Chapter IV

The Concept of Good Life and the Mystery of Death in Ayurveda
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Ayurveda literally means the 'Science of Life'. The questions concerning life, its meaning, purpose, fruit along with its final destination were the object of curiosity for the practitioners from beginning. There are very interesting, unique, systematic and completely original answers available in our ancient medical treatises. The mystery of death has been recognized and a very honest answer is available concerning the queries related with death and other related issues. It is also very significant to note down the visualization of our physicians regarding the concept of good life. The concept of good life in Ayurveda is more comprehensive and broad in its application though it certainly carries the original spirit of our traditional concept of good life. In the classical Sanskrit tradition, the query regarding the meaning of being a man is quite old. The concept of Puruṣārthacatusthayam is an attempt of Indian theoreticians to bring whatever worthy in a man’s life under a single category. This concept has been well recognized in Ayurveda as we see that the physician Caraka discuss this concept in the beginning verses of the first chapter of his treatise. But the meaning given to this concept by our Ayurvedic practitioners is unique and novel. Here the stated goals or ideals of a good life are broader and more comprehensive in their scope. The mystery of death also has been the object of inquiry of the ancient Indian medical scientists. The interesting thing here is that an attempt has been made in Ayurveda to understand this mystery under a spiritual backdrop and not been reduced to merely physical and physiological terms. Before coming to the ayurvedic perspective on good life and the mystery of death, it would be fairly reasonable to understand our traditional insights regarding these queries. Puruṣārthacatusthayam has been recognized unanimously in our tradition to be the ideals of a good life.
Puruṣārthacatustayam:

Puruṣārthacatustayam is one of the fundamental categories in the classical value system of Indian tradition. A thorough understanding of the Hindu view of life presupposes a deep cognizance of Puruṣārthacatustayam. The concept of Puruṣārthacatustayam is basically an attempt of Indian theoreticians to conceptualize the goals or ideals which men desire or strive after. The English version of the Sanskrit term Puruṣārtha can be put as: ‘the meaning (artha) of being an embodied self (puruṣa).’ Now the meaning of being an embodied self is that it strives after or aspires for the four pursuits or aims or ends of life and has an ability to attain them. The grand journey of the spiritual realization of any embodied self has to pass through these four stations. The first three ends of life (trivarga) i.e. kāma, artha and dharma are mundane in character and one has to live through them, enjoy them fully till all such desires are consumed fully or burnt up in the process and one can become eligible to pursue the ultimate value of life. Vātsyāyana in his Kāmasūtra has expressed the same spirit very succinctly: “let one enjoy or give unto whatever is produced in its proper time and age – discharging duties, acquiring wealth and satiating desires until one becomes exhausted.” These four-folded pursuits, which are deeply entrenched in Hindu psyche portrait before us a picture of reality in which the being of a person is not merely being which is depressingly confined within the four walls of this material world but a being that contain the possibility of moving into beyond.

The soul and Jīva:

The soul per se is a-historical entity. It transcends all limitations of material existence. At best, the true nature of the self can be described as eternal, indescribable, ubiquitous, part less, pure consciousness and blissful. A jīva, on the other hand, is a historical entity. A jīva is basically a complex of soul, body and mind. A jīva is the ruler of mind, sense-organs and body and one who is affected by the fruits of action. A jīva possesses certain
accidental qualities like desire, effort, action, cognition, pleasure, pain, etc. It may be noted here that these qualities are not part of the true nature of the self. All these qualities which are accidental in nature belong to the jīva. Desire is one of the basic attributes which is responsible for the continuance of the jīva in this mundane existence. Desire leads to action and the action either fructifies or fails. A fruitful action gives pleasure while a failed action leads to pain. The pleasure leads to attachment or jīva for the material existence and the pain caused by an unsuccessful action generates anger, and hence intensifies the feeling of otherness. Both of these attributes, that is the attachment for the material existence and the feeling of otherness or plurality has nothing to do with the true self. They belong to the jīva. The crux of the matter is that desire and attachment belong to the jīva and desirelessness and detachment belong to the soul, i.e. ātman.

The oldest school of Indian philosophy that is Sāṅkhya philosophy asserts the similar thesis by means of its theory of trigunas. According to Sāṅkhya, the three guṇas, i.e. sattva, rajas and tamas cause desire and also motivate and drive persons to action. But these three guṇas are parts of nature (prakṛti) and do not touch the self (puruṣa). It implies that the true self of a person is not an agent, nor is it an enjoyer (bhokta). A Jīva is an agent and an enjoyer is not the true self. Our true self is devoid of all desires; it is pure consciousness (śuddha-caitanyam), witness-consciousness (sākṣi-caitanyam), detached, and indifferent (udāśīn)

Historicity of Puruṣārthacatuṣṭayam

As we have mentioned in the beginning of the previous paragraph that jīva acquires certain qualities in historicity of a specific spatio-temporal framework. Therefore, the meaning of Puruṣārthacatuṣṭayam itself becomes historically determined and one which occur within the tradition. It is because the idea of Puruṣārthacatuṣṭayam presupposes the above mentioned qualities in this jīva. However, it may be noted that the idea here is not that Puruṣārthacatuṣṭayam becomes meaningless and valueless in
other traditions but that it can be understood and appreciated better by the minds that are trained in the tradition in which this category has emerged.

**Relationship between these four ends of life:**

After providing a detailed explanation of the meaning of the four ends of life, it may be appropriate here to introduce an interesting question regarding the nature of the relationship among these four ends of life. Whether the relationship among them is causal? If there is a causal relationship between the two events, i.e. event A and event B, then it implies that ‘The event A is caused by the event B’ or vice versa. Can there be such a relationship among any of the four ends of life? Can we say that ‘kāma is caused by artha?’ or ‘dharma is caused by artha’ or that “mokṣa is caused by dharma or by the combination of first three ends of life”. The answer is simply no. We cannot say that kāma is caused by artha. Kāma is the desire for sensuous pleasure. Irrespective of artha, such a desire can exist. One can say that one should attain sufficient material prosperity so that he or she can satisfy his/her desires. But that does not establish that there is a causal relationship between artha and kāma. One can certainly have desire even if one lacks the means to satisfy them. Similarly, we can answer the question regarding the causal relationship between mokṣa and the other three ends of life. Mokṣa is the highest state of being which transcends all the limitation of worldly existence. Now something that is immanent cannot be the cause of the transcendent. Therefore, we can say that the causal relationship among these four goals of life cannot be established.

