

# Philosophical Framework of Disease Etiology in Ayurveda and Yoga: A Review

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## Abstract:

### ➤ Introduction:

The concept of disease is a fundamental principle of health. Therefore, the goal of this review was to examine the Etiology of the disease in the ancient Ayurveda and Yogic philosophy. The specific verse related to disease and its classification in ancient texts is reviewed.

### ➤ Aim:

To study the Ayurvedic concept of disease and the yogic philosophy of disease.

### ➤ Methods:

The originally collected verses on disease from the Sanskrit language were translated into English/ examined, and interpreted, and the translated verses were grouped into 1. The concept of health 2. Cause of disease, 3. Classification of disease within each text.

### ➤ Discussion:

In the current analysis of the ancient text's perspective on disease explanation, collaboration is achieved through textual avoidance.

### ➤ Conclusion:

The overall finding revealed diverse and distinct perspectives on Disease across the texts. Future researchers will be able to examine and compare the causes of disease from ancient perspectives to better understand disease.

**Keywords:** Disease, Cause, Yogic Philosophy, Ayurveda.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda and Yoga are both ancient medical systems. Yoga and Ayurveda come from ancient Indian traditions and are known worldwide for their comprehensive, holistic approaches to supporting health and well-being. [1] Ayurveda and Yoga are the basic pillars of life. Ayurveda and Yoga occupy a strange niche in India's health system. It is intimately known and institutionally marginal, commonplace but disproportionately assessed. Approximately half of Indians report using an AYUSH system, with Ayurveda being the most popular option for daily self-care and, in some cases, curative care. In the modern era, lifestyle changes, Humans

are surrounded by worldly desires and distractions. Yoga, as a therapy, has become the most common these days for a healthy life. The literal meaning of Ayurveda is “the knowledge of life,” derived from the Sanskrit words “ayur” and “veda,” and it is one of the world's ancient, holistic healing systems, dating back more than 5,000 years in India.[2] This knowledge is found in ancient Ayurvedic texts such as the Charaka Samhita. Ayurveda and Yoga are two related Vedic sciences that offer a complete approach to health. They bring together medical knowledge and spiritual practices to help unite the body, mind, and soul. Although ancient Indian medical systems may take time, they do not harm the body, and patients recover quickly without side

effects. To understand the treatment by Ayurveda and yoga, it's necessary to know the root cause of the disease. In this review, we examine the basics of disease and the importance of Ayurveda and yoga to human health. Yoga has become a part of most people's lives. So, the objective is to understand the core philosophy of Yogic and Ayurvedic treatments.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A literature review was conducted using Ayurvedic texts such as Sushruta Samhita, Charkaka Samhita, Yog Sutra, and Hath yogic texts, as well as published research articles from online databases. Reported data were analyzed and embodied for the current review. The originally collected Sanskrit verses on disease were translated into English/examined, and interpreted, and the translated verses were grouped into 1. The concept of health 2. Cause of disease, 3. Classification of disease within each text.

### ➤ Etiology of Ayurveda

In Ayurveda, the five elements, called Mahabhuta, are the building blocks of all matter and play a key role in how our bodies function, get sick, and heal. [3] All five elements influence the balance of doshas (the main energies of the body), dhatus (tissues), malas (wastes) and various functions of the body. Vata dosha is the union of the air (Vayu) and the ether (Akasha) and is responsible for all the movement and communication in the body. Pitta dosha is associated with fire (agni) and is related to digestion and metabolism. The Kapha dosha is composed of water (Jala) and earth (Prithvi), which give structure and stability to the body. When these elements are disturbed by diet, lifestyle, seasonal variations, and/or stress, it can result in illness. These patterns are described in classical sutras and utilized for diagnosis and treatment.

