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Ritucharya w.s.r. to Varsha Ritu and its effect on Health

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda the science of health suggests various theories and principles towards the achievement of healthy physical and mental status, in this regards *Ayurveda* advocates concepts of *Dinacharya* (daily regimen) and *Ritucharya*. It has highlighted various rules and regimens regarding *Ahara* (diet), *Vihara* (regimens), *Achara* (conduct), *Vichara* (thoughts) which are mandatory for attaining the desired healthy life, one among such regimens is "*Ritucharya*", which plays an important role in acclimatizing the seasonal enforcement easily without altering body homeostasis. In this work an attempt is made to understand the concept of *Varsha Ritu*, prevention of seasonal disease that may occur in *Varsha Ritu*, and to understand and follow the regimen of *Varsha Ritu* which helps to prevent the disease and maintain the health of individual.

Key words: *Ayurveda, Ritucharya, Varsha Ritu, Seasonal regimen.*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the age-old science of life, has always encouraged to maintain the health and prevent the diseases by following proper diet and lifestyle regimen rather than treatment and cure of the diseases. *Ayurveda* follows the basic principle of medicine that is *Swasthyasya Swasthya Rakshanam*, which means to maintain the health of the healthy individuals, rather than *Aturasya Vikara Prashamana*, means to cure the diseases of the diseased. *Ritucharya* is the ancient *Ayurvedic* practice and it is combination of two words, "*Ritu*" which means season and "*Charya*" which means Regimen or discipline.

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Ayurveda has explained portion which describes the regimen to be followed to keep oneself healthy they. *Dinacharya* (daily regimen) and *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen) have been mentioned in *Ayurveda*. *Charaka* has divided the calendar year into two divisions (a) *Adana Kala* and (b) *Visarga Kala*. Each of these divisions constitute three seasons. There are 6 seasons according to *Ayurveda*. A year is divided into 2 *Kaala* (time periods). Each *Kaala* comprises of 3 seasons which gives a total of 6 seasons in a year. Each season lasts for two months and these seasons are precisely found in Indian subcontinent

As *Ritu* (season) changes there will be predominant changes in atmosphere around us. We see various changes in bio-life around us, such as flowering in spring and leaf-shedding in autumn in the plants, hibernation of many animals with the coming of winter, and so on. As human being is also part of the same ecology, the body is greatly influenced by external environment. Adopting different lifestyles according to change in the environment, is the key for survival, the knowledge of *Ritucharya* (regimen for various seasons) is very important. Failing to follow this leads to derangement of homeostasis and causes various diseases, such as viral flue. Seasonal diseases

are a result of an inappropriate adaptation of people with their environment. In our country the situation is quite alarming due to rapid changing of disease profile.^[1]

Ritu is divided into 1)Varsha 2) Sharad 3) Hemant 4) Shishira 5) Vasant 6) Grishma, among these six Ritu, Shishira, Vasanta and Grishma, Surya (sun) moves to Uttaradisha (north direction) these three Ritu are called as Uttarayana or Adana Kala. Varsha, Sharad and Hemanth Ritu, Surya moves to Dakshinadisha (south direction) so these three Ritu are called Dakshinayana or Visarga Kala.

In Visarga Kala wind is not so dry, period of emission predominantly shares qualities of moon and during this period the moon with the unstrained cooling property, continuously delights the world with its soothing rays. Adana Kala wind is dry and period is dominated by Agni qualities.^[2]

Effect of Adana Kala on body

During this period the sun and wind with their sharp velocity and dryness absorb moisture from the earth. Winds progressively bring dryness in the atmosphere during Shishira, Vasanta and Grishma Ritu, during these Ritu dryness increases and Ruksha Rasatikta, Kashaya, Katu Rasa increases this weakens the strength of human beings.^[3]

