

# AYURVEDA – THE SCIENCE OF LIFE

– Dr. Rakesh Sharma, Jodhpur

**A**yurveda is a system of medicine which is based on the inherent principles of nature. It aims at maintaining the health of a human being by keeping his body, mind and spirit in perfect harmony with nature.

The word ‘Ayurveda’ has been derived from Sanskrit. It contains two words—‘Ayu’ which means ‘life’ and ‘Veda’ which means knowledge or science. Therefore, Ayurveda means knowledge of life or science of life. It is the oldest recognized system of health in the world existing from Vedic era.

**The following are the aims of Ayurveda:**

*Swasthasya Rakshanam*

(Protection of Health),

*Aaturasya*

*Vikarpramshamanam cha*

(Elimination of disease from the body).

Ayurveda believes that every human being should be fit in all respects so that he can perform

his *Purusharth-chatushtaya* or four main duties (*Dharma, Arth, Kama* and *Moksha*) in perfect manner. For this purpose much has been said in the ancient texts of Ayurveda: what should be our daily routine in different seasons, what should be our ideal diet according to the season etc. What should one do throughout the day from the time one wakes up until one goes to sleep—all has been mentioned in the Ayurveda texts in detail. For example, one should get up early in the morning at *Brahma Muhurt*, i.e., around two hours earlier than sunrise and then first of all one should go for defecation. Further detailed information regarding daily routine segments, i.e., bath, brush, massage, exercise and perfuming elements is available in Ayurveda Texts.

The information regarding principles of social hygiene is so scientific and impressive that if somebody follows it strictly, there are little chances of falling ill. In Ayurveda, all the

information regarding principles of social hygiene is mentioned in initial chapters. As we have mentioned earlier, Ayurveda believes *Swasthya Rakshanam* (Protection and Conservation of Health) as its first object. Despite following these principles, if somebody suffers from a disease, then Ayurveda has further mentioned the treatment procedures and protocol accordingly in texts.

## **Mind, Body and Senses**

We see many supernatural phenomena in our body. One of these is the mind, which not only controls our thought processes but also helps us to assist in carrying out day-to-day activities such as respiration, circulation, digestion and elimination. **The mind and the body work together, to regulate our physiology. For the mind in order to act appropriately to assist the physical body, we must use our senses as information gatherers.** We can consider mind as a computer and the senses as the data which gets entered into the computer. Smell and taste are two important senses that aid in the digestive process. When the mind registers that a particular food is entering the gastrointestinal tract, it directs the body to act accordingly by releasing various digestive enzymes. However, if we over-

---

indulge the taste buds with too much of a certain taste, such as sweet, we may find that the ability of the mind to perceive the sweet taste is impaired; and thereby the body becomes challenged in its ability to process sweet foods. Maintaining the clarity of our senses is an essential part in allowing the mind and body to integrate their functions and help in keeping us healthy and happy individuals.

### **SOUL**

Ayurveda believes that human beings are comprised of a certain energetic essence that precludes the inhabitancy of our physical entity. It is named as soul. In fact, Ayurveda considers that we may indeed occupy many physical bodies throughout the course of time but our underlying self or soul remains unchanged.

**Ayurveda has its own beliefs and basic principles. These are the following:**

#### ***Panch Mahabhuta (Five Elements) Theory***

One of its most important basic principles is *Panch Mahabhutas* (Five elements). These five elements are Air (*Vayu*), Fire (*Agni*), Water (*Jala*), Earth (*Prithvi*) and Ether (*Akash*). *Ayurveda* considers that each human being is made up of these five

elements. But to be a live human being, soul (*Atma's*) attachment as an escort is necessary. If soul is detached from these five elements, then the human becomes a mortal.

#### ***Tridosha Theory***

Another most important Basic principle is *Tridosha* i.e. *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. These are the three *doshas* which control all the physiological activities in the human beings. These are also formed by these five elements. These *Doshas* also are active only in living human beings. Rather we can say *doshas* are the basic element of human physiology. As soon as a human becomes mortal, these *doshas* also stop functioning.

*Vata* consists of *Vayu* and *Akash Mahabhutas*. All the movements viz. circulation of blood, nerve impulses, respiration, elimination of waste material etc. in the human beings are due to this *Mahabhuta*.

*Pitta* consists of *Agni* and *Jala Mahabhutas*. It controls the process of transformation of food into two parts as *Sara* (Nutrients) and *Kitta Bhaga* (faecal material) and the process of metabolism.

*Kapha* consists of *Jala* and *Prithvi Mahabhutas*. It is responsible for the strength, mucous formation, lubrication of

movable joints (synovial fluid) and protection of different organs, i.e., Lungs (Pleural fluid), Heart (Pericardial fluid), Central Nervous system (Cerebrospinal fluid) and many other viscerae in the body.

#### ***Shaman Treament***

Each individual is a unique make of these three *doshas* and therefore, different treatment protocols that specifically address a person's health challenges are explained in *Ayurveda*. When any of the *doshas* (*Vata, Pitta or Kapha*) becomes aggravated, *Ayurveda* suggests specific lifestyle and nutritional guidelines to assist the individual in reducing that aggravated *dosha*. Certain herbal supplements are also prescribed to hurry up the healing process. This type of treatment is named as *Shaman* treatment.

#### ***Shodhan treatment or Panchkarma Theory***

If toxins in the body are abundant, then a purification process known as *Panchakarma* is recommended to eliminate these unwanted *doshas* (waste material and toxins). *Shodhan* Treatment (Purification therapy) is based upon five different *Karmas* (procedures). These are as following:

#### ***Vamana (Therapeutic***

*Vomiting or emesis)*  
*Virechana (Purgation)*  
*Basti (Enema)*  
*Nasya (Therapeutic expulsion*  
*of doshas through the nose)*  
*Rakta Mokshana*  
*(Therapeutic Bloodletting).*

All these procedures are performed upon the patients according to the nature and vitiation level of the *doshas*.

#### ***Ksharsutra Theory***

Ayurveda considers *Arsha* (Piles) and *Bhagandar* (Fistula) as diseases of great concern. In these diseases *Ksharsutra* Theory has become very popular. The patients undergoing Ayurvedic treatment have received charismatic results.

There is a lot more in Ayurveda but whatever has been mentioned above explains that Ayurveda is a very widely accepted system of medicine, which provides perfect and complication-free treatment with herbal therapeutics and dietary regimens.

“The successful leader must be willing to assume responsibility for the mistakes and the shortcomings of his followers.”  
– **Napoleon Hill**

## ALL GLORY GOES TO HIM

– Varad Shenoy, Mumbai

Eternal flame of God's love  
In the inner self burns bright  
I surrender myself to Him  
The Most Luminous, Kindly Light

Love for the Almighty is the oil  
Which each moment inspires the soul  
To shine and nurture His qualities in me  
No other thought can bring such glee

I have no words to express  
What God has just granted me  
Accelerated my spiritual progress  
Divinising my spiritual milieu

Transformed my inner mechanism  
Evaporated all mental fears  
My eyes express this sometime  
Happiness does rain as tears

Overwhelmed with joy, I ponder silently  
What have I done for this Grace?  
Re-united with my spiritual brethren  
And of negativity there's no trace

Wow! An ordinarily soul made special  
Intellect became knowledge-vessel  
Now I churn and joy fills to the brim  
Forever grateful am I, all glory goes to Him!