

## IV

### **The *Karma* Doctrine in Medical Literature**

One of the most important presuppositions of morality on which the entire Indian ethical thought is based is the doctrine of *karma*. The *Nyaya* school of thought also is not an exception to this view. Their theory of *karma* (*adrsta*) and its corollary, the theory of rebirth, plays an important role to their ethical framework. Outside the *Nyaya- Vaisesika* system; there are a lot of theistic systems who also believe in the doctrine of *karma*. Indian medical science or *Ayurveda* is one which also belongs to this group. In the present chapter, an attempt is made to focus upon the *karma* doctrine from the perspective of classical Indian medical tradition (*Ayurveda*). It is interesting to observe that within the framework of morality, the whole of life in India was set. The discussion about the discipline, moral values and high principles encompasses all the aspects of early Indian thought and life style. The *Ayurveda* or the ancient Indian Medical Science was no exception to it and that is why by considering the viewpoint of the *Ayurveda*, the theoretical or ideological aspect of the *karma* doctrine can be understood to some extent. In this chapter, it has been discussed how traditional Indian medicine reconciles the principle of karmic causality with empirical facts. If the doctrine of *karma* determines all aspects of human life, including its fortune and misfortune in terms of wealth, health and other items, what role does medicine- that is the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diseases- play? How to relate karmic causality with incurable diseases, psychological disorders and epidemics? However, to clarify our position, it would be better to begin by briefly stating the contents of the *Ayurveda*. The present discussions are mainly based on

two fundamental Ayurvedic texts and these are: the *Caraka Samhita* and the *Susruta Samhita*.

Broadly speaking, the *Ayurveda*, tries to alleviate somatic, psychic or other sorts of mental and physiological disorders by adopting various therapeutic measures. The necessity for this study as has been mentioned in the *Caraka Samhita* is as follows: '*Prayojanam Casya Svasthyasya Svasthyaraksana maturas'ya Vikaro prasamanam Ca.*'<sup>1</sup> To translate it roughly means that the aim of this study is to promote healthy life by eliminating most of the diseases of an individual using the aid of various therapeutic measures.

Now, before entering into the critical discussion, it is very necessary to explain the exact meaning of the word '*Ayurveda*'. The word '*Ayurveda*' has been derived from two Sanskrit words and these are '*Ayus*' and '*Veda*'. The word '*Ayus*' denotes the conjunction of body, sense organs, mind and the empirical self and is synonymous with the words like '*dhari*', '*jivita*', '*nityaga*', and '*anubandha*'<sup>2</sup> The term '*Veda*' suggests knowledge or science and in the present context, it signifies nothing but the science of life. Thus, '*Ayurveda*' is the science of life that deals with good, bad, happy and unhappy life especially through the different ways of therapeutic measures.<sup>3</sup> The task of a therapist is to provide conditions for healthiness and to alleviate disorders of the diseased. A therapist is required to have caring attitude towards the elderly people, and has control over blind impulses towards attachment. He must be acquainted with various academic disciplines, particularly with metaphysics. He has good memory and intelligence, constantly devoted to penance.

In this context, the attention must be given over the causes of the various diseases. According to this Ayurvedic study, the healthiness or the unhealthiness of an individual depends upon the balance or the disbalance of the three '*dhatu*s', namely, '*Vayu*', '*pitta*' and '*kapha*'.<sup>4</sup> The real or true nature of these three *dhatu*s has been discussed in the *Caraka Samhita* elaborately. According to the *Caraka Samhita*, the first *dhatu*, i.e. *Vayu*, may be explained in this way: '*Vayu*' is Non - unctuous, cold, light, subtle, mobile, non - slimy and rough in properties and are pacified by the drugs having opposite properties.<sup>5</sup> The second *dhatu* i.e.; *pitta* is slightly unctuous, hot, sharp, liquid, sour, mobile and pungent and is pacified immediately by the drugs having opposite properties.<sup>6</sup> The properties of '*Kapha*' are heaviness, coldness, softness, unctuousness, sweetness, immobility and sliminess which are subsided by the drugs and substances having opposite properties.<sup>7</sup>

