

Traditional Bhutanese medicine (gSo-BA Rig-PA): an integrated part of the formal health care services.

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Abstract

Traditional medicine in Bhutan is known as gSo-ba Rig-pa and is one of the oldest surviving medical traditions in the world. Other medical systems, such as Chinese medicine, Indian Ayurvedic medicine, Unani medicine, Greco-Roman medicine and the country's rich cultures and traditions have greatly influenced the way traditional Bhutanese medicine evolved. However, Buddhist philosophy remains the mainstream of this medical system. gSo-ba Rig-pa's principles are based on the perception the human body is composed of three main elements: rLung ('Air'), mKhris-pa ('Bile') and Bad-kan ('Phlegm'). When these three elements are balanced in the body a person is said to be healthy. The pathophysiology is also different from other medical systems, and the close link to Buddhism is reflected in the spiritual dimensions and the perception that all suffering is caused by ignorance. The treatment of diseases includes behavioral modification, physiotherapy, herbal medicines, minor surgery and spiritual healing. This makes the traditional Bhutanese medicine a unique and holistic health care system. The traditional medicine is an integrated and recognized part of the formal health care services in Bhutan under the auspices of the Ministry of Health. The article highlights three main points which can be learned from the Bhutanese experience: (1) the strong tradition of herbal medicines within gSo-ba Rig-pa forms a unique opportunity to prospect for new leads for development of pharmaceuticals, (2) the availability of the traditional medicine along with biomedicine broadens the health care choices for patients, and (3) the experiences of integrating two conceptually very different health care systems within one ministry contains important managerial lessons to be learned

Types of complementary or alternative approaches to mental health treatment

Alternative Medical Systems

There are many other medical systems in the world, beyond the standard Western system. Cultures throughout the world have a variety of healers or shamens. These systems are well-developed, with a 5,000-year old track record for healing, and many are gaining wide acceptance as alternative or complementary approaches in the West. Each of these systems addresses human suffering in different ways, but generally they seek to re-establish a balance or harmony within the body and in the lifestyle of the person being treated. Because they tend to view mental or emotional difficulties as part of a larger matter of balance and overall health, they are included here:

Ayurveda ("Science of Life" Traditional Medicine from India) is the oldest medical system. The focus on energy and balance rather than symptoms seeks to restore wholeness in the mind-body-spirit system. Disease is viewed as an outgrowth of mental conditions. Each person has a particular combination of physical, mental and emotional characteristics – distinct bioenergetic types known as Vata, Pitta, and Kapha – that are genetically determined and prenatally influenced. Different causes and treatments of physical and emotional disorders are based in part on this individual constitution, with the kind of patient being more important than the kind of symptoms. Physical and mental health is achieved by balancing diet, exercise, sleep, and sexual activity. Some of the tools of Ayurveda include a variety of stress management techniques, meditation, aromatherapy, yoga, and massage.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), in use for more than 4,000 years, is based on the flow of vital energy (qi or chi, pronounced "chee") throughout the body. In a healthy state, the yin and yang (negative and positive energies) are balanced, while a disease state results from an imbalance. Thus, the use of herbs, nutrition, meditation, acupuncture, and exercise are intended to restore balance and return the body, mind, emotions and spirit to health.

Native American healing is thousands of years old and combines religion, spirituality, herbal medicine, and rituals to treat medical and emotional problems, including trauma and addictions. Because there are hundreds of tribal nations, the practices vary, but generally include purifying ceremonies, chants, sweat lodge, and other tribal customs. Healing rituals can last for minutes, days or weeks and may involve a combination of dance, chanting, body painting, and prayer.

Homeopathic Medicine ("like cures like") was developed in the early 20th century. It does not treat a "disease" or disorder by name (such as depression) but rather by specific symptoms (including things that affect symptoms, such as sounds, smells, tastes, moods, energy, time of day or temperature when symptoms are worse, etc.).

Small, highly diluted quantities of specific substances are used to cure symptoms which would actually be caused by larger doses of the same substance.

Naturopathic Medicine sees physical and mental health as arising from a healing power in the body that establishes, maintains, and restores health. Many other treatment modalities (such as Chinese medicine, homeopathy, etc.) are incorporated to support this healing power, along with nutritional and lifestyle changes.

Nutritional or other "balancing" approaches

Vitamins and supplements: Many people may suffer from both physical and mental conditions that arise from inadequate nutrition. Nutritional deficiencies often first appear in the form of mental symptoms. Some researchers believe that the imbalances in the system can be regulated by nutritional supplements. For example, depression may be caused by an amino acid imbalance or vitamin deficiency. The B-Vitamins, omega-3 fatty acids, and folic acid are helpful for regulating stress and balancing mood. St. John's Wort and Kava Kava may help with depression and anxiety. However, without proper guidance of a nutritionist, these substances may also create serious side effects for some people.

Allergies: There are many theories that allergies to such foods as wheat, sugar, and milk cause or exacerbate symptoms in schizophrenia, autism, anxiety, learning disabilities, ADHD, and other conditions. Some people find that avoiding these foods, or determining other possible food sensitivities may reduce symptoms. Other suspected sources for emotional problems are sensitivities to substances such as paint fumes, plastics, or even electromagnetic fields. Some of these can be avoided, if it is determined that they may be causing emotional symptoms.

Dietetic changes: Many people find that adjustments in their diet may affect their mental and emotional health. For example, blood sugar levels have a strong impact on mood and emotional energy, and can be managed by eating small amounts every few hours, particularly of protein-rich foods, in a well-balanced overall diet.

Light therapy: For some people, a lack of full-spectrum sunlight may cause Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), and they may best be helped by daily exposure to light from a special bulb, which is now easily available from many lighting stores. This is particularly useful for those in far northern regions that do not get sunlight for long periods during the winter.

Chelation therapy: A synthetic amino acid called EDTA is added to the blood, where it "grabs" (chelates) onto metallic substances, which are then allowed to wash out of the body. An analogous process is unclogging a drain by adding a chemical which dissolves the block, and then washing the compound down the pipes. Patients who have had chelation treatment often notice less depression, more alertness, and better memory. It is speculated that this improvement results when harmful toxins

are removed from the blood stream, thus protecting the brain from effects of these toxins.

Aromatherapy: The use of essential oils – extracts or essences from flowers, herbs, and trees – is one of the oldest therapies, dating back 6,000 years to ancient Rome, Greece and Egypt. These oils are usually massaged into the skin, wafted in a room, or dissolved in a bath. Of our five primary senses, the olfactory is the only one that transmits information directly from the nose into the limbic center of the brain, the seat of emotions and memory. Recent brain scan research has shown that different scents affect brainwave production; for example, with some increasing alpha (relaxation) waves and others affecting beta (alertness) waves. Aromatherapy is effective with many disorders, including stress, anxiety, pain, PMS, depression, certain types of male impotence, and many others.

Bach flower remedies: This system is similar to homeopathy, in that tiny quantities of a plant-based substance are diluted, preserved in brandy, then sipped in water. There are 38 different flower essences and one combination known as Rescue Remedy. The remedies are used for a variety of emotional difficulties, including many specific fears and types of depression, as well as personality characteristics, such as selfishness, intolerance, and inflexibility.

Creative arts therapies

Creative arts therapies such as dance, music, art, and drama may help reduce symptoms by providing outlets for expression of emotions. They also offer access to "right-brain" material – non-verbal, emotionally based – which can be impossible to reach through the traditional talk therapies. Creative writing using dreams, symbols, and myth can also be a way to process emotional material.

Therapists who are registered in their specialization have received training in the use of creative expression to assist with mental health issues. Many creative arts therapists are also licensed mental health clinicians, while others may work with a licensed professional as an adjunct to treatment. The links below indicate the training programs available to art, music, dance and drama therapists, which can assist you in understanding what each type of art can do, and how to know if a provider has been certified as a therapist.

Energy Therapies

Energy therapies involve focused attention on the energy fields that are believed to surround and penetrate the body. Some of these therapies use movement, while

others involve manipulation of the energy field or the body. Still others focus on the electromagnetic fields that are all around us. Some examples of energy therapies are:

Qi gong (pronounced "chee kung") is an ancient Chinese system using movement, meditation, relaxation, mind-body integration, and breathing exercises. The purpose is to improve circulation, balance flow of chi, reduce stress and anxiety, and restore energy and health.

Reiki (pronounced "ray-kee") is a Japanese system of transferring energy from the practitioner to heal the patient's spirit, which leads to physical health. The Reiki Master does not touch the person directly, but places hands over the body. Reiki also uses distance healing, believing that energy fields in the universe are all interconnected and thus can be affected from far away.

Therapeutic Touch is a form of "laying on of hands", which may also involve the healer passing hands over the body without actually touching it, to detect energy imbalances and re-direct them through the energy of the therapist. According to the founders, TT is "based on the assumptions that human beings are complex fields of energy, and that the ability to enhance healing in another is a natural potential". There are a growing number of registered nurses who have also been trained in this healing art in classes around the world, who use their gentle presence and touch to assist patients with many kinds of physical and emotional distress. Skeptics challenge the existence of an energy field and claim that relief occurs because people feel comforted – to which most healers would probably say that is not the only reason, but if comfort helps, that's also a good thing.

The power of the mind – meditation, prayer, and distance healing are all varieties of thought forms used to calm the mind and body, and to call in a sense of intervention in health from energies of the spirit. Because stress is at the root of so many physical and mental disturbances – or at the very least, stress will exacerbate existing conditions – learning to relax the mind and body will ease many symptoms in the mind and body.

- There are many types of meditation that come from various cultural traditions (Buddhist, Zen, Tibetan, Transcendental, yoga, etc.). In general, they often involve calm and regular breathing, and a focus on one object (a "yantra" such as a candle or picture), one thought (such as "peace" or "relax"), or one word (a "mantra", often in Sanskrit or another language) that the mind is directed to return to over and over, and to set aside other distracting thoughts. With regular practice, one can learn to sit quietly and relax deeply, with a calming result.

- Prayer has been used for thousands of years by every culture. Regardless of religious tradition, prayer in general reflects a belief that there is a power greater than the individual, and that it is possible to access that power through words or thoughts. Many people attribute the healing of their physical or mental conditions to prayer, or to whatever their personal belief in a God or Higher Source might be. There have even been some experiments that have attempted controlled studies to "document" that prayer works by having strangers at great distances pray for people in hospitals or with various conditions to see if the prayer group improved at greater rates than the control group. These studies are controversial, but those who believe in prayer as a healing power would say they do not need a study to know that it works.

- Others would say that the power of the mind to change the body is evident whenever someone believes in something, a phenomenon known as a placebo effect. Some will then dismiss the value of the intervention as "just" a placebo. However, if a belief that something will help does in fact help, it is important to recognize that what we think or believe has a powerful effect on what happens in our lives. The opposite of a placebo is a nocebo (Latin for "I will harm"), the effect of a negative belief. The power of an idea to cause healing or harm is evidence of the power of the mind to lead to outcomes in the body and the overall health. This fact highlights the critical importance for doctors and others to maintain a positive outlook and not to predict a specific timeframe for the course of a disease.

Better known mind-body approaches

Some types of mind-body healing have become so commonplace, and are so often integrated into traditional treatment, that it is difficult to call them alternatives anymore. Examples include:

Relaxation techniques or deep breathing

Yoga or exercise

Hypnosis

Biofeedback and neurofeedback

Acupuncture

Some forms of physical manipulation might also be considered mind-body treatments, if the practitioner is skilled in connecting the two. Examples include:

Chiropractic

Osteopathy

Massage

Cranial-sacral therapy

Newer mind-body approaches

Recent developments in the treatment of emotional trauma include new, highly effective forms of psychotherapy and somatic (body) therapies. Although often intensely interpersonal, these therapies are also psychological and neurological in their focus and application. This group of therapies relies on innate instinctual resources, rather than medications, to bring about healing.

These newer Body-Mind Therapies (such as EMDR and somatic approaches) are discussed in Helpguide's [Newer Types of Mind-Body Mental Health Therapies](#).

[Keeping a positive attitude to help treat emotional problems](#)

The power of thought was discussed above in energy therapies. In addition, in some situations emotional disturbances are actually the result of a lack of acceptance of differences. For example, a person whose temperament is more high strung or more laid back than others in his or her family may be labeled as anxious or depressed, simply by comparison. Another frequently reported source of depression and even suicide is in families with a child who does not match parental expectations – who is sensitive when a parent wants toughness, or is fat when a parent wants thin, or is gay when a parent wants heterosexual, or is more interested in fixing engines than going to law school. Learning to accept, allow for, and even appreciate differences in family members is sometimes all that is needed to relieve depression or anxiety.

