



iv. Definitions of Ayurveda

iv. Definitions of Ayurveda - Hitāyu & Ahitāyu, Sukhāyu & Dukhāyu, Trisūtra of Āyurveda (Hetu, Liṅga, Aṣadha), and the Focus on Svastha & Ātura

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Definitions of Ayurveda

Core Meaning

- **Āyurveda** = “āyuh” (life) + “vedaḥ” (knowledge/science). Thus, it is the **science of life**.
- In classical texts, **Caraka Saṃhitā** (Sūtra Sthāna 1/41-42) notes that Ayurveda **analyzes** what is **beneficial** (hita) or **harmful** (ahita) for life, along with factors that foster **happiness** (sukha) or **sorrow** (duḥkha).

Purpose

Caraka Saṃhitā (Sūtra Sthāna 30/26) proclaims Ayurveda’s goal is twofold:

1. **Protect the health of the healthy** (svasthasya svāsthyaṛakṣaṇam).
2. **Alleviate disorders of the diseased** (āturasya vikārapraśamanam).

Hitāyu & Ahitāyu, Sukhāyu & Dukhāyu

Ayurveda classifies **life** (āyuh) in terms of **quality, alignment, and overall well-being**.

Hitāyu (Beneficial Life) & Ahitāyu (Harmful Life)

Hitāyu (Beneficial Life)

- Defined as **life spent in harmony** with dharma, correct diet, virtuous conduct, and balanced doṣas.
- **Caraka Saṃhitā** describes **Hitāyu** as life that **promotes** physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.
- Embodies **ethical** living, self-awareness, compassion, and moderation.

Salient Features:

1. **Balanced Doṣas**: Avoiding extremes in Vāta, Pitta, Kapha.
2. **Ethical Conduct**: Truthfulness, non-violence, philanthropy, moral lifestyle.
3. **Regulated Diet & Lifestyle**: Practicing daily routines (dinacaryā), seasonal regimens (ṛtucaryā), and mindful eating.

Ahitāyu (Harmful Life)

- Contrasts with Hitāyu, reflecting a **disconnected** life—**unethical, self-indulgent**, ignoring natural or moral laws.
- Imbalance in doṣas or ignoring health guidelines leads to **greater disease susceptibility**.
- Emphasizes how chronic neglect or harmful behavior fosters ill health and mental unrest.

Key Examples:

- Overeating, misuse of substances, lack of proper sleep or exercise.
- Ethical lapses (dishonesty, arrogance, aggression) exacerbating doṣic imbalances.



Sukhāyu (Happy Life) & Dukhāyu (Unhappy Life)

Sukhāyu (Happy Life)

- **Sukha** means “happiness,” thus **Sukhāyu** is life endowed with **joy, contentment**, stable health, and **mental peace**.
- Physical well-being (proper digestion, balanced energy), emotional balance, and **fulfilling social interactions** define Sukhāyu.

Characteristics:

1. **Disease-free state** with harmonious doṣas and healthy dhātus.
2. **Positive mental disposition**—calm mind, reduced stress, good sleep.
3. **Constructive relationships** and purposeful engagement in life.

Dukhāyu (Unhappy Life)

- A life marred by **diseases, mental turmoil**, sorrow, and **obstacles** to genuine well-being.
- Involves **uncontrolled** doṣas, frequent illness, emotional unrest, and possibly **negative social** circumstances.

Key Indicators:

- Chronic illness, recurrent stress, dissatisfaction, lack of direction or support.

Trisūtra of Āyurveda: Hetu, Liṅga, Auśadha

Trisūtra refers to **three fundamental threads** or pillars that structure Ayurvedic thinking around **disease** and **health**.

Hetu (Cause)

- **Hetu** means “causative factor.” Ayurveda systematically identifies triggers for diseases—**dietary indiscretions, lifestyle errors**, emotional imbalances, or **environmental factors**.
- Classified as:
 1. **Samavāyi Hetu**: Inherent causes (e.g., the doṣic constitution).
 2. **Asamavāyi Hetu**: Indirect influences (e.g., intangible triggers like emotional stress).
 3. **Nimitta Hetu**: External causes (climate, pathogens).