In the *Ayurveda* not only the three types of diseases and three types of causes of these diseases have been mentioned, but also three types of therapy has been mentioned respectively. Three types of diseases that have been mentioned in this study are: innate, exogenous and psychic. Innate diseases are that which arise due to bodily dosas, exogenous diseases are that which are caused by *Bhuta* (spirits and organisms), poisoned air, fire, trauma etc. Psychic diseases are those that which are caused by the non - fulfillment of desires and facing of the undesired.<sup>8</sup> This classical study of Indian medical science has not only described the three types of diseases, but also has tried to explain the three therapeutic measures to get rid of these three kinds of diseases. These three therapies are; spiritual, rational and psychological.<sup>9</sup>

In this chapter, our main concern is to search out the answer of this question; whether there is any relation between *Ayurveda* and the *Karma* doctrine. That is, if someone cultivates this study and tries to get remedy with different remedial measures supported by *Ayurveda*, then how does he enjoy the results of the *Karma*? In this connection, it may seem that the acceptance of *Karma* doctrine may come into conflict with this branch of study. If one believes in the law of *Karma*, then it amounts to accepting the proposition that one will have to enjoy the results of *Karma* –whether these are good or bad. On the other hand, to believe in the therapy of the *Ayurveda* is to accept another proposition that one may avoid enjoying the results of *Karma* (relating to health in general). In that case, the person will not probably go through the total amount of suffering that was due to him. So, it appears to be a paradoxical situation. How to answer this charge of paradox? One may choose the path of abandoning the doctrine of *Karma*, or one may not accept that the *Ayurveda* can actually provide relief from pain and suffering. In the following section a third alternative approach has been suggested.

### **Relationship between the *Karma* doctrine and the *Ayurveda***

In *Ayurveda*, the measure of life has also been described according to the body constitution. This discipline accepts that our life is eternally continuous and the flow of life is beginningless. So, the therapy that is accepted in the *Ayurveda*, not only considers the present life, but also takes into consideration the past life of an individual. And in this connection, we have to consider the doctrine of *Karma* which shows that our different *karmas* in the previous life bear results in the subsequent life and in that case if someone does act good in his previous life, he will possess good health and if someone

continuously does bad acts, he will get bad health in the subsequent life. Thus, we see in accounting for the good life, the doctrine of *karma* has also been brought.

Now, if one depends only on the karmic effect of an action, then the relevance of the application of the different therapies may be questioned. Further, since it is conceded that our karmic balance constitutes the ultimate cause of the fortune and misfortune, we meet with in this life; such a rule cannot but apply also to health, the ultimate good, and to illness and bodily disabilities of all sorts, the ultimate evil. But if the karmic determination of health and of its diseases is to be understood in a fatalistic way, then what role the medicine - that is, the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diseases - would be playing? The *Karma* of a given individual would infallibly be, in his body, the cause of such a disease, however carefully he would try to avoid it. Whereas the *Karma* of another would certainly enable him to escape the disease, however careless he might be.

It has been argued that if the lifespan of all individuals are predetermined, then for the maintenance of health, one need not resort to drugs, medicals herbs, vows, atonement, fasting etc. Again, if the lifespan is predetermined, then one should not be afraid of premature death. Conversely, one should not try to obtain longevity, as that would be useless. But, in reality, the experience always teaches us that even though our life is predetermined; the therapeutic measures are also necessary for the maintenance of good health. In the *Ayurveda*, the four factors have been admitted to alleviate the disorders and these are: physician, drug, attendant and patient. But it often happens that some patients do not recover totally in his life and in that case the therapy prescribed by this discipline

