

Integrative Understanding of Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa in Ayurveda Samhitas

¹Dr.Bishnupriya Mohanty, ²Limaye Chinmayi Vaibhav

¹MD, PhD., Professor and HOD, Department of Sanskrit Samhita and Siddhanta, Gomantak Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya and Research Centre, Shiroda, Goa

²Final B.A.M.S., Gomantak Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya and Research Centre, Shiroda, Goa

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1308000023>

Received: 17 July 2026; Accepted: 22 July 2026; Published: 27 August 2026

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda describes a holistic approach to health in which physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects of life are interconnected. Classical Ayurvedic literature identifies three primary therapeutic modalities: Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa (spiritual therapy), Yuktivyapashraya Chikitsa (rational therapy), and Sattvavajaya Chikitsa (psychological therapy). Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa is considered particularly useful in diseases arising from Purvajanmakrut Karma, mental illnesses, and unknown environmental factors. This review explores the classical concepts of Daivavyapashraya, correlates them with modern neurobiology, epigenetics, and psychoneuroimmunology, and examines similar cross-cultural healing systems. The integration of these spiritual practices with contemporary medical approaches may provide a comprehensive and holistic model of healthcare.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa, Spiritual Therapy, Mantra Therapy, Holistic Medicine, Neuro-theology, Epigenetics.

INTRODUCTION

The Bio-Psycho-Spiritual Paradigm

In the contemporary medical landscape, the 'Biopsychosocial' model often falls short when addressing idiopathic chronic illnesses. Ayurveda, however, has traditionally utilized a Bio-Psycho-Spiritual framework. Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa is the technology designed to manage the 'unseen' or Adrishta factors of health. While Yuktivyapashraya (rational therapy) manages the physical hardware, Daivavyapashraya serves as a software update for the human consciousness, addressing the subtle energetic causes of pathology.

Defining “Daiva” and “Vyapashraya”

The etymology of the term provides insight into its clinical application. Daiva refers to that which is divine, related to fate, or the cumulative effect of past actions (Purvajanmakrut Karma). Vyapashraya signifies dependence, refuge, or taking shelter in a specific protocol. Together, they describe a system of therapy that utilizes spiritual and vibrational influences to restore a patient’s internal and external harmony.

The Clinical Necessity of Spiritual Healing

In the contemporary medical landscape, this modality serves as a bridge for conditions that modern science often labels as “idiopathic,” “genetic,” or “refractory”. Ayurveda identifies that when rational drug therapy (Yuktivyapashraya) fails despite a seemingly correct diagnosis, the etiology may lie in the subtle energy body rather than the physical tissues. By addressing the soul and the subtle “software” of the human being, Daivavyapashraya offers a pathway for healing diseases caused by:

- Past-life deeds (Karmaja Vyadhi)
- Mental illnesses with non-physical triggers.
- Unknown environmental or “providential” factors (Yadruchha).

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The Mechanics of Karma and Adrishta

At the heart of Daivavyapashraya is the Law of Karma. Ayurveda posits that diseases are not always the result of current lifestyle errors (Doshaja) but can arise from past actions (Karmaja). Daiva refers to the fruits of past actions that have matured (Prarabdha). These actions leave residual imprints on the Sookshma Sharira (subtle body), manifesting as biological vulnerabilities. Adrishta refers to 'unseen' variables—the idiopathic factors that explain why individuals with identical genotypes and environments react differently to the same stressors.

Deep Dive into Therapeutic Modalities

Mantra: Neuro-Acoustic Science

A Mantra is a specific sequence of phonemes designed to produce a predictable psychological or physiological effect. Ayurveda suggests sound (Shabda) travels through Akasha (space), influencing the vibrational frequency of energy channels (Nadis). Modern science correlates this with the Polyvagal Theory. Chanting stimulates the auricular branch of the Vagus nerve, increasing Nitric Oxide production and shifting the Autonomic Nervous System from a sympathetic 'fight or flight' state to a parasympathetic 'rest and repair' state.

Homa and Dhupana: Ethnopharmacology and Medicinal Smoke

Homa involves the ritualized combustion of medicinal woods and herbs. Medicinal smoke (Dhupana) acts as a rapid delivery system for phytochemicals, bypassing first-pass liver metabolism and crossing the blood-brain barrier. Research shows that certain Homa rituals reduce aerial microbial counts by up to 90%, serving as a form of environmental sterilization.

