

## GLEANINGS FROM SUKLA YAJURVEDA

Prof. V. J. THAKAR\*

### ABSTRACT

Samhitas (Treatises) of Ayurveda are products of the period between the establishment of four Vedas and their Brahmanas and the production of the epic Mahabharata. Ayurveda is connected with Atharvaveda or Rigveda. Ayurveda as a separate branch of learning is mentioned first in Mahabharata which shows that, its development as a separate science of health and longevity might have taken place between the period of Shatapatha and Mahabharata. Here it is tried to show in brief how Yajurveda as distinct from Atharvaveda and Rigveda and its Shatapatha Brahmana are also connected with Ayurveda and how they cover subject matter of Ayurveda succinctly.

We have an unbroken tradition of learning of Ayurveda right from God Brahmā to this date, through Guru-Śiṣya Paramaparā, through literature-Vedas, Samhitās and later compilations and allied treatises; and also through usage of medicines and other skilled practices preserved and inherited in professional families. But, study of history, as word 'itihāsa' itself denotes a different thing, "itihāsa" means such was a definite happening. Recorded account of successive developments, rise and falls through different ages and at different periods and places reliable and supported by factual evidences of a particular region; and comparable

to the contemporary events and conditions in other regions; is quite a different thing. There should not only be the account of facts happened in the past but should be established beyond doubt. Though we have rich unbroken tradition, difficulty in tracing our history is that we find no mention of authors name, place or time, patronage or contemporaries, preceptors or disciples, ancestors or descendants, their speciality and expertise and their works in different branches of learning, their sources, etc. That is why there is much scope of conjecture and there are so many views and confusions, absence of unanimity among various scholars.

\*Ex-Vice Chancellor, Gujarat Ayurved University, Jamnagar, Gujarat State (India).

Our Saṁhitās of Ayurveda are the products of the period between the establishment of four Vedas and their Brāhmaṇas and the production of the epic Mahābhārata. It is mentioned in the Ayurvedic Saṁhitās that Ayurveda is connected with Atharvaveda or Ṛgveda. Ayurveda is also referred as Upaveda or Upāṅga of Atharvaveda which means similarity to Vedas or a section of the subject matter of Vedas. This similarity is evident in dealing with the various topics-description of Puruṣa and loka, diseases and their drugs, Deśa and Kāla, Janma and Mṛtyu and beyond, different classes and vocations, constituents of the body and its organs, food preparations, preparation of fermented beverages, congenial environment and society etc.

However, there is no mention of word 'Ayurveda' as such in any of the four Vedas, Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads. Ayurveda as a separate branch of learning, as the science of life, is mentioned first in Mahābhārata. So many Ṛṣis who are connected with propagation of science of Ayurveda are also mentioned in Mahābhārata in different contexts. Names of their disciples who compiled Saṁhitās are also found in ŚATAPATHA as well as Mahābhārata. So it seems reasonable to conclude that development of Ayurveda as a separate science of health and longevity might

have taken place between the period of Śatapatha and Mahābhārata.

Here, it is tried to show in brief how Yajurveda as distinct from Atharvaveda and Ṛgveda already mentioned in Saṁhitās and its Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa are also connected with Ayurveda and how they cover subject matter of Ayurveda Succinctly.

CARAKA (not to be confused with the person of same name, who redacted Agniveśa Saṁhitā - now in vogue as CARAKA SAṂHITĀ) who belonged to the school of Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda and Yajnavalkya belonging to the school of Śukla Yajurveda both were disciples of VAIŚAMPĀYANA, who was disciple of Veda Vyāsa and belonged to Post-Mahābhārata era.

Yajurveda of both schools mentioned "Āyus" in many contexts. "Puruṣa" constituted by combination of six elements as accepted by both CARAKA and SUŚRUTA, is described in Śukla Yajurveda.<sup>1</sup> This refers to combination of 5 Mahābhūtas and Ātmā. It also defines the *ideal life* where-in a man enjoys longevity full of health and strength, with acuteness of sense organs and mind intact in congenial and harmonious social and physical environment, ibid 25, 21-22, 3,62: 36,24, the same is falling under Sukhāyu (Happy life) and Hitāyu (benevolent life) described in

1. Shukla Yajurveda, Chapter 23, Mantra 51-52.

Caraka and their attainment are the aims and objects of "Rasāyana" therapy in Ayurveda. The *components of life* are body, mind, sense organs and the soul. They are described as follows :