might go in vein. This practical situation could not be denied and in this case, it seems that the therapeutic measures have practically no role and this branch of study actually depends not only but on the law of *karma* alone. The debate between the *karma* doctrine and the *Ayurveda* is like this. The *Ayurveda* provides therapeutic measures for the cure of diseases. If diseases are cured, then subsequently all pain and sorrows associated with the disease are annihilated. In the *Ayurveda*, throughout the imaginary conversation between the two sages, *Maitreya* and *Atreya*, we get some ideas about the goodness as well as the badness in life. In the *Caraka Samhita*, sage *Atreya* is arguing to show the importance of the therapeutic measures and also provides argument for the acceptance of the law of *karma*. It is said, in the *Caraka Samhita* that the proper administration of medicine ensures healthy condition.<sup>10</sup>

But some staunch supporters of *karmavada* may argue against this position as leading to the violation of *karmavada*. In answering this objection, some may go to the extent of denying any importance to the role of therapy in curing diseases. From the discussion of *Caraka Samhita*, it is found that the patients die in spite of being treated by therapy is incorrect because therapy is never impotent in respect of curable diseases. Even if patients recover without the entire therapy, it is not correct to say that the administration of total therapy does not contribute to the recovery. For instance, someone helps a fallen person to get up, the person is able to get up and stand up more quickly and easily. The patients who die even after the total therapy, they all are not liable to recover after therapeutic administration because not all diseases are curable by means of various sorts of therapy.

The *Ayurveda* thus, should not be supposed to go against the law of *karma*. In their final explanation, to answer some 'why' questions the *Ayurveda* takes recourse to the *karma* doctrine. Some considerations very early led Indian thinkers to work out, a pair of notions not only to be found in medical literature, but also in other texts. It consists in the opposition between *daiva* and *purusakara*. *Daiva* literally means what comes to us from above and from the God - and corresponds to what we usually call fate, that is a transcendent opaque power which bestows us a happy or unhappy destiny, sometimes the one, sometimes the other, without enabling us to understand the cause for its action. On the contrary, *purusakara* literally means human action and it also stands for human initiatives, the human answer to the blows of fate. In an Indian context, *daiva* is nothing but another word for *Karma* with its fatalistic meaning. According to the *Ayurveda*, the *purusakara*, of course, means the combined efforts of the doctor and his patient to overcome impaired health.

It may be argued side by side that in spite of the difference between these two concepts, these two may not be regarded to be opposite to each other rather they are mutually complementary. *Daiva*, from this point of view, is taken not only as unseen fate but it is accepted as effect which is born by one's own *karma* in an earlier life, stored up as unseen forces either as merit or demerit and controlled by the God. In this connection, it is noticed that the *Nyaya* philosopher has also been suggested that '*daiva*' is only the result of karmic forces kept in store for a span of life until the moment of maturation and to establish this thesis, they have developed their concept of *adrsta*. However, the *Nyaya* account of *adrsta* is somehow not similar to the concept of *daiva*. In fact, the notion of *adrsta* has been upheld by them as a quality (*guna padartha*) of the substance (*dravya*)

and the substance is the empirical self of the individual. But the concept of *Daiva* is not similar to the theory held by the Naiyayikas.

### ***Daiva & Purusakara***

Granting that the concept of *daiva* does not mean the unseen fate, but it may be taken to suggest the result of *adrsta karma* of previous life. An analysis may be undertaken as to what extent such a notion of *daiva* is compatible with the notion of *purusakara*. The schools who have regarded the two notions as mutually supportive to each other has to be considered in this chapter. In this connection, it has been noticed that *daiva* does not mean the blind force of any unseen power. It is the work of the individual himself accomplished in the previous life of which at present there is no recollection in the individual's conscious mind. But whatever name one attaches to that *daiva* or *adrsta Karma*, the effect on the individual remains almost same and the individual has no control over such forces.

