

Concept Of Yoga As Depicted In The Primary Ayurvedic Texts

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Abstract:

Ayurveda is a holistic medical system that originated in India thousands of years ago. This system aims to prevent illness, heal the sick and preserve life. This can be summarized as follows: To protect health, prolong life, and eliminate diseases and bodily dysfunctions. *Yoga* and *Ayurveda* provide lifestyle recommendations for better health, longevity and disease prevention as well as special methods for rejuvenation of body and mind. Acharya Charaka specifically describes the state of higher achievements of *Yoga* practice, including the ultimate realization, i.e. *Satya-Buddhi*, the achievement of *Siddhis* or *Aisvaryas*.

Keywords-*Well-being, Ayurveda, Arogya,*

1. Introduction-

Yoga and *Ayurveda* are closely allied disciplines that originated in ancient India and have shared a common philosophical and scientific foundation for holistic health since their inception. In the present era, both systems are moving toward a more purposeful and integrated union as contemporary healthcare increasingly recognizes the value of preventive, promotive, and holistic approaches. *Ayurveda*, once viewed largely as a traditional system, is now being reorganized and revived as a complete health science, addressing not only diseases but also lifestyle management, immunity, mental well-being, and personalized medicine to meet the emerging challenges of modern healthcare. Similarly, contemporary *Yoga* has evolved rapidly from its earlier association with spiritualism, mysticism, and esoteric practices into a scientifically validated discipline. It is now widely accepted for its therapeutic utility in managing lifestyle disorders, stress-related illnesses, mental health conditions, and rehabilitation. The mainstream development of *Yoga* today is clearly directed toward health promotion, disease prevention, and supportive therapy. In this context, *Yoga* and *Ayurveda* must collaborate to complement and strengthen each other, thereby forming a comprehensive and integrated science of health rooted in Eastern wisdom. The application of modern scientific methods for systematic study, standardization, and evaluation of these ancient sciences is essential to bring them into the mainstream healthcare system globally. Notably, several concepts and practices of *Yoga* are described in the primary Ayurvedic texts, namely the *Bṛhatrayi*—Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Vagbhata Samhita. These interconnections, elaborated in this research paper, highlight the profound integration of mind–body medicine in classical Indian medical literature.

Objective-

To explore the interrelationship between *Yoga* and *Ayurveda* in promoting holistic health, longevity, and disease prevention, and to highlight the higher states of realization and achievements (*Siddhi* or *Aisvarya*) as described by *Acharya Charaka*, *Acharya Susruta* and *Vagbhata* in the context of *Yogic* practice.

Methodology

The study is based on a literary review of classical Ayurvedic texts such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Susruta Samhita*, and *AṣṭangaHṛdaya*, along with commentaries and modern scholarly interpretations. A comparative and analytical approach is used to examine how *Yoga* and *Ayurveda* complement each other in maintaining health, preventing disease, and attaining higher spiritual realisation. The references are critically analysed to interpret the conceptual correlation between the *Ayurvedic* principles of *Swasthavṛtta*, *Rasayana*, and *Yogic* practices leading to *Satya Buddhi* and *Siddhi*

2. Definition of Yoga According to Acharya Charaka-The contact of the soul with the senses, the mind and objects of the senses lead to the experience of happiness and unhappiness. When the mind becomes concentrated and contained in the soul, supernatural powers are attained in the mind and body, and both these types of sensations disappear. According to the sages who are well versed in this science, this state is known as *Yoga*¹.

