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Role of *Ahara-Vihara* and *Rasayana* in prevention of disease and maintenance of health

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ABSTRACT

Ahara and *Vihara* play very important role in getting these *Prayojana*. The crucial role of *Ahara* and *Vihara* is maintenance of *Dhatu* i.e., *Dhatu*samyā, by which all physiological activity remain proper e.g. *Dahana*, *Pachana*, *Chaya-Upachaya Kriya*, etc. By *Vihara* the fitness and constitutional arrangement of body remain well, *Jatharagni* gets improved and *Bala* as well *Vyadhikshamatva* also gets improved. *Acharya Charaka* says "Aharah Praninam Pranah" and *Acharya Sushruta* says "Praninam Punarmoolam Aharo Balavarna Ojasam Cha" that is the *Ahara* is the life of all the *Pranis* as well as base of *Bala*, *Varna* and *Oja* i.e., life is impossible without *Ahara*. Thus, *Ahara* and *Vihara* are useful for prevention of diseases. *Ayurveda* also frequently referred as '*Ashtanga Ayurveda*' and *Rasayana Chikitsa* are the part of the *Ashtanga Ayurveda*. It helps a person to maintain good health or to establish impaired or lost physical or mental health. *Rasayana Chikitsa* are said to revitalize all the *Sapta Dhatus* (body elements), therefore, restores equilibrium and health.

Key words: *Mahaushadhi*, *Vyadhikshamatva*, *Upashaya*, *Sadvritta*, *Achara Rasayana*.

INTRODUCTION

The term immunity may be correlated with *Vyadhikshamatva*. The *Vyadhikshamatva* explained by *Acharya Chakrapani* i.e., The power of body which decrease the effect of disease termed as *Vyadhi Bala Virodhitvam* and the strength of body which prevent from disease known as *Vyadhi Utpad Pratibandhaktvam*. *Vyadhikshamatva* depends mainly on two factors i.e. *Oja* and *Bala*.^[1] According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Oja* originates first of all in our body which have *Sarpi Varna*, *Madhura Rasa* and *Lajagandhi*.^[2]

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The *Oja* are of two types i.e., *Para Oja* which is 8 *Bindu* in *Pramana* and situated in *Hridaya* and *Apara Oja* which *Ardhanjali* in *Pramana* and present in whole body. According to *Acharaya Charaka*, *Dasha Guna* of *Ojas* are *Guru*, *Sheeta*, *Mridu*, *Shlakshana*, *Bahala*, *Madhura*, *Sthira*, *Prasanna*, *Pichhila* and *Snigdha*.^[3] According to *Charaka Samhita*, *Oja* is nourished by *Ahara Rasa* as *Dhatu*s. The *Oja* is the *Sara* of all *Dhatu*s so it can be said that its nourishment started from *Ahara Rasa* via *Rasa*, *Raktadi Dhatu*s. *Acharya* says that, *Oja* is one of the *Prana* which is situated in *Hridaya* and if *Para Oja* is lost then life will be destroyed.

The disease preventing power of body is known as *Bala*.^[4] The natural *Shleshma* is known as *Bala* and *Oja* whereas the vitiated *Shleshma* is known as *Mala* and *Papma*.^[5] *Acharya* says that the *Bala* are of three types i.e., *Sahaja*, *Kalaja* and *Yuktikrita*. The *Sahaja Bala* is the physical and mental power which is naturally present by birth and it may correlate with innate immunity. The *Kalaja Bala* depends on *Vaya* and *Ritus* that is maximum in *Madhyamavastha* and *Hemanta Ritu*. The *Yuktikrita Bala* is the power increased by

healthy *Ahara* and *Cheshta* i.e., exercise.^[6] Use of *Shad Rasa* in foods also improves immunity i.e., *Bala*.^[7]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The term *Vyadhikshamatva* is define in *Charaka Samhita* 28 chapter and explained by Acharya Chakrapani in his *Teeka Ayurvedadeepika*. The concept of *Vyadhikshamatva* is similar to concept of immunity in modern medical sciences. The *Oja* and *Bala* are important factors for improving *Vyadhikshamatva*. *Trividh Bala* are explain by *Acharaya Charaka* in *Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana* 11. The origin, types and properties of *Oja* is given in *Sutrasthana* 17 chapter of *Charaka Smhita*. Explanation of *Rasayana* is given in all the *Ayurvedic Samhitas*. In *Charaka Samhita Chikitsasthana* chapter 1 is divided in four part and each part is dedicated to *Rasayana* in detail. There are many types of *Rasayana* explained as- *Kamya Rasayana*, *Naimittika Rasayana*, *Ajasrika Rasayan*, *Medhya Rasayan*, *Achara Rasayan*, *Kutipraveshika Rasayana*, etc.