In the *Caraka Samhita*, the *Karma* has been classified into two types, i.e., *daiva* and *purusakara*. In the *Vimanasthana* of *Caraka Samhita*, the distinction between *daiva* and *purusakara* has been described. The *Karma* which is done during past life is known as *daiva* where the effect is predetermined. The *karma* that is done during the present life is known as *purusakara* and in this case the effect is based upon the human effort. The famous verse given in the *Caraka Samhita* is:

*"Daivam atmakrtam vidyat karma yat paurvadaihi kam .*

*Smrtah purusakarastu kriyate yadihaparam".<sup>11</sup>*

In this connection, it is found that according to the classical Indian philosophy, the *karmas* of an individual may be divided into three heads and these are *sancita*, *prarabdha* and the *kriyamana karmas*. It may be said that the *karmas* accumulated through ages are *sancita* and amongst such *karmas* the types of *karmas*, which are supposed to be the cause of the present life, are regarded as *prarabdha*. That means, *prarabdha karma* refers to such *karma* of the previous life which is to be fructified in the present life whenever there is appropriate situation and that cannot be avoided by the individual's present effort. On the contrary, *purusakara*, is, however, supposed to have effort upon the present living state only in so far as the other type of *sancita karma* is taken into account. Such *karmas* are called as *kriyamana karmas*.

However, taking into account these two factors of *daiva* and *purusakara*, we may think of three possible ways of relating them. Firstly, human effort is superior to *daiva*. Secondly, *daiva* is all important and human effort is not so much important; and thirdly both *daiva* and *purusakara* are equally important. If one accepts the second alternative, he has to admit that happiness and sufferings, that all creatures undergo, are under the control of destiny and in that case, if the destiny is favorable, the person will get good results, But if the destiny is unfavorable for a person, then the consequences may not be good at all times. Again, if we consider the first alternative, then it is applicable only in the case of *kriyamana karmas*. In the case of *kriyamana karmas*, an individual cannot achieve anything by itself without the aid of human effort. Suppose, someone acquires and comes into wealth, and it is dictated by destiny, then obviously the question may arise about the usefulness of that wealth for a good purpose and this may be considered as a matter of personal choice and effort. In this way, human effort may be superior to *daiva*.

But if someone favors for the third alternative, i.e. *daiva* and the *purusakara*, are both important, then it is found that *daiva* stands for the accumulated *karmas* of the individual in the previous lives and on the contrary, *purusakara* means the human effort or *krti* of the individual in his present life. However, if we go through the theory of *Ayurveda*, it is observed that the life span of a certain individual depends both on *daiva* and *purusakara*. In the light of the various ayurvedic texts, these two concepts cease to be absolutely opposed but they are actually complementary to each other. According to the *Ayurveda*, these two in unbalanced way cause diseases while in balanced way one will prevent from those diseases. *Caraka Samhita* also explains karma as an important factor in causing diseases, in limiting the efficacy of therapeutic measures the incurable character of certain diseases and the different disorders in physical and mental make up is also due to the previous *karmas*.

But one may ask that if all the diseases are determined by the law of *karma*, then what the role of a therapist is at all. In this connection, if we take into account the concept of *purusakara* and this means the combined efforts of the doctor and his patient to restore impaired health, then it would be possible for someone to properly explain the therapeutic measures. In this connection, the question is: how the concept of *daiva* and the concept of *purusakara* affect each other in the life of the individual as well as they reflects effects on the society. From the point of view of *Ayurveda*, it is found that the life of an individual depends both upon the *daiva* and the *purusakara*. Analyzing each and every corner of *Caraka Samhita*, it is found that things will be entirely different from the moment when *karmas* is itself understood from the point of view of *purusakara* . From the medical point of view, indeed, it is usually believed that, properly speaking, there is no

unexpected disease but that diseases and disabilities are the result of lack of hygiene, carelessness and wrong diet. And above all other factors, they have paid more attention to all those general causes, i.e., the disequilibria of the three *dhatu*s, i.e., *vayu*, *pitta* and *kapha*. If the physical body of an individual is maintained by the equilibrium of these three *dhatu*s, then the individual would not be a patient and he will always be free from any kind of diseases either physical or mental.

