

DARŚANAS AND AYURVEDA - INTERDISCIPLINARY DIALOGUES

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ABSTRACT : Close reading of the core texts of any traditional discipline reveals the intellectual network that functions as its theoretical grid. By understanding the text in the background of that intellectual network, the learner is led to wider possibilities of enquiry inherent in that text. Disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity went hand in hand in the intellectual discourses of traditional knowledge systems. Interdisciplinarity was never something that had to be brought in mechanically from outside. Many disciplines point out the importance of knowing one's own *śāstra* in connection with *śāstras* different from one's own. Even though there is divergence in orientation pertaining to darśanas and ayurvedic conceptions of life, it is important to identify the theoretical dialogues between these systems of knowledge. Such an approach paves the way for a broader understanding of the systems. On the one, it facilitates a philosophically and logically indepth explication of *ayurveda*. On the other, it also enables the empirical exposition of *darśanas* to reveal its applied dimension. Caturvyooha method or four fold method of enquiry forms a method shared by different streams of traditional disciplines including *advaita* and *ayurveda*. The theories regarding different kinds of *kośas*, *śareeras* and diseases corresponding to each of them are evidences to the fruitful dialogues between *advaita* and *ayurveda*. Such interdisciplinary dialogues form and function as the essential characteristics of traditional knowledge systems of India.

Key Words Darśanas and ayurveda, Caturvyooha-siddhaanta, Pancakośa, Sthoola-śareera, Kaarāṇa-śareera.

Introduction

Close reading of the core texts of any traditional discipline reveals the intellectual network that functions as its theoretical grid. By understanding a text in the background of that intellectual network, the learner is led to wider possibilities of enquiry inherent in that text. Viewed from a broader perspective, new insights can be developed on the subject which makes the text contemporary and multioriented. It can be seen that the teaching and learning of traditional knowledge systems of India had always been a multidisciplinary dialogical process. Understanding knowledge systems from that dialogic perspective which is also an integral part of their evolution, enables contemporary learners to connect with the systems more effectively. As such studies involve more than one discipline of study, this endeavour undoubtedly will be of interdisciplinary nature. The boundaries of disciplinarity and inter disciplinarity are found to be thin and irrelevant considering the extensive possibilities of approaching and understanding a *śāstra* from multiple perspectives. This paper, at the outset, tries to trace certain important instances and ways in which interdisciplinarity was highlighted and practised in traditional knowledge systems of India. After that, some specific points related to the

theoretical background, commonly shared by different knowledge systems including *advaita* and *ayurveda* are presented. In the last part, certain noteworthy conceptual interfaces and dialogues between *advaita* and *ayurveda* are introduced and discussed.

Disciplinary/Interdisciplinarity

The authors of ancient Sanskrit texts often quoted verses from the works of their predecessors/contemporaries as authority. It was not a general practice to state the identity of these authoritative sources but referred to them as *kecid*, *eke* (some people) etc. It was the duty of the learner or commentator of the later period to identify the accurate source of reference. In that sense, the very reading of the text itself turned into a research activity. Theoretical discourses of each school of *darśana* could be understood contextually and historically, only with regard to their engagement with other schools. In *Nyaayasootras* and *Charakasamhitā*, theories are classified as *sarva-tantrasiddhaanta*, *prati-tantrasiddhaanta*, *adhikaranasiddhaanta* and *abhyupagamasiddhaanta*.^[1] All these intellectual disciplines, in one way or other, accept, contrast, accommodate and adapt theories advocated by others. The presence of a theoretical order was evident there which had to be addressed in the process of theorising.

Thus disciplinary and interdisciplinarity went hand in hand in the intellectual discourses of traditional knowledge systems. Interdisciplinarity was never something that had to be brought in mechanically from outside. Many disciplines point out the importance of knowing one's own *śāstra* in connection with *śāstras* different from one's own. For example, KumarilaBhatta, in his *Meemaamsaślokaśartī*, proclaims that the discipline of *Poorva-meemaamsa* is *bahuvidyāntaraśrī*, that is, a discipline that is relied upon by many other disciplines^[2]. Another connotation of the same is that *meemaamsa* is a discipline that demands the knowledge of many other disciplines of study. Anyhow, interaction with other schools of discipline is undoubtedly highlighted here.

