmānyam* (C.S.I. 1.44);  
*sāmānyam vrddhikarnam* (C.S.I. 1.44).

In the first case the meaning can be translated as “harmonic” or “corresponding”: almost a corresponding concept on a vibratory plane. The second refers to a concept of similarity between the substances, while the third indicates the cause of growth of all substances in all times; this last connotation of the concept of *sāmānya* seems to have a more pragmatic significance and emphasises a dynamic quality regarding the substance.

There are also three further definitions for *viśeṣa*:

*viśeṣastu viparyah;*  
*viśeṣastu prthaktvakrt;*  
*hrasahetur viśeṣasca.*

In these definitions reference is made respectively to the ability of differentiation, to the opposite function carried out by the *sāmānya* and to what is causing the decline.

According to the way that the *Sāṃkhya* is structured, the concepts of *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa* have a more metaphysical significance, if referring to fundamental levels; conversely, within the Ayurvedic concept it refers to a pragmatic aspect aimed at maintaining the *dhatusamya* or homeostasis of tissues.

Another category described in the *Vaiśeṣika* and in Ayurveda is that of the *guṇa*. Charaka describes the concept of *guṇa* as “*samavajitu niscestah karanam guṇam*”, which indicates that the *guṇa* refers to the principle, that property or quality that is coexistent and inactive within the substance. (C.S.I.1,519)

In Ayurveda, there is a deep correlation between the concept of *dravya* (substance) and that of *guṇa* (qualities), so that the two principles are considered essential: the term *guṇa* refers to what resides within a substance and characterises it in an intrinsic manner; it is, moreover, the quality from which every characteristic of the substance derives and is in itself inactive.

Ayurveda identifies three groups of *guṇa*: *vaiśeṣika guṇa*, *sāmānya guṇa* and *atma guṇa*. In the classification of the *sāmānya guṇa*, the first twenty *guṇa* are those that have an overriding importance in the physical, pharmacological and application aspects of Ayurvedic medicine; the remaining ten provide the doctor with information on the success of the treatment. (C.S.I.1,26,30)

The reclassification proposed by Ayurveda has added the qualities that characterize consciousness (atma guṇa). We will look into this aspect more carefully at a later stage.

### VAIŚEṢIKA GUṆA

*Śabda* (sound), *sparśa* (touch), *rūpa* (form) *rasā* (viscosity, flavour), *gandha* (smell).

### SĀMĀNYA GUṆA

*Laghu* (light, minute) *sita* (cold), *snigdha* (oily) *manda* (slow) *sthira* (solid, stable), *mrdu* (soft), *vishada* (tender, not slimy), *slaksna* (smooth) *sthula* (large), *guru* (heavy), *usna* (hot) *rukṣa* (rough), *tikṣṇa* (acidic, acute), *sāra* (fluid), *kathina* (rigid), *picchila* (slimy), *khara* (active) *sukṣma* (fine), *sandra* (dense), *para* (different), *yukti* (union, application), *samyoga* (compound, combination), *pythakatva*, *samskara* (purification), *drava* (liquid), *apara* (delay, decrease), *samkhyā* (connect), *vibhāga* (disconnect, section), *parimāṇa* (measure), *abhyāsa* (repeat, duplicate).

### ATMA GUṆA

*Buddhi* (intellect, perception), *icchā* (desire), *dveṣa* (aversion, hate), *sukha* (pleasure), *duḥkha* (sufferance, pain) *prayatna* (activities, active projection).

2) S. Dasgupta. A History of Indian Philosophy. Dheli, Motilal Banarsidass, 1922.

3) F. J. Tipler. The Physics of Immortality: Modern Cosmology, God and the Resurrection of the Dead. Milan, Mondadori, 1996.

## Part 3

Charaka defines *dravya* as follows: “That which is the substrate of an action and qualities and is the coexisting cause, is known as substance.” The concept of *dravya* is highly emphasised by Suśruta who attributes *dravya* with a certain priority, because *rasā guṇa*, the quality of lymph, depends on the characteristics of the various *dravya*; as we shall see, the concept of *dravya* is very important from a therapeutic point of view and also as regards the concept of Man as presented in Ayurveda.

