

## CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF NAISTHIKI CHIKITSA - A REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda* describes multiple dimensions of treatment aimed not only at alleviating disease but also at attaining ultimate liberation from suffering. For healthy people to get rid of pain or miseries from life had been the quest. Since time immemorial *Shad Darshanas* have tried to explain it in their terms whereas *ayurveda* profoundly described *Naisthiki Chikitsa* for it. *Naisthiki Chikitsa* represents the highest form of therapy, focusing on the complete eradication of *Duhkha* through the elimination of its root cause, *Avidya* (ignorance). Unlike *Yuktivyapashraya* and *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*, which address physical and metaphysical aspects of disease respectively, *Naisthiki Chikitsa* is fundamentally spiritual and philosophical in nature. This conceptual study aims to explore the meaning, classical references, principles, and clinical relevance of *Naisthiki Chikitsa* through an analytical review of Ayurvedic and allied philosophical texts. The study highlights

its role in achieving *Moksha* and its relevance in holistic health and mental well being.

**KEYWORDS:** *Naisthiki Chikitsa, Moksha, Avidya, Dukha Nivritti, Spiritual Therapy.*

## INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda* defines health (*Swasthya*) not merely as the absence of disease but as a state of equilibrium of body, mind, senses, and soul. In this context, *Chikitsa* is broadly aimed at the alleviation of suffering (*Dukha*). *Acharya Charaka* classifies *Chikitsa* into three major types: *Daivavyapashraya*, *Yuktivyapashraya*, and *Sattvavajaya*, while also acknowledging *Naisthiki Chikitsa* as the ultimate form of treatment.

*Naisthiki Chikitsa* is unique because it does not merely manage or cure diseases but seeks the permanent cessation of all forms of suffering by uprooting its fundamental cause—*Avidya* (ignorance). Here it appears that *Acharya Charak* expected *Ayurvedic Chikitsak* to treat healthy and disease free community through *Naisthiki Chikitsa* where *Moksha* is the supreme outcome. Unlike conventional therapeutic approaches that address bodily or psychological disorders, *Naisthiki Chikitsa* aligns with the philosophical foundations of *ayurveda* and indian *darshanas* particularly *Sankhya* and *Yoga*. Despite its profound significance, *Naisthiki Chikitsa* is less explored in clinical and academic discussions. Hence, the present study aims to conceptually analyze *Naisthiki Chikitsa* and elucidate its theoretical and practical relevance.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVE

To analyze basic concept of *Naisthiki Chikitsa* and Understand importance of its implementation.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is a conceptual and literary review. As *Naisthiki Chikitsa* is described only in *Charak Samhita* So *Charak Samhita* and Its Relevant commentaries were referred for deeper interpretation. Philosophical texts related to *Sankhya* and *Yoga Darshan* were also examined to understand the metaphysical foundation of *Naisthiki Chikitsa*. Secondary sources such as published review articles and *Ayurveda* textbooks were used to support interpretation. The collected data were analyzed thematically.

## Review of Literature

*Naishthiki Chikitsa* - Charakacharya has defined *Naishthiki chikitsa* as, one which is without *Upadha*.<sup>[1]</sup>

For clear understanding of the definition commentary of *Chakrapani* is useful. He comments that *Chikitsa* which eradicates all miseries from life and results in *Moksha* is *Naishtiki Chikitsa*. *Nishtha* according to him is *atyanta- dukkha- moksha* (as good as *Moksha*) and *chikitsa* for the same purpose is *Naishtiki chikitsa*. Meaning of term *Upadha* is *Trushna* (various desires good or bad). So *Vinopadha* gives meaning as *Trushna Shoonya Pravritti* (proceeding without *Trushna*) leads to *Moksha*. Salvation is the complete elimination of suffering, which is accomplished by the remission of *Raga* and *Dweshha* (attachment and detachment). *Naishtiki*, thus, is the way to salvation or the alleviation of inner suffering. According to *Acharya Charaka*, a doctor who performs *Naishtiki chikitsa* is endowed with *Brahma satva*.<sup>[2]</sup>

### **Upadha - Allurement or deceit**

Renunciation of all *Upadha* (*trishna*) eliminates all sorrows. *Upadha* (allurement) is the main source of misery as well as its refuge.

