



Original Article

Arogyam Moolam Uttamam: Vikara Prasamana as the Foundation of the Purusharthas

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian science of life, is universally recognized for its sophisticated approaches to personalized medicine and holistic health. However, a purely clinical interpretation of Ayurveda obscures its profound philosophical mandate. The dual objectives of Ayurveda—Swasthasya swasthya rakshanam (preserving the health of the healthy) and Aturasya vikara prashamanam (pacifying the diseases of the sick)—are not ultimate ends but functional prerequisites for achieving the Purushartha Chatushtaya (the four supreme goals of human life): Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth), Kama (desire), and Moksha (liberation). This comprehensive review explores the teleological continuity between physical homeostasis and spiritual emancipation in Ayurvedic doctrine. By analyzing concepts such as Prajnaparadha (volitional transgression), Ojas (vital essence), Sadvritta (ethical conduct), and Naishthiki Chikitsa (spiritual therapy), this paper argues that disease prevention in Ayurveda is fundamentally a soteriological discipline. Health serves to minimize somatic distractions, thereby stabilizing the mind-body complex for the cultivation of Sattva (purity) and the ultimate pursuit of self-realization.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Moksha, Vikara Prasamana, Naishthiki Chikitsa, Purushartha, Swasthavritta, Sadvritta, Prajnaparadha, Soteriology.

INTRODUCTION

स्वस्थस्य स्वास्थ्यरक्षणमातुरस्य विकारप्रशमनं च ॥

"The purpose of Ayurveda is to protect the health of the healthy and to alleviate the disorders of the diseased."

समदोषः समाग्निश्च समधातुमलक्रियः।

प्रसन्नात्मेन्द्रियमनाः स्वस्थ इत्यभिधीयते ॥

"One whose *Doshas* (bio-energies), *Agni* (metabolism), *Dhatus* (tissues), and *Malas* (excretions) are in a state of equilibrium, and whose soul (*Atma*), senses (*Indriya*), and mind (*Manas*) are in a state of pristine bliss, is considered healthy (*Swastha*)."

In modern biomedical paradigms, disease prevention is primarily an epidemiological and clinical endeavor aimed at extending life expectancy and improving physical quality of life. Conversely, Ayurveda interprets health and disease through a multidimensional lens that integrates the physical body (*Sharira*), sensory organs (*Indriya*), mind (*Sattva*), and the eternal soul (*Atma*). The *Charaka Samhita*, one of the foundational texts of Ayurveda, explicitly states that health (*Arogya*) is the supreme root of all human aspirations, while disease (*Roga*) is the destroyer of health, well-being, and life itself.

Ayurveda operates on the premise that human existence has a definitive, spiritual trajectory. To fulfill one's earthly duties and eventually transcend the cycle of birth and suffering, the physical vessel must be optimized. Therefore, *Vikara*

Prasamana (the alleviation of disease) and *Swasthavritta* (the maintenance of health) transcend clinical relevance to become preparatory spiritual disciplines. This review aims to systematically dissect the classical Ayurvedic literature to demonstrate how physiological maintenance is strategically designed to culminate in *Moksha*.

METHODOLOGY

This review draws upon classical books, primarily the *Brihat Trayi*: *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*. Specific attention was given to sections dealing with *Sutrasthana* (fundamental principles) and *Sharirasthana* (anatomy and philosophy).

The classical analysis was supplemented by classical books, review of peer-reviewed literature indexed in Embase, Scopus, and PubMed, focusing on the epistemological and philosophical foundations of Ayurveda, mind-body medicine, and Indian philosophy.

1. *Purushartha Chatushtaya*

Charaka Samhita (Sutrasthana 1.24):

धर्मार्थकाममोक्षाणामारोग्यं मूलमुत्तमम्।

रोगास्तस्यापहर्तारः श्रेयसो जीवितस्य च॥

"Health is the supreme root and foundation for achieving *Dharma* (righteous conduct), *Artha* (wealth), *Kama* (gratification of senses), and *Moksha* (spiritual liberation). Diseases are the thieves that destroy health, spiritual well-being, and life itself."

The architecture of Ayurvedic philosophy is built upon the Vedic framework of the four aims of human life:

1. ***Dharma***: Ethical, social, and moral duties.
2. ***Artha***: The acquisition of wealth and material resources required to sustain life and duty.
3. ***Kama***: The fulfillment of psychological, emotional, and physical desires in a regulated manner.
4. ***Moksha***: The ultimate liberation of consciousness from the cycle of suffering (*Samsara*).

