



AHS-5

Ayurveda In Vedas

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Life is beginning less and so is the knowledge about it. Quest for relief is since origin of man. But the earliest existence of Ayurveda is said to be manifested before creation. Ayurveda is nothing but the science to keep away the disease and maintenance of health i.e. science of life. History of medicine in India in ancient period is actually the history of the science of life (Ayurveda) which is shaped by ancient seers and later systematized as one of the upavedas.

Man does not stand in a vacuum; rather he is subjected to a number of forces operating in the universe guided by the time spirit. Man is a social product and as such his ideas shape others and shaped by others by process of interaction. Ayurveda has been a part and parcel of the culture of India as such is mixed up in the entire Indian documents. Atreya said in Agniveshatantra (presently named as Chakra Samhita) Ayurveda (the science of life) is beginning less and eternal and further says that the creator has delivered Ayurveda even before creations. Bramha before creating man it self Ayurveda has been ready to deal with any eventuality in future. The parampara mentioned in the text says; Bramha delivered it to Dakshprajapati, Dakshaprajapati in turn to Ashwini devatas to maintain the health of devatas and later, passed to Indra for maintenance of health of swargaloka, from where it has come to earth by the worldly sages Atri, Bharadwaja etc. moved by the affection of the people due to sufferings from various physical and mental diseases, approached Indra and brought Ayurveda down to earth for prevention and cure of ailments. Susruta's mention is from Indra to Dhanwantari and follows on...

Hence the science of life is existed in prevedic era like Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic ages also similarly in vedic and post vedic era. There maybe some change in form and content from age to age but the central motive and instinct is the same.

Among all the oldest texts in the world Vedas are premier which dealt with Ayurveda along with all other branches of sciences.

1. "Aadeenaah shyaam saradah satam, Bhooyascha saradah sataath" Y. 36/24
'O' Paramatma, bless with hundred or more years of life with out any problems'."

And

2. "Kurvanneveh karmaani jijevishechatam samaah" Y. 4th chap. 2nd mantra

Desire for hundred years of life while working in this world. For what this hundred or more years of life, to work properly in the world, so to fulfill this aim let us free of health problems - this is the ultimate of this prayer and this science. Out of four Vedas, Ayurveda discussed more in Atharva veda rather than Rig and Yajur Vedas, but it is regarded as upaveda of Rigveda (because of antiquity) or upaanga of Atharvaveda (because of similarity in approach and the subject matter). Eight names of vaidika granthas noted in Atharva veda, in

which 'Bheshajaveda' (which deals about the drug & treat) and Yatu veda (deals about the diseases) were described. This it self is obvious that, Ayurveda mostly elaborated in Atharvaveda than others.

Out of 9 sakhaas, pouppalaad and shounakeeya sakhaas are only available, in which shounakeeya is more popular, from where the contents of this paper are taken.

Ayurveda has been elaborated in veda not in the pattern of Astanga ayurveda but described all astangas all over the Vedas in scattered manner. 76 names of rishis are mentioned in vedamantram who are drastas of ayurvedic mantras. Vaidik rishis gave many upadeshas regarding integrity of life and also described in many places about prayers and measures for prolongation of life without any diseases. Though the matter is in vivid let us enumerate some of the important principles, theories and concepts originated in vedic periods, which are at present the nucleus/ foundations of the medical world.

Some of them are, knowledge of Anatomy (including 118 organs, 360 bones etc) blood circulation, aphrodisias, achievement of conception, physician and his role, diseases and it's causative factors (endotoxins, krimi and imbalance of trodosha), drugs and its usage, toxins, iterogenesis, methods of treatment godly and rational, art of surgery and its miracles, obstetrics and gynecology and many more prayers and measures.

ANATOMY: (SAREERA RACHANA).

In Atharvaveda 10th khanda and 2nd sutra described almost all parts of the body (motor organs), sensory organs, psychological feelings, blood circulation and pranapaanaadi organs etc. And description of many organs were also found in yajurveda 25th chapter -

Organs in the entire body of human is divided into 4 groups
1. Urdhva sareeravayava (upper part of body) 2.

Madhyah sareeravayava

3. Adhah sareeravayava 4. Antah kostaavayava -

Urdhva sareeravayavas (above clavicles) are numbered 32 in which kesha, shira, kapaala, masthiska, lalaata, bru, karna, mukha, shmasru, chibuka, kantha, grevasthi .