Charaka says there are nine types of *dravya* or substances: the *five mahābhūta*, *Ātman*, *manas*, *kāla* and *dik*, as it is presented in the philosophical thought of the Vaiśeṣika; with the exception of *Ātman*, these are defined as *pañchamahabhūtika*, thus emphasising their relationship with the five basic elements.

Apart from their correlation with the five elements, although the view expressed is important from a pragmatic and therapeutic point of view, these categories actually refer to metaphysical realities; in light of the latest discoveries in physics, the attribution of a metaphysical nature needs to be reviewed and the concepts of *Ātman*, *manas*, *kāla* and *dikas* as well as the five *mahābhūta*, can be identified within the scope of quantum vibratory states. We will have a closer look at this point in the following chapters, but in the meantime I would ask readers to accept these claims at this stage and allow me to give a brief presentation of the six *darśana*, in order to gain an understanding of the influence of these systems in the organisation of Ayurvedic thought and especially within the concept of mind.

There are various classifications related to the concept of *dravya* in their various contexts: the first refers to the categories of *cetanā* (animate) and *acetanā* (inanimate); the second classification represents three groups of substances, which are indicated with the terms *doṣapraśamana* (substances that tend towards balancing bodily imbalances), *dhātupradūṣaṇa* (substances that alter the bodily tissues) and *svasthavṛttikara* (substances that keep one’s body balance at a healthy level). (C.S.I.1,68)

Substances can also be classified with respect to their origin: *jāṅgama* (organic substances from the animal kingdom), *audbhida* (substances of plant origin) and *pārthiva* (substances of mineral origin). (C.S.I.1,168)

The concept of *dravya* is of extreme importance, especially if related to the principles of *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa*: in fact, every substance – of whatever origin – can be used therapeutically, when one knows their properties.

Lastly, we should add that other classifications of *dravya* are known in Ayurveda in connection with their use, as in *pañchakarma*, a detoxification and therapeutic procedure, or with regard to physiological or pharmacological principles.

Within the Vaiśeṣika trend of thought, karma is defined as the cause of connection or disconnection and this property lies within the substance; it is defined as the natural evolution of what needs to be achieved. (C.S.I.1,52)

In another context, Charaka says that therapeutic action or karma depends on the properties of the substance: thus, in this context, it would seem that the purely biological aspect is taken into account and this is further defined by the concepts of *samyoga* and *vibhāga*, respectively of synthesis and disconnection or separation; here the reference to biochemical, anabolic and catabolic processes is quite clear, both in a physiological and pathological sense.

A further specification of the concept of karma can be seen in the classification of *Karivakali*, referring to actions that are nevertheless underpinned by biochemical processes and bodily physiological activities<sup>7</sup>.

It includes the following five divisions: *prasarana* (extension and abduction), *akuncana* (flexion and adduction), *vinamana* (inclining), *unnamana* (extending) *tiryaggamana* (oblique, lateral movement). Finally, we can find the concept of karma in the panchakarma procedures: this is a set of procedures, thus actions, such as *vamana*, *nasya*, *virechana*, *basti* and *raktamokshana*, which are used for treatments aimed at facilitating longevity and for therapeutic purposes.

The last category highlighted in the *Vaiśeṣika* is *samavāya*, namely the relationship between the fifth basic element, earth, and the other four proto-elements (C.S.I.1,50): the principle highlighted in this category refers to the progressive organisation of the basic elements, from the finest size towards the various more complex levels of differentiation, up to the earth element that contains them all.

Ayurveda has the merit of having brought certain metaphysical concepts, belonging to the *Vaiśeṣika* philosophical trend, within the sphere of practical usefulness, by including them within the organisation of certain basic psychological, physiological, biochemical and therapeutic principles and demonstrating that the importance of these concepts is not restricted to the merely metaphysical or philosophical field.

Observation and knowledge is so profound that it recognises cellular units as the constituents of complex organisms and also the further composition of these, based on macromolecular complexes leads up to the intuition of atomic structures.

In conclusion, as regards the aspects of application Charaka used the more pragmatic knowledge of *Vaiśeṣika* whereas in organising the basic principles Suśruta remained more faithful to the *Sāṃkhya* school of thought.

