



Shad Darshan

The Six Philosophies of Life

आयुर्वेद

Introduction

Āyurveda is a system of healing that has its roots in ancient India. It is thought by many scholars to be the oldest healing system extant on our planet. *Āyuh* means life and *veda* means knowledge. The knowledge contained in Āyurveda deals with the nature, scope and purpose of life, and includes its metaphysical and physical aspects—health and disease, happiness and sorrow, pain and pleasure. Āyurveda defines life as the conjunction of body, mind and spirit found in Cosmic Consciousness and embracing all of Creation. Āyurveda states that the purpose of life is to know or realize the Creator, both within and without, and to express this Divinity in one's daily life. According to Āyurveda, every individual life is a microcosm of the Cosmos.

Āyurveda is a medical science and its purpose is to heal and to maintain the quality and longevity of life. It is an art of daily living that has evolved from practical, philosophical and spiritual illumination, rooted in the understanding of Creation. It offers a profound understanding of each person's unique body,

mind, and consciousness, which is the foundation of health and happiness.

The principles of many natural healing systems now familiar in the West, such as herbal medicine and polarity therapy, have their roots in Āyurveda. Because of its broad scope, Āyurveda embraces all health care disciplines and weaves them into an integrated treatment plan for each individual. If a person needs surgery, surgical procedures are available. If a person needs psychological or spiritual counseling, or rejuvenation of the body, mind, and spirit, there are procedures for these as well. Āyurveda encompasses all these treatments and coordinates them appropriately. It is called a “living” science since it incorporates modern developments and techniques along with ancient wisdom. It is uniquely capable of suggesting a treatment regimen appropriate to each individual. Most other medical disciplines are too specialized to design a plan that includes elimination of the cause(s), treatment of the condition, rebuilding of the body and the continuing support of a rejuvenation program. In Āyurveda, all these elements are of paramount importance in the treatment process.

Āyurveda is quite old, with its roots going far back into Indian antiquity. It has been practiced continuously in India for thousands of years. In more recent times, the British introduced Western medicine to India, which they considered a superior form of medical treatment. Āyurveda was suppressed and its practice discouraged by government policies. Many Indians followed this movement to Western medicine and succumbed to the lure of quick fixes, shots, pills and drugs, thereby, like their western counterparts, avoiding personal responsibility for their own health. Today some Indians are returning to historical, native Āyurveda having realized that Western medicine tends simply to suppress symptoms and does not help to prevent problems from recurring. Although Western medicine is extremely helpful for acute conditions and trauma, it tends to overlook the importance of individual response to the stresses and conditions of life. There is no concept of specialization in Āyurveda, as there is in Western medicine. Āyurveda treats the whole person, not just the organ or system involved.

Every healing system has a basic foundation of philosophy. Āyurvedic philosophy is based on the Shad Darshan, the Six Philosophies of life, which developed from the ancient sages and scriptures of India. Many of these scriptures are known as Vedas, or bodies of knowledge. The Vedas are timeless; some say more than 10,000 years old. The four main Vedas—Rigveda, Yajurveda, Atharvaveda, and Sāmaveda—



are among the oldest bodies of recorded/written knowledge in human culture. There are also four secondary Vedas, called Upa-Vedas or subordinate Vedas, which developed from each of the main bodies of knowledge. "Āyur-Veda," translated as "The Science of Life," is an Upa-Veda. Although there is some debate, many scholars feel that Āyurveda is an Upa-Veda of the Atharvaveda. Others feel the origin was within the Rigveda.

The entire Vedic tradition is composed of highly spiritual wisdom and pure knowledge revealed through the hearts of enlightened *rishis* (seers). It is not a creation made by the mind of man but rather a revelation from the hearts of meditative sages. This ancient wisdom came from the caves and mountains of India where the rishis had ashrams and disciples. Students came to study with them, and the rishis imparted knowledge as they experienced it in a deep state of meditation. These early teachings were an oral tradition and, because there were no books, the students stored the knowledge in their minds and it became a part of them. As written music has no melody, so the written *mantra* has little energy. For that reason, the rishis believed that mantras should not be written down. They tried to impart this knowledge from one soul to another soul through the oral tradition.

The knowledge of Āyurveda has been passed down to us in *sūtras* or small phrases and the wisdom these *sūtras* contain is there to be unlocked by the inquiring mind. Much of the information in this book is based upon the truths contained in these *sūtras*, composed in the form of poetry during ancient times, more than 5,000 years ago. The words of a *sūtra* bring hidden knowledge to consciousness. However, the understanding of this knowledge and its hidden meaning need the guidance of a teacher.

The Sanskrit word *sūtra* means to suture with a thread. The small phrase of the *sūtra* is analogous to a thread passing through the eye of a needle. The eye of the needle is small but the trail of the thread leads to great hidden wisdom waiting for interpretation. A seed is a tree in minute form. A *sūtra* is analogous to the seed. The seed can have many meanings and can describe a variety of forms: a small sapling, a mature tree, flowers, fruits, acorns or nuts. It is clear that the seed embraces the totality. It is the microcosm within the macrocosm. The same is true of a *sūtra*.

The Charaka Samhitā, compiled approximately 400 C.E., is the oldest ancient Sanskrit Āyurvedic text still in existence and describes the five subdoshas of *vāta*. The Sushruta Samhitā text, compiled by the sage Nagarjuna, first described surgery, blood



and the five pitta subdoshas. Vāgbhata was a famous Āyurvedic physician from the 6th century C.E. who wrote the *Ashtānga Hridayam* and the *Ashtānga Sangraha*. Earlier sages in the oral lineage of Āyurveda were Lord Brahmā, who taught Prajāpati, who passed it to the Ashvin twins. They, in turn, taught Indra, who passed it to Ātreya (6th century B.C.E.), who taught Agnivesa, who in the 5th century B.C.E. wrote the first major Āyurvedic treatise, which is no longer in existence.

Āyurveda incorporates the *Shad Darshan*, the six systems of Indian philosophy—Sāṅkhya, Nyāya, Vaisheshika, Mīmāṃsa, Yoga, and Vedānta. *Shad* means six. The Sanskrit root of the word *darshan* is *drish*, which means “to see.” In this sense *darshan* is inner vision as well as outer vision. The six systems represent six visions of life. They are ways of orienting with reality.