In this connection, it is found in the *Caraka Samhita* that all kind of diseases of an individual may be classified into two groups and these two groups are ordinary diseases and the critical type of diseases. Another division of the kind of diseases is *agantuka*, *sahajata* and some kind of mental diseases. It must be noticed that '*sahajata*' diseases are caused for certain physical disabilities in the body, the '*agantuka*' diseases are caused for the disequilibria of the five *bhutas* and the psychological diseases are caused by the non-fulfillment of desires.<sup>12</sup>

In this connection, one question may arise: is there any therapy to prevent from those diseases. In the *Caraka Samhita*, it is found that there are three kinds of therapy for releasing the bodily as well as mental diseases. These are spiritual, rational and psychological.<sup>13</sup> The spiritual therapy consists of reciting the mantras, wearing roots etc. The rational therapy consists of rational administration of diets and drugs. And the psychological therapy consists in restraining mind from the unwholesome objects and providing mental happiness to the individual. In this context, from the *Ayurveda* point of view, the ordinary frequent diseases whose karmic part, though not quite disclaimed, and is tacitly disregarded. But on the other side, there are rare diseases that are commonly

understood as being the sole result of *karmas*. The first kind of diseases is considered as curable diseases and their detections and treatment constitute the bulk of therapeutic practice. As to the other ones, i.e., in the case of leprosy (*Kausta*) and tuberculosis (*Yakshman*), these are considered as the punishment for particularly serious crimes such as murdering a *brahmin* or stealing his gold in the previous life. As such, they are thought to be incurable to such an extent that the doctor can resort only to a palliative treatment. Though they cannot be cured, these diseases do not call for a fatal prognosis. For sometimes, we may come across a remission; even a spontaneous, total or partial, recovery may be observed. From the chapter V of *Nidanasthana* of *Caraka Samhita*, the diagnosis of leprosy may be expounded. In that text, it is found that there is no *kustha* which is caused by the vitiation of one *dosa*.

According to this *Caraka Samhita*, seven materials that affected morbidly are the causative sources of *kustha* and the three *dhatu*s, i.e., *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* are vitiated by the etiological factors and there are also four *dusya sarira dhatu*s, i.e., *twak*, *mamsa*, *rakta* and *lasika* that are affected with affliction by *dosas*. These seven materials, in this way, are causative factors of seven types of *kustha*. But in this chapter, nothing more will be discussed regarding this issue. The only thing that might be explained is that the person who neglects the disease in early stage considering it as curable one is regarded as if dead after a lapse of time. One, who applies remedy properly prior to the disease or in its early stage, enjoys happiness for long time. Hence, the cases, which are curable, are considered to be as exceptions to the law of *karma*.

## **The Mental Diseases**

Again, the diagnosis of epilepsy is also found in the chapter VIII of *Nidanasthanam* of *Caraka Samhita*. According to the Ayurvedic text, there are four types of epilepsy, e.g., that are caused by *vata*, *pitta*, *kapha* and *sannipata*. Epilepsy arises shortly in such human beings whose mind is disturbed by *rajas* and *tamas*. This kind of disease can actually be defined as the transient appearance of unconsciousness with the expression due to the derangement of memory, intelligence and mind. Thus, this type of disease may be enlisted as a mental disease.

However, there is an interesting area where all the psychologists and psychoanalysts try to explain the nature of these types of mental diseases in their own way. It is our task to find out how the Ayurvedic literature tries to deal with this kind of matter. It is noticed that the ordinary curable diseases and the incurable diseases are loaded with the previous *karmas*, and among those diseases, the *Ayurveda* ranks mental diseases in a category of their own. This is specially an interesting case since it enables us to understand how the medical thought of ancient India paradoxically succeeds in making use of the very notion of *karma*. Traditionally for instance in *Ayurveda*, mental diseases and their symptoms like delirium, hallucination, aggressive or phobic behavior can be understood in terms of attacks or possession by several categories of demons like *yaksha*, *rakkasa* and *vetala* etc. or even ghosts who are dissatisfied for not having been honored with the funeral rites from their descendents. In these cases, medical thought unfolds into several stages. It suggests first that these demons are the means of bearing fruits and so they become the agent of those actions. The Ayurvedic texts also explain the history of a tortured individual due to his personal negative *karma*. Moreover, these kind of impious deeds are

