



## TANMATRAS-KEY TO HOLISTIC HEALING THROUGH DOORS OF PERCEPTIONS

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### ABSTRACT

We are all part of an infinite field of intelligence that orchestrates all of the activities in the universe and our sense organs are truly our only means of contact with the outside world.

*"Nothing is in the understanding, which was not first perceived by some of the senses."*

attributed to English philosopher, John Locke (1632-1704).

Our senses provide the keys to unifying two systems, in particular, to bridge our outer and our inner worlds. The study of the interaction between these worlds (Healing through the Senses) interfaces with psychological processes and the nervous and immune systems of the human body. Balance your senses through both inner and outer experiences of nourishing sounds, sensations, images, tastes, and smells, and your inner pharmacy which provide natural health promoting chemicals to improve immunity, relieve anxiety and depression, normalize digestive function, and keep you pain free.

Treating ourselves through the 5 senses is one of the most important ways to heal our body, mind and spirit. Ayurveda places great importance on improving the acumen and strength of the five senses. What if your taste was stronger, your eyes keener, your ears more sensitive? You would have a higher perception of reality. This healing modality gently stimulates all five of our sensory organs, harmonizing us. This results in an experience of peace and calm, dissolving any stress.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda, *Tanmatras*, Senses, Health, Body and mind

### INTRODUCTION:

Our brain is physical but the mind is energy. We can see the brain (physical) but not the mind (energy). The mind is sensitive to signals or vibrations and sends these signals to the physical brain. The brain transmits chemical neural communication through the whole body. This is where the term **Holistic Healing** comes from.

Ayurveda defines health not only as an absence of disease, but also as a very holistic level of vitality throughout our lives. As a result, the Ayurvedic approach to treating any single aspect of our health begins with taking into account the whole

of who we are-body, mind, and spirit.<sup>[1]</sup> More than 5,000 years ago, the Vedic sages of India understood what quantum physicists are just beginning to recognize. The energy and information of the world is translated into subtle sensory impulses that are experienced on the screen of your consciousness. These inner impulses are known in Ayurveda as *Tanmatras*.<sup>[ 2 ]</sup> *Tanmatras* are internal senses of our body and are of five types i.e.; Visual, Auditory, Tactile, Olfactory and Gustatory sensations.<sup>[3]</sup>

External information's(senses) translated, transformed and then transfer in as *Tanmatras*, the internal senses. We can

refine these internal senses by Holistic healing, for better perception and calmness of body, mind and soul. We can think of them as mental quanta, the subjective equivalent to the subtlest units of matter in the physical world. Awakening the *Tanmatras* through active imagination creates an alert mind and vital body. In Ayurveda, sensory impressions (*Tanmatras*) are considered crucial to health.

Ayurveda is based on five senses therapies, and teaches that what we take in through our five senses determines our health. In other words we are not just what we – Eat- but also what we See, Smell, Feel and Hear!

Stimulation with a balanced life style is how we heal. We are imperfect and need stimulation of our 5 senses by <sup>[2]</sup> --

1. Touch Therapy
2. Sound Therapy
3. Color Therapy
4. Aroma Therapy
5. Taste Therapy

Touch is a key component of traditional healing too. An Ayurvedic ancient text Charak Samhita said in its Sutra Sathana chapter 11 verse 38 <sup>[4]</sup>, that all senses [i.e.; Visual, Auditory, Tactile, Olfactory and Gustatory] are intermingling and inherited in the *Sparshendriya* (Touch sense) especially in reference of epithelial line of body. The sense of touch is present/pervades in all the senses. It is inherently associated with mind. The internal sense and mind is pervaded in sense of *Sparsh*, perceived all senses.

|| Ch.Su.11 / 38||<sup>[4]</sup>

## I. TOUCH THERAPY:

Medicines and words both have healing power, but so does touch, and it is perhaps the most widely available, financially responsible and safest tool in the healing arts. When we touch, we connect, and when we connect, we create a healing bond for which there is simply no substitute.

