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Analytical exposition of *Achara Rasayana* as discussed in *Ayurveda*

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ABSTRACT

Caraka Samhita harks back to a conference of sages in Himalayan Valley, where the topic of discussion was mounting burden of illness and suffering in the world. Relief, if not freedom, from suffering has been an ideal since ancient times. The *Ayurvedic Canvas*, vast as it was, gave preeminence to the storm of interactions between the world with and without the human body, to sustain so grand a theme, a strong philosophical foundation had to be laid in form of two central doctrines – *Pancabhuta* and *Tridosha* which broadly relate to structure and function while the homology between the structural materials within the body and outside in the physical world, is the theme of *Pancabhuta* doctrine, the functional equilibrium inside the body is explained by *Tridosha*. Two subsidiary themes – *Ritucarya* and *Vegas* deal with the harmonization of human life with time and place, and the functional significance of bodily urges.

Key words: *Achara Rasayana, Ayurveda, Hygiene, Moral code of Conduct.*

INTRODUCTION

Caraka Samhita has given a philosophical slant to medicine and sought to evaluate even therapeutic procedures in philosophical terms, it was the characteristics of *Caraka* to take an independent view and hold that evil and suffering in the ultimate analysis results from the error of judgments and imprudent conduct. *Caraka* recognized three motive forces of life: long life, material comfort and happy existence thereafter. The course of conduct he endorsed was very enthusiastic action in pursuit of the three basic desires, free from errors of judgement and imprudent

conduct. Price of acts of great moral depravity had to be paid and that no human effort could repeal or ward off their inevitable effect. However, the majority of errors in judgement and conduct lack a moral dimension in so far as they relate to struggles of daily living. If a person chose to remain well by paying attention to hygiene, wholesome food and other aspects of proper conduct, it could not be argued that his well-being had been preordained. The errors which were the lot of ordinary people could be avoided or corrected by the conscious choice of good conduct, which implied the avoidance of the overuse, underuse and misuse of the senses and the mind, neither the renunciation of desire nor non-attachment and a full and righteous life which one could enjoy in perfect harmony with his surroundings. A healthy life has to be a righteous life. The responsibility for proper conduct and effort rested with each individual no matter who he might be. What applies to the individual applies to the community in full measure. When the moorings in righteousness are lost, pestilence and ruin would become the destination of a community.

REVIEW

Aacharya Sushruta in *Sushruta Samhita Sutra Sthana* has described that suffering is of three-fold; it could be

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product of external events such as storms, or floods (*Adhibhautka*), it could result from illness caused by perturbed *Dosas* (*Adhyatmika*) or it could be a consequence of fate or the wrath of Gods (*Adhidaivika*).^[1] The philosophical base stood out for two central doctrines – *Panchabhuta* and *Tridosha* – which broadly relate to structure and function. While the homology between the structural materials within the body and outside in the physical world, is the theme of the *Panchabhuta* doctrine, the functional equilibrium inside the body is explained by *Tridosha*. Two subsidiary themes - *Ritucharya* and *Vegas* deals with the harmonization of human life with time and place and the functional significance of bodily urges influenced by age, sex, interests and hobbies, numerous activities and choices etc.

आचार or आचरण or चर्या words have been described by *Cakrapani* and other commentators.^[2]

प्रतिदिनं कर्त्तव्या चर्या दिनचर्या (इन्दु)

उभयलोकहितमाहारचेष्टितं प्रतिदिने यत्कर्त्तव्ये (अरुणदत्त)

आचाराल्लभते ह्यायुः

So, in relation of activities that a person does every day and practices frequently (सतत् अभ्यास) becomes the habit and determines the virtues and behavioral patterns also affecting the mental health and social well being.

सुष्ठु अवतिष्ठते निरोगत्वेन (च.सू. 1/67) चक्र.

The state of freedom from ailments (physical or mental) and the best of state of components of *Ayu* and to attain this *Rasayana* has been discussed in detail in *Chikitsa* than of *Caraka Samhita*, first chapter and four sub chapters, where description of *Acharya Rasayana* has been described in 4th *Pada* which includes behavioral therapy and also in form of diet and medicines.

