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## PHILOSOPHY AND MEDICINE : THE INDIAN STANDPOINT

### 1. Introduction

It is important to know that Philosophy and Medicine are intimately connected with each other. Philosophy is the science of all sciences. Medicine is one of the important physical sciences that have been developed ever since ancient times, and is popularly known as Medical Science. Naturally, logically and inevitably, there must be a philosophy of medical science as well.

Instead of ignoring the speculations of the thinkers of the medical schools in Indian Philosophy, one should remember that "medicine, the most important of all the physical sciences, was directly and intimately connected with the *Samkhya* and *Vaisesika* and was probably the origin of the logical speculations subsequently codified in the *Nyaya-Sutra*"!<sup>1</sup>

Before we talk about Philosophy and Medicine from the Indian standpoint, let us very briefly note the vital points revealing the essence of Philosophy and Medicine in the Western thought. In the western system of Medicine, the modern medicine or the Allopathy, has evolved through various stages before it has reached the present stage. Its beginning can perhaps be traced back to ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian medicine. By the fifth century BC, Hippocrates, reverently called the "Father of Medicine", developed the theory of Four Humours and formulated the Oath for the practitioner. The next most eminent physician was Galen. He was Greek but he

lived in Rome in the second century AD. Until the Middle Ages, students were taught what Galen had postulated long ago. Systematic study of the human body was undertaken by Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564 AD), a Belgian anatomist who showed that Galen was incorrect with regard to the passage of blood through the wall between the ventricles. The credit of discovering the theory of the blood-circulation in the body goes to William Harvey (1578-1657 AD). Further discoveries were built upon two fundamental concepts: the correct knowledge about the anatomy, the circulation of blood in the body. Thomas Sydenham, in England, contributed greatly towards the natural history of diseases. Hunter improved upon the practice of surgery, Jenner discovered vaccination; in France, Pasteur discovered the role of bacteria and Freud helped in the understanding of the human psyche. During the past hundred years so much has been discovered so rapidly in understanding the human body and disease that volumes would not be adequate to describe it. The concept of disease gradually evolved from the supernatural to the concept of Humours, the Alchemical concept, the Chemical concept, the Mechanical concept, the involvement of Organs, Tissues and Cells. The discovery of Xray by Roentgen and the use of his technique in diverse ways brought a great change in diagnosis, of antibiotics and streptomycin in 1944. The fundamental principle is to increase the vitality of the body so as to secure adequate resistance to disease. Of course, the latest developments and researches in medicine are based upon the greater and deeper understanding of the life processes of man, animals and plants. It has wonderful results to its credits also.

With this brief note on the purpose and the evolution of the modern western system of medicine (Allopathy), we will now talk in sufficient detail about the system of medicine from the Indian standpoint. Indian philosophy deals with Being, Becoming and Bliss. This is known in Upanishad as *Sat*, *Cit*, and *Anand*. "Sat" means self. Indian philosophy deals with the self and medical science deals with the embodied self. The method of medical science is to deal with the self through the body. This is also how medical science

becomes a philosophy of the body. "Cit" means Becoming. It means Life or "conscious force", which also means motion. Sat has no motion. Life (Cit) has motion. The acceleration or retention, the change in motion (speedy or slow) result in disorder. The aim is to reestablish the order. 'Anand' means bliss. Bliss arises when the self is in its natural state. The self in its natural state means "healthy". Thus according to the Indian standpoint the purpose of medical science is to keep the self in its proper and natural state in the body. When the self is displaced from its natural position in the body, it is suffering or diseased. When self is in its natural position it is in bliss. Indian medical science is called *Ayurveda* which means the science of life. According to some it is a sub-part of *Atharva-Veda* which is one of the Four Vedas, while others consider *Ayurveda* as an independent fifth veda. Whatever it is, it is quite rich in content, it "was co-existent with other vedas, was entitled to great respect, and was associated with the *Atharva-Veda* in a special way. It seems, however, that the nature of this association consisted in the fact that both of them dealt with the curing of diseases and attainment of long life; the one principally by incantations and charms, and the other by medicine".<sup>2</sup> There is an interesting mythological story about the origin of *Ayurveda*. "Long back many sages met together on the slopes of the Himalayas. They wanted to get rid of many diseases that were afflicting mankind. They knew that 'Indra', the Lord of Immortals, knew *Ayurveda*, the science of longevity from Ashwin kumar, the physicians to the gods, who learnt it from Daksha Prajapati, who in turn had learnt it from *Brahma*, the creator. Sage Bharadvaja approached Indra. Indra knew Bharadvaja's knowledge and power and so he taught the whole science of *Ayurveda* in brief. Sage Bharadvaja passed on to Punarvasu Atreya who taught *Ayurveda* to his six disciples, who composed treatises which became popular and proved helpful in mitigating human suffering".<sup>3</sup> In discussing the nature of *Ayurveda* it is said that "there was never a time when life did not exist or when intelligent people did not exist; and so there were always plenty of people who knew about life and there