Can we say that the relationship among these four puruṣārthas is logical? Can we prove that “artha is a necessary and sufficient condition for kāma”? Similarly can we establish that, “the strict observance of the first three ends of life is a necessary and sufficient condition for the attainment of the fourth end of life that is mokṣa.” Clearly, a logical relationship among these four ends of life cannot be established. Ādi Śaṅkarāchārya has established with strong arguments that dharma cannot be a necessary
condition for the attainment of mokṣa. Even if one observes dharma throughout one’s life it may not cultivate a strong burning desire (cikīrṣā) in him that is a necessary condition for the attainment of the state of mokṣa.

Finally, can we conclude that the four ends of life are not inter-related in any way and hence, they are totally independent of each other? If our tradition categorizes all these four ends of life under a single heading then there must be some genuine reason behind it. There must be some kind of relationship among the four items of the set of Puruṣārtha. What kind of relationship can it be? It appears that there is a kind of psychological relation among these four ends of life, especially between the first three ends and the last end of life, which is mokṣa. The consciousness begins its journey from the first two ends of life. The consciousness manifested in human being begins its journey from the first two ends of life. The consciousness manifested in human beings pass through a peculiar kind of pain which is not lessened by the attainment of material prosperity or by the satisfaction of sensual desires. Such a pain, though felt by all, varies in degrees in accordance with the level of consciousness attained by the person who is undergoing such a pain. Such a pain helps that person in realizing the essencelessness of the first two goals, as the true nature of consciousness cannot be identified with or reflected in these ends of life. Such dissatisfaction with the first two ends of life makes the person eligible for self-consciously positing the last two as his goal.

Similarly on being dissatisfied with the third one, he strives after the last one. Therefore, the previous state in this four-folded conceptual scheme prepares the person psychologically for the next stage. Once the consciousness attains the highest state of being, that is mokṣa, the pain is completely lost. The consciousness acquires its true nature, and feels the fullness and completeness. This pain actually is the result of an unceasing desire among all human beings to attain the highest good, i.e. to realize the true nature of self. Such a pain is felt by Maitreyi when she asked her husband: “If now, Sir, this whole earth filled with wealth were mine, would I be immortal thereby?”
'No, no!' said Yājñavalkya. 'As the life of the rich, even so would your life be. Of immortality, however, there is no hope through wealth'.

Then spoke Maitreyī: 'what should I do with that through which I may not be immortal?'

There is another psychological dimension which can explain the relevance of the first three ends of life to the final or ultimate end of life. The first three ends of life are this-worldly pursuits the compliance of whose may provide pleasure in the beginning but very soon it results into a kind of monotony. This very idea has been stressed in the following passage, “let one enjoy or give into whatever is produced in its proper time and age-discharging duties, acquiring wealth and satiating desires until one becomes exhausted (with age).” This idea appears as a premise to be refuted (pūrva-pakṣa) in Buddhacarita of Aśvaghoṣa and is said to be taken from the kāma-sūtra. Also Herman Hesse in his ‘Siddhārtha’ has suggested this very fact succinctly by saying that, “… this game was called Sansāra, a game for children, a game which was perhaps enjoyable played once, twice, ten times – but was it worth playing continually? ... then; Siddhārtha knew that the game was finished, that he could play it no longer. A shudder passed through his body; he felt as if something had died.” Such monotony generates a kind of dissatisfaction with the first three ends of life and psychologically prepares the person for the spiritual quest or a pursuit to attain the highest state of being, that is mokṣa.

**Four ends of life:**

The four aims of life in Indian tradition have been said to kāma, artha, dharma and mokṣa. It may be noted here that the sequential order of these Puruṣārthas of life is not very important and there is no unanimity in the tradition regarding the sequential order. Mokṣa is an altogether different category and is said to be niḥśreyas (other-worldly pursuit). The first three pursuits of life are this-worldly pursuits (śreyas).
Kāma is a multi-faceted term in Sanskrit literature. It refers to our all sensual desires and an instinctual drive for the satisfaction of several desires. Kāma is also referred to as that pleasure which our mind experiences when our sense-organs are in contact with their respective objects. The five sensory-organs are the functions of smell, taste, hear and touch. For instance, ‘I desire for food’ would come under the function of taste. Likewise ‘I have a desire to touch someone’ would come under the function of touch. Now here ‘food’ and ‘that someone which I want to touch’ are objects of our desire. All such possible objects come under the realm of the term ‘artha’. These objects have been said to be the food of senses (artho āhāraḥ). Artha in the tradition has been said to be, ‘a device, an instrument or a vehicle upon which the senses travel their journey.’ (rchanti indriyāṇi yasmin).

Dharma is another pursuit of life that is pursued by the value-conscious human beings. The term Dharma is one of the most broad, comprehensive and significant term in the whole range of Sanskrit literature. Etymologically, the term ‘dharma’ has been derived from the root dhr, meaning ‘uphold, support, sustain’ (dhr-dhāraka-poṣagayoh). Therefore the meaning would be ‘that which upholds and sustains.’ But this is too general and hence too vague to be useful. Here, perhaps the established meaning of the term dharma can be of some help to unfold the meaning of the term. The established meanings of dharma are sacred law and duty, justice, goodness, righteousness, religious merit. Indian commentators have explained it as denoting an act which produces the quality of soul called apūrva. Apūrva is the cause of heavenly bliss. It has been repeatedly mentioned in many classical Sanskrit texts like Mahābhārata, Manusmṛti, Arthaśāstra, etc. that the pursuit of wealth and kāma must be controlled and regulated by dharma (dharmāt arthaścā Kāmaścā).

The term kāma names the instinctual tendencies or biological drives that are peculiar to all living beings including human beings. But if all living beings start following up such never-ending urges blindly then the material resources will prove to be insufficient. The desires of living beings are
unlimited. But the earthly resources to fulfill those desires are limited. Therefore if desires are allowed to propagate unchecked it will lead to a situation in which there will be a clash of interests among various individuals. The problem is that there is a conflict between first two ends of life. On the one hand, there are infinite number unchecked desires to grab the earthly resources and on the other hand, the material resources to fulfill those desires are finite and limited. The challenge before the Indian theoretician was how to resolve this conflict so that we can provide the status of the goal of life to both kāma and artha and at the same time can put them together under a broader category of Puruṣārthacatustayam.

The general Indian belief is that any solution, if at all it has to be durable, must come from the deep within. No outer mean is capable enough to put a check on human consciousness. The human consciousness will always find some way to surpass that mean. In fact, the reverse is true, i.e. all outwardly existent things can be controlled by the inner consciousness.

