



A REVIEW ON NAISHTIKI CHIKITSA

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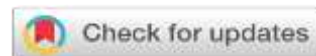
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ABSTRACT

Background

Life according to Ayurveda is not only limited to body or physical symptoms but also gives a comprehensive knowledge about spiritual, mental, and social health. Ayurveda has a unique approach to diagnosing and categorising diseases and a wide range of treatment modalities, even though these treatment modalities help in curing a broad spectrum of diseases, it does not ensure that the person is eternally healthy and happy in the true sense, the unending desires and the zest for worldly pleasures put a man in a web of miseries which gradually results into endless diseases. The sacrifice of all desires is the only remedy as mentioned by Acharya Charaka and the *Chikitsa* advised for this is known as *Naishtiki chikitsa*.

Aims and Objectives

The present article endeavours the subject matter regarding the necessity and practical implementation of the unique treatment approach “*Naishtiki Chikitsa*” as described in various classical literatures and philosophical schools.

Conclusion

The definitive healing method for all pains is *Naishtiki* (removal of pains by the deletion of greed or grasping). This can be achieved through various simple lifestyle modalities which we can inculcate in our day-to-day life.

Keywords: *Naishtiki chikitsa, Moksha, Upadha, Satvavajaya, Satya buddhi, Chikitsa*

INTRODUCTION

Health is the root cause par excellence for the attainment of all the four objectives of human life (*Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha*) and is the result of a balanced network of interactions and inter relations within the living beings and their environment¹. Diseases are considered the destroyers of health and also act as stumbling blocks for attaining the four objectives of life. Ayurveda has always emphasised the importance of treating the mental aspects for complete relief. It administers various treatment modalities to keep the patient's mind healthy by maintaining the balance between the *Manasika doshas*.

According to Acharya Charaka, *Upadha* (desires) is one of the root causes of disease² among the innumerable other causes, and it makes man submerged in a self-made web of miseries which ultimately leads to the cycle of re-birth. A person in the pursuit of obtaining all the desirous materialistic world will become a victim of psychological fluctuations like anger, lust, hatred, enmity, etc., which makes them entangled in the web of birth and death. The sacrifice of all desires is the only remedy and Acharya Charaka has introduced the concept of *Naishtiki Chikitsa* for this³. *Naishtiki Chikitsa* is an entirely different approach from other principles of treatment. The main aim of this treatment modality is *Dukkha Nivruti* (eradication of miseries). The absolute eradication of miseries is possible only by the elimination of desires. Acharya Charaka has mentioned that, among the four objectives of life, attaining *Moksha* (salvation) is the ultimate purpose. If the body and the mind are diseased, this cannot be achieved. *Naishtiki chikitsa* helps one in attaining salvation/*moksha*⁴.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

To understand the basic concept of *Naishtiki chikitsa* and the rationale behind its implementation.

MATERIALS & METHODS

Various classical literatures of Ayurveda have been studied to understand the basic concepts. Various literature pertaining to *Yoga Sastra* was also analyzed. Many articles pertaining to Indian Philosophy

and *Sanaatan Dharma* were also included in the study to draw definite conclusions on the topic.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ayurvedic science mostly concentrates on the aspects of mind, body, and soul and thus moulded the system of Ayurveda as a treating process combining both mind and body. Ayurveda describes three *Gunas* of mind, namely, *Satva, Rajas, and Tamas*. *Rajas* and *Tamas* are reactive tendencies that vitiate the mind and lead to emotional imbalance, which also results in psychological disturbances, hence *Rajas* and *Tamas* are the *Manasika doshas*. The person associated with *Rajas* and *Tamas* will be having endless rebirths and with this kind of conjugation of *Rajas* and *Tamas* when subdued by the prevalence of *Sattva Guna*, one attains salvation. Once the *Sattva Guna* increases, the *Rajas* and *Tamas* are eliminated, and it leads to the emancipation of a person. The increase in the *Sattva guna* bestows a person with pure knowledge and detachment from worldly affairs and leads to salvation⁵. *Naishtiki chikitsa* is the treatment done without any imposition or deceit. "*Hantiyuktam chikitsa tu naishtiki ya vinopdham*" It is the *Chikitsa* that is capable of curing all kinds of miseries (*upadha rahitha*) and is the ultimate way that leads to salvation (*moksha*)⁶. "*Vinopadhamiti*" *trishna* (*raga – dwesha*) *rahitha* means devoid of *Raga* and *Dwesha*, and ultimately leads to *Moksha*⁷.

