

## Ayurveda: The Science of Life

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Ayurveda is considered as a system of complimentary medicine. It was the major health care system before the scientific revolution. Modern medicine became prominent after 19th century. Both systems were evolved from a common source of thoughts of ancient civilizations. Ayurveda is applied for limited number of health problems. Modern medicine is developing daily, through inestimable efforts in reviews, research and experiments. The fundamentals of Ayurveda are not based on superstitions and are not beyond the scope of human mind. Information gathered from ancient experiments and research are equally applicable in any occasion of time. The philosophical background of Ayurveda is strong enough to set up new model of methodology for the development of Ayurveda. Negligence of majority of people, who deal with the subject, may be the most possible reason for the isolation of Ayurveda in solving major health care problems. Extensive revisions and researches will correct the mistakes.

### **Definition of Ayurveda**

Ayurveda has been defined as the science of life but it seems to be considerably broader according to the classical texts of Ayurveda. The main objective of the subject is to enable the people to lead a superb glorious life. The term "Ayusha", in the context of Ayurveda, stands for the combination of Sarira, Indriya, Manas and Atma. Modern science deals with the Sarira, Concepts of Indriya and Manas are beyond the scope of modern science. The synonyms such as Nityaga, Anubandha, Samyoga, Dhari and Jivita for "Ayusha" symbolize different perspectives of life.

### **Philosophical Background of Ayurveda.**

The philosophy of Sankya and the philosophy of Viseshika provide the foundation of Ayurveda. Philosophy of Sankhya describes three states of Universe; The Evolution, Existence and Dissolution. Vaiseshika analyzed the matter in detail. The Atom, the basic unit of matter, is composed of electrons, protons etc, according to the modern science. Vaiseshika considers the matter as a composition of Kala, Disa, Athma and Manas, in addition to the five basic elements Patavi, Apa, Theja, Vayu and Akasa. These controversial concepts should be reviewed.

### **Knowledge of Medicine**

#### **Health**

Ayurveda consists of well-organized knowledge of Medicine. The definition of Health accepted by WHO, is similar to that of Susruta (1200 BC). Guidelines provided by Ayurveda show the significance in designing health protection strategies. The person, who seeks happiness should exercise the highest care in selecting what is wholesome in the case of food, conduct and behaviour. Code of conduction promotes the individual health as well as the health of community.

**Anatomy and Physiology**

The basic concepts of structure and function are compatible with that of modern science. Concept of Deha paramanu in Ayurveda shows the relationship to the concept of cell, the basic unit of the organism. Concepts of Beeja, Beejabhaga and Bijabhagavayava are related to the concepts of genetics in modern science. Ayurvedic Anatomy describes the human body as a combination of three sub bodies: Stulasarira, Lingasarira and Adhishtanasarira. The knowledge, obtained from dissecting the Stulasarira, contributed for the development of Modern Anatomy.

Physiology is described on the concepts of Dosa, Dhatu and Mala. All body functions are controlled by Vata, the electromagnetic forces of the body. Agni, which exists in Pitta, is the force of Metabolism. Sleshma provides the functions of water in the body. Dathus are the fundamental constituents of structures. Concept of Mala deals with the things to be excreted from the body. The concepts of Dosa, Dhatu and Mala are equally applicable to both plants and animals. Transport and exchange of materials in the body occurs by means of Srotas, which include micro and macrovascules and channels. Dysfunction of srotas leads to generate metabolic derangements. Psychological functions are elaborated in detail on the concepts of Satva, Rajas and Tamas, the basic properties of the Manas. Psycho-somato typing of human is based on the concept of Prakriti. For the development of Ayurveda, these concepts should be applied practically with in a scientific background.

**Pathology**

Diseases are considered as the deviation of equilibrium states of Dosa, Dhatu and Mala. Disequilibrium of Rajas and Thamas causes psychological disorders. They are classified on different perspectives, pointing to correct diagnosis and management. Primary aetiological factor of diseases is the violation of code of healthy living. Majority of diseases are caused by violation of the laws of nature. Role of Microorganisms and other pathological organisms in the generation of diseases also have been identified. Ayurveda is rich in the information regarding the methods of transmission of infective diseases, spreading of epidemics, their reasons and methods of prevention. Genetic predisposition and inheritance of certain diseases created two separate sections in the classification of diseases.

**Clinical Management:**

The main objectives of the clinical management are to preserve the health and to alleviate the disordered body functions. Surgical and Medical managements are the two major branches of Ayurveda. Guidelines for effective management are given on the scientific evaluation of experiences. Elimination of aetiological factors is the supreme method of treatment. Purification helps to remove the unnecessary materials in the body. Samana treatments bring the body functions into equilibrium state. Upashaya consists of eighteen types of therapeutic methods for successful management.

**Pharmacology**

Knowledge on Pharmacology is based on long-term scientific observations. Medicinal plants mentioned in classical texts have been categorized in different perspectives. Five hundred decoctions have been categorized into fifty groups. Each group induces a particular action in the body. Natural products obtained from plants, animals, and minerals are mainly used as drugs. Alchemy was developed later

and contributed for further development of Ayurveda. Evidence obtained from scientific observations conducted in the real environment instead of synthetic environment, aided for the development of Pharmacology, Pharmacognosy and Pharmacy. Ayurveda possesses its own library of valuable herbomineral formulations. Modern scientific investigations witness their efficacy and effectiveness. It has developed eight specific branches. Kayachikitsatantra deals with the medical management of diseases. Salyatantra includes the knowledge on the surgical management of diseases. Salakyatantra represents both surgical and medical management of the diseases of head and neck including the special sensory organs. Information on Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Paediatrics exist in the branch of Kaumarabhrithyantra. Agadatantra covers all aspects of toxicology. Bhutavidya basically aims at curing diseases caused by invisible forces. Preventive medicine and methods for preservation of youth are described in the branch of Rasayanatantra. Vajikaranatantra advices to improve the sex related disorders.

Ayurveda is as deep as the ocean. It has been expressed as a gist . Person needs a sound logical knowledge of different subjects to aquire a deep insight on Ayurveda. Ayurveda includes all methods, which support for healthy living.

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