



Review Article

MANTRA CHIKITSA IN CHATURVISANTI VISHA UPKRAMA - A HOLISTIC APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the timeless wisdom of life, offers a path to complete well-being. It blends natural healing with inner peace, nurturing the body, mind and soul. In Ayurveda, the treatment of poisoning (*Vish Chikitsa*) holds a unique and sacred space. Where contemporary medicine zooms into chemicals and molecules, ancient science discovered the subtle energy fields and vibrational medicine through Sacred Chants i.e., *Mantra Chikitsa*. In Ayurveda, *Mantras* fall under the category of *Daiva Vyapashraya Chikitsa*, a spiritual form of therapy. This sacred approach to healing involves practices including the use of *mantras*, sacred herbs (*Aushadhi*), wearing of healing gems (*Mani dharan*), auspicious rituals (*Mangal*), fasting (*Upvasa*), scriptural recitations (*Svadhya*) and pilgrimages (*Yatra gamana*). This article explores the esoteric and potent role of mantras in neutralizing the effects of *Sthavar Vish*. Through a blend of sound therapy, intention and spiritual discipline, *Mantra Chikitsa* is believed to purify the body, uplift consciousness and restore *Doshic* balance. This review explores the fundamental concepts, applications and significance of *Mantra Chikitsa* in the management of various poisoning conditions and also discusses the psychosomatic benefits of *Mantras*, correlating ancient wisdom with modern perspectives on vibrational medicine, mind-body harmony and resonance energy effect. With renewed global interest in integrative therapies, *Mantra Chikitsa* emerges not just as a spiritual practice but a complementary tool in Ayurvedic toxicology.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, an ancient system of medicine originating in India, encompasses a wide range of therapeutic approaches, including dietary regulations, herbal treatments, physical therapies, and spiritual practices.^[1] *Mantra Chikitsa* represents one of the most ancient and profound therapeutic approaches in Ayurved, particularly within the specialized branch of *Agad Tantra*.^[2]

Mantra Chikitsa forms an integral component of *Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa*, the spiritual approach to treatment in Ayurveda.^[3] Creation is composed of vibrations vibrating at different frequencies and intensities, which together bring forth the world's

phenomena. *Mantras* are sound energies or *Shabda*, that hold immense power. They serve both as instruments of power and as pathways to harness it.^[4] When a *Mantra* is repeated, it resonates at a specific frequency that aligns with the cosmic energy, drawing it into the human body and its environment. *Mantras* exert a profound healing influence on the body, mind, and spirit by initiating biochemical changes in the brain. This modulation calms brainwave activity, purifies mental toxins, and facilitates cellular detoxification by acting through synaptic pathways.^[5] The term *Mantra* derives from *Sanskrit*, meaning sacred message or text. A *Mantra* is a pure thought emanating from a pure heart, functioning as an inspirational belief system, when constantly repeated it awakens consciousness (*chit*) or *Chaithanya*.^[6]

The *Atharva Veda* contains a rich collection of hymns dedicated to deities like *Indra*, *Varuna*, *Agni* and other deities invoking their blessings for relief from ailments such as fever, leprosy, jaundice, urinary disorders and diarrhoea. In *Vedic* tradition, diseases

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were often seen as divine punishments resulting from human misdeeds. These hymns were typically performed alongside specific rituals, as outlined in the Kaushika Sutra of the *Atharva Veda*, blending spiritual reverence with therapeutic intention.^[7] This *Daivavyapasraya Chikitsa* consists of the use of *Dana*, *Swastyayana*, *Mangala*, *Hom*, *Niyama*, *Prayashchitta*, *Upavasa*, *Mantra* etc.^[8] Among all these *Mantra* is explained in Ayurveda as foremost role in various places. *Mantra* provides a mental empowerment in harmony with the rhythm of the cosmos to facilitate the cosmic healing force.^[9]

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- To explore and critically review the foundational concept of *Mantra Chikitsa* within Ayurvedic literature.
- To present a scientific interpretation and analytical understanding of *Mantra Chikitsa* as a therapeutic modality wsr to *Vish chikitsa*.
- To identify diverse branches and applications of Ayurveda where *Mantra Chikitsa* can be effectively integrated.
- To highlight the growing global awareness and the intellectual contributions of scholars promoting this ancient healing technique.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A review of *Vedic* and Ayurvedic scriptures, electronic databases and published research has been undertaken. The concept has been systematically collected, compiled, and analyzed.

