

Reading C

Ayurveda

Suman was very happy that morning. She had rightly recognized some of the important herbs that her grandmother wanted her to bring from the backyard. Dadi had many little patches of the backyard where wild herbs were cared for. There were Lycopodium, Bhringraj and Aloe vera. She liked the names and wanted to see how Dadi prepared medicines from the herbs.

“Dadi, we eat so many fruits and vegetables. But how do wild plants make medicines when some people say they are poisonous?”

All plants have some special features and medical science owes the cure of many chronic diseases to the plant kingdom. Nature opens itself to Ayurveda with a cure to the chemical and biological imbalance.

“Dadi, have you studied all about Ayurveda?” Suman asked.

“I will have to study the whole of Ayurveda all my life, I have only learnt a little till now.”

“Will you tell me something about it?” Suman asked curiously.


There are several systems of medicines in the world. These mainly include: Allopathy, Homeopathy and Ayurveda. Allopathy is today the mainstream system of health care and treats the physical systems by using tried out medicines. Homeopathy is based on the doctrine of ‘like cures like’ whereby a substance that causes the symptoms of a disease in healthy people will cure similar symptoms in sick people. Ayurveda is the ancient Indian system of natural and holistic medicine. When translated from Sanskrit, Ayurveda means ‘the science of life.’ The Sanskrit root *ayur* means ‘longevity’ or ‘life’ and *veda* means ‘science.’

While allopathic medicine tends to focus on the management of disease, Ayurveda provides us with the knowledge of how to prevent disease and how to eliminate its root cause if it does occur.

“How old is this science?” Suman looked into Dadi’s wrinkled face.

“Quite old. The knowledge of Ayurveda was passed on orally for thousands of years through a lineage of sages in India until it was collated into a text,” said Dadi smiling.

“The oldest known texts on Ayurveda are the *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and the *Ashtanga Hrudaya*. These texts detail the effect that the five elements found in the cosmic system – earth, water, air, fire, space – have on our individual system, and expound on the importance of keeping these elements balanced for a healthy and happy



life. Ayurveda places great importance on one's *pathya*, or lifestyle (eating habits and daily routine). Ayurveda also provides guidance on how to adjust our lifestyle based on the change of seasons. According to Ayurveda, each person will be influenced by certain elements more than others. This is because of their *prakriti*, or natural constitution. Ayurveda categorizes the different constitutions into three different doshas.

Yes, according to Ayurveda, each one of us has a unique mix of three mind/body principles which are responsible for our 'unique' physical, mental and emotional characteristics. These doshas are the 'governing principles' of 'Intelligence' that literally govern everything in the universe...and therefore each one of us...including you!"

"Dadi, what kind of doshas are they?" Wrong things? Suman tried to confirm.

The three doshas are known as Vata, Pitta, & Kapha. Understand these three doshas and how to influence them and you literally hold the reins of life in your hand. As the doshas govern 'everything,' if you know how to balance them, you can eliminate ill-health, create perfect balance and therefore enjoy ideal health...without any need for an external expert, doctor, guru or anyone or anything outside your own 'self'.

According to Ayurveda, everything consists of different proportions of five fundamental elements - space, air, fire, water and earth.

Vata is expressed as 'space and air' and is responsible for all 'communication and movement.' It's qualities are light, dry, changeable, quick, cold & subtle...like the 'wind.' Vata Dosha - the space and air - energy that controls bodily functions associated with motion, including blood circulation, breathing, blinking, and your heart beat. If kept in balance, it leads to creativity and vitality. When out of balance it produces fear and anxiety.'

"But Dadi, how is air, water, fire or earth felt in our bodies?" Suman looked confused.

"Listen carefully. Pitta is seen as fire and a little bit of water. Pitta governs all "energy and transformation" in our bodies and the universe. Its qualities are like fire - hot, intense, sharp, dynamic, sour/acidic, related to colour (red, orange, yellow etc). This is *the energy that controls* the body's metabolic systems, including digestion, absorption, nutrition, and your body's temperature in proper system it leads to contentment and intelligence. Losing balance can cause ulcers and anger.

Kapha is dominantly expressed as water and earth. As such it is almost the exact opposite of Vata dosha. It is heavy, slow, non-changing, sweet and moist/ oily. Kapha governs all 'structure and lubrication.' This is the energy that controls growth in the body. It supplies water to all body parts, moisturizes the skin, and maintains the immune system. It is expressed as love and forgiveness. Lacking in adjustment, it can lead to insecurity and envy".

Suman, it is interesting to know that people can be identified by their tendencies to the doshas. Dadi said, ‘Whether you go to an allopathic, homeopathic or an ayurvedic doctor, you must always go to the professional doctor if you are not well. Taking any medicine without professional advice can be dangerous.’

Meanings in context

doctrine	:	a set of principles or beliefs
eliminate	:	to remove completely
cosmic system	:	belonging or related to universe
dominate	:	to be the most powerful or important
steadiness	:	not likely to change quickly
tendency	:	an unpleasant habit or action that keeps an occurring

Comprehension

Answer the following questions.