said to proceed from a general attitude, i.e. , lacking in wisdom - '*prajna aparadha*' , On the basis of such reasoning , the properly religious notion of sins committed in a previous life no longer considerably differs from the secular ones . It then also ensures that despite difference in symptoms, such as the organic diseases are due to the different disorder and the psychic diseases are due to recklessly visiting at night such places of evil fame and this may lead to a unified conception of disorders. In other words, the therapist may equate ordinary, psychic as well as organic diseases with what *Ayurveda* considers as the very essence of morbidity that is a certain lack of balance among the fundamental components of the organism, i.e., the disequilibria of the three *dhatu*s, i.e., *vayu*, *pitta* and *kapha*. Thus, there is no specialty in the case of mental diseases according to *Ayurveda*.

### **The special case of epidemics**

In the *Ayurveda*, the individual sin as well as the collective sin has been considered. Hitherto, only the nature and the different types of individual sins have been discussed. In the case of the discussion about the collective sin, it is found that the natural catastrophes, i.e., floods, forest fires, earthquakes etc. present a particular problem to the theory of *karma*, as they end with the almost simultaneous destruction of a large number of individual lives. According to the classical Indian way of thinking, these unhappy events cannot but be the result of karmic retribution of the previous life. In the case of natural catastrophes in which thousands of people may die together, the rule of strictly individual karmic retribution presents a serious problem, how can the maturing process of actions - in this case - probably more or less ancient deeds - running parallel within thousands of independent individual series suddenly converge to one, and the same, tragic end? Now,

with epidemics, which are more or less within their scope, doctors also meet with this problem?

The Ayurvedic literature is not an exception of this karmic rule. They must keep to the principle of a karmic origin of epidemics while taking into account the regularly attested presence of such original causes in stricken areas. In front of this situation, medical treatises, particularly that of *Caraka* - following a regressive method. In the chapter three of *Vimana Sthanam* of *Caraka Samhita*, the specific features and the causes of epidemics has been discussed. In this connection, one question may arise : how a single epidemic disease affect the persons having dissimilar constitution, food, body, strength, suitability, mind and age simultaneously [*Sutra* -5]. To reply, in the *Caraka Samhita*, it is found that even though the persons differ in dissimilar entities like constitution, etc, there are other common factors due to the derangement of which the diseases having similar period and symptoms arise and destroy the community. These common factors in communities are - air, water, place and time. Again, from noted symptoms, their description, their distribution among the populations and their geographical localization, the *Ayurveda* first try to identify the polluting elements present in the surroundings- air, water, and earth - of the affected groups. So doing, they pay a particular attention to the recently and especially obvious elements. The followers of *Ayurveda* have to postulate that, when, in a given area, phenomena have not occurred according to a normal regularity, it means that the inhabitants of the area were, sometime in the past, guilty of particularly serious offences to social morals and, so, have incurred, if not divine retribution - as Sodom and Gomorrha in the Bible - they bear at least the effect of the natural consequences of their acts.

One may remark that this particular way to link karmic causality with the natural causality does not entirely solve the problem inherent to the individual and to the individualistic character of karmic retribution. But it has to be kept in mind that according to the different Ayurvedic literatures, two types of sinful persons have been found and they are ordinary and extra-ordinary sinful persons. The persons whose diseases can be or may be cured in the future, they are considered to be the ordinary sinful persons. But the persons who have difficult diseases like *koustha*, epilepsy and other kind of serious diseases, they are considered to be the extra- ordinary sinful persons. In this connection, it has to be found that the medical treatises continuously waver between two hypotheses. Either they assume that, in the past, a real collective sin was committed and produced a collective *Karma*, or they fall back on the idea of innumerable separate individual karmas happening - nearly miraculously - to reach maturity together. This being admitted, they have to resume their therapeutic measures and try to continue it with the properly religious *Karma*.

