DIFFERENCES – FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES RELATED TO INTEGRATION OF
AYURVEDA AND MODERN MEDICAL SCIENCE

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A merger or blending of the two streams of traditional Ayurvedic science and the modern medical science to lay the foundation for a new integrative science with a wider perspective on health care has been attempted by many scholars for over perhaps a century now. A novel four point program was designed, planned and brought into action in support of this integrative school of thought at the Banaras Hindu University, however the program rather demonstrated the futility of such an effort. The present editorial is an effort to bring forth the precise reasons for the failure of such an attempt to bring together the two fundamentally diverse medical sciences of allopathy and Ayurveda.

1. Etymological difference between Ayurveda and modern medical science

The simplest definition of Ayurveda would describe it to be a comprehensive understanding or study of ‘life’ and all its related factors. This definition of Ayurveda brings it more close to ‘biology’ (bio – life, logy – science) rather than the medical branch of ‘allopathy’. ‘Ayuṣa’ or life is a continual amalgamation of ‘śarīra’ or body, ‘satva’ or mind and ‘ātmā’ or soul. Ayurveda thus concerns itself with an all-encompassing understanding of life rather than just the part which deals with the management and treatment of the diseases affecting the body. Health care can be said to be one of the important applied aspect of the comprehensive or all-embracing science called ‘āyuṣah vedah āyurvedah’. To prevent the anomaly or problem affecting any aspect of life and find solutions thereof is the aim of Ayurveda. In short, to maintain the health of an healthy individual and society alike and to treat any kind of ailment affecting them is the wider perspective of this traditional science thus carrying it beyond the preview of a mere medical science. Hence, the comparison of this eclectic science with modern medical science cannot be justified, as it appears closer to the science of biology rather than modern medical science.

2. Different perspectives

To extend the life span and enhance the quality of life by maintaining a disease free existence is essentially the aim of every medical science and there are two ways to achieve this noble aim. Consider the example of a farm, for a good yield one has to take into consideration the inherent fertility of the farm soil as also the quality or nature of seed which one intends to plant therein. Similarly the body can compared with the farm and the
disease causing elements with the unwanted or bad seeds. When one intends to cure the body of its ailments there would be two ways to achieve this goal. One of it would be to protect the body and enhance its strength and immunity against the disease causing ability of the seed, an inside-out approach. In this approach, even when a body is affected with any kind of ailment, stress is essentially laid on increasing the strength and restoring the health of the bodily elements to fight the problem. This can be referred to as a ‘body centric’ outlook which considers that to sustain the health and strength of the body, the causative factor of the disease and the ways and means to cure, both lie within the field or sphere of concern that is the body.

The other outlook considers that diseases are caused due to external factors or seeds which disrupt the normal functioning of the body. Hence, the treatment of diseases also principally concerns the elimination of these factors from the body. These external factors can be termed as ‘seeds’ of the disease, defining this outlook as ‘seed centric’ or outside-in approach.

One thus observes that the very perspective of looking at the body as per both these sciences is very much different from each other. Where allopathy applies a seed centric approach and aims at eliminating the external disease causing factors (viruses and bacteria) to restore health and fitness, Ayurveda states that diseases are caused due to an imbalance or anomaly in the bodily elements which allow the implantation of the seed in the body and concerns itself with enhancing the inherent strength of all the bodily elements to fight disease and prevent this implantation as far as possible. Ayurveda states that the elements in the body are themselves responsible to make it susceptible to disease and hence anomaly/aggravation of the doṣa, srotasa, the improper elimination of ‘mala’ from the body and other such factors are of prime importance as causative factors in the prevention as well as the management of disease. This is a ‘doṣa centric’ approach wherein the blame for causing the disease as well as the responsibility for curing it to regain a state of health, lie with the body and not the presence or absence of any external factor. On the other hand, the modern medical science is more concerned with measures like taking antiseptic precautions to prevent infection, to confirm infection with the presence of pus cells in the urine, making cultures for deciding the kind of antibiotics to be administered for fighting the infection etc. which center around the seed or factors that are other than the body. The science is largely concerned with the elimination of these external factors which are ‘outsiders’ affecting the health of the body.