According to ayurvedic preceptors, there are two kinds of relationship between a specific *śāstra* and other *śāstras*. According to *Suśruta*, a physician should have basic knowledge of different kinds of *śāstras* because one who knows only one *śāstra* will not be able to grasp the essence of even that *śāstra*.^[3] Thus, this kind of relationship enables the learner to have a comprehensive knowledge of one's own *śāstra* through the knowledge of other *śāstras*. The other type of relationship, as posited by *Charaka*, equips the learner to understand other

śāstras easily, based on the strong understanding of the disciplinary logic of one's own *śāstra*.^[4]

Thus one may benefit from the interactions and interfaces between one's own and other *śāstras* for an interdisciplinary and comprehensive understanding of them. During the course of *śāstra* discourses, it had been a practice to authenticate or supplement oneself by quoting or referring to other *śāstras*. *Para-tantraavalokanam* or learning other *śāstras* which are different from one's own has been a practice held high in *ayurveda*.^[5] Understanding the ways in which a particular theory is employed in different disciplines in different ways also exemplify a multi-perspectival potential inherent to it.

Caturvyooha-siddhaanta

Caturvyooha-siddhaanta is one of the narrative methods/logical tools commonly employed in texts of different *śāstras* in ways specific to each system.

In *Dhammachakkappavattanasutta*, the first sermon by Buddha and *Mahaahattipadopamasutta* of *Majjhimanikaayasutta*, the basic texts of Buddhist philosophy, the four *aarya-satyas* are proposed^[6]. They are *dukkha* (sorrow), *dukkhasamudaya* (origin of sorrow), *dukkhanirodha* (cessation of sorrow) and *dukkhanirodhagaminipada* (path leading to that cessation). This classification can be represented in another way like; a problem/issue to be addressed, its origin/cause, its cessation and the way to achieve that cessation. This may be cited as the earliest instance of four-fold perspective of addressing a problem. This method of perceiving a problem from different angles for a comprehensive understanding and resultant solution can be found adapted in different *darśanas* and in *ayurveda* as well.

Caturvyooha-siddhaanta is employed in *Vyaasabhaashya* of *Yogasootras*^[7]. This *sootras* sets foundation for the whole discourse of Yoga philosophy in the form of its rationale and objective. The discussion here focuses on the nature and kinds of *dukkha*. The three kinds of *dukkhas* are born of *pariṇāma* (change), *taapa* (anxiety) and *samskāra* (habituation). *Dukkha* is born out of imbalanced functioning of *gunastoo*^[7]. Persons who are oriented towards *Samaadhi* find the whole worldly life sorrowful. So, for them, it was inevitable to conduct an in-depth enquiry into the origin, cause, cessation and the means of cessation concerning *dukkha*. *Caturvyooha-siddhaanta* has been employed as the most suitable format for that purpose through which the cause of *dukkha* was identified as *avidyaa* and the means of its cessation was *samyag-darśana*. Vyasa the commentator aptly employs the methodology adopted in

medical science for framing its theoretical foundation as disease, cause of disease, health and the procedure of treatment.

Vyaasabhaashya elaborates on this *sootra* thus- As medical science employs a four-fold method of analysis such as, disease, cause of disease, health and treatment, this *sastra* also follows a four-fold method of *samsaara*, cause of *samsaara*, *moksha* and means to attain *moksha*^[8]

Thus a direct reference to *Cikitsaa-sastra* pointing out the similarity of approach is found here. The commentator Vyasa integrates this frame to the discipline of *Yoga-sastra* and explains it further^[9]: *Samsaara*, full of sorrow to be avoided, it originates from the union of *prakṛti* and *purusha*, its ultimate cessation is to be attained and means for that goal is right vision.

Nyaayadarśana adopts this frame in a manner specific to that school of thought. The first *sootra* of *Nyaayasootras* of Gautama enlists 16 categories of *padaarthas*^[10]. Vatsyayanain his *bhaashya* to this *sootra* elaborates the idea in a four foldmanner^[11]. He observes that the attainment of supreme felicity is preceded by four core themes of *Sastra* or four human concerns. They are ; identifying the problem to be avoided (suffering), its cause, the absolute cessation of the problem which is to be avoided and the means for that purpose. Here, the four fold foundation of the *sastra* discourse is mentioned. It is noteworthy that the categorization of 16 *padaarthas* is fitted into the four fold framing of the philosophical and logical narrative.