Mani (Gemstone Therapy) and Piezoelectricity

Ayurveda recommends specific gems to balance cosmic rhythms. Modern physics recognizes that crystals possess piezoelectric properties. When held against the human biofield, they may act as subtle resonators that stabilize electromagnetic frequencies, a concept currently being explored in biofield science.

Upavasa (Fasting): The Science of Autophagy

Fasting in Ayurveda is a spiritual vow with deep metabolic implications. Modern research into Autophagy confirms that periodic fasting triggers cellular 'cleaning,' where the body degrades damaged proteins to facilitate tissue regeneration and immune modulation.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives: A Global Tapestry of Healing

Many indigenous medical traditions incorporate spiritual healing methods similar to Daivavyapashraya.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and the “Shen”

In TCM, the spirit is known as Shen, and it is believed to reside in the heart.

Spiritual Balance: Just as Ayurveda uses Daivavyapashraya to stabilize the mind, TCM integrates spiritual concepts like Qi energy balance to maintain health.

Healing Rituals: TCM utilizes Taoist healing rituals and Qigong meditation to regulate internal energy, which mirrors the Ayurvedic use of mantras and meditative practices.

Holistic Integration: In both systems, herbal medicine is often combined with spiritual exercises to ensure that the “spirit” is settled enough for physical medicine to be effective.

In TCM, the 'Shen' (spirit) resides in the heart. Spiritual disturbances require Taoist healing rituals and Qigong to restore energy balance, mirroring the Ayurvedic stabilization of the spirit.

Japanese Shinto and Reiki

Japanese traditions emphasize spiritual purification as a prerequisite for physical well-being.

Misogi (Purification): Shinto rituals involve Misogi, a practice of purification through water and prayer, which is functionally equivalent to the Ayurvedic Mangala (auspicious rituals) and Prokshana (ritual sprinkling).

Reiki: This contemporary energy healing system works on the principle of universal life force energy, closely resembling the Ayurvedic manipulation of Prana through spiritual intent.

Chanting: Both Japanese Shinto and Ayurvedic traditions utilize sacred chanting to alter the patient's vibrational state.

Misogi (purification) and Reiki (energy healing) work on the principle of universal life force, aligning with the Ayurvedic concepts of Prana and Mangala rituals.

Indigenous African and American Traditions

Native American 'smudging' (burning sage) is functionally identical to Dhupana. In Yoruba traditions, the 'Ori' (inner spirit) must be aligned for physical medicine to be effective.

Tibetan Medicine (Sowa Rigpa)

Tibetan medicine serves as a direct historical bridge between Ayurvedic and Buddhist spiritual practices.

Ritual Interventions: Practices include prayer ceremonies, ritual healing, and mantra chanting to address diseases believed to be caused by spiritual provocations.

Psychological Stabilization: Like Daivavyapashraya, these methods aim to restore the patient's psychological equilibrium, which is considered essential for the success of herbal treatments.

Indigenous and Tribal Healing Practices

Global indigenous cultures—from the Americas to Africa—share a foundational belief in the spiritual etiology of disease.

Native American Traditions: The use of “smudging” (burning sacred herbs like sage) to clear negative energy is a direct parallel to Ayurvedic Dhupana (medicinal fumigation) used during Homa.

Yoruba (African) Healing: In West African traditions, the Ori (inner spirit or “head”) must be aligned through ritual offerings before physical healing can occur, mirroring the Ayurvedic belief that Daiva (spiritual merit) must support Yuktivyapashraya (rational therapy).

Shamanic Medicine: Amazonian traditions emphasize a connection with nature and spiritual purification, reflecting the Ayurvedic goal of restoring harmony between the individual and the cosmic order.

Contemporary Scientific Integration

Neuro-theology and the Brain

Neuro-imaging shows that during intense ritual, the Prefrontal Cortex activates while the Parietal Lobe deactivates, creating a state of 'Cosmic Oneness' that resets the stress response of the amygdala.

Epigenetics and Ancestral Karma

The Ayurvedic concept of Purvajanmakrut Karma aligns with Transgenerational Epigenetic Inheritance. Spiritual practices may act as signals for 'epigenetic remodeling,' silencing inherited stress markers.

Psychoneuroimmunology (PNI)

Spiritual therapy acts as a moderator between the nervous and immune systems. Rituals provide a sense of control that lowers cortisol and enhances Natural Killer (NK) cell activity.

