Journal of Ayurveda and Integrated Medical Sciences

www.jaims.in
Critical study of word Kaala and its importance in Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

In general, the word Kaala is used for time, period or proper time when something occurs. But in Ayurveda it has broader and deeper interpretation. Kaala is unique and specific causative factor of all type of effects, at the same time; it is unavoidable. Kaala is responsible for the generation of people and diseases. The universe is dependent on Kaala and Kaala is accountable for implementing all actions [Ch.Su.25/25]. Infact, the universe is generated from Kaala. The vitiation and pacification of Tridosha, Dhatu, manifestation of diseases, and even management of conditions, daily and seasonal routines, etc. are influenced by Kaala. Kaala helps to understand physiological functions as many procedures follow the circadian rhythm in the body. Kaala is one of the bases for classifying conditions like acute and chronic diseases; and natural or timely (Kaalaja) and premature or untimely (Akalaja) diseases. Kaala has a role in drug collection, formation, preservation, and administration. The strength and luster of the person is enhanced when he follows the suitable diet and regimen for every season and practices it accordingly. Thus, Kaala is helpful in maintaining health and in understanding the etiopathology and management of diseases. In this article we will discuss importance of time factor for maintenance of healthy life as well as management of diseases along with critical review of ‘Kaala’.

Key words: Kaala, Swasthya Raksha, Aatur Chikitsa

INTRODUCTION

The Kaala is accepted as one among the nine Karana Dravyas in Ayurveda.[¹] The word ‘Kaala’ is often used for time in general, or proper time when something occurs. However, it has a broader and deeper interpret-
The continuity of Kaala never breaks.\(^4\) Kaala is eternal and infinite.

**Synonyms**

2. *Samwatsara* [Cha.Sa.Vimana Sthana 8/125] (year)\(^6\)
3. *Bhagawan* [Su.Sa. Sutra Sthana 6/3] (the Almighty)\(^7\)

**Definition and Features**

Kaala is the process of transformation into seasons and is thus called ‘Parinama’.\(^9\) Kaala portrays a year (*Samwatsara*) and the state of disease of a patient.\(^10\) Kaala is responsible for the generation of people and diseases. The universe is dependent on Kaala and Kaala is accountable for implementing all actions.\(^11\)

Kaala cannot be produced, this means it doesn’t have any beginning (*Anadi*); as Kaala cannot ever end, it is eternal and indefinite (*Ananta*).\(^12\) Being eternal, Kaala is non-destructible and non-divisible. Time is one of the essential coordinates that is related to all the actions of the world because every action, either occurs early or late, and no action can surpass the involvement of Kaala in it. If the world becomes free from this control, it will become inactive.

**Attributes (Guna) of Kaala**

1. Number (*Sankhya*): It is one in number because despite their diversity, the marks of Kaala, viz., the cognition, ‘it is slow or late’ are the same in all places.
2. Measure (*Parimana*): It is indefinitely large (*Mahat*)\(^13\) because it does not have a definite size.
3. Combination (*Samyoga*) and disjunction (*Vibhaga*): As time passes, old molecules break by a disjunction of their atoms, and new molecules form by a combination of atoms. Actions and movements of matter occur in the world as time passes. These actions or movements are associated with combination and disjunction.

**Classification**

Depending on external conditions, Kaala has two divisions: 1. *Nityaga* 2. *Avasthika*

1. **Eternal (Nityaga Kaala)**

It is eternal moving time that is concerned with the day/season/year.\(^14\) It is not only used by the medical fraternity but also by common people as a calendar. The year (*Samwatsar* or *Varsha*) contains two *Ayana* (solstitial movement of sun to north or south). Northward movement of sun (*Uttarayana* or *Adana Kaala*): Duration occurs when ascent of sun or northward movement of sun. Southward movement of sun (*Dakshinayana* or *Visarga / Kaala*): Duration when sun descends or southward movement occurs. Each of these *Ayana* is divided into three seasons (*Ritu*). Each *Ritu* comprises two months (*Masa*). Each month has two fortnights (*Pakshas*) - *Shuklapaksha* and *Krishnapaksha*, of 15 days each. This division is assumed as Lunar metrics.