Table 1: Shad Darshan: The Six Philosophies of Life

Philosophy	Founder
Sāṅkhya	Kāpila
Nyāya	Gautama
Vaisheshika	Kanāda
Mīmāṃsa	Jaimini
Yoga	Patañjali
Vedānta	Bādarāyana

Darshan is translated as direct perception or philosophy, which is love of truth. While *darshan* is not philosophy, philosophy comes from *darshan*. Therefore, we translate *Shad Darshan* as Six Philosophies that Āyurveda accepts for the healing of mankind.

Why do we study the *Shad Darshan*? Three of these systems—Sāṅkhya, Nyāya, and Vaisheshika—predominantly deal with the material world. These philosophies try to understand and explain everyday experience on the level of the physical. Knowledge about physical creation was most important to them. Logical reasoning, understanding cause and effect, or experiences one can reduce to cause and effect, are the focus of Nyāya. This system is also concerned with the means of knowing and right knowledge.

Vaisheshika is also focused on the level of the physical world without concern for what created it, where it came from. It



is really more a model of physics, of particle interactions, than a philosophy of speculative thought. In contrast, Sāṅkhya states that we need to consider the origin of the world. Moreover, it is important to see how the theme of microcosm and macrocosm (as above, so below) plays out. In Sāṅkhya, physiology is expressed as a model of evolving Consciousness. Non-material in nature, Consciousness expresses itself in an evolutionary scheme, as the entire diversity of material creation. These three paradigms—Sāṅkhya, Vaisheshika, and Nyāya—form a natural grouping for understanding the physical universe.

The other three—Yoga, Mīmāṃsa, and Vedānta—observe inner reality as an attempt to understand outer reality. They are concerned more with pure philosophy and are less concerned about understanding the physical interaction of things. Their emphasis is on how we can evolve.

All six systems lead to evolutionary fulfillment and self-realization. What these philosophies are fundamentally trying to do is to alleviate pain and suffering, a common rallying point for all of them. They all want to bring us to a cessation of pain and suffering, which is a way of looking at them in relation to Buddhism. Buddhism and its Four Noble Truths specifically deal with this subject. (see “Buddhism” on page 21) In studying the Shad Darshan, we try to understand “what is” and how to relate to it in order to achieve self-realization.

Sāṅkhya

The most notable proponent of Sāṅkhya² philosophy was Kāpila, one of the great enlightened rishis (seers). The word Sāṅkhya comes from *san* and *khya*. *San* means Truth. *Khya* means to realize, to know, to understand. Sāṅkhya is a philosophy to discover and understand the Truth of life. Kāpila discerned 24 principles in the manifestation of the Universe. We will consider each of these principles in detail.

Purusha and Prakruti

The first concept of Sāṅkhya philosophy that we will consider is *Purusha*. *Pur* means city. *Sheta* means dwelling, living, existing. Purusha is that pure Consciousness that exists, lives, dwells in the city of senses. The body is a city of senses. Many houses gather together to create a city. In the same way we have many senses—auditory, tactile, optic, gustatory, olfactory—with nine gates or openings: seven in the head, and

2. The word sāṅkhya in Sanskrit also means enumeration. In enumeration there are 24 principles of creation. Here we are translating sāṅkhya as “to know the Truth.”

**24 Principles of Creation
According to Sāṅkhya**

- 1: Prakṛti
- 2: Mahad (Universal Intelligence)
- Buddhi (Individual Intellect)
- 3: Ahamkāra

**Formed from the Interaction
of Sattva and Rajas**

- 4: Manas
- Sensory Faculties (Jñānendriya):
- 5: Hearing
- 6: Touch
- 7: Vision
- 8: Taste
- 9: Smell
- Motor Faculties (Karmendriya):
- 10: Speech
- 11: Grasping
- 12: Walking
- 13: Procreation
- 14: Elimination

**Formed from the Interaction
of Tamas and Rajas**

- Objects of Sensory Perception (Tanmātrās):
- 15: Sound (Shabda)
- 16: Touch (Sparsha)
- 17: Form (Rūpa)
- 18: Taste (Rasa)
- 19: Odor (Gandha)
- Five Elements (Maha Bhūtas):
- 20: Ether (Ākāsha)
- 21: Air (Vāyu)
- 22: Fire (Agni)
- 23: Water (Āpas)
- 24: Earth (Pruthivī)

the anus and urethral opening. There are three extra gates in women: the nipples and the vagina. Pure Consciousness dwells within this city of senses. Purusha is the ultimate Truth, the ultimate healing power, the ultimate enlightenment, the transcendental state of being and existence. Purusha is energy and this energy is choiceless, passive awareness. It is formless, colorless, beyond attributes and takes no active part in Creation. Purusha can be called pure Consciousness.

Prakṛti is primordial will, primordial matter, creative potential. *Prakṛti* has form, color, and attributes in the field of action. It is Awareness with choice, Divine Will, the One who desires to become many. The universe is the child born out of the womb of *Prakṛti*, the Divine Mother. *Prakṛti* creates all forms in the universe, while Purusha is the witness to this creation. There is no matter without energy but there can be energy without matter. *Prakṛti* cannot exist without Purusha. However, there can be Purusha without *Prakṛti*. Sāṅkhya says *Prakṛti* is creativity, the feminine energy. Within the womb of *Prakṛti* the whole universe is born. Therefore, *Prakṛti* is the Divine Mother.

The unmanifested state of Purusha and *Prakṛti* is called *Brahman*, the state of pure Awareness, pure Consciousness. Before *Prakṛti* begins to manifest, at the merging point of Purusha and *Prakṛti*, it is *avyakta*, which means unmanifested. Once *Prakṛti* manifests, it is *vyakta*, which means manifestation. The root cause of the entire universe is *Prakṛti*, not Purusha.

In the potential energy of Purusha and the creative will of *Prakṛti*, we find an understanding of the evolution of non-material energy (Purusha/*Prakṛti*, *avyakta*) into material expression (*vyakta*). Each progressive step acts as an agent or a cause for the manifestation. The scheme of cause and effect is key to the functioning of creation through the Sāṅkhya model. This is the journey of Consciousness into matter.