[References and resources for complementary and alternative medicine](#)

[General information on complementary and alternative medicine](#)

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) is funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and has for the last several years been studying various non-traditional approaches to physical and mental health. This site provides a good overview of terms, and has many links.

Alternative Medicine Foundation provides evidence-based research resources for health-care professionals and information for patients and consumers.

Center for Mental Health Services, Knowledge Exchange Network from the National Health Information Center, provides general information about alternative therapies for mental and emotional health.

Ayurveda

About Ayurveda This page provides a very simple definition, including the origin and basic principles of Ayurvedic Medicine.

Native American healing

The Path of the Feather describes shamanic journeys, medicine wheels and spirit animals as traditions used for healing.

Homeopathy

National Center for Homeopathy's Website includes a searchable directory of practitioners in the United States.

Psychological Problems: Treating Mind and Body* provides a good overview of the concept of homeopathy for treatment of mental health issues. There is also a section discussing how various types of psychotherapy are similar in approach to homeopathy, for example, by introducing small amounts of an emotional toxin (such as something the person fears being presented in small increments to build up tolerance). (*This is an excerpted chapter from a book, and appears on a website that also contains commercial advertising.)

Prozac Free reviews a book that discusses the use of homeopathic medicine for depression and other mental and emotional problems.

Bach flower remedies

Bach Flower Remedies were developed by a British medical doctor in the early 20th century and are still in use around the world. This site describes the 38 flower essences and their uses, provides links to practitioners, and answers questions about the remedies.

Flower Essence Society, established in 1979 to continue exploration into the use of flower oils, has expanded the original list of 38 flowers to well over 100. This site includes a downloadable booklet with a quiz to help sort out which flower essences may be helpful to an individual. There is also a section on research into stress and depression, with a link to sign up as a participant in the current study.

Nutrition and other "balancing" approaches

Nutritional Therapy A report on the Food and Mood project, which includes specific recommendations for improving mental health. In addition to general information on such substances as caffeine, there is a chart listing many of the common mental health problems as they are often related to food sensitivities (e.g.: wheat and depression).

Nutritional Approaches to Mental Health* is written by an orthomolecular psychiatrist and discusses the uses of many different vitamins, minerals and supplements for specific mental health issues. (*This is an excerpted chapter from a book, and appears on a website that also contains commercial advertising.)

Mental Health and Protein Nutrition discusses the treatment of addictions, eating disorders, depression and other mood disorders through nutritional "mood foods".

Light Treatment for Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) from the non-profit Society for Light Treatment and Biological Rhythms. Many links to articles on circadian rhythms, jet lag, sleep disorders, melatonin and light treatment for SAD.

Chelation Therapy describes the theory, methods, benefits and possible side effects of chelation therapy.

Aromatherapy discusses how aromatherapy works, describes safety issues including which essences should not be used, and lists several types of problems with their corresponding treatments.

About Aromatherapy from the National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy, describes benefits and lists of top essential oils used. Good section on methods of application.

Creative arts therapies

The American Art Therapy Association describes the practice of art therapy and types of settings in which it is used, the kinds of issues effectively addressed by art therapy, and certification requirements for art therapists.

The American Music Therapy Association discusses what music therapists do, where they work, how they can be helpful, and what their certification involves.

The American Dance Therapy Association describes what dance/movement therapists do, which ones work in team settings and which in private settings, how they can be helpful, and provides lists of schools that train dance therapists.

Proprioceptive Writing is a process developed by two psychologists in Maine. It is an adjunct to therapeutic process, a writing tool, and a form of meditation.

Depression Learning Path from Uncommon Knowledge and the European Therapy Studies Institute, the complete website provides information on the relationship between dreams and depression, and ways to treat depression without drugs, A unique feature is a free "coach by email" to guide an individual through the Depression Learning Path over an 18-day period.

Energy therapies

Qi Gong describes the history and practice of this ancient Chinese healing art, and includes lists of practitioners as well as scientific studies and papers on the subject.

Reiki discusses the history and practice of this ancient Japanese healing art, which was rediscovered in the late 1800s. This site also includes photos showing the various hand positions used in Reiki.

Therapeutic touch

Therapeutic Touch This is the homepage of the founders of this process, who describe the history and list current classes.

Meditation, prayer and the power of mind

Meditation A comprehensive overview of various types of meditation with sample texts for many of them, discussion of several conditions that can be improved by meditation, as well as some individual situations that call for avoidance of meditation.

Learning Meditation describes basic meditation and includes several short audio meditations with music, for a variety of purposes (relaxation, healing, weight management, for children, etc.).

Transcendental Meditation is one of the best-known forms of meditation, popularized in the 1970s and practiced around the world. This site includes many of the scientific studies that have been done that demonstrate the effectiveness of TM for a variety of purposes.

Prayer and Spiritual Healing A very thorough webpage with many articles on religion, spirituality, the basic elements of prayer for health or healing common to most cultural traditions, specific examples from a variety of the world's major religions, and several discussions on applications for specific mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

The Healing Power of Placebos from the Food and Drug Administration, discusses the use of placebos in drug testing, and includes several examples of how belief affects outcome.

Better known Body-Mind Therapies

Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research is the oldest and most respected chiropractic research-funding institution. At this site, you can find many articles and outcome studies on chiropractic research.

Managing Negative Mental Health through Yoga explains the yoga view of negative emotions and describes the use of yoga for prevention and cure.

Understanding Clinical Hypnosis from atHealth.com, discusses myths, precautions and applications of clinical hypnosis.

Hypnosis, Hypnotherapy and Hypnotherapists from TherapistFinder.net, discusses how to find a therapist who uses hypnosis, and specific several types of conditions for which hypnosis is useful.

Biofeedback includes examples of types of biofeedback, applications, and cautionary notes.

Biofeedback from the National Institutes of Health, a definition and a few examples of uses, with two illustrations.

Neurofeedback This site is sponsored by an affiliation of more than 200 groups under one company. Discusses clinical applications and contains considerable information on the use of EEG Biofeedback, also known as Neurofeedback, with pictures showing equipment, and many questions answered.

Additional resources

Trauma Resources A non-profit website that discusses alternative perspectives on emotional trauma and its treatment. Includes an online video and links to events and practitioners.

Interconnections* A website from the UK, sponsored by several different practitioners, that offers brief descriptions of a variety of alternative approaches to understanding and addressing a variety of personal and emotional health issues.

Jaelline Jaffe, Ph.D., created this article with contributions from Jeanne Segal, Ph.D. Last modified in February 07.

Simple Definition

Ayurveda is a wholistic system of medicine from India that uses a constitutional model. Its aim is to provide guidance regarding food and lifestyle so that healthy people can stay healthy and folks with health challenges can improve their health.

There are several aspects to Ayurveda that are quite unique:

Its recommendations will often be different for each person regarding which foods and which lifestyle they should follow in order to be completely healthy. This is due to it's use of a constitutional model.

Everything in Ayurveda is validated by observation, inquiry, direct examination and knowledge derived from the ancient texts.

It understands that there are energetic forces that influence nature and human beings. These forces are called the Tridoshas.

Because Ayurveda sees a strong connection between the mind and the body, a huge amount of information is available regarding this relationship.

Origin

Ayurveda is an intricate system of healing that originated in India thousands of years ago. We can find historical evidence of Ayurveda in the ancient books of wisdom known as the Vedas. In the Rig Veda, over 60 preparations were mentioned that could be used to assist an individual in overcoming various ailments. The Rig Veda was written over 6,000 years ago, but really Ayurveda has been around even longer than that. What we see is that Ayurveda is more than just a medical system. It is a Science of Life. We are all part and parcel of nature. Just as the animals and plants live in harmony with nature and utilize the Laws of Nature to create health and balance within their beings, we, too, adhere to these very same principles. Therefore, it is fair to say that Ayurveda is a system that helps maintain health in a person by using the inherent principles of nature to bring the individual back into

equilibrium with their true self. In essence Ayurveda has been in existence since the beginning of time because we have always been governed by nature's laws.

Meaning

Ayurveda is made up of two Sanskrit words: Ayu which means life and Veda which means the knowledge of. To know about life is Ayurveda. However, to fully comprehend the vast scope of Ayurveda let us first define "Ayu" or life. According to the ancient Ayurvedic scholar Charaka, "ayu" is comprised of four essential parts. The combination of mind, body, senses and the soul.

Mind, Body, and Senses

We tend to identify most with our physical bodies; yet, in actuality, there is more to us than what meets the eye. We can see that underlying our physical structure is the mind, which not only controls our thought processes but helps assist us in carrying out day-to-day activities such as respiration, circulation, digestion and elimination. The mind and the body work in conjunction with one another to regulate our physiology. In order for the mind to act appropriately to assist the physical body, we must use our senses as information gatherers. We can think of the 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 overindulge 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 also sees that before we exist in physical form with the help of the mind and senses that we exist in a more subtle form known as the soul. The ancient seers of India believed that we were comprised of a certain energetic essence that precluded the inhabitation of our physical entity. In fact, they hypothesized that we may indeed occupy many physical bodies throughout the course of time but that our underlying self or soul remains unchanged. What we see to help illustrate this concept is what transpires at the time of death. When the individual nears the time to leave the physical body, many of his/her desires will cease to be present. As the soul no longer identifies with the body, the desire to eat food or indulge in a particular activity that used to be a great source of satisfaction for that person drops by the wayside. In fact, many individuals have been documented to experience the sensation of being "out of their bodies."

These are just a few examples of how we are made up of these four components that we call life.

Principles

Now that we have a better understanding of what comprises life, let's look at some of the principles of Ayurveda and how they might affect us.

In Ayurveda we view a person as a unique individual made up of five primary elements. The elements are ether (space), air, fire, water, and earth. Just as in nature, we too have these five elements in us. When any of these elements are present in the environment, they will in turn have an influence on us. The foods we eat and the weather are just two examples of the presence of these elements. While we are a composite of these five primary elements, certain elements are seen to have an ability to combine to create various physiological functions. Ether and air combine to form what is known in Ayurveda as the Vata dosha. Vata governs the principle of movement and therefore can be seen as the force which directs nerve impulses, circulation, respiration, and elimination. Fire and water are the elements that combine to form the Pitta dosha. The Pitta dosha is the process of transformation or metabolism. The transformation of foods into nutrients that our bodies can assimilate is an example of a pitta function. Pitta is also responsible for metabolism in the organ and tissue systems as well as cellular metabolism. Finally, it is predominantly the water and earth elements which combine to form the Kapha dosha. Kapha is what is responsible for growth, adding structure unit by unit. Another function of the Kapha dosha is to offer protection. Cerebral-spinal fluid protects the brain and spinal column and is a type of Kapha found in the body. Also, the mucous lining of the stomach is another example of the Kapha dosha protecting the tissues. We are all made up of unique proportions of Vata, Pitta and Kapha. These ratios of the doshas vary in each individual; and because of this, Ayurveda sees each person as a special mixture that accounts for our diversity.

Ayurveda gives us a model to look at each individual as a unique makeup of the three doshas and to thereby design treatment protocols that specifically address a person's health challenges. When any of the doshas (Vata, Pitta or Kapha) become accumulated, Ayurveda will suggest specific lifestyle and nutritional guidelines to assist the individual in reducing the dosha that has become excessive. We may also suggest certain herbal supplements to hasten the healing process. If toxins in the body are abundant, then a cleansing process known as Pancha Karma is recommended to eliminate these unwanted toxins.

Conclusion

This understanding that we are all unique individuals enables Ayurveda to address not only specific health concerns but also offers explanation as to why one person responds differently than another. We hope that you will continue to explore Ayurveda to enhance your health and to gain further insights into this miracle we call life.

Ayurvedic medicine: core concept, therapeutic principles, and current relevance

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Abstract

In the prebiblical Ayurvedic origins, every creation inclusive of a human being is a model of the universe. In this model, the basic matter and the dynamic forces (Dosha) of the nature determine health and disease, and the medicinal value of any substance (plant and mineral). The Ayurvedic practices (chiefly that of diet, life style, and the Panchkarama) aim to maintain the Dosha equilibrium. Despite a holistic approach aimed to cure disease, therapy is customized to the individual's constitution (Prakruti). Numerous Ayurvedic medicines (plant derived in particular) have been tested for their biological (especially immunomodulation) and clinical potential using modern ethnovalidation, and thereby setting an interface with modern medicine. To understand Ayurvedic medicine, it would be necessary to first understand the origin, basic concept and principles of Ayurveda.