Mantra Etymology (Vyutpatti) ^[10]

"Mananaat traayate yasmat atasmata mantrah prakirtitah"

Mantra is a sacred sound or phrase whose repeated recitation empowers an individual to overcome obstacles or safeguard oneself from suffering and entanglements. A *Mantra* is a sacred collection of words derived from the revered Vedas. Traditionally, most mantras are composed in the form of two-line verses or *shlokas*, although some may appear as a single line- or even just a powerful single word- carrying deep vibrational meaning.^[11]

According to *Bhagwat Geeta*,^[12] the source of all mantras is word- *Aum* called *Pranav*, *Aum* is considered to be the most fundamental and powerful mantra and thus is prefixed and suffixed to all prayers.^[13]

Creation is composed of vibrations vibrating at different frequencies and intensities, which together bring forth the world's phenomena. *Mantras* are sound energies, or *Shabda*, that hold immense power. They serve both as instruments of power and as pathways to harness it. When a *Mantra* is repeated, it resonates at a

specific frequency that aligns with the cosmic energy, drawing it into the human body and its environment.

Types of Mantras and Their Uses in Visha Chikitsa

Mantras are traditionally classified into three types: *Stree* (feminine), *Purusha* (masculine), and *Napumsaka* (neutral). A *Mantra* that ends with the names of *Agni* (fire) is considered a *Stree Mantra*, primarily used for *Vashikaran* (attraction or control). *Mantras* ending with the word "*Namaha*" are classified as *Napumsaka Mantras* and are typically used for *Uchchatan* (expelling negative energies or evil spirits). The remaining mantras fall under the *Purusha Mantra* category and are primarily used for *Visha Shanti* (neutralizing the effects of poison).

The effectiveness and appropriateness of a *Mantra* are also influenced by the number of syllables or *Aksharas* it contains. *Mantras* with more than 8 syllables are suitable for elderly individuals and can be recited regularly (*Nitya sevanam*). For young adults (*Yuva*), mantras with around 10 syllables are considered effective, while for children, shorter mantras of about 5 syllables are recommended.

Additionally, based on syllable count:

- *Mantras* with more than 20 syllables are known as *Maala Mantras* (garland-like).
- *Mantras* with 10 to 20 syllables are called *Sādhāraṇa Mantras* (general).
- *Mantras* with fewer than 10 syllables are referred to as *Bija Mantras* (seed *Mantras*).

As per the text *Visha Vaidya Jyotsnika*, mantras can be employed in toxicology for three primary purposes:^[14]

1. *Visha Sthambana* – To arrest the spread of poison,
2. *Samhara* – To eliminate poison from the body, and
3. *Sankramana* – To transfer the poison or its effects away from a person.

Mantra Chikitsa in Ayurved Texts

References emphasizing *Mantra* recitation in Ayurveda texts especially in *Caraka Samhita* are-

- ❖ During *Jaatakarma*, which involves chanting *mantras* in the newborn's right ear, prayers are offered to the deities for protection against evil forces.^[15]
- ❖ For treating *Jwara* (fever), *Charaka* advises the recitation of the *Vishnu Sahasranama* (the thousand names of Lord Vishnu).^[16]
- ❖ In cases of poisoning, specific mantras are used as part of the therapeutic process.^[17]
- ❖ *Unmada* (insanity) and *Apasmara* (epilepsy) are also treated with the power of *Mantras*.
- ❖ *Mantras* play a role in the treatment of *Aagantuja Shophā* (exogenous oedema).^[18]

- ❖ In *Vishachikitsa* (poisoning treatment), *Mantras* are integral to healing.^[19]
- ❖ During childbirth (*Prasuti*), certain mantras are chanted for spiritual and physical well-being.^[20]
- ❖ The collection of herbal drugs is preceded by chanting mantras to ensure the potency of herbs.^[21]
- ❖ In *Jaatakarma*, chanting of mantras is repeated to invoke divine protection for the newborn against negative energies.^[22]
- ❖ Specific mantras are recited when preparing antidotes for snake bites to enhance the medicinal effectiveness.^[23]