Touch is the first of the senses to develop in the human infant, and it remains perhaps the most emotionally central throughout our lives. While many researchers have appreciated its power, others have been more circumspect. Our mind, especially the subconscious mind, is a miraculous tool. And we must understand that any disturbance in the mind causes disturbance in the body. So you have understood the mind in order to use the mind to heal illnesses. Touch may also increase levels of melatonin and of the feel-good hormone, serotonin.

Touch is extremely powerful. There are even studies that show how what's called 'touch deprivation' (an interrupted mother care) stops babies from growing and developing properly. More recent studies have corroborated these findings. "Kangaroo care," to keep babies close to their mothers, decreases the rate at which they develop blood infections. Touching also improves weight gain.<sup>[5]</sup> After extensive study years later, the American psychologist Harry Harlow concluded that **the infants died from lack of touch**. A study by Rush University Medical Center in Chicago found that infants who were held, snuggled and touched had better mental and motor skills than those who were not.<sup>[6]</sup>

But we need physical touch not only as babies; we also need it as adults. The need for human touch present in infants as well as in an adult. Studies have shown that therapeutic touch benefits adults in the following ways:<sup>[7]</sup>

- Reduces stress (touching releases two feel-good brain chemicals, serotonin and dopamine)
- Lessens pain
- Reduces symptoms of Alzheimer's disease such as restlessness, pacing, vocalization, searching and tapping

Touch, a key component of traditional healing, is being increasingly studied in mainstream medicine, with some trials showing symptom benefits in a number of

areas, from asthma and high blood pressure to migraine and childhood diabetes. Other research findings hint that not only does touch lower stress levels, but that it can boost the immune system and halt or slow the progress of disease.

It has carried out more than 100 studies into touch and found evidence of significant effects, including faster growth in premature babies, reduced pain, decreased autoimmune disease symptoms, lowered glucose levels in children with diabetes, and improved immune systems in people with cancer.<sup>[8]</sup>

"Research has demonstrated that patients who receive healing touch experience accelerated wound healing and relaxation, pain relief and general comfort," said a spokesman, several studies are showing significant benefits in wound healing, pain and anxiety. It says touch therapy may also have positive effects on fracture healing and arthritis.<sup>[8]</sup>

- **Marma Therapy (Touch Healer in Ayurveda):**<sup>[9]</sup>

*Marma* therapy is an ancient practice whose focus is the directing of subtle energy (*prana*) in the body for purposes of supporting the healing process. This therapy is based on the utilization of 107 points in the body which are considered to be access points to the body, mind and consciousness.

When you are touched, the many nerve endings in your skin send messages back to your brain. This is the way **signals sent to your brain translate into feelings of moral and emotional values with happiness and graceful life.**

## II. SOUND THERAPY:

Sound Therapy can be prescribed to transform discord into harmony based on these qualities of the mind and the elements of the body in need of balancing and heal particular parts of the body, the subtle body and the mind.

As western attitudes broaden, eastern teachings are being integrated and are seen as complementary, leading to a

convergence of the ancient and the modern methods of healing, mind, and spirit.<sup>[10]</sup> Sound therapies include music, **Tibetan singing bowls, chanting of some mantras viz. Om mantra, Gayatri mantra, Mahamrityunjya mantra etc.**<sup>[11]</sup>

- **Music** affects health as it influences digestion, endurance, productivity, and feelings of romance. Used along with other healing modalities, mainstream or otherwise, certain types of music are seen as helpful and prescriptive sources.

- **Mantras**, or hymns, became interwoven with all actions related to healing. *Mantras*, as sacred sounds, are known to affect our vibratory being and consciousness as the word mantra itself means both protection and instrument.

- **Om** 'the sound of all sounds' is one of the most interesting aspects of the *Vedic mantra*. Om is that its uttering and meditating upon it connects us to a higher vibratory rate, linking us to the origin of *Prakruti*.

