

AYURVEDA IS NOT ALL HERBALS

ALL HERBALS ARE NOT AYURVEDA

By

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Ayurveda is an art and a science of health and long living, which has descended from the Indian Rishi's the holy preachers of Vedic era (about 30th century B.C.). The science was first documented in the form of *Samhitas* (Treatises) by Charaka and Sushruta (10th Century B.C.) The original script existed in Sanskrit language which was later on translated in Hindi and other languages and commented upon by various authors.

Despite propagating strict regime of daily routine and eating habit several diseased conditions have been visualized which have been studied logically and scientifically. These conditions were classified on the bases of '*Tridosha*' theory the three humours namely *vaat*, *pitta* and *kapha*, which broadly corresponds to nerve disorders, gastric disorders and respiratory disorders respectively. Ayurveda emphasizes perfect balance between these three *doshas*. Any vitiation of any or all of the *doshas* could result into *doshik* disorders bringing in some kind of disease. Thus all the ingredients of health and disease have been defined clearly.

Treatment of diseased condition is directed towards correcting the *doshik* vitiation and establishing or restoring *doshik* balance. Drugs are classified on the basis of their property to correct particular *doshik* vitiation. Method of preparing compound Ayurvedic formulations is also intended towards enhancing desired property or for regulating desired actions. This means certain conditions must be followed for using a drug and for preparing the same, as per biomechanics and neurohumoral presentation of disease. Ayurveda propagates a theory of using herbal drugs as per its own science called *dravyaguna vigyan*, a science of selecting, collecting, identifying and using the medicinal plants. It envisages time of collecting, time of harvesting, method of drying, method of storage, method of preservations, method of preparation, method of Pre-Treatment of plant drugs before actually converting them as classical Ayurvedic drugs or formulations. The pharmacology of herbal drugs has been explained on the basis of *Rasa* (Tastes), *Guna* (property), *veerya* (potency), *vipaka* (metabolism) and *prabhava* (action). Thus any herbal product used without following proper procedures as mentioned in classical Ayurvedic text cannot be termed as Ayurvedic product. It will simply

be a herbal material not even a drug. Because such product will not be effective in correcting the vitiated humors which is the basic principle of treatment in Ayurveda.

Ayurveda is based on holistic approach. It says about treating the patient as a whole and not symptomatically and also taking a drug as a whole and not the extracted active constituents, which could lead to adverse effects of the drug. The whole drug is subjected to purificatory processes to remove any adverse effect or side effect or to potentiate its own effect. Thus all herbal products available in the market without any reference to classical texts are not Ayurvedic. At the same time all Ayurvedic drugs and formulations are not herbals. They are prepared from mineral, metallic, marine and animal sources.

All Important branch of Ayurveda viz: *Rasa Shastra* deals with drugs obtained from metals and minerals. An old time Alchemy deals with identification, purification, and methods of preparation of such products viz: *Bhasmas* (microfined metallic products), *sindoors* (sulphur containing metallic products), *Ksharas* (Incinerated vegetable products), mercurial, *Kuppipaka* (prepared with sulphur after typical application of heat in ascending order), arsenic preparations and other products. An expert in the classical science of Rasashastra only can undertake preparations of these metallic drugs which are rendered non-toxic by adopting specific classical methods of isolation, purification, sublimation etc. It is really an Ayurvedic art of converting toxic drugs into non-toxic efficacious products which when used ethically are known to have produced wonderful and remarkable results. Thus one can understand that Ayurveda is not all herbals and that all herbals are not Ayurvedic.

Ayurvedic concept of health and disease work on a triad of body - mind - soul herbalism can not take care , explain or provide scientific basis for this consideration. Ayurveda also takes care of social and spiritual well being of a person which is not possible with herbalism. Same drug with variation of dose, time of ingestion and vehicle(*Anupan*) may provide result variation which is difficult to explain from standard pharmacology point of view.