Saamkhyakaarika by Iswarakrishna begins the text with a comprehensive formula to deal with the three kinds of *dukkha* that affect all living beings^[12]. Here, the introduction to the *sastra* is presented effectively through a format similar to four fold narration. Thus evolves the action plan to get rid of *dukkhatraya*. The yearning to identify the means to avoid the cause, to be aware of the different available means for its cessation and to identify the suitable one among them form part of the action plan.

BhadantaNagarjuna, author of the ayurvedic text *Rasavaisheshikasootra* which deals with the logic and ontology of *ayurveda* begins the work pointing to the four fold method followed in *ayurveda-sastra*. The first three *sootras* of *Rasavaisheshikasootra* indicate the four fold analytical method to explore the science of *ayurveda*^[13]. The four fold method, in the case of health, involves the components of health, symptoms of health, cause and means to achieve health and benefits of being healthy. In the case of disease, it involves the components of disease,

symptoms of disease, causes of disease and effect of disease. This classification specifically sets the ground for a logical and unique definition of *aarogya* and *roga* as well as for explaining the whole process of treatment.

Sankaracharya, in *Upadeśaasahasree*, has integrated this fourfold method with advaitic methodology of analyzing a problem. In *Kootastha-advayaatma-prakaranam* of *Upadeśaasahasree*, the disciple asks *Guru* whether the sorrow experienced by him was inherent to his own nature or incidental (caused by a specific reason)^[14]. According to the disciple, if the sorrow was inherent to his own nature, it was impossible to put an end to it because one's own nature was unavoidable. If it was born out of any specific cause, it could be removed by removing that cause.

Guru gave him the answer that the sorrow was not inherent but causal. And the disciple inquisitively asked about the nature of the cause, method of removing it and about his own real nature. He was convinced that when the cause was removed, he will regain his own nature like a patient regaining his *svabhaava* when the cause of his disease was removed.^[15]

Guru answered that *avidyaa* or ignorance was the reason of his *dukkha*, *Vidyaa* was the remedy to remove it and when *avidyaa*, the cause was removed, the effect will naturally be removed and he will experience his own nature or *swabhaava* which is of the form of liberation from this *samsaara*^[16] In this dialogue also, direct reference to *cikitsaasaastra*, through the reference to fourfold method of addressing and analyzing a problem is found.

All the schools of thought mentioned above hold different theoretical positions but a specific pattern of enquiry shared by all is evident from the above references. Vagbhaṭa, the author of *Ashtaangasangraha* has hailed the greatness of the method of *aaryasatyas* saying that one who practises *ayurveda* on the lines of *aaryasatyas* accomplishes the utmost result from it, not only for oneself but for the sake of others also.^[17]

Question of *Adhishṭhaana*/Medium

The nature of *adhishṭhaana*/substratum or medium is accorded much importance in *saastras* connecting it with various processes. *Sareera* is the basic *adhishṭhaana* conceptualised in unique ways both in *advaita* and *ayurveda*. There is no doubt that *sareera* is a term which carries a wide range of meaning in both the disciplines. But they differ in accordance with the nature of fundamental conceptualization in the respective system. In *advaita*, *sareera* is not a mere physical entity that is visible externally. It has many layers; gross, subtle and causal and

all of them together constitute the entity of *jeeva*. Atmabodha written by Sankaracharya, clearly delineates the three kinds of *sareeras*. According to him, the gross body which is made up of five elements, is the platform of experiences of *jeeva* (*bhogaayatana*). At the same time, subtle body which is constituted of ten *indriyas*, five *praanas*, *manas* and *buddhi* acts as the instrument of experiences. (*bhogasaadhanam*). Causal body is *avidyaa* itself, the root cause of multiple experiences one undergoes.^[18] In *Vivekachoodamani* also, Sankara gives the definitions of the three bodies. Gross body is the *aasraya* for the empirical activities of individuals. The definition he gives for subtle body here is interesting. Subtle body is union of eight structures (*puryashṭaka*), viz, five *karmendriyas*, five *jnaanendriyas*, five *praanas*, five *bhootas*, four aspects of *antahkarana* (*manas*, *buddhi*, *ahankaara*, *cittam*), *avidyaa*, *kaama* and *karma*. It is *karmaphala-anubhaavaka* or instrumental for the experience of fruits of actions. Causal body is defined as one which is constituted by three subtle elements of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* which acts the root cause of all that is experienced.^[19]