This thesis, if applied to the problem we have discussed above, gives rise to an important suggestion. The solution lies in the resolution of apparently conflicting situation by an inner sanction or constraint or regulation. In fact, it appears to be a sanction only from outside otherwise it is the very nature of consciousness that appears in the form of jīva. This inner sanction lies in the form of an objective element in our intellect (buddhi) which is manifested if our intellect is enlightened by sattvagūpa. This objective element is dharma and it is always there but one has to become aware of it through efforts. This objective element or dharma is also said to be the Kāma of buddhi which is aroused on the arousal of sattvagūpa in buddhi (or intellect). It brings about objectivity in the judgment of an individual and helps dissolving his ego which is a subjective element in him. The manifestation of impartiality, fair-mindedness, equitableness, justness, open-mindedness, and disinterestedness in one’s intellect replacing all subjective elements (which actually belongs to ego) are the fruits of dharma.
Manu has described dharma, as the one which is always honored by the people having wisdom; 2) which is followed by those who are above attachment (greed) and aversion (hatred); and 3) which is approved by the hearts of people. In *Mahābhārata*, the principle of universalizability has been put forth to explain the concept of dharma. It has been stated there that Dharma is to perform only those actions with respect to others which you would like to be performed with you if you would have been in his position in the identical situation and to shun away from those actions which you would not like to be performed with respect to you while in the similar situation. It may be mentioned here that only an intellect lightened up with *sattvaguṇa* will embrace such a principle of universalizability. If *dharma* is practiced in this way then it will lead to heavenly bliss (which is not qualitatively different from earthly pleasures though in degree it is much higher). *Dharma*, therefore leads to the well-being of living beings in this world as well as in the heaven.

*Mokṣa*, or the final liberation has been considered to be the ultimate value of life (*Puruṣārthacatuṣṭayam*). *Mokṣa* is basically, a state of being in which the knower and the known fused together. Consciousness in this state is not separated from its object. In all other experiences, except the experience which occurs when the consciousness realizes its true nature, the dualism between the knower and the known does remain. But *mokṣa* is the state of being in which this dualism between the knower and the known also disappears. Consciousness becomes one with its object. In fact, there remains no object and everywhere there is all pervading consciousness. It is transcendent in nature because it surpasses all the categories of reason. In fact, this state of being is prior to everything. It is actually not achieved as it is always there but it is realized in history. The realization of such a state of existence has been said to be the highest aim of life.

One may raise an objection here that to call a *mokṣa* the end of life appears to be paradoxical. It is because if we start considering it as an end of life, we can never achieve it. *Mokṣa* is a gift of divinity that is given and is not something that can be achieved through human efforts. Rather it is
achieved by effortlessness. If at all it is an effort, it is an effort of de-conditioning or the effort to un-learn. At best we can remove away the obstacles through de-conditioning or un-cleaning. Once we get away with these obstacles, the consciousness will shine forth on its pristine purity. The ideal of mokṣa is so deeply entrenched in Indian philosophy that if any philosophical system does not have any scope for its realization, then a material fallacy of anirmokṣa prasanga, i.e. the impossibility of liberation, can be put against it.

It may be appropriate here to add that there is a qualitative difference between first three ends of life which has been categorized as trivarga and the final end of life, i.e. mokṣa. The first three goals are pursuits that belong to this world; they are the goods that are desirable for this world (preyas) that is the attainment of earthly pleasure, material prosperity and cultivation of virtues. On the other hand, the final end of life goes beyond this world and that is why it is said to be niḥśreyas that is the highest good which is transcendent in nature.

There is another qualitative difference between the first three ends of life and the final one. The first three ends of life are degree-specific. What I want to say here is that even if one achieves these pursuits, the satisfaction he or she attains will always be in degree, the more or less but never in its fullness or completeness. Let us take the example of artha. Even if we grab the whole material wealth of this world, we will not attain the state of an unsurpassable satisfaction. The satisfaction we attain will always be in degree but never in its perfection. Similarly, even if you spend the whole of your life in the enjoyment of erotic pleasure, you will not attain that perfect peace and happiness.

The ultimate goal of life is qualitatively different. On the attainment of mokṣa, the satisfaction, happiness and peace one acquires are not in degrees but in its perfection. There remain no more or less. Instead, there is fullness, and completeness. This state of existence cannot be overtaken by any other thing. There remains in consciousness no space that can be
Mokṣa, in the sense, is a state of excellence which if one achieves, there remain nothing else to be desired and from which nothing else is greater. (yam labdhvā nāparam...)

After giving an elaborate version of our traditional vision of the concept of good life, it would be worthwhile to see what insight Ayurveda can provide us regarding the same concept of good life. The questions regarding the idea of good life are very significant for Ayurveda as Ayurveda itself is popularly known as the science of longevity. These questions that how one should live his life; what could be the purpose of one’s life, etc, have been discussed at a great length in almost all popular ancient medical treatises.

Good Life in Ayurveda:

In *Carakasaṃhitā*, the most popular Indian medical treatise, the concept of good life has been discussed at length. Here the concept of good life does not merely imply an ethically virtuous life. It is actually much more than that. It means freedom from diseases so that one can enjoy the full time span of his or her life along with a morally sound life. It is a life of wisdom and prudence as lack of these two attributes is the chief cause of all physiological, psychological, social, moral, and spiritual evils. Therefore, if one wants to be a good human being then it is not sufficient to practice the moral virtues alone. He should also practice the physical, physiological and social virtues. He must try to live healthy, fit, and long. Caraka does not believe that mind and body are two separate entities. For Caraka, there is an intimate interconnection between the two. This approach regarding the relationship between mind and body was popular from early times. For instance, *Mahābhārata* says that out of the body arise the mental diseases and out of the mind arises the bodily diseases. In *Mahābhārata*, it has been said that the body is made up of three elements, viz. heat, cold and air. It is further said that when these three elements are in a state of equipoise, the body is healthy, and when any one of them aggravates, there is disease.\(^\text{vii}\) Similarly, the mind is constituted of *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. When these
three are in a state of equipoise, the mind is in proper order. But when any one of them starts predominating then it becomes diseased. Caraka also accepts the same thesis with certain minor changes. The interesting thing here is that when Caraka discussed the concept of good life, he includes both mind and body. The whole of his ethics revolves around the two folded good of mind and body. For him, it is the welfare of both that should be the chief concern of the physician.