was always medicine which acted on human body according to the principles which we find enumerated in the Ayurveda. Ayurveda was not produced in time out of nothing; but there was always a continuity of the science of life".<sup>4</sup>

But what is this *Ayurveda* ? Ayurveda is the Indian medical science. "Ayu" means life-span and "veda" means science. Ayurveda means the science of life. Being a part of *Atharva veda*, it is essentially spiritual in its approach. Ayurveda is a science of 'Holistic living'. It does not deal with a particular organ of the body or cell or tissue; it deals with the wholeness of man, like all the vedas and holy scriptures of Indian philosophy. Ayurveda also accepts one reality and that is our organic relationship with the cosmos. Life is one and an integrated whole. In order to have a complete and perfect diagnosis and treatment, the appreciation of the totality of life is a necessity. Today, even the western world has started demanding a system of treatment based on the integral and holistic view of life processes. This leads to the applications of Ayurveda. This places the essence of Ayurveda in accordance with the spiritual relationship of life. "The live touch of spirituality results in a total transformation of life, right from its roots".<sup>5</sup> This spiritual perspective, the holistic approach and the acceptance of totality makes Ayurveda quite different from Allopathy and most other systems. Charak, the author of *Charak-Sahita*, "uses the word 'Ayurveda' in the general sense of 'science of life'. In *Caraka-Samhita*, the etymological derivation of Ayurveda, given by its author Caraka, is as "that which instructs us about life";<sup>6</sup> "Susruta suggests two alternative derivations, one is that by which life is known or examined and the other that by which life is attained".<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Branches of Ayurveda

According to Ayurveda there is a definite relationship between the metaphysical state of an individual and illness. "Ayurveda has eight distinct branches: 1. general medicine (*Kayacikitsa*). 2. major surgery (*Shalya-tantra*). 3. ear, nose, throat, eye and mouth diseases (*Shalakya-tantra*). 4. pshychiatry (*Bhuta-*

*vidya*). 5. obstetrics, gynaecology and pediatrics (*Balatantra*). 6. toxicology (*Agada-tantra*). 7. rejuvenation (*Rasayana-tantra*) and 8. aphrodisiacs (*Vajkaran-tantra*)”.

Because of this eightfold development it offers, it is called ‘Eight-fold Ayurveda’ (Ashtanga Ayurveda). The occult (Tantra), metallic pathology and yoga are also part Ayurveda. There are systems which developed out of Ayurveda or were influenced by it. One such system is the Tibetan system of medicine.

### 3. Purpose of Ayurveda

We have seen the nature and the basis of Ayurveda. Its goal is longevity of life. Caraka-Samhita, an authentic scripture on Ayurveda written by a sage Carak, begins with the chapter entitled ‘Longing for longevity’ (*Deergha jivitecyam*). In Ayurveda the attainment of longevity is given the first place. Since Ayurveda is the science of life, it is important to know what kind of life Ayurveda talks about, before we talk about the object of Ayurveda. “Life, in Ayurveda, is divided into four kinds, viz. happy (*sukha*), unhappy (*duhkh*), good (*hita*) and bad (*ahita*). Happy life (*Sukham-ayush*) is a life which is not affected by bodily or mental diseases, is endowed with vigour, strength, energy, vitality, activity and is full of all sorts of enjoyments and success. The opposite of this is unhappy life (*Asukham-ayuh*). Good life (*hitam-ayush*) is the life of a person who is always willing to do good to all beings, never steals others’ property, is truthful, self-controlled, self-restrained and works with careful consideration, does not transgress the moral injunctions, goes after virtue and enjoyment with equal zeal, honours revered persons, is charitable and does what is beneficial to the world and to others. The opposite of this is called bad life (*ahita-ayush*). The object of the science of life is to teach what is conducive to all these four kinds of life and also to determine the length of such a life”.<sup>8</sup>