Effect of Visarga on body

In Varsha, Sharad, Hemantha Ritu when Surya moves to south direction the power of sun and wind reduces by various factors like time, course, storm and rain but the moon is not affected. Earth is relieved of its heat by rain waters. Amla, Lavana and Madhura Rasa which cause Snigdghata (unctuousness) in body during Varsha, Sharad, Hemanth Ritu respectively as the result of this human being also progressively grow in strength.^[4]

Health status in Adana and Visarga Kala

Beginning of Visarga Kala i.e., Varsha Ritu and end of Adana Kala i.e., Grishma Ritu in these strength of human being is low, in the middle of Visarga and Adana Kala i.e., Sharad and Vasanta Ritu respectively

strength of human being is medium, in the end of Visarga Kala (Hemantha Ritu) and beginning of Adana Kala i.e., Shishira Ritu human being possess good strength.^[5]

Varsha Ritu

Mid-July to Mid-September - It is considered as Varsha Ritu. During this season, the sky is cloudy and it rains without thunderstorms. The lakes and rivers are filled with water. Rasa and Mahabhuta in this season are Amla (sour), and Prithvi and Agni, respectively. The strength of an individual becomes weak in this season. Variation of Vata Dosha and deposition of Pitta Dosha, Agni also gets vitiated.

In Varsha Ritu all the three Dosha's get vitiated, according to Charaka Samhita cloudy environment during rainy season will vitiate the Kaphadosha, Bhubhashpa (water from ground) which turns into Amlavipaka (sour) this vitiates the Pittadosha, Pitta will be in Sanchaya stage Vatadosha will be in Prakopa stage, due to cold breeze Vata gets vitiated, due to ground water Pitta gets vitiated and due to low digestive power Kapha gets vitiated.^[6] All these conditions will lead to vitiation of all the three Doshas which in turn effects the Agni and Bala of a person.

Diet routine

Food which alleviates all the three Doshas should be taken in Varsha Ritu. Foods having Amla and Lavana (salty) taste and of Sneha (unctuous) qualities should be eaten. In order to maintain normal digestive power one has to take old barley wheat and Shali rice (*Oryza sativum* Linn.) along with the meat of arid animals and vegetable soup. One should drink Madhvika Arishta mixed with little honey. Even though by nature, honey is responsible for the vitiation of Vata its intake in small quantity is prescribed. It is advised to drink pure rain water or water from pond or well which is boiled and cooled.^[8] Puratana Madhu (old honey) is Vatanashaka (alleviate Vata).^[7]

Contraindications during Varsha Ritu

One should abstain from taking Mantha (groat) diluted in excess. The foods, which are substantial and difficult to process, similar to meat, are prohibited.

excessive exercise, drenching in rain, napping in the day, sexual indulgence, hard work, wind, staying at the river bank are some of the things that should be avoided.^[8]

Lifestyle

Boiled water for bathing and massaging the body properly with oil is advised after taking bath body should be anointed with paste of aromatic drugs like *Chandana* (sandal) etc. wearing fragrant garlands wear light and clean apparel and should reside in house devoid of humidity^[8]during this season.

DISCUSSION

According to *Ayurveda* the fundamentals of *Ritucharya* is to live one's life according to change in the seasons. The energy of the nature changes according to seasons. As human beings are part of environment health status of human being depends on nature. *Ayurvedic* wisdom which believes in preventive medicine as seasonal system of holistic medicine one has to follow the seasonal regimen to protect them from illness. *Asvarsha Ritu* is one among the *Visarga Kala* in which the strength of the person and digestive fire will be in a low status, in this condition human beings are more prone to the seasonal diseases because in *Varsha Ritu* all the three *Dosha* will be vitiated. So, one has to follow regimens which pacifies all the three *Doshas* and must adopt the life style which maintains the healthy status of individual.

CONCLUSION

Ritucharya is totally a principle based on blending with nature it helps individual in bringing up the strength, complexion, happiness and longevity without disturbing the equilibrium of *Dhatu*s and

Dosha of body thus preventing diseases, *Ritucharya* as preventive medicine provides way for healthy leaving.

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