As we will see later on, Ayurveda is an extremely complex and profound system of medicine, so the use of investigative methods and deductive processes turned out to be particularly important for understanding the causes of imbalances that led to diseases as well as the course of pathological processes and the results thereof.

The methods of dissertation or logical speculation, as well as the use of inductive and deductive processes represent a significant contribution that Ayurveda has incorporated from the *Nyāya* system even if, from a historical point of view, the codification of these processes appears to pre-date the *Nyāya* system.

Ayurveda has four investigative or data acquisition procedures referred to as *pramāṇa*. These procedures are as follows: *pratyakṣa*, *anumāṇa*, *āptopadeśa* and *yukti*. I will briefly describe these methods, because in their historical contextualisation, they provide further information on the depth of Ayurvedic thought.

Pratyakṣa is associated with the acquisition of definite and immediate knowledge that arises from that synergistic process of synthesis that is formed through the participation of the soul, of the mind, of the senses and of the sense objects. Via this kind of definition, we can understand how the process of perception is extended over a number of levels: perception as a process of internal synthesis that involves the deeper spheres of the individual – for example the dynamics of supplementing and processing of external data within the “resident”

memories and new perceptions – and perception in a more basic sense of sensory data that is useful for a correct observation and diagnosis, i.e. that deductive process following the acquisition of data; this process is extremely useful in medical practice.

Charaka gives emphasis to clinical observation through the senses with the aim of collecting as much observable data as possible which can be used in the diagnosis and observation of the patient, and to the subsequent work of deduction, resulting from the collection of sensory data. In this regard, Charaka cites a list of examples in this process:

- *agni* from the *pachanasakti*, the ability of digestion
- *bala*, strength, from the *vyāyāma* i.e. the ability of muscular exercise
- the quality of the mind, from the ability to concentrate
- intelligence, from the power to understand
- understanding, from the realisation of intended actions
- passion, from the strength of attachment
- anger, from violent action
- moral pain, from discouragement
- joy, from the ability of recreation
- fear, from dejection
- resolution, from the absence of uncertainty
- memory, from the ability to recollect
- character, from behaviour
- steadiness, from the absence of restlessness.

This particular process of deduction, which we have given a few examples of, consists of the *anumāṇa pramāṇa*. Lastly, *yukti* – the mental process and precisely the ability to grasp the becoming of events within a time frame that includes the past, the present and the future – is an intellectual ability related to results caused by several factors: in other words, it is the ability to predict certain results in relation to certain causal circumstances.

Another important *pramāṇa* in Ayurveda is *āptopadeśa*, a term that indicates revelation; this process has been given great importance in Ayurveda as regards the source of knowledge.

Here revelation is related to the reliability of the source, also referred to as authoritative teaching, and represents a process of primary importance in relation to the meanings attributed to knowledge.

Charaka describes the characteristics of persons whose statements need to be considered as reliable or as authoritative teaching: “Individuals who have freed themselves from passion and ignorance through spiritual growth and knowledge, whose pure and unclouded understanding receives the past, the present and the future, are authoritative, wise and enlightened individuals. Their words are beyond reproach and are true.” (C.S. I. 11. 18, 19)

In some schools the authoritativeness of knowledge is due to the *Veda*: so, human authoritativeness is not recognised as a method for gaining knowledge, although Charaka recognised the reliability of the *rishi*.

Charaka says: “The tradition of reliable knowledge is the *Veda*. But even those assertions, made by people who have dedicated in-depth study to various fields of knowledge and are not in conflict with the *Veda*, are approved by the wise men aiming towards the well-being of man and must be treated as authoritative.” (C.S. I. 11. 27)

*Sāṃkhya* and yoga are two complementary aspects of a unitary knowledge that synthesizes theory, practice, philosophy and religion; the *Sāṃkhya* relates a theoretical dimension, while yoga deals with practical aspects that make up that practice that is essential for the achievement of the absolute.

Yoga accommodates some of the theoretical foundations of the *Sāṃkhya*, except for some differences in the theistic concept: although the *Sāṃkhya* is intrinsically atheist, we can see the theoretical relationship between yoga and Ayurveda through the already expressed relationship between *Sāṃkhya* and Ayurveda.