Caraka approves the necessity of controlling certain mental and bodily inclinations, or tendencies. He recommends restrain of mind, speech and action. A man should control his passion of greed, feeling of grief, fear, anger, vanity, envy, attachment and solitude. He should avoid talking too much and should not speak harshly. He should avoid using stinging words or lie or speak irrelevance or untimely. He should not injure others by his body, indulge in unrestricted sex gratifications, or steal. Injury to living beings produces sin and thereby reduces the time span of one’s life. Therefore, according to Caraka, non injury to living being is the best way of increasing one’s life. The person who lives his life according to these principles can lead a virtuous life. Such a person enjoys wealth, satisfies his desires, abides by the laws of a good life, and is happy at all the three level of his existence and hence can said to be healthy. Caraka recommends the well controlled exercise of moral functions along with the well controlled and moderate bodily exercise. According to him, when moderately performed, they provide lightness, power of doing work, steadiness and fortitude. Avoidance of unwise courses and non-commission of errors of judgment, sense-control, remembrance of past experiences, due knowledge of one’s own powers, due regards to proper time and place and good conduct prevent the inrush of mental and bodily diseases; for it is these which are the essentials of a good life, and a wise man always does what is good for himself.

The company of good fellow-beings is also appreciated by Caraka in high terms as it is very crucial for sustaining a good life. According to him, one should avoid the company of those people who are sinful in action,
speech or mind, or those who are greedy, crooked, jealous, cruel, vicious and fond of speaking ill of others. But one should always associate with those who are wise, learned, aged, mature, firm, focused and those who knows the real nature of things and can direct us in the right path. Such persons are good to all beings and they possess a settled character and are peaceful and self-contented. Therefore, these are the ways by following which a person can secure himself against the inrush of mental troubles which upset one’s moral life. At the same time one should remain attentive to one’s bodily welfare by consuming the proper kind of food at the proper time and attending to other details of physical well-being.

Caraka in his popular medical treatise described in great detail the principles of a good conduct. According to him, “A man should respect gods, cows, Brahmans, preceptors, elderly persons, saints and teachers, hold auspicious amulets, bathe twice and clean all the pores of body and feet and cut his hair, beard and nails thrice in a fortnight. He should be well dressed, should always oil his head, ears, nose and feet, comb his hair, and scent himself and smoke. He should recognize others with a pleasant face, help others in difficulties, perform sacrifices, make gifts, talk delightfully, nicely and for the good of others, be self controlled and of a virtuous temperament. He should envy the cause of another’s prosperity in the form of his good character and other causes of his personal efficiency, but should not be jealous of the fruits of these in the form of a man’s prosperity or wealth. He should be of firm decision, fearless, susceptible to the feeling of shame, intelligent, energetic and skillful, of a forgiving nature, virtuous and a believer. He should use umbrellas, sticks, turbans and shoes, and should at the time of walking look four cubits of ground in front of him; he should avoid going to impure, unclean, and dirty places; he should try to appease those who are angry, soothe the fears of those who have become afraid, help the poor, keep his promises, bear harsh words, be self controlled, remove the causes of attachment and antipathy and behave as the friend of all living beings. Again, one should not tell lies, or take that which actually belongs to others, should not commit adultery, or be jealous at other people’s wealth.
should not be given to creating enemies, should not commit sins, or do wrong even to a sinner, or speak about the defects or secrets of others; should not keep company with the sinful or with those who are the king's enemies or with madmen, the mean, wicked, outcast, or those who make abortions. One should not climb into bad vehicles, lie on hard beds, or bed without sheets or pillows, should not climb steep mountain sides or trees or bathe in fast flowing rivers with strong currents; one should not go about places where there are great fires raging, or laugh loudly or yawn or laugh without covering the face, or pick one's teeth. Again, one should not break the laws ordained by a large number of persons, or other laws in general; should not go about at night in improper places, or make friends with greedy people, fools, sinners; one should not be fond of wines, gambling, prostitutes, divulge secrets, insult others, be proud or boastful or speak ill of old people, teachers, kings or assemblages of persons, or talk too much; one should not turn out relations, friends or those who know one's secrets. One should attend at the proper time to every action, should not undertake to do anything without properly examining it, or be too procrastinating, or be under the influence of anger and pleasure; one should not be very down hearted in afflictions, or too elated in success, or too disappointed in failures; should practice sex-continence, try to be wise, make gifts, be friendly and compassionate to all and always contended.” The list of such attributes necessary for a good life is quite long and detailed. Such a comprehensive list of qualities of various kinds is very unique in the whole Indian thought as they are requisites not only of a virtuous life but also that of a healthy and long life.

Prajñāparādha or the error of judgment in various spheres of life has been said to be the central cause of all kind of evils. Caraka in his treatise takes the various domains of life and demonstrate that the conception of life can be better viewed in terms of good and bad rather than as moral, or immoral. There can be no doubt in saying that he though appreciates moral virtues very highly yet the non-moral virtues such as providing due attention to the well-being of one's own body and the observance of socio-cultural
laws and forms of normal prudent behaviour are regarded by him to be
equally necessary for living a good life. Moral sins are regarded as the
cause of mental agonies and also of many physical diseases. Therefore, one
should be extremely careful to avoid such happenings. It is interesting to
note down here that such mental troubles or physical diseases which occur
as a result of moral sins or transgressions cannot be cured by the ordinary
means of the application of medicines. But it is also equally important to note
here that sins are not the only cause of mental or physical diseases. The
error of judgment is the central cause of all evils as it results into imprudent
behavior and conduct. A good life is a life of prudence, wisdom and well-
balanced judgment. It is possible only when every action is done with due
consideration to its future consequences and where all that may lead to
troubles and difficulties is carefully avoided. It is only such type of life that
can be regarded as an ideal. It is life full of peace, happiness and
contentment. The most important thing here is that a good life implies a wise
life. The observance of morality is just one aspect of living a life full of
wisdom. A good life which also can said to be an ideal life must be good in
all respects. Any transgression whether it is regarding the rules of hygiene or
the rules of a good citizenship or rules of our cultural heritage may disturb
the peace of life.

The purpose of Ayurveda is to deliver a happy, contented and good
life for all. Therefore, it takes great interests in carving out ways in which a
life may be good, bad, happy or unhappy. A happy life is one that remains
unperturbed by bodily and mental diseases. It is a life full of youth, energy,
power, strength, vitality, knowledge, and efficient sense-organs. In a happy
life, all kinds of desirable enjoyments are relished and all the ventures that
are undertaken are all successful. The reverse of it is an unhappy life. On
the other hand, a good life is the life that is moulded and cultivated by our
right conduct. It can be said to some extant that a good life makes a happy
life. Those who aspires a good life should keep themselves away from the
sins of taking other people's possessions and be truthful and self-controlled.
They should perform every action with proper observation, care and
judgment, and should not be hasty or make mistakes by their carelessness. They should attend to the attainment of virtue, wealth and the enjoyments of life without giving undue emphasis to any of them; they should respect those who are revered, should be learned, wise and of a peaceful mind and control their tendencies to attachment, anger, jealousy and false pride; they should always make gifts; they should lead a life of rigor and attain wisdom, self-knowledge or philosophy, and behave in such a way that the interests of both the present life on earth and the life hereafter may be attended to with care and judgment, always remembering the experiences and lessons of past life.

