

ORIGIN & DEVELOPMENT OF AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Lord Brahma created Ayurveda, which was then transferred to *Devatas* (God), then onwards to sages through two main schools of thoughts as *Punarvasu Atreya* School of physicians and *Divodas Dhanwantari* School of surgeons. The references related to Ayurveda are available in all the Vedas especially in Atharva Veda where the Ayurvedic concepts are explained in systematic and detailed manner. The matter of Ayurveda is also available in Upanishads, Smritis, Epics like Ramayana & Mahabharata, Chanakya arthashastra. The systematic development was noted during *samhita* period, during which *Charaka & Sushruta samhitas* were written, so the trend was continued by *Acharya Vagbhata* who wrote *Astanga Sangraha*. The *Laghutrayees* highlights the importance of subject specialization and added updated information to the field of Ayurveda. The science of *Rasashastra* which deals with treatment by using metals & minerals increased the value of Ayurveda. In later part of 20th century Ayurveda developed with research & development by utilizing scientific tools.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Veda, Samhitas

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda the ancient science of life is a comprehensive system of health care. According to Indian philosophy, good health is very essential to gain social & spiritual upliftment of human beings. Lord Brahma who is creator of this universe is the first demonstrator and the teacher of Ayurveda. Four Vedas the oldest

Indian literatures were believed to be composed between 5000-1000 B.C. have enough information on treatment by using plants and natural procedures. References of treatment, medicines and surgery were also available in most of the ancient Indian literatures. The Ayurveda was considered as fully developed

and categorized science from the period of *Samhitas*, i.e., around 1000 years B.C., and then onwards till 17th century A.D. Ayurveda was developed remarkably, even though troubles and hurdles created by Mogal empires. During the British rule the modern system of medicine entered into our country and because of government support & quick action the modern system was popularized. In such conditions also many traditional *Vaidyas* and families saved the treasure of Ayurvedic literature and practiced it as main health care system. In latter part of 20th century the Ayurveda has become integral part of national health delivery system of India. In 21st century Ayurvedic Medical Science has developed very scientifically with the aid of research and development.

Review of Literature

Origin of Ayurveda

Brahma the creator of the universe revealed Ayurveda to *Dakshaprajapati* & *Daksha* taught it to the *Ashwini Kumara's*, the Vedic gods of medicine, who in turn taught it to *Indra*¹. All the schools of Ayurveda agree with the divine genealogy up to *Indra*, but they have different version regarding the transmission of the Ayurveda in next stages. There are two main schools of thoughts in Ayurveda; *Punarvasu Atreya* the school of physician & *Divodas Dhanwantari* the school of surgeons.

Early developments of Ayurveda¹

A time bracket for the origin & development of medicine includes the 5th millennium B.C. to 3rd century A.D., the period from 3rd century A.D. can be named as post Ayurvedic period, after which no further modification or devel-

opments are seen in the fundamental principles of Ayurveda.

Acharya P. V. Sharma described the development of Ayurveda render 3 major components,

1. *Prachin Kala*- Ancient period (up to 7th A.D.)
2. *Madhyama Kala*- Medieval period (8th -15th century A.D.)
3. *Adhunika Kala*- Modern period (16th century onwards)

Atrideva Vidyalkar described history of Ayurveda as under,

1. *Vaidika Kala*- Pre historic period (2500 B.C.)
2. *Ramayan & Mahabharat kala* (500 B.C.)
3. *Bouddha Kala* (363 B.C.)
4. *Kushan kala* (210 B.C. to 176 A.D.)
5. *Gupta Kala* (380 A.D.)
6. *Madhya Kala* (647-1200 A.D.)
7. *Moghul Kala* (12th – 18th century A.D.)
8. *Adhunika Kala* (After 18th century)

Dr. Achanta Lakshmpati quoted it as,

1. *Puratana Yuga*- From time immemorial to 50,000 B.C.
2. *Arya Yuga*- From 50,000 B.C. to 1000 B.C.
3. *Bouddha Yuga*- From 1000 B.C. to 300 A.D.
4. *Pouranika Yuga*- From 300 A.D. to 1000 B.C.
5. *Bhakti Yuga*- From 1000 A.D. to 1850 A.D.
6. *Adhunika Yuga*- From 1850 A.D. to the present time.

Vedic Period¹

Various scholars opine that Vedas are the oldest records of Hindus scriptures, Hindu scriptures are generally classified into two types; such as *Sruti* and *Smruti*. *Sruti* means heard

and Smruti means recollection. It is believed to have been heard as revelations from Brahma & Rishis, thus inspired have left a record of those truths for the benefits of mankind. These records are known as Vedas, the term Veda, literally means knowledge.

