

*Ayurveda —  
An Effective  
Solution*



**Dr. Mayank S. Vora**

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# ***Ayurveda — An Effective Solution***

*This explores the current lifestyle we are leading and aims to provide a relief by offering a way out*



By  
**Dr. Mayank S. Vora**

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## PREFACE

**W**orld is changing at a very rapid pace. Each person aspires to live, a long, healthy, wealthy, beautiful, honourable and comfortable life. In last couple of years, we have changed a lot including our diet, dressing, and lifestyle etc. Today everyone is in mad race for happiness. Every class of people have common objective of earning money. No doubt money is important but not at the cost of health. We have become like little children who cry out "I really don't know what I want but I want it now!" All the problems of seeking originate in the mind. No one wants to remain inadequate, unhappy and incomplete. These are the conditions, mind cannot accept. That is why logically; it is impossible for us to be happy, it can only be forgotten. So to forget ourselves, we plan holidays, visit different places/countries and spend lot of money and time. As we grow, our desires become defined, refined and constantly renovated according to our cultivated likes and dislikes.

On the contrary, all animals are programmed to live its life, governed by its inborn instinct and urge to survive. For example, a cow instinctively fulfils the need to nourish its body by eating grass. It does not deliberate to be a vegetarian. Nor does she demand addition of spices or special sauce as she is fed up with eating plain grass. For thousands of years, cow is eating the same grass and will continue to eat till its existence. Same is true for all animals. Cow never demands good dress to look nice, while humankind have the freedom to bring about a change in the manner they like. Animals live in harmony with nature.

In our quest for money, we are losing love, satisfaction, compassion, intimacy, honesty, friendliness, fearlessness, equanimity and internal peace. Our relations have become artificial dry, conditional and without affection. In a wild race for money, we have lost our vital emotions. Today nobody has got time to sit with ease and freely discuss with parents, wife/husband, children, and friends. We even don't find time to take regular lunch

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instead we indulge in junk and fast food like pizza, burger, vadapau etc. Chronic diseases and poor health are rampant nowadays.

With the introduction of modern electronic gadgets, our life has become sedentary. The information about Satvic diet has remained confined to books only.

Today death from lifestyle diseases like heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes etc., is now the primary causes of concern. Too many people are dying at relatively young age from heart disease, cancer and other lifestyle diseases in modern times.

As per the World Health Organization (WHO) report, chronic diseases, such as heart disease and stroke, have become the chief causes of death globally and by 2030, death from cancer, heart diseases etc., will be around 75 % of all death. On the contrary, death due to infectious diseases including AIDS will be reduced. The diseases are widespread as countries become industrialised and people live long. The incidences of lifestyle diseases is increasing due to our change in diet from nutritional food to junk food and reduced physical activities and exercises. The world has not enough money to fight lifestyle diseases and they cannot be cured even with allopathic medicines.

In India, the situation is quite shocking. The WHO has identified India as one of the nations that is going to have most of the lifestyle disorders in the near future. At present 60% heart patients of the world are Indian. By 2025, 80% of all diabetics from entire world will be Indian.

Nowadays, not only are lifestyle disorders becoming more common, but they are also affecting younger population. A sedentary lifestyle combined with an increase in consumption of junk food loaded with full of unhealthy fats, sugar, salt and calories; alcohol, inadequate sleep, work pressures, etc., are to be blamed. Fortunately these lifestyle diseases are preventable. For majority of lifestyle diseases modern allopathic system has no permanent answer. We know the limitations of modern medicines which control symptoms of the diseases with serious side effects, ignoring the root cause.

Today is the era of polyclinic, where once you enter, you will be caught in vicious cycle of meeting series of consultants, carrying out number of unwanted sophisticated tests, viz., CT scan, MRI, Eco cardiogram, Colour Doppler and so on. Poor patient do not find any way out and he ends up financially and mentally broken.