### • Definition of Health According to Ayurveda:

sama-dosaḥ samāgniś ca sama-dhātu-mala-kriyāḥ |  
prasannātmendriya-manāḥ svastha ity abhidhīyate ||

In the following verse, Sushruta has described the features of a healthy person. A state of health is balanced when the Digestive fire (agni) is in a balanced state, the bodily humors (Vata, Pitta and Kapha) are in an equilibrium state the three waste products that are Urine, and Sweat are produced in normal amounts and are in a balanced condition, the senses are functioning normally, and the body, mind and consciousness are harmoniously working as together. When the balance of any of these systems is disturbed, a disease cycle begins. Thus, imbalances of the body and mind are responsible for physical and psychological pain and misery.[4]

### • Concept of Diseases According to Ayurveda

dhīdhr̥tismṛtīvibhraṣṭaḥ karmayatkurute aśubham |  
prajñāparādham taṃ vidyāt sarvadoṣaparakopaṇam||102||

This means that a man performs bad actions when Budhi (mind), Dhairya (patience), and Smriti (memory

power) are destroyed; then his physical and mental doshas are said to be imbalanced. These bad actions are called as 'Pragyapradh'. One who performs pragyapradh, his body and health deteriorate, and a person becomes unhealthy.[5]

### • Type of Disease According to Ayurveda

Tatra trividha vyādhayaḥ prādurbhavanti āgneyaḥ,  
saumyaḥ, vāyavyaś ca; dvi-vidhaś cāpare rājasāḥ, tāmasāś  
ca || 4 ||

In Ayurveda, there are two types of disease: one is physical-based, which is divided into three parts: the first is āgneyaḥ, which means pitta-dominated; the second is saumyaḥ, which is kapha-dominated; and the third is vāyavya, which is vata-dominated disease. The other three primary causes of disease have been identified: asa-tmyendriya-arthasamyoga, prajñā-para-dha, and parināma. Each of these three primary causes exhibits a threefold nature: atiyoga (excessive use or overuse), ayoga or h-nayoga (non-use or underuse), and mithyayoga (abuse). Classification is based on mental health, with two types: rajasa and tamasa.[5]

### ➤ Etiology of Yogic Philosophy

Yogic ontology describes several layers of personhood, such as the physical body (sthūla/annamaya kosa), the subtle prāṇic and mental layers (prāṇa, manomaya kosa), and higher spiritual levels (vijñānamaya and ānandamaya kosa). In this view, problems with prāṇa and the mind (citta) are seen as key causes of ill-health. Afflictions (kleśas) and misidentification (adhyāsa) are considered the main distortions that lead to both psychosomatic and physical diseases. The core of Patanjali's Yoga, as described in the Yoga Sutras, goes beyond just physical poses. It is a complete system that includes "ethical guidelines (Yamas and Niyamas), physical practices (Asanas), breath control (Pranayama), sensory withdrawal (Pratyahara), concentration (Dharana), meditation (Dhyana), and ultimate absorption (Samadhi).[6] Inability to control oneself causes mental instability. Consequently, there becomes a craving for gratification from things outside. If they are fulfilled, desire continues; if they are not, hatred increases, leading to anger. Lust and anger further inflame the mind and cause the occurrence of various mental diseases. These perspectives highlight the close link between mental and bodily processes and form the basis for psychosomatic models of disease. Yogic views of disease focus on psychological causes. The Yogasūtra and similar texts trace many disorders to the kleśas, such as avidyā (ignorance), raga (attachment), and dveṣa (aversion). Yogic philosophy explains the five layers of the human body.

Table 1 List of Five Layers of the Yogic Body

Kosha	Sanskrit Verse	Description
1	अन्नं सर्वस्य मूलम्। य एषा देहायाः आहारिणा। तेन विना न जीवनम्।	Annamaya kosha is composed of food and forms the physical body. Without food, life cannot be sustained.
2	प्राणधारिणः एषा प्राणकोशः। यस्मिन् सर्वे प्राण रणनीते।	Pranamaya kosha consists of the vital energies or pranas that animate the physical body.
3	मनसः एषा कोशः। यस्मिन् इंद्रियाणि संविन्यस्तानि।	Manomaya kosha is the mind sheath, governing emotions and sensory processing.
4	विज्ञानधारिणः एषा कोशः। यस्मिन् बुद्धिः संवहति।	Vijnanamaya kosha is the intellect sheath, responsible for knowledge and discernment.
5	आनन्दधारिणः एषा कोशः। यस्मिन् मोदः अनुभवति।	Anandamaya kosha is the sheath of bliss, representing the subtlest layer of self-experience.

