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Scientific approach towards *Dincharya* - A Review

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is perpetual science of life as it gives importance to quality of living and avoidance of diseases rather than treatment of diseases. As a result of stressful life, improper diet and sedentary lifestyle, the current world is facing lifestyle related disorders like obesity, diabetes etc. For maintaining health of healthy individual, *Ayurveda* has described many fundamental principles like *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Sadvritta* etc. As many articles published earlier provides information about processes to be followed in *Dincharya*, in this article the main emphasis is on the scientific importance of *Dincharya*.

Key words: *Dincharya*, *Dosha*, *Agni*.

INTRODUCTION

'Pratidinam Kartavyam Charya Dincharya'!^[1]

Word *Dincharya* is derived from two words *Dina* & *Charya*. *Dina* means day & *Charya* means Charan towards the *Prakriti*. In *Ayurveda*, *Dincharya* is the best prophylactic measure to prevent many diseases. It regularizes a person's biological clock, improves metabolism & generates self esteem discipline, peace, happiness & longevity. It is a lifestyle modification to live healthy life in present context or following ancient way of day-to-day activity to maintain the health. According to *Ayurveda*, man is said to be healthy, whose *Doshas*, *Dhatus*, *Malas* and *Agni* are in state of equilibrium along with mental sensory & spiritual pleasantness and happiness.^[2] These daily regimes if

followed regularly have beneficial physiological effects on our body and our mind.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Various *Ayurvedic* classic texts - *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtang Hridaya* were used as source materials. Apart from these, websites, articles and modern books on preventive and social medicine were also used for this study.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To study the concept of *Dincharya*
2. To study and understand the scientific importance of *Dincharya*

DISCUSSION

Brahma Muhurta

Healthy person should get up from bed at *Brahma Muhurtha* to protect his life. That time is before dawn, or around 48 minutes before sun rise. This time is related with *Brahma* symbolically denoting *Buddhi* or Intelligence.^[3]

Importance - Boost immunity, increases energy level, maintain balance of pH level, enhance absorption of minerals and vitamins, relieves pain, soreness and cramps.

Scientific Reason - During the predawn period, there is availability of nascent Oxygen in atmosphere, this

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nascent oxygen easily mixes with the Hb forming oxy-haemoglobin. (According to International Journal of Yoga & Allied Sciences).

Dantadhavana

A person should clean their teeth twice daily with herbal twig without injuring the gums. The tip of the twig should be chewed a little to make it as brush.^[4] Length - 12 *Angula*, width - Approx. equal to the girth of little finger, devoid of any knot.

Danta kashtha should be of *Katu*, *Tikta*, *Kashaya Ras-Acharya Sushrut* mentioned *Shreshtha Dantapavana* according to *Rasa, Karanja (Katu)*, *Neem (Tikta)*, *Khadir (Kashaya)*, *Madhuka (Madhur)*.^[5]

Acharya Sushrut also mentioned *Danta Churna* in which *Trikatu*, *Trivarga*, *Tejovati*, honey, oil and *Saindhava* are used.^[6]

Importance - Removes *Mukhdaurgandhya*, subdue *Kapha* from the mouth, induce appetite.^[7]

Contraindications - Diseases of teeth, lips, throat, palate or tongue, *Ajirna*, *Vamathu*, *Shwas*, *Kaas*, *Jwar*, *Ardit*, *Trishna*, *Aasyapak*, heart disease, eye, head & ear disease.^[8]

Scientific Reason - It is found in research that *Dantadhavana* by herbal twig modifies salivary pH, saliva becomes alkaline that neutralize the acid which is produced by pathogenic bacteria. This process makes a difference to secure teeth as this acid plays a main role for dental decay.

Some studies have also proved that by using herbal twig the good bacteria present in our mouth, which convert nitrate to nitrite and nitrite to nitric oxide are not destroyed. Insufficient nitric oxide production results in atherosclerosis, high blood pressure, resistance to insulin etc.

Khadir contains Taxifolin as active ingredient which is antifungal, antiviral, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant activity.

