

Philosophy of Ayurveda

Over 6000 years ago, before civilization embraced those parts of the world we today know as "the developed nations" a great civilization existed in Asia. A vibrant social structure evolved in time and with it the classification of individuals according to the the tasks they performed.

The highly revered were the Vaidyas or Rishis. These wise men were custodians to the secrets of the Universe and had begun the process which evolved into the most comprehensive medical data in the history of mankind. This knowledge was called Ayurveda or "Science of Life".

Ironically, the first science developed was the last to be re-discovered. Yet even with its relatively new re-emergence, its popularity is snowballing and keen interest in Ayurveda is growing exponentially. Ayurveda has gained worldwide acceptance and earned recognition by providing stable, safe and effective healthcare solutions. The Ayurvedic vision of health involves healing the person by treating the root cause of his illness, and not merely treating the symptoms.

In being truly holistic, Ayurveda promotes longevity in four ways; through physical, mental and spiritual and lifestyle changes. Appropriate foods and herbs re-create equilibrium within the body by detoxifying and rejuvenating or rebuilding the cells and tissues. Brain herbs, calming aromas and colours help bring peace and longevity to the mind and the brain's cells and tissues.

Since the early '60's those of us following holistic, vegetarian diets heard of the virtues of fresh, organic, detoxifying diets. People with severe diseases, like cancer, experienced relief through detoxifying programmes like Macrobiotics and raw foods.

However, over the years, once the toxins were expelled, a continuous detoxification diet began to eat away the healthy cells and tissues as there were no toxins for it to destroy. As a result, too many people become weak and emaciated while following a seemingly holistically healthy diet. There was no knowledge of rejuvenation or longevity methods.

In India, the references to the curative properties of some herbs in the Rig Veda seem to be the earliest records of the use of plants in medicine. The identity of several plants referred to be in the Suktas of the Rigveda can be disclosed with reasonable certainty e.g. Semal, Pitahvan, Palash and Pipal. A more detailed account is available in the Atharva Veda. Later on, the works of Charak and Sasruta introduced more plants into the Indian system of medicine. Love of God or mystical presence is equal to health, beauty and longevity. The Charak Samhita reminds us that the first cause of all illness is the loss of faith in the Divine.