Indian medical science, namely Ayurveda, believes in treating the life of a man as a totality of four components, i.e., body, senses, mind and soul. If life is lost, all is lost. Therefore, protecting life,

and thereby attaining longevity has remained the cherished longing in a living being. To achieve it, one must strive to remain hale and healthy. In order to understand the goal or purpose of Ayurveda, we should note that according to Ayurveda there are three longings in every human being: longing for a long, happy and wealthy life. Since longing for a long life comes first, it has very distinctly emphasised the concept of a long and beneficial life. Ayurveda, by giving a simile of a chariot or a wooden cart and comparing it to life explains that if we take good care of the body and use it properly, then we would survive for few years more and the life would be happy and purposeful. “The sole aim of Ayurveda is to advise diet, medicine and a course of behaviour, such that, if they are properly followed, a normally healthy person may maintain a balance of his supporting bases (*dhatu*s) and a man who has lost the equilibrium of his supporting bases (*dhatu*) may regain it. The aim of Ayurveda, thus, is to advise men how to secure control over the basic supporters of life (*Dhatu-Samya*)”.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4. Central Theme

Even the most ordinary or an average student of Ayurveda, on hearing Ayurveda immediately remembers the three vitiators (Doshas). In fact these three vitiators are the key to understand Indian medical science. According to Ayurveda, *Vayu*(air), *pitta* (Bile) and *Kapha* (phlegm or lymph), these three maintain the body in perfect health so long as they are balanced. When these three are in equilibrium life is healthy, and they do not pollute or weaken the body or produce disease. When they are unbalanced, they become vitiated and they also vitiate the body. In reality, the very existence of life and of the body is based on them. So they are called basic supporters of life (*Dhatu*s). When the balance of these three is vitiated, it happens that out of the three one dominates the other two. The sole purpose and the central theme as well as the treatment in Ayurveda is to restore the balance of these three life forces (*Prans*), i.e., Air (*vayu*), bile (*Pitta*) and Phlegm (*Kapha*). Restoring balance means normal, hale and healthy body and mind.

According to Indian philosophy, as earlier said, life is one and an integrated whole. The living being, constituted from the body, the senses, the life force, the mind and individual consciousness or soul, is a unified complex. A person when born inherits the five primordial elements (*Panch-Maha-Bhootas*). These five primordial elements are earth, water, fire, air and ether. These are also the primordial elements out of which the world is made. Amongst them there is a harmony. When this balance or harmony in an individual or in the environment is disturbed, imbalance or disharmony takes place. Ayurveda accepts and adheres to this concept of five elements. The three vitiators are independent agents which work in unison with man's karma and also in unison with a man's mind. In Ayurveda we find a psycho-physical parallelism. Caraka, in trying to formulate this view, says: "The mind corresponds to the body and the body to the mind". In fact, Caraka has discussed these three vitiators in great details explaining how they perform physical, intellectual and psycho-physical operations. Thus, the central theme of the Indian medical science is to maintain the harmony or the balance of the three life forces (*Pranas*), i.e., air, bile and phlegm (*Vayu, pitta and Kapha*), so that these will perform the operations constructively. An unhealthy diseased or injured person is one where the lost balance is to be restored. Volumes and volumes have been written to cover up almost all the diseases and disorders. Neither is it the subject of this paper nor is it possible here to mention the long discussion about the diagnosis, causes and treatment prescribed in Ayurveda. However, we will certainly examine some of the vital points of treatment discussed in Ayurveda, and the approach of the practitioners. Let us first see what, according to Ayurveda, is disease and the cause of disease? What is the nature of treatment in Ayurveda?

## 5. The Cause of Disease

It has already been mentioned that according to Ayurveda, vata, bile and phlegm are the three life forces. When one or more of these three fall off or exceed the proper quantity, one or more

may be in deficiency or in excess. Cakarapani explains not every kind of excess or deficiency, but only what produces a disease or disturbance of the equilibrium; It is only when such deficiency or excess produces affections on the body that it is called vitiators (*Dhatu-vaisamya*). A man is said to be unhealthy or to be in a state of disturbed equilibrium (*Dhatu-vaisamya*) when symptoms of disease (*Vikara*) are seen.<sup>10</sup> More than once in this paper we have said that the disharmony or imbalance is the root cause of the disease. Why does disequilibrium take place? Caraka, while replying to this question, has said: "The cause of it is disturbing the nature's orderliness (*a-dharma*), and the root of this disturbance is malfunction of or lack of intellect, will and continuous alertness". According to the Indian medical science the individual is fully responsible for disease and calamities that occur both in the individual and in the universe. "At one place it is said that no disease will occur so long as a person takes proper nourishment, food and drink in proper measure and at proper time". "At another place it is stated that formerly there were no diseases and men used to live for the full span of a hundred years; but those who happened to get more comforts and conveniences went on using more and more to satisfy their senses. By over eating, being over weight, 'over enjoyment, idleness, cheating, anger, violence, etc., the blood gets vitiated by strong impulses, the heart gets agitated, the brain and the nervous system suffer a shock. This way the diseases increase and multiply".<sup>12</sup>