It can now be fairly said that the ideal of good life in Caraka is very broad and comprehensive. It covers all aspects of this life and even beyond. Caraka recognizes the importance of purusārtha-catuṣṭyam in the very beginning stanzas of the first chapter of his treatise. But his novelty lies in the fundamental idea that a life should be so regulated that the body and mind may be free from diseases, that it should not run into unnecessary risks of danger through carelessness, that it should be virtuous, pure and moral; that it should be a prudent and wise life which abides by the laws of polite society and of good and loyal citizens, manifesting keen alertness in thought and execution and tending constantly to its own good - good which encompass good for all and good for all aspects of an individual being, i.e. body, mind and spirit.

Now before coming to another interesting thesis of Ayurveda on aging, death and the relationship between aging and death and other related theme, it is very crucial to understand the position of Ayurveda on the nature of the theory of karma and how it gets differentiated from the old, stereotyped conventional belief regarding the theory of karma. The theory of karma, as we know has been unanimously accepted by all the six systems of Indian philosophy though there are minor differences over the details of the true nature of the karma theory. Caraka discussed in detail the theory of karma in his monumental work and made certain new innovations to make it compatible with the practice of medicine.
The theory of Karma: Break from the tradition in Ayurveda:

The theory of karma has a wide acceptance in our tradition. All orthodox as well as unorthodox schools of Indian philosophy give their unanimous support to the theory of karma though there are subtle differences in their versions of the theory of karma. Broadly, there are four schools of thought which vary in their interpretation of the theory of karma. The first school of thought is Yoga-vāsiṣṭha which believe that all our experiences can be controlled by a determined effort of the will and that there is no limitation of previous karma, destiny, fatality which cannot be controlled or overcome by it. Human will is supreme and by means of it human being can produce any change of any kind in the development of our future well-being. This school of thought is also popular as puruṣavādins.

The second school of thought believes in a total opposite view that the supreme God alone is responsible for all our actions to the extent that He makes those whom He wants to raise perform good actions and those whom He wants to take the downward path commit sinful deeds. Besides these two completely opposite positions, there are certain views lying in between. One view is that God rewards or praises human beings in accordance with their good or bad deeds. Therefore, human beings themselves are responsible for their actions and are free to act as they choose. There is a further interesting view that has been elaborated in Patanjali's Yoga-sūtram. According to it, our deeds determine the particular nature of our birth, the period of our lifetime and the nature of our pleasures and pains. Normally it is believed that the fruits of the actions of a previous birth are harvested in the present birth and the outcomes of the actions of the present birth determine the nature of the future birth whereas the fruits of the exceptionally good or bad actions are reaped in the present life only.

The physician Caraka tends to synthesize the best elements of all the different accounts given regarding the human actions and their fruits. It also captures the common-sense wisdom. According to Caraka, it is only the fruits of extremely bad actions that cannot be checked by the normal efforts of good conduct. Otherwise the fruits of all the commonly encountered
actions can be checked by normal ways of well-balanced conduct, the administration of proper medicines and the like. It means that our normal actions in the proper care of health like taking appropriate medicines, etc. can tackle, modify or check the usual course of the fruition of our karma. Therefore, for instance if I fall ill due to the effect of some ordinary karma of mine in previous birth or otherwise than after taking suitable precautions like the administration of an appropriate drug therapy one may arrest such effects and can enjoy good health. Such a position regarding the karma theory is essentially novel in the sense that no other theory is ready to sacrifice the immutability of the laws of karma. Conventionally, it is believed that the laws of karma are immutable. The fruits of ripe karma will bear their fruits whatsoever would be the case. Nothing can stop them from bearing their fruits once the karmas are ripened. Even if one attains the highest knowledge that dispels all ignorance in a person, still he has to face the consequences of his ripened deeds. Only the consequences of immature or unripe karma can be destroyed by true knowledge. The novelty behind the Caraka’s position regarding the nature of karma theory is that he does not support this immutability of ripe karmas. The novel thesis of Caraka regarding the law of karmas is that the effects of all karmas except those which are exceptionally strong by nature can be altered by an apparently non-moral course of conduct like observance of the ordinary daily duties of life. This position as can be seen clearly from its consequences creates some scope for the practice of science of medicine which could not be found in the four major views regarding the karma theory. For, if our ordinary efforts cannot mitigate the sufferings or the harsh consequences of some previous karma-s or cannot bring happiness to humanity and the terms of our life is predestined then the purpose of the science of medicine itself becomes questionable. In our common sense based reasoning we normally refers to ‘destiny’ or ‘fate’ only when the best of our efforts fail to deliver. It seems to be reasonable since if even best of our effort fail to bear the results then what sort of explanation we can put forth in such a situation. The common sense wisdom is that unless there is an absolute fatality, properly
directed efforts are bound to succeed. Caraka's theory of karma takes into account this common sense wisdom.

A significant question that can be raised here is that if the theory of karma as proposed by Caraka is accepted then how can we preserve the immutability of the law of karma? According to Caraka, only exceptionally good or bad actions have this immutable character. The effects of all ordinary actions can be checked or modified by human efforts. Caraka does not believe in the dichotomy between the moral and physical sides of an action which is normally upheld in Indian tradition. Caraka also tends to demystify the vague principles like virtue and vice. The ultimate criterion, to him, to judge the worth of any action is its all-encompassing good or hita. Now, if the effects of any action are overall beneficial to a person, then it is good for him. Therefore, the overall utility of any action is the ultimate test of any action. A man ought to do that action which has beneficial effects for him. Another point that deserves attention here is that the standards of a good action lie in the pursuit of our own good (ātma-hita). Ātma-hita or self-good has been described by Caraka very comprehensively. It includes not only that which provides us basic pleasures and material comforts of our life along with the peace of mind and long life but also that which will be beneficial to us in our future life. It is very critical to properly guide and direct our mind and senses towards this objective. Caraka recommends the classical principle of golden mean. According to him, the appropriate means of keeping the mind in the right path are avoiding too much thinking, in not thinking of revolting subjects, and in keeping the mind active. Thoughts and ideas are the objects of the mind. Therefore, one has to avoid the atiyoga, mithyā-yoga and a-yoga of all thoughts. Also, the right conduct (sadvṛtta) leads to the health and secures an effective control on our senses.