3. Integration of Yoga and Ayurveda for Well-being (According to Acharya Charaka)- *Ayurveda* is a science of living beings. A comprehensive view of life was developed to ensure *Arogya*, i.e. healthy life in all its dimensions, which was considered essential for achieving the four instincts of life: *Dharma, Artha, Kama*, and *Moksa* around which the entire *Hindu* thought swings². *Yoga* was an integral part of *Ayurveda*, as it served the same objectives. However, the primary aim of *Yoga* was not the achievement of the entirety of human instinct; it was essentially developed to achieve *Moksa*-“*YogoMoksaPravartaka*.” Thus, *Ayurveda* is the life science specifically concerned with the psych-spiritual development of an individual³. It may be noted that *Yoga* and *Ayurveda* share a similar concept of human existence. According to basic *Hindu* thought, life is the combination of *Sattva (Manas), Atma (spirit), Sarira (body), Indriyas (Senses)*⁴. The body and the mind have both been considered as the seat of disease⁵. *Yoga* and *Ayurveda* are allied disciplines. Both have advocated *Ausadhi, Mantra, Japa, Samadhi*, etc.⁶. Besides spiritual paths, *Yoga* also teaches the use of drugs for *Citta-Suddhi*. Similarly, besides *Ausadhi, Anna, Vihara* (drugs, diets, etc.), *Ayurveda* also teaches the practice of *Yoga*⁷. Thus, there is a similarity in the approach of these two human sciences, though the emphasis varies. *Yoga-Sutras* of *Patanjali* for *Citta-Suddhi* (Purification of mind). *Mahabhasya* of *Patanjali* for *Vani-Suddhi* (Purification of Speech). *Charaka Samhita* of *Charaka (Patanjali)* for *Sarirasuddhi* (The purification of the body). Thus, *Yoga* and *Ayurveda* are allied disciplines. (Yoga.Vartika) *Charaka Samhita*, one of the foremost *Ayurveda* classics, deals with the highest category of *Yoga*. It describes very vividly the concept of *Prajna* and the features of a *Yogastha-Purusa*, i.e. *sthitaprajna*, almost in a similar manner as the idea of *Rtambharaprajana* (The wisdom filled with truth) or described is *Yoga-Yoga-Sutras* of *Patanjali* and that of the *Yogastha-Purusa* in the *Bhagavad Gita*⁸

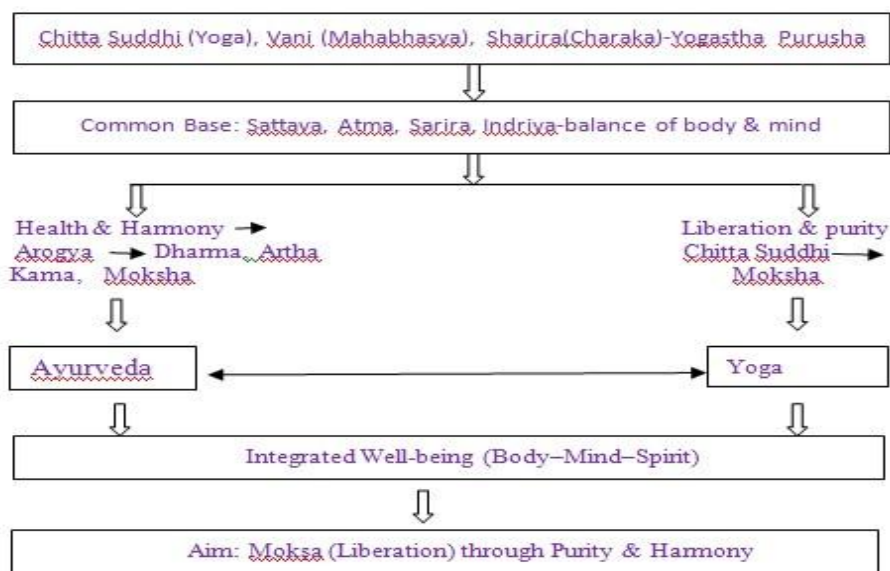


Figure 1: Yoga and Ayurveda as complementary paths for attaining physical health and spiritual liberation.