Jivha Nirlekhana

To scrap the tongue, use an instrument made of silver, gold, iron or strong twig of tree that is soft, smooth & serves to clean. Length should be 10 *Angula*.^[9]

Importance - Cures oedema & stiffness of the tongue, prevents *Mukha Dourgandha*, prevent *Aruchi* & *Vairasya*.^[10]

Scientific Reason - Clinical research shows that if a person use tongue scraper daily, it has a significant role in eliminating anaerobic bacteria like *Actinomyces*, *Eubacterium* etc. and decrease bad odour (*Halitosis*).

Tambula Sevana

A betel leaf prepared with *Lavanga*, *Karpura*, *Jatiphala*, *Sudha*, *Kramuk*, *Kankola* and *Latakasturi* etc. should be taken (chewed) after meals, after vomiting, after bath as well as after waking from sleep.^[11]

Importance - Mask bad breath caused by indigestion, gastritis due to food with strong smell like onion & garlic, cleanse the mouth, helps to take out excess secretion of saliva, brings clarity of mouth, keep *Kapha* in balance, remedies for toothache, sore throat, cough.

Contraindications - Bleeding disease, dryness of body redness of eye, poisoning, unconsciousness, tuberculosis.^[12]

Scientific Reasons - *Tambula* leaf is rich source of vitamins and minerals including calcium, Vit.C, niacin, thiamine, carotene and riboflavin. Other leading betel phytochemicals are allylpyrocatechol, 4-hydroxycatechol, β -caryophyllene, methyl eugenol and an essential oil containing hydroxychavicol.

The advantage of betel leaf in maintaining salivary ascorbic acid levels in humans has been found in research. Salivary ascorbic acid help to prevent carcinogenesis in the oral cavity.

The tip, middle part and stalk of the leaf are not suitable for consumption. After chewing, extracted juice should spit out twice at the beginning as it is not suitable for consumption; the initially extracted juice is like poison and causes *Prameha*.

Anjana

Eyes are predominant of *Tejo Mahabhut* so it is specially liable to be adversely affected by *Kapha* therefore measures curative of *Kapha* are beneficial in keeping the vision clear.

1. *Souvir Anjana* has been advised, to use daily. It helps in maintaining the health of eye & vision, prevent *Kandu, Klinnata*, it prevents & cures *Daah, Mal, Vedana*.
2. *Rasanjan* is told to use every 5th or 8th day at night to evacuate excessive *Kapha Dosha*.

Do not use *Tikshna Anjana* at day time^[13]

Since eyesight weakened by drainage gets impaired on exposure to sunshine, therefore draining by collyrium is indicated exclusively by night.

Scientific Reasons - Once applied an *Anjana* it acts as a foreign body to ocular surface. Hence eye gets reflex secretion in response to foreign particles on cornea and conjunctiva.

Due to that considerable amount of drug washes out from the eye by weeping and another major portion may drainage through nasolacrimal duct (NLD). Apart from these another part may be eliminated from the ocular surface by evaporation (mainly *Rasakriya Anjana*), metabolization by tear enzymes and get in contact with tear proteins. Meanwhile the portion drain to the NLD may absorb to the systemic circulation by nasal- laryngeal and oral mucosa.

Anjana therapy may be highly activated in the anterior segment of the eye because of the presence of several anatomical, biological and physiological ocular barriers. In the system of Ayurveda pharmacological actions of a drug may explain according to its pharmacological disc properties which are included *Rasa, Guna, Virya, Vipaka* and *Prabhava*.

Types of *Anjana*^[13]

1. *Souveeranjana*: Stybnite-Sb253,
2. *Srotonjana*: Antimony sulphide Sb283
3. *Pushpanjana*: Zinc Oxide ZnO/Sb203,
4. *Neelanjana*: Galena PbS
5. *Rasanjana*: HgO/*Darvikwathasambhavam*

Nasya

It is the procedure where the medicated drug or oils are administered through the nostrils.

Pratimarsh Nasya - Advised to use daily. Two drop of medicated oil should be used.

Types of *Nasya*^[14]

Virechana Nasya, Bruhana Nasya, Shamana Nasya, Navana Nasya, Marsha Nasya, Pratimarsha Nasya

Importance^[15]

- It pacifies the *Vata Dosha*.
- Give unctuousness to head & neck region, so it prevents mainly the degenerative disorders of brain & sense organs.
- It prevents – *Khalitya, Palitya, Manyastambh, Hanustambh, Shira Shool, Ardita, Peenas*.