*Body* is composed of Doṣas, Dhātus and Malas and all of them are the combination of basic ingredients, i. e. Pancabhūtas. There is mention of "Tridhātus" in ibid. 27, 7-8-9 & 36-10 and "Tisro Devis" in ibid 29-33. Three Dhātus are Vāta, Pitta and Kapha. Three Devis are Bhārati, Iṣā and Sarasvatī who are ascribed the function of sensation and vital activity. It is strange that we do not find mention of these three Devis anywhere in the Ayurved Saṁhitās. In Haṭha Yoga texts we find three names of another type 'Iṣā, Piṅgalā and Suṣumnā' for the main channels of Prāṇa.

*Sapta Dhātus*-The body is composed of gross seven dhātus. These are also referred by the name of Sapta Ṛ is. These are described as responsible for vigilance and for constant protection of the living body. In addition, there are two other watchmen, ever awakening and vigilant. Whenever seven Dhātus along with sense organs fall asleep, these two viz. Prāṇa and Apāna take care of the body without stopping for rest. 34-35.

As Caraka and Suśruta both have mentioned, *three dynamic forces in the outer world* viz. Soma, Sūrya, and Anila are responsible for maintenance of the world by their respective activities of humidity, heat and motion; and for cyclic changes of weathers. Same three are referred to in 36-10 for benefit of the people. Similarly Vāyu and Āyu have different roots, but have the same meaning, that is why in one Mantra Āyu is used to mean Vāyu and Bhāṣya-kāra has explained as such. Thus Vāyu is just the synonym of Āyu i. e. life. The same importance of these words is emphasised in Caraka Saṁhitā i.e. 'Vāyu is life and Vitality; Vāyu is the supporter of all embodied beings: Vāyu is verily the whole universe; and Vāyu is the Lord of all. Thus is Vāyu extolled.' Vāyu is again called as Prāṇa and is thus chief manifestation of life i.e. Ātmā, which is also denoted by word 'Indra', Vāyu in the form of Prāṇa and Udāna is pervading all over the body in the form of respiratory air. It moves to and fro in each and every organ and also in the space between the earth and sky. 5 divisions of Vāyu in the body are also mentioned, ibid 7.27; 13-19; 23-18; 14-8, 12, 14, 17.

*Savitra Sūrya* -is described as having shining golden arms(rays) spread out in the space, gives vitality and life,

destroys diseases and disease producing microbes.

**Soma**:- is described as the watery element present as juice in plants, as milk in cattles and as rains and clouds in the sky. As moon it removes darkness because it owes light from sun, *ibid* 34-21—22-23. This gives us impression of 'Vāta Kalā Kaliya' the 12th chapter of Charaka, Sūtrasthāna and Suśruta's principles of agniṣomīya jagat and puruṣa. *Development of the body* and formation of its various organs and their location at different situations is described by the way of simili of weavers making different designs in different parts of a cloth, *ibid* 19-80. Here in Dhātus and Malas, Viscera and organs of head and neck are enumerated.

Two Aświns, Sarasvati, Savitā, Varuṇa and Candra are depicted here as artists or sculptures. Here word Rūpa is used to denote body, some usage is found in Caraka Śā.2. Embriological development of different organs like skin and other organs contained inside the thorax and abdomen and description of eye ball in Suśruta, obviously follows this description. *Puruṣas with eight types of developmental defects were condemned* (30-22). Same is incorporated in Caraka Saṁhitā, Aṣṭauninditiya (The eight censured persons) chapter- "The very tall and the very short, the

very hairy and the hairless, the very dark and the very fair, the very corpulent and the very emaciated"<sup>3</sup>.

**Physiology**- Importance of Agni for life is stressed being useful to fight cold, *ibid*, 3-17; 20-56; 21-13; 25-7; 27-12; and 44,29-26.

Fertilization, foetus, foetal membranes, placenta and its blood content and labour pains at full term are practically described by giving simili of waves of sea and waves of wind, *ibid*, 8-28. Best attribute of a woman was to be able to conceive a child. Barrenness of any type was considered a stigma.

**Marmas** (Vital parts of the body) and their protection by wearing impervious jackets during fighting is also referred, which subject is described by Suśruta in detail in a full separate chapter, Su-Śā-6.