Ayurveda posits that a diseased body dictates the focus of the mind, binding human consciousness to physical pain and immediate survival. Acharya Sushruta defines total health (*Swasthya*) not merely as balanced bio-energies (*Doshas*), tissues (*Dhatus*), and wastes (*Malas*), but equally as a state of blissful equilibrium of the soul, senses, and mind (*Prasanna atma indriya manah*). Thus, biological homeostasis is the necessary launchpad for spiritual inquiry.

Ashtanga Hridaya (Sutrasthana 1.2):

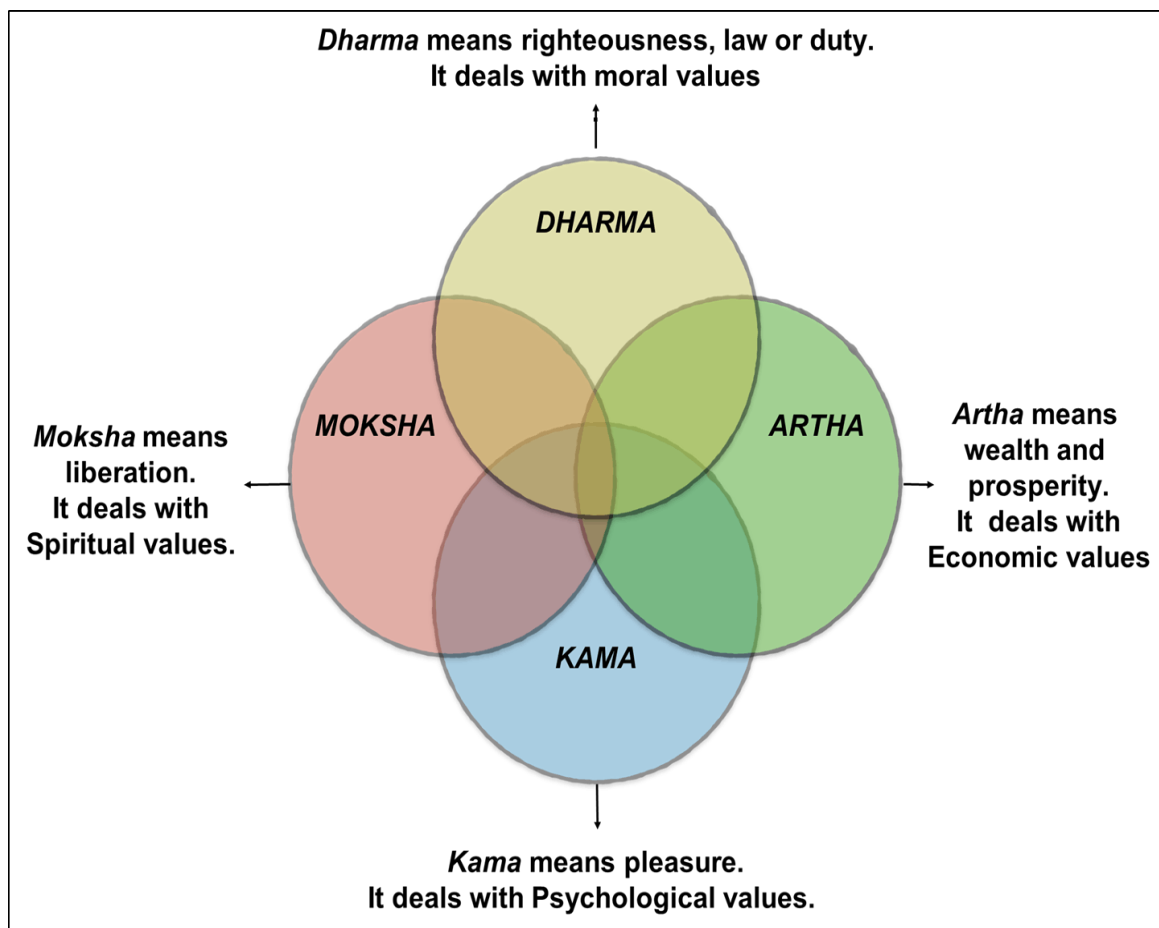
आयुःकामयमानेन धर्मार्थसुखसाधनम्।

आयुर्वेदोपदेशेषु विधेयः परमादरः॥

"One who desires longevity as the vehicle to achieve *Dharma*, *Artha*, and *Sukha* (liberation/bliss) must adhere to the instructions of Ayurveda with the utmost reverence."