Caraka also speculates on another interesting question regarding the motive behind all our actions? What is that which impels us to act? Caraka recommends the desire for self-preservation (prāṇaiśaṇgā), the desire for the materials of comfort (dhanaiśaṇgā), and our desire for a happy state of existence in the future life (pāralokaiśaṇgā) to be the reasons for all our
actions. Human being seeks not merely survival but also a prosperous and comfortable life in this birth and a blessed after-life. It would be interesting to note here the way in which the physician Caraka interpret the term right conduct. In our tradition, the term, right conduct implies either the conduct in accordance with the injunctions of the Veda-s, or conduct which leads ultimately to the cessation of all pains and sufferings through the cessations of all desires or through right knowledge and the extinction of avidyā or false knowledge. Caraka is not agreed to this definition of right conduct. According to him, the right conduct is that which leads to the fulfillment of the three ultimate desires. The cause of moral evils is not breach of the injunction of the Holy Scriptures. Instead it is the error of right judgment (Prajñāparādha). The error occurs when we tend to move contrary to our three fundamental desires. The first and the most important among them is our desire for life, i.e. for health and prolongation of life. It is necessary to respect this desire for life as life is the pre-condition of all other valuable things. Next is the desire for material comforts and the practice of such vocations that leads to it. The third and last one is the desire for a blessed after-life. These three basic desires sum up all springs of action.

An important implication of the position of Caraka on the question of basic motives behind all our actions is that for Caraka, human will becomes more fundamental than feeling or knowledge. Caraka challenged the old stereotyped belief that false knowledge is the starting point of this world. The idea of a well-balanced life which is impelled by the harmonious play of the three basic desires and directed by perfect wisdom and error-free judgment is an original and fresh idea which challenges the stereotyped schemes regarding life of his predecessors. In Caraka’s scheme of life, evil enters when there is some error of judgment as a result of the disharmony of the three fundamental desires. All kinds of evils and misdeeds are traced to the error of judgement (Prajñāparādha). This is an interesting thesis and in sharp contrast to the conventional belief of reducing all evils to our feelings of attachment. The Prajñāparādha of Caraka is not some metaphysical entity. Neither is it some fundamental defect inherent in our mental
constitution. Instead he identifies this term with this-worldly connotations of the term and tends to understand it through its expression in the individual breach or fall of judgment. Therefore, it can be fairly said that the course of conduct that Caraka approves consists in the normal exercise of the three fundamental desires, free from the commission of any errors of judgment or Prajñāparādha. Accordingly, Caraka does not preach the ideal of leaving off desires, feelings, attachments and actions of all types. He also does not support the ideal of the performance of duties without attachment. The ideal of Caraka is to live one’s life in such a way so that it can be conducive to health, long life, and proper enjoyment. For the fulfillment of this ideal, we should avoid committing any mistake in eating, drinking and other actions of life which may directly or indirectly produce diseases and sufferings or jeopardize our life and enjoyment in any way.

Ideas of Aging and Death in Ayurveda:

Aging and death are the concrete truths which each of us is going to face one day. They are part of the life itself and willingly or unwillingly, one day we all have to submit before these phenomena. But still they are the most profound mysteries which our present day biology is facing. There are many unresolved problems concerning both these phenomena: how to precisely define the notion of death? Is the relationship between aging and death is justified? Can we reverse the process of aging? Can death be ever overcome? How to handle the psychological fear associated with the onset of the process of aging, or death? Can we say for sure that both aging and death are purely natural phenomena? Or certain non-natural entity is also involved here. These are some of the questions which are often raised with no or less satisfactory answers. My endeavor in the coming paragraphs will be to explore the suggested answers put forth by Ayurveda to the above-mentioned questions or the questions of similar nature with the hope that a system of medicine which is at least three thousand years old and which practice an altogether different methodology for its diagnosis, pathology and therapy must have certain novel solutions to the greatest puzzles of biology and may have the capability to unravel the
mystery that surrounds the phenomena of aging and death. But before that I would like to analyze the notion of aging and death and their relationship which we generally accept uncritically.

**Relationship between aging and death is an assumption:**

Death seems to be the end of this life. Everyone who is born on this earth has ultimately met his end with death. Although death can occur at anytime, it is normally related with old age. It is implicitly believed by most of us that one gets birth, grows, becomes mature, becomes old and finally dies. So death and aging are experientially related very closely. However, this is no more than an assumption. This assumption can certainly be challenged in the light of the fact of a high rate of child and infant mortality. If we develop a statistics of how many persons have died before acquiring old age, we may find, quite interestingly, that the number of persons died before acquiring old age surpasses the number of persons who died through aging. It would be appropriate to add here another interesting point that it is wrong to believe that we are living much longer than our grandparents. The truth is that the average life span has increased. It means that the number of persons who die before acquiring old age has been brought down to some extent. Anyhow the point we wish to make here is that we have to be aware that the relationship between aging and death is not a proved fact but an assumption which happens to be true in most cases. Interestingly, Ayurveda does not agree to any such relationship between aging and death. As I quoted in the beginning, *Suśruta* (the great Indian surgeon) while elaborating the causes of death nowhere mentions old age as one of the causes of death.

**Whether we know precisely what death is?**

The relationship between death and aging, which is commonly accepted uncritically, needs to be reviewed. However, before going into
details of that problem, we have to be a little clearer about the ideas of both aging and death. Most of us think that there is nothing problematic about the idea of death since we are all familiar with it. We have seen people dying around us. Human beings and other life forms die every day before our eyes. On the death of some of our dear ones, we get moved and shocked. And we perceive the death of others as a regular phenomenon of life. So we normally form the belief that we know what death is and do not find any problem with the idea of death. We are awakened to its problematic character only when a philosopher like Wittgenstein declares that death is not an event in life.xli

We see people die everyday but we cannot see our own death. What Death is? This is not known to us either by our own experience or by that of others. One Who dies never comes back to tell us what experience he passed through and if we can have a first hand experience of death at all, then it remains death no more. After all, if I survive after that, how can I call it death? Hence (given this reflection) the idea of death needs to be formulated in somewhat as follows:

“X dies means X shows no sign of life which he was earlier showing and this cessation of life is permanent.”

and

“Y and only Y knows that X is dead (X never knows it or at least Y never knows if X knows it).”

Given this formulation, many features about the idea of death come to the fore: (1) Death is a mystery for everyone as a phenomenon. (2) The talk about death is to be understood in a very special manner because it only means that X experiences something which is putatively called death but it is not so for X just because he experiences it and survives it.