Mahad (Creative Intelligence)

Purusha and *Prakṛti* are together for the purpose of creation. In the presence of Purusha, when *Prakṛti* becomes conscious of Consciousness, *Prakṛti* creates the first expression of creation, which is *Mahad*. *Mahad* has self-awareness. The meaning of *Mahad* is supreme intelligence, that which puts everything in its proper place. Even in the single cell there is intelligence and each cell has a unique function. The bone cells choose and utilize calcium, magnesium, zinc, and other minerals. The muscle cells choose protein. There is intelligence and right order in the cells, and that order is cellular intelligence.



The Journey of Consciousness into Matter

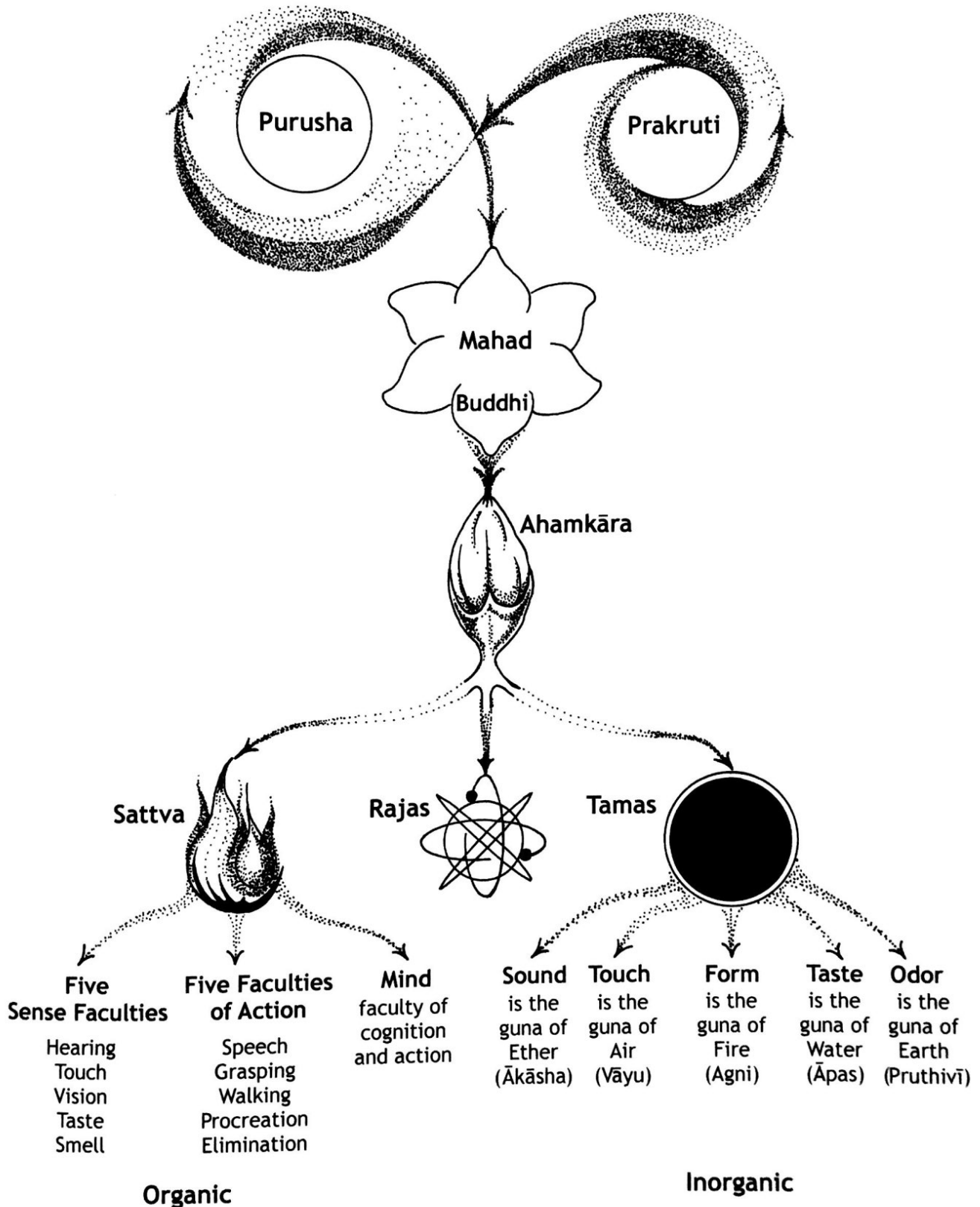


Illustration 1 — The Journey of Consciousness into Matter

That is Mahad. There is communication between cells which is the flow of intelligence called *prāna*, the life force. Mahad is this collective intelligence.

Ahamkāra

Mahad is pure intelligence and from Mahad comes *Ahamkāra*. *Ahamkāra* means the feeling of “I am,” the ego. “I” is the center and where there is a center there is a radius, and where there is a center and a radius there is a circumference. That circumference forms a frontier, the border of consciousness. We all live in the tiny enclosure of consciousness, which is centered upon *ahamkāra*, the “I former.” The question is how a center is formed. When you allow your eyes to focus, in that very looking there is perception. And the moment you identify with an object, there is the birth of “I,” the birth of *Ahamkāra*. In Mahad there is no differentiation. However, *Ahamkāra* focuses on one thing, making it the center of vision. This center is “I.” *Ahamkāra* is a process of identification based upon previous accumulated experience. But the moment “I” is formed, which is a center created in the consciousness, then that creative intelligence (Mahad) becomes *Buddhi*, which is reasoning capacity, intellect, individual awareness. Mahad is the universal principle. *Buddhi* is the individual principle.

Sattva, Rajas, Tamas

The pulsation of cosmic *prāna* causes Consciousness to break up into the three universal qualities (*gunas*) which pervade all Creation—*sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*. Because of the formation of an ego reference point, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* can be perceived as distinct, separate, and defined. *Sattva* is the pure essence of light, right action, and spiritual purpose. *Rajas* is the principle of movement, change, excitability. *Tamas* is inertia, darkness, confusion. These three universal qualities influence both our minds and bodies. On the universal level, *sattva* is vast, clear space; *rajas* is atmosphere; and *tamas* is solid substance. On the individual level, *sattva* is perception, the knower; *rajas* is the movement of perception, which becomes the process of attention; and *tamas* is the precipitation of perception, which is experience, the known. *Sattva* is the light of Consciousness; it is potential energy. *Rajas* is kinetic energy. *Tamas* represents inertia. Without *tamas* there is no experience. *Sattva* is the observer. *Rajas* is observation. *Tamas* is the object to be observed. *Sattva* is creative, *rajas* maintains, *tamas* is destructive.