The term *yoga* has been used with different meanings: we find the first and rather scanty concepts of yoga in the *Veda*; some austere practices were described in the *Atharva Veda* and in the *Upaniṣad*; this term was used in the sense of a conscious soul searching for the true knowledge of reality.

Ayurveda and yoga are practical and applied sciences: just as the science of medicine deals with diseases and disorders, their causes and general health and how to preserve it, similarly yoga deals with the *duḥkha*, the causes of pain and how to eliminate it.

*Japa*, the whispered recitation of a mantra, was considered in yoga as a way to purify the *indriya* i.e. sense organs. (Y.S.II,43)

In Ayurveda, it says that the *vedanā*, (pain, the feeling of emptiness), are confined within the *Samyoga puruṣa* (C.S.IV. 1, 85) and that the doctor treats all types of *vedanā*, therefore all the pains relating to the present, the past and the future. (C.S. IV. 1, 86)

The *trṣṇā* (“desire, greed”) is regarded as the cause of *sukha* (“pleasure”) and *duḥkha* (“pain”) (C.S.IV.1, 134) and the *upadha* (“wishes”), the result of a state of loss and deprivation, are the causes of the production of *vedanā*; therefore, the *upadha* must be abandoned in order to achieve salvation from the *vedanā*.

A wise man believes that the objects of the senses are as dangerous as fire and so he keeps well away from them; in so doing, by abstaining from action and from attachment, he does not become affected by pain. (C.S. IV. 1.95)

These assertions, arising from the *Yoga Sūtra* and from the *Charaka Saṃhitā* are similar in some ways and we can state that both of these bodies of knowledge have many points to connect them and, above all, they both share the need to eliminate the *vedanā*. Both disciplines are therapeutic sciences with various fields of application: yoga is mainly concerned with the removal of psychological *vedanā*, while Ayurveda primarily focuses on mental and physical disorders.

The term *yoga* and its implications are mentioned several times in the *Charaka Saṃhitā*. In defining yoga, Charaka says: “Pleasure and pain are generated out of the interaction of the Self, the senses, the mind and the objects of the senses.” When the mind is firmly fixed in *Ātman*, as a result of inaction of the mind, *sukha* and *duḥkha* both cease to exist and the *Ātman* in its state of oneness becomes *vase* (acquires psychological powers) and this state is known as yoga. (C.S.IV 1,138-139).

The mind needs to cease its activity and to stabilise within *Ātman*: this is the only way in which the state of yoga can be achieved, i.e. in a condition of external and internal sensory

deafferentation. This refers to the concept of *yogaś citta vṛitti nirodhaḥ* (“yoga calms the frenzy of the mind”) and its purpose is the stabilisation of the mind in Ātman.

Therefore, Charaka briefly mentions this process in these terms, mainly regarding the practice of meditation: *satya buddhi* is considered a valuable tool for achieving the state of yoga. Charaka says that this practice is capable of having an effect on the extraordinary power of illusion, and the individual may be freed from desire and selfishness, escaping from the law of karma and foregoing everything; finally, he achieves Brāhman. (C.S. IV. 1, 187)

This *satya buddhi* process is known as *siddhi* (perfection), *mati* (understanding, intellect), *prajñā* (intelligence, knowledge) and *jñāna* (awareness, supreme knowledge) and thus that correlation is achieved between systems such as yoga, *Sāṃkhya* and the *Vedānta*.

Charaka stresses the similarities between yoga and mokṣa and affirms that in both states there is no longer any sensory feeling; in the final liberation there is dissolution, while yoga leads you to that dimension. (C.S. IV. 1, 187)

In stressing the importance of proper conduct, Charaka emphasises the achievement of *samādhi*, which is the dissolution of the perceptual process in a state of profound and abstract meditation; the latter is indicated as useful in the treatment of mental disorders. In other chapters we will talk further about the importance of *samādhi* in the treatment of mental illnesses, but we can appreciate the considerable importance given to yoga within Ayurveda and, although there are differences in their approaches and content, the two disciplines seem to be closely related.