In the *Ayurveda*, it has been stated that people do not suffer, in spite of the derangement of the four factors such as air, water, earth and time, if they are managed with preventive therapy. For those individuals who have no similarity in either death or previous deeds, five fold therapies are the best treatment. Truthfulness, benevolence, charity, offerings worship of Gods, observance of celibacy and company of those who are observing celibacy, discourse of religious scriptures, narratives of self controlled great sages , constant company with religious , pure and those regarded by the elders - these are management for the protection of life for those whose death is not certain during that difficult period .The Ayurvedists have also found the source or the root cause of the

derangement of all the four factors and this is unrighteousness. And this unrighteousness also arises from the misdeeds of the previous life. Suppose, when the heads of the country, city and community having transgressed the virtuous path deal unrighteous with the people, their officers and subordinates, people of the city and community carry this Unrighteousness further. In this way, this unrighteousness or '*adharmā*' by force makes the righteousness or '*dharma*' disappears. Then the people having righteousness may not seem and are abandoned even by Gods. In that case, sometimes the epidemics break out due to polluted contacts. Likewise, unrighteousness is also the cause of the destruction of the community by weapons. It is also the cause of the diseases arisen due to cursing. In the treatises of *dharma* of the type - laws of *Manu* - these religious practices are believed to be able preventively-before fruition -to render at least some small or medium types of negative *Karma* harmless. And let us not forget a third way to solve the problem, a radical one because it cuts the Gordian knot rather than unties it. It consists in making only one person responsible for the epidemics. This was relevant in ancient India where, to some extent, the king was actually considers as the owner of his kingdom and of its inhabitants. He, then through his personal misdemeanor, could have called misfortune not only on himself but also on all his subjects. It was, then, his duty, both privately and publicly to practice expiatory and propitiatory rites.

In this connection, another important point must be noticed and that is the issue of rebirth. Actually, in this classical Indian way of thinking, the theory of rebirth is the corollary of the *karma* theory. A fundamental rule of the theory of *karma* is 'as you sow, so you shall reap' and to get the karmic retributions of the previous life the individual has to be reborn again and again. According to the *karma* theory, the individual who does any

*sakama karma* and the individual who reaps the result of that *karma* have to be the same person. In that case, if the belief in *karmavada* will be the logical basis of accepting the theory of rebirth, and if one accepts the theory of rebirth, then one has to admit the other notion, the notion of '*jatismara*'. The concept of '*jatismara*' has been found in the *Caraka Samhita*.<sup>14</sup> From this text; it has been found that the 'psyche' of 'mind' is an essential and necessary property of an individual. This psyche is of three types –*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*.<sup>15</sup>

The *Ayurveda* has a strong belief in the permanent self. Some questions have been raised in this connection and there is a long imaginary discussion between lord *Atreya* and *Maitreya* regarding the nature of the personal individual self. According to *Caraka Samhita*, the personal self can be known as the cause of all kinds of valid knowledge. In this connection, a very good example has been presented in the *Caraka Samhita* to establish the existence of the personal self. As the pitcher is incomplete without a potter, though the clay, stick and wheel are present, so also the body of an individual is also incomplete without, the existence of a permanent self, though the other instrumental organs are present. <sup>16</sup>This personal self is also different from the supreme self. In this context, this branch of study also indicates that there are two kinds of self and these are supreme self that is devoid of any kind of ignorance, desire and aversion. The other kind of self is personal self, which is full of ignorance, desire and aversion.