The above statements merely highlight the general approach of the two sciences towards the human body. It does not imply that modern medical science does not concern itself with the body centric approach or that Ayurveda does not agree to the existence of external disease causing factors or microbes.
Ayurveda also describes several diseases which are caused due to *krumī* or *āgantu* factors, but to a very limited extent. The treatments described in the *Atharvaveda* do describe the origin of disease in external factors like *krumī*, *grahabādha* etc. but with the propagation of the science of Ayurveda more emphasis was laid on the *doṣa* and the imbalance thereof, thus limiting the outside in approach. A bird may fly as high as possible in the sky, but its shadow never fails to follow it wherever it goes. Similarly, Ayurveda states that the body may suffer from several different types of afflictions but no affliction can be caused without the aggravation or anomaly of the *doṣa*. The *doṣa* are the fundamental building blocks of the body, and at the same time the anomaly of these *doṣa* is the very reason behind the initiation of disease in the body, thus emphasizing the body centric approach of Ayurveda.

Thus, imbalance in the state of *doṣa*, which are also the foundational elements of the body, is responsible for the advent of disease.

The term body centric can generally be applied only to the diet and lifestyle part of the modern medicine approach. Hence there lies a basic difference between the management of diseases and the research methodology approaches of the two sciences. For example – where Ayurveda would be concerned about the imbalance of the *doṣa*, dietary and lifestyle factors which cause the disease and the *dhātu* affected by it, the modern medical science would look at the agents causing the infective focus in the body and the drugs or antibiotics which can be administered to eliminate this infective agent. The body centric approach of Ayurveda is underlined when the texts state that the *atmā* or the soul is the sole factor responsible for the feelings of joy or sorrow in a human being.

3. Diet

*Agni* is the energy in the body of living beings which helps assimilate ingested food. Ayurveda advocates that diet should essentially be determined by the state of the *agni* or the digestive capacity of an individual. As per modern medical science however a healthy diet consists of a combination of proteins, carbohydrates, minerals and vitamins in the right or required quantity. Hence, deficiencies of a particular ingredient are compensated with the inclusion of a substance rich in that ingredient, for example consumption of soya grains would ensure a diet rich in protein and helps treat its deficiency, intake of citrus fruits would ensure the minimum expected requirement of vitamins etc. thus, the body is also looked upon as a chemical and physical entity and treated accordingly. The concept of the ability/ inability of the body to assimilate the substance or the attributes of the substance as a whole is hardly considered.

The *agni*, as per Ayurveda is an extremely important entity responsible for converting the consumed food into bodily assimilable products and further into bodily elements. Thus *agni*, the strength of which differs in every individual, is therefore a very important factor in the management of diseases with Ayurvedic therapeutics. Like for example, when the body
requires nourishing diet but the agni of the patient is weak, he can be given nutrition with the help of māmsarasa or yusa preparations which are nutritious but easy to digest; on the other hand as commonly observed in the patients of obesity, when the agni is strong but the patient requires to go on an emaciating diet, he requires to be served with substances which are guru or difficult to digest. In short, for the Ayurvedic therapy of disease management the agni, along with the attributes of the medicines and diet to be advised to the patient, becomes an important decisive factor, whereas the modern medical treatment largely consists of eliminating the deficiency of particular substances by supplements or with dietary substances rich in the deficient elements. The chemical constituents of the diet are more important for the modern medical science. Like for example, fish which is rich in essential amino acids and proteins forms an important part of diet advised to the patients suffering from diabetes, but the same fish is contraindicated for the patients of prameha or diabetes as per Ayurvedic school of thought because it is known to increase the frequency of micturation by aggravating the kleda or mala in the body. Thus, the modern medical science largely focuses on the reimbursement of the chemical constituents of the body instead of a multifarious approach taking into consideration the individual’s requirements and the ability of the body to accept or assimilate given supplements.

4. Abstract concepts/ hypotheses

Adharma (~ Immoral or unrighteous behavior), Karma (~ individual deeds), Niyati (~destiny) and Svabhāva (~ nature) – The modern medical science does not agree to the existence of factors like unrighteous/ immoral behavior, the culmination of the effect of one’s deeds, destiny and nature and to these being of any consequence as disease causing entities.