As a silkworm produces the threads which become its own killer, in the same way, an ignorant person receives nothing from worldly possessions except the thirst to spend the rest of his life in misery. Our desires drive us to take action, give us cravings, make us happy when they are fulfilled, and make us sad when they are not.<sup>[3]</sup> Materialistic activities are always mixed with three kinds of miserable conditions: *Adhyatmika*, *Adhidaivika*, and *Adhibhautika*. Therefore, even while engaging in such activities leads to success, there is no gain and one is still susceptible to birth, death, old age, illness, and the consequences of his fruitful activities.<sup>[4]</sup>

The root cause for *Upaplava* (beginning of miseries) is *Pravritti* (action/attachment). *Nivritti* (inaction/detachment from worldly affairs) leads to the destruction of all miseries. The root cause for attachment (*Pravritti*) is *Moha* (ignorance), *Ichha* (desire), *Dweshha* (hatred), and *Karma* (action). Attachment leads to *Ahamkara*, *Sanga*, *Samshaya*, *Abhisamplava*, *Abhyavapaata*, *Vipratyaya*, *Avisesha*, and *Anupaaya*.

The impacts of attachment cause a person to get engulfed in all of these things, much like a tree with large branches engulfs a young plant. As a result, a person affected by these elements does not transcend worldly activities.<sup>[5]</sup>

### ***Nishta* – Liberation from Misereries**

One must avoid *Upadha* or desires (attachment) in order to escape misery. Liberation from misereries is called *Nishta*. According to *Chakrapani*, *Nishta* is the form of salvation from all sorrows. (*Atyanta dukkha moksho moksha roopa*)<sup>[6]</sup> Since *Nishta* liberates you from the misereries, it is a form of salvation (*moksha rupa*). *Naishtiki chikitsa* is the treatment to attain salvation (*moksha*, liberation from misereries). Since *Naishtiki* is devoid of desires and attachment, it becomes the way to attaining the ultimate aim of life, one among the four objectives of human life (*purushartha chatushtaya*) i.e., Moksha or salvation. In short – *Nishta* means salvation. *Naishtiki chikitsa* is the means for attaining salvation. This leads one to a path of true knowledge i.e *Satya Buddhi* and *Tatva Smriti* which is the attainment of true knowledge which comes only from a pure mind that is devoid of *Raga* and *Dwesh*.<sup>[7]</sup>

### ***Satya Buddhi* – True Knowledge**

Pure and true knowledge comes from a pure mind and through it, the *Tamas* with very strong and great ignorance are removed. Through this, a person can know the nature of all beings and his soul. In this way, the person is freed from desires. One who is not affected by ego is never associated with the cause of suffering, and he expects nothing, but abandons everything. Through this, man attains eternal, peaceful, and imperishable *Brahma*.<sup>[8]</sup>

The path to happiness is detachment, while attachment is the source of suffering. This is the ultimate and only truth, and the realisation of this fact is pure knowledge.

*Satyabuddhi* means real knowledge, by this real knowledge, one can realise that the intellect, egoism, etc., are not pertaining to him and he is different from all these, and he refers to the soul, After gaining this ultimate knowledge, one is freed from all problems and moves onto the path of salvation.<sup>[9]</sup>

### ***Tatva Smriti* – Recollection of reality**

The power of recollection of reality is the only way to liberation. “*Tatva smriti balam*” means the strength of remembrance of reality or the special power which is said to be in the path of means of salvation.<sup>[10]</sup>

*Tattvasmriti* is one of the best paths unanimously accepted by *Jeevanamukta* personalities. One who follows this path will never get rebirth is the strong thought of *Yogi* as well as

*Sankhya tattvadnya*. *Jeevanmukta* personalities are such that either they get renaissance (*moksha*) or are capable to take birth as per their wish (incarnation).