"Ayurveda has given three general causes of disease. The improper engagement of the senses in their sense object, the effect of the cycle of time, and the history of the life struggles and of various actions of previous births of individuals and societies".<sup>13</sup> "Ayurveda explains health and disease in a very systematic, coherent and logical manner".<sup>14</sup>

## 6. Diagnosis, Treatment and Medicine.

Indian medical science in general and Ayurveda in particular do not seem to think that diagnosis means only naming the disease;



they comprise much more. Diagnosis includes predisposing causes, indications, symptoms and diagnosis of the stages of the disease. All these will be properly recognised and assessed. In diagnosing, the physician is expected to be holy, self-restrained and without an ulterior motive. For securing these qualities of the physician the Ayurveda has prescribed a form of oath which every physician is expected to swear before starting his medical practice (See Appendix II). Caraka has stated that, "the diseases of one whose desires have totally vanished, vanish"<sup>15</sup> or what is important to be noted about the Ayurveda treatment is that treatment is not symptomatic as it is in Allopathy. Ayurveda purifies the whole body system and does not allow any impurity to remain in the body which might produce disease. It does not treat the symptoms of the body but it treats the whole body. This is because of the holistic, integrated and spiritual approach of Indian medicine. This also makes the physician or the practitioner constantly aware of the fact that he is neither treating the symptoms of a patient nor the part or limb of his body; he is treating a human body as a whole. Here the physician gives greater importance to diet and drugs. What he has to do is to correct the diagnosed imbalance of vitiators (*dosh*). The diet to be suggested to a patient is mostly the vegetables and herbs through mineral compounds. We do not enter here into discussion about the ways these drugs are dispensed, i.e., powders, solutions, decoction, pills, medicated oil, etc. "Since Ayurveda gives emphasis to diet and drugs which act on the patients' body through the influence of their taste (*Rasa*), potency (*Virya*), post digestive taste (*Vipaka*) and special action (*Prabhava*), it becomes of utmost necessity to study the properties, classifications and the selection of drugs, extensively and elaborately".<sup>16</sup> The Indian medical science is very clear about the approach to patients' near examination. The system is composed of detailed, methodological and very scientifically chronological stages of treatment. Since the aim of the approach is perfect recovery and total remedy, sometimes patients feel that it takes a long time. In a way this is true. Unlike Allopathy which concentrates only on the part and not on the whole, Ayurveda

proves to be more meaningful, systematic and oriented towards beneficial results.

According to modern medicine, diseases are either structural or functional. The modern doctors say that functional diseases are cured by medicine, but the structural diseases are cured by surgical treatment. But Indian medical schools, including Ayurveda, do not agree with this. We do have surgery as an important branch of medicine. At the same time "Ayurveda asserts that Ayurvedic type of medicine does have the capacity to reverse such processes. In medicine the importance is given to substance. Ayurveda says: 'no attribute can exist without substance'.<sup>17</sup> "A substance can be medicine only when it is applied (or used) in the proper way and for specific purposes; nothing can unconditionally be considered a medicine. The medicative influence is exerted both by virtue of the specific agency of a substance and by the specific agency of its qualities, as also by their joint influence".<sup>18</sup> One lesser known and rarely practiced branch of medicine is metallic pathology (*Rasayana*). The essence of a substance (*Ras*) is an ancient phenomenon. The earliest person to have developed some techniques in connection with metallic pathology (*Rasayanasastra*) is Nagarjuna who lived in the 2nd century AD. In Ayurveda there are two sorts of medicine: One is the application of herbs and the other is derived from metallic chemistry. Metallic pathology occupies a place of great importance in Ayurveda. Where herbal medicine fails to bring results, metallic medicine is used. It has a very strong curing power. Among other metals the metallic drugs largely make use of mercury. Therefore the use of metallic drugs requires great caution and accuracy. Metallic drugs can be taken by a patient only under the supervision of an expert physician. The metallic drug has power to produce wonderful therapeutic results.