Is there is any way out? The answer is yes! Fortunately, we have 5000 year old Indian system of medicines called *Ayurveda*. Our ancient holistic Ayurvedic healing system presents an alternative to cure majority of diseases with almost no side effects. It can cure common diseases like cold to major diseases like heart disease or diabetes. A basic knowledge of fundamental principles of *Ayurveda* is essential in order to intelligently understand procedures and get the best treatment. There are numbers of excellent books on *Ayurveda* available but a book written from patients perspective is missing.

In view of this fact, this is written with a intension of giving basic information on *Ayurveda*; the book illustrates details of different Purvakarma and Panchakarma procedures including Keralite Panchakarma, their procedure, indications, contraindications etc. This book also covers Ayurvedic diet and its importance on health and prevention of diseases along with Indian herbs and rasayana therapy in promoting longevity and rejuvenation. Separate chapters on Ayurvedic lifestyle and on useful Ayurvedic products are also included. This book is specially written for the common man and provides useful information about *Ayurveda* and its role in maintaining sound health. At the end, a table for knowing one's prakruti, information of major lifestyle diseases and current scenario of lifestyle diseases in our country; list of panchakarma treatment centers and panchakarma equipment manufacturers in India and glossary of *Ayurveda*, and herbs are specially given for the benefit of readers.

The book does not require reader, to possess any prior knowledge of *Ayurveda*; it aims at providing reader

sufficient knowledge to use this information and techniques of *Ayurveda* to improve him or her life and consciousness at all levels.

The knowledge given in this book will be of lasting value to everyone including foreign visitors who come here for panchakarma therapy and rejuvenation. It will serve as ready reckoner for them. Readers who wish to know the *Ayurveda* in details can look at the recommended list for future reading. I hope you find this book useful, interesting and fascinating.

*"One should remember always that vibrant health is not a matter of luck but of smart choices and good living practices. So eat right, exercise, think positive and take time to help others."*

Vadodara Dr. Mayank S. Vora

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## Part I

# ***Ayurveda* – The Science of Life**

Principles of *Ayurveda*, Origin of Indian System of Medicine, *Ayurveda* and health, Panchamahabhuthas — the five elements theory, The science of Tridosha

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## CHAPTER

# 1

# Principles of *Ayurveda*

*“Ayurveda is an eternal science based on universal laws of nature that has neither beginning nor an end. Being nature of existence is true therefore science is also true and eternally acclaimed “*

*Charak Samhita*

**A***yurveda* is a holistic healing science originated from India, which comprises of two Sanskrit words, *Ayur* means life and *Veda* means knowledge. So we can say that it is “knowledge of life”. The word holistic is derived from the word whole. Holistic medicines project the holistic universe, where every entity is separately interconnected with the universe. *Ayurveda* is not merely a medical system from ancient India as it is understood by western world, but it is comprehensive science of life dealing not only with treatment of some diseases, but is a complete way of life giving suggestions how to live wonderfully, with disease free life. It is open to and includes all life and all methods that bring us greater harmony with nature. It is neither of east and west, nor of ancient or modern times. It is the oldest and most holistic medical system available on the planet today.

## THE ORIGIN OF ANCIENT INDIAN SYSTEM OF MEDICINE

It is common belief that *Ayurveda* is eternal. This neither does nor refers to the work of any author. *Ayurveda* is collection of principles of life took birth with the world itself and is not going to change in future. According to Hindu mythology Lord Brahma, the cosmic creator composed *Ayurveda* in a hundred thousand verses and presented it to humanity.

It was placed in written form over 5,000 years ago in India. The great seers of ancient India have enriched the world with two impressive legacies, *Ayurveda* and yoga, which are significant to the art of healing and rejuvenation. The body of information known as *Ayurveda* was orally transmitted from teachers to students for centuries through songs and verses known as Vedas; their dates of origin cannot be estimated. The sacred texts of India believed to be the oldest writings in the world. There are still families in India who continue to chant one or more of four vedas by memory alone, as their way of perpetuating this ancient knowledge.