The Role of *Mantra Chikitsa* in Toxicology

The *Vedas* and *Puranas* contain numerous hymns designed to alleviate the effects of poisons. During ancient times, the use of *Mantras* and hymns was often favoured over medicinal treatments and procedures. However, as Ayurveda progressed through the *Samhita* period, the practice of using mantras became less common. With the rise of Ayurvedic texts like the *Samhitas*, *Dravyabhut Chikitsa* (drug-based treatments) gained more prominence than *Adravabhut Chikitsa* (non-material treatments). Despite this shift, the application of mantras continues to play an important role in Ayurvedic toxicology.^[24]

Acharya Vagbhatta asserts that poisons are imbued with *Tejas* (a fiery energy) and are not dispelled as effectively by drugs as they are by mantras, which are filled with *Satya*, *Brahmacharya*, and the *Tapas* of the practitioner. Among the 24 therapeutic methods for treating poison, *Acharya Charak* lists *mantras* as the foremost. *Mantra Chikitsa* must be practiced by individuals who observe strict disciplines, including abstinence from women, meat and alcohol. A proper diet, personal hygiene and sleeping on a mattress made from *Kusha* grass are also essential. The practitioner must achieve *mantra siddhi* (perfection). It is also emphasized that improper chanting or incorrect practice of *Mantras* may result in their ineffectiveness. Thus, one should use *Mantra* very consciously.

Mantras play a significant role in Ayurvedic toxicology, being utilized in several key practices such as: ^[25]

- Chanting during the application of a tourniquet, particularly for snake bites.
- Reciting *Mantras* while preparing potent herbal formulations like *Mahagandhasti Agad*.
- Incorporating *Mantras* in the treatment of *Alark Visha*.
- Using *Mantras* in the management of *Shanka Visha*.
- In some regions of India, *Mantras* continue to be an integral part of *Vrishchika Visha* treatment.

Acharya Charak has described the use of specific *Siddha Mantra* for *Visha Chikitsa*.^[26]

Mantra Chikitsa in Modern Period: Contemporary Researches in Toxicology-

In the modern era, several research studies have been undertaken to explore the therapeutic effects of *Mantras* across a variety of health conditions related to toxicology. As sound and music are forms of vibrational energy, they are known to significantly influence the physiology and psychology of living organisms.

Anti-Cancer Effects ^[27]

The role of sound vibrations in cellular physiology was studied using *Saam-veda Mantras*. The experiment focused on tumor cell cultures from various organs, including lungs, colon, brain, breast and skin. Results showed a significant reduction in the growth of these cancer cells, suggesting that specific mantras may possess potential anti-tumor properties through harmonic vibration mechanisms.

Effect on Hypertension ^[28]

A study using a hymn in praise of the Sun-demonstrated its effectiveness in managing primary hypertension. Chanting this mantra alleviated common hypertension symptoms such as excessive sweating (*Sweda*), anger (*Krodha*), tremors (*Kampa*), and headaches (*Shirashula*) across all severity levels.

Neurophysiological Impact of *Om* Chanting ^[29]

During *Om* mantra chanting, Chanting *Om* was found to lower sympathetic nervous activity while enhancing parasympathetic responses leading to decreased heart and respiratory rates and heightened sensory awareness. This suggests potential benefits for individuals with emotional or psychological disorders.

Rehabilitation of Post-Stroke Patients ^[30]

Stroke remains a critical global health issue, often leaving patients with physical, emotional and cognitive impairments. A study on Gayatri Mantra chanting indicated significant improvements in the quality of life among post-stroke individuals, enhancing functions related to mobility, memory, emotional stability, and overall well-being.

Probable Modes of Action of *Mantra Chikitsa*

The effect of *Mantras* is described as "*Prabhavajanya*" action in Ayurvedic texts. *Prabhava* refers to the specific and characteristic action of substances that is considered *Acintya*.

The universe is fundamentally composed of vibrations of varying frequencies and amplitudes, which together manifest the physical world. *Mantras*, sacred sound vibrations are not merely words but dynamic tools of energy. When a *Mantra* is chanted repeatedly, it resonates at a specific frequency that

aligns with cosmic energy, drawing this subtle force into the practitioner's body and environment.^[31]

Beyond ritual, *Mantras* carry deep energetic significance. Their repetition generates waves of thought-energy, which help regulate internal vibrations, enhance specific energy types, and activate supportive physiological and psychological processes. Just as light travels in wavelengths and sound in frequencies, the human auditory system, especially the tympanic membrane, receives these sound waves and allows the body to respond.^[32]