2. **Transient or temporary (Avasthik or Aturakaala)**

The condition of a patient changes with moving time due to various stages of disease manifestation.\(^15\) Understanding the stages of diseases is mandatory for planning its management. Thus, Kaala is vital in medical sciences.

In the ancient era, time was calculated in various units. The smallest unit of time is *Akshinimesh* (also called *Matra*). *Akshinimesha* is the time taken in the blinking of eye lids.

Further Sushruta has given below mentioned division of time on the basis of movement and positioning sun.\(^16\)

*Akshinimesh* (one blink of the eye) = *Matra* (=88.9 milliseconds)

15 *Matra* = 1 *Kashtha* (=1.6 seconds)
30 *Kashtha* = 1 *Kaalaa* (=48 seconds)
20 1/10 *Kaalaa* = 1 *Muhurta* (=48 minutes)
Prakopa (1/30 day), and other essential vitals are measured in terms of Kaala. According to Sushruta, the body tissues become fully developed at 25 years in males and 16 years in females. Accumulation (Sanchaya), provocation (Prakopa) and pacification (Prashamana) of Tridosha are confined to Kaala.

Medical practitioner must acknowledge the relation between Dosha and season before prescribing medicine. Childhood (Balavastha), middle age (Madhyamavastha) and old age (Vriddhavastha) are the three stages of life divided by Kaala in which Kapha, Pitta and Vata Dosha are predominant respectively.

Table 1: Relation between Dosha and season

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tridosha</th>
<th>Sanchaya</th>
<th>Prakopa</th>
<th>Prashamana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vata</td>
<td>Grishma Ritu</td>
<td>Varsha Ritu</td>
<td>Sharad Ritu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitta</td>
<td>Varsha Ritu</td>
<td>Sharad Ritu</td>
<td>Hemanta Ritu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapha</td>
<td>Shishira Ritu</td>
<td>Vasanta Ritu</td>
<td>Grishma Ritu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Role of Kaala in understanding etiopathology

There are three etiological factors of diseases - Asatmyaindriyarthar Samyoga (incompatible contact of the sense organs with their objects), Prajnparadha (intellectual error), and Kaala Parinama (being out of harmony with the rhythms and cycles of nature).

Kaala Parinama may occur in three ways: firstly, Atiyoga, i.e., over manifestation of a season (e.g. excess raining in rainy season), secondly, Ayoga, i.e., lesser manifestation of a season (e.g. less rain in rainy season), thirdly, Mithyayoga, i.e., unusual manifestation of a season (e.g., heat in winter season). The vitiation of Vayu, Jala, Desha and Kaala may lead to Janapadodhwansha. Some diseases have a specific duration of pathogenesis. Five types of Vishama Jwara are described based on frequency and time of manifestation viz. Santata (continuous), Satata (two times in a day), Anyedyushka (alternate day), Tritiyaka (every third day), and Chaturthaka (every fourth day).

In children, Kapha Dosha is dominant; it may be responsible for most cases common in children like pneumonia, cough, cold, etc. At a young age, Pitta's

DISCUSSION

Role ok Kaala in maintaining health

The strength (Bala) of person is of three types - Sahaja, Kaalaj and Yuktikrita. Kaalaj Bala depends on age and seasons. Eating food at appropriate time is crucial element to attain sound health. Kaala affects the health of a person as the air, sunlight and moonlight have got special features in Dakshinayana and Uttarayana Kaala. The strength of the person increases in the Visarga Kaala and decreases in the Aadan Kaala. This indicates that to maintain health, a person must take adequate precautions at the time of Ritusandhi. Ayurveda emphasized Kaala at various places in the context of Dinacharya and Ritucharya. For example, Dhoomapana during eight times (in case of vitiation of Vata and Kapha) after bathing, eating, tongue scraping, sneezing, brushing of teeth, inhalation of medicated materials, after application of collyrium, and after sleep. Following specific measures at a particular time in daily routine (Dinacharya) is a key factor in maintaining health. Contrarily, following improper Dinacharya is responsible for diseases.