Although *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are each present to some degree in every object of creation, some objects arise primarily from *sattva* and some primarily from *tamas*. *Rajas* is the energy



which is the momentum of creation. Attention is a combination of sattva and the flow of rajas. Through rajas Consciousness becomes matter.

Sattva is further described by the Sanskrit word *jñānashakti*, which means the energy of cognition, the motive for perception. *Jñana* means perception, knowledge, cognition, intelligence. Rajas is described as *kriyāshakti*, the energy of observation. *Kriya* means action, creativity. Tamas is described as *dravyashakti*, which is material matter, the observed. You wake in the morning because of sattva (*jñānashakti*). Because of rajas (*kriyāshakti*) you plan for the entire day. In the evening after a heavy dinner, you feel tamas (*dravyashakti*), heavy, dull, like going to sleep. Tamas brings sleep, inaction and darkness. The inaction of tamas and the inaction of Purusha are different. The inaction of Purusha is pure Consciousness; the inaction of tamas is unconsciousness, a blind force without awareness, which brings confusion when it causes unconscious action.

Rajas is the active vital force which moves to sattva to create the organic universe, the world of sensory perception. Rajas moves to tamas to create the inorganic universe. Therefore, sattva and tamas are inactive energies that require the active, kinetic force of rajas. As a result of the influence of the three universal qualities, the five *jñānendriya* (sensory pathways), the five *karmendriya* (motor pathways), and the mind are differentiated as part of the organic universe. The five *tanmātrās*, or objects of sensory perception, and the five elements (Ether, Air, Fire, Water, and Earth) are differentiated as part of the inorganic universe. The *tanmātrās* are the *gunas* (qualities) of the elements: *shabda* (sound), *sparsha* (touch), *rūpa* (form), *rasa* (taste), and *gandha* (odor or smell).

The five elements are born in the womb of tamas but contain all three *gunas*. Even the *tanmātrās* contain all three *gunas*. Though they are derived from tamas, there are some rajasic and sattvic qualities in the *tanmātrās* and therefore in the elements. Earth is tamas. Water is tamas and sattva. It seeks its own level, which is tamas, but is transparent, which is sattva. Fire is intense rajas and sattva, Air is rajas but also sattva, while Ether is pure sattva. The elements evolve successively to include their own related *tanmātrā* and each of the prior *tanmātrās*. For example, Ether is just *shabda tanmātrā*, Air is comprised of *shabda* and *sparsha*, while Earth is comprised of *shabda*, *sparsha*, *rūpa*, *rasa*, and *gandha*. Each element manifests from the addition of its primary *tanmātrā* to the *tanmātrās* of the preceding element(s).

We can put our knowledge of the philosophy of Sāṅkhya into our daily lives and relationships in moment to moment existence. The moment we look at our bodies in the mirror, we start judging. Many of us don't like the face, hair, nose, or color we have. But we are not nose, face, or body; we are the dweller dwelling in this body. We are something higher and nobler. We are Purusha. We are *Shakti*. In this way we can apply the philosophy of Sāṅkhya in our daily lives for self-healing. We all must heal ourselves.

The same thing applies when your wife is yelling at you or your husband is criticizing and you become upset and angry. You are not anger, you are the watcher of anger. You are not fear, you are the witness of fear. You are not bored or tired, you are the pure observer of the tiredness.

Sāṅkhya philosophy has changed my life and I'm sure it will also change your life. Self-acceptance and self-love are the first steps to bliss.

Nyāya and Vaisheshika

The philosophies of Nyāya and Vaisheshika are represented by the writings of Gautama and Kanāda, respectively. Nyāya means logic and Vaisheshika means to specify the important aspects of concrete reality. The proponents of Nyāya and Vaisheshika believed in obtaining knowledge through observation and critical logic. They were like modern scientists. They found that certain principles which can be experienced with sensory perception are real—*pratyaksha*, that which can be seen and experienced. *Prahāna* means proof. The proponents of Nyāya and Vaisheshika discovered ways of investigating the truth and they stated that truth could be proven.

Nyāya and Vaisheshika go together. While Vaisheshika speaks about nine causative substances of the universe, called *nava karna dravya*, Nyāya deals with how to think about them—the reasoning. *Nava* means nine, *karna* means causative, *dravya* means substances. These nine causative substances are Ether, Air, Fire, Water, and Earth; the soul. (*ātman*), which is spirit or self; mind, (*manas*); time, (*kāla*); and direction, (*dig*).³

Vaisheshika holds to the atomic theory of existence that claims the entire universe is composed of atoms. Vaisheshika believes the union and separation of atoms is guided or directed by the will of the Supreme Being. Ether, Air, Fire, Water, and Earth are eternal atoms. The union of atoms in twos, threes, etc., created universal elements at the time of creation and these

atoms will separate at the time of *pralaya*, disintegration or annihilation.

The Four Pramāna–Sources of Valid Knowledge

According to Nyāya, there are three sources of non-valid knowledge: *samshaya* (doubt), *bhrama* (faulty cognition), *tarka* (hypothetical argument), and four sources of valid knowledge:⁴

- Pratyaksha (Perception)
- Anumāna (Inference)
- Upamāna (Comparison)
- Shabda (Testimony)

Nyāya states that any reality can be understood by these four methods of understanding, comprehension and perceiving.

Pratyaksha. Nyāya classifies perception as *laukika* (ordinary) and *alaukika* (extraordinary). *Pratyaksha* (perception) is knowledge produced through contact of the senses with objects of the world. This contact must be clear. When in the twilight one perceives a rope as a snake, it is false and invalid perception.

There are five ordinary external perceptions—hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, and smelling. Extraordinary perception is based upon association and intuition and includes perception of the qualities of soul, thought, desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, and cognition.