1. What was the task given to Suman by her *dadi*?
2. Why did *dadi* need the herbs?
3. List the various systems of medicines prevalent in the world.
4. How are the three systems of medicine different from one another?
5. What are the basic principles of Ayurveda?
6. What effects do the five basic elements in the universe have on us?
7. What are the three energies (doshas)? List them.
8. How are people with *vata/pitta/kapha* different from one another in the functions of their body?
9. Name a well known person in your town who runs ‘a health care centre’. Which system of medicine does he/she practice?

Vocabulary

I. Read the following sentences carefully and tick (✓) the correct meanings of the underlined words.

- Vata* people are very easy to recognize.
(a) mix up (b) identify
(c) to be friendly with (d) socialize
- Kapha* people are easy going and relaxed.
(a) calm (b) social
(c) open minded (d) talkative
- Pitta* people are very energetic and organized, warm and friendly.
(a) well-planned (b) sincere
(c) honest (d) lively
- Usually one *dosha* or two are dominant in a person.
(a) famous (b) powerful
(c) exceptional (d) significant

II. Fill in the missing letters to form the correct spelling of the words.

- _y_rv_d_
- D_m_n_nt
- R_c_gn_z_
- B_l_nc_
- M_xt_r_
- C_nf_d_nt

III. Circle the odd word out in the following sets of words.

- ayurveda, homeopathy, allopathy, medicine
- health, personality, diet, nutrition
- organised, efficient, tidy, well-ordered
- energetic, enthusiastic, tired, refreshing
- aggressive, relaxed, calm, confident

IV. Find two words from the passage that are related to the words/phrases given below.

eg.: metabolism: circulation, breathing

- doshas* :
- elements of nature :
- system of medicine :

Passives

Look at the sentences given below.

- i. The chief guest *was welcomed* by the principal
- ii. The library *was arranged* by the students.

The above sentences are in passive. In active voice, we can write these sentences as :

- iii. The principal welcomed the chief guest
- iv. The students arranged the library

In sentences (i) and (ii) the action is more important than the doer (Passive) whereas in sentences (iii) and (iv) doer is more important (Active)

Now, consider these sentences from the text:

- a. The knowledge of Ayurveda *was passed* on orally for thousands of years through a lineage of sages in India until it *was collated* into a text.
- b. Dadi had many little patches of the backyard where wild herbs *were cared for*.
- c. Pitta *is seen as* fire and a little bit of water.
- d. Kapha *is* dominantly *expressed as* water and earth.

- **A passive sentence begins with the person or thing that receives the action. It must have a passive verb.**

Passive sentence : The door was painted by Ashok yesterday.

Eg. : *Active sentence* : Ashok painted the door yesterday.

- **When we change a sentence from the active voice to the passive voice, the tense of the verbs has to remain the same.**

Eg. : Pitta governs all energy and transformation. (*active voice, present tense*)

All energy and transformation are governed by Pitta. (*passive voice, present tense*)

Tense	Active voice	Passive voice
Simple Present	main verb example : give	am/are/is + past participle of verb example : am given
Simple past	main verb example : given	was/were + past participle of verb example was given
Present continuous	am/are/is + main verb with 'ing' example : is giving	am/are/is + being + past participle of verb example : is being given
Past continuous	was/were+main verb with 'ing' exmaple : were giving	was/were + being + past participal of verb example : were being giving

- **When we change a sentence from the passive voice, we need to make sure the verb agrees with the subject in number.**

Eg.: The sages describe the three *doshas* as *Vata, Pitta, & Kapha*. (*active*)
 The three *doshas* are described as *Vata, Pitta, & Kapha* by sages. (*passive*)

- **When we do not know who did the action or what was the cause of action, a passive sentence does not contain an agent.**

Eg.: The documents have been checked.

Present passive : eg.: Kapha *is* dominantly *expressed as* water and earth.

1. Put the verbs in brackets in correct form to complete the sentences.

- Our neighbour, Mrs Singh, (accompany) us to the market every Saturday.
- The small city (illuminate) by thousands of multi-coloured lights at night during Navaratri.
- It is a big factory. One thousand people..... (employ) here.
- Most of the Earth's surface (cover) by water.

2. These are some instructions from a computer operating manual.

- Link up the monitor, keyboard and printer.
- Plug in the main cable.
- Switch on the monitor at the back.
- When the light appears on the screen, place the Day Disk in Drive A.
- Push in the disk until the button clicks out.
(It takes about 30 seconds for the computer to load the programme.)
- Press the Drive button and the disk shoots out.
- Replace the Day Disk with the Document Disk.
- Press function key 7.
- Start work!

- **Change the instructions into present passive by filling in the blanks.**

First the monitor keyboard and printer are linked up. Then the _____ is _____. The monitor is _____ at the back. When the light \ appears on the screen _____ in Drive A. The disk is _____ until the _____. About 30 seconds _____ by computer to load the program. The drive button _____ and the disk shoots out. The Day Disk _____ with the Documents Disk. Finally the function key _____. The word processor is then ready to use.