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The Role of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* in Ayurveda: A Focus on *Upavas Chikitsa*

Shivani R. Naxine¹, Harish Kumar Purohit², Brijesh R. Mishra³

¹Post Graduate Scholar, Department of PG Ayurved Samhita and Siddhant, Shri Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

²Associate Professor, Department of PG Ayurved Samhita and Siddhant, Shri Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

³Principal & HOD, Department of PG Ayurved Samhita and Siddhant, Shri Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The disease preventive and health leading approach of 'Ayurveda', which takes into consideration the whole body, mind and spirit while dealing with the maintenance of health. In the realm of traditional Indian medicine, Ayurveda, and its holistic approach to health and wellness, the concept of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* holds significant importance. *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* is one of the three treatment modalities listed in *Charak Samhita* for *Shirik Dosh* (bodily elements) and *Manasik Dosh* (psychological attributes). This ancient healing philosophy emphasizes the integration of natural elements and practices to restore balance and promote well-being. Among its various modalities, *Upavas Chikitsa*, or therapeutic fasting, stands out as a potent therapeutic tool. **Objectives:** 1) To review literature related to the concept of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*. 2) To find out details about *Upavas Chikitsa*. **Material and Methods:** Ayurveda text, Ayurveda Samhita, published articles are review for compilation and analysis of the concepts. **Discussion and Conclusion:** *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* works on the basis on *Prabhava* (unknown /unexplainable mode of action, not undergoing digestion but showing its action) *Upavas Chikitsa* is not merely about abstaining from food; it involves a structured approach tailored to individual constitution (*Prakriti*), health conditions, and seasonal variations.

Key words: *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa, Sharirik Dosh, Mansik Dosh, Upavas Chikitsa*

INTRODUCTION

The diseases are mainly caused by three *Karanas* – *Atiyoga, Ayoga* and *Mithya Yoga* of *Kala, Artha* and *Karma* where *Karma* refers to either of *Purvajanmakrita* or *Ihajanmakrita* which would result in the manifestation of the disorders.

“धातवो वातादयो रसादयश्च तथा रजःप्रभृतृ यश्च।”

(Chakrapani. Cha. Su 9/4)

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Shivani R. Naxine

Post Graduate Scholar, Department of PG Ayurved Samhita and Siddhant, Shri Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

E-mail: shivaninaxine28@gmail.com

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All the definitions of *Chikitsa* suggest the purpose of Ayurveda as maintenance of health of a healthy individual and to cure the disease of diseased. The status of health is defined by *Dhatusamyavastha*.^[1] *Vishama Dhatus* can be brought back to normalcy by three types of *Chikitsa* i.e., *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa, Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa* and *Satwavajaya Chikitsa*.

Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa has been mentioned in the beginning because of its “*Ashukaritva*”. It includes *Mantra, Oshadhi, Mani, Mangala, Bali, Upahara, Homa, Niyama, Prayashtitta, Upavas, Swastyayana, Pranipata, Gamana* etc.^[2]

The term *Daivavyapashraya* can be split into 2 parts '*Daiva*' and '*Vyapashraya*'.

1. '*Daiva*' (दैवम्) means divine or god's/heavenly
2. '*Vyapashraya*' (व्यपाश्रय) means dependent on.

Daivavyapashraya is literally mean that any therapy which depends on or linked to *Daiva*.

The mode of action of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* is beyond the purview of reasoning. It included procedure such as mantra therapy, wearing *Mani* (precious gemstones), *Bali* (religious sacrifice), *Homa* (offering ghee in fire), *Upahara* (oblations), *Niyama* (vow), *Upavas* (fasting), *Swastyayana* (Auspicious hymns), *Pranipata* (paying obeisance), *Gamanam* (pilgrimage).^[3]

In *Tisraishaneeya Adhyaya* of *Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana Acharya* proves the presence of rebirth (*Punarjanma*) with the help of *Chatur Vidha Pramana-Aptopadesha*, *Prathyaksha*, *Anumana* and *Yukti*. There it is explained that actions performed in the previous life which is unavoidable, *Avinashi* (eternal), *Aanubandhika* (continues in this life) is known as *Daiva*. The results of which are enjoyed in this life.^[4]

Ayurveda, the concept of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* is indeed mentioned in various texts, providing insights into its application and principles. Here are references to some of the classical Ayurvedic texts where you can find discussions on *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* in healing.

Charak Samhita: *Charaka Samhita*, one of the foundational texts of *Ayurveda*, discusses the concept of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* in the context of certain diseases that are considered to be caused by spiritual factors. It emphasizes the use of prayers, rituals, and spiritual healing practices alongside medicinal treatments.^[5]

Sushruta Samhita: another important Ayurvedic text, also touches upon the role of spiritual healing methods in the management of diseases. It describes specific rituals and practices that can be employed to address ailments believed to have spiritual origins.^[6]

Ashtanga Hridaya: *Ashtanga Hridaya*, compiled by *Vagbhata*, integrates concepts from both *Charaka* and *Sushruta Samhitas*. It includes discussions on *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*, providing further insights into its application and significance in *Ayurvedic* practice.^[7]

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To review literature related to the concept of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*.

