Ayurvedic Approach to Good Health and Happy Life

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In the eyes of Ayurveda “Health is the supreme foundation of virtue, wealth, enjoyment and salvation. Diseases are the destroyers of health, of the good life and even of life itself. Thus, has arisen the great impediment to the progress of humanity.”

Ayurveda is a life science - the science of life wherein are laid down the good and the bad life, the happy and unhappy life, and what is wholesome and what is unwholesome in relation to life, as also the measure of life. The science relating to life is regarded by the philosophers as the most meritorious of all the science because it teaches mankind what constitutes their good in both the words.

Life is spoken of as the union of the body, senses, mind and spirit. The body, mind and spirit together are, as it were the tripod. The body and the mind are both considered to be the abodes of disease, likewise, of well-being. The cause of wellbeing is their harmonious and concordant interaction. The cause of disease, psychic or somatic, is either erroneous, absent or excessive interaction.

The objective of the science of life is establishing equilibrium of the body elements. Finally, the Ayurveda reveals that the morbidity of the body is remedied by medication; the morbidity of the mind by spiritual knowledge, philosophy, fortitude of the mind by spiritual knowledge, philosophy, fortitude, remembrance and concentration.

The Nature of Happy life: Life of such a man is called happy as is not afflicted with either bodily or mental ailments, as is endowed with youth, strength, virility, reputation, enterprise and boldness befitting his abilities, is actuated by his deeds, the combined urge of knowledge, science, the senses and the sense objects, is possessed of multifarious and delightful amenities occurring from great wealth, whose efforts are prosperous and who can plan his likes. A life to the contrary is deemed unhappy.

The Nature of Good Life: The life of that man is said to be good who is a well-wisher of all creatures, who does not covet other people’s goods, who is a teller of truth, who is peace loving, who acts with deliberation, is not negligent, is devoted to the three ends of life viz., virtue, wealth and enjoyment, without letting anyone to come into conflict with the other two, who is reverential to those who are worthy of reverence, who is of a scholarly, scientific and restring disposition, partial to the company of elders, envy, pride and conceit, who is constantly given to charitable acts, and contemplative of the good in this world and the next and endowed with memory and understanding.

Life of the opposite nature is said to be “not good”.

Code of Conduct For Healthy Living: The wise man who seeks happiness both here and hereafter, should exercise the highest care in
selecting what is wholesome in the matter of food, conduct and behaviour.

The length of life is matter of care and husbandry. The opposite condition leads to death. He who rightly observes the rules of health as laid down here will not be deprived of the full measure of hundred years of disease less life.

**Virtues of Clean Habits**: Virtues of cleaning the teeth, scrapping the tongue and cleansing the mouth, message and bathing, wearing of clean apparel, trimming of hair, beard and nails, frequent ablution of the feet and the excretory orifices, have all been emphasized. Like the lord of a city in the affairs this city, a charioteer in the management of his chariot, so should a wise man be ever vigilant in the care of his own body.

By degrees, the wise man should free himself from unwholesome habits; also by degrees he should develop wholesome habits. By gradual withdrawal, addictions do not revert and wholesome, gradually acquired, become firmly implanted.

**Virtues of Measured Diet**: Food is the principal factor which materially contributes to the strength, complexion, vitality of animated being. That should be known as the proper measure of food which when taken, is digested in due time without impairing one’s health.

An excess of surfeit of food is markedly harmful unless the gastric fire is increased by hard exercise.

**Importance of Exercise**: That activity of the body, which is meant to increase its strength and firmness is regarded as physical exercise. It should be précised regularly in the right measure. Lightness, capacity of work, firmness, tolerance to hardship, subsidence of hemeral discordance and stimulation of gastric fire accrue from exercise.

Fatigue, exhaustion, wasting, thirst, asthma, cough, fever and vomiting result from over exercise.