Article Outline

- ORIGIN
- GENERAL CONCEPT AND FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

- CONCEPT OF DISEASE
- DIAGNOSTIC APPROACH
- GENERAL THERAPEUTIC APPROACH
- MEDICINES
- RASAYANA
- ARTHRITIS AND RHEUMATISM
- OBESITY
- VALIDATION AND MODERN RELEVANCE
- ACKNOWLEDGMENT
- References

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Review

Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine: A Comparative Overview

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Ayurveda, the traditional Indian medicine (TIM) and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) remain the most ancient yet living traditions. There has been increased global interest in traditional medicine. Efforts to monitor and regulate herbal drugs and traditional medicine are underway. China has been successful in promoting its therapies with more research and science-based approach, while Ayurveda still needs more extensive scientific research and evidence base. This review gives an overview of basic principles and commonalities of TIM and TCM and discusses key

determinants of success, which these great traditions need to address to compete in global markets.

Keywords: Ayurveda – Chinese medicine – complementary and alternative medicine – traditional medicine

Integrated approaches towards drug development from Ayurveda and other Indian system of medicines

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Abstract

Biodiversity of natural resources has served not only for the primary human needs but also for health care, since time immemorial. The Indian subcontinent, with the history of one of the oldest civilization, harbors many traditional health care systems. Their development was supported by the diverse biodiversity in flora and fauna due to variations in geographical landscaping. Ayurveda, whose history goes back to 5000 b.c., is one of the ancient health care systems. The Ayurveda was developed through daily life experiences with the mutual relationship between mankind and nature. The ancient text of Ayurveda reports more than 2000 plant species for their therapeutic potentials. Besides Ayurveda, other traditional and folklore systems of health care were developed in the different time periods in Indian subcontinent, where more than 7500 plant species were used. According to a WHO estimate, about 80% of the world population relies on traditional systems of

medicines for primary health care, where plants form the dominant component over other natural resources. Renewed interest of developing as well as developed countries in the natural resources has opened new horizons for the exploration of natural sources with the perspectives of safety and efficacy. The development of these traditional systems of medicines with the perspectives of safety, efficacy and quality will help not only to preserve this traditional heritage but also to rationalize the use of natural products in the health care. Until recent past, the nature was considered as a compendium for templates of new chemical entities (NCEs). The plant species mentioned in the ancient texts of these Ayurveda and other Indian systems of medicines may be explored with the modern scientific approaches for better leads in the health care.

Keywords: Indian system of medicines; Ayurveda; Siddha; Unani; Homeopathy

Abbreviations: WHO, World Health Organization; ISM, Indian system of medicines; GMP, good manufacturing practices; ASU, Ayurveda; Siddha and Unani; CCRIMH, Central Council for Research on Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy; CCRAS, Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and Siddha Medicines; CCRUM, Central Council for Research in Unani Medicines; CCRH, Central Council for Research in Homeopathy; CCRYN, Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy; ISM & H, Indian system of medicine and homeopathy; NCEs, new chemical entities; NMPB, National Medicinal Plant Board

Article Outline

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Acknowledgements

References

The Use and Safety of Non-Allopathic Indian Medicines.

Review Article

Drug Safety. 25(14):1005-1019, 2002.

Gogtay, N.J.; Bhatt, H.A.; Dalvi, S.S.; Kshirsagar, N.A.

Abstract:

Non-allopathic Indian medicines, referred to elsewhere in the world as complementary and alternative medicine have gathered increasing recognition in recent years with regard to both treatment options and health hazards. Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and homeopathy are practiced in India as non-allopathic systems. These systems comprise a wide range of therapeutic approaches that include diet, herbs, metals, minerals, precious stones and their combinations as well as non-drug therapies. Ayurveda is the oldest system of medicine in the world and by far the most commonly practiced form of non-allopathic medicine in India, particularly in rural India, where 70% of the population lives.

The difference between modern medicine and these systems stems from the fact that the knowledge base of many of the above systems, unlike Western medicine, is based on years of experience, observations, empiricism and intuition and has been handed down generations both through word of mouth and treatises.

The focus on non-allopathic systems of medicine in India can be attributed to various causes including a need to revive a rich tradition, the dependency of 80% of the country's population on these drugs, their easy availability, increasing

worldwide use of these medicines, the lack of focused concerted scientific research and the abuse of these systems by quacks. Elsewhere, the increasing use of herbal products worldwide and the growth of the herbal product industry has led to increasing concern regarding their safety. The challenges in these non-allopathic systems relate to the patient, physician, regulatory authorities, the abuse/misuse of these medicines, quality and purity issues. Safety monitoring is mandated by a changing ecological environment, the use of insecticides, new manufacturing techniques, an as yet unregulated pharmaceutical industry, the availability of combinations of herbs over the counter and not mentioned in ancient Ayurvedic texts, and the need to look at the active principles of these medicines as potential chemotherapeutic agents.

The Indian traditional medicine industry has come a long way from the times when it was considered unnecessary to test these formulations prior to use, to the introduction of Good Manufacturing Practice guidelines for the industry. However, we still have a long way to go. The conflict between the traditional practitioners and the purists demanding evidence of safety and efficacy needs to be addressed. There is an urgent need for the practitioners of the allopathic and non-allopathic systems to work together to optimise the risk-benefit profile of these medicines.

Principles of Ayurveda

Ayurveda is a holistic healing science which comprises of two words, Ayu and Veda. Ayu means life and Veda means knowledge or science. So the literal meaning of the word Ayurveda is the science of life. Ayurveda is a science dealing not only with treatment of some diseases but is a complete way of life.

Ayurveda aims at making a happy, healthy and peaceful society. The two most important aims of Ayurveda are:

- + To maintain the health of healthy people
- + To cure the diseases of sick people

A Person is seen in Ayurveda as a unique individual made up of five primary elements.

These elements are ether (space), air, fire, water and earth.

Just as in nature, we too have these five elements in us. When any of these elements are imbalanced in the environment, they will in turn have an influence on us. The foods we eat and the weather are just two examples of the influence of these elements. While we are a composite of these five primary elements, certain elements are seen to have an ability to combine to create various physiological functions.

The elements combine with Ether and Air in dominance to form what is known in Ayurveda as Vata Dosha. Vata governs the principle of movement and therefore can be seen as the force which directs nerve impulses, circulation, respiration and elimination etc.,

The elements with Fire and Water in dominance combine to form the Pitta Dosha. The Pitta Dosha is responsible for the process of transformation or metabolism. The transformation of foods into nutrients that our bodies can assimilate is an example of a Pitta function. Pitta is also responsible for metabolism in the organ and tissue systems as well as cellular metabolism.

Finally, it is predominantly the water and earth elements which combine to form the Kapha Dosha. Kapha is responsible for growth, adding structure unit by unit. It also offers protection, for example, in form of the cerebral-spinal fluid, which protects the brain and spinal column. The mucous lining of the stomach is another example of the function of Kapha Dosha protecting the tissues.

We are all made up of unique proportions of Vata, Pitta and Kapha. These ratios of the Doshas vary in each individual and because of this Ayurveda sees each person as a special mixture that accounts for our diversity.

Ayurveda gives us a model to look at each individual as a unique makeup of the three doshas and to thereby design treatment protocols that specifically address a person's health challenges. When any of the doshas become accumulated, Ayurveda will suggest specific lifestyle and nutritional guidelines to assist the individual in reducing the dosha that has become excessive. Also herbal medicines will be suggested, to cure the imbalance and the disease.

Understanding this main principle of Ayurveda, it offers us an explanation as to why one person responds differently to a treatment or diet than another and why persons with the same disease might yet require different treatments and medications.

Other important basic principles of Ayurveda which are briefly mentioned here are:

Dhatu- These are the basic tissues which maintain and nourish the body. They are seven in number namely- rasa(chyle), raktha(blood), mamsa(muscles), meda(fatty tissue), asthi(bone), majja(marrow) and sukla(reproductive tissue). Proper amount of each dhatu and their balanced function is very important for good health.

Mala- These are the waste materials produced as a result of various metabolic activities in the body. They are mainly urine, feaces, sweat etc. Proper elimination of the malas is equally important for good health. Accumulation of malas causes many diseases in the body.

Srotas- These are different types of channels which are responsible for transportation of food, dhatus, malas and doshas. Proper functioning of srotas is necessary for transporting different materials to the site of their requirement. Blockage of srotas causes many diseases.

Agni- These are different types of enzymes responsible for digestion and transforming one material to another.

All these factors should function in a proper balance for good health. They are inter-related and are directly or indirectly responsible for maintaining equilibrium of the tridoshas.

Balance and Harmony of the Three Doshas

When the three Doshas are well harmonised and function in a balanced manner, it results in good nourishment and well-being of the individual . But when there is imbalance or disharmony within or between them, it will result in elemental imbalance , leading to various kinds of ailments.

The Ayurvedic concept of physical health revolves round these three Doshas and its primary purpose is to help maintain them in a balanced state and thus to prevent disease. This humoral theory is not unique to the ancient Indian Medicine : The Yin and Yang theory in chinese medicine and the Hippocratic theory of four humours in Greek medicine are also very similar.

The Qualities of the Three Doshas

The three Doshas possess qualities and their increase or decrease in the system depends upon the similar or antagonistic qualities of everything ingested.

Vata is : dry, cold, light, mobile, clear, rough, subtle

Pitta is : slightly oily, hot, intense, light, fluid, free flowing, foul smelling.

Kapha is: oily, cold, heavy, stable, viscid, smooth, soft

Both Vata and Pitta are light and only Kapha is heavy.

Both Vata and Kapha are cold and only Pitta is hot.

Both Pitta and Kapha are moist and oily and only Vata is dry.

Anything dry almost always increases Vata , anything hot increases Pitta and anything heavy , Kapha.

Puffed rice is dry, cold light and rough - overindulgence in puffed rice therefore is likely to increase Vata in the overindulger.

Mustard oil is oily , hot , intense , fluid , strong-smelling and liquid and increases Pitta in the consumer.

Yoghurt , which , being creamy, cold, heavy, viscid, smooth and soft , is the very image of Kapha , adds to the body's Kapha when eaten.

All Five elements , as expressed through Vata, Pitta and Kapha , are essential to life, working together to create health or produce disease. No one dosha can produce or sustain life - all three must work together , each in its own way.

Allopathic, homeopathic philosophies of medicine continue to spark debate on alternative therapies

Monday, April 11, 2005 by: Mike Adams, the Health Ranger, NaturalNews Editor |
Key concepts: Medicine, Homeopathy and Homeopathic

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Summary

In the last years of the 18th century, a German physician named Samuel Hahnemann laid out the principles of homeopathic medicine, and a battle has raged between practitioners of homeopathy and allopathy (traditional medicine) ever since. Hahnemann believed that substances that would produce illness in a healthy person would cure the disease in a sick person, if appropriately diluted and weakened.

This is a stark contrast to the principle behind allopathic medicine, which is that the effectiveness of a substance generally increases with an increase in its concentration. The debate has not been confined to the western world. Indian physicians have made major contributions to the literature on both sides of the argument. Buzz up!

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Details

The principles of homeopathy were first expounded by Samuel Hahnemann in the last decade of the 18th century.

This German physician stated that certain substances produce symptoms of illness when administered in large doses to a healthy person.

This is in stark contrast to basic principles of the allopathic system which states that efficacy of medicinally active substance increases with increase in concentration.

In the mid-19th century, Rajendralal Datta, a Calcutta-based practitioner of allopathic medicine created an uproar by shifting over to homeopathy.

When the Calcutta chapter of the British Medical Association was set up in 1863, Datta campaigned vociferously for recognition to homeopathy.

But he was up against formidable adversaries.

Among them was the eminent physician and founder of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, Mahendralal Sircar.

Called to deliver the inaugural address of the British Medical Association's Bengal branch, Sircar launched into a diatribe against homeopathy.

He spent six months with the physician, closely observing the method of treatment followed in homeopathy.

Next lecture Sircar's next lecture at the British Medical Association (1867) was a rude shock to allopaths.

Sircar presented a comparative picture of allopathy and homeopathy at the lecture and argued that homeopathy had not got the importance it deserved.

Such support for homeopathy from a renowned allopath stunned members of the British Medical Association.

In 1878, the senate of Calcutta University nominated him as a member of its medical faculty.

But all other members lodged a strong protest against this and even expressed their inability to sit with a person "who had faith in a useless subject such as homeopathy and who followed it as a method of medical treatment".