## 7. Occult and Yoga

Indian philosophy as such is very rich in Occultism. Occultism is considered to be a significant medical philosophy. Occult is primarily concerned with motion, and it cures disease through sound

vibration (*Mantra*). Occultism (*Tantra*) is a sound pathology which attempts to cure different diseases by different sound formulas.

However, the nervous system according to occultism (*Tantra*) is different from that of the medical system of *Caraka* and *Susruta*. The most important feature of Tantra anatomy is its theory of nerve plexuses (*Cakras*). Of these, the first is the sacrococcygeal plexus (*adhara Cakra*), situated between the penis and the anus and there are eight elevations on it. They, in the upward order, are the Sacral Plexus (*Swadhishana-Cakra*), the Lumba Fluxes (*Mani-Pura-Cakra*) the Cardiac Plexus (*Anahata-Cakra*), the Laryngeal and Pharyngeal Plexus (*Bharati Sthana*), the plexus between the eye brows (*Ajna-Cakra*); above it is the plexus in the middle of cerebrum and finally the plexus in the upper cerebrum (*Some-Cakra and Sahasra Cakra*), the seat of the soul".<sup>19</sup>

"Indian occultism (*Tantra*) believes that there is a great power called Big Mysterious Power (*Maha-Kundalini*) which functions in the entire universe. The same Power in the form of mysterious centers (*Kundalini*) functions in the physical body. Leaving aside a great detail of occult philosophy, the purpose here is simply to show that the occult anatomy differs very much from Ayurved anatomy. Moreover, unlike *Caraka* who refers to the heart as the central seat of the soul, or authors who associate the head with sensory consciousness, the occult school considers the upper cerebrum as the seat of soul. It regards the spinal cord at its lower end as being of supreme importance for the vital functions of the body".<sup>20</sup> In a human being the mysterious power is located in the secret plexus (*Muladhara-Cakra*), near the root of the penis, where it lies in dormant condition. The occult science (*Tantra*) attempts to awaken that sleeping, dormant mysterious power. This is done through different sound formulas (*Mantras*) and make it to rise in the body which will result in energising a big body. All the centres are interconnected with the supreme bodily energy (*Kundalini*). Despite apparent differences in Ayurveda and the occult system, the goal is the same, viz. curing the disease and restoring health.

The occult system aims at harmonising the functioning of different energy centres so that it may produce normal health.

Let us now turn to yoga. Yoga means union: i.e., the union of the soul with the Super Soul (God). Here we do not discuss the yoga philosophy but yoga as a therapy. Indian yoga has two purposes, i.e., the therapeutic and the transcendental. Leaving aside the transcendental aspect, we shall here confine ourselves to the therapeutic. In achieving communion with God, which is the ultimate aim of yoga, a healthy body is absolutely necessary. Yoga shows various techniques by which the body can be made competent for realising divine communion. Yoga provides two techniques for keeping the body free from disease. One is the breath control known as *Pranayama*; the other is the yogic postures of the body known as *Asanas*. The breath control technique is for strengthening the lungs and improving longevity of life while the different postures (*Asanas*) are for keeping various parts of the body in a sound physical condition. Yoga has been defined as "Science of divinity, "Science of soul", etc. But from the medical point of view, in yoga we find life energy (*Prana*) at the centre. Ayurveda has accepted the importance and usefulness of yoga. Caraka says: "all the pains and tribulations whatsoever, totally subside through *Moksha* (liberation) and *Yoga*. Yoga leads to salvation and salvation leads to total freedom from pain of all types". Moreover, the imbalance about which we talked earlier, gets created not only in the body, but also in the Mind and in the Self. Ayurveda has employed *yoga* to remove the imbalance of the mind (*Manas*) and the self (*Atma*). The aim of yoga and its eight-fold path is to quieten the activities of the Mind and to reestablish the Mind, to regain energy. Today yoga is perhaps the most popular of the systems of Indian Philosophy. Outside India several cases have shown that incurable diseases are cured by yoga. Yoga is proved to be very effective on metabolism, in increasing the power of the skin, normalising high blood pressure, in memory, curing insomnia (sleeplessness) and the central nervous system. The Indian medical system in general and

Ayurveda in particular has accepted yoga's capacity to cure chronic patients for a long time and thus it has its unique place throughout the world, including India.