**Ethical Conduct**: Mind control consists of restraining the mind from the desire for unwholesome objects.

A wise man should not suppress the natural urges of urine, faeces, semen, sneezing, yawning, hunger, thirst, sleep, tears, and deep breathing after exertion.

On the other hand, those desirous of their welfare both in this and the next world, should suppress the rash and evil impulses of the mind, speech and body. The wise man should control the impulse of speech that is harsh, extravagant, insinuating, untrue and untimely. One should control the impulse for all such activities as are injurious to others such as adultery, theft and violence.

Once should have recourse to such means of livelihood as are not contrary to the dictates of religion. One should be devoted to peace and scholarship. Living thus, one attains happiness.

Do not give way to anger and joy, do not nurse your sorrows, be not be arrogant in success and dejected in defeat, remind yourself constantly of the vanity of things, be decided as to causes and their effects and consequently devote to benevolent enterprises; do not grow complacent with your achievements; and who is generous, just, truthful and forgiving and who gets along well with his relatives.

**Meaning of Medicine and Aim of Therapy**: Medicine is that, which being well administered, becomes an equalizer of increased and diminished elements at the same time. It brings down the excessive element and augments the deficient one.

Indeed this alone is the end to be sought in the employment of medicine, as also in the observance of wholesome habits, that equilibrium of the elements may be achieved or maintained as the case may be. For it is only with a view to help maintain the balance of elements that the
intelligent will make use of a balanced diet. By the uses of like and unlike food and exertion, the increase and diminution of body elements and brought about opportunity to restore equilibrium.

There is in the world no substance that may not be used as medicine, in this or that manner, for this or that purpose.

Medicine is of two kinds - one kind is primitive of vigour in the healthy. The other is destructive of disease in the ailing. The opposite or medicine is also of two kinds - the one causing immediate disorders and the other causing remote ill-effects.

That which of contrary character to medicine is to be known as ‘contra-medicine’. It is unfit for use. We shall confine in describing that which alone is fit for use.

The Four Pillars of Treatment: The physician, the drugs, the attendant and the patient constitute the four basic factors of treatment. Of these four, the physician occupies the chief place, being at once the knower of disease and drugs, the instructor of the attendant and patient, and the prescribe of medicine and regimen.

Qualification of Physician, Nurse and Patient: Clear grapes of theoretical knowledge, wide practical experience, and skills, purity of body and mind, these are the tetrad of desiderata in a physician. The qualifications in a Nurse according to the Ayurvedic approach-knowledge of nursing are skill, affection for the patient and cleanliness. These are the tetrad of desiderata in the attendant. Recollection, obedience to instruction, courage and ability to describe his ailment are the tetrad of desiderata in a patient.

Drugs, their Potency and Sources:

Substances are classified into three groups:

1. Some rectify the discordance of body elements.
2. Some vitiate the body elements.
3. Some are conducive to maintenance of good health.

Again, Substances can be classified differently in three groups as animal, vegetable and mineral. He is the best physician who knows the science of administration of drugs with due reference to clime and who applies it only after examination each and every patient individually.

A drug that is not understood perfectly is comparable to poison, weapons, fire and the thunder bolt, while the perfectly understood drug is comparable to ambrosia. The drug whose name, form, and properties are known, or the drug which though known is not properly administered, will cause disaster. Even acute poison is converted into an excellent medicine by the right method of preparation. While, even a good medicine may act as acute poison if improperly administered.

Therefore, the intelligent man who desires health and long life should not take any medicine prescribed by a physician who is a stinger to the art of application. One may survive the fall of a thunderbolt on one’s head, but one can’t expect to escape the fatal effects of medicine prescribed by an ignorant physician.

That is the right medicine which makes for health and he is the best physician who relieves people of disease.

Aims of Therapy: The physician will try to cure the diseases which are curable adopt palliative measures in cases where palliation is the only remedy that can be offered; and give up a case which is beyond all medical treatment.

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