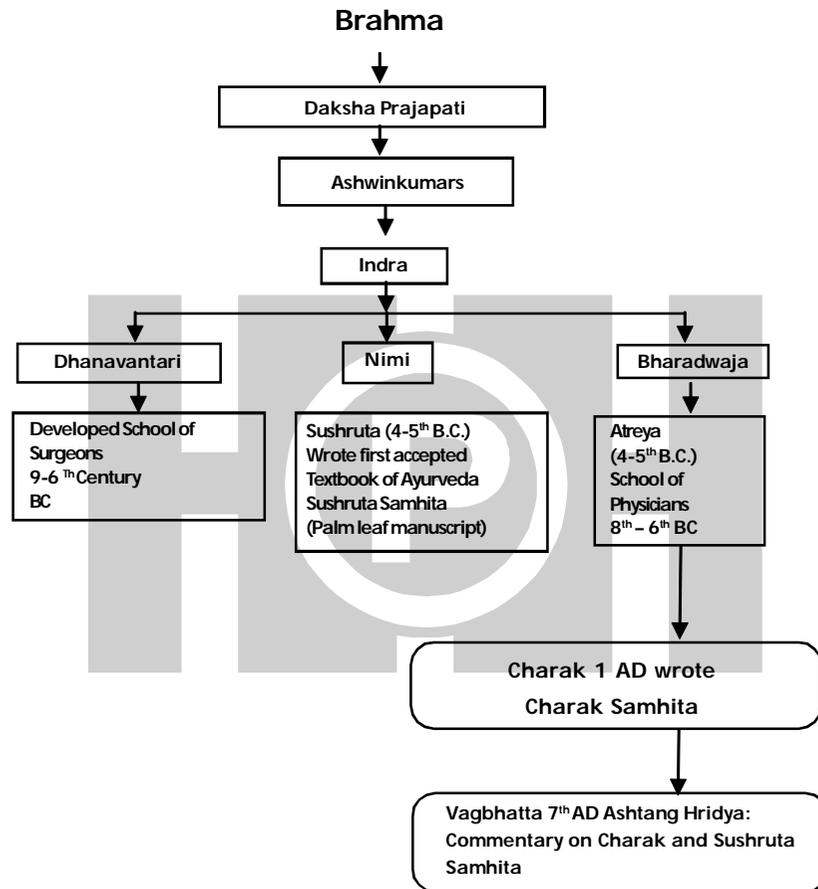
Our present knowledge of Ayurvedic medicine is derived mainly from the works of Charak and Sushruta, supplemented by that of Vagbhatta. When *Ayurveda* further developed is still not clear but later a medical book emerged is known as "Charak Samhita." It is a compendium with full of theory and philosophy written by Charak, who lived in Punjab about 700 BC. It was first text book on ancient art and science of *Ayurveda*. Apart of describing different aspects of *Ayurveda*, it also describes cellular structure of human body and includes list of microorganisms that may cause diseases. Charak described the symptoms and signs of different diseases including common conditions of diabetes and arthritis that still is cause of concern today. The book explains in detail different treatment methods including diet, detailed description about medicinal herbs and their properties, preparation, and therapeutical procedure etc. He also delineated main procedure of panchkarma for purifying and rejuvenating the body. He is consequently considered to be the father of Ayurvedic

internal medicines. He has emphasized the influence of diet and activity on mind and body and proved the correlation of spirituality and physical health contributed greatly to diagnostic and curative sciences. He has also prescribed an ethical charter for medical practitioners two centuries prior to the Hippocratic Oath. Through his genius and intuition, Acharya Charak made landmark contributions to *Ayurveda*. He forever remains engraved in the records of history as one of the greatest and noblest of rishi-scientists. Charak represents the Atreya School of physicians, whose approach is mainly herbal. The basic concept of Atreya developed by discussing different principles of *Ayurveda* with sages and scholars in different symposia, seminars organized in different parts of country.