It is suggested that comprehensive and indepth knowledge about *sareera* is essential for the deeper understanding of *ayurveda*.^[20] According to Charaka, mind, soul and body exist as a tripod and the world has this tripod as its substratum.^[21] Different kinds of knowledge about body are relevant in *ayurveda*. One is structural which elaborates on different limbs of physical body. The second kind of structural knowledge, more fundamental in nature, is related to the theory of five *bhootas*, i.e., compositional aspects of body. Another kind of analysis of body is based on its internal functional aspects. Vagbhata, in *Ashtangasangraha* maintains that body is the foundation of *dosha*, *dhaatu* and *mala*.^[22] Three *doshas*, seven *dhaatus* and various *malas* taken together explains the whole bodily functions of life which in turn result in *aarogya* or *anaarogya*.

Pancakoṣa-siddhaanta

The interface between advaitic and ayurvedic theories on body can be well explained when they are understood in connection with *pancakosha-siddhaanta*. This theory has its roots in *Taittiriya Upanishad*, even though the word *koṣa* is not found used there. The layers of *annamaya*, *praanamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijnaanamaya* and *aanandamaya* are explained there as the parts constituting a living being. Five sheaths form five layers of individual self and altogether these constitute the medium of all mechanisms of bodily functions. In the description starting from *annamayakoṣa* and proceeding to *aanandamaya*, the *Upanishad*

affirms that each layer becomes complete with the succeeding one- *tenaishapoornah*.^[23] This expression indicates that *kosas* are envisaged as mutually complementary to each other.

The theory of three *sareeras* viz., *sthoola* (gross), *sookshma* (subtle) and *kaarana* (causal) can be understood in connection with the theory of *pancakosas*. *Sthoolasareera* corresponds to *annamayakosawhich* is defined as one which gets nourished by food (*bhogaayatana*). *Sookshmasareera* is constituted of three *kosas* of *praanamaya*, *manomaya* and *vijnaanamaya*. Thus it is held that *sookshmasareera* is constituted of *jnaanendriyas*, *karmendriyas*, five kinds of *vaayu-s*, *buddhi* and *manas*. This is in tune with the definition of *sookshma-sareera* as *bhogasaadhana*. The basis of *kaarana-sareera* is *avidyaa* or ignorance. *Avidyaa* is considered as *kaarana-sareera* because, in *advaitavedanta*, *avidyaa* is regarded as the basic root of the whole creation which is transient. In a generalized sense, *avidyaa* and *vidyaa* can be interpreted in terms of the basic perspective/vision one upholds; wrong in the case of *avidyaa* and right in the case of *vidyaa*. Even that perspective/ vision is called as *sareera* in *advaita* because it is the basic source of experience which shapes the nature of further course of human life.

This classification generates several questions. *Sareeras* are constituted of *kosas* or layers. Layers in turn are called *sareera-s*. Why are they called *sareeras*? In the primary sense, only gross or *sthoolasareera* is to be called *sareera*. Other two have to be called merely layers or group of layers. So the term *sareera* itself connotes a deeper meaning here. It means something that gets affected/deconstructed or decomposed. It also denotes the immediacy of experiences that emerge from that particular platform. *Sookshma* and *kaarana-sareeras* are not mere abstract conceptions but principles inner and subtle, subject to/ source of numerous experiences.

