

REVIEW ARTICLE

Theoretical Secrets of *Ayurveda*-Review

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ABSTRACT

Background: Almost everyone must have experienced that in this world, not only humans, but even the smallest creatures always try to avoid suffering and strive to attain happiness. Keeping this fact in mind we can say that ever since the creation of the universe, man has been making efforts to fulfill natural desires such as hunger, thirst, and sleep and to get rid of physical diseases. *Ayurveda* first emerged in this sequence. Nowadays we use many of medical methods such as Allopathy, Homeopathy, Naturopathy, Unani, and Siddha but *Ayurvedic* system is settled in our hearts. These days everyone's inclination is increasing towards *Ayurveda*. *Ayurveda Shashtra* not only protect the health of a healthy person but also cure the disease. *Ayurveda* is the only medical science in the whole world which focuses more on *Pathya Apathya* than the treatment and gives more importance in removing the cause of the disease.

Aim: The primary aim of *Ayurvedic* therapy is to identify the root cause of an illness. Its therapeutic methods are classified into four categories as *Prakrutisthapna Chikitsa* (health maintenance), *Rasayana Chikitsa* (restoration of normal function), *Roganashani Chikitsa* (disease cure), and *Naishtiki Chikitsa* (spiritual approach).

Materials and Methods: An extensive review of *Ayurvedic literature*, along with its associated commentaries, has been undertaken. In addition, contemporary medical science textbooks have been referenced as sources for this discussion.

Result: *Ayurveda* is the art of living a balanced life, as it not only offers treatments and understanding of diseases but also imparts comprehensive knowledge essential for leading a fulfilling life. Finding the cause of an illness is the basic goal of *Ayurvedic* therapy.

Discussion and Conclusion: *Ayurveda* is widely recognized as one of the oldest traditional medical systems in the world. The ancient knowledge within this traditional medical system remains largely unexplored. A significant obstacle to the convergence of these systems, aside from other challenges in developing plant-based medicines, is the limited understanding of the differences and similarities in their theoretical principles. The review seeks to highlight the ancient history of *Ayurveda*. This will assist budding scholars, researches, and practitioners in gaining a deeper understanding of traditional medical systems, fostering the strengthening of shared aspects, and addressing challenges to achieve their global acceptance and harmonization.

1. INTRODUCTION

The word *Ayurveda* is a science which focuses on life. *Ayurveda* is defined as the knowledge that considers the beneficial and harmful aspects of life and provides guidance for attaining a long and healthy life.^[1]

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The word *Ayurveda* has its origin from two words – “*Ayush + Veda*”. *Ayush* means Life and *Veda* means Knowledge and Life. In simple language, *Ayurveda* is the art of living life properly because this Science not only provides treatment of diseases or knowledge of diseases but also provides all kinds of necessary knowledge to live life. In a very limited sense, we can also call it a medical system, because it also presents comprehensive and complex knowledge about health and disease. In fact, this science affects all the physical, mental and

spiritual aspects of life not only for the welfare of humans but also for the welfare of living beings. The union of body, senses, mind, and soul is referred to as life.^[2]

While giving the definition of *Ayurveda* in the book named *Charak Samhita*, *Maharishi Charak* has said that – ‘The Science which gives knowledge about benefits, harms, happiness, sorrow, duration, and symptoms of life is *Ayurveda*’.^[3]

This makes it clear that these principles of *Ayurveda* are not limited to any particular person, caste or country but they are universal. Just as life is true, similarly these principles and rules are also valid and true at all places and hence are eternal and universal because it has no origin; its principles are inherently self-evident and its essence is eternal by nature.^[4]

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of this study were to review the basic principles of *Ayurveda* for physical health and mental well-being.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A review of *Ayurvedic* literature and its corresponding commentaries has been conducted in depth. Text books of contemporary medical sciences have also been cited as sources for this topic.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

4.1. *Ayurveda* Considered as Eternal

Ancient sages have called *Ayurveda* as eternal and have given three tips in support of this statement-

Means *Ayurveda* is eternal due to its eternal nature, due to the proven nature of its symptoms and eternal nature of emotions.