Mantras operate at exceptionally high vibrational levels, influencing consciousness itself. According to the universal law of energy, while energy cannot be created or destroyed, it can transform and the *Aatma* (soul), as described in ancient scriptures like the *Bhagavad Gita*, is an eternal, changeless energy form with a high vibrational frequency. *Vedic* texts equate "*Shabda*" (sound) with "*Brahma*" (the divine) suggesting that mantra- being a form of *Shabda*- can align the soul's frequency, triggering responses at multiple layers of existence: physical, physiological, biological, biophysical, and even at atomic and subatomic levels.^[33]

The body's tissues and organs vary in how they absorb or reflect these subtle, supersonic vibrations. *Mantras* have the extraordinary ability to open blocked energy pathways and harmonize internal channels, including the *Shatchakras* (six energy centers), thus activating the dormant spiritual force known as *Kundalini*. *Kundalini* energy, once awakened, flows through the chakras, contributing to deep healing of the body, mind and soul.

It is essential to understand what sets mantras apart from ordinary speech. Though both consist of sound, the vibrations produced during *Mantra* chanting interact uniquely with the body's subtle systems. As a *Mantra* is uttered, its vibrations travel through the *Naadis* (energy channels) into the six *Chakras*- each associated with specific colors, elements, deities, *Bijaksharas* (seed syllables), and frequencies that correspond to physical nerve plexuses along the spine. When this energy passes through these *Chakras*, it converts into neural energy, gets transmitted via the nervous system, and eventually influences the entire body through blood circulation and nerve impulses.^[34]

Practical Utility and Research Databases

Regular practice of *Mantra* chanting has been shown to enhance cognitive functions such as concentration, memory and logical reasoning. It exerts a calming influence on the nervous system, eases muscular tension, and significantly reduces mental stress. Interestingly, the benefits of *Mantras* are not

limited to the one who chants them-those who listen also experience therapeutic effects. Studies reveal that listening to *Mantras* can help lower blood pressure, regulate heart rate, stabilize brainwave patterns, reduce adrenaline secretion and even balance cholesterol levels.

Mantra vibrations help calm mental restlessness, promote self-discipline, and play a vital role in sharpening memory and focus. Scientific research has observed tangible impacts of these sound vibrations on the physical body-especially in brain activity, as recorded through EEG patterns. *Mantras* like *Omkar* and the *Gayatri Mantra* have been associated with increased alpha brainwave activity, a state linked to relaxation and heightened awareness. This phenomenon is known as the neuro-linguistic effect.^[35] Additionally *Mantra* chanting enhances nervous system responsiveness, thereby improving an individual's resilience and capacity to endure challenging situations with greater strength and stability.

Research Insights

Recent studies exploring the therapeutic impact of *Mantras* and sound vibrations on the human body and mind have highlighted the transformative potential of *Mantra Yoga*. One of the leading institutions in this domain is the *Brahmavarchas Shodh Sansthan*, a prestigious research center based in Shantikunj, Haridwar. It has played a pioneering role in conducting in-depth scientific studies on the power of *Mantras*- *Mantra Shakti*- and their potential influence on the human mind and body. Their findings provide substantial evidence supporting the application of *Mantrapathy* as a scientifically viable method for healing and environmental purification. Additionally, notable contributions by scholars like Dr. T. Temple Tutler of Cleveland University, USA, have further validated the profound effects of mantras through rigorous research, producing significant and noteworthy results.^[36] A clinical trial was collaboratively conducted by the NMP Medical Research Institute, Warwick Research Services, and the Swamigal Trust for Vedic Sciences, India, with the primary aim of assessing the immediate effects of *Mantra Chikitsa* in patients with cardiovascular disorders.^[37]

Significant insights have also emerged from international research on the *Gayatri Mantra*. Dr. Howard Steingeril, a renowned American physiologist, collected a diverse range of *Mantras*, hymns, and sacred chants from various cultures across the globe. He then conducted laboratory tests to study and measure their vibrational potency and energetic resonance. Among them, the *Gayatri Mantra* of Hindu

tradition demonstrated the highest frequency an astounding 110,000 sound waves per second-marking it as the most potent chant globally. This potent vibrational energy is believed to activate certain spiritual centres and physiological responses within the body and mind. Furthermore, research at Hamburg University has explored the influence of the Gayatri Mantra on both mental and physical aspects of human health and consciousness. A *Beej Mantra* mentioned in 'Tulsidas' Ramcharitmanas has been observed to bring about noticeable positive effects when chanted regularly. Students who practiced this chanting reported enhanced attention, a sense of ease and relaxation, improved memory retention and a significant drop-in average pulse rate and body weight. Those dealing with blood pressure issues also shared that they felt calmer and enjoyed a joyful, stress-free learning environment after engaging in meditation with the mantra.^[38]