Madhya sareeravayava is nothing but trunk, comprising of 24 organs in which skandha, amsa, amsaphala, parshva, udara, pristavamsha, pristasthi, spine etc

Adhah sareeravayava are 36. Comprising of parts of lower limbs and circulating fluids like Rasa rakta mamsa, vasa, veerya, rajah, pittam, sleshma are included. Actually, even today as per Ayurveda, these are classified under 'saakhas' only.

Antah kostavayavas described are 26, which included all visceral organs like puppasa, amaashaya, pithasaya, unduka (appendix) guda (rectum) 'gavaanika' uterus and fallopian tubes, urinary bladder, testicles and all genital organs of both sexes.

In total 118 organs described and 360 bones were enumerated equating 360 days of the year which are bases of body and time (cosmos) respectively.

In nutshell look at these two manthras mentioned in Atharvaveda 10/2 to reveal the knowledge of body.

Astachakra, Navadwara, devanaampurayodhyaah |
Tasyaam hiranyaayah kosshah swargo jyothishamith ||
A.V. 10/2/31

There is a unconquerable (Ayodhya) towns of Gods with eight wheels and nine entrances which is having an illumination of swarga with brightness.



*Hiranyaye koshe tryare tripratistate |
Tasmin yad yakshmaatmanvath tadwou bramhavido viduh*
||

Within that Hiranyakosha, three chambers are located with three centers of satwa, raja, tamo gunas in which jeevaatma, who is bramhajanani is seated.

In this way Vedas described anatomy of body (organs) mind (trigunas) and spirit soul (atma) encapsulated - which is nothing but the definition of Ayu i.e. life according to charakasamhita "sarendriya satvatma samyoge dhari jeevitham".

BLOOD CIRCULATION:

Though the history of medicine at present reads blood circulation is discovered by William Harvey in nineteenth century, look at the description of blood vessels, its contents and its flow in vedas.

'Tmaa yaasthe satam heeraah sahasram dhamaneeruta' A.V. 7/36/2

There is wide spread network of sirah (veins) and dhamanis (arteries) is in the body comprising of hundreds and thousands of them.

"Yasthe satam dhamanyozngaanyaanu vishtithah" A.V. 6/90/2

These vessels are spread in all organs.

'Bilwamadhyam' 7/36/2 having caliber in it for flow of blood. On puncture of these vessels two colours will found.

"Teevra arunaah" 10/2/11 - Bright red (Aruna)- Dhamani (artery)

"Taamra dhoomrah" 10/2/11 - smoke colour (tamra) - Heera (vein)

In Vedas blood is also called as "*Lohini*" 10/2011 indicating it contains Loha (iron), nowadays called as "Haem" since it is having Haem = Iron.

APHRODISIACS: VAAJEEKARANA

Vaaji in the sense a man should have solidity, good physique and potency (force) like vaaji (horse), the process which makes it is known as vaajikarana. But this treatment is indicated for only the debilitated weak persons.

'Yena krishna vaajayanthi yena hinvanthyathuram' A.V. 6/101/3

ACHIEVEMENT OF CONCEPTION: GARBHADHANA

Given much importance to get pregnancy with an aim to achieve a progeny with longevity of life, with out any disease and for most potent performer. But not to increase the crippling population.

"Aa veero jaayathaam putrasthe dasamaasyah" A.V.3/23/2

Couple must be potent to have a potent child -

The term *Garbhadhaanavidhi* is self explanatory, for sex education to get child, not for enjoyment. Described the process of grabhadanavidhi, care of pregnant and care of child.

Let us move from health to disease section of Vedas.

DISEASE:

'Yakshma' is the synonym of 'roga', but commentators treated it as Rajayakshma disease, but the fact is yakshma means roga *'Yakshmaanam sarrerham'* A.V. 9/8/10.

Out of which 12 diseases jwara kaasa, balaasa, Apaahi, Jayaanya, Harisma, Mootrarodha kshetriya kilas asrava vishuchi and unmada described detail and many other disorders described at various places. Rigveda 10 mandal 136 sookthi A.V.2/33, 9/8, 20/96 - and stated *'Ajnatayakshmat'* indicating many unknown disorders.