Āyurveda uses both ordinary and extraordinary perception as diagnostic tools. When a patient has a fever, it is measured with a thermometer. The skin looks red and feels hot. Ordinary *pratyaksha* is that which can be experienced by direct

3. Some scholars describe the elements as composed of atoms, in the sense of irreducible units. In Vaisheshika, the causative substances are atoms and the elements are molecules in the Western sense. Element is the grosser form. Each element is composed of atoms of the same name, but also of the other four atoms, giving rise to molecules. For example, the element Air contains predominately Air and also contains all the other atoms. Fire is composed mainly of Fire and also contains the other atoms. In Sāṅkhya, the elements are composed of the *tanmātrās*, which are similar to the causative substances of Vaisheshika, but subtler than atoms. In Sāṅkhya, Nyāya, and Vaisheshika, the *tanmātrās* or causative substances are irreducible, but the elements are molecules.

Note that we use Nyāya as a way of reasoning and understanding experience in what we call the physical universe. The content is Vaisheshika. Therefore, the concept of the elements and atoms belongs under Vaisheshika.

4. The four sources of valid knowledge according to Nyāya are accepted by Āyurveda. However, other philosophies present information that is slightly different.

perception through the senses. Extraordinary perception through association and intuition is developed through persistent yogic and Āyurvedic practice in daily observation.

Anumāna. The second proof is *anumāna*. Anumāna involves inference and cognition based on some previous knowledge or experience. Wherever there is smoke, there will be fire. Ten miles away behind the mountain there is a big cloud of smoke. We have not seen the fire but have previous experience that smoke and fire go together. We have seen people dying. Hence we draw inference that man is mortal. Āyurveda can use inference to see which *dosha* is aggravated. For example, we can say that wherever there is inflammation, there is *pitta*.

Upamāna. The third proof is *upamāna*. Upamāna relies upon comparison. There is a kind of knowledge that comes when one perceives the similarity between the description of an unfamiliar object and something already known. Doctors compare disease processes and pathological conditions as one way of understanding. Āyurveda uses comparison to understand the different diseases in terms of their doshas. For instance, a *pitta* type cold will show thin, yellow mucus, a sore throat and fever while a *kapha* type cold will present thick, white, copious mucus, chest and bronchial congestion and chills.

Shabda. The fourth pramāna is *shabda*, which means verbal testimony, that which is authentic and truthful. The Bible, the Koran and the Vedas are sacred texts. They are authority, which gives them authenticity and validity. These sacred texts receive the status of authority from people who regard them as authority. These authorities are called *āpta*, those whose thoughts, feelings and speech/actions are consistent. These people have told us that the Vedas are true. X-rays, electrocardiograms and MRIs are also objective observation. *shabda*. If an ultrasound shows that there are gallstones, we must believe it. The patient is one who knows the truth that he/she has a tummy ache, so we must believe the patient and listen with great respect.

The Elements

We will now consider the five elements or *panchamaha bhūtas*. The elements as referenced in this section are molecules composed of the atoms or basic substances, which are the first five of the nine causative substances⁵ outlined by Vaisheshika.

5. The nine dravyas or causative substances are Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Ether, Time, Direction, Soul, and Mind.

Ether. Ether is called *ākāsha* in Sanskrit. It is a mystic word. *Ākāsha* means all-enclosing, all-pervading, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent. All-pervading Ether serves as the common factor or “home” for all objects in the universe.⁶ Ether, which is the first expression of Consciousness, is the basic need of the bodily cells. In the development of matter, Ether comes first. Ether is expansive, empty and has no resistance. Ether provides freedom in which to move. Without Ether there is no love or freedom. *Āyurveda* holds that within Ether there is a pure presence of spiritual energy that manifests as nuclear energy.

Air. This same Consciousness, when it moves in a particular direction, becomes Air. Air is called *vāyu*. We translate *vāyu* as Air but words are not sufficient to convey the deeper meaning. Air is a principle of movement necessary for keeping the body in constant motion and manifests as electrical energy.

Prāna is the basic principle of the Air element. It is the flow of Consciousness from one cell to another cell in the form of intelligence. *Prāna* is the vital life force and is necessary for all subtle and gross movements within the cell, within the system and within the physical body. In other words, sensory stimuli and motor responses are the subtle movements of *prāna*. Even the movements of the heart, respiration, peristalsis and other involuntary movements are governed by this principle of Air, *prāna*.

Fire. Where there is movement there is friction and where there is friction there is Fire. So the next manifestation of Awareness is Fire. Fire is called *agni*. All transformative processes are governed by the Fire element. It governs the metabolic processes regulating the transformation of food into energy and is responsible for body temperature and the processes of digestion, absorption and assimilation of food stuffs. Within each of the doors of perception—ears, skin, eyes, tongue, nose—there is a subtle Fire component that is necessary

6. According to *Vaisheshika*, there are five kinds of atoms: Ether, Air, Fire, Water, and Earth, each having its own qualities. *Ākāsha* (Ether), the first substance, is the substratum of the quality of sound. There is only one atom of Ether and it is universal. *Ākāsha* is also translated as space or sound and cannot be perceived directly. It is unlimited, eternal and universal, so it does not have a perceptible dimension. It is formless, so it does not have color. Therefore, *Ākāsha* cannot be perceived, but it can be inferred as a quality of sound. *Ākāsha* is not made up of parts and does not depend upon any other substance for existence. It is all-pervading in the sense that it has unlimited dimension and its quality of sound is perceived everywhere.

Attributes of Ether

Gunās (Qualities): Clear, light, subtle, soft, immeasurable
Karmās (Actions): Vibration, expansion, non-resistance, freedom, love. Descent of intelligence into the heart of the matter.
Tanmātrā: Sound
Type of Energy: Nuclear energy

Attributes of Air

Gunās (Qualities): Mobile, dry, light, cold, rough, subtle
Karmās (Actions): Movement in a particular direction
Tanmātrās: Sound and touch
Type of Energy: Electrical energy

Attributes of Fire

Gunās (Qualities): Hot, sharp, light, dry, subtle
Karmās (Actions): Brilliance, luminosity, penetration, the radiant flame of intelligence
Tanmātrās: Sound, touch, form
Type of Energy: Radiant energy

Attributes of Water

Gunās (Qualities): Cool, liquid, dull, soft, oily, slimy
Karmās (Actions): Downward movement, cleansing, cohesiveness, adhesiveness, percolation
Tanmātrās: Sound, touch, form, taste
Type of Energy: Chemical energy

Attributes of Earth

Gunās (Qualities): heavy, dull, static, dense, hard, gross
Karmās (Actions): Gravitation, downward attraction
Tanmātrās: Sound, touch, form, taste, odor
Type of Energy: Physical, mechanical energy

for sense perception and processing of perception into knowledge.

