

**BRINGING KARMA OUT OF THE BLIND SPOT THROUGH AYURVEDA
PERSPECTIVE ON MOKSHA**

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is referred to as the '*Punyatamveda*' (*Virtuous among other Vedas*) as it not only aid humans in this life but afterlife as well. Humans primarily focus on attaining *Dharma*, *Artha* & *Kama* but the accomplishment of the final pursuit '*Moksha*' (emancipation) seems unattainable to any simpleton. *Ayurveda* has blessed humankind by instructing *Sadvritta* (the right code of conduct), following which a person could liberate himself from the karmic cycle of rebirth & hence suffering. *Ayurveda* through its farsightedness towards emancipation, brings us closer to see beyond this physical body, so that one could strive for mighty accomplishment in life by opening their minds to a richer realm of timeless wisdom. After going through some of the research work on this topic, it was found that there is a significant relationship between *Ayurveda* & *Moksha*. This indeed should be a subject of fascination as this article would give a new intervention to gain clear understanding of reassessing our life through *Ayurveda*'s insight on *Moksha* along with reminiscing & relating our historical background to the board game named "*Moksha Patam*" to widen our comprehension on the subject of *Moksha*. It supports the fact that *Ayurveda*'s teachings isn't just restricted to safeguarding health & treat diseases, it also strengthens our *Samskarahs* (Virtues).

KEYWORDS: *Moksha*, *Ayurveda*, *Karma*, *Sadvritta*.

INTRODUCTION

As one goes through ancient *Ayurveda* texts, one finds pearls of wisdom encoded in the Sutras. But to every learner's amazement; the knowledge attained from reading it doesn't remain same, it's depth increases based on the reader's intellect. Our present body is the manifestation of our past deeds and our future bodies would be the outcome of our current bodies. Whatever actions we perform with this body; it's outcome isn't restricted to the physical world. The idea of rebirth is ultimately parallel with one's balance sheet of *Karma*.^[1] Thus we should mind our karmas (deeds).i.e. why *Ayurveda* has devised *Sadvritta* for all humans which assists us in harbouring good *Karmas* and help us to attain *Moksha*.^[2]

Darshana(*Philosophy*) give perspective to a learner,^[3] & every *Darshana* has its own philosophy regarding *Moksha*, with the exception of *Mimanasa Darshana* which owes attainment of *Moksha* to *Karma Kshaya* & performing *Yagnas*(*Ritual done in front of a sacred fire*) properly.^[4] Another philosopher named *Viveka Chunamani* has used an elegant metaphor to explain this dynamics "Just as the cloud comes through the wind & goes through the wind, in the same manner bondage is also through the mind & liberation as well". Attachment

keeps human in animalistic bondage and again frees him from that bondage by creating toxic disinterest, hence mind is the reason behind bondage & salvation of the creature.^[5]

What is the "Blind Spot"?

Upadha (Desire) is the root cause of all the miseries, Upadha arises from the association of *Rajas* & *Tamas* with the *Mana* & *Aatma*. According to Acharya Charak, impairment of intellect, patience and memory, with the advent of maturity of time and action is known as *Pragyaaparadha*, which aggravates all the *Doshas* (physical and mental) and cause diseases. Abstinence from all kinds of *Upadha* is true happiness, the way a silkworm gets entangled in its own created silk & dies through suffocation, similarly a person who gets entangled in his own mindless activities suffer from miseries (diseases) throughout his life.^[6] This happens because the eye only sees which the brain knows, we cannot see the things unknown to us.^[7] This simple fact gives the right explanation about how we grow oblivious to the ideal life & follow everybody else. This "ignorance" is the 'Blindspot' which prevents us from perceiving the proper knowledge.

Even though we know what we do isn't "right" yet given the kind of lives we are leading infiltrated by unethical provocations in the name of current trends & customs. The mind resists initially but with stronger and darker influences of the surroundings; it eventually succumbs to what we call "Comfort Zone" which is a zone of harmony to mediocrity. "Hustle Culture" has given rise to more mechanical mindsets than ever before leading us right to the "Blind Spot" from where we perceive things as we are made to, not as they originally are, in nature. By giving up the control to make a decision for ourselves, we liberate the mind from thoughtfulness and become easy targets for manipulation.