In 1919, the Bengal government sought Sircar's advice when a severe plague epidemic hit the province.

Treatments which may be used in Complementary and Integrated Medicine

Homeopathy

Links within this treatment:

Homeopathy:introduction

Homeopathic preparations

Homeopathic treatments

Other treatments:

Main Therapies page

Introduction

The word homeopathy derives from the Greek 'homoios', meaning similar, and 'pathos', meaning suffering. The combination of these two words in many ways defines the practice of homeopathy very exactly, as the main governing principle of this form of medicine is summed up by the Latin phrase 'similia, similibus curentur' - like cures like.

Perhaps the therapeutic basis for homeopathic prescribing can be best illustrated by analysing the use of the medicine Belladonna (deadly nightshade, atropine). The symptoms of Belladonna poisoning are clearly described. The main effects observed are mania and confusion, a flushed red face, dilated pupils, a high fever, and a dry mouth. If a patient presented with such symptoms, for instance as a result of an infection, the homeopath would assume that a minute dose of Belladonna could alleviate the complaint. In other words, the toxic effects of the preparation can be used as a symptomatic, or symptom 'picture', basis for the selection of appropriate medication.

Principles of Homeopathy

The basic principles of this form of medicine were first elucidated by Dr Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843). He did not develop his ideas in a vacuum, but seems to have based many of his original thoughts on Hippocratic principles that suggested symptoms were an expression of nature's healing powers. A German physician, George Stahl, also stumbled across and used homeopathic principles about a century before Hahnemann's birth. This approach contrasts with allopathic principles of therapy (conventional medicine). 'Allos', or different, suggests that an appropriate remedy will produce symptoms different from those of the disease; for instance, the suppression of fever by aspirin.

Hahnemann developed homeopathy on the sound basis of detailed and scientific observation of the effects of specific medicines, both in health and in disease. The first drug picture clearly defined by him was that of cinchona bark. During the 18th century this remedy was commonly used for many infections, including malaria and intermittent fever. On dosing himself up with cinchona bark, he found that he was able to mimic many of the symptoms of malaria and it occurred to him that the bark eradicated this febrile disease by producing its own self-limiting fever.

Similarly, mercury was used as a treatment for syphilis. Hahnemann noted that mercurial fever was in many ways similar to the symptoms of early syphilis. He began to prove other drugs, simply by taking them or asking one of his students to take them and subsequently recording in considerable detail the mental and physical symptoms that occurred over the next week or two. It is important to understand that homeopathic prescribing is as much based on mental symptoms as it is on physical complaints.

He slowly began to build a detailed 'library' of drug pictures, each drug having associated with it a long detailed list of symptoms that had been defined by its toxic action. If a patient required homeopathic treatment, then a detailed history was (and still is) taken, the symptoms were fitted into the most appropriate drug picture, and the required remedy was prescribed. More recently, the prescription of classical homeopathic drugs has tended to be divided into two main groups - the constitutional and the symptomatic. Constitutional remedies are designed to rebalance the individual's health. For instance, if someone suffers from recurrent attacks of indigestion, a remedy based on their general demeanour and personality can be given, with the idea of controlling both the symptoms and the cause of the pathology in a long-term manner. Symptomatic prescribing is based on the immediate presenting symptoms and is usually effective in controlling acute and minor illness such as an acute viral infection. Ideally, both constitutional and symptomatic remedies should be given together to obtain the best therapeutic results. Homeopathic pharmacies have also developed "complex" homeopathic preparations. These are effectively mixtures of several homeopathic medications, all of which may be indicated in different individuals for the same group of symptoms.

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Allopathy and other Medical Systems

Sandhya Srinivasan

Alternative" or "complementary" doesn't say it quite right. Ayurveda, Unani and many other healing systems predate the development of Allopathic medicine, and for many centuries provided care to the majority of the population. They continue to do so even today, despite the economic and even cultural dominance of Allopathy. For example, according to the 1981 census, Kerala had 7,409 allopathic compared to 7,826 ayurvedic and 3,393 homoeopathic practitioners respectively. In a special issue on the subject, a report in the Journal of the American Medical Association notes that 42 per cent of American households spent at least \$ 27 billion for some form of alternative medicine in 1997, many more in developing countries.

Commercial preparations of ayurvedic and other 'herbal' formulas are finding a receptive market worldwide, encouraged, perhaps, by pharmaceutical companies' renewed interest in extracting the 'active ingredients' of a herbal medicine.

However, concerns have been raised: do manufacturing and labelling follow the principles on which the systems are based? The chair of the health ministry's Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani Drugs technical advisory board has stated that most commercial preparations do not conform to Ayurvedic texts; there is no quality control or other regulation, and no information on contraindications or potential side-effects. This can make them both ineffective and dangerous, and allopathic journals regularly carry reports of 'adverse events' associated with herbal medicine. (Of course, many more people may be affected by improper use of allopathic drugs — or use of improper allopathic drugs.)

Why are these systems so popular?

Treatment with such medicine is seen as more affordable, effective, accessible, humane and holistic. From the point of view of allopaths, interest in these other systems is fuelled at least partly by dissatisfaction with allopathy: "disillusionment with the often hurried and impersonal care delivered by conventional physicians, as well as the harsh treatments that may be necessary for life-threatening diseases." They also seem to view 'alternative medicines' as essentially unscientific: harmless at best, but potentially dangerous, particularly if it causes seriously-ill patients to neglect effective (allopathic) treatment. From certain perspectives, the WHO'S decision to establish a centre for global standardisation for herbal medicines makes a lot of sense, though it has been argued that standardisation is technically difficult and would make drugs unaffordable in developing nations. As for reports of specialist clinics to generate data on disorders for which efficacious traditional remedies are claimed, or the various clinical trials of such medicines, one does not know if these will focus on extracting allopathic treatments or documenting the traditional medical system. Doubts have been expressed about the government's commitment to research into traditional systems

Ethical questions

It is becoming common for patients to use more than one medical system, either simultaneously or alternating from one to the other. Sometimes there is no perceived conflict; sometimes such 'multi-drug therapy' is conceptually chaotic, and each system sees the other as harming the patient. Homoeopathy says steroids

suppress symptoms. Allopathy says some ayurvedic medicines can cause heavy metal poisoning. This presents serious dilemmas to the health professional. How can you respect patients' rights to use another system, even if it doesn't make sense to you — and even if you believe it does harm?

The existence of more than one system should also be an opportunity for health professionals to learn about other forms of treatment. How should Allopathy and other medical systems

the doctor open up to this possibility of another perspective, and not just extract another treatment according to his own system's principles? Finally, what is the role of the external authorities in the promotion and regulation of all medical systems?

The discussion articles in this issue raise a number of questions that must be examined in the light of a growing — though uneasy — interface of these different systems of medicine. A doctor describes what he sees as the tasks ahead in a 'mileu of mixopathy' and proposes the practice of integral medicine'. The parents of a child with a serious health condition describe their efforts to mediate between two systems. A philosopher holds that both Ayurveda and Allopathy are used against women. A doctor and researcher describes the ethical principles guiding tribal medicine men.

It is hoped that these essays provoke a lively debate and reflection, ultimately contributing to ethical medical practice

DOSHAS

Ayurveda identifies that, the functional integrity of human body is governed by a balance of three specific humors, termed as Doshas. Practically speaking, their equilibrium is not a static one but dynamic in nature.

The word Dosh is derived from the root dus, which sounds similar to the English prefix 'dys'. If translated, the word dosha would mean a "fault", "stain", and "transgression" against the cosmic rhythm or an inaccuracy that leads to chaos. However, in the context of Ayurveda philosophy, doshas are not per se harmful.

Rather, they seem to be called doshas for they are prone to undergo chaos or aberrations under disturbed circumstances.

VATA DOSHA

If Doshas are considered to be manifestations of energy, Vata dosha can rightly be equated to a Kinetic Energy. The origin of the word Vata can be traced to "that which moves" and it fits the dosha to the letter.

Vata is the initiator of all life processes that are dynamic in nature. It represents the impulse in the communication network of the body – from brain to periphery, from tissue to tissue and cell to cell. Vata is responsible for perception (pain), transmission and reaction. It brings a thought from the memory to consciousness, and transfers current experiences into memories. It inspires speech and is the base for laughter and exaltation.

In human physiology Vata governs all such functions that involve somatic initiation and dynamism:-

- * Vata initiates and transmits all stimuli.
- * Vata governs the intestinal motility facilitating the downward movement of food we consume.
- * Vata governs whole process of respiration.
- * Vata governs the movement of heart. Thus, it takes off delivering the nutrients to all cells in our body. It governs the collection and transport of carbon dioxide and other wastes from body.
- * Vata governs our intellectual perception, imagination and motivation.

In order to explain more intricate details of these doshas, Ayurvedic doctrines classified each of them in five sub-doshas; like vata dosha in "Prana, Udana, Vyana, Samana, Apana"

PITTA DOSHA

Pitta represents the somatic energy in all living forms. In a living cell, it converts the ingested food into energy. Pitta maintains the natural pigmentation/colour of cells. Pitta is primarily distributed in the regions of umbilicus, the stomach and small intestines, sweat, lymph, blood, plasma, eyes and skin.

Pitta dosha, as the name suggests, is responsible for all types of transformation in the body. Pitta controls digestion of food in the gut as well as the conversion of light rays which fall on the retina to electrical impulses which in turn are carried by the optic nerve for processing in the brain. A strong Pitta in the brain allows good processing of the information, thereby leading to a certain maturity in comprehension.

If vata dosha controls exultation and laughter, Pitta dosha controls emotions like anger, fear and bravado. In keeping with its effect on the brain, Pitta is responsible for positive and action-oriented emotions. Because it hones the intelligence, Pitta gives rise to greed and may be said to be responsible for Machiavellian tendencies in humans.

In human body, it governs an array of complex activities concerning digestion and metabolism; -

- * Pitta generates and maintains some natural urges, like hunger, thirst.
- * Pitta represents various secretions, responsible for digestion.
- * Pitta regulates the complexion and suppleness of skin
- * Pitta is instrumental in the maintenance of vision.
- * Pitta supports certain mental phenomena like intellectual comprehension, Conviction, courage and valour.
- * Human body is maintained at a constant temperature of 37°C irrespective of temperature in outer environment. This phenomena is called as "Thermoregulation" and constitutes an important function of Pitta.

In order to explain more intricate details of these doshas, Ayurvedic doctrines classified each of them in five sub-doshas like pitta dosha in "Pachaka, Ranjaka, Sadhaka, Alochaka, Bhrajaka"

KAPHA DOSHA

In human body, Kapha is primarily distributed in chest, throat, head, plasma, fatty deposition and tongue. If Vata is kinetic energy then Kapha is potential energy.

It gives mental strength, as well as resistance to disease. It gives firmness to joints while keeping them lubricated. It also imparts sexual potency.

- * Like in living cell, Kapha maintains the structural integrity and confines Individual organs to their specific location.
- * It protects the bodily organs against physiological injury.
- * Kapha imparts immunity against diseases.
- * It maintains the fluid balance.
- * Mental phenomenon like, intellectual stability, determinations are governed by Kapha.

In order to explain more intricate details of these doshas, Ayurvedic doctrines classified each of them in five sub-doshas like kapha dosha in "Avlambaka, Kedaka, Bodhaka, Tarpaka, Sleshaka".

DHATUS

Dhatus are structural blocks of the body. They constitute the body -termed as S'areera. The most important difference between the Doshas and the Dhatus is that the latter perform functions under the influence of the Doshas.

The word Dhatu means 'support', in Sanskrit. Tissues therefore form the infrastructure of the body. There are Seven types of such structural elements that, constitute human body.

Rasa :- It represents the primary constitution of human body. Water is a major constituent of human body. Such water is present in human body, both as extra cellular and intracellular fluid content. Rasa dhatu-the first of seven structural elements refers to both extra cellular and intracellular portions of fluid in the body.

Rakta :- The word Rakta refers to Blood. Thus, Rakta dhatu represents the blood, which includes its cellular components. Blood is perceived as a special type of tissue, in modern concepts of physiology also.

Mamsa :- The muscular tissue, which constitutes many internal organs as well as the muscles, is referred to as Mamsa.

Medas :- Medo-dhatu is referred to as adipose tissue. Commonly, adipose tissue comprises of all deposits of fat-distributed in the body.

Asthi :- All the bones in human body are composed of a tissue termed as osseous tissue. All such tissue is termed as Asthi dhatu in Ayurveda. Asthi dhatu also include all cartilaginous structure in the body.

