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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 (*Akaalaja*) 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 *Ayurved*.^[1] The word '*Kaala*' is often used for time in general, or proper time when something occurs. However, it has a broader and deeper interpre-

tation in *Ayurveda*. Aim of *Ayurveda* is *Swasthsya Swasthya Rakhsnam, Atursya Vikara Prashmanam Cha*.^[2] *Kaala* has important role in achieving these both aim of *ayurveda*. For first aim of *Swasthya Rakshana*, *Dincharya* and *Ritucharya* are mentioned which are based on *Kaala*. The strength and luster of that person are enhanced who knows suitable diet and regimen for every season and practices accordingly. Daily and seasonal routine are affected by *Kaala*. For second aim, *Atursya Vikar Shaman Kaala* has a role in deciding chronicity of diseases, planning line of treatment, drug collection, formation, preservation, and administration.

Critical review of word *Kaala*

Etymology and Derivation

The word '*Kaala*' is formed by '*Kakar*' and '*Aakar*' of *Kaala* and '*Lakar*' of *Lee dhatu*. *Kaala* means to count

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(*Kaalate*) and to hold/to put on (*Kaalaayaati*).^[3] The continuity of *Kaala* never breaks.^[4] *Kaala* is eternal and infinite.

Synonyms

1. *Parinama* [Cha.Sa.Vimana Sthana 8/48] [Cha.Sa.Sutra Sthana 11/42]^[5]
2. *Samwatsara* [Cha.Sa.Vimana Sthana 8/125] (year)^[6]
3. *Bhagawan* [Su.Sa. Sutra Sthana 6/3][3] (the Almighty)^[7]
4. *Swayambhu* [Su.Sa. Sutra Sthana 6/3][3] (self-originator)^[8]

Definition and Features

Kaala is the process of transformation into seasons and is thus called '*Parinama*'.^[9] *Kaala* portrays a year (*Samawatsara*) 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* (≈1.6seconds)

30 *Kashtha* = 1 *Kaalaa* (≈48seconds)

20 1/10 *Kaalaa* = 1 *Muhurta* (≈48minutes)

30 Muhurta = complete 1 Day and 1 Night = 1 Ahoratra (≈24 hours)

15 Day night = 1 Paksha (1 fortnight)

2 Paksha = 1 Masa (1 month)

2 Masa = 1 Ritu (1 season)

3 Ritu = 1 Ayana

2 Ayana = 1 Varsha (year)

5 Varsha (year) = 1Yug

DISCUSSION

Role of Kaala in maintaining health

The strength (*Bala*) of person is of three types - *Sahaja*, *Kaalaj* and *Yuktikrita*. *Kaalaja Bala* depends on age and seasons.^[17] Eating food at appropriate time is crucial element to attain sound health.^[18] *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.^[19] 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*. According to *Sushruta*, the body tissues become fully developed at 25 years in males and 16 years in females.^[20] 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 (*Vridhdhavastha*) are the three stages of life divided by *Kaala* in which *Kapha*, *Pitta* and *Vata Dosha* are predominant respectively.^[21]

Table 1: Relation between Dosha and season

<i>Tridosha</i>	<i>Sanchaya</i>	<i>Prakopa</i>	<i>Prashamana</i>
<i>Vata</i>	<i>Grishma Ritu</i>	<i>Varsha Ritu</i>	<i>Sharad Ritu</i>
<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Varsha Ritu</i>	<i>Sharad Ritu</i>	<i>Hemanta Ritu</i>
<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Shishira Ritu</i>	<i>Vasanta Ritu</i>	<i>Grishma Ritu</i>

Role of Kaala in understanding etiopathology

There are three etiological factors of diseases - *Asatmyaindriyarthasamyoga* (incompatible contact of the sense organs with their objects), *Prajnaparadha* (intellectual error), and *Kaala Parinama* (being out of harmony with the rhythms and cycles of nature).^[22] *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 *Janapadodhwansa*.^[23] 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*

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 (*Sthanasamshraya*)
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 *Mridu*, *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 *Anuvasana 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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