This personal self is eternal in nature and it has the special quality, i.e., '*samskara*', which controls everyday actions, lives and also the characters of the individuals. According to the *Ayurveda*, the qualities, which are dominant in the present birth of the self connects

the subsequent birth as well as the previous birth of an individual. These qualities may give some impressions in the present life of that individual. Now, if the psyche is pure, then one recollects the incidents of the previous birth. There are many *samskara* of the past life regarding different matters, but if there is no stimulant, and then there is no question of the rise of the *samskara* of the appropriate situation. But to some individual, some *samskaras* of the past in association with the proper stimulant gets imprinted in the present life and the individual can or may recollect some of the incidents of the past life. This sort of recollection or the reaccumulation of knowledge comes forth by the association of the mind with the self on the basis of which the person has been called as '*jatismara*'. Simultaneously it has been kept in mind that the person who is a '*jatismara*' could not recollect all of his past events. However, this kind of admission of a '*jatismara*' is a very novel one to the western thinkers and they may raise objections against this notion. But, according to the classical Indian way of thinking, it is not so novel for most of the Indian philosophers belonging to the *astika* tradition have a strong belief about the past life of an individual and impacts of the past deeds on an individual.

## Notes and References

1. *Sutra 26, chapter - 30, sutrasthana, Caraka Samhita* , Vol -1, edited and translated by Prof. Priyabrat Sharma, Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi, 1981
2. *Sarirandriya sattvamsamyogo dhari jivitam, Sutra -42, Sutrasthanam, Caraka Samhita*, ibid
3. *Hitahitam sukham duhkhamayustasya hitahitam, Sutra 41, sutrasthanam*, ibid
4. *Vikaro dhatuvaisamyam , samyam prakrtirupyate, sukha sangakamarogyarh, vikaro dukhameva Ca', Sutra - ,4, chapter - 9, Sutrasthanam, Carakasamhita*, ibid
5. *'Rukmah sito laghuh sukmascalohthavisadah kharah, Sutra- 59, chapter – 1, Sutrasthanam, Caraka Samhita* , ibid
6. *'Sasnehamusnam tikhnam Ca dravyammlam saram kadu, Sutra- 60, Chapter -1, Sutrasthanam, Caraka Samhita*, ibid
7. *'Gurusiltamridusnigdha madhura sthira picchilah', Sutra - 61, Chapter- 1, Sutrasthanam, Caraka Samhita*, ibid
8. *Trayo rogah iti - nijagantumanasah, Sutra 44, Chapter - xi, Sutrasthanam, Carakasamhita*, ibid

9. *Tribidhamausadhamiti-daivavyapasrayam, yuktivyapasayam, sattvavapasayam* ,  
*Sutra - 54* , chapter xi , *Sutrasthanam* , *Caraka Samhita* ,ibid.
10. *'tatbhesajam yuktivyuktam alam arogyayoti* , ibid
11. *Sutra 30*, chapter - III, *Vimana sthanam*, *Caraka Samhita*, ibid
12. *'Trayo rogah iti nijdgantumanasah'*, *sutra - 45*, chapter - 11, *Sutrasthanam*,  
*Carakan Samhita* ,ibid
13. *Trividhamausadhamiti – daivayapasrayam yuktivyapasrayam sattvabajayasca*,  
*sutra – 54*, Chapter – 11, *Sutrasthanam*, *Caraka Samhita*,ibid
14. *Sutra - 13*, chapter - III, *Sarira sthanam*, *Caraka Samhita*,ibid
15. It may be said that the metaphysics of the Ayurvedic literature is some how similar to the *Samkhya* metaphysics. The *Samkhya* School clarifies the three gunas as the modifications of mind. *Sattva guna* of the mind is of the nature of pleasure. The *Raja guna* of the mind is of the nature of misery. The *Tama guna* of the mind is of the nature of indifference. Every individual's bodily structure is a *guna-complex*, i.e. a complex of three components, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.
16. *"Krtam mrd - dandacakraisca kumbhakara dyate ghatam. Yo vadet sa vadeheham sambhuya karanaih krtam. Vina kartaramajnanady uktyagama vahis krtah "*,  
*Sutra - 43 - 44*, chapter - 1, *Sarira - Sthanam*, *Caraka Samhita*, ibid