



## BUIDING BLOCKS OF MAN AND NATURE

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### TIME



The philosopher, Immanuel Kant in his work *CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON* published in 1781 examined whether the universe had a beginning in time and whether it is limited in space. He called these questions antinomies or contradictions of pure reason because he felt that there were equally compelling arguments for believing the thesis that the universe had a beginning, and the antithesis, that it had existed forever.

His argument for the thesis was that if the universe did not have a beginning, there would be an infinite period of time before any event, which he considered absurd. The argument for the antithesis was that if the universe had a beginning, there would be an infinite period of time before it so why should the universe begin at any one particular time. Being principally the same argument for both the thesis and the antithesis, they are based on his unspoken assumption that time continues back forever, whether or not the universe had existed forever.



As we shall see, the concept of time has no meaning before the beginning of the universe. This was first pointed out by St. Augustine. When asked: What did God do before he created the universe? Augustine didn't reply: He was preparing Hell for people who asked such questions. Instead, he said that time was a property of the universe that God created, and that time did not exist before the beginning of the universe. – Stephen King in *A Brief History of Time*.

### MAN AND/IN UNIVERSE

In understanding this crucial problem, one of the greatest thinkers of our times has, like others, ignored the holistic Eastern worldview as enunciated in the Vedas, which has since been quoted and re-quoted and interpreted and reinterpreted by thinkers the world over. By looking at the universe as only an extension of man, the scriptures have lucidly explained the origin of the universe, which is similar to the formation of the zygote in the mother's womb.



The process of creation thus described is an everyday and every-second occurrence and is a continuous cycle. Thus the representation of the TRIMURTIS – Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara – as the proponents of creation, sustenance and destruction is not merely religious – it is also highly symbolic and speaks volumes of the metabolic process that is incessantly taking place in the universe.

The *Charaka Samhita* says –

Evamayam lokasammitah purusah Yavanto hi lokae moortimanto bhavavisheshastavantah purusae, yavantah purusae tavanto lokae iti, budhastvaevam drashtumichanti...

Thus the person is equal to the universe. Whatever formed entities are found in the universe, they are also found in the person and vice versa. The learned people want to see the phenomena from this angle.

It further goes on to say very specifically...

Shaddhatavah samuditaah loka iti sabdam labhantae, tadyatha prithvyaapastaejo vayuraakaasham brahma chavyaktamiti, aeta aeva cha shaddhatavah samuditaah purusa iti sabdam labhantae...



## OF MACROCOSM & MICROCOSM

The aggregate of the six constituents is termed as “universe” (macrocosm) such as – prithvi, ap, tejas, vayu, akasha and the un-manifest Brahman (principle of consciousness). These very six constituents aggregated are termed as “person” or purusa.



In the Person prithvi, ap, tejas, vayu, akasha and brahman are represented by form, moisture, heat, vital breath, pores and inner self respectively. As is the magnificence of Brahman in the universe, so is that of inner self in the Person. In the universe, the greatness of Brahman is represented by Prajapati, and in the Person the same of the inner self is represented by the satvam (psyche).

What is Indra in the universe is ego (ahankara) in the Person; Aditya (sun) receiving (adana); Rudra agitation (rosha); Soma (moon) cheerfulness (prasada); Vasus happiness (sukham); Aswins lustre (kanti); Marut enthusiasm (utsaha); Visvadeva all sense organs and their objects (sarvaendriyani sarvaendriyarthashcha); darkness (tama) ignorance (moha); light (jyoti) knowledge (gnanam); as initial creation in the case of the universe, so impregnation in the Person; krtayuga childhood; treta youth; dwapara old age; and kali yuga illness and

end of creation or death. Thus by inference commonness of other unmentioned entities of the universe and the Person may also be known.

Lord Atreya goes on to explain the reason for describing the commonness between the UNIVERSE and the Person. Seeing the entire universe in the SELF and vice versa gives rise to true knowledge. On seeing the entire universe in his Self one realizes (the truth) that self-alone is the agent of happiness and misery and none else. Though associated with cause etc. under the influence of previous actions, after realizing the identity of the Self with the Universe, he rises for salvation.

### **EAST MEETS WEST**

Why this elaborate introduction? – why does a rendering of a knowledge system of the East require the thoughts of Western scientists and philosophers? It is indeed ironical, but again as always, recent history suggests that East look to the West for its inspiration; the East needs the ratification of the West for its thoughts, ideas, concepts, categories, to name just a few. And when it becomes known that the West is today looking to the East to quench its scientific and spiritual needs, it becomes that much easier for the Eastern community to respect its own thought process.



### **AYURVEDA**

Ayurveda, the knowledge of life and longevity, is perhaps the oldest existing body of knowledge on the healing process. It is not a mere medical knowledge system; it is a WAY OF LIFE. It is not the empirical system that it is made out to be; just because science has not grown enough to understand the foundations of the eastern thought process does not mean that logic is forsaken and that it is totally based on hearsay.

### **THE INDIAN VIEW**

The Indian thought process has an elaborate structure for understanding the universe and this is based on different schools of logic and philosophy like the Nyaya, the Vaisheshika, the Samkhya, the Yoga, the Purva Mimamsa and the Uttara Mimamsa (Vedanta) – together put, they are called the shaddarsanas – the six “light givers”. All Indian science and arts whether Ayurveda or astrology or architecture or pottery or the temple pujas owe their logic to either/all of the above darsanas and that is why there is a common thread flowing through all these systems. Thus an Ayurveda physician has a basic understanding of the position of your stars, the temple priest can tell you what medicines are good for you, an astrologer advises you regarding the pujas or prayers you

have to perform and so on.