Fire is carried throughout the body in the blood and plasma as heat. If the blood supply is cut off, that part of the body will be cold. Poor circulation results in cold hands and feet. Fire regulates understanding, comprehension, and selectivity. The Fire element is radiant energy and is present in the body as the flame of attention.

Water. The next element is Water, *āpas*, which is associated with chemical energy. Water is the universal chemical solvent and all biochemical functions are governed by it. Water is necessary in the human body for assimilation and for maintaining electrolyte balance. The plasma in our blood is composed of approximately 90 percent water and this water carries nutrients from one part of the body to the other. Oxygen, food particles and the subtle molecules of minerals are carried from one cell to another cell, from one system to another system, by this continuous river of fluid, the plasma. The body's lymphatic system is also governed by the Water element. Within the medium of Water all the elements maintain their function. This is the Water of Life.

Earth. The solid, dense and hard element is Earth, *pruthivī*, the firm ground for global life. *Pruthivī* cradles and holds all living creatures of the planet, giving them food and shelter. All solid structures, hard, firm, and compact tissues are derived from the Earth element (e.g., bones, cartilage, nails, hair, teeth, and skin). Earth is associated with mechanical energy.

Table 2: The Elements and Associated Types of Energy

Ākāsha	Ether	nuclear energy
Vāyu	Air	electrical energy
Agni	Fire	radiant energy
Āpas	Water	chemical energy
Pruthivī	Earth	mechanical energy

The five elements normally support life and maintain harmony in the world but, when they are out of balance, they can cause discomfort and threaten life. The predominance of each element changes continuously, modifying temperature.

humidity and seasons. People must strive to accommodate these changes in order to survive. Having intelligence, human beings use knowledge of the elements in order to create optimal environmental conditions. For example, they build brick (predominance of Earth element) houses to protect themselves from changes in air, heat, and water.

All the elements are present in each individual but the proportions and combinations vary from person to person. Keeping one's individual qualitative and quantitative balance of these five basic elements is necessary for total health. When your own unique combination of the elements is maintained, your health is good. But when the combination is upset, disease may result. For example, an increased Earth component can result in obesity; increased Water can lead to edema; increased Fire can cause fever, ulcers, and burning sensations such as heartburn, conjunctivitis or burning urination. Subtle changes in the mental faculties may also appear when the equilibrium is upset. For example, an increase of the Air element may cause fear and anxiety; increase of Fire element can lead to anger and hate; increase of Earth may bring depression and dullness. All five elements play an important role in the formation of the structure of the tissues and in maintaining their functions. Relating this to cause and effect—function is the cause, structure is the effect.

The five elements form the basic foundation of Āyurveda out of which come the three doshas—*vāta*, *pitta*, *kapha*. Ether and Air together constitute *vāta*; Fire and Water, *pitta*; Water and Earth, *kapha*.

Soul (Ātman)

We have discussed the five elements. Now we will shift our attention to soul, the sixth of the nine causative substances according to Vaisheshika. According to Vaisheshika, soul is eternal; universal; of two kinds, individual and supreme (*jivātman* and *paramātman*); inferred; and indivisible. It is a substratum or phenomenon of Consciousness. Consciousness evolves because soul or spirit exists. Individual souls do not perceive other souls but they do infer their existence.

Sāṅkhya talks about Purusha, which is pure awareness, the highest principle. Modern science takes seriously only what can be seen, measured, or put on the observation table. Ancient Vedic philosophy speaks a great deal about soul as one's true identity and true Self. Self can exist without body, Self can exist without mind. In a deep sleep, one forgets the body and mind but in a dream state, Self still functions through the mind. The Self is still there enjoying the pure presence, the pure existence.

Without that Self, consciousness is not possible. Ātman cannot be seen but it can be experienced. It cannot be measured but one can merge into it. Vaisheshika's definition of ātman is as a material, causative factor of creation.

Mind (Manas)

The seventh causative substance is mind, manas. Mind is universal, atomic or indivisible, and is not directly perceivable. Mind directs experience. It is awareness functioning through the senses. Mind directs awareness to an object or goal and then perceives the outer object.

The content of mind may be either conscious or subconscious. For example, the cellular mind (atomic mind) is subconscious. The subconscious mind working through the autonomic nervous system directs most of our bodily functions. The beating of the heart, the breathing of the lungs, and the movement of liver cells, cells of the intestinal wall, of the ovaries and fallopian tubes, are all under autonomic control, which is the subconscious mind.

Actually, there is no line of demarcation between the conscious and subconscious mind. Mind is one, but it operates on levels that we call conscious and subconscious. For the convenience of understanding we have created this division. Mind is a wonderful vehicle. Meditation is probing into the subconscious. In meditation, thoughts of the past come up, feelings and emotions surface. When we meditate, our cells become aware and conscious of thoughts, of stress being released. We can begin to talk, share, and communicate with each cell.

Time (Kālā)

The next causative substance is time, kālā, which is movement and change. Time is a force that can produce change and we use it as a marker for change. When we measure time, we measure change.

The function of the doshas is also related to the time of day. For example, 5:00 AM or PM is associated with vāta, and 9:00 AM or PM is associated with kapha. The time of the day produces a different style of function. Time is a cause of change, creation, maintenance, and destruction.

The Earth rotates on its axis and also revolves around the sun. When the Earth completes one rotation, it is one day. When the Earth completes one revolution around the sun, it is one year. Chronological time is based upon the movement of the Earth.

Time can be measured in terms of prāna. One prāna is one breath. One breath is one inspiration and one expiration. Fifteen prāna is said to make one minute; 900 prāna, one hour; 21,600 prāna, one day. The faster the rate of respiration, the shorter the span of life. The slower the rate of respiration, the longer the span of life.

There is chronological time and there is psychological time. Thought takes place in psychological time. Since thought builds on memory, and memory is accumulated past experience, time is the movement of the past into the present and the future. Therefore, thought is the linear movement of time, because of the sequential change of events. Psychological time is the movement of thought. If one enters the inner space beyond thought, one goes beyond psychological time.