## **8. Modern Science and Indian Medicine**

Ancient Indian medical science is perhaps one of India's richest treasures. For centuries it was not taken seriously by the West. With the development of modern science and humanistic psychology, the entire approach has changed. Sciences which were based on pure external objective researches created an alarming situation. Great scientists and philosophers of science such as, Einstein, Henry Bergson, Alexis Carel, Ivan Illich, Fritjof Capra, Schoendinger, Heizenberg, David Bohm and others in the west made people turn towards integral and holistic medicine. Indian medicine integrated the spiritual context of life; thus it became very significant to the world. Let us consider the latest research in modern medical science. These examples show that the principles and speculations of the Indian medical schools were of great significance.<sup>21</sup>

### **8.1. About the Brain and the Mind**

In the 1990's, termed "the decade of the Brain" by the international scientific community, there have been some dramatic advances in our understanding of how the human brain functions, how it generates our thoughts, emotions, behaviour and why there are differences between a man's and a woman's brain. The advanced study of the biochemistry of brain cells has brought us a long way from Aristotle who believed that the brain was to cool overheated blood. "Modern science now feels that no study of the brain will be complete unless there is some understanding about the realm of mind. Where is the mind located ? How does it work ? Does it arise purely from physical processes ? Or is it something else - closer to the metaphysical and the spiritual? "Plato believed that the mind was in the head, while Aristotle asserted it was in the heart. French Philosopher Rene Descartes believed that the mind (soul), though situated in the brain, was somehow an independent

entity". The British Journal "Nature", in its November 1995 issue, published a study entitled: "Sex differences in the human brain and its relation to trans-sexuality". New research shows that food affects not only the body, but the brain as well. The food and mood connection can be useful. Biochemistry supports the view that "chemicals from food actually compete for entry into brain".

After seeing this let us consider what Indian medical systems say: Diet is one of the most important aspects of the treatment. The mind (*manas*) is one and the same for each person, but it is atomic. It moves senses and is considered to be the direct cause of pleasure and pain. Ayurveda considers food affecting the mind and thoughts. The difference between head and brain was known as early as the *Atharva Veda*. Caraka considers the brain to be the centre of the mind (*manas*). In Ayurveda we find a long story about the function of the brain, self and its association with mind (*manas*) and the power of thought.

What Ayurveda propounded through its integrated and holistic approach, now the scientists come to accept and they say: "Your mind is in every cell". Deepak Chopra, inspired by Indian thought, claims that the mind can be harnessed through awareness. "Because the mind influences every cell in the body, human ageing is fluid and changeable. It can speed up, slow down and even reverse itself. He cites the effect of the Occult (*Tantra*) and of Buddhist theory for controlling involuntary responses, such as breathing, blinking and balancing. Dr. Chopra accepts and talks about the integrative approaches such as the "medical intuition", i.e., where the link between the emotions and illness is finding real use. It leads to the same theme, i.e., the mind and body are one.

## 8.2. On Sound Psychorama.

Psychorama is a new form of therapy that uses the techniques of both theatre and psychotherapy. Psychologist Lief Blomkvist, who brought this therapy says: "The best way to get through life is to learn how to live with pain". Well, he is more philosophic than therapeutic. But one thing is sure. Dr. Choussy's invention of the

lethotriper machine to cure the blockage of the urinal system by stones through powerful sound waves supports the ancient sound formulas (*Mantra vidya*) in the Occult (*Trantric*) system of India.

### **8.3. Water, Food, Allergy.**

Modern medical science has come out with wonderful findings about water, food and even allergies. Popular beliefs are now being sent down the drain by scientists. Water is the most valuable property to mankind, says Carak. In fact, water and food, for both curing disease and maintaing health, have been discussed and described in Indian medical systems in full length. Food intolerance, or masked food allergy, which is still a relatively new concept in the modern medical world of the West was already touched upon and discussed in ancient Indian medicine. Allergy to it is "a physical disorder caused by hypersensitivity to certain usually harmless substances that are eaten, inhaled or brought into contact with skin." All the new researchers regarding these further support the principles and practices of the Indian standpoint.

### **8.4. On Depression and Emotional Stress.**

Most people do not recognise depression and mental or emotional stress until it is too late. It is important to know that one man in ten and one woman in five have a serious depression. In Yoga, in the Indian medical system, centuries back, this was not merely discussed, but an elaborate picture of symptoms and treatment was given. Again, by accepting the scientific explanation that emotional stress makes you physically ill, the biochemistry of stress, a new area of inquiry, is proceeding in research studies. According to the Indian medical systems stress affects digestion. "Physicians now see loose connections between types of stress and types of disease". In Ayurveda, as I mentioned earlier, the physician is asked to know the patient not only physically, but also his state of mind, his activities and character in general. Of course, "links between cancer and stress are suspected" (*asserted in Ayurveda*), but they are still unproved.