Scientific Reasons -

Neurological Pathway - It is concerned with olfactory stimuli. The olfactory nerve differs from other cranial nerves in its close relation with the brain. The peripheral olfactory nerves are chemoreceptor in nature.

The olfactory nerves are connected with the higher centers of brain i.e., limbic system, consisting mainly of amygdaloidal complex, hypothalamus, epitheliums, anterior thalamic nuclei parts of basal ganglia etc.

So, the drugs administered through nose stimulate the higher centers of brain which shows action on regulation of endocrine and nervous system functions.

Kawal and Gandusha

Kawal - It is a process in which medicated paste in small quantity are filled & swish around the mouth.

Gandush - It is a process in which medicated oil/liquid in sufficient quantity are filled & hold in the mouth.^[16]

Drugs used in *Kawal and Gandusha* - According to *Dosha*, drug should be prepared in Ghee, oil, cow's milk, *Madya, Mansa Ras, Swarasa, Mutra*, honey + water mixture, *Dhanyamla*.^[17]

In *Swastha*, *Kawal* & *Gandush* should be done with oil or *Mansa Rasa*.^[18]

Types of *Kawal/Gandusha*^[19]

1. *Snigdha Gandush* – In *Vaata Dosha*

2. *Shaman Gandush* – In *Pitta Dosh*
3. *Shodhan Gandush* – In *Kapha Dosh*
4. *Ropana Gandush* – In *Vrana*

Duration of Gandusha - should be kept in the mouth till following symptoms develop: *Kaphapurna Asyata*, *Ghrana Strava*, *Akshi Strava*.^[20]

Importance - *Hanuorbalam*, *Swarbalam*, *Vadanopchaya*, *Rasagyanam*, *Ruchi Uttama*, prevent chapping of lips & dryness of throat, strengthen the teeth & gums.^[21]

Scientific Reasons - By doing *Kawal* & *Gandush*, active ingredients of the drugs get absorbed through buccal mucosa & reach the blood stream.

It increases the mechanical pressure inside the oral cavity. This stimulates the chemoreceptor and mechano- receptors of the oral cavity to send signals to salivary nuclei in the brain stem. This result in increased salivary secretion. Excessive salivary secretion dislodge the toxins, food debris, superficial infective micro-organism & mix with medicated oil/liquid & thus get removed from oral cavity. It also regulates the oral ph by salivary buffer system & balance the ph to reduce bacterial growth.

It also increases the local defense mechanism of the oral cavity by stimulating the salivary gland to secrete saliva (as saliva contains antibody IgA, IgM, & lysozyme. Also, coagulation factors VIII, IX, X which protect wounds from bacterial invasion).

Dhumapana

In this therapy, the person inhales herbal smoke thrice from each nostril. Inhalation will be through the nose for the imbalance impurities in the nose & head, and through the mouth for the imbalance impurities in the throat.

Importance - Relieves heaviness of head, relieves hoarseness of voice, relieves rhinitis & neck stiffness, relieves pain in the eye & ears, relieves cough & hiccough, relieves dyspnoea & lock jaw, removes obstruction of the throat.^[22]

Scientific Reasons - *Dhoompana* which is the inhalation of medicated sticks. Smoke that will affect the lungs, small air sacs by entering its small channels

with its *Sukshma*, *Ushna* and *Tikshana* properties, it also liquefies and eliminates the *Dosha* from there nearer routes. However gaseous form of medicine increases the bioavailability of it. The gases are absorbed in blood by pressure difference and greater surface area in lungs.

Abhyanga

Abhyanga means massage of whole body including head with oil.

Importance - Delays ageing process, relieves fatigue & relaxes the body, helps cure *Vata* disease, improve skin complexion, nourishes the body, improves sleep, strengthens the body, increases the life span.^[23]

Contraindication - When there is increase of *Kapha* in the body, who have undergone *Shodhana*, in indigestion.

Scientific Reasons -

Effects on the arterial flow

- Massage improves the blood supply of the area being massaged.
- A definite vasodilation along with an increase in the peripheral blood flow is usually observed after massage

Effects on the venous and lymphatic flow

- Massage facilitates the forward movement of the venous blood and lymph.
- So reduces the chance of stagnation of blood and lymph in the tissue space.
- The mechanical action of massage resembles with that of normal muscular contraction.