Majja :- Majja is bone marrow. A special type tissue called myeloid tissue forms bone marrow.

Sukra :- Sukra represents the reproductive elements. This includes the sperm in males and ovum in females. Apart from these elements, Sukra also refers to cellular reproductive elements.

TISSUE NUTRITION IN AYURVEDA

The mechanism involved in the maintenance of nutrition to these 7 structural elements is explained in a concept; known as " Dhatuparinama Vada".

As per this concept, the ingested food is digested in digestive tract and nutrient and waste parts are segregated. This kind of digestion is carried out primarily, by Pachaka Pitta-which is the digestive moiety of Pitta.

Samana Vata and Kledaka Kapha, which are the functional moieties of Vata and Kapha respectively, located in digestive system, support Pachaka Pitta in this process. In view of its fire like role, Pachaka Pitta is referred to as "Pachakagni".

This process can be explained very simply, with an analogy of "Cooking". We need the help of air, fire and water to cook food properly, in our day today practice. In our body, functions of air, fire and water are played by Samana Vata, Pachaka Pitta and Kledaka Kapha respectively. A right degree of cooking is possible when the air, fire and water are just, at optimal level.

After digestion, the nutrients and wastes from ingested food are segregated. The digested food, termed as " Ahar Ras" is a blend nutrients needed for all 7 dhatus.

Nutritional demands of different dhatus are variable and each dhatu derives its selective nutrients, as this "Ahar Ras" is circulated through out the body through circulating channels. The selective nutrient, picked-up by each Dhatu, undergoes further metabolism in respective tissues.

Such metabolism, within a Dhatu is carried out with the help of specific moieties of Pitta located in respective dhatus. The Pitta element, working within a particular dhatu, is called as Dhatwagni.

During this process, each Dhatu produces some kind of metabolic waste again, from its selective nutrients. Such wastes produced by a Dhatu are called Dhatumala. If not eliminated from time to time these wastes from tissues become toxic. Therefore, Ayurveda recommends periodical "cleansing" of body

MALAS

Mala's are excretory elements. These are three and termed as Thrimalas-

(1) Pureesha (The Faeces)

(2) Mutra (The Urine)

(3) Sweda (The Sweat)

The word Thrimala is used, to refer 3 types of excretory systems present in the body and not just the excreta. Mala can be translated as metabolic end products. This means that each cell which is a living factory will produce, under the influence of the Doshas , wastes (mala) which in turn influence adversely the functions of the Dhatus that produce them.

Thus Dosha, Dhatu and Mala form a tripod of health

GAYANENDRIYAS

Gyanendriyas are sensory organs. They are the organs of perception. Since they are the tools to acquire –"gyana" –the knowledge or information, they are termed so. They are five in numbers-

Akshi (The Eyes)

Karna (The Ears)

Nasika (The Nostrils)

Jihwa (The Tongue)

Twacha (The Skin)

These five are termed as Indriyadhithana. It means, the prime location of sensory perception. Every Gyanendriya is a complex system and not just, one or two organs.

Each of these Gyanendriyas have a definite object of perception. This object of a sensory organ is termed as Indriyarthā.

KARMENDRIYAS

Pada (The Feet)

Hasta (The Hands)

Vagindriya (The sense of speech)

Paya (The Anus)

Upastha (The Genitalia)

The name of karmendriya includes the entire structure and functional mechanism of that particular organ. The function of a karmendriya is referred to as Indriyarthā.

MANA

Manas or the mind is considered as 11th Indriya by Ayurveda. By virtue of its functions, Manas performs the functions of both Gyanendriya, the sensory organs and Karmendriya, the motor organs.

It has two specific characters, viz. Ekatva (solitude or seclusion) and Anutwam (subtleness). Because of its Subtleness, Manas can move swiftly. For its swiftness, Manas is considered as the fastest object in the universe.

Manas are an entity that is responsible for generation of knowledge. It plays an instrumental role in the perception of Indriyarthā. For this purpose, it conjugates itself, with the respective gyanendriya and receives sensory signals.

Gyanendriya can't perceive any type of knowledge on its own, without conjugating itself, with Manas or Mind. Also, it is important to note that, Manas can conjugate itself, with only one sense organ at a given point of time and not more than one. But, it can move from one organ to the other, swiftly-within a split second. Functioning of Karmendriyas also needs a conjugation with Manas.

Apart from such dual role, Manas is also responsible for some more faculties. Analysis, Thinking, Imagination are some of such special functions of Manas.

BUDDHI

Buddhi is another constituent of Purusha. In terms of modern Psychology, Buddhi comprises intellect and will. It contemplates the circumstances that call for an action and provides rule of conduct. Will control the disposition, in harmony with the dictum from Buddhi.

Manas has an ability to perceive various stimuli through Indriyas. Also, it can analyze them in terms of merits & demerits. Based on such analysis, Buddhi produces a decisive knowledge. Thus, Buddhi-the intellect is ultimate decision-maker.

ATMA

The word Atma can be literally translated as Soul. Concept of Atma has been the central dogma of Indian Philosophy.

Atma conjugates with all the constituent elements of human body, which is eternal. Such conjugation of Atma is only restricted to the instruments (such as sensory organs, mind & intellect) but, not their with their deeds.

Atma is omnipresent. It is constituent among all forms of life. The biological functions of all living systems are attributed to the presence of Atma, in a body-where all other constituents are incorporated.

AYURVEDA IN TIME

Ayurveda is a system of healing that originated in India thousands of years ago. The roots of Ayurveda are not fully traceable and somewhat fade into myth. Ancient scholars of Ayurveda believed that Ayurveda is as old as life itself. Charaka Samhita states that Ayurveda is Saswat (eternal) which means history of Ayurveda is

traceable to the beginning of life processes in this universe. However , for the practical purposes, history of Ayurveda can be covered under two major heads :

MYTHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

To this perspective, origin of Ayurveda is linked to Gods, dieties and heavens. According to Hindu belief, Lord Brahma is considered as creator of this universe. Creation of all forms of matter occurring in this universe, living or non-living is believed to be his handiwork. The Hindu system of medicine (Ayurveda) is also said to be originated by Brahma, the fountainhead of all learning.

It is believed that Brahma propagated this knowledge through Daksha Prajapati who in turn taught this science to the Ashwini Kumars (the twin son of the Sun God). The Ashwinis imparted the science of Ayurveda to Indra. In Indian Mythology , a lot of work is credited to the legendary medical skills of Aswini Kumars- They gave eyesight & walking power to Rishi Pravarak.

Saved the life of Bhardwaj.

Restored lost energy of Rishi Chyawan & rejuvenated his health.

Gave power & rejuvenation to Rishi Vandan.

Going by another legend, in ancient days, both Demons on earth and Gods in heaven were interested , to obtain ambrosia – the Amrit from Ocean of Milk – the Ksheera Sagar. Ambrosia was to make an individual immortal. However, it was not an easy task to obtain ambrosia from the ocean of milk individually for both of them. It was then decided that both the groups would share the task as well as the outcome. Accordingly, both the groups churned the Ksheer Sagar, using Meru Parvata (A large mountain) as the agitator and Adishesu (A large and strong snake) as the rope. This churning brought out first a powerful Poison, which Lord Shiva swallowed, in the interest of universe. It later followed with outcome of Ambrosia. Dhanvantari emerged out of Ksheera Sagar, with a vessel of Amrita in one hand and a set of Herbs in another.

Since then, Indian Mythology regards Dhanvantari as the God of Health and immortality.

The knowledge of Ayurveda was known only to celestial personalities till the time Lord Indra passed on the knowledge of Ayurveda, the Science Of Life, to Sages & Rishis (mortals), the first pupil being Bhardwaja.

Descent of Ayurveda from Lord Brahma to earth can be put as under. Lord Brahma

Daksha Prajapati

Ashwin Kumars

Indra

Divodasa Dhanvantari

(School of Surgeon)

Bhardwaja

(School of Medicine)

Maharishi Atreya

Sushruta

(4th-5th BC)

Wrote first well accepted standard

text for Ayurveda: Sushruta Samhita

Ksharapani

Parasara

Harita

Jatukarna

Bhela

Agnivesha

Nagarjuna

Revised Sushruta Samhita in 2nd AD

Charak (1st AD)

Revised Agnivesha Samhita

Vagbhata (7th AD)

Ashtang Hridaya: Commentary on Charak and Sushruta

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE Vedic Era Samhita Era
Buddhist Era Mediaeval Era
Modern Era

Vedic Era:

India is known as Land of Vedas. The word Veda refers to True Knowledge. A number of guiding principles for preservation of health are mentioned in Vedas. However in Atharva Veda, such guiding principles, medicinal effects of herbs etc. occur more abundantly. Thus, Atharva Veda forms the structural foundation for emergence of Ayurveda, as a separate branch of science or knowledge.

It would be an arduous task to determine the time of origin for Vedas. Based on an astrological calculation, B.G.Tilak opined that, Rigveda (the first of four Vedas) originated between 6,000 and 4,000 B.C.

Historical descent of Ayurveda upto Indra could be termed as Vedic Era. It is believed that Maharishi Bhardwaj ventured to reach the heavens and sought the knowledge of Ayurveda for the benefit of mankind. Thus it is apparent that Ayurveda was not within the reach of mankind before Bhardwaj. He, in turn, taught this subject to others including Atreya.

According to another mythological belief, Lord Indra favoured the blessed Lord Dhanvantari with knowledge in Ayurveda. Dhanvantari, in years to come, became a renowned teacher in the art of surgery & taught this subject to his disciples. He was considered the "Patron Saint Of Surgery" and later elevated to divinity of classical medical wisdom.

However, during Vedic Period, Ayurveda was not a separate branch of science. It would be logical to state that, evolution of Ayurveda started with compilation of health care information scattered in Vedas. Such beginning would have given a

much wider scope for its evolution into an inter-disciplinary science (as Up-Veda) for application purposes.

Samhita Era:

The word "Samhita" means "Compilation of Knowledge". Thus the period in which process of compiling treatises on Ayurveda began is known as Samhita Era.

The length of this period between Atreya to Gautam Buddha is generally termed as Samhita Era, in the history of Ayurveda. Based on the available evidence, Atreya's period was considered to be around 1000 B.C. Thus Samhita Era is the span between 1000-6000 B.C. During this span, Ayurveda was enriched by a series of treatises by different rishis (sages).

To the available evidences, Maharishi Krishnatreya initiated process of spreading knowledge. He was said to have knowledge of Ayurveda from his teacher Maharishi Bhardwaja. Atreya spread his knowledge while moving from one place to other, through out the country. So Maharishi Krishnatreya has acquired another name, Charaka (Char means to move and the one who moves is, Charaka). The Six Disciples of Atreya, Who developed the School of Medicine namely Agnivesha, Bhela, Jatukarna, Parasara, Harita and Ksharapani wrote samhita of their own (Shatbhishak Samhita). Of these the Agnivesha Samhita was well accepted and was propagated as the backbone of Ayurvedic Samhita (Compendia).

Similarly, the Divodasa Dhanvantari, who developed School Of Surgery, had its disciples-Aupadhenava, Vaitarana, Aurabhara, Poushakalvata, Gopurarakshita and Sushruta. The Sushruta Samhita was written by Sushruta. It deals with a complete systematic approach to Shalya Kriya (General Surgery) & Shalaky Tantra (eyes, ear, throat & nose) The period of Sushruta Samhita is considered to be around 500 B.C. just before Buddhist Period.

The other available samhita that belongs to more or less the same period are Kashyapa Samhita, Bhela Samhita and Harita Samhita. During this period, it is interesting to note that most of the knowledge about drugs was centred on plants.

Apparently by this time, Ayurveda was developed into a School of Medicine having eight branches of medical specialties- Ashtangas of Ayurveda:

- 1 Kaya Chikitsa - Internal medicine
- 2 Balaroga Chikitsa - Paediatrics
- 3 Shalya Chikitsa - General surgery
- 4 Shalakya Chikitsa - Eye, Ear, Nose & Throat surgery
- 5 Agada Tantra - Toxicology
- 6 Rasayan Chikitsa - Science of Rejuvenation
- 7 Vajikarana Chikitsa - Study & development of sexual power & fertility
- 8 Bhoot Vidya - Psychiatry

Buddhist Era

Probably in the history of Ayurveda, Buddhist Era could be stated as golden period. During this era, every branch of Ayurveda was nourished due to the contributions of different scholars. The period of Gautam Buddha is more or less accepted to be around 600 B.C. From that time onwards, Buddhist Era for the purposes of Ayurveda is considered up to 5th A.D.