3.1 Sadvritta and Achara Rasayana: Ethics and Realisation in Charaka Samhita- *Yama* and *Niyama* are the good conduct of life at personal, social and spiritual levels. *Charaka* has described these concepts under the headings of *Sadvritta, Achara Rasayan*, and *Dharniya Mansika Samvegas*, among others. The psychosomatic disorders are the outcome of the modern way of life and changing value systems, and hence their incidence is rapidly increasing. These disorders may be prevented by necessary environmental corrections in both their physical and psychosocial dimensions, as well as personality transformation. *Achara Rasayana* is based on similar principles of *Yama, Niyama* of *Astanga Yoga*, which help to control the mind & prevent psychological disturbances. Thus, these not only prevent them but also help to treat psychosomatic diseases⁹. *Charaka* emphasises that the *Purusa*, the individual living being, is the miniature form of the *Loka*, the universe, “*Puroso-Ayam Lokasammita*”¹⁰. According to *Charaka*, the whole universe (*Loka*) is *Saddhatvatmaka* (Constituted by six *Dhatu*s, viz. *Prthvi, Jala, Vayu, Akasa* and the *Avyakta Brahma*). The Same six *Dhatu*s constitute the *Purush*, i.e. the living individual being¹¹. The realisation that the entire universe and the individual are the same is called *Satya-Buddhi* (real knowledge)-“*Sarvalokamanyatmamca Sarvaloka, Samanupasyatasatyabuddhirutpadyatiti*”¹².

The concept of *Satya-Buddhi* is a very fundamental thesis propounded by *Charaka*, which appears to be a more vividly defined and comprehensive entity than the *Rtambharaprajna* (The wisdom filled with truth) of *Patanjali*. *Patanjali*'s concept of *Rtambharaprajna* is completely incorporated in *Charaka*'s concept of *Satya-Buddhi*¹³. Thus, *Satya-Buddhi* is the state of realisation of the ultimate reality. It eliminates all miseries and leads to *Moksa*. *Charaka* says that *Svata* (Selfhood) or *Mamata* is the cause of all miseries. The moment *Satya-Buddhi* emerges, the *Atman* transcends *Svata*

(Mamata), i.e. self, and all worldly miseries end¹⁴. Charaka further says, “PravrttihDukhamnivrutihSukhamiti¹⁵. Pravriti is the cause of all miseries, and Nivruti is the source of real happiness. The Pravrtti is initiated by Karma (action). The Satya-buddhi transcends all Kamas and affords Nivruti. This Nivruti is considered to be a superb achievement¹⁶. Charaka says, “Nivrttirapavargastatparam tat prasantamtadaksaram tad Brahma SaMoksa¹⁷. The same has been considered synonymous with the ultimate realisation and Moksa¹⁸. Thus, Charakas describes the highest quality of a yogic achievement, Satya-Buddhi, and he also teaches humanity a path for a yogic achievement. His ethical teachings as a means of reaching higher consciousness are very comprehensively described in different contexts in his Samhita¹⁹. Besides the unique descriptions of the above-mentioned higher consciousness, Charaka also describes the Aisvaryas or Siddhis, attainable by a Yogi in the same manner as described by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras. The Aisvaryas described by Charaka are: the Ability to introduce one's spirit into another's body. Knowledge of all knowable things. Ability to do whatever one wishes to do. Divine vision. Divine sense of hearing. Divine memory. Divine complexion. Ability to appear or disappear²⁰. These are very much similar to the siddhis described by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras. These can be achieved by following the path of Yoga.