In general, for better efficacy of *Rasayan* purification of body and mind is mandatory.

The mental attitude followed in our daily routine will hasten the action of mind, rejuvenating diet and medicines which comprises truthfulness, free from anger, avoidance of alcohol, maintaining celibacy,

avoiding violence (physical, mental or verbal) avoiding excessive exhaustion, thinking, stress and worries, being calm and indulging in creative activities, talking with pleasing words, following religious rites, maintaining hygiene (physical and mental), being courageous, stability of thoughts, regular practice of charity, meditation, assessment of self, respect towards God, Cow Brahmins, teachers, preceptors and old people, avoidance of barbaric behavior, being compassionate, proper maintenance of time of sleep and awakening, regular intake of Ghee and milk, possession of appropriate knowledge in respect of time, place and person practicing rationality with wisdom, free from vanity and ego, having good conduct and being broad minded with empathetic and sympathetic behavior for fellow being, proper use of sense organs, respecting seniors and those who believe in God, full of control, regular reading of scriptures and religious book and similar virtues and conducts in very much details have been advocated in *Sutra Sthan* of *Caraka Samhita* as the best source to attain happiness in this world and the world beyond.^[3]

DISCUSSION

According to *Caraka*, the sense, the sense object – senses – mind – self complex is the integrative basis of all sensory experiences, motor actions and life itself.^[4]

Where sense faculties are capable of perceiving their respective objects only when they are motivated by the mind, the mind of a person is qualified on the basis of the type of his repeated actions.

Pleasure, pain and all other sensory experiences are registered by the mind to feel pleasure or pain, think objects of thought or initiate action. *Caraka's* adoption of philosophical ideas is governed by the minimum needs of medicines.

Rules of conduct prescribed in *Ritucharya* are logical.^[5] The eternal cycle of change in the physical world which relates to the six seasons and also the *Panchabhautica* entities in our body went on to interpret the equilibrium of the body, as the world and living body no less are in a state of constant flux (*Nityaga*) which mandates adoption of change as the essential

condition of life. The rules of conduct are essentially based on the role of body fluid which fluctuate in the body with changing seasons. They would determine the choice of food, drinks and levels of physical activity to suit a given season.

Similarly, natural urges pertain to the body and mind has extraordinary importance in the maintenance of health and causation of disease. Suppression of natural urges of the body and failure to control urges of the mind (greed, lying, violence, vanity etc.) is certain to cloud one's judgement and bring about imprudent conduct which underlies many a disorder.^[6]

As overuse, underuse and misuse of the senses and the self with the objects is the root cause of all diseases and disharmony^[7] and also the virtues and attributes one practices mostly becomes the second nature affecting the psyche of the individual^[8] influencing the personality and determines the mental health. All the features mentioned under *Hitaya*^[9] promotes the cheerfulness hence influencing the mind in positive way and therefore modulating the immunity (*Ojas/Bala/Vyadhishamatra*) and opposite traits will act as patent etiological factors^[10] for series of pathological manifestation like CHD, impotency and infertility^[11] by disturbing the *Doshas* which affects the status of *Agni* causing disturbances in *Chaya (Ahar Rasa)* and *Poshana* pathways.

CONCLUSION

Right and balanced ethical code of conduct depending on seasons, age day to day activities determines the health and social well-being acting not only as promoting factors but also as the potent preventive tools which play a major role in the field of prevention of non-communicable disease and also influencing the gene expressions of inherited disorders. The three basic attributes (*Satwa, Rajs, Tamas*) which are the building blocks of everything existing, gets influenced by the selection of behavioral patterns and conducts. In striking the harmonious balance and practice of good traits is the underlying basis of the prevention of

disturbances and adjusting with circadian rhythm and emotional well-being. *Sharirik* and *Mansik Doshas* echo each other in the state of health and diseases.

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