## THE ELEMENTS

It is an acute understanding of the PANCHAMAHA BHOOTAS – the five great elements – earth, air, fire, water and ether – that makes this interdisciplinary approach possible. The five elements are the substratum of all animate and inanimate beings in this universe. They combine with the “chetana” or consciousness to make the animate being.



“KHADAYASCHETANASHASHTTA DHATAVAH PURUSAH SMRITAH  
CHETANADHATURAPYEKAH SMRITAH PURUSASAMJNAKAH”

Ch.Sa. 1/16

## PURUSA

The aggregate of five mahabhutas and consciousness as the sixth one is known as Purusa. CONSCIOUSNESS alone is also known as purusa. Though the panchamahabhootas pervade all over, in the living being, each of them can be identified with their respective sense organs.

	Rupa (form)	Indriya (eyes)	Tejas (fire)	
	Rasa (taste)	Rasanendriya (tongue)	Ap (water)	
	Gandha (smell)	Ghranendriya (nose)	Prithvi (earth)	
	Sparsa (touch)	Sparsanendriya (skin)	Vayu (air)	
	Sabda (sound)	Srotrendriya (ears)	Akasa (ether)	

Rupa, rasa, gandha, sparsa and sabda are the characteristic qualities of tejas, ap, prithvi, vayu and akasa respectively and each of them characterize one sense organ.

## HEALTH OR DIS-EASE

The five elements combine in ratios, which are different with every individual. Thus every living being has his/her own unique combination/balance of these five elements - it is like every computer on the Internet being assigned its unique IP (internet protocol) address making it totally different from the next computer.

It is this unique balance of the five elements in each individual that is addressed whenever the healthy becomes unhealthy. To be more specific, health is the individualized harmony of the five elements in a newly conceived baby – it is this harmony that determines the health of the individual right through his life. Whenever disease occurs, it means that one or more of these elements have increased/decreased out of proportion to the other elements thus causing disharmony. Simply put, treatment is the restoration of the individualized harmony.



However, these five elements being at the microcellular level, it is difficult to perceive them easily – though you can perceive a cell with the help of a microscope, there is as yet no instrument available to see the five great elements which makes the understanding of their harmony/disharmony a little difficult. Hence to make this more perceptible to the human senses, we try to identify a more gross form of these elements in the living body.

### **THE HUMAN ELEMENT**

Even as cells combine to form molecules, these five elements combine to form the TRIDOSHAS – VATA, PITTA and KAPHA where Vata is primarily made of AKASA and VAYU, Pitta is primarily AGNI and a part of AP, and Kapha is primarily PRITHVI and the remaining part of AP.



Though more gross than the subtle Panchamahabhootas, these DOSHAS are yet not visible to the naked eye and hence they are known to us more by the symptoms they exhibit when in balance/out of balance than by actual perception. These may be known as the functional units, which control the entire functioning of the human system. Then there are the structural units, which are again built up from the five great elements – these units are called the DHATUS and they are seven in number namely RASA, RAKTA, MAMSA, MEDAS, ASTHI, MAJJA and SUKRA.

### **BODY AS TEMPLE**

This can be better understood if you compare your body to a house. The bricks, the cement, the wood etc. that form the house can be compared to the DHATUS while the composition of each brick, cement, wood etc. namely the sand, water etc. can be compared to the PANCHAMAHABHOOTAS. The function of keeping the house together, of ensuring that the cement binding remains, of ensuring that the doors don't fall off

their frames, of ensuring that the house doesn't collapse due to the vagaries of nature and most importantly of ensuring the flow of the life force throughout the house can be compared to the function of the DOSHAS in the human body. Even as cracks appear in the walls of the house with the passage of time, the ageing in the human body causes gradual decay. Even as regular maintenance ensures the long life of the house, proactive healthcare ensures the long and healthy life of the individual. Even as the cause of the cracks that appear cannot be traced down to any individual particle of sand or water, it is difficult to trace the symptoms of illness to any of the PANCHAMAHABHOOTAS. Even as we rectify the problems in a house at the structural or functional level, we identify the problems in the human body with the imbalance or malfunctioning of any of the DOSHAS or DHATUS and take corrective measures accordingly. Even as the waste of the house have to flow through the proper channels without getting accumulated or blocking the channels thus giving it an important role in the maintenance of the house, the body also has to ensure that the waste is properly generated and excreted to maintain proper metabolism – thus the MALAS (SWEDA, MUTRA, PUREESHA) also play an important role in the health of the individual.



## WELL-BEING



It is thus that the DOSHAS, the DHATUS and the MALAS play their respective roles in maintaining/affecting the health of the human body and that is why they are referred to as the building blocks of the human system. Thus the definition of health according to Ayurveda is

“SAMADOSHA SAMADHATU SAMAAGNISCHA MALAKRIYAH  
PRASSANATMENDRIYAH MANAH SWASTHA ITYABHIDEYATAE...”

Literally translated this means “HEALTH is defined as balanced and well functioning doshas, dhatus and agni and mala and a happy state of the atman, indriyas and manas. To put it simply this means “a balance in the bio-physical and physiological state of the body and contented state of senses, mind and consciousness is defined as health”.

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