Another well known medical text is "Sushruta Samhita". This book is written by Sushruta who lived in 6<sup>th</sup> century BC., which contains information about surgical methods and equipment. In the Sushruta Samhita, he prescribes treatment for twelve types of fractures and six types of dislocations. His details on human embryology are simply amazing. Sushruta used 125 types of surgical instruments including scalpels, lancets, needles and rectal speculums; mostly designed from the jaws of animals and birds. He has also described a number of stitching methods; the use of horse's hair as thread and fibers of bark. He details 300 types of operations. It also contains physiological and spiritual advice on how to live a healthy life. His views regarding prognosis of the various ocular diseases, e.g., glaucoma is still fundamentally unchanged. Sushruta is considered as father of *Ayurvedic* surgery. His classification of fractures, wounds, abscesses, as well as procedure of plastic surgery is still relevant today. Many of the surgical procedures and instruments which he described in his scholarly writings, thousands of years ago have been rediscovered in last 150 years by western medical science. He noted that when *ama* is collected in the body, they were circulated throughout the body with the blood. Through extensive observation of the blood, he identified several different types of blood toxemia based on doshic imbalance. It was in this way, two schools of *Ayurveda*, the Bharadvaja or the Atreya School of physicians and the

Dhanavantari School of surgeons developed in India. In United States a society of surgeons named themselves “Sushruta society” in remembrance of Ayurvedic father of surgery. The pedigree of the teachers of *Ayurveda* is shown below.

Pedigree of *Ayurveda* Teachers in India



*“Daksha Prajapati first obtained the science of life in its entirety as promulgated by Brahma and from him in turn Aswin twins obtained it. From the Aswin twins Shakra (Indra). Therefore Bhardwaja requested by the sages approached Shakra”*

*Charak Samhita*

There were originally four main books of spirituality called vedas. One of them the Rig veda, a compilation of verses on the nature of existence, is the oldest surviving book of any Indo-European language (3000 B.C.). The Rig veda refers to the basis of both *Ayurveda* and Yoga, contains verses on the nature of health and disease, pathogenesis and principles of treatment. It is surprising to note the degree of insight these ancient sages had; without the aid of modern diagnostic tools like X rays, CT scan, MRI, they knew of the inner working of the human body. One can read in the ancient texts the development of fetes month by month in mother’s womb. The ancient sages later realized that it is impossible for any one to learn the entire compilation of *Ayurveda* in one’s lifespan, divided into eight parts. The Atharva Veda lists the eight divisions of *Ayurveda*.

- (1) Internal Medicine,
- (2) ENT and Ophthalmology
- (3) Surgery
- (4) Toxicology
- (5) Psychiatry
- (6) Pediatrics
- (7) Rejuvenation Therapy which means rejuvenator
- (8) Vajikaranas

In course of time students found it difficult to learn all these eight parts. Later authors came into picture and abridged the whole *Ayurveda* into two to three books.

The two most important aims of *Ayurveda* are

- \* To maintain the health of people
- \* To cure the diseases of sick people

## AYURVEDA AND HEALTH

*Ayurveda* is humanistic and person oriented system of medicines that shows us how to find out our own health and unfold

our hidden energy potentials to enjoy life in which drugs and hospitals are secondary. While western physicians relate microorganisms, i.e., bacteria, virus, fungi, worms, etc., with majority of diseases, on the contrary *Ayurveda* believes that only 2% of diseases are caused by microorganisms and that too, when our body defense system allows them to grow and proliferate. *Ayurveda* focuses on individual and controlling diseases through balancing the lifestyle within the person. We know the deadly side effects of manmade modern synthetic medicines. Modern medicines including antibiotics kill all types of bacteria including beneficial, and weakened our immune system, which allow new infectious disease to develop. *Ayurveda* teaches us how to develop and improve ourselves and our internal resources including our diet, exercises, yoga, and meditation etc. *Ayurveda* advocates many simple natural, preventive, and therapeutic measures for keeping and restoring good health.