Immunity boosting factors

Balavidhikara Bhava and *Shariravidhikara Bhava* mentioned are the main immunity improving factors. Use of all the *Shadrasa* in *Ahara*, proper follow up of *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Sadvritta* and *Achara Rasayana* etc. The regular use of *Rasayana Dravays* like - *Triphala Rasayana*, *Shilajatu Rasayana Haritakyadi Rasayana*, *Amalakyadi Rasayana*, *Bramha Rasayana*, *Nagbala Rasayana*, *Baladi Rasayana*, *Medhya Rasayana*, *Pippali Vardhamana Rasayana*, *Chyavanaprash Rasayana*,^[8] etc. improves immunity.

Balanced diet and sleep

Atimatra Bhojana leads to *Tridosha Prakopa* while *Alpa Matra Bhojana* leads to *Vata Prakopa*. Many lifestyle disorders are a result of inadequate food intake and sedentary lifestyle. Hence, an individual should always consume a balanced diet in *Matra* and *Rasa*.

In *Charaka Samhita*, it is mentioned that *Ahara Parinamkara Bhava*, *Ahara Vidhivisheshayatana*, and *Ahara Vidhividhana* are play very important in digestion, absorption and assimilation of food. So, one should follow these for better health.

Suppression of natural urges

In *Charaka Samhita*, there is a description of *Adharaniya Vegas* and many diseases caused by their suppression. So, one should not suppress the *Adharaniya Vegas* for prevention of disease and maintenance of healthy life.^[9]

Sadvritta and Achara Rasayana

The root '*Sad*' means good and '*Vritta*' means regimen. Person who follows *Sadvritta* and *Achara Rasayana* remains free from disease due to control of sensory organs and improves mental development. *Sadvritta* and *Achara Rasayana* are best in balancing of *Manasika Dosha (Raja & Tama)*. Thus, *Sadvritta* and *Achara Rasayana* prevents diseases (hypertension, diabetes, psychological disorders etc.) by maintaining *Manasika* and *Sharirika Dosha* and play a major role in healthy social life.

Benefits of Godugdha and Goghrita

Godugdha possesses *Gunas* like *Madhura*, *Sheeta*, *Mridu*, *Snigdha*, *Guru* etc. which are similar to *Guna* of *Oja*. Hence, it acts as *Ojo Vardhaka* and *Balya*.^[10] Use of *Goghrita* on regular basis increases *Smriti*, *Buddhi*, *Agni*, *Shukra Dhatu*, *Oja* and is *Rasayana*.^[11]

DISCUSSION

It is said for *Ahara* that - "*Pareekshya Hitam Ashniyaad Deho Hi Ahara Sambhava*"^[12] i.e., possibility of life only with food. Dietary consideration is an important component of every prescription in *Ayurvedic* therapy. Sometimes dietary management in itself is a complete for prevention of disease. So, *Ahara* has been specified in the first place in *Trayah Upasthambha (Ahara, Nidra, Bramhacharya)*. *Acharya Kashyapa* says that *Ahara* is *Mahaushadhi* and *Acharya Harita* says that *Ahara* is *Mahabheshaja*. *Vihara* is second most important factor for healthy life. It is inclusive of habit, behavior, living pattern, social relation and adjustment with the environment in which we grow. *Acharya Charaka* has stated that all the *Bhavas* i.e., *Ahara* and *Vihara* which boost our immunity and promote our health should be taken in proper quantity. *Rasayana* improves the metabolic activities and results in best possible bio-transformation. *Jara Chikitsa* or *Rasayana* therapy

promotes rejuvenation in a healthy person and cures the disease of an unhealthy person. *Rasayana* is not a drug therapy but is a specialized procedure practiced in the form of rejuvenation recipes, dietary regimen and special health promoting conduct and behavior i.e., *Acharya Rasayan*. Most of these *Rasayanas* can be used regularly as a food for maintaining mental and physical health. They may be used either alone or along with other modalities of treatment as an adjuvant.

CONCLUSION

The concept of *Pathya*, *Apathya* and *Nitya Sevaneeya Ahara Dravya* is given in Ayurvedic science. These are very essential for maintenance of health and prevention of disease. The concept of *Dincharya*, *Ritucharya* and following of *Ahara* and *Vihara* are essential for healthy life. *Sadvritta* and *Acharya Rasayana* are essential tool in modern era as it helps an individual to not only obtain and maintain their health but also help to build a most civilized society and nation, worthy of emulation.

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