### 8.5. On Exorcism, Obesity, Laughter, etc.

A wide range of areas related to human illness is under active research. The so called notions or beliefs regarding exercise, obesity, laughter, blood cholesterol and even the good and bad sides of alcohol are turning to myths. The old rules once again become significant and the world looks again at conceptions expressed in Ayurveda. It has been in the right sense astonishing to see the vast literature on Ayurveda systematically produced along with the development of Indian medicine. The inductive method in Ayurveda itself is a great contribution to the speculations in the Indian medical schools. Ayurveda and other systems, like the Occult and even the Metallic pathology, are not simply a narration of inquiry and its procedures. They have also their ethics. One can clearly see how the ethical is related in the oath for a physician prescribed in Caraka Samhit 229a (see Appendix II). It deals with all the branches of medical science and also talks about human action. It talks about the three primary desires as the motives which cause all of our actions. These are: desire for life, desire for riches and desire for future life. Ayurveda has also studied gerontology and has given the causes and the cure of pre-mature old age through the process of Metallic pathology (*Rasayan*).

All the discoveries of modern science have shown that (a) matter and energy are interconvertible, (b)unity, harmony and connectedness exist in the universe (c) the observer and observed possess unity, (d) that time and space are relative. All these discoveries lead to Cosmic Unity which is the fundamental view of Ayurveda.

This paper will be incomplete without a further clarification; throughout these pages, very enthusiastically, I have tried to bring out the Indian standpoint regarding Philosophy and Medicine which is spiritual in its nature and holistic in its approach. In doing so, if an impression is created that modern science, modern medicine and other medical systems, like Allopathy or Homeopathy or Unani or Nature cure, are considered useless, then I must say that this



impression is not what I had in mind. They, i.e., the western medical traditions, also have made remarkable progress and met with wonderful success. These real traditions and their systems might have encountered cases with which they might not prove effective or might unfortunately have been nullified by commercialization and evil market forces. I have not even the least intention to ignore or demoralise any of the medical systems, while bringing out the Indian perspective.

Both Philosophy and the medical schools, the Ayurveda, the Occult, Yoga and Metallic Pathology, adopt the holistic approaches, they are all Ayurveda, the Science of life. These different approaches are not contradictory to each other, but they are complementary. They have a common goal and that is to restore the health of an ailing human body so that the embodied Self enjoys a kind of bliss! They are in themselves perfect systems having their philosophy, fundamental principles, effective methodology and distinct goals. The Indian medical science has accepted the totality of the universe, that rests on a holistic approach and is adopting also a transcendental purpose of life. Indian medicine is both science and philosophy. It is both functional and transcendental. In this regard it is unique.

## APPENDIX :

### 1. THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH

"I swear by Apollo the physician, the Aesculapius, and Health, and All - heal, and all the gods and goddesses, that, according to my ability and judgment, I will keep this Oath and this stipulation - to reckon him who taught me this Art equally dear to me as my parents, to share my substance with him, and relieve his necessities if required; to look upon his offspring in the same footing as my own

brothers, and to teach them this art, if they shall wish to learn it, without fee or stipulation; and that by precept, lecture, and every other mode of instruction, I will impart the knowledge of the Art to my own sons, and those of my teachers, and to disciples bound by a stimulation and oath according to the law of medicine, but to none others. I will follow that system of regimen which, according to my ability and judgement, I consider for the benefit of my patients, and abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous. I will give no deadly medicine to any one, if asked, nor suggest any such counsel; and in like manner I will not give to a woman a pessary to produce abortion. With purity and with holiness I will pass my life and practice my An. I will not cut persons laboring under the stone, but will leave this to be done by men, who are practitioners of this work. Into whatever houses I enter, I will go into them for the benefit of the sick, and will abstain from every voluntary act of mischief and corruption; and, further from the seduction of females or males, of freemen and slaves. Whatever, in connection with my professional practice or not, in connection with it, I see or hear, in the life of men, which ought not to be spoken of abroad, I will not divulge, as reckoning that all such should be kept secret. While I continue to keep this Oath unviolated, may it be granted to me to enjoy life and the practice of the art, respected by all men, in all times ! But should I trespass and violate this Oath, may the reverse be my lot ! ”

( From Hippocratic Writings ).