In *Ayurveda* sound has been used mainly to balance constitutional energies i.e.; *Vata, Pitta, Kapha doshas* or constitutions. *Ayurveda* promotes the use of particular sounds and chants (*mantras*) to bring transformations by raising the body's vibration frequency.<sup>[12]</sup>

In the *Vedas*, sound was understood to have a healing effect on its listener and, not surprisingly, various instruments were used to enable particular vibrations of sounds to prevent increases in particular *doshas*.<sup>[11]</sup>

For example:

- The instrumental sounds of the **Bamboo flute** are thought to prevent the increase of *Vata* as it emits soft notes and has a soothing effect on its listener. This is also the flute from which Lord Krishna played his soulful calming melodies alone on a calm river.

- **Pitta** needs a strong quality to catch its attention and the **Sitar** is believed to possess that with its nasal overtones and rich sound.

- The **Sarod** is a classical Indian lute-like instrument and, with its deep and ‘awakening’ sound and clear tones, is said to help balance and enliven the **Kapha dosha**.

Sound is a powerful tool for healing, not only for the physical body, but for returning us to the silence from which all sound, and indeed all matter, originates, assisting us in the quest to remember our true nature as spirit. It is only upon reaching that realization that we will be truly and completely healed.

### III. COLOR THERAPY:

It is everywhere you look, and everywhere you don’t look, we see colors all the time. Color is visible because it reflects bends and refracts through all kind of particles and objects. It is lesser known fact that the colors not only have effect on your mind, yet they are also holder of many curative benefits. This statement may be authenticated as a separate branch of healing named as Color Therapy or Chromo therapy.

It is a type of holistic healing technique of restoring imbalances in the body by applying colored light to the body. Through colored archetypes the individual can become aware of areas once vague or subconscious, in need of further development or understanding, allowing for increased opportunities of developing one’s inner and outer potential. Each and every color has a driving force within our very cell consciousness, which in turn has a driving force within the consciousness of the whole person. Bringing color into our daily lives, acts as a catalyst and motivator to recognize our self-image.<sup>[13]</sup>

Color have very powerful effect, they can energize, inspire, calm or heal. Vedic astrological and architectural scriptures make the use of colors to represent different deities. The seven colors of the spectrum namely, violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red are said to be the seven rays or the deities or the sun. Each color has different attributes.

Color therapy balances the mental and physical *doshas* through the sense of sight. Colors are absorbed primarily through the eyes or *Aalochak Pitta* and secondarily through the skin *Bhrajak Pitta*.<sup>[13]</sup>

The therapeutic qualities of color are the crucial part of subtle mental and pranic life-force nutrition as it energizes the nerves, which in turn stimulates the mind

As with everything Ayurvedic, a proper balance must be maintained. Alternative therapies also believe that person’s aura contains different layers of light which can be used for cleansing and balancing our doshas and thus help us better understand how to heal.<sup>[14]</sup>

- **Vata**  
Balancing colors for vatas are warm or calming. Yellows and gold are very pleasing in *Vata* decor. So are white, violet, blue, and deep reds. Avoid bright red—it’s far too stimulating.
- **Pitta**  
Because *pittas* tend to be hot, they need a cooling environment to stay in balance. Stick with soft, pastel colors to soothe away tensions. Blues and greens are particularly beneficial, as are pinks and roses.
- **Kapha**  
*Kapha* needs the stimulation of bright, hot colors. Pick up the energy level with reds and oranges.

Color therapy can generate an overwhelming emotional response in individuals. It’s important to refrain from overdoing spaces with too much color. Whether color is used to encourage healing or to enhance use of a space, color therapy can be exceptionally powerful.

### IV. TASTE THERAPY:

Our sense of ‘Taste’ originally developed to keep us healthy. The healthy diet is very important for a healthy body and a healthy mind. An ideal diet, according to Ayurveda incorporates the six tastes prescribed in the literature and comprises a wide variety of fresh fruits, grains and milk .The food we eat has a significant

influence on our minds and hearts. You could even say that the nature of our mind and feelings depends on the food we have eaten.