Chakrapanidatta's Commentary on Charaka Samhita: Chakrapani notes that without *Arogya*, physical and mental faculties remain pre-occupied with pain (*Dukha*). *Dharma* requires bodily vigor for rituals and ethical duties; *Artha* demands cognitive clarity and enterprise; *Kama* requires sensory balance without vitiation; and *Moksha* requires uninterrupted contemplation and meditation (*Dhyana*), which is impossible in a diseased body.

Health as an Instrument (*Sadhana*): These verses demonstrate that classical Ayurveda does not treat physical well-being as a terminal goal, but as the essential biological instrument (*Shariramadyam khalu dharmasadhanam*) enabling the journey toward self-realization.



4. The Genesis of Disease and the Obstacle to Moksha

To understand disease prevention as a spiritual tool, one must understand the Ayurvedic etiology of disease. Ayurveda identifies three primary, macro-level causes of all pathology (*Trividha Hetu*):

- **Asatmendriyartha Samyoga:** Unwholesome conjunction of the senses with their objects (overuse, underuse, or misuse).
- **Kala / Parinama:** The inevitable effects of time, age, and seasonal changes.
- **Prajnaparadha:** Intellectual blasphemy or volitional transgression.

Prajnaparadha is the most philosophically significant of the three. It occurs when an individual, driven by ego (*Ahamkara*) and governed by the mental impurities of *Rajas* (agitation) and *Tamas* (ignorance), acts against their inherent wisdom. This transgression disrupts bodily equilibrium and generates both somatic and psychic diseases. The journey toward *Moksha* requires the elimination of *Prajnaparadha* through the cultivation of mindfulness, self-restraint, and discriminative intelligence (*Dhi*, *Dhriti*, and *Smriti*).

5. Swasthavritta and Sadvritta:

Ayurvedic preventive medicine is operationalized through *Swasthavritta* (personal hygiene and daily regimens) and *Sadvritta* (the code of noble conduct).

- **Dinacharya and Ritucharya:** Daily and seasonal routines sync the human biological clock with circadian and circannual rhythms. These regimens demand strict discipline, acting as a form of somatic training (*Tapas*) that reduces physical inertia and sensual indulgence.
- **Sadvritta (Ethical Conduct):** The *Charaka Samhita* dedicates extensive passages to moral behavior, enjoining truthfulness, non-violence, compassion, and the avoidance of anger, greed, and grief. Ayurveda views these not just as moral imperatives, but as potent preventive medicine. Unethical behavior perturbs the mind, vitiates the *Doshas*, and drains vitality. Adherence to *Sadvritta* ensures a tranquil mind, which is a prerequisite for the meditative practices required for *Moksha*.

6. Ojas and Sattva:

Two concepts bridge the physical and spiritual realms in Ayurveda: *Ojas* and *Sattva*.

- **Ojas:** The ultra-fine essence of all physical tissues (*Dhatus*), responsible for immunity, vitality, and resilience (*Bala*). Depletion of *Ojas* leads to systemic collapse and psychological despair. A life of moderation and ethical conduct preserves *Ojas*, which in turn supports the rigorous demands of spiritual practice.
- **Sattva:** The mind (*Manas*) is governed by three qualities (*Gunas*). While *Rajas* and *Tamas* cause mental disease, *Sattva* represents clarity, purity, and enlightenment. The dietary and behavioral prescriptions of Ayurveda are fundamentally designed to increase *Sattva*. Only a purely *Sattvic* mind can grasp *Tattvajnana* (the knowledge of ultimate reality), breaking the illusion of separateness that binds the soul.

7. Naishthiki Chikitsa: The Ultimate Eradication of Upadha

Ayurvedic therapeutics (*Chikitsa*) are classified hierarchically. While *Daivavyapashraya* (spiritual therapies like chanting) and *Yuktivyapashraya* (rational pharmacological and dietary treatments) address immediate and manifest diseases, the highest form of treatment is *Naishthiki Chikitsa* (supreme or absolute therapy).

Naishthiki Chikitsa targets the metaphysical root of all suffering: *Upadha* (attachment or desire). According to classical texts, as long as there is desire, there is a subsequent action, which yields a consequence, binding the individual to the cycle of pain. By utilizing the intellect to realize the transient nature of worldly phenomena, the individual achieves *Vairagya* (detachment). This absolute eradication of psychological attachments represents the ultimate *Vikara Prasamana*. It is the point where the physician's role ends, and the yogi's journey reaches its zenith.