The physical body is the annamaya kosa and the pranamaya kosa, collectively called the sthula sarira. Manomaya kosa and vijnanamaya kosa are the mental body, which are called the sukshma sarira. Anandamaya kosa is called the causal body (karana sarira).[7]

• *Definition of Health According to Hatha Yoga:*

vapuḥ kṛṣatvaṃ vadane prasannatā  
nādasphuṭatvaṃ nayane sunirmale |  
arogatābindujayo' gñidīpanaṃ  
nāḍīvisuddhirhaṭhasiddhilakṣaṇam | 78 |

The characteristics of attainments in haṭhayoga are leanness of body, a pleasing physique, clarity of internal sound, impeccable eyes, diseaselessness, conquering the nectar oozing from the moon, stimulating the gastric fire, and purifying the nāḍīs.[8]

• *Concept of Diseases According to Yogic Philosophy*

dehaduḥkhaṃ vidur vyādhim ādhyākhyam vāsanāmayam |  
maurkhyamūle hi te vidyāt tattvajñāne parikṣayaḥ || 14 ||

Yoga philosophy classifies diseases into two categories: Adhi, which refers to psychological disorders, and vyādhi, which relates to physical pain; both are causes of disease.[9].

### III. DISCUSSION

People have ample time to be distracted by worldly matters such as greed, anger, lust, and hatred, yet have no minute to truly focus on their physical, mental, and spiritual health. By using Allopathic Medicine, a person gets relief within minutes, but it has negative effects on the body that are not immediately visible to humans. Today, everyone wants a diagnosis as quickly as possible because they do not have much time. Medications for conditions such as hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, headaches, allergies, chronic pain, epilepsy, diabetes, and depression are frequently prescribed in contemporary healthcare settings. There is a prevailing belief that increased reliance on these medications is inevitable as we age. By the seventh or eighth decade of life, many individuals depend on multiple prescription drugs and perceive them as essential for daily functioning. This raises an important point: Is taking drugs the only way to have a quality of life? People have to decide whether to take care of

their own health or trust healthcare professionals to prescribe for them. This is the reason for the increase in health problems over the last decade. Yoga and Ayurveda are the best and zero-cost treatments for a healthy life.

Yoga is a holistic approach to health (physical, mental, social, spiritual, and emotional). It gives a novel perspective on disease and prevention. In which disease is caused by an imbalance of Prana, lack of control of the mind, senses, and inauspicious karma. The seed of most physical ailments is in the mind, as it is in unsound thoughts. One can rid oneself of disease by purifying one's thoughts. It defines Yoga and Gyana as means to cure disease and, at the same time, declares that Yoga is the path to freedom from disease and to the prevention of mental disorders. The practice is beneficial for all ages and fitness levels, targeting the root causes of modern health problems, including chronic stress, high blood pressure, and poor posture. Studies at the American College of Physicians and Johns Hopkins are confirming yoga as a top-tier option for managing chronic low back pain and as an effective resource for managing stress and supporting mental health.[10] Yoga is an integral part of preventive medicine and complementary care, as it fosters inner peace, physical vitality, and overall quality of life, making it a necessary practice for optimal health in today's fast-paced world.

Ayurveda explains that disease arises from an imbalance in the three doshas, and the mental level operates at the rajas and tamas levels. Treatment of the cause includes detoxification therapies, a personalised diet, herbal medicines, and lifestyle adjustments. All these treatments help to balance the tri doshas. Ayurveda emphasises the balance of the body, mind, and spirit, promoting overall well-being. This boosts digestion and nutrient absorption, resulting in improved energy. With Ayurveda, you can manage stress and anxiety, which leads to emotional stability. These practices can help promote a balanced and fulfilling life, ultimately improving physical and mental health.

### IV. CONCLUSION

Ayurveda and Yoga are interconnected Vedic sciences. Together, they offer a holistic approach to health by integrating medical principles with spiritual practices to achieve unity of body, mind, and soul. Yoga is both a way to transform yourself and a practical philosophy. Following the eightfold path helps people find balance in body, mind, and

spirit, even as modern life brings new challenges from materialism and technology. Ayurveda, literally and symbolically, provides the knowledge to help an individual adopt an individualised method of health and well-being. By following the principles of Ayurveda, the right time and amount of food, supplements, sleep, work, and exercise can be determined according to the individual's needs. Practising Ayurveda gives people the opportunity to take proactive steps in managing their health. In the end, Ayurveda presents a chance to lead a life without drugs, with conscious and personal decisions. This paper concludes that Ayurveda and Yoga are the pillars of a healthy life, and it is the individual's duty to adopt them for their own well-being, attaining health without taking medicine.

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