Modern science considers that dharma or religion/ divine law and health care sciences are totally diverse or exclusive subjects, while Ayurveda considers that the two are very closely associated with each other. The health and sanctity of a society or community is based on dharma or righteous behavior of human beings who are an intrinsic constituent of the society. The righteous path of dharma and the health of the society thus become intricately dependent on each other. The main causative factor of the ‘janapadodhvansa vyādhi’ or the epidemic outbreak is the unrighteous behavior of the people and the society at large. The serial degradation of dharma and the society is indirectly linked to the dilapidation of the health, quality of life and life span of the individuals and the society in general.

The fruit of the karma or deed depends on the nature (good or bad) and the degree of the karma. Some diseases are perceived as caused as a result of bad karma performed by the individual and the annihilation of this bad karma can be the only solution or treatment for these diseases. Thus, the individual himself is responsible for his own health or ill-health by way of the deeds performed by him. Modern science does not agree to this hypothesis of
karma and its ethical consequences which determine the nature of one’s existence. Ayurveda however considers that the same can be an important causative factor for certain diseases affecting mankind.

One of the biggest social health problems faced by the society today, the sexually transmitted infection of HIV virus was introduced into the human race because of unnatural sexual contact of humans with monkeys. Thus, the immoral behavior of humans can be called as the root cause of the disease. Ayurveda firmly believes that the divine law or dharma are rules laid down for the betterment of the individual and the society as well. Hence, Ayurvedic texts also elaborate on certain rules or decrees of moral behavior essential as a part of holistic health care for the society and the individual.

5. Difference in the diagnostic criteria and methodology

The diagnosis of an ailment as per Ayurvedic philosophy can be termed as individualistic or subjective evaluation of the problem. Each patient is scrutinized as per the evident symptoms, the probable causative factors and the possible pathology or samprāpti that might have occurred before the expression of those particular symptoms. These factors are then collectively studied to determine the involvement of particular doṣa and duṣya in that ailment. Even though one may not be able to conclusively name an ailment, the determination of the anomalous doṣa and duṣya involved and the hetu or causative factors is more important to plan effective treatment for the patient. The determinants or the criteria which are used for diagnosis of the disease as per Ayurveda are different than those applicable for the diagnosis of a disease as per modern medical science. Thus, the inference or conclusion sought after studying different determinants as per Ayurveda and as per modern science also ought to be generally different from each other.

The conclusion reached after studying various diagnostic factors as per Ayurvedic philosophy appears to be centripetal/ afferent or a body centric diagnosis, wherein essential importance is given to the affected individual as regards his own constitution, habits and habitat etc.

The modern science diagnostics appear to be grosser, where every anomaly is differentially diagnosed as per the set of symptoms and the results of laboratory based diagnostic studies of different elements in the patient’s body. The diagnostics are largely studied with a statistical evaluation of set of symptoms or structural deformities evident in majority of patients. Like for example 90 % of the patients suffering from SLE are young females or gall stones are generally evident in fat females of over forty years of age. Thus, one finds a lot of generalized statements describing the common diagnostics for modern medical science. Even though such statements are also a part of Ayurvedic texts, they are few and far between. One of the most common is the description of four kinds of individuals who are commonly prone to different illnesses like businessmen or vendors, servants to the king,
priests and commercial sex workers owing to occupational hazards which generally come their way.

There is a vast difference between the examination criteria and methods, diagnostic parameters and the therapeutics of both the modern medical science and Ayurveda.

It is observed that sometimes the causative factors behind an ailment may not be detected with the help of laboratory tests conducted on individuals. Thus, when all the readings and parameters are reported as normal, diagnosis according to modern parameters becomes very difficult. One then needs to study and research about different new ailments and infections affecting the individual. It should also be noted that modern science does not express diagnosis in terms of vāta, pitta and kapha or their anomalies and the Ayurvedic diagnosis expressed in terms of tridosha cannot be understood in the light of modern chemical or physical diagnostic tests. Both these sciences apply completely diverse parameters to interpret the suffering of a patient. Ayurveda evaluates each patient and his constitution with a very individualized subjective approach, while the modern medical science searches for new parameters and diagnostic criteria for understanding new diseases. This is the basic difference between the body centric and seed centric approaches followed by the two sciences.