Development of Ayurveda during Buddhist periods was due to an unequivocal support of Gautam Buddha himself. Buddha naturally considered Ayurveda as one of the very effective methods to alleviate human suffering and this ability was much closer to his philosophy.

By this time, Ayurveda in India took a major leap, by introducing an 8 years long professional course at Takshashila University (presently in Pakistan), around 700 B.C. Soon, Nalanda University also followed the course.

Important personalities & Compilations in Buddhist Era:

Vridha Jeevaka

He had an admirable authority not only in Ayurveda, but also in many areas of contemporary knowledge. For his tremendous power of analysis, he was referred as Jnanavridha (aged person in knowledge). Thus Jeevaka became familiar as Vridha Jeevaka. He compiled a treatise covering the teachings of his teacher Kashyap, in the name of Kashyap Samhita. The text is also known as Vridha Jeevakeeya Tantra – to commemorate the author.

Kashyapa Samhita

The treatise compiled during Buddhist Era has specialized in Bala Chikitsa (Paediatrics). It contains 9 volumes (Sthans) and 200 chapters.

Jeevaka

Jeevaka was praised for his influential personality, generosity and spiritualism. Jeevaka was born to a prostitute near Patliputra (presently Patna) as an unwanted child and was thrown out as a neonate soon after his birth. The prince of that state by name Abhay brought him to the palace and ordered his maids to bring him up. Since the boy survived the rejection by his mother, he was named as Jeevaka. He studied Ayurveda under Bhikshu Atreya for 7 years, at Takshashila University. Jeevaka performed his career as a Surgeon. He treated Gautam Buddha for a chronic ailment by administering a purgation course.

Nagarjuna

He was born in Amravati (presently in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh) during 113 AD. As the dynasty nurtured Buddhism, Nagarjuna also became an ardent Buddhist and lived as a Buddhist saint. He also became the 13th chief (Dharmadhyaksha) of Buddhist saints. Though, Nagarjuna had traveled widely, he spent most of his life in Amravati and a near by hilly area –Sriparvata and its adjacent valley. This Sriparvata is also known as Nagarjuna Konda (the hill of Nagarjuna) and its valley is totally merged in the reservoir of a multipurpose project on River Krishna, named as Nagarjuna Sagar.

However, Nagarjuna's contribution for Ayurveda comes from a different angle. He has conducted extensive studies on health applications of Mercury & other heavy metals. These studies, have entailed in the emergence of a new branch of Ayurveda, viz. Rasa Shastra or Alchemy. Ayurveda, in later periods used Mercury as well as other toxic metals as important components of pharmaceutical formulations.

Treatises compiled during Buddhist Era Kaya Chikitsa :- - Ashtanga Hridayam*

- Ashtanga Sangraha*

Shalya Tantra :- - Aupadheneva Tantra,

- Aurabhra Tantra

- Kapila Tantra

- Paushkalavatatantra

Shalaky Tantra :- - Videha Tantra

- Nimi Tantra

- Chakshusya Tantra

- Katyayana Tantra

Kaumarabhritya :- - Kashayapa Samhita

- Bandhaka Tantra

- Hiranyakshat Tantra

- Kumara Tantra

Agada Tantra:- - Sanaka Samhita

- Ushana Samhita

- Brihaspati Samhita

- Garuda Samhita

Vajikarana :- - Kuchumara Tantra

*Ashtanga Hridayam & Ashtanga Sangraha both are compiled during Buddhist Era. These treatises are the Encyclopedia of medicine covering all the branches of Ayurveda medical system.

The Mediaeval Era

For the purpose of Ayurveda history, mediaeval periods were spread through 8th century to 18th century A.D. During this span of 1000 years India, as a country passed through a series of sanguinary political upheavals, which were rather, unprecedented. On the other hand the scientific and cultural heritage of India also, was subjected to a closer and competitive impact.

Ayurveda as a science by that time was able to derive its conceptual and driving spirits from only Indian philosophy. There was hardly any scope to enrich itself, from the Trans-National approaches of health care, nor there is a clear evidence of its influence on any other upcoming system of medicine like, Chinese or Greek medicine.

The Arabian Medicine, which had roots in Greece came into contact with Ayurveda only through invaders and emigrants to begin with, in 6th Century A.D. There were some Ayurvedic literatures translated by prominent scholars-

- * Charak Samhita translated into Persian by Manka & later to Arabic by Abdulla-bin-Ali as Sharaka..
- * Sushruta Samhita translated into Arabic by Manka as Sushrud.
- * Ashtanga Hridaya translated into Arabic by Ibun-Dhan as Astankar.
- * Siddhayoga translated into Arabic by Ibun-Dhan as Sindhashtaq

Also in Firdausu'l Hikmat, authored by Ali-bin-Raban-al-Tabri (850 A.D.) gives a detailed account on Indian system of medicine towards the end of his work.

Around this time, the works of Avicenna (985-1040AD) enriched Greco-Arabic medicine. During later periods, his publication- The Cannon of Medicine (Spread in 5 volume) was taught in the medical institutions of many European countries and influenced the concept of medical sciences there.

Under difficult political situations, the scholars and practitioners of Ayurveda were unable to protect their valuable belongings- the Ayurvedic literature. They taught Ayurveda only to their sub lings and not to the really eligible students. These forced practices of Ayurvedic scholars, have set a new trend in motion, of Proprietary/Secret formulations, in the name of Anubhoot Yogas (formulations arrived at, -based on experience).

By this time, the Hippocratic Medicine having spread into Europe in the name of Allopathy (To treat substance opposite the symptoms) made few important strides. In 1543, Andreas Versalis compiled a textbook on Human Anatomy. In 1590, Andreas Versalis compiled a textbook on Human Anatomy. In 1628, a Dutch Optician, Zacharias Janssen invented microscope. This instrument played an important role in later discoveries concerning Medicine. William Harvey made his discoveries on Blood Circulatory System were laying foundations to Systematic Physiology in 1628 A.D. A Dutch Naturalist, Anton Van Leevanhoek, carried out this observation.

In India, compared to the rule of Delhi Sultanate, Mughul administration was able to provide the country a much-desired political stability. Some of Moghul kings were favourable to Indian civilization; of them Akbar was highly compassionate to Indian values and was keen to rule the country, by winning the heart of Indian natives.

Akbar's main contribution for Ayurveda came from two corners. Firstly, he constructed a unique hospital where both Ayurvedic and Unani systems worked hand in hand. Secondly, his name remained in the history of Ayurveda immortal because of Todarmal – who was a scholar laureate in his court.

Ayurvedic Texts During Mediaeval Periods

Coping up with all these negative influences, medical literature in India had attained a definite stride during mediaeval periods. Also the periods have witnessed a major level of enrichment of Ayurvedic literature prevailing at that time. This enrichment had two distinctly different directions -

Original Texts :-

Various scholars through out the mediaeval periods authored a substantial number of new Ayurvedic books. Some of that are – 1. Madhava Nidana written by Madhavakara in the field of Clinical Pathology.

2. Sarngadhar Samhita written by Sarngadhara in the field of Pharmaceutics.

3. Bhavaprakasha Nighantu written by Bhavamisra in field of Lexicon of Med. Plants

4. Kalyanakaraka written by Ugradityacharya in the field of General Text.

5. Siddhasara Samhita written by Ravi Gupta in the field of General Text.

6. Dravyaguna Sangraha written by chakrapani Datta in field of Lexicon of Med. Plants

7. Anjana Nidana written by Agnivesa in the field of Clinical Pathology.

8. Vangasena written by Vangasena in the field of Therapeutics.

9. Brindamadhava written by Brinda in the field of Internal Medicine.

10. Parahita Samhita written by Srinatha in the field of General Text.

From the above texts, three texts need a specific mention. Madhava Nidana (700 AD), Sarngadhara Samhita (13th Century) and Bhavaprakasha (16th Century) were distinctive in their nature as well as the contents. Thus, these three books are considered as Laghutrayee (the minor triad).

Commentaries :-

Commentaries are referred to as " Vyakhya Vangmaya" . Commentaries were aimed to inherent brilliance of codified (sutra) language used in the ancient Ayurvedic literature. Every Sutra used in ancient Ayurvedic literature was designed precisely, to convey a distinct and elaborate information related to topic under discussion. Each of Sutra was strand like structure arranged in a coil design, which becomes obvious only, when the strands are separated and the coils are opened methodically.

Thus, commentaries on ancient Samhitas were an inevitable necessity. This literature was precisely aimed to segregate the strands and open-up coils of each Sutra, used in particular Samhita. More than 50 commentaries could be traced partially or fully, which were compiled during the mediaeval periods. Some of them are – 1. Nirantara Padavyakhya written by Jejjata on Charaka Samhita.

2. Kimvandanti written by Jejjata on Ashtangahridaya.
3. Ayurveda Deepika written by Chakrapani Datta on Charaka Samhita.
4. Nibandha sangraha written by Dalhana on Sushruta Samhita.
5. Madhukosha Vyakhya written by Vijaya rakshita on Madhava Nidan.
6. Sarvanga Sundra written by Aruna data on Ashtangahridaya.
7. Shashilekha Vyakhya written by Indu on Ashtanga Sangraha.
8. Ayurveda Rasayan written by Hemadri on Ashtangahridaya.
9. Deepika written by Adhamalla on S'arangadhar Samhita.
10. Ratna Prabha written by Nischalkar on Chakra Datta.

Modern Era: -

Under this head there are two categories: - 1. Developmental Status Of Ayurveda

Mughul dynasty was in power, for a total span of about 150 years. By the end of 16th century, the Allopathic Doctors hailing from Portugal, Dutch (The Netherlands), France and England were spread in important cities.

Overpowering others, Britain established its rule by 1765 A.D. through its East India Company. By this time, a number of western scholars were attracted to the richness of Indian art, culture and sciences. They were actively persuading their Indian studies with high academic spirits. As a result of this enthusiasm, William Jones established Asiatic Society in Calcutta, in 1754. Indian & European scholars, who became members of Asiatic Society to attract the attention of western scholars towards Indian Culture, Civilization, Arts and Sciences.

In 1822 Government started the National Medical Institution at Calcutta headed by Dr. Tytler. During 1824, a Sanskrit College was also started at Calcutta for imparting education in both Oriental & upcoming western systems concurrently. In 1827 a medical course was started in Sanskrit College and the curriculum had both Ayurveda & Allopathy system. Pandit Madhusudan headed the faculty of Ayurveda.

Parallel to Allopathic Medical Colleges, Vernacular Medical Colleges were also started from 1835 onwards. Qualified in these Vernacular Medical Institutes were referred to as Native Doctors. Over a period of time Vernacular Medical Institutes were also converted into Allopathic Medical Colleges. Ayurvedic education went back to Guru – Shishya Parampara.

In 1885 the Indian National Congress was started. A feeling of Nationalism started creeping into all walks of life. In 1908, the All India Ayurvedic Congress was started, with a view to preserve & propagates the values of the great scientific heritage of the Nation. The most important task, the congress took up was re-organize the Ayurvedic education which was taken-up & was ignored more on political

considerations. The first Ayurvedic College to be started under the aegis of Congress at Ahmed Nagaer in 1916.

Meanwhile, another endeavour to integrate Allopathic Medicine with Ayurveda –in common cause of Public Health was taken up in 1910 by the effort of Dr. Pardie Leucas, Director of medical services in the Imperior Government. As a result of his effort, the Govt. School Of Indian Medicine came in existence in 1925. In this system a student of Ayurveda was bound to know the development of Allopathy to enrich his professional skills.

Research in Ayurveda also, had attained a new dimension –by the studies conducted by Dr. Dwarkanath, at faculty of Medicine, Hamburg University Germany in 1935-37. The study evaluated Ayurvedic Gold preparations in Tuberculosis. He was first to demonstrate that, Gold processed as prescribed by Ayurveda is absorbed and metabolized by the body.

Sulpha drugs began the history of human success over infecting micro-organisms. While Domagk was busy in screening Sulfur compounds to fight infections, it was a chance discovery by Alexander Fleming in 1928 the Penicillin came into picture. This wonder substance could see the light as a drug in 1940 due to the efforts of Florey, Chain & Abraham.

2. Present Status Of Ayurveda

India acquired independence from British rule in 1947 and become a Democratic Republic in 1950. Developments of Ayurveda in India after independence need to focus on various aspects-

a) Ayurvedic Education

The integrated approach of Ayurvedic Education started by efforts of Dr. Leucas continued for about one more decade. The parallel Institutions started by All India Ayurvedic Congress were running concurrently. Apart from these two institutions of learning one more institution working silently, without any kind of hindrances was, the Guru Shishya Parampara.