And conversely, the state of our mind, emotions, intellect and senses — and our overall state of contentment — all these, in turn, affect the digestion, absorption and elimination of the food we have eaten. Foods that enliven the state of being bring the physiology to the source of bliss, which is pure consciousness. By opening every cell of the physiology, every molecule of the physiology, every pathway of that cell to the source of bliss, then the consciousness value can enter the cell.

This is very important. The food that brings a feeling of contentment after you eat is a source of bliss.<sup>[15]</sup>

In Ayurveda, “Taste” means “*Rasa*” the is the sensation perceived by the tongue. According to Ayurveda, it is incredibly important to taste our foods, our herbs – our lives.

*Rasa*, the Sanskrit word for taste, has a number of potent meanings, among them: experience, enthusiasm, juice, plasma (as in *rasa dhatu*), and essence. These diverse meanings only hint at the significance of taste within the Ayurvedic tradition. *Rasa* is, in a very real way, the essence of life and quite literally affects every aspect of our being – from structure and physiology, straight through to our overall state of mind and consciousness. Ayurveda sees

*rasa*, or taste, as a tremendously powerful therapeutic tool that determines not only how we experience our food, but ultimately, the overall flavor of our existence.<sup>[16]</sup>

Ayurveda recognizes more qualities in food than the typical Western categorization. Ayurveda recognizes six tastes--*Madhura* (Sweet), *Amla* (Sour), *Lavana* (Salty), *Katu* (Pungent), *Tikta* (Bitter), *Kashaya* (Astringent), each of which has a vital role to play in our physiology, health, and wellbeing.<sup>[17]</sup>

For a balanced diet *Ayurveda* recommends getting all of these flavors with every meal and adjust the amounts of each to your personal constitution. Apart from feeling satisfied this practice also ensures that all major food groups and nutrients are present.

It is considered critically important in determining the effect that various foods, spices, therapeutic herbs, and experiences will have on our state of balance – body, mind, and spirit. Each taste has an effect on the body as well as mind. The basic principle of diet in *Ayurveda* is that physical changes as well as mental effects can be observed after consumption of different food types. In this way, food can directly and indirectly affect the [three doshas of an individual](#). We can achieve a balance in these three *doshas* by regulating diet.<sup>[18]</sup>

#### Effects of the Flavors on the *Doshas*:

o - soothing effect

x - aggravates *Dosha* when taken in excess

Taste	Vata	Pitta	Kapha
Sweet	O	O	x
Salty	O	X	x
Sour	O	X	x
Pungent	X	X	o
Astringent	X	O	o
Bitter	X	O	o

• Psychological effects of Six Tastes (*Rasa*):<sup>[19]</sup>

• *Madhura* (Sweet)

Sweet taste is very pleasant and exhibits pronounced satisfying and gratifying effects. It increases cheerfulness, love and compassion. It gives the feeling of love but if consumed in excess, it increases greed and attachment.

- **Amla (Sour)**

Sour taste is very sharp. It brings alertness to the mind and increases attention. It is responsible for bringing appreciation but if consumed in excess it brings out hate, jealousy.

- **Lavana (Salty)**

Salty taste enhances the taste of food so one can enjoy it. This taste brings interest and enthusiasm. Hence, generally people show a kind of addiction to the salty things.

- **Katu (Pungent)**

Pungent taste also has sharp and penetrating effects on the mind. It aids the clarity of mind, increases attention and brings clarity of perception.

- **Tikta (Bitter)**

Bitter taste helps to withhold the mind and senses from objects of desire.

- **Kashaya (Astringent)**

Astringent substances help the mind to become collected or organized. But excess consumption of this taste causes insomnia, anxiety and depression.

Taste, the *rasa*, is an inherently potent means of fine tuning the flavor of your life – whether through diet, lifestyle, relationships, or through the types of experiences you pursue. Evolving a deepened relationship with taste can shed light on your unique strengths, vulnerabilities, and needs. At the same time, you'll be implementing a powerful tool in support of your path toward perfect health.