I would like to define the concept of mokṣa from the point of view of Ayurveda. Charaka says that the achievement of mokṣa is related to the complete elimination of each painful situation or, rather, from the elimination of the *vedanā* (C.S. IV. 1,137), while in yoga the term mokṣa refers to the achievement of a state of liberation, of definitive self-dissolution and liberation, without any further “return”.

Charaka refers to a final liberation in the sense of the dissolution of all ties, related to the cessation of all passion and states of disappointment – *rajas* and *tamas* – and the cessation of all karmic influences due to past actions. Charaka also says that *nivṛtti-mārga* (inaction) interrupts the causality process chain, known as *apamarga* (“final dissolution”), which is the highest state of consciousness and corresponds to calmness and a state of peace; this last achievement is indestructible, it is Brāhman and it is liberation. (C.S. IV, 5, 11)

In his reference to *mukti* (bliss), Charaka lists the following synonyms: *vipapamna*, *virajah*, *śānta*, *para*, *akṣara*, *avyaya*, *amṛta*, Brāhman, *nirvāna*. (C.S. IV. 5, 23)

These synonyms cover the meaning of final liberation or bliss in the various systems of Indian philosophy, highlighting different perspectives and a certain flexibility in the approach to the concept of liberation.

In the state of liberation, one cannot observe any correlation or characteristic of the Soul; no state of knowledge is possible. (C.S. IV, 5, 22)

In the *Charaka Saṃhitā* there is a description of several ways to achieve the state of mukti:

- 1) Yoga. Yoga is considered as one of the chosen ways for achieving the state of liberation. A person who has achieved the state of *tattvasmṛti* – recollection or the state of truth – using the techniques of yoga, is no longer subject to a process of reincarnation. This type of path is defined by the yogis as “the way of yoga” and the final liberation is known as mokṣa. (C.S. IV, 1. 150, 151)
- 2) The contemplation of the universe, *sarvaloka* within oneself and the contemplation of oneself in the world. Ayurveda insists a lot on the concept of *puruso'yam lokasammitah* and argues that the contemplation of the movement of the space within oneself leads to correct understanding and liberation. (C.S. IV, 5, 7)
- 3) In his definition of *nivṛtti-mārga* (inaction) Charaka describes a long list of positive practices and forms of conduct aimed at the achievement of final liberation. He presents those spiritual, psychological and behavioural processes that need to be adopted by those who pursue this path of gradual self-refinement. Most of the descriptions of these forms of conduct are included in the yoga systems of yama and niyama.

Certain processes related to the states of expansion of consciousness, achieved with the practices described above, are described in yoga. In the *Charaka Saṃhitā* they are described as follows:

- 1) *āveśa*, transmigration into the body of another person
- 2) *cetaso jñāna*, telepathy and knowledge of the desires in the minds of other individuals
- 3) *arthānāṃ chandataḥ kriyā*, achievement of one's own will
- 4) *dṛṣṭi*, viewing or perceiving invisible things
- 5) *śruti*, development of extremely keen hearing
- 6) *smṛti*, deep and subtle understanding of reality
- 7) *kānti*, effulgence
- 8) *iṣṭato' darśanam*, ability to become invisible according to one's will.

Although the concept of *siddhi* in Ayurveda does not correspond to the description of the concept of *vibhūti* (“manifestation of powers”) given in yoga, Charaka nevertheless describes the acquisition of powers obtained by yogis through the practice of yoga, demonstrating a clear relationship between the science of Ayurveda and yoga. Since it is a psychotherapy procedure, the knowledge of yoga was used in Ayurveda in order to eliminate mental disorders and achieve the highest levels of consciousness.

We have so far discussed the correlations that Ayurveda has with the top four Indian philosophical systems. Now we will analyse the way the two remaining philosophical systems have correlations with Ayurveda. In the *Charaka Saṃhitā* there are some references that demonstrate a certain influence of the *Vedānta* in the metaphysical thought of Charaka; furthermore, other quotes in the text may be correlated with the *Mīmāṃsā darśana*.

The concepts in Ayurveda of mokṣa (“liberation”), tattva (“substance or essence”), smṛti (“memory”) and vairāgya (“indifference to worldly objects and to life”) correspond to the principles of the *Vedānta*.