In the context of Ayurveda's growing global relevance, it is essential to recognize the vastness of this ancient pathyso expansive, in fact, that much of its constitutional depth and multidimensional approach remains underexplored. *Mantra Chikitsa*, if earnestly integrated as a core therapeutic modality, holds the potential to unveil an entirely new frontier in Ayurvedic healing. It could elevate the system to remarkable heights while paving the way for innovative research and deeper understanding.

Globalisation and Relevance: There is a need for systematic, global-level research on *Mantra Chikitsa*. Only through such dedicated efforts can we hope to revive and reawaken this ancient and nearly forgotten healing tradition.

1. Undertaking comprehensive, systematic research on *Mantra Chikitsa*, which is urgently needed.
2. Integrating *Vedic* astrological principles to truly comprehend its subtle biophysical effects and enhance its therapeutic efficacy.
3. Adhering strictly to prescribed guidelines and prohibitions to ensure safety and authenticity.
4. Acknowledging that the scope of *Mantra Chikitsa* extends beyond spiritual or psychological dimensions-it influences the physiological as well.
5. Placing greater emphasis on its potential to address psychosomatic disorders, warranting further scientific exploration.

DISCUSSION

The integration of *Mantra Chikitsa* in the treatment of *Visha* highlights the holistic approach of Ayurveda, where physical, mental, and spiritual aspects are addressed simultaneously. While contemporary medicine primarily focuses on the biochemical neutralization of toxins, Ayurveda's

inclusion of mantras provides a complementary approach that enhances overall healing and recovery. The psychosomatic benefits of *Mantra* chanting, coupled with its potential to modulate energy fields and immune responses, make it a valuable adjunct in the management of poisoning. *Mantra* are applicable in Different Stages of Poisoning- in *Visha* Vega, *Mantras* are recommended as the first intervention, often followed by other treatments like therapeutic emesis, cauterization or blood-letting depending on how far the poison has progressed in the body.^[39]

Some of the commonly used mantras in the treatment of *Visha* include:^[40]

- ❖ **Garuda Mantra:** Traditionally chanted to counteract snake venom and other animal poisons.
- ❖ **Mrityunjaya Mantra:** Known for its life-restoring properties, often used in severe cases of poisoning.
- ❖ **Navagraha Mantras:** Chanted to balance planetary influences and alleviate toxic effects.
- ❖ **Narayana Kavacham:** This is a protective hymn invoking Lord Vishnu, offering a shield against various forms of harm, including poisoning.

Integration of Mantra Chikitsa with Other Treatments ^[41]- *Mantra Chikitsa* is usually used in combination with other therapies for severe poisoning. It forms part of a comprehensive approach that may include:

- Physical interventions like *Utkartana* (incision) and *Nishpeedana* (squeezing) at the bite site
- In cases of *Visha*, *Panchakarma* is advised to combine with *Mantra Chikitsa* to enhance the elimination of toxins. Procedures such as *Vamana* (therapeutic vomiting) and *Virechana* (therapeutic purgation) can be supported by *Mantra* chanting to promote holistic healing.
- Medicinal interventions like *Agada* (antidotes) administration
- *Prativish* (counter-poison) therapy, where one poison is used to neutralize another.

CONCLUSION

Mantra chanting is an ancient healing practice that soothes both the mind and soul. It represents a sophisticated approach to toxicology that integrates spiritual, psychological and physical dimensions of healing. Its placement as the first intervention in *Chaturvimshati Upakramas* underscores its significance in poison management.

The transformative effects of mantra are hard to fully describe, as they work through vibrations or resonance that alter the energy levels of both the chanter and the listener. In *Visha Chikitsa*, mantra chanting helps slow the rapid spread of poison and facilitates the cessation of its effects. Many studies are

currently exploring the miraculous benefits of *Mantra Chikitsa*. Today, there is a growing recognition of its power and integrating this practice alongside conventional treatments can enhance therapeutic outcomes. To foster the widespread adoption and incorporation of *Mantra Chikitsa* in present healthcare, future initiatives should prioritize conducting clinical trials and promoting collaborative research between contemporary scientists and medical professionals.

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