Correlation of Ayurvedic and Modern Concepts:

Ayurvedic Method	Traditional Purpose	Modern Scientific Equivalent
Mantra	Vibrational healing	Vagal Tone / Neuro-acoustics
Upavasa	Spiritual purification	Autophagy / Metabolic Reset
Homa/Dhupana	Environmental cleansing	Ethnopharmacology / Aerial Sterilization
Prayashchitta	Atonement/Guilt removal	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
Mani	Cosmic balance	Piezoelectric / Biofield Regulation
Pranipata	Surrender/Prayer	Neuro-theology / Amygdala Reset

DISCUSSION

The clinical significance of **Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa** lies in its ability to address the "subtle" dimension of pathology that remains inaccessible to purely physical or chemical interventions. Ancient Ayurvedic scholars recognized that certain diseases—particularly those labeled as Karmaja (karmic) or those arising from unknown environmental factors (Yadruchha)—require a restorative protocol that operates on a vibrational and spiritual level.

Addressing the "Idiopathic" Gap

In contemporary medicine, a significant percentage of chronic and autoimmune conditions are classified as "idiopathic," meaning the cause is unknown. Ayurveda's inclusion of spiritual causes (Purvajanmakrut Karma) offers a theoretical framework for these gaps. By acknowledging that the body is an extension of a deeper energetic substrate, practitioners can utilize methods like **Mantra** (vibrational therapy) and **Prayashchitta** (atonement) to resolve internal stressors that drug therapy alone cannot reach.

The Scientific Convergence

Modern scientific paradigms are increasingly validating these ancient "spiritual" claims through several key fields:

- **Neuro-theology:** Research into meditation and ritualized behavior confirms that spiritual practices can physically alter brain structures, specifically those associated with the stress response and emotional stability.
- **Psychoneuroimmunology (PNI):** There is a clear relationship between the mind's state (influenced by prayer or ritual) and the nervous system's ability to regulate immune function.
- **Metabolic Health:** The practice of **Upavasa** (fasting), once viewed solely as a religious act, is now recognized for its role in cellular repair and autophagy.

Global Heritage of Spiritual Healing

The cross-cultural comparison with systems like Traditional Chinese Medicine, Tibetan Medicine, and Indigenous rituals suggests a universal human understanding of health as a state of "Spiritual Balance". Whether it is the stabilization of Shen in TCM or the purification of Prana in Ayurveda, the goal remains the restoration of harmony between the individual and the cosmic order.

CONCLUSION

Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa is an integral and essential component of the Ayurvedic therapeutic triad. It serves as a sophisticated precursor to modern holistic medicine by addressing the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of human health simultaneously.

Through practices such as mantra recitation, ritual worship, pilgrimage, and therapeutic fasting, this modality aims to remove the "unseen" causes of disease and restore spiritual equilibrium. The evidence from modern neurobiology, epigenetics, and cross-cultural medical history indicates that these ancient concepts hold profound relevance for 21st-century healthcare. Integrating Daivavyapashraya with contemporary clinical approaches does not require a rejection of science; rather, it invites an expansion of science to include the subtle energies and psychological frameworks that govern biological life. By treating the patient as a whole being—body, mind, and spirit—medical systems can move closer to achieving the classical Ayurvedic definition of true health and happiness. Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa is an integral component of Ayurveda that addresses the spiritual and karmic dimensions of disease. By correlating ancient rituals with modern neurobiology and epigenetics, we move toward a truly holistic medicine that treats the human experience in its entirety—body, mind, and spirit.

REFERENCES

1. Sharma PV, editor. Charaka Samhita of Agnivesha (Sutra Sthana). Vol 1. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia; 2021.
2. Acharya YT, editor. Sushruta Samhita of Sushruta (Uttara Tantra). Varanasi: Chaukhambha Surbharati Prakashan; 2017.
3. Koenig HG. Religion, spirituality, and health: The research and clinical implications. ISRN Psychiatry. 2012;2012:278730.
4. Newberg AB. The neurobiology of spiritual and religious experience. New York: Oxford University Press; 2011.
5. Longo VD, Mattson MP. Fasting: Molecular mechanisms and clinical applications. Cell Metab. 2014;19(2):181-192.
6. Yehuda R, Lehrner A. Intergenerational transmission of trauma effects: putative role of epigenetic mechanisms. World Psychiatry. 2018;17(3):243-244.
7. Porges SW. The Polyvagal Theory. New York: Norton; 2011.
8. Nautiyal S. Scientific study of Homa (Yagya). Indian J Tradit Knowl. 2015;14(2):210-215.