Absolute eradication of miseries is called salvation, it is actioned by the remission of *Raga* and *Dwesha* (attachment and detachment). Thus, the reduction of inner miseries or the path to salvation is called *Naishtiki*. A physician who practices *Naishtiki chikitsa* is endowed with *Brahma satva* as per Acharya Charaka⁸.

Upadha - Allurement or deceit:

Upadha (allurement) is the greatest cause of miseries and also the shelter or resort of these, renunciation of all *Upadha* (*trishna*) eliminates all miseries. As a silkworm produces the threads which become its own killer, in the same way, an ignorant person receives

nothing from worldly possessions except the thirst to spend the rest of his life in misery. Desires move us to action, give us urges, incline us to joy at their satisfaction, and incline us to sorrow at their frustration⁹.

The wise person considering these sense objects just like fire renounces those and thus becomes free from them. To him, the absence of these longing of desire and thus the absence of their association with the body thereby prevents the attack of miseries.

Materialistic activities are always mixed with three kinds of miserable conditions: *Adhyatmika*, *Adhidaivika*, and *Adhibhautika*. Therefore, even though one achieves success by performing such activities, there is no benefit in it and one is still subjected to birth, death, old age, disease, and the reactions of his fruitive activities¹⁰.

The root cause for *Upaplava* (beginning of miseries) is *Pravritti* (action/attachment). *Nivritti* (inaction/detachment from worldly affairs) leads to the destruction of all miseries. The root cause for attachment (*Pravritti*) is *Moha* (ignorance), *Ichha* (desire), *Dweshha* (hatred), and *Karma* (action). Attachment leads to *Ahamkara*, *Sanga*, *Samshaya*, *Abhisamplava*, *Abhyavapaata*, *Vipratyaya*, *Avisesha*, and *Anupaaya*. Just as a tree with big branches engulfs the young plant, due to the effects of attachment the person is submerged in all these things. Therefore, he who is under the influence of these factors doesn't transcend worldly activities¹¹.

- *Ahamkara*: the egoistic feeling that "I belong to a such high clan, endowed with beauty, wealth, conduct, intelligence, character, etc.,
- *Sanga*: the activities of the mind, word, and body that do not contribute to ultimate liberation.
- *Samsaya*: doubt about the existence of the results of past actions, salvation, soul, rebirth, etc.,
- *Abhisamplava*: proudness or superiority.
- *Abhyavapaata*: means the feeling of selfishness.
- *Viratyaya*: false concept. i., e considering the desirable as undesirable, etc.,
- *Avisesha*: means lack of ability to differentiate between conscious and unconscious elements, attachment and detachment, nature and its modifications, etc.,

- *Anupaaya*: improper approach of performing prokshana, agnihotra, upavaasa, etc.,

Moha leads to desire and hatred. Through desire and hatred, righteous and unrighteous acts happen, and these acts are the root cause for the initiation towards worldly affairs¹². Thus, a person without intellect, restraint, and memory sinks into egoism, just as a tree is an abode for birds, the body becomes an abode for diseases of those whoever is egoistic.

Having attachments with doubt, proudness, selfishness, misconceptions, etc., is an abode for all miseries caused by the defects of body and mind. So, walking in a state of misperception due to the agitation of faults like ego he cannot overcome attachment, and it forms the root cause for all the miseries.

Nishta – Liberation from Miseries

To escape from miseries, one needs to keep away from *Upadha* or desires (attachment). Liberation from miseries is called *Nishta*. According to Chakrapani, *Nishta* is the form of salvation from all sorrows. (*Atyanta dukkha moksho moksha roopa*)¹³. Since *Nishta* liberates you from the miseries, it is a form of salvation (*moksha rupa*). *Naishtiki chikitsa* is the treatment to attain salvation (*moksha*, liberation from miseries). Since *Naishtiki* is devoid of desires and attachment, it becomes the way to attaining the ultimate aim of life, one among the four objectives of human life (*purushartha chatushtaya*) i.e., *Moksha* or salvation. In short – *Nishta* means salvation. *Naishtiki chikitsa* is the means for attaining salvation.