Role in Prevention

- By knowing **causative factors**, one can **prevent** the disease through lifestyle corrections, reversing wrong habits, and implementing prophylactic measures.

Liṅga (Symptom/Sign)

- **Liṅga** denotes **clinical features** or expressions of a disease.
- Ayurveda relies on thorough **clinical examination** (darśana, sparśana, praśna) and signals from **pratyātmalinga** (subjective experiences) to identify **illness progression**.

Importance of Symptom Recognition

- **Early detection**: Recognizing subtle liṅgas helps in timely intervention before disease fully manifests.
- **Differential Diagnosis**: Observing **unique** symptoms guides correct doṣa identification and appropriate therapy.



Auśadha (Treatment)

- **Auśadha** generally means “medicine,” but in a broad Ayurvedic sense, it encompasses **therapeutic approaches** addressing doṣic imbalance and tissue malfunction.

Three Pillars of Treatment

1. **Antidotal** or **Pacifying** measures (e.g., doṣa-praśamana)
 2. **Nourishing** or **Tissue-replenishing** measures (dhātu-upacaya)
 3. **Eliminative** or **Detox** measures (śodhana, panchakarma)
- Lifestyle modifications, herbal drugs, panchakarma therapies, and **pathya-apathya** (dietary do's and don'ts) collectively form Ayurvedic auśadha strategies.

Focus on Svastha & Ātura

Svastha (The Healthy Individual)

Definition

Caraka Saṃhitā (Sūtrasthāna 9/4) defines svastha as one whose **doṣas**, **agni** (digestive fire), **dhātus** (tissues), and **malas** (wastes) are in **equilibrium**, and whose **ātmā** (soul), **indriyas** (senses) and **mana** (mind) are **pleasant** and **content**.

Characteristics

1. **Sama Doṣas**: Balanced Vāta, Pitta, Kapha.
2. **Samāgni**: Optimal digestive and metabolic fire.
3. **Samadhātu & Samamala**: Properly formed tissues and regular excretion.
4. **Prasanna Ātmendriya Mana**: Cheerful, stable mind, clarity of senses, spiritual harmony.

Relevance

- Emphasizes **preventive healthcare**: daily routine (dinacaryā), seasonal regimen (ṛtucaryā), balanced nutrition, ethical living, stress management to maintain “svastha” status.

Ātura (The Diseased Individual)

- **Ātura** means “one who is suffering or afflicted.”
- The **opposite** of svastha, reflecting **imbalance** in doṣas, deranged agni, or mental agony leading to physiological or psychological **pain**.

Pathogenesis

- Mistakes in diet (viruddhāhāra), environment, stress, or ignoring **prakṛti** lead to **doṣic vitiation**.
- The culminating stage is **vikāra**, manifested as recognizable **liṅgas** (symptoms) and **clinical disorders**.

Treatment

- Ayurveda's approach to restoring the **ātura** to a **svastha** state involves reversing the underlying **hetu**, addressing **liṅga**, and providing **auśadha** (appropriate therapy).

Conclusion

Ayurveda frames life and disease in **dynamic** ways:

1. **Definitions of Ayurveda** highlight it as the **science** guiding **beneficial vs. harmful** living, laying out the



fundamentals for **health** (svastha) and disease (ātura).

2. **Hitāyu-Ahitāyu** & **Sukhāyu-Dukhāyu** clarify the **qualitative** dimensions of life—**ethical alignment**, **physical well-being**, and **mental contentment** or, conversely, **harmful lifestyles** and **unhappiness**.
3. The **Trisūtra**—Hetu (cause), Liṅga (signs/symptoms), and Auśadha (treatment)—structures how Ayurveda **diagnoses and intervenes** in illness.
4. The explicit **focus** on **svastha (healthy)** and **ātura (diseased)** individuals underscores Ayurveda's **dual mission**: **preventive** care to maintain health, and **therapeutic** protocols to cure existing diseases.

By comprehending these categories, practitioners and patients grasp **why** certain lifestyles yield **hitāyu** or **sukhāyu** and how **Ayurvedic** therapies rectify pathologies—always aiming to restore the integrative **harmony** between body, mind, behavior, and environment.