Role of Kaala in understanding physiology

Many physiological functions in the body are bound to specific Kaala. For example: Attainment of puberty at around 13 years and menopause at around 50 years in females, 21-35 days of the menstrual cycle, 37-40 weeks of gestation. The development of the foetus during the gestation period and its embryological development is time specific. Example: development of the Manas at 5th and Buddhi at 6th month. Heart rate (70-80/min), respiratory rate (18/min), urine output (1.5-2 L/day), and other essential vitals are measured in terms of Kaala.
predominance might be responsible for diseases like Rakta-pitta, Amlapitta cholecystitis, etc. Similarly, in old age, when Vata Dosha is predominant, most old-aged people suffer from insomnia, tinnitus, and joint pain.

The progression of the disease is divided into six stages. A disease progresses to an advanced stage if not treated on time. These stages are described as Shat-Kriya kaala as follows:

1. Stage of accumulation (Sanchaya)
2. Stage of provocation (Prakopa)
3. Stage of propagation (Prasara)
4. Stage of localisation (Sthanamsamshraya)
5. Stage of manifestation (Vyaktibhava)
6. Stage of complication (Bheda)

Efforts made at early Kaala will prevent the progression of the disease to advanced stages of Shat-Kriya Kaala.[24]

Role of Kaala in Collection, Preservation & Administration of Drugs

Herbs are most potent when collected at a time of optimum potency, preserved and used before the decrease in strength (Saviryataavadhi). The time of administration of medicine is also essential. Date of manufacturing and expiry dates are printed on the label of drugs guiding the patients to use them in a definite period of optimum potency.[25]

Role of Kaala in treatment

Snehana is one of the steps carried out on a patient before Panchakarma. The duration till which Snehana should be done depends whether person has Mrudu, Madhyam or Kroorakoshtha. Mridu Koshtha - 3 days, Madhyama Koshtha - 5 days, Krura Koshtha - 7 days.[26]

Normally Basti is advised in Pravrit (before rains) season but can be advised at any time if a person suffers from any acute conditions/disease. Time for the administration of Niruha Basti: when a patient has an empty stomach and after digestion of previous night’s food, the best time is the afternoon. Time for the administration of Anuvasma Basti: in Sheet-Vasant Kaal (winter and spring) - day time; Sharad, Varsha and Grishma (autumn, summer, and rainy season) - night time.[27]

The suitable Kaala for administration of Vamana is Vasant Ritu (for Kapha dominant disorders), Virechana is Sharad Ritu (for Pitta dominant disorders) and Basti is end of summer (for Vata dominant disorders). This is because Vamana, Virechana and Basti are most efficient in pacification of Kapha, Pitta and Vata respectively.[28] Natural vitiation of Kapha, Pitta and Vata occurs in Vasant, Sharada and Varsha respectively. Kaala for Nasya as mentioned in Ayurvedic literatures is twice a day in Hikka, Apatanaka, Svarabhramsha, etc.[29] As mentioned in Sushruta Samhita, 100 years old Ghrita has properties of pacifying Kapha-Vata. It is efficient in providing strength and good for the eyes and intellect.[30] Agnikarma should not be practiced in Greeshma and Sharad Ritu. Raktamokshana should be done in Sharad Ritu.[31] Panchakarma therapies are effective when done at optimum Kaala.

CONCLUSION

Kaala is the name of ‘The Almighty’, which originated from no one. It is devoid of origin, existence, and destruction. Kaala is the process of transformation into seasons and is thus called ‘Parinama’. Kaala has a role in drug collection, formation, preservation, and administration. Kaala is one of the bases for classifying conditions like acute and chronic diseases; and natural or timely (Kaalaja) and premature or untimely (Akaalaja) diseases. Kaala is responsible for determining younger or older, neither younger, nor older. Kaala helps understand physiological functions as many procedures follow the circadian rhythm in the body. Thus, Kaala plays important role in maintaining health and understanding the etiopathology of various diseases as well as helpful for deciding treatment protocol, which is basically the aim of ayurveda Swasthya Swasthya Rakshanam, Aturasya Vikar Prasamanam Cha.

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How to cite this article: Lunagariya Trusha, Lajwanti Kesvani, Pawan Kirar, Poonam Nagle, Paras Jain. Critical study of word Kaala and its importance in Ayurveda. J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci 2023;05:110-114. http://dx.doi.org/10.21760/jaims.8.5.17

Source of Support: Nil, Conflict of Interest: None declared.