Status of Ayurveda during Vedic period

Ayurveda is regarded as upaveda of Rig-Veda also, whether Ayurveda is upaveda to Rig-Veda or Atharv-Veda both are preponderating sources of the principles of Ayurveda lying scattered in the Vedic literature. Sage Kashyapa has bestowed Vedas status to Ayurveda & mentioned it as *Panchama Veda*.

References related to Ayurveda in Rig-Veda

The Rig-Veda is the oldest significant existence Indian text; it is a collection of 1028 Vedic Sanskrit hymns and 10,600 verses in all, original into mandalas.

In Rig- Veda the use of natural remedies were discussed, such as, exposure to sun rays gives relief in many numbers of disorders such as, worms, cardiac problems, anemia, jaundice etc, importance of water is explained as essential sustenance of life, fire is mentioned as destroyer of bacteria and virus and is applied in various ways in different disorders, air is also considered as *bhishak*, single drug therapy was more familiar in those days, along with internal medicine use of gems and other divine therapeutic measures were also in practice. Description regarding the various parts of the body and various diseases like *Rajyakshma*, *Hidroga* etc are also available. The references related to *Ashwini* twins who treated and made old *Chyavana Maharshi* quite young and blessed him with long life and fitted iron legs

to *Vispala*, daughter of king khala and made her fit for the battle are available. Causative factors and the treatment pertaining to animals also have been described in Rig-Veda.

References related to Ayurveda in Yajur-Veda

The Yajurveda (Veda of sacrificial formulas) consists of archaic prose mantras and also in part of verses borrowed from the Rig-Veda. It has two branches; Shukla Yajur-Veda and Krishna Yajur-Veda. This Veda is made up of 6 Kanda (Segment) with each of these having 5 to 11 prapathaka (similar to chapters) for a total 44 adhyayas (Chapters).

Reference related to anatomical structures of animals as well as human beings are vastly available in this Veda. In the 12th Shukla Yajur-Veda the medicinal properties of different herbs, their uses, and collection of drugs and also treatment of *Balasa*, *Arshas*, *Galagandha*, *Slipada*, *Yakshma*, *Mukhapaka* and *Kushta* are explained.

References related to Ayurveda in Sama-Veda

The Sama-Veda is the Veda of chants or knowledge of melodies. It consists of 1875 mantras total, Purvarchika 6 chapters with 650 mantras & Uttararchika 21 chapters 1225 mantras. Only few references related to Ayurveda are available in Sama Veda, mainly it deals with the use of natural remedies like Sun, Air, Water, and Fire etc.

References related to Ayurveda in Atharva-Veda

The Atharva-Veda is the Knowledge of the Atharva & Angirasa rishis, this Veda contains at least 20 Kandas (chapters) and the total number of hymns in this Veda may be as

much as 12,300. It has 9 sakhas (divisions), out of nine *Saunaka & Pippalada* are the only two which are available now, most of the Ayurvedic literature can be found in the *Saunaka* branch.

Only a brief introduction is available pertaining to medical science in Rug, Yajur and Sama Vedas, where as in Atharva Veda contains detailed description of various aspects of Ayurvedic concepts, Anatomical structures of human body, digestion and metabolism, blood circulation, diseases and their causative factors, preventive measures, treatment with herbs, minerals and surgical techniques, different types of worms and the diseases caused by them along with treatment have been explained. Hence by considering the amount of matter related Ayurveda, which is available in Atharva- Veda, the Ayurveda is considered as Upa veda of Atharva-Veda.

Ayurveda in Upanishad literatures¹

The Sanskrit term Upanishad means sitting down beside, i.e., sitting down near a spiritual teacher (guru) in order to receive instructions in the *guru-shishya* tradition. The date of composition of the Upanishad may be from around 800- 400 B.C. The number of Upanishad is given as 108. Among 108 *Katha, Isa, Kena, Mundaka, Svetasvatara, Prasna, Mandukya, Aitareeya, Brihadaranyaka, Taittiriya & Chhandogya* Upanishad are the major. The references related to *kundalini* awakening, *pranayama* are available in Upanishad, the explanation related to *prana vata* is available. Explanation related 31 herbs, like *Agaru, Aksha, Amala, Amalaka, Amra, Anu, Arka* etc are available in Upanishad.

Ayurveda in Smritis¹

Hindu Dharma or Hindu way of life has been incorporated in smritis, and smritis were written by considering Vedas as base. The basic smritis were eighteen in number, among them *Manu smriti, Naradiya smriti, Vishnu smriti & Yagnavalkya smriti* have become more popular. The smritis mainly includes civil and criminal laws along with individual life style. The Ayurvedic concepts which mainly highlights and educates life style, such as bathing is avoided after eating, one should get up early in the morning, one should not immediately study after the meals etc were included in smritis.