2. To find out details about *Upavas Chikitsa*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The references for article has been collected from *Ayurveda* texts, *Ayurveda Samhita*, published research articles, electronics database.

Understanding Upavas in Ayurveda: A Comprehensive Overview

Upavas is derived from 'Vas' Dhatu meaning to dwell and 'Ghnyā' Pratyaya and starts with 'Upa'upasarga [Upa+Vas+Ghnyā] meaning towards, near to, by the side of^[8] Thus, *Upavas* can be understood as "dwelling near" or "approaching" a state of increased awareness or spiritual focus through fasting. to abide in a state of abstinence, from food.^[9]

Ahara is stated to be a *Karana* of the *Sharira* as well as *Roga*;^[10] hence, the treatment could also be with *Ahara*. Digestion, according to *Ayurveda*, is like acid. If you pour too much fuel all at once on the flames, you simply put the fire out. Fasting is a powerful method to lightning the digestive fire that contributes to all aggregated toxins that are saturated in the body and mind being burned away.^[11]

Ayurvedic text, *Langhana* is stated to be the best treatment for *Santarpanotha Vyadhi*. Here, *Langhana* has been described under a broad aspect, and ten treatment modalities have been grouped under this umbrella. The definition of the *Langhana* is given as that which causes lightness of the body.^[12] Here the *Upavasa* and *Pachana* types of *Langhanas* in *Ayurveda*.

Types of Upavas [fasting]

1) *Nirahara* - without taking food

2) *Phalahara* - with fruits

- *Sajala* - with drinking water

- *Nirjala* - without drinking water

One should consider his *Prakriti* before fasting.

Key Aspects of Upavas in Ayurveda

Purpose and Benefits

1. **Detoxification:** *Upavas* is used to cleanse the digestive system and remove accumulated toxins

(ama). It helps in flushing out waste products and rejuvenating the body.

2. **Digestive Health:** Fasting allows the digestive organs to rest, which can improve digestion and absorption when food is reintroduced.
3. **Dosha Balance:** Fasting helps in balancing the three *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*) by stabilizing the digestive fire (*Agni*) and removing excess dosha imbalances.
4. **Mental Clarity:** *Upavas* is believed to enhance mental clarity and spiritual awareness making the mind more receptive to divine energies.,
5. **Strengthening Willpower:** The discipline required for *Upavas* [fasting] strengthens mental resilience and self-control.

Guidelines for Practicing *Upavas*:

- **Personalization:** Fasting practices should be tailored to individual needs, dosha type, and seasonal changes. What works for one person might not be suitable for another.
- **Preparation:** Preparing the body for fasting by consuming light and easily digestible foods in the days leading up to the fast is advised.
- **Hydration:** Staying well-hydrated is important, especially during fasting periods. Herbal teas or warm water are often recommended.
- **Breaking the Fast:** It is crucial to break the fast with light, easily digestible foods to prevent digestive discomfort.

Seasonal and *Dosha* Considerations

- **Seasonal Fasting:** *Ayurveda* recommends aligning fasting practices with seasonal changes to support the body's natural rhythms. For instance, lighter fasting might be preferred in warmer months.
- **Dosha Alignment:** Fasting practices can be adjusted based on one's *Dosha* balance. For example, *Vata* individuals may need more frequent hydration and light foods, while *Pitta* individuals might focus on cooling and calming foods.

Precautions

- **Consultation:** It is advisable to consult with an *Ayurvedic* practitioner before starting any fasting regimen, especially if there are existing health conditions.
- **Moderation:** Extreme fasting or prolonged fasting without proper guidance can lead to imbalances and digestive disturbances.

Individual Needs: Fasting might not be suitable for everyone, such as pregnant or nursing women, children, or those with certain medical conditions.

Scientific Perspective:

Modern research supports many of the health benefits attributed to fasting. Studies have shown that intermittent fasting can improve metabolic health, reduce inflammation, and promote longevity. The psychological benefits, including improved focus and emotional stability, align with the traditional *Ayurvedic* view of fasting as a holistic practice.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, categorizes treatments into three main types: *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* (spiritual or divine therapy), *Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa* (rational therapy), and *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* (psychological therapy). *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa* involves spiritual practices aimed at invoking divine intervention to cure ailments. This article delves into *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*, focusing particularly on *Upavas* (fasting), a significant component of this therapeutic approach.

Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa, with its focus on spiritual remedies, offers a unique approach to health and healing. *Upavas*, as an integral part of this therapy, exemplifies the confluence of physical detoxification and spiritual purification. While rooted in ancient traditions, the principles of fasting resonate with contemporary scientific findings, underscoring its relevance in modern holistic healthcare. By integrating such timeless practices, *Ayurveda* continues to provide a comprehensive framework for achieving and maintaining health in harmony with nature and the divine.

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