There is a vast difference between the diagnostic methods, clinical diagnostic, prognosis and also the management of diseases as per both these sciences. The diagnosis and treatment as per Ayurveda is centered on understanding the individual and his inherent constitution. Like for example, the medicine against fever affliction in the summers for a lean and weak individual of vātaprakruti would be different than that advised for an obese individual. The other parameters of age, inherent constitution, weight, season and strength of the patient also require to be taken into consideration while determining the kind of medication and therapy for any patient. This individual evaluation renders tremendous precision in the treatment offered, thus minimizing the chances of any side effects of the treatment. The tenfold examination described in the Ayurvedic texts stands with a similar aim. All the factors like prakruti, sāra, samhanana, angulī pramāna, satva, sātmya, deśa and kāla are factors which help estimate the bala or the inherent strength of the patient. ĀcārayaCaraka states that the understanding of all the above determinant factors helps facilitate effective health care. One of the most important parameters here is the estimation of the bala or the inherent strength of the patient while administering medications. Modern science studies the general criteria of weight, chest-waist ratio, BMI etc. which are too gross to give an in-depth understanding of the strength and fitness of the patient as an individual. Hence, one finds that even when the patient has cleared all his pre-operative tests, some surgeries fail because the patient is unable to sustain the operative procedures owing to an inherently weak disposition.
6. Difference in the fundamental concepts of the sciences

There is a vast difference between the fundamental concepts or basics of Ayurvedic philosophy and modern medical science.

The modern medical science views the body as a machine consisting of different systems which are made up of different organs. These organs again constitute a range of different tissues; tissues are made up of cells and cells of several cellular components. The modern science has reached into the depths of the physical body to the level of chromosomes; DNA, RNA and they are still searching for more intricate functional factors divisible at molecular levels. It is a progressive science, still in search of several answers, delving into new researches which either endorse or refute previously laid down hypotheses, every day reaching a new understanding of the body and its functioning. Hence, very few of the hypotheses or fundamentals of this science can be referred to as eternal or perennial truths.

The modern science traverses from the gross to the microscopic entities and progressively attempts newer understanding of the human body.

The basic concepts in Ayurveda are however universal truths which hardly change and are comprehensive or generalized applying to a wider area of consideration. Statements like diseases are caused only due to the anomalies of the three doṣa, diseases are caused due to agni māndya, suppressing the natural urges is one of the most important causes of disease, or that the entire universe is made up of five fundamental elements etc. which indicate the similarity or likeness in a wide range of subjects. This likeness is termed as ‘sāmānya’, while ‘viśeṣa’ is the dissimilarity or specific disparity between different things. Like for example the common denominator while attempting the study of two different plants would be that both are composed of the five basic elements of nature, while the višeṣa would be their specific attributes, vīrya, vipāka etc. or while all the diseases would be caused as a result of the anomaly of the tridoṣa, the degree of their relative variance or abnormality would determine the nature of treatment offered. Thus, the višeṣa in each of the elements can change or differ but the common denominator of sāmānya remains constant. It cannot be altered or destroyed. Newer research would only help understand the višeṣa, but the sāmānya would be stable and eternal truth. The basic fundamentals of Ayurveda thereby remain eternal truths which cannot be eliminated. Hence, discovering a new sixth element apart from prithvi, āpa, teja, vāyu andākāśa would not be possible, but it would be possible to improvise or alter the višeṣa, which would be the discovery of newer forms their expressions. For example, the phala shāka or fruit vegetables are all termed to be healthy and wholesome for the body (sāmānya) but to decipher which of the phala shāka (ridge gourd or bottle gourd) would be more beneficial for patients suffering from heart disease would be a matter to be scrutinized (višeṣa).
This sāmānya provides a firm fundamental base, while the višeṣa provides ample open and unlimited opportunity for understanding the intricacies of nature without altering or opposing the basic truths.

