



## Importance of *Ritu-Charya* in Healthy Living with special reference to *Basanta Ritu- Charya*

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### ABSTRACT:

As environmental properties change with the season, it influences our *Tridosha* constitution. Ayurveda described 6 *Ritu*(season) and described *ritu-charya*(seasonal regimen) for living a healthy lifestyle which is necessary for a healthy life. The foremost principle of Ayurveda tantra is to keep individuals healthy, this is an important aspect of preventive medicine in Ayurveda texts. *Tridosha* gets their different stages(*gati*) according to *Ritu*(season); *sanchaya*(accumulation), *prakopa*(elevation) and *prashamna*(alleviation). So particular *ritu* causes a particular effect on the *dosha* state, so when someone follows a single diet and lifestyle regimen the whole year this may cause health issues because lifestyle disorders are very common in the modern era and which are originating from ignoring seasonal regimens and following the same or opposite *ahara-vihara*. This causes *Tridosha* imbalance and normal physiology changes into pathology as lifestyle disorders. In this article, various diet and lifestyle modifications and regimens as per ayurvedic texts, as well as their importance on lifestyle disorders are described.

**Keywords:** *Ritucharya, Ritu, Basanta Ritucharya Tridosha, Ahara-Vihar, Lifestyle disorders*

## INTRODUCTION

*Loka- Purusha Samya* theory given in Ayurveda explains that whatever we have outside our body in the world we also have a miniature world inside our body.<sup>1</sup> As the outside environment changes during different seasons; the quality of air, water, vegetation, temperature, etc. changes, in response our internal environment also changes according to the season in the miniature world inside our body. *Tridosha* (three humors or tri-pillars of physiology) physiology also gets affected due to external environmental changes. When *Tridosha* stays in a balanced

and natural state they cause health and when they get imbalanced, they cause pathology in our body. Many exogenous and endogenous rhythms have a specific phase relationship with one another, meaning they interact and synchronize with one another. If the body is unable to adapt to stressors because of seasonal changes, it may result in *Dosha Vaishamya*, which makes the body more susceptible to one or more types of disorders. People's inappropriate relationships with their environment cause lifestyle diseases. These lifestyle diseases have an insidious onset,



a slow progression, and are difficult to cure. Due to the rapidly changing disease profile in our country, the situation is quite concerning. India has been identified by the World Health Organization as one of the countries that will experience the greatest number of lifestyle disorders shortly.<sup>2</sup> Lifestyle disorders are becoming more common these days, and they are affecting a younger population as well. As a result, the population at risk decreases from 40 to perhaps 30 or even younger. The aim of this article is to understand Impact of *Ritucharya* on life style disorders.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

The main Ayurvedic texts used in this study are *Charaka Samhitha*, *Astanga Sangraha*, *Astanga Hridaya* and available commentaries on these texts. We have also referred to the various websites and scientific journals to collect information regarding current researches on the relevant topics.

### **Ritucharya**

As environmental seasons change our body response also, our body shows various physiological changes according to season. Our metabolism, digestion, energy level, psychological changes, immune changes. To combat the effects of the external environment on our internal environment (inside body) our acharya is described as *ritucharya*. *Ritucharya* means *ahara* and *vihara* according to season so that we can keep ourselves healthy during seasonal changes. Because adaptation to changing conditions is essential for survival, knowledge of *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimens) is essential.

The holistic science of Ayurveda's first and foremost goal is to prevent disease and maintain health. "*Tasya Shitadiya Ahaarabalam Varnascha Vardhate*," says the *Tasyashitya* chapter of the *Charaka Samhita*. "*Tasyartusatmayam Vaditam Chestaharvyapasrayam*," which means "a person's strength and complexion is enhanced by knowing the appropriate diet and regimen for each season and practicing accordingly."<sup>3</sup>

According to Ayurveda, the year is divided into two periods. *Uttarayana* (northern solstice) and *Dakshinayana* (southern solstice) are the two types of *Ayana* (solstice) based on the direction of the sun's movement.

Each *Ayana* is subdivided into three *ritu*. In *Uttarayan*, *Shishira* (winter), *Vasanta* (spring), and *Grishma* (summer) are the six seasons, while in *Dakshinayana*, *Varsha* (monsoon), *Sharada* (autumn), and *Hemanta* (late autumn) are the six seasons. Because *Ayurveda* originated

in India, the above seasonal changes are primarily observed in India. Each *ritu* has two months. So, six seasons (*Ritu*) completes a year.<sup>4</sup>

Seasonal changes in the Indian subcontinent during *Uttarayana* are *Shishira* (winter) *Vasanta* (spring) and *Grishma* (summer). The period can be compared from mid-January to mid-July when the weather becomes warmer and drier.

*Ritucharya* is a seasonal regimen that creates homeostasis in our body for seasonal biological adaptation which can be called *ritusatmya*. *Ritusatmya* is necessary for maintaining good health and coping with *Kalaja* disorders (*vyadhi*). *Ritusatmya* is the prescribed regimen for a specific *Ritu* for a specific period of *Ritu*. *Ritucharya* also describes the modes and stages of disease development in terms of the state of the various *Doshas*—*Vatu*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*—as time passes. It is critical to have a good understanding of it to make an early diagnosis and determine the prognosis so that preventive and curative measures can be taken. Seasonal rhythm has been observed in physical and mental health due to biophysical and biochemical changes in many other medical systems.

