

WHOLISTIC PATH

The concept that our appearance outside is inseparable from our feelings inside is gaining momentum in the beauty industry. We unravel the need to re-evaluate our decisions when it comes to the new era of skincare.

BY CHITMAN KANWAR AHUJA

The search for everlasting youth and longevity is not a recent quest. As a matter of fact, the ancient Egyptians, Chinese, Indians, and other cultures around the world have long searched for secrets and references for enhancing beauty and creating a youthful appearance. But the fountain of youth doesn't just appear out of nowhere. It took years and years of research to unlock what few tricks we know, and even today the modern world of beauty is pursuing those ideals. Unfortunately, with environment pollution, global stressors, and an adverse lifestyle; the factors affecting the health of our skin are only increasing with time, and it sure is going to need to be rescued.

"In recent times, the 'Clean Beauty' movement has gained a lot of momentum. It propels the idea that skin care products should be non-toxic and unadulterated, without the use of ingredients such as parabens, sulphates, chemical sunscreens, and synthetic fragrances. The core principles of 'Green Beauty' focuses upon the use of natural ingredients, along with the aim of reducing the carbon footprint along the way. In that sense, *ayurveda* has pioneered the idea of clean beauty generations ago, making it the most relevant cosmetology, even in the current modern age," says Mira Kulkarni, Founder, Forest Essentials.

In a time when beauty is often equated in many cultures with a "fair" complexion, or a fashionably thin figure, or even the shape of the nose, it is interesting to look back to a time when beauty was defined in more holistic terms, and was within every woman's reach. Herein, *ayurveda*, the 5,000-year-old healing system from India, has a unique perspective on beauty.

Holistic and all-encompassing, the ayurvedic definition of beauty reads thus — "*Roopam, gunam, vayastyag, iti shubhanga karanam.*" According to *ayurveda*, these are the three pillars of beauty. *Roopam* is outer beauty—personified by shining, healthy hair and a clear, radiant complexion. *Gunam* refers to inner beauty—one that shines from within, characterised by a warm, pleasing personality, and innocence of mind and heart. Equally important is *vayastyag*, which means lasting beauty—looking, and feeling younger than your chronological age. Thus, *ayurveda* does not focus only on cosmetic aspects to achieve the state of true beauty.

"We can understand and find beauty within a larger, holistic framework. This larger framework is *Svasthi*. In order to achieve this state of true well-being, we turn towards traditional and ancestral wisdom for guidance of all sorts, including but not limited to hosting monthly workshops on a diverse range of subjects, both modern and traditional. We look towards *ayurveda*, which literally translates to the 'Science of Life', because it is a holistic path. It nudges you towards creating your own daily rituals, or *dinacharya*, and then helps you align with nature's rhythm by recommending the correct seasonal rituals or *rtucharya*. If we can do this; be in sync with the natural cycles of our own body, and the cycles of nature or *prakriti*, then you will be well on the way to *svasthi*. Similarly, aromatherapy offers both the delight, and the potent therapeutic benefits of *prakriti*," shares Simran Lal, Co-founder – Paro & Nicobar and CEO, Good Earth.

Since nature's gifts were the only option for ingredients back then, it is interesting to think that in our modern day world, we are still making our way back to the inception of these ancient beauty traditions. The industry has been taking some groundbreaking steps towards reviving traditional techniques, to help develop new beauty products. We ask a pioneer of natural skincare, whether this is a trend or a movement, and what inspired her process?

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old techniques and traditions for enhancing beauty. I don't consider it to be just a trend. I feel that it is here to stay. The traditional techniques of enhancing beauty have always been Aromatherapy and *Ayurveda*. What inspires me to create organic and natural products is my firm belief in the fact that beauty is holistic—a medley of body, mind, soul and emotions. One of my biggest inspirations to start a natural beauty company was my daughter. She has very sensitive skin and could not use just any product. So, I started out by curating products for her that help keep her sensitive skin healthy and supple," says Dr Blossom Kochhar, Chairperson, Blossom Kochhar Group of Companies.

An ancient practice that feels more relevant (and necessary) today than ever before, *ayurveda* is all about balancing your life to suit you. Fortunately, it works in your skincare routine as well. Leading experts, as well as the industry are showing marked improvements towards establishing a more holistic and revivalist approach, while assessing the impact that skincare has on our well-being and self-esteem. According to Simran, revival is more like a return to our forgotten traditions and rituals of *shringar*. As these traditional recipes and rituals were passed down from one generation to the next, we already have an incredible wealth of knowledge to tap into.

Furthering emphasis on the concept of revival, Mira says, "The age old science of *ayurveda* suggests that one must only use products that they can consume, and this is applicable for skincare products as well. Whatever we apply on our skin goes directly to the blood stream, and can impact the entire system. Hence, it is important for us to change our eating habits, lifestyle and skincare rituals in accordance with the seasons, to best enhance beauty and delay the ageing process." For Blossom, revival in beauty means the holistic glamour of an individual. However, over the years, people have opted for chemical products because it treats one's skin quicker than usual, while still being unhealthy in the long term. She is glad that people are now going back to the purer form of beauty, and opting for fresh and natural products.