Effects on the soft tissue - Elasticity, plasticity and mobility of the soft tissue enhance.

Effect on the skin - It improves the nutritive status of the skin and rises the temp. of the skin.

Shiro Abhyanga

Abhyanga of the head with oil is a good cure for the ailments of head. A person should apply oil on his head daily.

Importance - Prevents hair fall, prevents early graying of hair, strengthens hair roots, gives nourishment to all the sense organs, gives good complexion to face, good & sound sleep.^[24]

Contraindication - When there is increase of *Kapha* in the body, who have undergone *Shodhana*, indigestion.

Scientific Reasons - By massaging, the internal fluids of the skin move because of osmotic pressure. Massage causes mechanical hydrostatic pressure in extra cellular compartment. Fluid enters the viscera, tissue and dilute the accumulated toxins. When the fluid refills the peripheral vessels, the diluted toxins are expelled

Karnapurana

It is a process in which warm medicated oil/liquid is gently poured into the ears then root of the ear is gently massaged.

Drugs used in Karnapurana - Oil, Ghee, Milk, *Kanji*, *Mutra*, *Swarasa* like *Arka*, *Tulsi*, *Vasa*, *Lashuna*, *Aardraka*.

Time of Karnapurana - according to substance used:^[25]

With *Sneha Dravya* - after *Suryasta*.

With *Swarasa & Mutra* - before taking meal in the morning.

Duration^[26]

Karna Roga - 100 *Matra*

Kantha Roga - 500 *Matra*

Shiro Roga - 1000 *Matra*

In *Swastha* - 100 *Matra* (approx. 2 min)

In painful condition, till pain relieves.

Importance^[27]

1. Prevent from *Vataja Karna Roga* like *Karnakshwed*, *Badhira*, it cures *Manyastambha* and *Hanugraha*, relief from *Karnashool* & *Shirashool*.

Scientific Reasons - Ear is the location of *Vayu Mahabhoot*. *Vata Dosha* has the property of cold, dry, mobile, rough. These properties of *Vata Dosha* get imbalanced through daily pressures of modern life. By

doing *Karnapurana* on daily basis, oil reduces the imbalance *Vata Dosha* by its warm, moist, stable & smooth property.

We know that, hair follicles found inside the cochlea, respond to mechanical sound vibration by sending an electrical signals to the auditory nerve, thus sound is heard. High frequency sound wave, ear diseases & in old age hair follicles & hair cilia get damaged. By doing *Karnapurana*, high frequency sound wave get reduced by reflection from the oil, result in decrease in ear disabilities.

Karnapurana smoothen the inner walls of the ear to direct the sound in particular direction.

It also provide nutrition to the hair follicles & to the inner lining of the ear resulting in maintenance of ear health.

Padabhyanga

Padabhyanga means massage of feet with the help of oil.

Importance - Reduces dryness of foot, removes the stiffness & numbness in legs, relaxes the feet, gives strength & stability to feet, improves health of eyes, pacifies *Vata*, prevents - sciatica, cracking of feet & muscle stiffness in the legs.^[28]

Scientific reason as Chakshushya

Gandhari - surrounds *Ida Nadi* which extends from *Pada* and ends in left eye.

Hastijivha - Surrounds the *Pingla Nadi* which extends from *Pada* and ends in right eye.

Acharya Vagbhata also mentioned 2 *Siras* situated in the centre of foot which is connected to the eyes.

During *Padabhyanga* this *Nadis* are stimulated and leading to *Chakshushya* effect.

Padabhyanga, normalizes the two important neurotransmitters Serotonin and Norepinephrine, which regulates a wide variety of Neuropsychological processes along with sleep. Thus it induces relaxation and natural sleep and impacts a positive effect on eyes.

Padprakshalan

Cleaning and washing feet with water which removes dirt and diseases of feet and fatigue.^[29]

Importance - Cleans the feet, cures foot diseases, relieves tiredness, good for health of eyes, prevents growth of germs, increases the semen (*Vriya*).