### **State of Bala(strength):**

Weakness occurs at the start of *Visarga Kala* and the end of *Adana Kala*, i.e. during *Varsha* and *Grishma*. Strength is moderate in the middle of the solstices, during *Sharata* and *Vasanta*, and maximum strength is seen at the end of *Visarga Kala* and the start of *Adana Kala*, during *Hemanta* and *Shishira*.<sup>5</sup>

### **Basanta Ritucharya:**

General features of *Basant Ritu* - The period is roughly from mid-March to mid-May. This is the season of flowering and the emergence of new leaves. *Kashaya* (astringent) and *Prithvi* and *Vayu*, respectively, are the predominant *Rasa* and *Mahabhuta* during this season. The person's strength remains moderate, the *Kapha Dosh*a becomes vitiated, and *Agni* remains in the *Manda* state.<sup>6</sup>

When it comes to the importance of *Agni*, *Acharya Charak* says that when the function of *Agni* is interrupted, an individual dies; however, when the *Agni* of an individual is *sama*, that person is completely healthy and lives a long, happy, and healthy life. However, if a person's *Agni* is vitiated, his body's entire metabolism is disrupted, resulting in illness and disease. As a result, *Agni* is considered the foundation (*mool*) of all life.<sup>7</sup>

So here *Acharya* explained *Ahara* and *Vihara* which protect *Agni* and alleviate *Kapha* dosha; so that

metabolism can be boosted and the formation of ama dosha can be prevented to keep individuals healthy.

#### **Routine of eating:**

Easy-to-digest foods should be consumed. Old barley, wheat, rice, and other cereals are among the most popular. Lentil, *Mugda*, and other pulses are suitable for consumption. Take food that tastes *Tikta* (bitter), *Katu* (pungent), and *Kashaya* (astringent). Honey, in addition to these, should be consumed. It is possible to consume easily digestible meats such as *Shahsa* (rabbit).<sup>8</sup>

Means diet can be vegetarian or nonvegetarian as per individual preference but should be easily digestible so the body can get nutrition from it and *agni* not get vitiated. hard-to-digest foods should be avoided at all costs. *Sheeta* (cold), *Snigdha* (viscous), *Guru* (heavy), *Amla* (sour), and *Madhura* (sweet) are not the best options. New grains, curd, cold beverages, and other similar items will be prohibited as well. Cold drinks, ice creams, sweets, milk derivative sweets, fatty and oily food, deep-fried and fried foods, over-eating, heavy meals should be avoided as they alleviate *Agni* and increase *Kapha dosha*.

#### **Lifestyle modifications:**

During *Vasant Ritu*, one should bathe in warm water and exercise. *Udvardana* (massage) with powders of *Chandana* (*Santalum album*), *Kesara* (*Crocus sativus*), *Agaru*, and *Kavala* (gargle), *Dhooma* (smoking), *Anjana* (collyrium), and evacuative measures like *Vamana* and *Nasya* are all recommended.<sup>9</sup>

During this time of year, day sleep is strictly prohibited.

**Ritu-sandhi:** *Ritusandhi* encompasses the last seven days of one season and the first seven days of the next. To adjust to the shifts in seasons. *Ritusandhi charya* is mentioned, which means that during this time the previous season's regimen should be gradually discontinued and the new season's regimen should be gradually adopted for optimum biological adaptation. *Shishira - Vasanta Rituandhi- Kapha* has a positive tendency.<sup>10</sup>

## **DISCUSSION**

Ayurveda is the oldest branch of biology still practised in the modern period. In Ayurveda, different illnesses can be treated in different ways by adhering to a set routine. The text argues that Ayurveda has two main objectives: "*Swasthya Swasthya Rakshana and Aaturasya Vikara Prashman*," which suggests that Ayurveda asserts to

increase longevity and provide immunity to disease. Thus, by following these recommendations, it is possible to prevent diseases, which promotes a healthy way of life. Therefore, the appropriate diet and regimen for particular ailments can be elaborated here, in accordance with Ayurveda.

This is how the ancient sages established the schedule for the various seasons based on logical justification in order to achieve *Swastha* (health) and ward against disease. They provided instances that can be used as a guide to determine further dos and don'ts for the regimen. — *Ritucharya*. The characteristics of the land, the water, and different atmospheric phenomena, such as temperature, humidity, wind, rain, clouds, and atmospheric pressure, are considered environmental elements.<sup>11</sup> No two moments are exactly comparable in a given location since all these environmental elements are always changing. As a result, as the Sun rises, the temperature continues to rise and eventually declines at night. Although the maximum and minimum temperatures vary everyday, summer and winter are the highest and lowest times respectively.

## **CONCLUSION**

*Loka Purusha Samya* theory of Ayurveda establishes that whenever changes occur outer environment our inner micro-environment is also affected. We can adapt to combat any side effects of these changes and establish *Tridosha Samya* by controlling and modifying what we eat and what we do. This is described under *ritucharya*. The background on which *Ritucharya* is based is *Tridosha* and *Panchamahabhuta's* theory, which must be understood. With the knowledge of *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), we can easily avoid these problems by following a *Ritu*-based regimen to keep the *Tridosha* in balance and stay healthy for life. *Ritu* determines the diet to be followed to maintain health and avoid *Kalaja* disorders. *Ritusandhi* is a fourteen-day transition period between two seasons. It is recommended that you follow *Rituatmya* with specific *Krama* during this time to avoid *kalaj vyadhi*. Increasing public awareness, in conjunction with government and corporate wellness programs, may be able to halt the rapid rise in the incidence of such diseases, potentially saving lives and billions of rupees in costs.

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