## V. AROMATHERAPY:

The sense of smell has deep primal connection to the nervous system and consciousness. *Ayurveda* uses various aromas such as essential oils, incense and

natural fragrances in order to help balance the body [i.e.; *doshas, dhatus, malas*].

Aromatherapy is a modern term for an ancient healing practice that is more than 5000 years-old; there are descriptions of the burning of fragrant herbs, flowers, barks and resins, to enhance healing and meditation, in the *Vedic* texts. The earliest holistic healers made incense, oils, salves and poultices from a variety of aromatic botanicals.<sup>[20]</sup>

Aromatherapy allows the mind and physiology to settle down through the sense of smell. The scents of essential oils have been used in the ayurvedic tradition for millennia, as documented in the *Vedic* texts. Aromatherapy, in the form of floral and herbal extracts and incense, has always been an integral aspect of *ayurvedic* healing.<sup>[21]</sup> When you smell essential oils, they are carried directly to the area of your brain that influences your emotions, memories, desires and creativity. Aroma also provokes the production of hormones that control physical and psychological functions. The benefits of aromatic oils can be introduced into your body through your sense of smell or by contact with your skin.<sup>[20]</sup>

*Ayurveda*, the ancient holistic health care system of India, explains that there are three dynamic forces in nature, called *Doshas*, which are constantly changing and therefore affecting your personal balance. Aromatherapy helps to bring balance to your body, mind and spirit naturally through the aromatic properties of plants, and this is why *Ayurveda* embraces the use of aromatherapy as a valuable way to balance the three *Doshas* of *Vata, Pitta and Kapha* [i.e.; Calming--*Vata*, Cooling--*Pitta* and Stimulating--*Kapha*].

- **Here is a list of Dosha specific essential oils and carrier oils:**<sup>[20]</sup>
- **Vata Dosh**a – elemental force of Air and Ether

*Vata* is balanced by using sweet, warming and grounding scents.

**Essential oils:** amber, angelica, anise, basil, bergamot, camphor, cardamom, chamomile, cinnamon, clary sage, coriander, eucalyptus, frankincense, geranium, ginger, jasmine, *jatamansi*, lavender, lemongrass, myrrh, neroli, patchouli, rose, rosewood, sandalwood, sweet orange, tangerine, thyme, vanilla, vetiver, ylang-ylang.

**Carrier oils:** sesame, avocado and castor.

- **Pitta Dosha** – elemental force of Fire and Water

*Pitta* is balanced by using cooling, soothing and calming botanicals.

**Essential Oils:** birch, Brahmi, chamomile, *champa*, clary sage, coriander, fennel, geranium, jasmine, *jatamansi*, lavender, lemon balm, lemongrass, lime, mandarin, myrtle, neroli, peppermint, petitgrain, rose, sandalwood, spearmint, tangerine, tea tree, vanilla, wintergreen, yarrow, ylang-ylang

**Carrier oils:** sunflower, coconut and olive.

- **Kapha Dosha** – elemental force of Water and Earth

*Kapha* is balanced by using stimulating, warming and cleansing aromatics.

**Essential oils:** angelica, anise, basil, bay, bergamot, birch, camphor, cardamom, cedarwood, cinnamon, clary sage, clove, cypress, eucalyptus, fir, frankincense, geranium, ginger, grapefruit, hyssop, jasmine, juniper, lavender, lemon, lemongrass, lime, marjoram, neroli, myrrh, myrtle, petitgrain, peppermint, rose, rosemary, sage, sweet orange, tea tree, wintergreen, yarrow.

**Carrier oils:** mustard seed, almond and grape seed.

### CONCLUSION:

While the senses make us feel and treat the world as different and other, in fact, they are distorting the deeper truth of the oneness of the entire manifested universe. This leads us to the opportunity to experience the world directly through *Manas* without necessarily using the intermediary of the senses and thus getting

a more direct experience, or even, developing new and additional senses beyond the five that we are comfortable with using through long habit, to extend the range of experience that the Sense-Mind is able to explore.

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