Historical (Recreational) view on the idea of Moksha

Moksha Patam is a board game dating back to medieval India, the origins of *Moksha Patam* remain a matter of debate, with some scholars attributing its invention to *Dhyaneshwar*, a 13th century Marathi saint. In addition to being a form of recreation, it had a spiritual & didactic purpose. The snakes & ladders on the board were meant to function as karmic devices, either thwarting or aiding a player's efforts to reach *Moksha* (Victory in the game). To emphasise this, the squares from which the tokens either ascended or descended were labelled with names of various virtues or flaws. The last square of the game represented the attainment of *Moksha*. The game as a whole, was meant to educate players on which personality traits were morally desirable and which were abhorrent. The wisdom each player gets from this game is noteworthy, no matter how high one gets, he isn't immune to making additional mistakes, which cause a fall, symbolized by snakes on the board.^[8]

As religious discernment is refined, it leads to cultivation of wisdom. Being given capacity to make choices, the game shows us our experience and perception of the world is nothing but the consequence of our thoughts & decisions, we are entertaining on a daily basis.^[9]

Ayurveda's insight on paving the path to Moksha

Going through the religious codes like avoiding collection of material things, keeping company with saints, avoiding wicked, abstaining from the company of dishonourable people, submission to the teacher, implementing his instructions, study of religious scriptures, observance of vows, freedom from ego, critical analysis of the philosophical reality etc. all this arises due to emergence of memory of reality, which leads to *Moksha*.^[10]

Hence, *Sadvritta* is mentioned much earlier in *Charak Sutrasthana* and non-compliance of *Sadvritta* not merely makes a person suffer physically or mentally but spiritually as well because it follows the person in his next life in the form of *Karmaj vyadhi* like *Kushtha* (Skin Disorders), as mentioned in *Charak Chikitsasthana*, the *Sutra* states that speaking lies, being ungrateful, criticising deities, disrespecting the teachers, involvement in unethical deeds, consumption of

incompatible diet along with bad deeds performed in past life, is responsible for *Kilasa* (Vitiligo).^[11]

Even *Grahavesha* happens to those whose *Satva* is weak, and to people who neglect the ethics as instructed in the *Ayurveda* texts, also it reminds us that the possessed soul reaps the fruit of its own *Karma*, nobody but we are responsible for whatever happens to us.^[12] Thus one should be mindful to not put the blame on others for his miseries or misfortunes. Life brings us back to the things we were trying to escape from, which in simply mean whatever shortcuts we are trying to take in life for our pleasure, much later we are brought back to the same path.

CONCLUSION

We live our lives satisfactorily until a health problem emerges, then we begin a search to find solution, by spending the rest of the days realigning our life. But after death, the soul along with the impressions of *Karmic Sanskaras* quits the body & migrates to another body suitable for embarking on its next journey. We have grown oblivious to the knowledge of right conduct & self-discipline, but as we eventually realize the repercussions of the *Karmas* we perform everyday, & how it would put an impact everything around us, including ourselves. This manifests the consequences of our deeds in the form of diseases or pain; then we are able to come out of the blind spot & have a crystal vision on life. This enlightenment helps us to lead a more meaningful & healthier life, getting to the root cause (*Upadha*), as a result all kinds of past, present & future pain are completely destroyed, which is possible after paving the path to *Moksha* through *Ayurveda*, which gives us a fair chance at redemption.

Ayurveda isn't just restricted to teachings of morality & health, it emphasises on spiritual realms as well, elevating an individual to greater consciousness of achieving all the pursuits of life (*Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha*). As the scholar of *Ayurveda* we should realize as well as practice such latent concepts coded in our ancient sacred *Samhitas* that aim to simplify life & take humanity towards achievement of complete well being & excellence.

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