7. Therapeutics
   a) Planning of treatment and medication based on two main therapies –

To understand the effect of diet and medications on the human body, the food substances can be divided into two main categories. The first is the group which manifests with the predominance of the prithvi and the āpamahābhuta, while the other class of substances which manifests with the dominance of the tej, vāyu and the ākāśa mahābhuta. The prithvi and āpamahābhuta add mass to the body and nourish the bodily elements (~ santarpana), while the other group leads to the emaciation of bodily elements (~ apatarpana). These two principal therapies of ‘santarpana’ (~ therapies for nourishment) and ‘apatarpana’ (~ emaciating therapies) are extremely important in the management of diseases and the understanding the bala or strength of both, that of the patient and of the disease. Some physicians specifically consider or mention these therapies for deciding the kind of therapies while some inadvertently consider them. The ‘śaḍvidhopakrama’ or ‘six basic therapies’ are also applied in the same manner. The decision to administer either of these therapies can be termed as ‘sāmānya’ or based on the similarities in the conditions; but at the same time the physician has to consider certain ‘višeṣa’ or specific conditions for example relative variance in the anomaly of the doṣa, condition of the patient, for example pregnancy, menopause etc. or drugs specially effective in particular diseases (~ vyādhi pratyanīka) etc. before deciding on the treatment. To elaborate on the same, the therapy of svedana (sāmānya) is used differently in different conditions. The svedana for patients suffering from santarpanothha diseases (~ those caused due to excessive consumption of nourishing and fatty substances and indigestion) has to be rukṣa in attribute (rukṣasveda – višeṣa), while the svedana therapies administered for patients suffering from apatarpanottha diseases (~ diseases caused due to excess emaciation of the body) require to be snigdha in attribute (snigdha sveda – višeṣa).

One observes that Ayurvedic physicians use several different kinds of medications in a range of different patients perhaps suffering from a similar anomaly. This is justified when one understands the similarity and the disparity between the attributes of the medications and the stages of the disease affecting the patient. Physicians in various different regions around India prescribe a range of different drugs for the treatment of jvara, the physicians from Northern parts of India are known to prescribe medications like tribhuvankīrti, or lakṣmīnārajanarasana, those from South India generally prescribe dasamūlaKatutrayādi kvātha or amrutyādi kaśāya while those in the central parts like Maharashtra prefer the mahāsudarśana churna. This is a clear example wherein the therapy or upakrama of apatarpana administered for the treatment of jvara is a common factor while the drugs
used for the same, though similar in action may vary according to specific needs of the patient and the climatic conditions of that area. The freedom to choose from a range of different drugs with similar action and the upakrama philosophy is the speciality of Ayurvedic treatment. Though the use of drug for patients suffering from the same anomaly may vary, the upakrama or the therapeutic action expected out of those drugs is similar in nature.

There are limitations on such liberties of drug selection when it comes to treatment administered as per modern medical science. Modern therapies aim at eliminating the specific bacteria, virus or other parasites which may have caused the disease and hence require the use of specific antibodies or antibiotic drugs acting against them. Immense research is also encouraged for the discovery of such special drugs to combat new diseases.

b) Use of specific drugs

The philosophy behind the use of particular drugs for a particular disease is different in both the sciences. The use of a drug as per modern science is recommended only after due research and experiments and collection of statistical data to validate its action against a particular ailment.

While administration of any drug as per Ayurveda is based on the specific attributes of that drug active against the disease, the specific attributes do not always form the only criteria for determining action against the disease. Sometimes the specific action of the drug against the disease itself, irrespective of its inherent attributes is also important and applicable for the treatment of that disease. Like for example, the texts mention the use of specific antidotes against specific venoms without mentioning any specific active attributes of the drug. They state that scorpion bite can be treated with the use of salt. Here, the kārmukatā (~ specific action) of the drug carries more importance than its attributes. At the same time, the texts also mention that the medications of śīta vīrya are effective against the aggravation of the pitta dosa. The substances like rose, khus, cold milk are thence used here for their śīta attribute. Thus, specific action and actions based on attributes are considered while determining the most effective medication.