If we try to analyse the philosophical thought of the *Charaka Saṃhitā*, we find certain tendencies toward the concept of *adwaita-vada*, i.e. the speculation on the union of the individual soul with the universal soul, the ultimate truth or oneness, expressed in *Vedānta*.

Charaka says that, through a process of knowledge characterised by purity and truth, an individual may obtain Brāhman, the Eternal, that which does not decay, the imperishable. (C.S. IV. 5. 19.)

He also asserts that anyone who has achieved Brāhman will achieve total detachment and will be witness to all levels of existence in all dimensions and at all times. (C.S.IV. 5. 19.)

Brāhman is conceived as a synonym of mukti (final bliss), thus denoting that the vision of the *Vedānta* is included in the concept of mokṣa in Ayurveda.

Describing the soul's state of final emancipation, Charaka says that it becomes *brahmabhūta* ("achievement of Brāhman, of its very substance"), and then the individual self experiences oneness with the universal self: it no longer has any special features and is therefore devoid of any quality.

Only those who achieve Brāhman have a knowledge of this kind that cannot be experienced in any other way. (C.S. IV. 1. 155)

We noted previously that in his cosmogonic vision, Charaka adopted a monistic approach considering Avyakta – puruṣa – as the ultimate cause of evolution and not recognizing prakṛti as a separate substance.

As regards the cosmogonic vision in the manifestation of the first levels of the phenomenal world, even Suśruta adopts the vision of *Vedānta* in his approach concerning the concept of *pancikarana*, i.e. that which generates the coexistence of the five elements in all things.

We can therefore see that there are a significant number of similarities between the philosophical principles in Ayurveda and those in the *Advaita Siddhanta* commented by Sankara.

Ayurveda takes on board the concept of Brāhman and the similarity between macrocosm and microcosm consisting of six substances; it does not highlight a two-tier approach, but considers a universal unitary dimension – a continuously dynamic self-referential oneness – and says that Man is responsible on his own behalf for his pleasures and pains. Liberation is achieved through knowledge of this oneness and the validity of the law of karma is confirmed within this oneness, although the concept of *māyā* is not referred to.

As regards the school of the *Mīmāṃsā*, Ayurveda accepts the principle of *niyati*, i.e. control of the universe through an internal intention.

Although you never come across the term *Mīmāṃsā* in Ayurvedic literature, certain related trains of thought emerge in an indirect and generalised manner.

The sūtra of the *Mīmāṃsā darśana* often include expressions that have some correlation with the content of Ayurveda. Some terms such as vaidya ("doctor"), *auśadha* ("drug, medicine"), *sannipāta* ("aggregation"), *abhoiya* (that cannot be assumed) and others are found in the sūtra of the *Mīmāṃsā*, indicating in this way that the science of Ayurveda was known during the period when the sūtra of the *Mīmāṃsā darśana* were organised, between 300 BC and 200 BC.

Apart from the influence of the main darśana ("philosophical schools"), there is evidence in the *Charaka* that other members were present at the assemblies with Punarvasu Atreya: they often expressed differing views in various dissertations on the principles of Ayurveda.

The additional schools of thought discussed are the following:

- Atma-vada
- Sattva-vada
- Rasa-vada
- Shad-Dhatu vada
- Matr-pitr vada
- Karmavada
- Svabhava-vada
- Prajapati Vada
- Kala-vada.

Atreya emphasised the syncretic thought of these schools, without giving prominence to any one and acknowledging the contribution of each one in the vision and understanding of the self and disease.

This approach adopted by Atreya seems to have been essential in order to accommodate the various contributions, characterising the depth of Ayurvedic thought.

We have seen, therefore, that in the formulation of its basic principles Ayurveda mainly adopts the thought of the *Sāṃkhya*, yoga, *Nyāya* and *Vaiśeṣika*, while also incorporating contributions from other schools of thought; none of these schools, however, was adopted individually.

Suśruta states that the study of a single path or single science is insufficient to understand the true scientific nature of medicine: therefore, an Ayurvedic doctor needs to gain a deeper understanding of scientific and philosophical issues at the same time.

The various principles expressed in the different darśana were applied and incorporated into the scientific vision of Ayurvedic medicine, carefully keeping their metaphysical dimension. Over the years these schools, in popular terms, became Ayurvedic darśana.