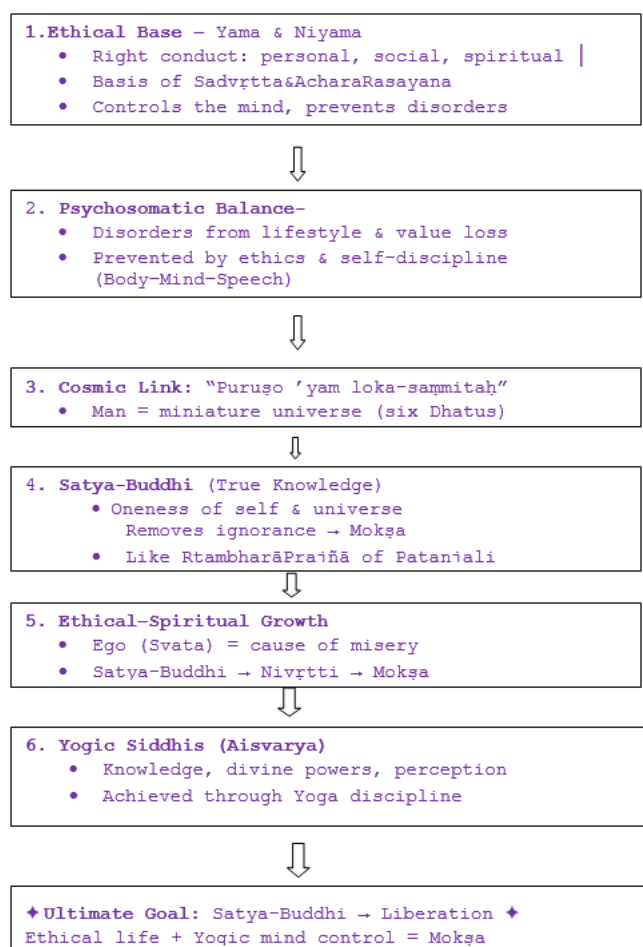


Figure 2: Ethical Discipline & Realisation of Satya-Buddhi in Charaka Samhita

4. Description of Yogic and Spiritual Practices in Susruta Samhita-According to Susruta Samhita-According to Susruta Samhita, another equally important Ayurvedic classic, these Aisvaryas can be achieved by the specialised use of the divine drug²¹. The Karmaja diseases (deeds done by a man in the present or any prior existence) are not curable through medicine. These can be cured by Prayascitta, Japa, Homa, and Upahara, etc., by reducing the Karmas of Part of life²². Hiccup should be treated through the practice of Pranayama. “PranayamodvejanaTrasanam²³. Austere penances and vows, self-control, truthfulness, charities and religious practices, as well as the eight qualities, i.e. Aisvaryas, are either wholly or partially present in the Grahas according to the degree of their respective power²⁴. These Grahas may be cured by only Saucha, Snana(bath), BrahmAcharya, etc, and chanting Gayatri Mantra²⁵. At the time of use of Soma, one should then wash and rines his mouth with water in the manner of Achamana. Then, having controlled his mind and speech with the vows of Yama and Niyama, he should stay in the protected inner chamber surrounded by his friends²⁶