**Indriyas** (Sensory and motor organs) and their functions are also mentioned. **Manas** (Mind) and its functions are described in a special group of mantras called — Śiva Saṁkalpa Sūkta. Here too, its location in heart and speed and relation to sensory organs, sleep and wakefulness, memory, and self control, motive force behind each sensory and motor activity and capacity of conceiving past and future images and role as internal instrument of enlightenment is vividly described.

Ātmā (Spirit) is described in a special chapter called Puruṣa Sūkta and Sarvameda, *ibid* - 31 - 32. Ātmā-omnipresent and confined to individual body and entering along with Śukra in the fertilised ovum instantly, as described in Charaka, Śārīra chapters 1&2 is also supported by the mantras - "Prajā Paṭiśvarati garbhe antar jāyā-māno bahudhā vyajāyata, 31.

Paritya bhūtāni parityalokān ātmanā  
ātmanamabhi sativiveśa

Paridhyāvā pṛthivi sadhyaḥ .....  
tadabhavat tadāsīt", 32-11-12.

This resembles to—"which is known as the formative principle of all bodies in the universe and omnipresent soul"<sup>4</sup> "He who sees himself as extended in all the world and all the world in himself, the peace of that surveyor of this (i.e. spirit and matter) and the yonder, being rooted in knowledge, does not perish"<sup>5</sup>.

"It is all-pervasive and can take all bodily forms. It can do all actions and appear in all shapes. It is the element of consciousness and transcends sense-perceptions. It is always in conjunction with the mind, intellect etc. and is associated with the emotions of like and dislike"<sup>6</sup>

Herein the principle of Karma,

Karmaphala and Punarjanma, Mokṣa are implicit.

*Loka* (Environment) in the form of society, regions and seasons are also described. Moreover four factors of environment - air, water, country and seasonal changes are described in Charaka Saṁhitā, responsible for community health or ill health<sup>7</sup>. They are also described in Yajurveda, purity and salubriousness of environment was earnestly described in two mantras - 13. 27-29, and 36-17.

*Vāyu* (Air) is prayed in Vāyusūkta. It is described as a force which keeps earth and sky clean by its movements from west to east.

*Jala or Āpaṇa* (Water) is described in Suśruta Saṁhitā. It is derived from two sources (1) Divya i.e. rains falling from antarikṣa (sky) and is subdivided as Sāmudra and Gaṅgā according to the months in which it is showered; and (2) Bhauma i.e. found on or under the earth, which is again divided as rivers, lakes, wells, fountains, etc. In Yajurveda these divisions of water are mentioned under different names, *ibid*. 22-25.

*Deśa* (Region)- Mention of some geographical regions is also found, *ibid* - 36-1 & 23-18.

4. Charaka, Chikitsasthana, Chapter 2-49.

5. Charaka, Sharīrasthana, Chapter 5-20.

6. Charaka, Sharīrasthana. Chapter 2-32.

7. "Te tu khalvime bhavah samanya janapabeshu bhavanti; Tadyathah -Vayuh, Udakam, Desh, Kala iti"—Charaka, Vimanasthana, Chapter 3-6.

*Kā/a* (Time factor)- There is mention of day and night, dawn and dusk, months and seasons and year and yuga which is followed by Caraka and Suśruta in chapters on Ṛtucarya. Year starts with Vasant (spring) season, which is comprised of Chaitra and Vaiśākha and ends with Śiśira, i.e. Māgha and Phālgun. The year is called Saṁvatsara and a group of five years is called a Yuga (13-15, 25 to 47, 24-11; 27-45). Same is followed by Suśruta.

*Loka* (Society) is also described by citing four main classes or castes and sub castes and the people of various characters and vocations (30-4-21).

Ayurveda deals mainly with the Hetu, Linga and Auśadha i.e. causes, diseases and remedies respectively and the conditions of health and unhealth. Above lines deal with normal conditions of structures and functions of the body.

*Abnormal conditions* of the body and mind are also mentioned in Śukla Yajurveda. Yakṣmā is a general name for any disease and a particular name for consumption.

*Some Prominent diseases* are mentioned by name e.g. Balāsa, Kṣaya, Arśa, and hundred types of Yakṣmā.