*Ayurveda* describes the health of individual as

*“A person whose bodily Doshas i.e. vata, pitta, kapha are in the state of equilibrium, with balanced digestion, and metabolism (agni), in whom the functions of tissues and waste are normal and accompanied by properly functioning senses and a happy state of being is truly healthy individual.”*

This multidimensional approach of health care has led to a new concept of “Holistic medicines”. If one intelligently follow all the rules laid down in *Ayurveda*, then it is possible to enjoy healthy life till death without contacting disease. *Ayurveda* holistic approach to maintain good health is the need of the hour and is the best, highly effective and most affordable treatment available in whole world. The ancient ayurvedic teacher Vagbhata endorses this view. To achieve a healthy condition of mind, body and soul, he has suggested following four rules.

- \* Do the entire thing properly after repeatedly thinking about their adaptability to your self.
- \* Only use those enjoyable objects and circumstances that your organ and mind are agreeably accustomed to.

- \* Maintain a habit of always criticizing your own action intelligently.
- \* Always use things that balance your constitution and the season, whereby physical ease is maintained.

According to Sushruta, “the ideal healthy person is an individual who has balanced constitution. People who have a balanced constitution from the birth are able to digest the correct amount of food and maintain proper elimination, their system and organs function normally and they have a happy state of mind.”

Acharya Charak has stated that life is the outcome of union of the body, the sense organs, the mind and soul. As long as these four components are functioning in the coordination, there is existence of life.

## PANCHAMAHABHUTAS- THE FIVE GREAT ELEMENTS THEORY

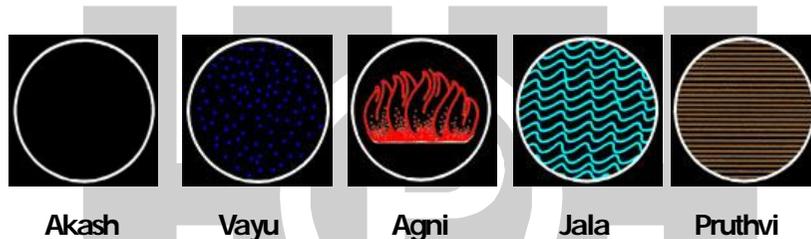
Just as our body is made up of trillions of independent cells, we are all tiny cells in the universal organism. We have independent existence like our cells but none of us is free enough to live independently of the whole. In fact what ever exist in external universe has its counterpart in our internal body. The flow of nutrients into and waste products out of body cells is similar to continuous flow of nutrients and wastes into and out of microorganisms, animals and humans.

We can say that practically there is no difference between cooking our food in pots on the stove and cooking the food in the pot of our stomach on the stove of your digestive fire. Both use heat to prepare the foods. Flames are used on the external stove and acid and enzymes (jatharagni) on the inside, but the principle of cooking is identical to both the cases.

Rishis used the theory of panchamahabhutas to explain how these internal and external forces are linked together. These are the basic foundation and principles upon which *Ayurveda* lies.

A Person is seen in *Ayurveda* as a unique individual made up of five primary elements, i.e., akash (space), vayu (air), agni (fire), jala (water) and pruthvi (earth), which are known as “panchamahabhutas”. Everything found on earth can be classified into one of these five categories based on their innate characteristics. The word “element” is not used as a name or label for each individual natural element, in the manner that the modern scientific periodic table uses it.

Just as in nature, we too have these five elements in us. In fact entire universe is made up of these panchamahabhutas. When **any of these elements are imbalanced in the environment, they will in turn have an influence on us.** The foods we eat and the weather are just two examples of the influence of these elements.



While we are a composite of these five primary elements, certain elements are seen to have an ability to combine to create various physiological functions. The concept of five elements lies at the heart of Ayurvedic science.

The panchamahabhutas theory may sound simplistic, but it is actually a very sophisticated method of classifying not only all of the objects found on earth but also the natural cycles experienced on it like days, seasons and life itself. This is because the elements dominate at particular times, depending on the conditions experienced and observed.

The panchamahabhutas have certain qualities, attributes and impacts on the body and mind. All objects and substances are a mixture of the five elements, but they have one dominant element that allows them to be identified and classified. Examples of food and herbs are used to illustrate the elemental groups.

Properties of panchmahabhutas and their effects on our body are presented below.