This leads one to a path of true knowledge i.e *Satya Buddhi* and *Tatva Smriti* which is the attainment of true knowledge which comes only from a pure mind that is devoid of *Raga* and *Dweshha*.

Satya Buddhi – True Knowledge

Pure and true knowledge comes from a pure mind and through it, the *Tamas* with very strong and great ignorance are removed. Through this, a person can know the nature of all beings and his soul. In this way, the person is freed from desires. One who is not affected by ego is never associated with the cause of suffering, and he expects nothing, but abandons everything. Through this, man attains eternal, peaceful, and imperishable *Brahma*¹⁴. It is

the attachment that is the cause of misery and detachment is the way to bliss. This is the ultimate and only truth, and the realisation of this fact is pure knowledge.

Ignorance and true knowledge are the vicious cycle of worldly existence as well as salvation respectively. Acharya Charka says, whatsoever that whatever has a cause can cause misery; it is extra-terrestrial and short – lived. By this word it can be understood that all arising factors like intellect, ego, body, etc., are causes of misery¹⁵.

Satyabuddhi means real knowledge, by this real knowledge, one can realise that the intellect, egoism, etc., are not pertaining to him and he is different from all these, and he refers to the soul, the one who has obtained this ultimate knowledge gets out of all the troubles and moves towards salvation¹⁶.

Tatva Smriti – Recollection of reality

The power of recollection of reality is the only way to liberation. “*Tatva smriti balam*” means the strength of remembrance of reality or the special power which is said to be in the path of means of salvation¹⁷.

Moksha - Salvation

Nivrutti (abstaining from actions) is known as *Apavarga* (emancipation or salvation)¹⁸. *Moksha* is nothing but the complete separation of all contacts due to the absence of *Rajas* and *Tamas* in the mind and the destruction of the effects of the powerful past actions. It is a state after which there is no further physical or mental contact and there is no process of rebirth. If one recognizes himself as an extension of the entire cosmos and vice versa (i.e, identifies his true self with *Brahman*), he is said to possess transcendental and worldly vision and his serenity of mind is based on this wisdom which never fades away¹⁹. At this stage, the symptoms of the self are also not found because he is devoid of all senses; and due to lack of connection with the senses, it is called liberation.

When one reaches the stage of salvation, there is detachment of *Shareera*, *Manas*, *Indriya*, and *Atma*. *Moksha* is an absolute detachment of all contacts by virtue of the absence of *Rajas* and *Tamas* in the

mind and the termination of effects of potent past actions/deeds. Disinclination/detachment from worldly affairs is *Apavarga* (salvation). It is the *Para* (the supreme), *Prashanta* (the serene), *Akshara* (the immutable), the *Brahman* (supreme consciousness), and the *Moksha* (emancipation)²⁰.

DISCUSSION

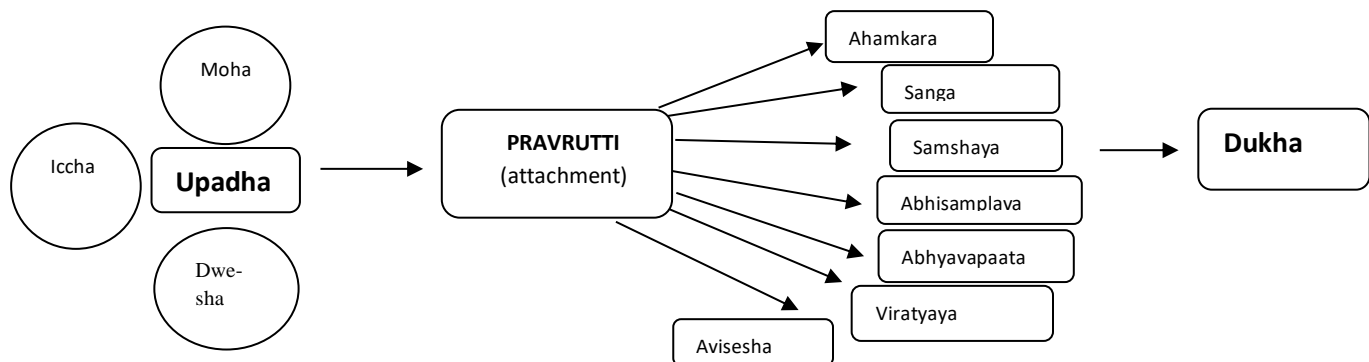
The treatment that is devoid of desires (*Upadha*) is called complete treatment or supreme treatment (*Naishtiki chikitsa*). This also has been termed *Mokshada* (that which gives moksha)²¹. Attachment to desire, and not desire itself, is the underlying cause of practically all of our pain and suffering.