Three *sareeras*/five *kosas* and respective *rogas*

The advaitic text *Panchadaṣi* written by Madhava Vidyananya of 14th century, gives insightful observations about the three *sareeras* and the respective *rogas* which affect them. Madhava Vidyananya observes that the diseases born out of vitiation of the *vaata*, *pitta* and *kapha* affect the gross body. They result in the malfunctioning of body. Mental afflictions like *kaama*, *krodha* etc. affect the *sookshma-sareera* by their presence in it. In the case of *sama*, *dama* etc. it is their absence that produces the negative effect in *sookshma-sareera*. *Kaarana-sareera* happens to be the platform where the self experiences the feeling of being lost in ignorance i.e. being mentally and intellectually confused.^[24] Even that condition can be called a *roga* in a broad perspective. Madhava Vidyananya points out that as the three *sareeras*

are affected by diseases, *Aatman* or supreme self is not affected by any. According to him, the root of the diseases that affect both *sthoola* and *sookshma sareeras* lie in *kaarana sareera*.^[25] Thus a unique kind of relation exists between the three kinds of *sareeras* and corresponding *rogas*. This forms one important logic behind the concept of three bodies.

Ayurvedic scholars have put forward some noteworthy observations regarding the logic behind the conception of five *kosas* from the perspective of bodily functions. K.Raghavan Thirumulpad, referring to the theory of *Pancakoshas*, points out that each layer of *aananda, vijnaana, manas, praana* and *dhaatus* of an individual regulates the succeeding layer in its functioning. (This observation can be compared with the phrase *Tenaishapoor nah* (Each *kosha* becomes complete by the succeeding one) of *Taittiriya Upanishad*, which was quoted earlier). He is also of the view that when different kinds of symptoms of various diseases are analysed carefully, physician is sure to get indications about the nature of afflictions the five *kosas* have been subjected to. When conditions like *Prajnaaparaadha* are analysed thoroughly, one is led to the conviction that *roga* and *aarogya* are not mere physiological or mental conditions but are deeply and intricately connected with the life vision of a person. It has also been observed that positive, blissful and natural experience of wellbeing is the one which gets reflected positively in all of these five kinds of *kosas*.^[26] It is in this context that the concept of three *sareeras*/ five *kosas* becomes relevant in *ayurveda* which views a person as a complete being with all kinds of external and internal complexities.

The very first verse of *Ashtaangahridaya* deserves special mention here^[27]. *Roga* is characterised as *raaga* (attachment) etc. in that verse. That means the definition of *roga* encompasses all kinds of afflictions that affect body and mind. *Rogas* are again characterised as *aseshakaaya-prasrta* that means which are pervading all through the body. Here, the term *aseshakaaya* is usually interpreted as pervading the whole body. But, in the light of the observation in *Panchadasi* regarding three bodies and diseases corresponding to each of them, the term *aseshakaaya* may be interpreted as all the three kinds of bodies i.e.; *sthoola*, *sookshma* and *kaarana*. *Rogas* that affect a person range from mental states like *raaga* and *dvesha* to vitiation of *vaata*, *pitta* and *kapha*. The absence of a right and balanced vision about life can also be called *roga*. So different platforms are to be there as the *adhishtana* of each kind of *roga*. As *Madhava Vidyanatha* theorises, *sthooladeha* is affected by the vitiation of *vaata*, *pitta* and *kapha*. *Sookshmadeha* is affected by *raaga*, *dvesha* etc. *Kaarana-deha* is affected by the absence of right vision of oneself and the other.

What can be the implications of this theorisation? *Advaitavedanta* as a philosophy enquiring about the innermost and subtle principle of life, theorises broadly about the afflictions of different kinds and their causes in tune with *ayurveda*, the applied science. This mode of enquiry paves the way to understand the logic and relevance behind the conceptualisation of three kinds of bodies as explained in *advaitavedanta*. This also enables one to understand the broad and unique conception of *roga* and *aarogya* as upheld in *ayurveda*.

Conclusion

Understanding traditional knowledge systems on the basis of interdisciplinarity inherent in them enables the learners to explore the maximum potential it offers. It can be seen that interdisciplinarity and intertextuality were essential components in the process of evolution of each knowledge system. Even the classification of *siddhaanta* is indicative of the intertextual engagements that resulted in interdisciplinary enquiries. Concepts like *caturvyooha-siddhaanta* acts as a methodological, and at times theoretical platform, that was shared by different systems of knowledge with unique ways specific to that particular system. The way *advaitaandayurveda* have adapted it into their discourses is noteworthy. Through understanding the theory of three *sareeras* as conceptualised in *advaita* in tune with ayurvedic theories, the applied dimension of advaitic thought is revealed to the learner. This understanding effectively offers the learners a broader perspective of *ayurveda* with which it has conceptualized *roga*, *arogya* and their *adhishthaana*. An in-depth philosophical and logical explication of *ayurveda* results from that. Such interdisciplinary dialogues form and function as the essential characteristics of traditional knowledge systems of India.