Modern pharmacology focuses on the use of the active principles of the raw materials like plants and animal products for use against particular disease, while Ayurveda advocates the use of whole drugs without disturbing their biological constitution. These drugs may be treated or made into different formulations for enhancing their action but the derivation of active principles is not suggested herein. This is so because as modern research has as at times demonstrated, the whole drugs demonstrate a self controlling action which is not observed when one uses mere derivatives of active principles. For example the active principle of 'sarpagandhā' – reserpine is an excellent anti-hypertensive agent. Sarpagandhā administered only in the form of active principle does show very quick action against the
anomaly but also gives rise to a number of side effects. At the same time, administration of sarpagandhā as a whole drug gives the desired effect sans the undesirable side effects observed otherwise.

c) Sanskāra

Sanskāra (~ treatments) are essentially important in dietetics and medicinal therapy both. The sanskāra are specific actions performed on the drugs to alter or enhance its attributes and this is done with respect to the requirements of the patient. These sanskāra are applied for altering the attributes of the particular substances like for example the rice which is contraindicated for patients suffering from santarpanotta anomalies can be made laghu in attribute by dry roasting for the consumption of such patients. The modern medical science lays emphasis on the chemical changes which occur in a substance after these sanskāra. Like for example modern research questions the authenticity of the formulation of cyavanprāśa stating that it is prepared after boiling the Indian gooseberries, which are a rich source of Vit. C. It states that this action of boiling destroys the active principle of Vit. C and hence cannot be recommended. Ayurveda on the other hand emphasizes the alteration of attributes of the gooseberries which takes place after boiling them along with other drugs. The rasāyana action of these gooseberries is activated and brought forth only after they are fried in ghee and boiled along with other medications. The entire process of preparation of cyavanprāśa enhances the attributes of the gooseberries which then display rasāyana action on the bodily dhātu. Thus, the modern science and Ayurveda differ in their parameters about effects of different sanskāra on raw drugs, their action and efficacy too.

d) Use of metals as medications

Both the modern medical science and Ayurveda are known to use metals and ores for the preparation of different drugs however the pharmacology, group of metals used and their method of use and administration greatly differ. Ayurveda has traditionally been making successful use of several metals and non-metals like mercury, sulphur, zinc, mica, copper etc. as medications while the same are considered toxic according to modern medical science. These elements are used after due treatments or sanskāra which help eliminate their toxicity and enhance their useful attributes. These elements have been used in this manner as medications since time immemorial by the Ayurvedic physicians but scientifically prepared good quality Ayurvedic medications have never displayed toxic effects of metals on any of the patients as described by modern medical science and the main reason behind this are the specific sanskāra performed while formulating these drugs. A drug which is not prepared as per specifications mentioned in the texts and which are poor in quality can however display unwarranted actions. But it is important to note that following improper or wrong methods of drug preparation does not in any way undermine the efficacy or
authenticity of the science but is the responsibility of the individual preparing the drug. It is thence advised to buy drugs from authentic and reliable sources only.

e) Kāla (~ time of drug administration) and anupāna (~ accompaniments)

Different kāla and anupāna described for the intake/ administration of medications are essentially unique to Ayurvedic philosophy. There are several different kāla and anupāna mentioned in the texts like ‘samāna kāla’ (~ intake of medications halfway between meals) for their action on agni , repeated doses of medications throughout the day for treatment of anomaly of prāṇavāyu , medication before meals for action on apāṇavāyu etc. These different kāla form an important part of disease management in Ayurveda. The expected action of a particular drug on a particular body element can be effectively gained by administering it at appropriate timing and with appropriate anupāna . The parameters like state of the doṣa in the body, duṣya involved, sthāna or location of the anomaly in the body, agni and srotasa and the vīrya of the medicine are all important in determining the kāla for the administration of medication. Like for example, the medication for diseases affecting the head region is prescribed at bedtime according to Ayurveda.

Modern science however generally prescribes medications in the morning, after or before meals and at bedtime depending on the state of secretions in the gastrointestinal tract. For example, medications for hyperacidity are administered before meals, medications which might increase the acidity are administered post meals while laxative medications at bedtime.