DISCUSSION:

Dinacharya is fundamentally a bio-rhythmic discipline. By synchronizing human physiology with the diurnal macrocosmic rhythms, the daily regimen prevents the vitiation of *Doshas*, preserves *Ojas*, and cultivates *Sattva*. For a clinical practitioner, it is clear that *Dinacharya* is not just preventive medicine, but a highly structured framework for achieving the *Purusharthas*.

How the daily regimen helpseach of the four goals:

Dharma (Righteous Duty)

To execute one's moral, professional, and social duties, profound mental clarity is required.

- **Brahma Muhurta Jagaranam:** Waking approximately 96 minutes before sunrise aligns the mind with *Vata*'s pure, kinetic energy in nature. This establishes a deeply *Sattvic* state, providing the unclouded intellect required for studying classical texts (*Svadyaya*) and executing ethical duties.
- **Saucha and Snana:** Daily elimination of *Malas* and physical bathing eliminate *Tamas* (inertia). This creates the ritual and psychological purity necessary to interact with society and fulfill professional obligations with a clear conscience.

Artha (Wealth and Purpose)

Economic stability and the acquisition of resources require sustained physical endurance and cognitive sharpness.

- **Abhyanga and Vyayama:** Daily oil massage and appropriate physical exertion build robust *Bala* (strength) and *Vyadhi-kshamatva* (immunity). A resilient, disease-free body is the primary asset for continuous professional productivity.
- **Nasya and Kavala:** Nourishing the supraclavicular region ensures acute sensory perception and clear speech—critical cognitive tools for professional success, intellectual engagement, and resource management.

Kama (Desire and Fulfillment)

Ayurveda advocates for the balanced fulfillment of desires without tipping into *Prajnaparadha* (volitional transgression).

- **Ahara Vidhi:** Consuming food according to the state of *Agni* ensures the sequential nourishment of all *Dhatus*. This culminates in the enrichment of *Shukra Dhatu*, providing the vitality required for a fulfilling intimate and family life.
- **Indriya Tarpana:** Practices like applying *Anjana* (collyrium) keep the sensory organs sharp. This allows the individual to fully experience and appreciate the aesthetics, tastes, and pleasures of the world without overwhelming the mind.

Moksha (Spiritual Liberation)

The ultimate goal requires freeing the consciousness from the distractions of a suffering physical body.

- **Somatic Homeostasis:** The strict discipline of following *Dinacharya* acts as behavioral training. It cultivates an inherent detachment (*Vairagya*) from transient whims and sensory indulgences.
- **Dhyana (Meditation):** By maintaining the body in a state of frictionless equilibrium, the *Manasa Doshas* (*Rajas* and *Tamas*) are pacified. The consciousness, no longer tethered by physical pain or agitation, is liberated to focus entirely on self-realization and ultimate truth.

Interpreting Ayurveda solely as an alternative medical system focused on herbal remedies and massages is a modern reductionist error. The structural architecture of Ayurvedic texts deliberately integrates metaphysics with pathology. Disease is viewed as a form of karmic friction—a physical manifestation of spiritual misalignment.

When an Ayurvedic physician successfully applies *Vikara Prasamana*, they do more than suppress a symptom; they remove a barrier to the patient's spiritual evolution. By prescribing a diet that calms the mind, or a routine that disciplines the senses, the physician acts as a facilitator for the patient's pursuit of the *Purusharthas*. Consequently, Ayurveda can be accurately classified as a soteriological science—a medical discipline where biological preservation serves the ultimate goal of spiritual salvation.

CONCLUSION

In the grand continuum of Ayurvedic philosophy, health and liberation are inextricably linked. *Vikara Prasamana*—the prevention and pacification of disease—is essential because physical and mental afflictions obscure the soul's true nature. Through meticulous dietary guidelines, behavioral discipline (*Sadvritta*), and the cultivation of mental purity (*Sattva*), Ayurveda systematically dismantles the physiological and psychological obstacles to self-realization. Therefore, the practice of Ayurvedic preventive medicine is profoundly teleological; it is a highly structured, preparatory pathway designed to guide the individual from the maintenance of physical life to the achievement of eternal liberation (*Moksha*).

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