In Indian culture, the supreme purpose of human life is four *Purusharthas*- *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*. By following these four variables, man can become free from the cycle of birth and death. The real means and basis for the accomplishment and achievement of these four efforts is a completely healthy body because a healthy body is the means to follow *Dharma*.

Only if the person is healthy and fit, a person can follow the daily routine properly, for the welfare of the soul, we can do *Sadhana* and worship of God, that is why we are blessed with happiness, the first happiness among us is said to be healthy, i.e., having a healthy body.

Ayurveda also says the same, i.e.,

The foundation of *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha* is “Health”.^[5]

4.2. Purpose of *Ayurveda*

A question has been posed regarding the importance and usefulness of *Ayurveda Shashtra* - What is the purpose of *Ayurveda*? The question was answered.

That is, the purpose of *Ayurveda Shashtra* is to protect the health of a healthy person and to cure the disease of a healthy person.^[4] The most important thing is that the purpose of *Ayurveda* was not to earn money or to gain fame, but it is the feeling of kindness and compassion towards living beings.

That is, the sages, who were active in *Dharma* work and aspired to attain *Akshar* status, published *Ayurveda* for the practice of *Dharma*, not for earning money or achieving any specific wish.^[6]

While defining a physician, *Ayurveda* has, therefore, said.

The doctor who works only with compassion for living beings, without keeping money or any specific desire in mind, is the best doctor.^[7] The sages who propounded the rules and principles with such noble and high ideals have said that *Ayurveda* is the only medical science in the world which gives more importance to following the *Pathya Apathya* than the treatment and removing the cause of the disease is the first step of treatment, i.e., first eliminate the cause of causing disease.^[8] To fulfill its purpose, *Ayurveda* suggests measures to protect health and also gives information about the reason due to which diseases arise.

While giving measures to protect health *Ayurveda* says-

Aahara, *Nidra*, and *Brahmcharya* are the three pillars to keep the body and health stable, strong and good.

‘Up’ means assistant and ‘satambh’ means pillar. Only by consuming these sub-pillars properly body and health are protected.^[9]

Along with this, the reasons that make the body sick have also been discussed, such as.

When *Dhee*, *Dhriti*, and *Samriti* get degraded, a person commits inauspicious deeds, and then all the physical and mental *Doshas* get aggravated. These evil deeds are called “*Pragyaparadh*”. One who follows “*Pragyaparadh*”, his body and health will definitely suffer from disease.^[10]

4.3. Features of *Ayurvedic* Medicine

Some special things are kept in mind while treating through *Ayurveda* system. We also get some special facilities in this medical system.

4.3.1. *Holistic personality therapy*

According to this method, while treating the doctor not only looks at the diseased organ or the symptoms of the disease but also takes into account the condition of the patient’s mind, physical nature, soul and *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Doshas*, *Mala*, and *Dhatu*.^[11]

This is the reason, why, even if the disease is the same, there are differences in the medicines for different patients.

4.3.2. *Psychosomatic nature of diseases*

According to *Ayurveda*, it is believed that no disease can be only physical or mental. Physical diseases have adverse effects on the body and mental diseases have adverse effects on the mind. Therefore, while treating any disease, mind and body cannot be completely separated. This is the reason why all diseases are treated as psychosomatic diseases because according to *Aacharya Charak*, all diseases such as *Vataj*, *Pitaj*, *Kaphaj*, and mental diseases have the same root cause, i.e., “*Pragyaparadh*”.^[12]

Our sages have hundreds of years of experience behind the use of *Ayurvedic* medicines. The basic source of these medicines is natural substances such as trees and plants, substances obtained from the animal world such as cow urine and ghee *Dhatu* also. No chemical substances are used in these. Therefore, these medicines do not have any toxic effect on our body. Nowadays Allopathic Doctors show a kind of fear in the use of medicines prepared from *Dhatu* like copper etc., but these metals and some rich botanical substances such as

Kuchala and *Bhilawa* are not used directly in this form in medicines. Before using them as medicine, the toxic effects of these substances are removed through various processes and they are made capable of mixing easily with all the *Dhatus* in our body. In this way, all these substances prove to be more beneficial rather than harmful.