*Common abnormal conditions of structure or functions* are described and conditions of disfigurement of

skin, colour defects of the eyes, Mental derangements, the defects of the sense and motor organs, developmental defects and deformity, gynaec conditions, some personality traits and peculiarity of characters etc. are mentioned as is described in Manas Prakriti in Caraka and Suśruta Saṁhitās.

*Dhanaishṇa* is a necessary pursuit for earning livelihood, which helps the maintenance and prolongation of life. For this a number of vocations are described. In Caraka Saṁhitā only few like agriculture, commerce, services and animal husbandry etc. are cited while in Yajurveda main 4 castes and few sub-castes are cited viz. Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, Śūdra, Māgadha, Sūta, Śailūṣa, Bhiṣak, Gaṇak, Praśnina, Abhipraśnina, Praśnavivāka, and other vocations are also cited viz Vāṇija, Hastipa, Aśvapa Aśvasāda, Gopāla, Ajapāla, Surākāra, Maṇikāra, Karmāra, Ayastāpa, Hiraṇyākāra, Kaulāla, Rathakāra, Dhanuṣkāra, Vapa. Rajjusarja, Śvanim, Upada, Gruhapa, Vittadha (Dhanakartā), Vidalakārī, Kośakārī, Kaṇṭhakikārī, Vanapa, Dāśa, Niśāda, Paunjiṣṭha, Cāṇḍāla, Mrgayu, Paṇḍaka, Vīṇāvāda and Vādyavādaka etc. This shows how many varied arts crafts were practiced during that period and how much cultured that society was.

*Anna & Auśadha* (Foods & Drugs)- In ibid 12, 75 to 109, there is "Auśadhi Sūkta", in 13-48 animals of 3 types - flying in air, floating in water and

dwelling on earth grouped as tamed and forest dwelling, again two legged and 4 legged. In 24 there is mention of 609 biological drugs out of which 327 are of tamed animals, 260 are of forest animals and aquatic creatures. Rest 22 grouped into two containing 11 creatures each.

In 18 - 13 minerals are cited "Aśmāḥ mṛttika.....loham, sisam, trapu". This division tallies with that of Caraka and Suśruta<sup>8</sup>. Vaidyas used to collect and store all of them and used them to remove diseases and disease causing germs.

Āhāra (food) - Food grains of various types were used viz. Vrihi, Yava, Godhūma, Śyāmāka, Nivāra, Mudga, Māṣa, Tila, Masūra, and Priyaṅgu etc. and various preparations were made out of them viz. Yūṣa, Āmikā, Māsara, Saktu and Lājā etc. Similarly food of animal origins (meat) was also used after cooking it; milk and curd and clarified butter were profusely used as sacred food.

Anupāna (Drinks) - Soma and surā were prepared by adopting special methods of fermentation and were given special importance for their tonic and stimulating effects (19- ), as it is praised in Caraka Saṁhitā. Special festivals like "Sau-

trmani Yagūa" were reputed for their liberal use.

*Janma Mrityu* (Birth and death) are two mysterious events, inevitable for life. Union of Ātmā (spirit) with 5 bhūtas through Śukra, at the time of conception, is referred above. After full development for 10 months the foetus is born as a child; and life begins. At the end of this life, the Ātmā leaves the body, i.e. union of 5 bhūtas and death, that is 'Pancatva Prāpti' takes place. The 5 bhūtas of the body get disintegrated after the dead body is consigned to pyre. This is described in the last mantra of 40th chapter of Yajurveda. The same idea is clearly mentioned by Caraka in Śā-1, and by Suśruta in Śā-4.

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa also mentions some of the topics mentioned in Ayurveda Saṁhitās—foremost of them is the total number of bones - 360, which is fully corroborated by Caraka; and Suśruta, has also referred to that as 'VEDAVĀDINO BHĀṢĀNTE', and put his disagreement with it, by reducing the number to 300. Caraka has described Hṛdaya (heart) to be the seat or the base on which important factors i.e. spirit and mind with its emotional set-up and intellect rest; and many organs and functions of body, its six main divisions—four

8. Tat punastrividham proktam jangamāudbhidaparthivam (again they are classified in 3 groups—animal, vegetable and mineral)—Charaka, Sutrasthana, Chapter 1/67½, and Sushruta, Sutrasthana, Chapter 1/28-32.

extremities, head and neck, and trunk; five senses and sensations are dependent. Heart supports them through blood circulation.