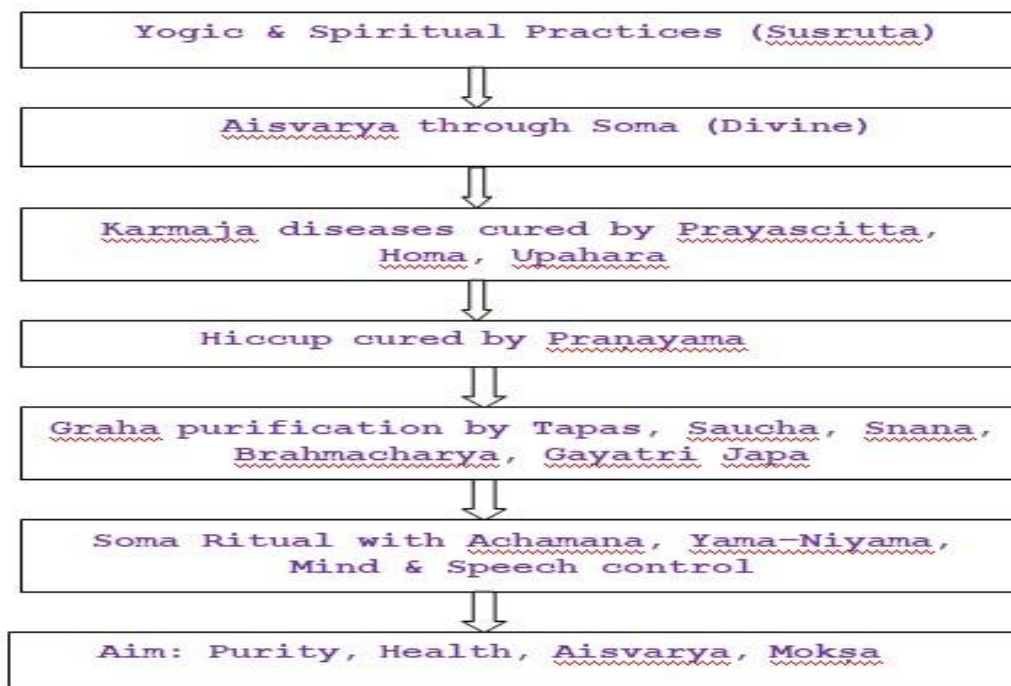


Figure 3: Spiritual discipline and holistic healing

5. Description of Concept of Yoga, Ksema, and Ethical Conduct According to Vagbhata—According to Vagbhata, acts such as *Hinsa* (violence), *Asteya* (theft), misconduct with women, conspiracy, use of harsh speech, falsehood, irrelevant or excessive talk, causing harm to others, jealousy, acquiring others’ wealth unjustly, and non-belief in God — these ten evils should never be practised through body, mind, or speech²⁷. One should be particularly careful about the purity of food, especially in the case of kings, as the prosperity and security of the kingdom — *Yoga* (attainment of the unattained) and *Ksema* (preservation of the attained) — depend upon them. The four goals of human life — *Dharma* (righteousness), *Artha* (wealth), *Kama* (desire), and *Moksha* (liberation) — are all related to this concept of *Yoga* and *Ksema*(preservation)²⁸. A person who maintains cleanliness (*Saucha*) of body and mind, faith in God, and other such noble qualities is said to possess a *RajasaPrakṛti* (active or passionate nature)²⁹. Those who attempt to understand or practice *Yoga* without proper means or discipline, relying merely on *Tapa* (austerity) or unmethodical efforts, are warned that such practices may even lead to death³⁰. In the treatment of *Murchha* (coma or fainting), it is advised to sprinkle the face with cold water until the fatigue is reduced, fan gently, then perform *Pranayama* (breath regulation by pressing the nose and mouth and holding the breath), followed by rubbing of the back and abdomen³¹. If the neck is compressed and the eyes are drawn inward (as in suffocation), the patient should be induced to vomit (*Vamana*), followed by *Utkasana* (coughing posture), sneezing (*Chhikka*), and *Pranayama* to restore normal breathing and consciousness³².

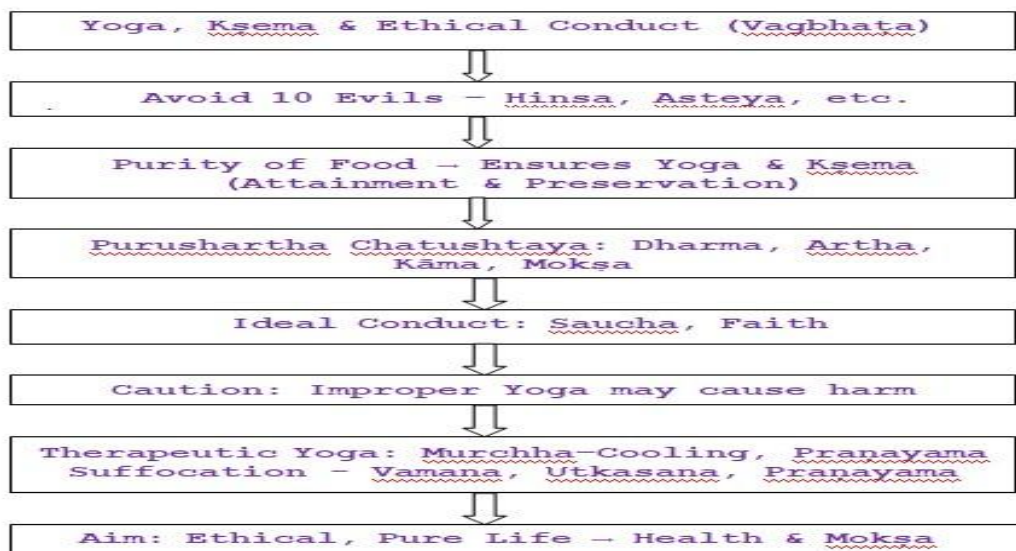


Figure 4: Ethical conduct and purity are vital for maintaining Yoga (attainment) and *Kṣema* (preservation).