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17. यथाप्रतिज्ञातमितिक्रमेण वेदो/यमष्टांगनिधेर्निबद्धः। अभ्यस्यतोमार्गमिवार्यसत्यम् संजायतेस्वार्थपरार्थसिद्धिः।Ashtangasangraha, Utharasthanamch.50.
18. पञ्चीकृतमहाभूतसंभवं कर्मसञ्चितम् । शरीरं सुखदुःखानां भोगायतनमुच्यते ॥ पञ्चप्राणमनोबुद्धिदशेन्द्रियसमन्वितम् । अपञ्चीकृतभूतोत्थं सूक्ष्मांगं भोगसाधनम् ॥ अनाद्यविद्यानिर्वाच्या कारणोपाधिरुच्यते उपाधित्रितयादन्यमात्मानमवधारयेत् ॥ SankaracharyaAtmabodha, Vv.12-14., Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1947.

19. प्रञ्चीकृतेभ्यो भूतेभ्यः स्थूलेभ्यः पूर्वकर्मणा
समुत्पन्नमिदं स्थूलं भोगायतनमात्मनः ।
अवस्था जागरस्तस्य स्थूलार्थानुभवो यतः ॥
वागादिपञ्च श्रवणादिपञ्च प्राणादिपञ्चाभ्रमुखानि पञ्च
बुद्ध्याद्यविद्यापि च कामकर्मणी पुर्यष्टकं सूक्ष्मशरीरमाहुः ॥
अव्यक्तमेतत्त्रिगुणैरिक्तं तत्कारणं नाम शरीरमात्मनः
सुषुप्तिरेतस्य विभक्त्यवस्था प्रलीनसर्वेन्द्रियबुद्धिवृत्तिः ॥
Sankaracharya, *Vivekachoodamani*, Vv.88,96,120 Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, 1991.
20. *Ashtaangahrdya*, Sootrasthaana, Adhyaya, 1.
21. *Charakasamhita*, Sootrasthaana, 1.46.
22. दोषधातुमलमूलो हि देहः। *Ashtamgasamgraha*, Sutrasthaana, 19.3.
23. *Taittiriyanopanishad*, Brahmaanandavalli ,Gita Press, Gorakhpur, 2011.
24. स्थूलसूक्ष्मकारणंचशरीरं त्रिविधं स्मृतम्।
अवश्यं त्रिविधोऽस्त्येव तत्र तत्रोचितो ज्वरः ॥
वातपित्तश्लेष्मजस्य व्याधयः कोटिशस्तनौ।
दुर्गन्धित्वकुरूपत्वदाहभंगादयस्तथा ॥
कामक्रोधादयश्शान्ति- दान्त्याद्यालिंगदेहगाः।
ज्वराः द्वयेऽपि बाधन्ते प्रास्याप्रास्यानरं क्रमात् ॥
स्वंपरंचनवेत्यात्मावित्तष्टइवकारणे।
आगामिदुःखबीजं चेत्येतदिन्द्रेण दर्शितम् ॥
Panchadasi, *Trptideepaprakarana*, Vv. 223-226. Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, 2022,
25. भोग्यमिच्छन्भोक्तुरर्थेशरीरमनुसंज्वरेत्
ज्वरास्त्रिषु शरीरेषु स्थिताः नत्वात्मनोज्वराः ॥
व्याधयो धातुवैषम्ये स्थूलदेहे स्थिताः ज्वराः
कामक्रोधादयः सूक्ष्मे द्वयोर्बीजंतुकारणे ॥
Panchadasi, *Vidyaanandaprakarana* , Vv.8-9 Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, 2022.
26. Raghavan Thirumulpad. K., *Ayurvedadarsanam*, Pp.121-122, Kerala Language Institute, Thiruvananthapuram, 1997.
27. रागादि रोगान्सततानुषक्तान् अशेषकायप्रसृतान् शेषान्।
औत्सुक्यमोहारतिदान्जघानयोः पूर्ववैद्याय नमोस्तु तस्मै ॥ *Ashtaangahrdya*, *Sutra* 1.1