

Chapter 8

Conflict Resolution of Mind and Body Using Ayurveda and Yoga

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ABSTRACT

This chapter will focus on Ayurveda and yoga to understand the power of the mind and body to resolve conflict. The fundamental principles of Ayurveda will be discussed in relation to the universe and body because we are a microcosm of the macrocosm. A society so rich in science, pharmaceuticals, and healthcare professionals still struggles for good health. Society continues to remain malnourished even though overfed with food causing the human mind to turn to other modalities like Ayurveda and yoga. As contemporary medicine starts with disease, Ayurveda begins with health with the focus on maintaining the health of the healthy. The fundamental principles of Ayurveda regarding the biological humors (doshas) will be discussed in relation to the five elements of ether, air, fire, water, earth. The main focus will be diet and lifestyle. This chapter will provide pearls of Ayurvedic wisdom to allow one to assimilate these practices into daily life.

INTRODUCTION

As one of the most advanced and powerful nations, blessings of natural resources and material wealth abound; a medical system considered one of the best coupled with top notch researchers developing cures for disease still results in one feeling unhealthy. The current mode of treatment is not a fully comprehensive approach causing people to search for other modalities. Today, there exists a conflict between modern day medicine and overall good health that must be resolved. This conundrum must be resolved to restore health to all. The holistic system of *Ayurveda* and the spiritual system of *yoga* looks like the missing pieces to this puzzle because they explain that the biggest blessings in life are to have

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balanced health where one feels harmony of body, mind, and soul. In other words, one feels harmony of physiological, psychological, and philosophical aspects of our being. The objectives of this chapter are to introduce the reader to the fundamental principles of *Ayurveda* regarding the biological humors (*doshas*) in relation to the five elements of ether, air, fire, water, earth with diet and lifestyle being the focus. This chapter will provide pearls of *Ayurvedic* wisdom to allow one to assimilate these practices into daily life.

BACKGROUND

What is Ayurveda?

Ayurveda literally translates to the “science or knowledge” (*Veda*) of life (*Ayu*). The origin of *Ayurveda* is truly ancient. It is considered one of the oldest healthcare systems in the world. Enlightened sages, equivalent to modern day scientists or doctors, communicated with their disciples, and passed the knowledge of their lifetime experiences to them. Later this science was compiled into such classics like *Charaka Samhita* (Charaka), *Sushruta Samhita* (Susruta), and *Ashtanga Hridayam* (Vagbhata). The *Ayurvedic* classics offer knowledge about every aspect ranging from thousands of medicinal plants to age old herbal formulas. Also, a vast knowledge of *Ayurvedic* protocols, surgery, toxicology, pharmacology, obstetrics, pediatrics, psychiatry, and philosophy are described.

Ayurveda remained an oral tradition for a long period of time before it was codified into written science many years ago. As time passed, new concepts were adapted but the fundamental principles remained unchanged. Modern allopathic medicine, which came to light about 300 years ago, respected the classics and used a “holistic” approach to treating disease. However, during the last 100 years, there has been a transition away from the classics and a movement towards a disease-centered, compartmentalized, and reductionistic approach to treating disease. How and when the wisdom of whole-body healing was lost is not clear. However, we must find these missing pieces of the puzzle that were apparently “lost in translation”. *Ayurveda* is one of those missing pieces. Being a nature-loving science, life study is not limited to humans but to all life on the planet. Modern medicine’s primary focus is on the body and a little on the mind while *Ayurveda* has its focus on mind, body and spirit moving one towards balanced health.

AYURVEDA

Fundamental Principles of Ayurveda

One of the principles of *Ayurvedic* philosophy is that the entire universe is created from the 5 universal elements (*pancha mahabhutas*) of ether, air, fire, water, and earth. This represents the most important fundamental concept of *Ayurveda*. Every matter contains all 5 elements. Once a person deeply understands the 5 elements, the new window of knowledge opens. Everything that exists in the external universe (macrocosm), also appears in the internal cosmos of the human body (microcosm). So, each person’s body is also made up of these elements but in different proportions. So, how does it reflect in humans? Ether equates to space and lightness in the body. Air equates to respiration and circulation in the body. Fire equates to metabolism and heat in the body. Water equates to feeling and fluidity in the body. Earth

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