Vyayama

The effort which elicits stability & potency in the body is known as *Vyayama*.^[30] It is an act that brings about tiredness in the body.^[31]

Time and duration - In *Sheeta & Basant Ritu – Balardha* and in other *Ritu – mild Vyayama*.^[32]

Importance - Brings lightness of the body, increase work ability, improves digestive power, increase metabolism, increases tolerance to heat, cold, thirst, hunger, pacifies *Tridosha*, helps loose body fat, delays ageing.^[33]

Contraindication - Old age, children, pregnancy, person involve in excessive sexual activities, person bears excessive weight, weak person, *Vata prakriti*, in grief, anger, fear, exhaustion, when hungry and thirsty, indigestion, after meal, person who practices loud speaking.^[34]

Scientific reasons - Exercise stimulates the sympathetic nervous system & will induce an integrated response from the body. This response works to maintain an appropriate level of homeostasis for increased demand in physical, metabolic, respiratory & cardiovascular efforts.

Contracting muscles release substances known as Myokins which promotes the growth of new tissues, tissue repair & multiple anti-inflammatory function.

Exercise induces increased capacity for oxidative phosphorylation in mitochondria of skeletal muscles, thus exercise enhances submaximal endurance performance.

Also exercise reduces level of cortisol which causes many health problem both physical & mental.

Udwardan^[35]

In this the massage of the body is done in an upward direction by the use of herbal powder with oil.

Importance - Reduces excess *Kapha Dosh*, reduces excess body fat, removes drowsiness, alleviates foul odour, provide strength & stability to the body, clear & healthy complexion to skin, reduces heaviness of the body, dilates blood vessels, prevent rashes & itching,

Contraindications - Presence of wounds and cuts, presence of burns, diseases with severe pain e.g., OA, Colic, *Pitta* related disorders having high inflammation, old age, kids, pregnant women.

Scientific Reasons - Stabilize and normalize the *Agni (Bhrajak Pitta)* in the skin which is responsible for skin immunity, to provide good colour and complexion.

Improves blood circulation to the skin - *Udwardana* dilates the openings and passage of the body including skin and enables free circulation of nutrients and essentials in the body.

Ushna and *Ruksha Dravya* are used for *Udwardana*. It liquefies and reduced the tissue fat as well as serum lipid along with an increase cholesterol.

Udgharshan^[36]

Massage with powders of herbs without oil in upward direction is called *Udgharshan*.

Importance - Cures itching and rashes, enhance strength of thighs and provides lightness.

Indication

1. *Udgharshan* of the body with brick powder excites the heat of skin, dilates the orifices of the bodily ducts, and cures the itches and *kotha*.
2. *Udgharshan* by *Samudraphena* bring the lightness and steadiness in the thigh.

Scientific Reasons - *Udgharshan* (friction) of the body excites the heat of skin (*Bhrajaka Pitta*).

By *Udgharshan* blood vessels get dilated and pores of the body get opened. which help in remove the trapped duct, oil, and toxins.

Ushna and *Ruksha Dravya* are used for *Udgharshan*. It liquefies and reduced the tissue fat as well as serum lipid along with an increase cholesterol.

Snana^[37]

Snana plays an important role in maintaining health. *Snana* is one of the forms of cleaning our body.

If it is done in proper manner, it will be a therapeutic, preventive and rejuvenating ritual for the body, mind and soul. *Snana* has a promotive, protective and curative effect on the body.

Importance - It is auspicious, helps live a long life, cures fatigue, increase the appetizing power, act as aphrodisiac, improves strength of heart, increases *Oja*, relaxes the body, removes excess sweat, itching & foul body odour, removes drowsiness.

Contraindication of Snana - Fever, facial palsy, disease of eye, mouth & ears, diarrhoea, flatulence, rhinitis, indigestion, who have just taken food.

Scientific Reasons -**Cold water bath**

Bathing with cold water in the morning can help in relieving depression. bathing with cold water send electrical impulses to the brain and stimulate hypothalamus and pituitary gland and released endorphin hormone which is called happy hormone. Which leads to feeling of well being and optimism.

Bathing with cold water helps in release of testosterone, which improves reproductive health in men.

Cold water in blood stream stimulates leukocytes production which help to fight against infection in the body.