Kshetriya word is also used for disease, as this sayana commentary says it is a genetically inherited disease, which is transmitted by the patient to his son and grandson.

Jayanya is a disease which affects bones, musculature and cervical vertebra. It is of infection nature and transmitted from person to person. It is of two types wounded and unwounded. *Kasa* - cough respiratory disorders, *Jwara* - Infection disorders, *Apachi* - glandular enlargements, *Jayanya* - Disorders of bones musculature, cervical vertebra, *Kshetriya* - Genetically inherited disorders, *Hasime* - Jaundice, *mootra rodhe* - dysuria, *Kilasa* - Leucoderma vitiligo, *Asrava* - polyurea, accidental hemorrhage, *Visuchi* - Gastro enteritis, *Unmada* - Insane.

Apart from the above, without naming the disease, diseases of the organs are described in abundant viz. netra, nasika, karma, sirah, mastihiska, yoni, loma, nakha etc and also stated *'Ajnata yakshma'* which indicates the diseases are innumerable.

Prime etiological factors of a disease mentioned in Vedas are a) Endogenous toxins, its cumulations and causation of a disease

"Yakshmanaam sarvesham visham niravolchamaham" A.V. 9/8/10

b) Krimi or jeevanu - drishya - adrishya.

A.V.5/29/6, Y.V.16/6

c) Imbalance of tridoshas

A.V.6/109/3

KRIMI:

Under the caption of krimi covered and narrated all types of jeevanu (microbes) udarakrimi (body parasites), keeta, pathanga (insects).

'Ye antah krimayo gaavi' krimi in environment (cosmos) A.V. 2/32/1

Again two varieties of krimi described.

1. Visible

2. Invisible

'Dritamadrestamatruham'

A.V. 2/31/2

Mode of transmission -

Obviously described that "the krimi enters into the body through water, milk, takra (A.V.5/29/7)"

"Ye anneshm vividhyanthi paathreshu pibathaam janam" through food and vessels.

Described sites of manifestation of several organisms which causes pathogenicity in a various organs A.V.10/1112/2

Several synonyms also quoted Rakshas, pishacchi (eats, spreads through meat) and, yaatu, yaatadhan, krimidou gandarpa (gayaka krimi), apsara (transmits through water), Asura (which takes the prana).

DRUGS:

In vedic age man had intimate contact with the environment particularly plants. In rites, ceremonies and scarifice plants played a great role in various forms. They defined a group of trees useful in sacrifices as yajnya vriksha and plants used as bhesaja for alleviate the disease. The osadhi sukta of RV (10.97.1-23) is the authoritative document of the knowledge about plants in the age. Various classifications based on structure, colour and usages were described.

Descriptions of not only of plants but minerals were also present. Several thousands of names of drugs were mentioned in Vedas but few drugs described in detail.

Yaaschaham veda veerudha yaascha pashyami chakshusha |

Ajnaataa jaaneeyaascha ya yaasu vidya cha sambrutam || 8/7/18

This 'Ajnata' word indicates that, you might be having vast knowledge of plants and drugs, but still many are obscure.



Knowledge of medicines and its therapeutics were more in traditional practice. "*paramparaagata*" A. 19/39/9. Knowledge of medicinal usage was well learned from cattle, birds, and other creatures.

During the vedic period, drug marketing was existed. Medicines were also treated as source of income. Place of sale and purchases also described.

"*Dhanam sa nishyanteenam*" R.10/67/8, "*Saneya mashvam gam vaasah*" R. 10/67/4.

By virtue of medicine you will get money, cow, horse, cloth etc.

Description of 67 plants in rigveda, 81 in yajurveda, 89 in atharvana is available apart from general mention.

In Vedas specific drugs were mentioned for specific diseases. Prescription of single drug is available, but not mentioned multi drug therapy (compound drugs).

PHYSICIAN: is known as *Bhishak*.

'*Bhishati chikitsithe iti bhishak*' Who ever counters the disease, he is known as *Bhishak*.

'*Pavithraaya bhishak*' of yajurveda indicating that the medical profession is a holy and noble one.

Supreme physician is '*paramaatma*' '*bheshajerbhisktamam two bhishajo srnomi*' R. 2/33

Physicians are two types 1. Daivya 2. Manusha.