The anupāna or specific accompaniments used along with medicinal drugs act as vehicles to carry the medicine to the specific srotasa or organ of anomaly. It may also be used for enhancing the attributes of the medicine or to reduce the unwanted effects of the drug. Substances like honey or ginger extract are helpful as vehicles for medications acting on the prāṇavahasrotasa. Kāla and anupāna both are of importance when the medication of tribhuvankīrti is administered along with ghee and sugar at night in summers to reduce the possible undesired effects of its ushNa attribute. In the same manner the medication of candrakalā is generally avoided in winters because of its śītavīrya. This unique application of kāla and anupāna for administration of drugs is not the subject matter of modern medical science.

f) Dosage

The dosage of plant derivative or herbal medications used in Ayurveda is generally measured in grams while the dosage of bhasma and other higher formulations is measured in milligrams. On the whole, the dosage of Ayurvedic medications is far higher than the allopathic drugs. The method of administration of the allopathic drugs which are generally in form of pills or capsules is also very easy as compared to Ayurvedic formulations.
g) ApunarbhavCikitsā

The negative results of laboratory tests are generally the parameter to decide the remission of disease and signify the time to end the treatment as per modern medical science. The Ayurvedic treatment however continues even after the elimination of disease from the body. As explained above any disease is a result of some weakness or anomalous condition of the doṣa in the body. Thus, no treatment is complete without the restoration of the health and strength of the bodily elements affected due to the disease and without imparting the body the power to prevent repeated afflictions of the same ailment. Like for example the therapy of vamana and the medications like milk treated with pippali are administered to the patients suffering from asthma even when they are not suffering from an attack or acute stage of the disease. This treatment helps regulate the state of the doṣa in the body and reduce the intensity and the frequency of further attacks which occur because of change in seasons and climate and thereby assist the complete elimination of the disease from the body.

The preventive medicine branch of modern science also advises recuperative treatments but these are largely aimed at protecting against the infection of external agents and increasing the immunity of the body with proper diet and exercise. Ayurveda is a holistic therapy which strengthens the dhātu and imparts bala to the body. It also aims at restoring the physical and mental health of the patient and maintaining the health of the healthy individual with the use of routine therapies of dinacaryā, rutucaryā, āchārārasāyana etc. which act as preventive measures ensuring the healthy state of the individual. This is one of the main important distinguishing points between the two sciences.

h) Kāla (~ time) and diśā (~ direction; north, east, south etc.)

The science of Ayurveda advocates kāla and diśā as two ‘dravya’ or fundamental substances which influence existence of human life. The modern science does not agree to the existence of any such dravya. For example it is advisable to use tree roots which grow northwards and the patients for vamana are advised to undergo the therapy facing the east or north direction etc.

i) Grahabādhā (~ adverse effect of celestial bodies on one’s life and health) or karmavipākasiddhānta (~ culmination of one’s deeds into congruent consequences that determine the quality of one’s existence) –

Ayurveda maintains immense belief in the hypothesis of karma or deeds and their results or fruits. It states that the diseases caused due to bad karma can be healed only after reversing the effects of such deeds with good karma. The science also maintains that diseases can be caused by antagonizing the celestial bodies with bad karma, such diseases are known as ‘graha bādhā’. Thus, it firmly believes that the root of all diseases or ill health is the good or
bad *karma* performed by the individual, either in this or his past lives. However, this branch of the science is hardly practiced today with the dearth of knowledgeable individuals regarding the same.

The science also endorses the study of astrology and the effects of the movement of stars and planets on the health of a person. The immoral and unethical behavior of individuals is considered as the main causative factor or ‘*janapadodhvansa* diseases’ or epidemic outbreaks.

Modern medical science does not confirm to any of these hypotheses or abstract ideas.

The pathology, diagnostics, determination of causative factors, management of diseases, and disease prognosis and also the study and therapeutic applications of different raw materials and drug formulations as per both the health care sciences, Ayurveda and modern medical science, are poles apart. Hence, one should not attempt and integrate the two sciences which display such fundamental differences.