Direction (Dig)

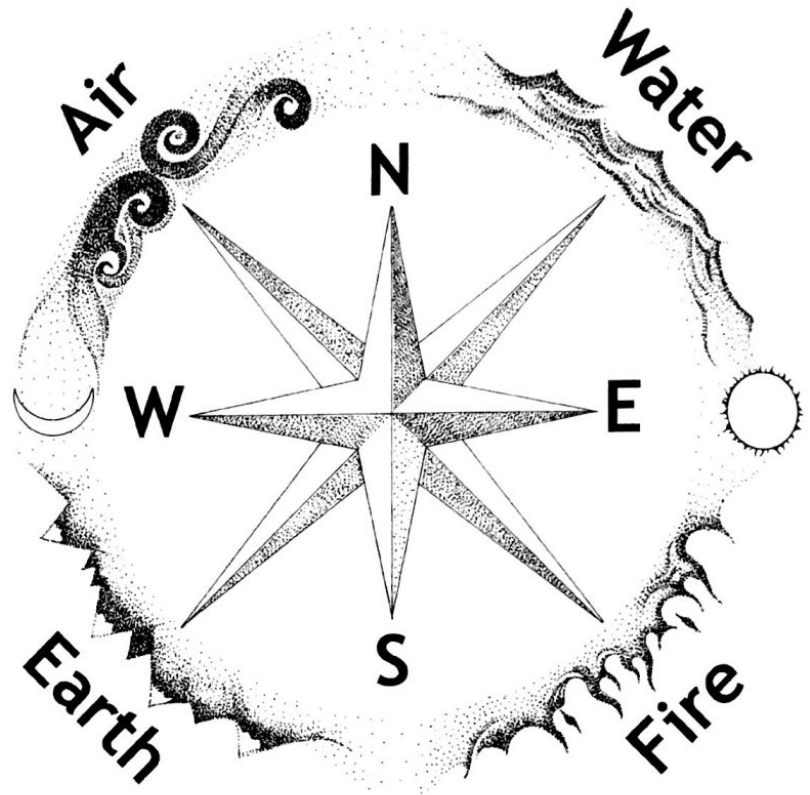
The last of the nine causative factors is direction, dig. Direction is an important concept in Āyurveda. Up, down, and lateral movements describe *doshic* function and are referred to as *dosha gati*. Internal and external movements also give a sense of direction.

East, west, north, and south, are four directions also used by Āyurveda. East is hot, sharp, bright. It has more solar energy. West is cool and has more feminine, lunar energy. In the northern hemisphere, the more you go to the north, the colder it is. The more you go to the south, the hotter it is. Āyurveda has used direction for healing purposes—for example, selecting the proper directional axis a person should sleep.

Southeast is the direction of Fire, southwest the direction of Earth, northwest the direction of Air and northeast the direction of Water. Ether is the center. This is the natural order of direction and the elements. Therefore, the kitchen should be located in the southeast part of the house in order to take advantage of the Fire element. Earth will bring sound sleep in the southwest portion. Fresh air should enter through the northwest. The Water element is located in the northeast, providing a good space for meditation and an altar. The middle area, Ether, should be left empty.

Arranging a house in this way helps us bring the blessing of all five elements so that we will be blessed by our environment. This Vedic understanding of arrangement is called *vastu shilpa shāstra*.

Directions and the Elements



Mīmāṃsa

The fourth philosophy is Mīmāṃsa, which means to analyze and thoroughly understand the truth. This is a philosophy of attaining freedom through the performance of duty or *dharma* (action in the light of awareness). The proponent of Mīmāṃsa was Jaimini, one of the great philosophers. It is a positive way of logic and Mīmāṃsa proves that there is a God. Mīmāṃsa says that there must be a non-moving mover who moves every object and that non-moving mover is God.

Mīmāṃsa emphasizes the teaching of the Vedas from the perspective of rituals. Pūrva Mīmāṃsa is based on the initial teachings of the Vedas, while Uttara Mīmāṃsa uses the later, higher teachings of Vedānta, which are the Upanishads.

Mīmāṃsa believes that the ultimate creator of the universe is God and that God is eternal, timeless, pure existence. It says God is both personal, incarnating in human form to bring peace, love, and order, and impersonal as Brāhma. Mīmāṃsa believes in many deities and says that each deity has some significant blessing to offer mankind.

In Mīmāṃsa, God as a universal being and as a totality is here in the present. God is reflected in every human being as the sky is reflected in water. In the ocean there is a vast sky. In the river there is a tiny sky. In a small container of water there is a yet smaller reflection. Mīmāṃsa says that reflection is incarnation. In some persons the reflection of God is 90 percent. In other persons it may be only 10 percent. Mīmāṃsa says that in reality every individual reflects God. Every individual is a complete phenomenon, but the completeness of this individual reflection is difficult to realize. Mīmāṃsa says that to understand our individuality, to truly know ourselves, is to know God. Mīmāṃsa says there is a lower self, *jīvātman*, and a higher Self, *paramātman*. Through meditation the lower self merges into the higher Self.

The knowledge of Mīmāṃsa is vast and cannot be covered in a few brief paragraphs. These teachings include many methods and means of attaining God through rituals, ceremonies, and fasting. Also included are instructions for different ways of *puja* and sacrifice. This philosophy is quite complex. Āyurveda has accepted Mīmāṃsa for healing purposes and incorporates rituals such as burning candles, offering flowers, sprinkling holy water, and burning incense, all of which have healing power.

Yoga

The fifth philosophy is Yoga. Yoga means union—the union of the lower self with the higher Self, the union of man with God. It is a practical discipline for knowing the self. Yoga comes from *yuj* that means to unite.

When you control your thought waves, you can go beyond thought. Thought is a barrier, an obstacle, and a block. Yoga is one of the ways to go beyond. Patañjali was the pioneer who organized yogic discipline as a science through his Yoga Sūtras and Āyurveda has accepted this philosophy for healing purposes.

The Yoga system provides a methodology for expanding one's individual consciousness to the universal Consciousness. There are various schools of Yoga—Bhakti Yoga (path of devotion), Jñāna Yoga (path of knowledge), Karma Yoga (path of action), etc. Patañjali's Yoga Sūtras gives eight methods to attain enlightenment:

1. Yama (five restraints)
2. Niyama (five observances)
3. Āsana (postures)
4. Prāṇāyāma (control of the vital force)

5. Pratyāhāra (withdrawal of senses)
6. Dhāraṇa (focusing attention on an object or mantra; one-pointed awareness⁷)
7. Dhyāna (meditation; a continuous flow of attention without words or thoughts; moment-to-moment awareness without judgment)
8. Samādhi⁸ (balance of body, mind, and consciousness; an expansive state of choiceless, passive awareness; spiritual Bliss)

Patañjali's system has great therapeutic value and discipline. The *yogāsana* is a way of bringing awareness into action in a particular position. Control of the mind is established by quieting and stilling the mind, so that the object of perception becomes the Self. In the broadest sense, Yoga brings attention back to the Self and creates the value of self-referral.

