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Tridosha Theory - Origin and Acceptance in Ancient Literature

Dr. Sanjeev Bhagat,¹ Dr. Swati Sharma²

¹Post Graduate Scholar, Dept. of Samhita and Siddhanta, ²Post Graduate Scholar, Dept. of Swasthavritta, Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, INDIA.

ABSTRACT

Vedas have been considered oldest texts of world. The term Veda conveys the meaning of knowledge, so the four Vedas are source of knowledge. The existing each and every theories of knowledge have been originated from Vedic literature. This is a common and popular view of Indians. Considering this view, certainly the Theory of *Tridosha* had been described in Vedas directly or indirectly. History of Ayurveda can be described in different periods, the earliest being Vedic period. This is the period when the Aryans compiled four Vedas or sacred Books of knowledge during the period, amongst them *Rigveda* and *Atharvaveda* have quoted maximum references to the Healing Art. They have in these texts mentioned in detail the methods of preservation of life, prevention of illness and healing of sick.

Key words: *Tridosha, Panchmahabhut, Prana, Vaka, Manas.*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, or the science of life had its genesis in the hoary days of the vedas (c.308 B.C). Still today, the vast majority of the teeming population, mostly of the Indian sub-continent and Srilanka, avail themselves of the aids from Ayurveda for their well-being. Ayurveda has, however undergone many modifications or changes through the ages since days of its origin. But the essential features of treatment remains almost the same. The basic edifice of the Ayurveda mode of treatment is founded on the fundamental theory commonly called the '*Tridosha Tatwa*'. Etymologically, the word '*Tridosh*' is derived from the sanskrit words,

'Tri' and '*Dosh*' meaning three and pollutant or vitiated factor respectively, and in combination they mean the 'three pollutants' or tri-pollutant; and the sanskrit word '*Tatwa*' stands for its English equivalent 'theory'. Essentially, the pollutants or vitiating factors play a significant role in maintenance of health or well-being and disease or illness. In a nutshell, health or well-being and disease or illness.

In a nutshell, health or well-being is maintained if *Tridosha* or the three pollutants operate in harmony with one another, and disorder or chaotic condition emerges to produce disease or illness, if they do not operate in harmony with one another, or they operate in abnormal fashion.

The elementary idea underlying the Ayurvedic mode of treatment is to generate or maintain condition or environment so that *Tridosha* may operate in harmony with one another, or in case they gone out of order or harmony, to restore the condition or the environment for their harmonious operation.

Definition

a) *Dooshayanti Iti Dosh* | Those which vitiate the other substances after getting themselves vitiated.

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Sanjeev Bhagat

Post Graduate Scholar, Dept. of Samhita and Siddhanta, Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, INDIA.

E-mail: acharayabhagat20@gmail.com

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- b) *Dustingatva Vyadhim Janayanti Iti Dosha* | Those which produce disease when vitiated.
- c) *Prakriti Janakatvey Sati Swatantryena Dusti Kartritvam Dosatwam* | Those which give rise to a specific temperament by birth and which can produce disease independently i.e. primarily. It is mentioned by *Pandit Hirlekar Shastri* in his *Sareeram Tatwa Darshanam*, that *Doshas* are "*Saktiroopa Dravayas*". In fact, all the *Doshas*, *Dhatus*, and *Malas* act as *Dhatus* in certain conditions or *Dosha* and *Malas* in certain conditions. The so called *Doshas* in their normalcy act as *Dhatus*. In the same way the so called *Dhatus* and *Malas* also act as *Dosha* and *Malas* in their vitiated states.

Origin of Tridosha Theory^[1]

Vedas are oldest literature and without help of those, it is quite impossible to decide any idea regarding origin of *Tridosha*. It is clearly mentioned in Vedic literatures that before the origin of world only '*Sat*' were existing in its basic form. In fact the idea mentioned above is clearly stated in *Chandogayopnisada*.^[2] There it has been mentioned that, '*Sat*' had manifested from unmanifested form '*Asat*'.^[3] then recruited itself in many forms according to its own wishes and this was cause for origin and after that *Tejas* manifested itself in many forms according to its own wish and this was the cause behind origin of '*Ap*'. In the same manner '*Anna*' was evolved from '*Ap*'.^[4] Now these three factors, considered as God, take attachment with *Atma* (soul), and a large number of living beings originated. All the different forms of originated living beings were in fact due to permutation and combination between *Tejas*, *Ap*, *Anna*. In series of evolution they were named according to their different forms. It has been stated by author of *Chandogayopanisad* that,^[5-7] then after absoluteness of all matters was completely lost and what established was '*Trivrit*' form of *Teja*, *Ap* and *Anna* in the whole matter. According to Upanisads when *Anna* was digested, *Purisha* was evolved as major product and *Manas* was essence of this metabolism. The middle part evolved as *Mamsa*.