Ayurveda in the Epics¹

Ramayana & Mahabharata are considered two great epics of Indian literature both Ramayana & Mahabharata have religious value to Indians and valuable ideal epics of Indian ethics & culture. In both the epics the principles of Ayurveda & other Ayurvedic aspects are mentioned such as;

In Ramayana

Preservation of dead body; the dead body of king *Dasharatha* was preserved in *tila droni* till the arrival of Bharat.

Transplantation of organs; the sage *Gouthama* castrated one of the testicles of *Indra*, in place of that *Ashwinis* transplanted the testicles of goat, so *Indra* was called as "*Meshanda*".

Toxicology; when *Dasharatha* rejected to fulfill the desires of queen *kaikakeya*, she said, if Rama was installed as the king of Ayodhya, then she will die by taking poison, which shows that the use of poisonous substances already existed in those days.

Description of herbs; many plants and trees have been described in Ramayana at different

places, such as *Kutaja, Arjuna, Kadamba, Nimba, Saptacchada, Ashok, Asana, Sapta parna, Kovidara* etc.

Examination of dead & alive; During the war, when Lakshmana became unconscious struck by an arrow, Rama thought him dead, at that time vaidya Sushen examined the body of Lakshmana and decided that he was alive.

Treatment with the herbs; Vaidya Sushen treated Lakshmana with drugs which has been brought from Himalayas by Hanumana.

In Mahabharata

Toxicological references; once Duryodhana gave poisonous food to Bhima who became unconscious and was thrown in to the river, due to serpent bite he was revived, it suggest that *Jangama Visha* might have acted as antidote for *Sthavara Visha*.

Diseases, causes and treatment; in santi parva of Mahabharata the psychosomatic disorders & their clinical pictures were described along with influence of Trigunas on the body & mind.

Ashwinis treated the blindness of Upamanya, which was caused due to the consumption of *Arka* leaves.

Atriputra suffered from *Rajayakshma* caused due to excessive copulation and was revived by getting treatment.

Practice of Surgery; when Bhishma was wounded and was lying on the bed of arrows during kurukshetra war, Duryodhana called experienced and skilled surgeons to treat Bhishma, but Bhishma refused to take treatment.

Ayurveda in Chanakya's Artha shastra¹

Chanakya (350-283 BC) was an adviser & Prime minister to the first Mourya emperor

Chandragupta and architect of his rise of power. Two books are attributed to Chanakya i.e., *Artha shastra & Niti shastra*, regulations of public health, the govt. rules for the practice of physicians, classification of physicians, their duties, responsibilities, maintenance of the hospital & dispensaries, plantation of medicinal plants, line of treatment for various diseases, facility to be provided to the patient etc., were elaborately described in *Artha shastra*.

Ayurveda in Buddha literature¹

Buddhism has played a significant role in uniting spirituality and medicine, enough references of Ayurveda are available in Buddha literature such as, diseases were classified in to four types as *vatika, paittika, sleshmika* and *sannipatika*, four types plants are explained as *trina, gulma, oshadhi & vanaspati*. Various types of forms of administration were mentioned, anatomical references such as the part of the body, internal organs, number of bones, joints, arteries, veins, tendons, vital organs are available. The process of digestion and metabolism were explained by using the concepts of Ayurveda. The various references related to diseases and treatments were also available.

Samhita Period (The era of Systematic development of Ayurveda)²

Samhita period is associated with the systematic development and division of Ayurveda, the development is associated with formulation of unique literatures. Around 1000 B.C. the compendia like *Charaka samhita & Sushruta samhita* were written in a systematic manner with eight branches.

Charaka samhita basically known as *Agnivesha tantra* consists of 12000 verses originally,

unfortunately the complete original text is not available at present, and it was redacted by *Charaka* & there after it became popular as *Charaka samhita*. 41 chapters (17 chapters from *chikitsa*, 12 chapter from *kalpa sthana* and 12 chapters from *siddhi sthana*) were lost which were originally composed by *Acharya Agnivesha* & revised by *Charaka*, later on those were redacted by *Dridhabala*. *Charaka samhita* occupies a very important place in the history of world's medical science, even though all the eight branches of Ayurveda have dealt by the author, this work has become more popular as the authentic text of *Kayachikitsa*.

Sushruta samhita was also one of the ancient treatises of Ayurveda, which specially deals with procedures of surgery, originally *Acharya Sushruta* composed the text *Sushruta samhita* later on *Nagarjuna* redacted it.