Daivya are agni, rudra, varuna, indra, ashvini deva, maruta and sarswati. Six male and one female physician.

Bhishak is defined as "the person who relieves the patient from suffering is the right and best physician" similarly, for sake of patient who further consults another physician and treats is still best. *Bhishaja bheshajani krinwath* A.V. 2/9/5.

METHODS OF TREATMENT:

Diseases may be caused by unknown affect of natural agents or disturbances in innate factors. The former were treated by offerings and prayers to gods and other natural agents (*daivavyapasraya chikitsa*). The latter are treated with external and internal application of drug remedies (*yuktivyapasraya chikitsa*).

In vedic medicines, the division is indicated with two epithets '*Rakshoha*' and '*Ami vacatana*' given to *bhishak*. The physician was simultaneously treating *Rakshas* (supernatural unseen causative agents) and *amiva* (innate disease) with recitation of hymns and application of drugs. The following methods were employed in vedic medicine.

1. Prayers and offerings to Gods - like Indra and Varuna.
2. Use of natural remedies like sunrays, fire, water and air. Water is regarded as panacea (*vishwabhesaja*), fire is mentioned as destroyer of *rakshas* as well as *amira*. Fire and air are said as *bhishak*.
3. Internal administration of drugs
4. External application of drugs
5. Mechanical intervention such as catheterization in case of retention of urine.
6. Surgical operation.

Rigveda described many miracles of surgical skills (*salya*). *Ashvini kumaras* are treated as best surgeons. Some of the surgical techniques are as follows.

1. Joining of amputated organs organoplasty
2. Iron/metal leg arranged for *vishalpa* who lost leg in the battle for better walking.
3. Major surgeries were done with metallic instruments.
4. Treatment of the conditions, injuries caused by *Agni*, *Danda* and metals.

5. Fractures, wounds, *angabhangas* were discussed.
6. *Ashvini* provided eye balls to *Rijrasra* and given light to blind.
"*Aakshi rijrashre Aswinadhatham*"
"*Jyothirandhaya chakradhuah vchaksha*"
R.V. 1/117/17
7. Removal of arrows and weapons pierced in various parts of body including heart. A.V. 6/60/1
"*Roobhoo rathasyaevaangaani sandhadhath parushaa paru*:" A.V 4/12/7

The above stanza states that "surgeon is like a carpenter of a human body" which is indicating technical know - how of surgical skills of those days.

OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY:

Certain salient features found in veda regarding obstetrics and gynecology are as follows:

1. The Vedas contain various references of female genital organs.
2. '*Gavini*' i.e. fallopian tubes were also described.
3. The woman is considered as *kshetra*.
4. The beautiful girl wearing ornaments was advised to select her husband, in other words, marriage was done in mature age.
5. Description of nourishment of fetus from mother specially through *nabhi* is available.
6. The drugs to protect the pregnant woman and protection from *rakshas* or *krimi*.
7. The process of labour, and good details of mechanism and management of labour are available in Vedas specially in the *atharvaveda*.
8. 10th month considered as best period for *parsava*.
9. Treatment of bleeding disorders.
10. Method of male and female contraception is available. The man is made infertile by use of drugs (anti spermatogenesis) or by crushing his two *naadis* (*vasectomy*). A.V. 6/138/1.5 - by *manthras* and use of I.U.D. were noted for females.
11. *pumasvana karma* i.e. to achieve conception, to achieve deserved child.

CONCLUSION:

Though the Vedas are *apaurusheyas*, the Vedas are considered to be the first written record of Indian literature containing innumerable references of science of life.

Apart from all the above, there are several descriptions on longevity of life, toxins, iatrogenic disorders and many more prayers and measures for maintenance of health, prevention of disease and to treat disease were mentioned in Vedas.

The high edictive knowledge on this science of life in vedic period is still mystic in light of present day science. The surgical techniques described still appears to be miracles even by the high technique surgeons of the day. Vedas are nothing but the all aspects of the art and the science of living. The truth is that the Vedas represent all these and much more. The Vedas contain the seed of all modern sciences which needs for a comprehensive review of true facts.

In conclusions, it can be said that the entire vedic literature is full of the ideas and facts in relation to the science of life, which guided the development of the subjects as *ayurveda* in post vedic era.