## 2. THE INDIAN OATH

A successful student was asked to take an Oath before he could start his practice. Some excerpts from it are as follows:

“Day and night however you may be engaged, you shall endeavour for the relief of the patient with all your heart and soul. You shall not desert or injure your patient even for the sake of your life or your living.

You shall be modest in your dress and appearance. You shall not be a drunkard or a sinful man, nor should you associate with those who commit crimes.

You should speak words that are gentle, pure and righteous, pleasing, worthy, true, wholesome and moderate. Your behaviour must be in consideration of time and place and heedful of past experience.

No persons who are hated by the public or who are haters of the public, shall receive treatment from you. Similarly, those that are of very unnatural, wicked and miserable character and product, those who have not vindicated their honour and those that are on the point of death, and women who are unattended by their husbands or guardians, shall not receive treatment.

No offering of a present by a woman without the knowledge of her husband or guardian shall be accepted by you. While entering the patient's house, you should be accompanied by a man who is known to the patient and who

has his permission to enter, and you should be well clad and bent of head, self-possessed, and conduct yourself after due consideration. You shall thus properly make your entry. Having entered, your speech mind, intellect and senses shall be entirely devoted to no other thought than that of being helpful to the patient, and of things concerning him only. The peculiar custom of the patient's household shall not be made public. Even knowing that the patient's span of life has come to its end, it shall not be mentioned by you there, where if so done, it should cause shock to patient or to others.

Though possessed of knowledge, one should not boast very much of it. Most people are offended by the boastfulness of even those who are otherwise good and knowledgeable.

There is no limit at all to which a knowledge of Ayurveda can be acquired, so you should apply to it with diligence. The entire world is the teacher to the intelligent and foe to the unintelligent. Hence knowing this well, you should listen to and act according to the words of instruction of even an unfriendly person, when they are worthy and as such bring fame to you and long life, and are capable of giving you strength and prosperity.”

( From Caraka Samhita).

**References :**

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3. Dr. O. P. Jaggi, "All about...", Orient Paperbacks ed. (1976), pp. 68-69.
4. S. N. Dasgupta, "A History of Indian Philosophy", Vol. II (1975), p. 274.
5. Balkrishna Vaidya, "The Spiritual Essence of Ayurveda," (1994), Preface : vii.
6. *Caraka*, 1.1.40 and I. 30,20-23.
7. *Susruta - Samhita* 1.1. 14.
8. *Caraka*, 1.1.40 and I. 30.
9. Ibid. 1.1.52.
10. Cakrapani on *Caraka - Samhita - Comments*: IV 6.4.
11. Balkrishna Vaidya, "The Spiritual Essence of Ayurveda", (1994), p. 31.
12. Ibid,p. 33.
13. Ibid., p. 33.
14. Dr. O. P. Jaggi, "All about..." o.c., p. 85.
15. *Caraka - Samhita* - Quoted by B. K. Vaidya, *The Spiritual Essence of Ayurveda*, Ibid.
16. Dr. O. P. Joggi, "All about..." (1976), p. 86.
17. S. N. Dasgupta, "A History of Indian Philosophy", (1975), Vol. II, p. 358.
18. Ibid., p. 359.
19. Ibid., pp. 355-356.
20. Ibid., pp. 356-35 7.
21. The Times of India (Guj. ed): different articles on "Health" (between Nov. 1996 and April 1997).

“The religious consciousness of our time, which consists in recognizing the union of people as both the general and the individual aim of life, has already become sufficiently clear, and the people of our time now have only to reject the false theory of beauty according to which pleasure is recognized as the aim of art, and then religious consciousness will naturally become the guide of art in our time.

And as soon as religious consciousness, which unconsciously already guides the life of people in our time, is consciously recognized by people, the division of art into art of the lower and art of the upper classes will of itself immediately be annulled. Once there is a common, brotherly art, then of itself there will be rejected, first, that art which conveys feelings discordant with the religious consciousness of our time — feelings which do not unite but disunite people — and, secondly, that worthless, exclusive art which now occupies a significance for which it is unsuited.

And as soon as this happens, art will immediately cease to be what it has been in recent times — a means of brutalizing and corrupting people — and will become what it always has been and should be — a means of mankind’s movement towards unity and well-being”.

From : *‘What is Art ?*  
By : Leo Tolstoy