In today's fast-paced materialistic world man is swept in the whirls of unending desires and unwanted addictions which engulf him and bind him to various physical as well as mental disorders. Desires and achieving their fulfillment have their challenges. There is a challenge in trying to decipher whether or not what you want is really in your best interest, there is the issue of how to live with the expectations or attachments that invariably accompany our desires. It is the attachment that is the cause of misery and detachment is a way to bliss.

Naishtiki chikitsa is of paramount importance in the present scenario where man is subdued in the web of desires. All the worldly desires and attachments lead to a perverted psyche which is dominated by *Raajasi-ka* and *Taamasika bhavas* like ego, lust, superiority, doubt, unstable mind, selfishness, improper judgement, etc., manifesting as personality defects often. Since we have desires, we have an attachment that leads to ego, ego gives us unhappiness and hurt. Walking in the misperception due to the agitation of faults like ego, one cannot overcome attachment, which becomes the root cause for all evils. It is the duty of a physician to remove and (help the patient to remove) all physical and mental suffering. The definitive healing method for all pains is *Naishtiki* (removal of pains by the deletion of greed or grasping). This can be achieved through various simple lifestyle modalities which we can inculcate in our day-to-day life.

Having a good presence of mind. Ability to differentiate between need and luxury. Before buying any product, think if it is a need or is it a luxury. If it is a luxury, avoid it. Am I buying it to boost my ego or is it really needed? Avoiding selfishness, ego, and superiority complex which is much prevalent nowadays in the form of peer pressure in the workplace as well as in the study environments also plays an important role in the psychological well-being of individuals. Physicians should be well acquainted with different methods to combat these toxic behavioural issues to lead light on the patient's psychological and behavioural etiquettes in the current scenario.

Daily meditation, pranayama, and Yoga –These keep the mind calm and concentrated. Social service, Donation for a social cause, reading a spiritual book, and Mantra Chanting all can be practiced to awaken spirituality which in turn eradicates the *Rajasika* and *Tamasika gunas*.



CONCLUSION

Ayurveda is regarded as the "Science of life" rather than a mere system of medicine, and the practice involves the care of the physical, mental and spiritual health of human beings. The norms of Ayurveda are based on *Hitaayu* and *Sukhaayu*. *Naishtiki Chikitsa* provides absolute health which may be considered *Adhyatma chikitsa*. The application of this unique practice is of paramount importance. A new approach to explore three-dimensional health education in preventive, promotive, and health has been done and there is a role of *Adhyatma jnana* in strata of preventive health in the form of *Sadvritta*, promotive in the form of *Achara Rasayana* and absolute through *Moksha marga* via *Naishtiki chikitsa*.

- Yoga: Yoga and moksha both are the pacifiers of the miseries. When the mind becomes concentrated and contained in the soul, supernatural powers are attained in the mind and body, and sensations of happiness and unhappiness, and all other experiences disappear.
- Following the path of spirituality
- Satsang and Satseva
- By giving priority to satisfying someone else's desires, gradually one's needs become less, and the seeker becomes more adept at following the path of spirituality.
- Pursuing the rules of good conduct
- Detachment from the objects of senses
- Absolute control of psyche and abstinence from performing the acts.
- Absence of egoistic disposition.

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