It means that we have to talk about death always with reference to a happening that has occurred to someone else and not to ourselves. We have to admit that either its experiential value is zero or the possibility of its
being informative is zero or both. Since we do not know what happened to others who died, we are not in a position to ascertain whether they experience something but could not communicate it to others or did not experience anything at all. One possibility may be that a person passes one’s own death experience, the phenomenon that is called death by others. But eventually that person cannot communicate it with others since the means of communication are ceased. In this case, the phenomenon of death would have a certain experiential value for the subject who undergoes death but normally it may lack any informative value for others.

A near-death experience (NDE) gives us some information about its experiential content but they can be interpreted in pure physiological terms as well as in terms of our spiritual life. Now this dilemma can be resolved only through personal experience although it cannot be informed to others by any ordinary means of communication. The idea of death thus remains a problem and whenever we talk about it, we should be careful which specific formulation of it we are referring to.

On the ground of our discussion at least these possible interpretations can be accepted:

(a) Talking about death means talking purely in physical and physiological terms with reference to cessation of properties of life such as heart-beating, pulse-rate, blood-circulation, respiration, brain-functioning, etc.

(b) The second possible interpretation of death may be that it means an experience which some people recollect after passing through a condition which is physically and physiologically declared to be a condition of death. Here the person sees one’s own experience which one passes through and survives after but which cannot be communicated to others in any ordinary way. Its experiential value and informative value require a life of spiritual backdrop.
What Aging is?

Aging is a phenomenon that is purely physical and physiological. Technically speaking, aging is a progressive deterioration of the body's structure and function. The signs of aging are overtly noted by the person himself or by others. From early infancy to childhood, from childhood to adolescence, from adolescence to youth, from youth to maturity, and eventually from maturity to old age, human body (or any biological organism) passes through various changes externally as well as internally. Not only physical symptoms of these changes are seen on the body but physiological functions also undergo changes. Hormonal changes from stage of adolescence to maturity and again from maturity to old age is a common physiological change that is noticed by the person himself and by others and which affects one's personal and social life also. Aging is normally meant to refer to the stage of advancing towards old age but this is a continuous process which starts right from the time of conception of embryo in the womb of mother and continues till end that is called death. So while talking about aging, we need to be careful again about what we are talking about. If we are exclusively talking about advancement of old age then it would be one sort of discussion which may practically demand stopping of this process or at least minimizing its speed as much as possible. But it may be argued here that the process of aging is necessarily connected with the beginning of human life. But nobody would like to be an infant forever. Therefore, the discussion regarding how to put a halt to the advancement may actually demand just the contrary. So when we talk about aging we should be clear which way we want to discuss this phenomenon.

Some reflections on the phenomena of aging and death in Ayurveda

As we have stated in the above discussion that aging is normally related to death necessarily but we have seen that it is not so. The child and infant mortality shows that death is neither logically nor empirically excluded
from early young age. However, it cannot be denied that with the growth of age and especially after passing the middle age (approximately 50 years), the metabolic activities happening in the organism seem to generate less energy and more fatigue that gives the indication of the gradual and slow degeneration of organism. It may eventually bring death at one point. People all over the world are concerned with this change and all sorts of efforts are made at least to slow down this process as much as possible. Very often it is claimed by certain therapeutic systems that it not only is capable of arresting the process of aging but it can also bring back an old man to his youth. In Ayurveda also this claim is made. There is a myth about the sage Cyavan who was brought back to his youth by a certain kalpa given to him by the celestial physicians’ Ašvinikumārs.

Ayurveda believes that people can certainly age in a healthy manner by living healthy lives. In Carakasamhitā (and likewise in other ayurvedic texts), a number of rasāyana-s and rejuvenation-therapies (kāyā-kalpa) have been mentioned which can counter the degeneration of organism. It has been mentioned that the use of these rasāyana-s and rejuvenation therapies can not only slow down the process of advancement towards the old age, but can also reverse it. Also the disease of premature aging can be cured by the use of specific herbs including in these rāsāyana-s. Now it is an empirical claim and can be tested in laboratories.

However, along with certain organic reasons, aging is also caused by certain psychological factors. Despite having enough nutritious diet, a person under constant stress begins to show old age at an early age. On the contrary, a person who lives a cheerful life and keeps himself free from stresses appears to be young and strong even at an advanced age. The psychological factors of aging, therefore, need specific consideration. The specific combination of physical and psychic health is necessary for keeping a person in good health and saves him from an early or pre-mature aging. How far mental stress and anxiety contribute to an undesirable early aging is a matter of quantitative study also. Perhaps, experimentally it is possible to measure the rate of aging under the influence of stressful conditions. This
sort of quantitative study can also reveal certain truths about our inner life and our perceptions of aging.

In connection with psychological health, the notion of aging also takes another dimension. We know that I.Q. is measured by the ratio of physical age and intellectual age. The physical aging is not desirable but intellectual aging or advancement in intelligence is very much desirable. Although a detailed discussion of this dimension of aging will prove to be a digression from our present discussion but it would not be off the point to keep this dimension also in our mind.

Man is normally believed to be a psycho-physical complex and his spiritual dimension is not given due consideration in a scientific or a rational discourse. To an extent, this reservation against the spiritual dimension of human life is justified, since we ordinarily are not in a position to relate this dimension to our physical life. This, however, is the limitation of the precise formulation of the notion of spirituality and not of the spirituality itself. Whether we like it or not, human beings qua human have a spiritual dimension and if we are not rigidly tied to some pre-occupations, then it is not very difficult to relate this spiritual dimension of man’s life to his physical and psychic life in a workable manner.

However, there is no need to reduce spirituality to psychic or neuro-psychic function. In that effort, its spirituality is marred. To make the spiritual dimension of man’s life an important working factor in his own life, the only need is to connect the links between the spiritual state of existence of man with psychic functions that ensues it.

In the context of aging, the spiritual dimension also has a vital role to play. The physical and psychic existences of man’s life are the outer and inner peripheries of his being but spirituality is centered on his being itself. This relation of periphery and centre is functional and not anatomical. What happens to the spiritual dimension of a man’s life necessarily affects his body and mind in different degrees. But it is not always true that the body and mind also affect the spiritual dimension. A pure transcendent spirit is not
being advocated here. The physical and psychic conditions help or frustrate a person to rise above to his pure spiritual dimension. Therefore, it is not correct to say that spiritual dimension is purely transcendent and beyond the reach of body and mind. But it is in one sense beyond or transcendent that it cannot be completely denatured and thrown from its central position. Remaining in the centre, the spiritual dimension of human life affects one’s body and mind. And it can never be the other way around.