Hot water bath

Hot water bath can help in open up the pores of the skin, which allows to clear out the trapped dirt, oil and toxins.

Hot water bath with steam provide relief from cold or respiratory symptoms by open the airways, loosen up phlegm, clear out nasal passages

Anulepana

Anulepana is the external applications of medicines in the form of paste.

Types of Lepa - According to Sharangdhar - Varnya, Vishaghna, Doshaghna.^[38]

According to Sushruta - Pralepa, Pradeha, Aalepa.^[39]

Importance - *Anulepana* the body with scented pastes removes a sense of fatigue, odour and perspiration, produces a sense of pleasure, improves the *Ojas*, enhances the beauty and glow, make skin wrinkle free and spotless, enhance the complexion of the skin.^[40]

Scientific Reasons - *Lepa* should be applied against the direction of hair follicles. This facilitates the easy absorption of *Lepa*. *Pitta* situated in skin namely *Bhrajaka Pitta* absorbs the drugs applied externally in the form of pastes and enhance the beauty and glow.

Vastra Dharan

Clothes should be made of such material to preserve body heat in winter as well as in summer & should be designed such to maintain the uniform temperature of the whole body.

All tight fitting clothing should be avoided as they interference with the normal circulation of blood.

Clothes protect the body against effect of heat and cold, also from external injury.

Clothing influences metabolic change - If sufficient clothing are not done in cold weather, the metabolism is increased in an effort to maintain normal body temperature, hence loose energy.^[41]

Importance - Enhances charm and personality of an individual, promotes longevity, prevents bad luck / inauspiciousness and brings about pleasure.

Gandhamalya Neshevanam^[42]

Importance - Brings freshness, joy, improves self-esteem, enhances virility, promotes longevity, charm, plumpness and strength, pleasing to mind, averts poverty.

Scientific reasons - When we inhale a scent through the nose its molecules climb up in olfactory nerves in the inner nose & head straight to the brain by limbic system. The scents molecules has the ability to get quickly crossed by blood brain barrier & interact with the CNS.

The mechanism of their action involves integration of essential scent into a biological signal of the receptor cells in the nose. when inhaled the signal is transmitted to limbic & hypothalamus parts of the brain via olfactory bulb.

Kshaur Karma^[43]

It is the act of cutting, shaving or trimming of the hair, moustache & cutting of nails.

Importance - It increases health, virility, longevity & purity, enhances the beauty, brings lightness to the body, brings joy, prosperity.

Scientific reasons - Nails requires to be cut short periodically otherwise dirt will lodge under them & may carry infection. As a majority of Indians eat their meals with their hands and do not use spoons and forks.

If the hairs are not cut properly, disease like ring worm, dandruff may arise.

Cleansing of hand with soap and water is very essential to prevent spread of infectious disease like cholera typhoid dysentery etc.

Padatradharana^[44]

Use of foot wears is beneficial for eye sight and tactile sense-organ, is destroyer of calamity and promotes strength to feet and libido.

In present time shoes are very important because going without shoes for too-long time or wearing ill-fitting shoes can cause corns, fungal nail infections etc.

Shoes also help to prevent the injury.

Chatradharana^[45]

Use of Umbrella alleviates natural calamities, provides strength, protection, covering and well being and guards against the sun, wind, dust, and rains.

It improves complexion and good for eyes and enhances *Ojas* and is auspicious.

Use of umbrella averts the attacks of diseases etc. it gives strength and protect one from evil spirits, it covers and brings about happiness, and it guards against the sun, wind, dust and rain.

Danda Dharana^[46]

Use of stick supports a slipping person, averts enemies, gives strength and longevity and destroys fears.

Holding stick removes fear of dog, reptile, ferocious beasts and horned animals. Alleviated fatigues, slipping and other defects and is particularly useful for old persons. It promotes the quality of *Satva*, enthusiasm, strength, steadiness, patience and power provides, removes fear.

CONCLUSION

Dincharya described in *Ayurveda* is very beneficial in preventing disease. It is a unique, evidence-based practice and useful in maintaining proper physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. This helps us to create a better and healthy future for the individual. This is the need for the modern era as various diseases are emerging very rapidly and most of them are only preventable. It is necessary to understand the scientific aspect of *Dincharya* for proper understanding of the facts at universal level.

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