All these factors are mentioned in Śatapatha as related to heart. Moreover, sleep and wakeful conditions are also dependent on influence of heart from Tamas and Sattva respectively. The body with its six limbs, the understanding, the senses, the five sense-objects, the spirit with its attributes, the mind and the mental concepts, are all dependent on the heart<sup>9</sup>. We come across the first mention of Ayurveda as a distant branch of knowledge in Mahābhārata along with other branches<sup>10</sup>.

Similarly, we find the same narrations of expertise of Aśvinikumāras in Mahābhārata as we find in Caraka and in Suśruta Saṁhitās.<sup>11</sup>

Two types of disorders—Psychic and Somatic and their mutual influence, balance of 3 doṣas, man's physical health and balance of 3 Guṇas means psychic health and when they are disturbed balance is again re-established by promoting opposite properties like heat to be sub-dued by application of cold and grief to be

sub-dued by producing job. This is the principle advocated by Caraka as "Application of opposite properties in the form of medicines, foods, seasons and in dose is the method for eradicating diseases"; and rāga etc. emotional upsets should be set right by producing opposite conditions of fear or favour.<sup>12</sup> Same R̥ṣis, who are cited in are mentioned to approach Brahmā for clarifying some spiritual problems, including genesis of this world. The genesis of this world forms the basic elements viz. Avyakta, Trigūṇas, Mahat, Ahaṁkāra, Panca Bhūtas and their inherent properties successively increasing in numbers viz. Ākāśa having only one property of Śabda and Prithvī, having 5 properties—Śabda, Sparśa, Rūpa, Rasa, and Gandha, and people having different temperaments and behaviour due to prominence of satvādi guṇas are described in the same order. Of course, in more detail, in Mahābhārata,<sup>13</sup> the similarity in philosophical thoughts and the method of question/answer Guru Śiṣya is apparent in both treatises. Unity of Avyakta, Kṣhetrajñā, Ātmā and Brahmā as described in Caraka is also followed by Mahābhārata and by predominance of Satva one attains liberation and by predominance of Rajas and Tamas

9. Cha aka Sutrasthana 30/4, Shatapatha, 3-8-3-12, 3-3-4-7, 3-4-3-8, 3-8-3-15, 9-1-2-40, 12-9-1, 14-6-9-25, 14-8-4-1.

10. Maha, Shanti, Moksha—Chapter 341-8-9.

11. Maha, Anusha, Chapter 160.

12. Maha, Ashwame, Chapter 12-1-6.

13. Maha, Ashwame. Chapter 35, 36, 37, 38, 39.



one gets entangled in the cycle of birth and death is also the course preached in Mahābhārata.<sup>14</sup>

Next to Mahābhārata we come to Buddha and Jain periods. Buddha period starts from Gautama Buddha and ends with Aśoka. Aśoka's monuments and lithographs are well known. JATAKA KATHĀS discuss many Ayurvedic Topics incidentally.

Jain literature is not yet sufficiently studied with this angle. We come across some episodes of Ayurvedic interest in Jain-Pāli book VIPĀKA ŚRUTI.

However this is just an example, more research is required to fill up the gaps in the history of Ayurveda from early Maurya period to the end of 18th and 19th centuries.

सारांश

## शुक्ल यजुर्वेद से संकलित तथ्य

—वी. जे. ठाकर

आयुर्वेदीय संहिताओं का रचनाकाल चारों वेदों व उनके ब्राह्मणों तथा महाभारत के मध्य का काल है। आयुर्वेद का सम्बन्ध अथर्ववेद तथा ऋग्वेद से है। आयुर्विज्ञान के रूप में ज्ञान प्राप्ति हेतु एक स्वतन्त्र शाखा का आयुर्वेद के नाम से उल्लेख सर्वप्रथम महाभारत में मिलता है। यह इस बात का द्योतक है कि स्वास्थ्य तथा दीर्घायु प्राप्ति के लिये एक स्वतन्त्र विज्ञान के रूप में शतपथ तथा महाभारत के मध्यकाल में इसका विकास हुआ। यहाँ संक्षेप में यह बताने का प्रयास किया गया है कि किस प्रकार से यजुर्वेद और उसके शतपथ ब्राह्मण आयुर्वेद से सम्बन्धित हैं और उनमें आयुर्वेद के विषयों का किस प्रकार सारगर्भित रूप में प्रतिपादन किया गया है।