It may be appropriate here to say a little bit about the belief of Ayurveda about the phenomenon of death. Ayurveda views the phenomenon of death from the spiritual perspective. Death appears to be a total destruction or annihilation of organism from the physiological perspective which is not acceptable to Ayurveda, since the transitory and mortal character of living organism is only an appearance and not a truth. In reality, nobody dies, they only get changed, are always reborn, continually have new faces: only time stood between one face and another. Death, therefore, is nothing but a hyphen which connects two gross bodies and during this pause, subtle body remains alive.xv

The phenomenon of aging is also very much influenced by a person’s spiritual dimension. A person who has entered into the depth of his spiritual dimension of life is found to be temperamentally cool, composed and balanced and these psychic qualities has bearings on his physical behavior and physiological activities as well. It is a normal thing to note that a balanced person not only behaves in a balanced manner but his rate of respiration, B.P., etc. are also affected by his temperament. When a person enters into deeper layers of spiritual dimension, he, in fact, enters into a very different world. The world in which he lives in assumes a very different significance for him because he now could see certain things, which he earlier took to be very trivial and worthless, become very important and significant for him. Normally, we people do not find anything special in the fact that we are alive, our organs are functioning well, our mind is in order and our social relations with others are, in general, good. We do not think
that there is something special about them. But a person, who has attained some spiritual depth in his life, can also see that life has a value, health has a value, psychic normalcy is of great value and good social relations are also of great value. He does not think that they are valuable but because of his spiritual depth he could feel that these are quite valuable. This can give us a way to relate the spiritual dimension to psychic and physical dimension of human life. The spiritual self-placement (svastha) has a direct effect on aging not exactly in a physical sense but in an overall sense. A person who is spiritually self-placed feels internally more alive and enthusiastic. This naturally influences his physical and physiological aspect of life. Even if he appears to be an old age person in appearance, his behavior indicates that he is younger than the youngsters. This aspect of aging needs to be taken into consideration seriously as we have to choose what we want. Do we want to control our aging from the point of view of look of physical body and its physical function or we want an internally strong, vibrant, enthusiastic and younger person who is not made old by his physical age. A combination of both is the most desirable thing but we must be clear what we have to choose either of the two.

Ayurveda talks of human health in all its three dimensions. As a system of medicine and therapeutics, its contribution in this regard is very important because it relates spiritual health with physical and mental health essentially and gives due importance to all these three dimensions of life. The concept of ārogya is very significant in this regard. Caraka, the great Indian physician, established in the beginning of his treatise on Ayurveda that the objective of Ayurveda is the attainment of ārogya for all. The state of ārogya is the positive state of existence of jiva in which it feels delighted at physical, psychological as well as at spiritual level. Ayurvedic system of diagnosis, pathology, and therapy is holistic in the sense that it necessarily gives importance to spiritual dimension of human life and try to relate it to its peripheral dimensions in a definite manner. A vaidya of Ayurveda uses his insight more deeply into his past experience of professional practice to reach up to the actual cause of the disease. A vaidya strives to pin-point the place...
from where it springs. The cause of disease may be spiritual also, according to Ayurveda. Any complication or problem at the spiritual level may cause early aging. Hence, in the context of aging this factor needs to be given due consideration.

As we have mentioned in the previous paragraph that the concept of ārogya is very significant for Ayurveda. There is a very interesting relation between ārogyatā and death which Ayurveda upheld. Ārogyatā is the state of existence in which the person is awakened at all the three levels of existence. Now life without ārogyatā has no worth in Ayurveda. There is no qualitative difference between such life and death in Ayurveda. The lack of awareness at any level is a disease that is needed to be cured. In fact, Ayurveda goes to the extent of saying that ārogyatā is life and its absence is death. This claim of Ayurveda is also needed to be taken seriously by the modern mind.

As we have discussed earlier while analyzing the notion of death that either it cannot be seen as an experience or if it happens to be an experience, then it cannot said to be death in the sense of the final terminus of life. We can talk of death only on a spiritual plane, experientially as well as informatively. As we have seen, it should not be necessarily related to the question of aging, death is a kind of shift or a migration from a body to a disembodied state of existence which may again come back to a bodily existence. But what happens in that dimension of existence can be discussed meaningfully only by debunking the myth of our identity as a psycho-physical self. Death brings about a complete change in the psycho-physical identity and there is much to talk about this dimension of existence. But that needs a very different kind of experiential backdrop.

**To sum up:**

The major concern of the above mentioned detailed discussion regarding life, aging and death is to challenged the commonly upheld belief in the academic circle that consider death only as the terminus towards
which the human life is heading and acquiring old age in this process. For this very reason, they are always presented in a precise connection. But as we have seen if we formulate the notion of death in a precise manner, the two are found to be different issues that are needed to be discussed separately. We have also seen in the above discussion that the phenomena of aging and death have been interpreted in an altogether different way in our traditional system of medicine. This interpretation deserves to be taken seriously as it is comprehensive, broad, and inclusive in nature and takes up seriously the spiritual backdrop of life without which as we have seen the phenomenon of aging and the phenomenon of death remains unexplained.
REFERENCES:


This passage appears as premise to be refuted (pūrvapkṣa) in the Buddhacarita of Aśvaghōṣa. King śrenya of Magadha is disturbed by young Siddhārtha’s resolve to abandon the world. He, therefore, tries to persuade Siddhārtha by reiterating this traditional Vedic teaching.


Buddhindriya Sarīrādhyākṣa ………………… Brahmsūtrasāmkarabhāṣya
1.1.1.

iv ‘athato Brahmajijnasā commentary an Brahmasūtra by Samkarācārya.


vi Hermann Hesse, Siddartha, translated from German by Hilda Rosner, Harpercollins publishers India, a joint venture with the India Today group, New Delhi, P.69.


viii Mahābhārata, Chapter XII, Verse 16


"Those who wish to achieve good in this world as well as in the next world and those who possess physical as well as mental powers should strive for these three fundamental desires, i.e. prāṇaiśaṅgā, dhanaśaṅgā, and pāralokaiśaṅgā."

Carakasamhitā, translation by Dr. Brahmanand Tripathi, Chaukhamba Surbharti Prakashan, Varanasi, 1995, Vol. 1, Ch. 11.3, P. 223.

‘Death is not an event in life: We do not live to experience death. If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present.’

_ Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, 6.4311

na jārāṃ na ca daurbalyamā nācāturyam nidhanam na ca.
jaṅgarvārṣasahsāṇī rāsāyanaparaḥ purā.

Bhutāiscaturbhīḥ sahitāḥ susūkṣmaṁmanojavo daiḥamupaiti dehāḥ.
śārirasthānam, carakasāṁhitā p. 412, ch. 2.

... prasannātāmāndryamanāḥ swastha ityabhidhiyate.
sūrutasāṁhitā (1.15.48)