Similarly '*Ap*' and *Teja* were also divided in three parts after digestion with agni.^[8-10]

Basic elements	Major portion evolved as	Middle part evolved as	Essence evolved as
<i>Anna</i>	<i>Purisha</i>	<i>Mamsa</i>	<i>Mana</i>
<i>AP</i>	<i>Mutra</i>	<i>Rakta</i>	<i>Prana</i>
<i>Teja</i>	<i>Asthi</i>	<i>Majja</i>	<i>Vaka</i>

In this manner living beings were generated by these three basic elements viz. *Anna*, *Ap* and *Teja*. In series of evolution '*Prana*' was basis for all functions and it was '*Vaak*' which was given various names. By these in every *Dravya*, *Naam* (Name), *Rupa* (form, shape) and *Karma* (functions) were evolved from *Manas*, *Prana* and *Vaak*. By Ayurvedic seers these three were accepted as *Tridosha*.

Vedic Tridhatu in Ayurved

1. *PranaVata*
2. *Vaak Pitta*
3. *Manas Kapha*

Now above matter can be concluded as follow.

- *Vaak* was evolved from essence of '*Tejas*'.
- *Prana* was evolved from essence of '*Ap*'.
- *Mana* was evolved from essence of '*Anna*'.

In other texts of Vedic literature, some authors have been considered that *Teja* and *Ap* are actually *Agni* and *Soma* respectively. There *Agni* was mentioned as combust or and *Soma* was mentioned as substratum (*Havi*). It was also assumed that this process is continuing without complication in all the living and nonliving matters. This process is known as '*Yagya*'. This process is continuing because of *Vaayu*, which is the motivator of this process and monitor of *Agni* and *Soma*. *Acharya Susruta* and *Vagbhata* mentioned same facts in their *Samhitas*.^[11,12]

It is also mentioned in '*Yajurveda*' that *Vaayu* is cause for *Anna* and *Urja* (energy) and itself gets strength from *Surya*.^[13]

In *Satapathbrahman 'Yagya'* was considered as *Shreshtakarm*. (Best work to do) and it has been stated that this phenomenon is performed by *Vaayu*.

In Ayurvedic literatures such theory is mentioned by Ayurvedic seers also.^[14] Now it may be said that *Soma* provides nutrition to *Loka* (world). *Surya* acquires it while *Vaayu* is responsible for its motivation, similarly *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* are working in individual living beings. Actually Ayurveda believes in the theory of '*Purusho Ayam Loksammitam*' and '*Samanayavad*' means the individual is the unit of universe, what ever is located in universe that is in the individual and this theory also represents on macro and micro level. So far, above mentioned verses can be concluded that *Teja*, *Ap* and *Anna* of Vedic literatures are not identical with *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* of Ayurveda. Here according to '*Vyapadesastu Bhuyasa*' *Nyaya* they are named on the basis of predominant quality in themselves viz.

In *Vaayu*, *Vata* is predominant while *Pitta*, *Kapha* are less.

In *Pitta*, *Pitta* is predominant while *Vata*, *Kapha* are less.

Here we found that, concept of *Tridosha* theory is present in subtle form in Vedas. *Tridosha* word used as such in *Mahabharat* for the first time. So it seems that much literature includes gradual enhancement in knowledge of *Tridosha* is missing at present times which can reveal many unknown concepts regarding *Tridosha*.

We have a second option also to consider *Ayurveda-Avataran* which is already an accepted theory. According to *Ayurveda-Avataran*, Ayurveda is *Sasvata* and *Nitya* and so why it can't be originated or destroyed. It appears time to time according to wishes of Brahma in eligible seers for the benefits of being here and here after.

CONCLUSION

The *Tridosha* theory is a derivative of *Panchmahabhut* theory described earlier. *Tridosha* principle form the foundation of Ayurved. It has been postulated that whatever physiological and pathological processes

occurring in the body, they are under the influence of three basic elements or particles/ humors known as *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. Despite of the fact that *Tridoshas* are also *Panchbhautic* (i.e. made up of five basic elements *Panchbhutas*) still there is predominance of *Vayu* and *Akash* in *Vata*, predominance of *Agni* in *Pitta* and predominance of *Jala* and *Prithvi* in *Kapha*. Considering importance of *Tridosha* theory, it is necessary to know all facts of *Tridosha*. In present work, we studied all related available literatures and found that *Tridosha* theory is not only physiological unit of human being but also effects whole Cosmos, as a functional unit. So it can be assumed that existence of *Tridosha* theory was present from beginning of Cosmos. Before the origin of world only *Sat* existed in its basic form. Gradually basic elements *Anna*, *Ap* and *Teja* evolved from *Sat* and these *Anna*, *Ap* and *Teja* generated *Manas*, *Prana* and *Vaka*, which manifested itself in *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* respectively in living being.

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