4.3.3. Every drug is a form of Rasayan

Every *Ayurvedic* medicine acts as a tonic or *Rasayan* in itself because it provides nourishment to the mind and body in some form or the other. This is the reason why these medicines can be used both by patients as well as nourishes the healthy person and develops immunity. *Chyawanprash*,^[13] *Chandraprabha Vati*^[14] is a direct example of this.

4.3.4. Importance of Pathya

In this method, more emphasis is given on the fact that the person should develop immunity so that he does not get attacked by the disease. This is the reason that for a healthy person, *Aahar Samhita*, i.e., rules related to food and rules related to diet in different seasons, day and night etc. have been described.^[15]

4.3.5. Importance of Pathya Aahar and Satamye

In *Ayurveda*, more emphasis has been given on the consumption of those food and drinks which are suitable for the nature and health of the patient and which are helpful in curing the disease. On the contrary, consumption of those substances has been prohibited which do not suit the nature of the patient and are likely to aggravate the disease. Due to this a healthy person also gets protected from the attack of diseases and also the patient gets cured quickly.

4.3.6. Simple and cheap methods of diagnosis

In modern medical system, the treatment of disease cannot begin until various types of tests are conducted. Due to this, the patient not only faces physical and mental problems but also has to spend a lot of money. On the contrary, in *Ayurvedic* system, a skilled doctor diagnosis the disease only by examining the *Nadi* (pulse) due to which unnecessary physical, mental problems and expenses can be avoided.^[16]

4.3.7. Eradication of diseases

Through this method, treatment is done in such a way that the root cause of the disease is also destroyed. When the cause of the disease is destroyed then the disease ends forever.

4.3.8. Preservation of ancient tradition

Ayurvedic medicine protects the thousands of years old Heritage of our sages. Therefore, we can preserve our culture through this *Ayurvedic* medicine.

4.3.9. Easy availability of medicines and distance from artificiality

Because many *Ayurvedic* medicines are available in our kitchen and home garden, hence, it is easy to get them. Apart from that, for these we have to connect with nature, hence, we can stay away from artificial life.

4.3.10. Foreign exchange savings

The use of these medicines is also beneficial from the economic point of view of our country. Because all these medicines are available in our own country, so one does not have to spend foreign currency to get them from abroad.

4.3.11. Supplement of Yoga and Dharma

As already said earlier, *Ayurveda* actually provides the knowledge to live life. Therefore, we cannot separate it from our *Dharma*. Like the purpose of life, its purpose is also to achieve the four efforts of *Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha*.^[5]

The rules and principles explained in *Ayurveda* are also helpful in the practice of *Yoga*. Thus, we see that the *Ayurvedic* medical system is unique in itself and is in line with our way of life. We cannot separate it from ourselves.

5. DISCUSSION

Ayurveda is widely acknowledged as one of the world's oldest traditional medical systems. This article gives a brief overview about the ancient history of *Ayurveda*, i.e., by following four *Purusharthas* (*Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha*) a man can become free from the cycle of Birth and Death. Furthermore, special emphasis has been laid on the fact that common people should maintain their health by taking *Pathya Aahar* and stay safe from the attack of diseases. This article gives review about all the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of life not only for the welfare of humans but also for the welfare of living beings. By taking *Rasayans* such as *Chyawanprash* and *Chandraprabha Vati* a person can nourish his or her body. Hence, the purpose of *Ayurveda Shashtra* is to protect the health of a healthy person and to cure the disease of a healthy person.

6. CONCLUSION

It can be said that *Ayurveda* is not just a science that gives information about medical science and medicines or herbs but is a science and philosophy of life for the entire human life. There is a description of medicines to cure the patient and to protect the health of a healthy person; there is also a description of *Dincharya* and *Ritucharya*, which gives detailed description of proper and beneficial diet on the basis of *Vata, Pitta, Kapha Doshas*. While there is a description of contradictory and completely inedible substances, there is also a detailed description of the *Vegas* that can be sustained. The real fact is that the scope of *Ayurveda* is so vast that its subject cannot be limited to any limit.

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11. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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12. DATA AVAILABILITY

This is an original manuscript and all data are available for only review purposes from principal investigators.

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