Table 1.1 Properties and effects of Panchamahabhutas

Elements	Sensory faculty	Taste	Properties	Effects in body
Earth (Pruthvi)	Smell	Sweet, slightly astringent in taste	Cold, wet, slow, heavy, immobile, solid, hard	Promotes growth, weight gain, stability, strength, downward flow of pran. Organs of teeth, nail, flesh, tendons, muscles
Water (Jala)	Taste	All tastes, mainly sweet	Cold, wet, slow, heavy, soft, mobile, sticky, liquid	Moistening, binding, holding in solution, fluid part of body is water, around 70 %
Fire (Agni)	Sight	Pungent slightly sour and salty	Hot, sharp, subtle, rough, hard, clear, light	Warming, digesting stimulants, give luster, improves complexion, causes tears, moving upward
Air (Vayu)	Touch	Astringent, slightly bitter	Subtle, cold, light, clear, mobile and effect on our motor signals	Cleaning, gives lightness. Agitating, governs inhalation, closing of eyelids,
Ether (Akash)	Sound	No taste	Subtle, soft, loosening, penetrating, softening, discriminating, increasing porousness	Opens the channels, gives lightness, all body channels, working for the transport of nutrients, and all fluids

The panchamahabhutas therefore serve as foundation of all diagnosis treatment modalities in *Ayurveda*. Its knowledge assists the physician to detect and treat illness of the body and mind successfully. In the creation of dhatus some elements play a more active role than others. Akash and earth, the first and last element is static and do not change in their basic nature. Akash is only space and nothing exists in this space to change. It only provides platform in which all changes occur, while vayu, agni and pruthvi mahabhutas constantly changes.

Table 1.2 Movements of Panchamahabhutas

<i>Akash</i> (Space)	Does not change
<i>Vayu</i> (Air) <i>Agni</i> (Fire) <i>Jala</i> (water)	Constantly changes
<i>Pruthvi</i> (Earth)	Does not change easily

## THE SCIENCE OF TRIDOSHA

The science of tridoshas is one of the greatest and most noble gifts given by our ancient rishis to the entire world. According to *Ayurveda* five elements combine in pair to form three body forces of interactions called doshas. These three mega divisions of our **body**, viz.; *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* are called the tridoshas. They are present in every cell, tissue and organ. Even our sperms and ovum also contain *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*. They are required for the life to sustain. Every one of us is made up of unique proportions of *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*. They cannot be detected in their original form in any cell. These ratios of the doshas vary in each individual and because of this *Ayurveda* sees each person as a special mixture that accounts for our diversity.

The elements akash and air combine to form, what is known in *Ayurveda* as *vata dosha*. *Vata* governs the principle of movement and therefore can be seen as the force which directs nerve impulses, circulation, respiration and elimination etc.

The elements fire and water combine to form the *pitta dosha*. The *pitta dosha* is responsible for the process of transformation or metabolism. The transformation of foods into nutrients that our bodies can assimilate is an example of a *pitta* function.

Finally, it is predominantly the water and earth elements which combine to form the *kapha dosha*. *Kapha* is responsible for growth, adding structure unit by unit.

The three cosmic elements of air, agni and water are the three components of tridoshas.

The relationship of panchamahabhutas with tridoshas, gunas principles of energy are presented in following tables.

Table 1.3 Relationship of five elements to the Tridosha Energy Principles in the Universe.

Wind <i>Vata</i> Dosha	Air & Space Movement and Space	Principle of Propulsion
Sun <i>pitta</i> dosha	Fire Energy and Transformation	Principle of Conversion
Moon <i>Kapha</i> Dosha	Earth and Water Density and Cohesion	Principle of Preservation

Table 1.4 Relationships of Gunas and Doshas

Ether	Satva
<i>Vata</i>	Satva + Rajas
Air	Rajas
Fire	Satva + Rajas
<i>Pitta</i>	Satva + Rajas
Water	Satva + Tamas
<i>Kapha</i>	Satva + Tamas
Earth	Tamas

Ether (Akash) is pure satva and while earth is pure tamas. Air is principle of motion is pure rajas. Fire has both satva and rajas; water has satva and tamas.

