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A system of self-care that originated in India more than 5000 years ago, Ayurveda is becoming very popular all over the world, with hundreds of healers incorporating it into their practices and thousands of people using its well-tried principles and therapies to improve their well-being. The Vedic word ayurveda has two root words--ayu and veda. Every root word in the Vedic tradition has its own definition--thus, ayu has its own definition and so does veda. Literally and concisely, ayu means "life" and ved means "science." According to this translation, ayurveda means "the science of life." But the Vedic texts expand on these definitions to offer us a more complete understanding, and our ayurvedic expert Vaidya Rama Kant Mishra has explained some of these expanded statements.

Ayu explained

What is the real meaning of ayu or life according to the fundamental principles of ayurveda? Sharirendriya sattwa atma samyogo ayuhu, goes one verse. Sharir means physical body; indriya means senses. Sattwa refers to the combination of mind and heart--overall psychological strength, and atma means soul or spirit. When all of these--body, senses, heart, mind and spirit--are in proper balance and function in a harmonious, coordinated manner, that is true life--"the living body."

Veda explained

Veda means science: not a science that changes its theories and its findings every few years but ageless, eternal knowledge built on siddhantas, fundamental unchanging principles. Veda refers to guided knowledge: it is not just theory, but also a roadmap for how to derive practical benefit from the knowledge.

A longer definition of ayurveda

Another longer definition of ayurveda goes: ayurhitahitamvyadhe nidaanamshamanam thathaa vidyate yatra vidhwadhihi tatra ayurveda uchyate. This verse takes us to a deeper level to understand what ayurveda is.

Ayurveda provides us with a complete understanding of what is life-sustaining and what is not, not just for the physical body, but also our mind, heart, senses and spirit. This includes descriptions of the kind of diet, lifestyle and behavior that is optimal for well-being, the ideal environment, and the herbal rasayanas that are good or bad for each of these aspects of health. There is great detail on each of these modalities--what to eat, when to eat and how to eat are a part of dietary recommendations, for example. The texts also include recommendations for nurturing relationships and living as part of the human community.

If an individual does not have this knowledge or has the knowledge but does not implement the knowledge, then, say the texts, the person becomes susceptible to imbalance and disorders.www.ayurvedakerala.biz/meaning-of-ayurveda.html

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