When one sits in the lotus pose, one becomes like a lotus. When in a cobra pose, one becomes like a cobra. When in a tree pose, one becomes like a tree. There is a communion between body, mind and consciousness. Standing on one leg for 10 minutes, 15 minutes, even one hour, will bring *siddhi*, the benefit of that *āsana*. Every *āsana* has a *siddhi*, a benefit, which creates biochemical changes in the body. Patañjali made a science of yoga and the ultimate end of yoga is *samādhi*, the merging of the lower self into the higher Self, where body, mind and spirit become one, and that is the state of liberation.

Āyurveda classifies yoga *āsanas* according to *vāta*, *pitta*, and *kapha*, utilizing yogic science for healing purposes.

Vedānta

The sixth philosophy is Vedānta, which was established by Bādarāyana. *Veda* means knowledge and *anta* means ending, so Vedānta means the ending of knowledge. Knowledge is necessary for learning, inquiring and investigating. But to fully realize life, the merger of the lower self into the higher Self, knowledge becomes a barrier. If one has tremendous knowledge, that knowledge blinds. The person becomes prejudiced and preoccupied with the knowledge. One cannot find God or one's true Self by reading books. We all have to read our own book, which is our daily operating consciousness. We have to read ourselves, our thoughts, emotions, reactions and feelings in every aspect of life and inquire of ourselves what we are.

7. This can be likened to the flow of oil on the head in the *pañchakarma* procedure called *shirodhāra*.
8. "Sama" means balanced, "dhi" means intellect; so *samādhi* is the state of balanced cognition.

Vedānta is a profound philosophy that Āyurveda has accepted. This philosophy is also referred to as *upanishad*. *Upa* means near, *nishad* means to sit in the vicinity of the enlightened one, the teacher, master, *guru* and listen to him or her without any doubt, delusion or comparison. Vedānta, the entire teaching, is *upanishad*.

Vedānta uses another word for God called Brāhma, which means the expansion of consciousness. The only thing that exists in Vedānta is Consciousness. There is nothing else. There is a tendency toward dualism in Sāṅkhya and Vaisheshika. However, in Vedānta there is only one principle, and that is called Consciousness.

Edwin Powell Hubble (1889-1953) was an American astronomer who is considered the founder of extragalactic astronomy and who provided the first evidence of the expansion of the universe. But before Hubble, several thousand years ago, Bādarāyana discovered this same truth and that is why he called the universe *brāhmanda*. Brāhmanda means the golden egg that is expanding. *Anda* means egg, *brah* means expansion—the expanding egg. Bādarāyana also discovered that there is a universal Consciousness in which we all share. We all share in one Consciousness even as we all share the light and that is what Bādarāyana was telling us. Āyurveda has accepted his philosophy for healing purposes.

Buddhism

Later, Āyurveda incorporated the philosophy of Buddhism, founded by Lord Buddha. The essence of Buddha's teachings is condensed within the Four Noble Truths:

1. Suffering exists.
2. There is a cause of suffering.
3. There is cessation of suffering.
4. There is a means to cease suffering.

According to Buddhism there are 12 causes of suffering:

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|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Avidya | Ignorance |
| 2. Samskāra | Past Impressions |
| 3. Vignana | Initial Consciousness |
| 4. Nama Rūpa | Mind/Body |
| 5. Shadayatana | Six Organs of Cognition |
| 6. Sparsha | Contact of Senses with Objects |
| 7. Vedanā | Sensation, Feelings, Pain/Pleasure |
| 8. Trushna | Thirst to Enjoy |
| 9. Upadan | Mental Attachment |
| 10. Bhava | Becoming |
| 11. Janma | Birth |
| 12. Jara Marana | Old Age, Death |

And there are eight ways to overcome suffering:

1. Right Perception and Observation
2. Right Thinking
3. Right Speaking
4. Right Conduct
5. Right Living
6. Right Doing
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Meditation

Lord Buddha was born on the Indian subcontinent around the 6th or 7th century BCE.⁹ He was highly enlightened. He never used the word God. He felt God as a pure Presence, pure Existence. Buddhist philosophy encourages entering into that pure existence by emptying our minds of their contents. Buddha said that in order to hold the contents of our minds and our consciousness, we have had to establish definite borders around them. Containers and contained are the same and we live in the tiny enclosures we call consciousness. Buddha said that if we empty our consciousness of its contents, then we dissolve our borders. At that moment we enter *nirvāna*, which is the state of pure Existence. Buddha called this state nothingness or no-mind state.

We have considered the Shad Darshan, the Six Philosophies, on which Āyurveda is based. We have also discussed Buddhism. The creators of these philosophies were great pioneers and have given us profound insights into the truth of life. Each of these philosophies has contributed to the thought of Āyurveda.

- * Sāṅkhya gave Āyurveda the theory of evolution and a theory of cause and effect.
- * Nyāya and Vaisheshika gave Āyurveda logical and sequential thinking. The body is a material machine and this machine should be corrected. This approach is reflected in modern physics.
- * Mīmāṃsā is about action, the path of life, freedom through performance of duty (dharma). Its teachings include methods and means of attaining God through rituals, ceremonies, and fasting.
- * Vedānta gave profound thinking to Āyurveda about eternal, changeless Brahmā, the ultimate achievement of each human being. To achieve that goal each person needs perfect health.

9. There is much scholarly discussion about the exact year of the Buddha's birth. Modern scholars specify dates ranging from 563 to 623 BCE.



- * Āyurveda uses Yoga therapeutically and indeed each of these systems has great value.
- * And finally, Buddhism. Buddha says everything is going to end. Do not worry about disease, because disease is going to end. Have patience. Buddhist philosophy says there is suffering and a simple way to go beyond suffering is to have patience, to give time for pathogenesis to eradicate itself. That is what Buddhism has given to Āyurveda.