These three doshas are affecting the world as well as our body through different forms.

## BALANCE AND HARMONY OF THE TRIDOSHAS

When the three doshas are well harmonized and function in a balanced manner, it results in good nourishment and well-being of the individual. But when there is imbalance or disharmony within or between them, it will result in elemental imbalance, leading to various kinds of ailments. *Ayurveda* gives us a model to look at each individual as a unique makeup of the three doshas and to

thereby design treatment protocols that specifically address a person's health problem. When any of the doshas become aggravated, *Ayurveda* will suggest specific lifestyle and nutritional guidelines to assist the individual in reducing the dosha that has become excessive. Also herbal medicines will be suggested, to cure the imbalance and the disease. The philosophy of *Ayurveda* is to help people heal themselves. A unique quality of *Ayurveda* is that healing is promoted by balancing the different energies in the body. In *Ayurveda* patients are treated according to their constitution. The treatment is not symptomatic. The purpose of *Ayurveda* is not to cure a particular disease, but to bring each individual to his/her natural self harmony.

*Ayurveda* emphasizes prevention of disease, rejuvenation of our body systems, and extension of life span. The philosophy and promise of *Ayurveda* is that through certain practices, not only we can prevent diseases and but we can also better understand ourselves and the world around us, live a long healthy life in balance and harmony, achieve our fullest potential, and express our true inner nature on a daily basis.

Other important basic principles of *Ayurveda* which are briefly mentioned here are

1. **Dhatus:** These are the basic tissues which maintain and nourish the body. They are seven in number, *viz.*; *rasa*, *rakta*, *mamsa*, *meda*, *asthi*, *majja* and *sukra* tissue. Proper amount of each dhatu and their balanced function is very important for good health.
2. **Mala:** These are the waste materials produced as a result of various metabolic activities in the body. Proper elimination of the malas is equally important for good health, as their accumulation causes much disease.
3. **Srotas:** These are different types of channels which are responsible for transportation of food, dhatus, malas and doshas. Proper functioning of srotas is necessary for transporting different materials to the site of their requirement. Blockage of srotas causes many diseases.

All these factors should function in a proper balance for good health. They are inter-related and are directly or indirectly responsible for maintaining equilibrium of the tridoshas. Health and disease are governed by the dynamic equilibrium of doshas, dhatus and malas. Any imbalance of them in the body results in disease, decay or death.

These principles of positive health and therapeutic measures relate to physical, mental, social and spiritual welfare of human beings. Thus *Ayurveda* becomes one of the oldest systems of health care dealing with both the preventive and curative aspects of life in a most comprehensive way.

*Ayurveda* is not just an alternate system of medicines developed in India but complete science of health designed to increase our well-being and happiness from each aspects. *Ayurveda* not only shows us how to treat diseases but how to live in such a way to remain hale and hearty throughout our lifespan. Still in western countries *Ayurveda* is not fully recognized as system of medicines. It is difficult for them to understand theories of panchamahabhutas, dosha-dhatu-mala concept. In recent years they have realized the importance of *Ayurveda*; because of this now it is spreading worldwide as one of the most ancient and innovative system of medicine of mind body. In last 10 years, it has spread like wild fire in India and it has become a hub for Ayurvedic treatment in world. More and more new treatment centers and hospitals, new popular books on *Ayurveda* are coming up. Now there are many panchakarma centers in Germany, Switzerland, United States etc. This shows new beginning and days are not far when Indian system of medicines will explore in big way.

*Ayurveda* has got ability to cure almost all diseases. But you need to have full faith, trust and patience to harness fruits.

***“Most over-the-counter and almost all prescribed drug treatments merely mask symptoms or control health problems or in some way alter the way organs or systems such as the circulatory system work. Drugs almost never deal with the reasons why these problems exist, while they frequently create new health problems as side effects of their activities.”***

***John R. Lee, M.D.***