Based on experience of multifaceted pressure, it was decided to bring the Ayurvedic education under the preview of universities in Independent India. By 1969 all the colleges imparting education in Ayurveda or other Indigenous system of medicine –were affiliated to respective universities. In 1970, the Central Council Of Indian Medicine was constituted through an enactment in the Parliament. The council works for maintenance & up-gradation of standards of education in Ayurveda.

Besides Graduate and Post-Graduate courses, different levels of training are being imparted for Para-Medical staff, like Panchkarma Technicians, Ayurvedic Pharmacist etc. at different centers in India.

Now there are few institutions of national repute, which are conducting various programs in the field of Ayurveda, viz. Faculty of Ayurveda, Institute of medical Sciences Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Institute of Post Graduate Training & Research, Gujrat Ayurveda University, Jam Nagar, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur & Rashtriya Ayurved Vidyapeetha, India.

b) Patient Care Services

A number of Hospitals, Dispensaries run by Government, Local Administration provide treatment to the needy, employing Ayurvedic methods.

c) Research In Ayurveda

Research in Ayurveda with clearly defined objectives and well-designed protocols is the need of hour- if Ayurveda has to respond to emerging challenges of the global health care scenario. Realizing this need a number of organization were pressed into various aspects of these research needs.

A deliberate effort to carry out integrated and coordinated research on medicinal plants selected after careful discussion and consultation with reputed Ayurvedic & Unani physicians was made for the first time in India by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in 1964 through the Composite Drug Research Scheme (CDRS). In 1970, this scheme was transferred to the newly constituted Central Council For Research In Indian Medicine & Homeopathy (CCRIMH). Recently, two autonomous bodies, the Council For Research In Ayurveda And Siddha and Central Council For Research In Unani have been constituted after winding up the CCRIMH.

The Institute of Medical Sciences at Banaras Hindu University and Gujrat Ayurved University has taken up interdisciplinary research in Ayurveda on a large scale, among both curricular and co-curricular programmes.

Research efforts in Ayurveda have increased manifold during the last couple of decades. However, most of these efforts have revolved around the intention of discovering new drugs from plants. Many drugs obtained from plants, which have carved out an important place in modern medicine for themselves as-

Serial No.

Drug

Plant Source

1.

Codeine

Papaver somniferum

2.

Atropine

Hyoscyamus niger

3.

Hyoscyamine

Hyoscyamus muticus

4.

Digoxin

Digitalis purpurea

5.

Hyoscine

Datura metel

6.

Pilocarpine

Pilocarpus jaborandi

7.

Quinidine

Cinchona spp.

8.

Quinine

Cinchona spp.

9.

Colchicine

Colchicum autumnale

10.

Papaverine

Papaver spp.

11.

Emetine

Cephaelis spp.

12.

Theobromine

Theobroma cacao

13.

Ephedrine

Ephedra spp.

14.

Digitoxin

Digitalis purpurea

d) Manufacturing of Ayurvedic Medicine

In 1964, manufacturing of Ayurvedic Medicine was brought under the scope of Drugs & Cosmetics Act, through an amendment enacted by the parliament. As a result, the government could exercise appropriated regulation over the manufacturing of Ayurvedic Medicine. This regulation helped the Industry of Ayurvedic Medicines to grow in a healthy environment.

The GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice) certification also played an important role to provide, quality standard as per the norms of World Health Organization in the field of Ayurveda Industries. Recently Govt. of India has laid down separate GMP requirements for Ayurvedic manufactures & made it mandatory.

e) Cultivation of Medicinal Plants

Ayurveda advocated a harmonious interface of human beings with nature as; it recognizes him to be an integral part of Universe. Also, Ayurveda draws its therapeutic agents mainly, from Plant Kingdom. Thus, the forests have been the

conventional sources of Ayurvedic Medicines. However, under threatened ecological balance and dwindling forest resources, Ayurveda as a whole faces a major threat in near future.

So, more precise methods for propagation of Medicinal Plants should be devised through methodical research. Tropical Botanical Garden & Research Institute (TBGRI), and Centre for Indian Medical Heritage (CIMH) promoted by Ayurvedic Trust –are working in this direction besides many other agencies in the country.

Unani traditions

Prof. Hakim Syed Khaleefathullah

Unani Consultant and Researcher, Formerly Chairman of the Central Council of Indian Medicine.

Modern civilisation owes an immense debt to ancient Greece. Almost everything that contributes to the interest and happiness of life originated in Greece. Philosophy and history, poetry and drama, sculpture and architecture, mathematics and astronomy, science and medicine; all had their roots there, and indeed attained in some instances a level of excellence which has never since been equalled.

Painting by Mahaveer Swami

Unani, as a system of medicine, originated in Greece. It was Bukrath (Hippocrates), 460-377 BC, who freed medicine from the realm of superstition and magic, and gave it the status of science. After him many scholars enriched the system of whom Jalinoos (Galen) 131-210 A.D., Al-Razi (Rhazes) 850-925 A.D. and Abu Ali Ibn Sina (Avicenna) 980-1037 A.D. are noteworthy.

It was further enriched by imbibing the best of contemporary systems of medicine in the middle eastern and far eastern countries. In India the Unani system found immediate favour with the masses and spread all over the country and was unchallenged for a long time even after the Mughal period. The system, however, suffered a setback during the colonial period for want of official patronage.

Unani medicine was the first to establish that disease was a natural process and that symptoms were the reactions of the body to the disease. It believes in the humoral theory which presupposes the presence of the four humors - Dam (blood), Balgham (phlegm), Safra (yellow bile) and Sauda (black bile) in the body. Each humor has its own temperament - blood is hot and moist, phlegm cold and moist, yellow bile hot and dry and black bile cold and dry. Every person attains a temperament according to the preponderance in them of the humors which represent the person's healthy state, which are expressed as sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric and melancholic.

To maintain the correct humoral balance there is a power of self preservation or adjustment called Quwwat-e-Mudabbira (medicatrix naturae) in the body. When this power weakens, imbalance in humoral compositions occurs resulting in disease. The medicines used help regain this power and thereby restore the humoral balance and the disease is eradicated.

The diagnosis of diseases in Unani system of medicine is through Nabz (pulse) and examination of Baul (Urine) and Baraz (stool).

Unani system recognises the influence of surroundings and ecological conditions on the state of health. It has laid down six essential pre-requisites (Asbab-e-Sitta Zarooriya) i.e. air, food and drinks, body movement and repose, psychic movement and repose, sleep and wakefulness, and excretion and retention.

Once a person develops a disease, the Unani physician employs the following types of treatment:

Haj bit tadbeer (regimental therapy) includes venesection, cupping, diaphoresis, diuresis, turkish bath, massage, cauterisation, purging, emesis, exercise and leeching.

Haj bil ghiza (dietotherapy) aims at treating certain ailments by administration of specific diets or by regulating the quantity and quality of food.

Haj bid dawa (pharmacotherapy) deals with the use of naturally occurring drugs mostly herbal, though drugs of animal and mineral origin are also used. Single drugs or their combinations in raw form are preferred over compound formulations. The materia medica of Unani medicine being vast, the medicines are easy to get, for most are available locally. Although general preference is for single drugs, compound formulations are also employed in the treatment of various complex and chronic disorders.

Jarahat (surgery) has also been in use in this system for long. The ancient physicians of Unani medicine were pioneers in this field and had developed their own instruments and techniques.

The development of Unani medicine gained considerable momentum after Independence. In 1969, the Government of India established the Central Council for the Research in Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy (CCRIMH) to develop scientific research in different branches of Indian systems of Medicine Homoeopathy. In 1978, the CCRIMH was made into four separate councils - for Unani Medicine, Ayurveda and Siddha, Homoeopathy, Yoga and Naturopathy. The Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM) is developing independent and multi-dimensional research into various fundamental and applied aspects of Unani system on scientific foundation whose benefits can be extended to the common man.

The areas of research are clinical research, standardisation of single and compound drugs, literary research, survey and cultivation of medicinal plants and family and welfare.

Much research has been done in the field of iltehab-e-kabid (infective hepatitis), bars (vitiligo), daul feel (Filariasis) and waja-ul-mafazil (rheumatoid arthritis).

The Central Council of Indian Medicine, a statutory body, monitors the education in Unani system. There are 37 under-graduate recognised colleges, situated in

different parts of the country and affiliated to the universities of that area. Post-graduate education in six subjects is available in three centres - Hyderabad, Aligarh and Delhi. The Government of India has set up a National Institute of Unani Medicine at Bangalore in collaboration with the Karnataka Government.

There are more than 35,000 registered Unani practitioners scattered all over the country. A large number of unregistered practitioners practise Unani medicine on hereditary basis. There are 105 Unani hospitals and 950 Unani dispensaries run by Government/local bodies and non-government organisations, besides seven CGHS dispensaries.

The manufacturing of Unani drugs is regulated through the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940. Licences are issued by the State Drug Controllers. The good manufacturing practices (GMP) are also applied to the manufacture of Unani Medicine.

Professor Wilkins - a Nobel Laureate in medicine - said: "The time has come for philosophy to say interesting things to science which is changing. The great success of modern medicine, molecular biology being one example, tends to give rise to an idea that its concepts are final and comprehensive. This tendency contributes to certain weaknesses in modern scientific medicine. There is often a need for broader approach where wider aspects of patients living are taken into account".

Unani medicine has that broad perspective. Its approach to the problems of patients is individualistic and the therapy encompasses all aspects of a patient's life.

Is There an Alternative to Conventional Medicine?

There are several modalities that are not traditional, Western, reactive or drug-dependant. They fall generally under the category of "holistic" healing methods. Holistic methods take the entire person into consideration, versus isolating the symptom as it existed separately. Holistic methods can effectively be used to treat digestive disorders, among other physiological issues.

Holistic treatments have many benefits. Primarily, the methods encourage the body to become sound by using its own healing capabilities. A basic premise is that wellness is the natural state, and the body will seek to be healthy if obstacles are removed. This means that the holistic practitioner will look beyond the symptom to identify what causes are driving the illness, and will work with the patient to address the illness at all levels.

Practitioners will look at a patient's lifestyle, their eating habits, and their stress level as well as any presenting symptoms. This approach harmonizes with the body, mind and spirit. There are some Western-trained physicians who have started adapting their practices to holistic methods. However, alternative medicine practitioners perform most holistic treatment.

Generally speaking, the treatments provided by holistic practitioners are natural, and the chances of harmful side effects or dependency are low.

There are many schools of holistic practice. Some of the major disciplines are reviewed below, along with their best-known approaches for digestive disorders.

Traditional Chinese Medicine

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is one of the best-known holistic approaches. As with all holistic practices, TCM looks at the individual as a whole system, rather than as an isolated bunch of symptoms. Thoughts, emotions, processes, and all of the body are considered when the practitioner evaluates a client and his or her illness. Wellness is the focus of TCM, and any disease or disorder is seen as a departure from the norm and an imbalance in the whole person.

Of the modalities used by TCM, acupuncture is probably the one most people are familiar with. Other modalities include the prescription of exercise and other lifestyle changes, dietary advice, stress management techniques, massage, herbal medicine, and more. Every patient is viewed as an individual, so treatment varies from one to another. There is no standard treatment for any given illness.

Acupuncture is particularly helpful in addressing anxiety-related digestive issues. Herbs are also commonly used as a digestive remedy. They change the environment in the stomach and intestines, setting the stage for proper digestive function. Herbal treatments are customized, and many factors besides the digestive trouble are taken into consideration when developing a treatment plan. A certified practitioner should be consulted for assistance. Some of the common herbal remedies are listed below:

* Chinese Coptis Extract Pills for diarrhea. The active ingredient,

berberine, has strong antibiotic effects.

* Atractylodes (baizhu) can help move fluids through digestive canal.

* Patchouli pills are helpful for flu-like symptoms of diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting.

* Qi-regulating pills aid with indigestion, diarrhea, and flatulence.

* Six Gentlemen Tea pills contain ginseng, licorice root and has antispasmodic properties and calms nervous disorders.

Herbology

Traditional medicine based on the use of plants and plant extracts is known as Herbology.

There are a number of herbs frequently used to treat digestive disorders. They include cumin seed, black pepper, dandelion root, catnip, caraway seeds, rock salt, and rhubarb. These herbs, among others, have been used to treat numerous issues effectively since prehistoric times. Herbal stress relief is a superb way to assist with increasing digestive health.