6. Discussion-

6.1 Interrelationship between Yoga and Ayurveda—The contents of various chapters compiled in this paper would clearly show that *Yoga* and *Ayurveda* have many unique features that are hitherto unknown, and they can greatly enrich the current system of health care delivery and Medicare, besides their role in the uplift of the social and spiritual status of humanity at large. The basic concepts of *Yoga* are also incorporated with *Ayurveda*. *Yoga* and *Ayurveda* are both allied disciplines developed and practised in the same land during the same period—the art and science of both these disciplines developed in ancient India. *Ayurveda* envisages the total welfare of man, while *Yoga* specifically ensures his psycho-spiritual development. *Charaka* describes the highest form of *Yoga*, aiming at higher consciousness and the realisation of the ultimate reality of oneness of ‘self’ and the ‘whole’, i.e. *Satya-Buddhi*

6.2 Yoga as a Path from Liberation to Lifestyle and Wellness. - According to *Acharya Charaka*, Mankind has always tried to attain peace and happiness through all available means, as it is the basic instinct of every living being. In ancient times, the aim of life and *Yoga* science was somewhat different, i.e. the attainment of *Moksha* (liberation) as mentioned in the ancient Indian system of knowledge and *Ayurveda*, also in different contexts like the concept of *Purushartha Chatushtya*, and *Yoga-Moksha*, etc. But today, *Yoga* is known more popular for the promotion of health, prevention and even cure of diseases like diabetes mellitus, hypertension, bronchial asthma, thyroid disorder and obesity, etc, up to some extent. Thus, it is an ideal method of attaining mental peace free from the stress and strain of life, as well as the prevention of diseases, especially in urban areas.

6.3 Spiritual Discipline and Yogic Healing in *Susruta Samhita*—

According to *Susruta Samhita*, true healing extends beyond medicines—*Karmaja* diseases (arising from past deeds) are treatable only through *Prasyaschitta*, *Japa*, *Homa*, *Upahara*, and self-purification rituals. *Pranayama* is prescribed for ailments like hiccups, showing the therapeutic use of breath control. The text highlights *Yama-Niyama*, *Brahmacharya*, *Saucha*, *Snana*, and *Gayatri Mantra* chanting as means of mental and spiritual purification. The use of *Soma* requires strict discipline, self-control, and sanctified conduct, reflecting a deep union of *Ayurveda*, *Yoga*, and spirituality for holistic well-being and the realisation of higher consciousness.

6.4 Yogic Harmony, Kṣema, and Ethical Living in *Vagbhaṭa's Teachings*—According to *Vagbhaṭa*, one must avoid ten evils—violence, theft, misconduct, deceit, harsh or false speech, jealousy, greed, irreligion, and harmful intent—through body, mind, and speech. Purity of food and conduct ensures the well-being of both the individual and society, especially rulers, as *Yoga* (attainment of the unattained) and *Kṣema* (preservation of the attained) depend on moral stability. The four *Puruṣarthas*—*Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama*, *Mokṣa*—are harmoniously sustained by this ethical foundation. *Vagbhaṭa* also warns against improper yogic austerities without discipline, and prescribes *Pranayama* and related techniques in treating conditions like *Murchha* (fainting), showing the integration of *yoga*, ethics, and medical practice.

Conclusion—*Yoga* was initially not conceived as a health science, but the recent studies have revealed its potential as an answer to the growing incidence of anxiety, tension and psychosomatic diseases. But *Ayurveda* is a broad-based science of life developed with two-fold objectives, namely, to preserve the health of the healthy and to relieve the disease of the ailing. *Ayurveda* puts a great emphasis on the maintenance of positive health, but at the same time comprehends well the study of the nature of ill health and the curative measures for the treatment of different diseases. *Yoga* may serve the former objective of *Ayurveda*, i.e. preservation of positive health.

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