### **Moksha - Salvation**

*Nivritti* (abstaining from actions) is known as *Apavarga* (emancipation or salvation).<sup>[11]</sup> *Moksha* is nothing but the complete separation of all contacts due to the absence of *Rajas* and *Tamas* in the mind and the destruction of the effects of the powerful past actions. It is a state after which there is no further physical or mental contact and there is no process of rebirth. If one recognizes himself as an extension of the entire cosmos and vice versa (i.e, identifies his true self with *Brahman*), he is said to possess transcendental and worldly vision and his serenity of mind is based on this wisdom which never fades away.<sup>[12]</sup> At this stage, the symptoms of the self are also not found because he is devoid of all senses; and due to lack of connection with the senses, it is called liberation. When one reaches the stage of salvation, there is detachment of *Shareera*, *Manas*, *Indriya*, and *Atma*.

*Moksha* is an absolute detachment of all contacts by virtue of the absence of *Rajas* and *Tamas* in the mind and the termination of effects of potent past actions/deeds. *Apavarga* (salvation) is disinclination or detachment from worldly matters. It is *Brahman* (the highest consciousness), *Moksha* (emancipation), *Akshara* (the unchangeable), *Prashanta* (the tranquil), and *Para* (the ultimate).<sup>[13]</sup>

### **DISCUSSION**

*Naishtiki chikitsa* represents the philosophical zenith of Ayurvedic therapeutics. While *Yuktivyapashraya chikitsa* addresses somatic and psychosomatic disorders through rational interventions, and *Sattvavajaya chikitsa* manages mental disturbances, *Naishtiki chikitsa* transcends both by eliminating the very cause of rebirth and suffering.

In the modern context, *Naishtiki chikitsa* may not be directly applicable as a clinical intervention, but its principles are highly relevant in managing chronic stress, existential anxiety, and psychosomatic illnesses. Practices such as meditation, self-awareness, ethical conduct, and spiritual counseling can be seen as applied aspects of *Naishtiki chikitsa*. Thus, it complements contemporary mental health approaches and promotes holistic well-being. All the worldly desires and attachments lead to a perverted psyche which is dominated by *Rajasika* and *Tamasika bhavas* like ego, lust, superiority, doubt, unstable mind, selfishness, improper judgement, etc., manifesting as personality defects often.

It is the duty of a physician to remove and (help the patient to remove) all physical and mental suffering. The definitive healing method for all pains is *Naishtiki* (removal of pains by the deletion of greed or grasping). This can be achieved through various simple lifestyle modalities which we can inculcate in our day-to-day life.

Having a good presence of mind. Ability to differentiate between need and luxury. Before buying any product, think if it is a need or is it a luxury. If it is a luxury, avoid it. Avoiding selfishness, ego, and superiority complex which is much prevalent nowadays in the form of peer pressure in the workplace as well as in the study environments also plays an important role in the psychological well-being of individuals. Daily meditation, *pranayama*, and *yoga* – These keep the mind calm and concentrated. Simple procedures like *Satsangati*, *Sadgranthwachana*, *Namasmarana/Japa*, *Tapa*, *Dhyan* are also useful to awaken spirituality which in turn eradicates the *Rajasika* and *Tamasika gunas*.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis revealed that *Naishtiki chikitsa* is consistently described as a means for *Atyantika Dukha Nivritti* (absolute cessation of suffering). Classical texts emphasize that all physical and mental diseases ultimately originate from Avidya, which leads to attachment, desire, and karmic bondage. *Naishtiki chikitsa* operates by imparting *Tattva Gyan* (true knowledge), *Viveka* (discriminative wisdom), and *Vairagya* (detachment).

Unlike other therapeutic approaches, *Naishtiki chikitsa* does not rely on drugs, procedures, or rituals. Instead, it focuses on self-realization, control of mind, ethical living, and liberation of the soul. The outcome of *Naishtiki chikitsa* is not merely health but *Moksha*, which is considered the highest *Purusartha*.

*Naishtiki chikitsa* is a distinctive and profound concept in *Ayurveda* that aims at permanent liberation from suffering through the eradication of ignorance. Though primarily spiritual and philosophical, its principles hold immense relevance in achieving complete health and inner harmony. Understanding *Naishtiki chikitsa* enriches the holistic vision of *Ayurveda* and bridges the gap between medicine, philosophy, and spirituality.

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