Herbal teas for digestive wellness are chamomile, peppermint, ginger and lemon, fennel and dandelion.

Homeopathy

Homeopathy is a discipline widely respected in Europe and just now

making inroads in America. It uses natural remedies in micro-doses to stimulate responses in the patient's system.

The underlying premise of homeopathy is that like calls to like, and the body will respond to a stimulus in small amounts by becoming stronger and healthier. Therefore, a disorder is treated with a small amount of an herb, mineral, or other substance, which would produce the disorder's symptoms if a well person were to take it in excess. This stimulates the body's response.

Some homeopathic substances pertinent to digestive disorders are:

- * Nux Vomica for heartburn, digestive spasms, and nausea
- * Antimonium Crudum for indigestion
- * Lycopodium for bloating and heartburn

Naturopathy

Naturopathy is a holistic approach that evaluates the whole patient and utilizes multiple treatment modalities including some mentioned above. The discipline relies on the body's ability to heal and uses low hazard therapies. Additional tools of the naturopath include nutrition, counseling, and energy balancing.

Holistic recommendations to maintain good digestive condition are:

- * Don't overeat
- * Eat plenty of fiber, fruits, and vegetable
- * Eat slowly in a relaxed setting and chew thoroughly
- * Avoid stimulants like caffeine, alcohol, sugars, and tobacco
- * Eat lean proteins such as tofu, legumes, nuts, and seeds
- * Keep hydrated, drinking at least 2 liters of filtered water daily
- * Eat a yogurt with live probiotics daily
- * Drink a warm glass of water with lemon juice in the morning
- * Before meals, drink apple cider vinegar, or take slippery elm or a digestive enzymes supplement
- * Increase bitter foods to produce more saliva and enzymes

Osteopathy

Osteopathic practitioners utilize a system of musculoskeletal analysis and manipulation to help their patients achieve and maintain a sound body and mind.

A traditional osteopath will use manipulation as the primary, if not sole, modality. Manipulations by osteopaths may or may not be similar to those used in chiropractic, depending on the practitioner and his or her preferred techniques.

Other osteopaths incorporate more alternative methods into their practice, and some practice almost completely as allopathic physicians.

In the United States, a Doctor of Osteopathy (DO) is qualified to obtain a physicians license and can do everything an MD can do. Therefore, before you choose to visit with an osteopath, you will want to make sure you know what type of practice he or she has.

Ayurvedic Medicine

Ayurveda is an ancient medical discipline of Hindu origin. The word "Ayurveda" translates roughly from Sanskrit to "life knowledge," and the philosophies encompass guidelines to living a healthy life, versus focusing on treating only illnesses as they present. Ayurvedic medicine is the oldest known complete medical system.

Medicines are concocted from natural ingredients, and diet, exercise and lifestyle are considered in the treatment plans.

Some herbal remedies for digestive issues are common, such as coriander or cumin seeds for constipation. Lemon juice and water is recommended many times daily to cleanse the bowels.

Chiropractic Care

The philosophy of chiropractic is that the spine must be in alignment and functioning properly for all parts and systems of the body to work well. The spine routes nerves to all parts of the body, so impairment

or dysfunction of the spine can negatively impact those parts of the body served by that part of the spine that is misaligned.

A Doctor of Chiropractic (DC) uses manipulation to realign vertebra and may recommend other supporting activities, such as massage, exercise, or the use of orthotics, to maintain alignment.

There are many nerves in the digestive system. One of the main nerves of the central nervous system, the vagus nerve, travels from the cranium to the abdomen, where digestive issues, as well as spinal misalignments along the way, can irritate it. Once irritated, no matter the reason, the vagus nerve can cause additional digestive problems. All of the nerves in and around the digestive system contribute to proper functioning of the muscles of the system, the flow of digestive fluids and blood flow. These nerves are important not only to the proper functioning of the digestive system, but for other systems they may also serve.

There are many chiropractors who concentrate only on spinal issues, and there are others who approach their patients in a more holistic fashion. Determine what kind of chiropractor you want, and research those in your area to find the one that is right for you.

Yoga's Ten Principles

Yoga is a complex integrated system, which has a history of 5,000 or more years. Beginners can be easily overwhelmed by the vastness of the yoga practice, its philosophy, and its literature. Here are a few key principles that will help you understand better the numerous aspects of Yoga.

Ten Key Fundamental Principles.

1. Yoga is what is traditionally called a liberation teaching. It guides us to free ourselves from our historical limitations of who and what we were to become something greater and better.
2. To truly learn and understand Yoga, a teacher must instruct if possible, whether in a class or even on a video. This is essential for ultimate success in Yoga. It is possible to benefit from a good many yogic practices even without instruction though as any form of yoga is better than none at all.
3. Because everybody has their different strengths and weaknesses, Yoga has various styles that have been developed over time. There are many however here are the seven most common:
 - (i) Râja-Yoga is the "Royal Yoga" aiming at liberation through meditation, which is for practitioners who are capable of intense concentration.
 - (ii) Hatha-Yoga is the "Forceful Yoga" aiming at liberation through physical transformation
 - (iii) Jnâna-Yoga is the "Wisdom of Yoga" aiming at liberation through the steady application of higher wisdom that clearly distinguishes between the real and the unreal

(iv) Karma-Yoga is the "Action Yoga" aiming at liberation through self-transcending service, relinquishing the ego.

(v) Bhakti-Yoga is the "Devotional Yoga" aiming at liberation through self-surrender in the face of the Divine

(vi) Tantra-Yoga is the "Continuity Yoga" aiming at liberation through visualization, ritual, subtle energy work, and the perception of the identity of the ordinary world and the transcendental Reality

(vii) Mantra-Yoga is the "Yoga of Potent Sound" aiming at liberation through the repetition (aloud or mental) of empowered sounds (such as om, hûm, ram, hare Krishna, etc.)

-Often considered an aspect of Tantra-Yoga these seven branches are alternative portals into the mysteries of Yoga and thus our own consciousness.

4. Yoga is a journey of theory and practice. In order to engage Yoga properly and successfully, one must pay attention to the ideas behind its practical disciplines and to the exercises and techniques encompassing its theories. This calls for thoughtful and mindful practice. For instance, regular and correct practice of the yogic postures will definitely help us maintain good physical health.

5. All forms of Yoga have as their foundation of a sound moral life, there are basic laws. They stand for moral virtues like nonviolence, truthfulness, and abstention from theft, compassion and kindness. Basically you could say it's about living a positive life. Without a firm grounding in these moral principles, Yoga cannot lead us to its ultimate goal of liberation.

6. However simple a particular yogic approach may be, all approaches require a huge commitment. If we fear change and cling to our old habits, we cannot succeed in Yoga. The practice of Yoga calls for considerable personal effort, which involves self-discipline.

7. Yoga is made up of a lot of practice, both physical and mental. These can be broken down into two major categories:

The first is the repeated performance of exercises or techniques that are intended to produce a positive state of mind in us.

The second is the complementary practice of letting go of old behavior patterns, habits or attachments that hold us back

8. Focus is the key to making improvements with yoga. With focus comes control and power. The power in question is the energy of consciousness itself.

9. Get back to basics, the more we untangle our lives the better of we will become.

10. Yoga is a progressive process of replacing our unconscious thought patterns and behavior with new, more beneficial patterns that are helpful towards a better life. It takes time to achieve this goal of self-transformation, and therefore practitioners of Yoga must first practice patience.

We must be willing to commit to a lifetime of yogic practice. There must be a basic want to grow, regardless of whether or not we will achieve enlightenment in this lifetime. It is one of Yoga's fundamental beliefs that no effort is ever wasted, even the slightest attempt at transforming ourselves makes a difference. It is our patient cumulative effort that grows into self-realization sooner or later.

Yoga

Basic Principals and Benefits of Practice

Yoga is an ancient art that comes from India; the name translates as *creating union*. This concept of creating union is expressed in the philosophical perspective that our lives are an energetic combination of body, mind and spirit. The physical action of the yoga poses serve to challenge the practitioner to create balance, strength and flexibility in all aspects of their being. These characteristics are then carried over into our day-to-day lives with the intent of being able to deal calmly with the challenges we face there.

One of the most sacred Indian text states that there are four major reasons that people sought out yoga. From lowest to highest they were categorized as: the desire to reduce pain, the desire to feel better, the desire to gain power (internal and external) over our lives, and finally, the desire to achieve spiritual discrimination. Contemporary westerner interests in yoga can be seen to fit into these traditional

categories but we usually tend to look at the benefits with an eye to more basic results: We may want to get rid of a nagging back ache, to slow down and de-stress, to ease some emotional heartache, or to find a physical activity that can give us strength and flexibility.

Because yoga focuses on finding your internal center through focused breathing and concentration, the benefits are many and widespread. It is common to find that a yoga practice creates more equanimity and internal silence, making dealing with the stresses of our lives more manageable. The effectiveness of yoga lies in its simplicity of process, its ability to evoke a sense of wholeness, balance and calm. One works on tuning-in to their body in that present moment and then begin to open and strengthen through breathe and movement.

This emphasis on starting-where-you-are makes it easy for beginners to start a yoga practice, regardless of their current physical shape. By paying attention to *where you are now* and then striving to make that condition better, we become focused on creating positive changes that *unite* us with our highest aspirations. This is the intention of yoga, to empower the individual by creating focus and a conscious path of connectivity between breath, physical body, emotions, and ultimately our mastery over our reactions to the pressures and conflicts of life in the material world.

Yoga means a holistic approach towards the cause and treatment of disease.

According to Yoga, most of the diseases Mental, Psychosomatic and Physical originate in mind through wrong way of thinking, living and eating which is caused by attachment.

The basic approach of Yoga is to correct the life style by cultivating a rational positive and spiritual attitude towards all life situation.

Yoga does not treat gross body alone, it takes into consideration all the five Kosa s (Sheaths) i.e. Manomaya Kosa, Annamaya Kosa, (grass Sheath) Pranamaya Kosa (Extral Body) (Psychic Body), Vijyanmaya Kosa (intellect Sheath) and Anandamaya Kosa (Bliss sheath).

Like Ayurveda and Naturopathy Yoga also takes up the cleansing of the body as the first measure to fight disease. While Ayurveda performs its pancha karma through the help of ametics purgative Yoga performs them without the help of any drug i.e. by developing full efficiency and control of eliminative systems of the body. Which no other system of health care can do.

All the systems of medicine at their best aim at curing the disease whereas Yoga aims at preventing the disease and promoting health by reconditioning the psycho-physiological mechanism of the individual.

Yoga emphasises the development of brotherhood, harmony, fraternity and equality not only towards all human beings irrespective of colour, caste, nationality, age and sex but towards all living beings also. This attitude renders

the thinking so positive that man is liberated from all mental malice and also all the mental, psychosomatic and physiological diseases arising thereof.

The approach of Yoga is not confined to various disorders, it aims at bringing under perfect control of the mind, senses and pranic energy and direct them towards healthier channels with a view to acquire mental purity, intellectual stability and spiritual bliss.

Yoga is very wide and comprehensive system embracing all walks of human life. It is unlike Ayurvedic, Unani and Homoeopathy. It is not merely a system of treatment but has potential to develop around health i.e. physical, social, mental and spiritual. For social health, it prescribes the practice of Yama & Niyama and Karma Yoga. A man devoted to karma Yoga looks all the living beings as his brethren and helps them getting rid of painful situations. This concept of "Vasudhaiv Kutmba Kama" is the basic Philosophy of Yoga.

Yoga emphasises the practitioners to withstand the environmental influences both external & internal as well as physical & mental processes. This practice cultivates strong immunity in them and make them capable of offering a effective resistance to various environmental pressures and thus, maintains behavioural equanimity and intellectual stability.

The practice of Yama " Niyamas purifies the heart of practitioner from vices like attachment, aversion, avarice and infatuation etc. and generates higher ethical qualities like sincerity, honesty, straightforwardness, cheerfulness, courage, detachment, patience, perseverance, tranquility, self control, truth, harmony and uprightness.

Our ancient seers have very sagaciously designed the Yogic practices to invigorate the entire psychosomatic constitution of man. A set of Asanas, Mudras and Pranayamas practised with faith, perseverance and insight rejuvenates the brain, heart, lungs, liver, pancreas, kidneys, bowels, all nerves, muscles, tissues, glands of the body by ensuring oxygenated and balanced blood supply, kindles up the appetite, bestows control over seminal fluid, senses and mind and imparts increased vitality, vigour and longevity to the practitioners.