The essential details of *Charaka samhita* & *Sushruta samhita* were compiled and further updated in the treatises *Astang Sangrha* and *Astang Hridaya* authored by *Vrudha Vagbhata* and *Vagbhata* during 6th – 7th century A.D. *Astang Sangraha* is one of the authentic texts on the Ayurvedic medical sciences and hence it has been grouped under “*Brhatraya*” along with *Charaka samhita* & *Sushruta samhita*. *Brhatraya*'s formed and created basis for subsequent scholars to write texts and among them three concise classics i.e., *Madhava Nidana*, *Sarangadhara Samhita* and *Bhavaprakash* having distinct features are called as *Laghutrayi*. Some other eminent practitioners and visionaries like *Kasyapa*, *Bhela*, and *Harita* also wrote their respective compendia.

Madhava Nidana, authorized by *madhavakara* is a work on diagnosis of the diseases, *Bhava-prakasa* written by *Bhava Misra* gives additional emphasis on medicinal plants and diet and *Sarangadhara Samhita* focused on pharmaceuticals and Ayurveda was enriched with addition of more formulations and dosage forms.

Origin & development of Rasashastra³

Rasashastra means the science dealing with mercury and other metallic substances & their utilizations in the medicine. The period between 7th century AD. to 13th century AD. was considered as the golden period of development of *Rasashastra*, the use of mercury & other metals in *bhasma* form shown miracles results in diseased condition and in contributing positive health. *Acharya Nagarjuna* and many *siddhas* of *Rasashastra* contributed lot in the development of *Rasashastra*, many *Rasashastra* literature which is available now were written during this period only. Many important formulations which were demonstrated during this period (7-13 Cen, A.D.) are till today practiced to treat many chronic disorders.

Development of Ayurveda in 19th Century and Onwards⁴

In 1827, the first Ayurveda course was started in India in Government Sanskrit college, Calcutta.

1920- Indian National congress convention at Nagpur resolved to accept the Ayurvedic system of medicine as India's national health care system.

1921- Mahatma Gandhi Inaugurated Ayurvedic & Unani Tibbia college, karola bagh in Delhi

1922- Teaching of Ayurveda started in Banaras Hindu University in the department of oriental Learning & Theology.

1927- Madan mohan malviya established Ayurveda College in Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

1940- Enforcement of drug & cosmetic act for Ayurvedic/Siddha/Unani medicines.

1956-57- Establishment of Institute for Post Graduate Training & Research in Ayurveda in Jamanagar.

1963-64- Establishment of Post graduate Institute of Indian medicine at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

1964- Indian council of Medical Research started composite drug research scheme (CDRS).

1969- Setting up of an apex research body i.e., Central council for research in Indian systems of medicine & Homeopathy (CCRIMH).

1970- Indian Medicine Central council Act, 1970 (IMCC Act) came in to force for regulation of practice & uniformity standards of education.

1970- Establishment of Pharmacopoeia laboratory for Indian medicine, Ghaziabad, U.P.

1971- Constitution of Central council of Indian Medicine under IMCC Act-1970 for regulation of education & Clinical Practice.

1972-73- Establishment of National Institute of Ayurveda Jaipur, Rajasthan.

During the period 1950-1980 many Ayurvedic colleges were started in different states of India.

1976- Publication of Part-I of Ayurvedic formulary of India containing 444 formulations.

1978- Establishment of Central council of research in Ayurveda & Siddha (CCRAS).

1983- Setting up of Indian medicine pharmaceutical corporation Ltd, (IMPCL), a drug manufacturing unit for Ayurvedic and Unani medicines at Mohan, Dist. Almora, Uttarakhand.

1989- Establishment of Rastriya Ayurveda Vidya peetha (National Academy of Ayurveda) at New Delhi to promote guru-shishya parampara.

1995- Creation of separate department of Indian systems of medicine & Homeopathy in the ministry of Health & Family well fare, Govt. of India.

2001- Initiation of Traditional Knowledge digital Library (TKDL).

2002- National Policy on Indian systems of medicine & Homeopathy.

2003- Department of ISM&H was renamed as Department of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha & Homeopathy (Ayush).

2005- Under the National Rural health mission (NRHM), the main streaming of Ayush was important decision to introduce Ayush at PHC, CHC and at district level.

2008- The union cabinet approved the establishment of All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA).

- Establishment of North-eastern institute of Ayurveda & Homeopathy at Shilonga, Meghalaya.

2015- Creation of separate ministry in central government for Ayush, as ministry of Ayush.

CONCLUSION

Lord Brahma created Ayurveda, which was then transferred to *devatas*, and then to sages. Enough references of Ayurveda are available in all the Vedas especially in Atharva veda.

The matter of Ayurveda is also available in Upanishads, Smritis, Epics like Ramayana & Mahabharata, Chankya *artha shastra*. The systematic development of Ayurveda was noted during *samhita* period. *Rasashatra* the science of metals and minerals increased the value of Ayurveda.

In latter part of 20th century many Ayurvedic Institutions were established in India by which it has become integral part of national health delivery system of country. In 21st century Ayurvedic Medical Science has developed very scientifically with the aid of research and development.

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