

THE UTILITY OF ACHARA RASAYANA FOR ACHIEVING HEALTH AND SPIRITUALITY – A REVIEW

ARVIND KUMAR GUPTA¹ #, MANJUNATHA T. SASANOOR²,
ASIT KUMAR PANJA³, KEDAR LAL MEENA⁴

Department of Basic Principles, National Institute of Ayurveda,
Jaipur - 302002 Rajasthan (India)

Abstract : Health and longevity are the motto of human life but salvation is ultimate goal. Self-realization is needed for salvation. *Sadhana* and *ayurvedic* therapies are suggested to improve self-realization, which in turn promotes spirituality. *Ayurveda*, the science of life, has taken its shape with the objective of *deerghayu* (Longevity). *Ayurveda* has not only emphasized on longevity but also improves quality of life through various specialised procedures. The concept of *rasayana* has been evolved for improving the quality of life. *Rasayana* deals with all angles of health i.e. physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects. *Achara Rasayana* has been described to maintain the pace of psychological, moral aspects. This is a methodology to rejuvenate tissues of body, develops mental health and other aspects of human life. *Achara rasayana* is an *adravyabhoota* type of *rasayana* in which no pharmaceutical measure is taken under consideration. It increases immunity of the body and mind which is an essential factor for healthy life. It is also described in *achara rasayana*, to gain the knowledge of *vedic* literature which sharpens our intellect. With the knowledge of literature, one will restrict himself from *pragyaparadha* which is a factor between three major contributors for ill-health. It teaches about virtuous behaviors which are necessary to develop healthy society. It also works in the way to calmness of mind which is necessary to develop spiritual aspect. Thus, we can say that *achara rasayana* strengthens physical, mental, social and spiritual parts of health i.e. health in its totality.

Keywords: *Ayurveda, Achara Rasayana, Health, Spirituality.*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the science of life, has a peculiar approach of treating the patients i.e. in holistic manner. *Ayurveda* got its root from *Veda*, the basis of all contemporary sciences. *Dhanurveda*, an *upaveda* of *Rigveda*, has viewed that if our physical body is fit, then our mental status will also be sound whereas yoga philosophy has opined that if our mind is well, then our physical body will be fine. But, *ayurveda* tries to treat the body and mind simultaneously.

The first treatment principle of *ayurveda* is *nidana parivarjana*. (*Ch.Chi.6/53, Su.Ut.1/25*) *Nidana parivarjana* can be easily done with the logical adoption of regimen described in *dincharya* and *ritucharya*. So, *nidana parivarjana* in the form of the enhancement of *sattva* is a part of treatment. *Rasayana* therapy has also been described for enhancing the *sattva*. *Rasayana* therapy can be

done in two ways- with food and drug, and with behavior. In this current topic the behavioral portion in the form of *achara rasayana* (*Ch.Chi.1/4/30-35*) has been described.

Review:

Ayurveda has a unique approach to promote health and spirituality by using the rejuvenating therapy. The idea of rejuvenation comes from *atharvaveda* where it is mentioned that -

Devasya pashya kavyam na mamar na jeeryati (*Atharvaveda 1/8/32*)

i.e. the world is a literature of god which never die nor growing old. After thinking of this there is development of *Rasayana* therapy. The medicines, used for this purpose, are called *daivi*. (*Atharvaveda 11/4/16*)

Rasayanas are the health promoting substances which nourishes tissues. Due to

sattvika nature, *Rasayanas* improves mental and intellectual power.

Deerghamayuh smriti medhamarogyam tarunam vayah|

Prabhavarnaswaroudaryam dehendriyam balam param||

Vaksiddhim pranitim kantim labhate na rasayanat|

Labhopyayo hi shastanam rasadeenam rasayanam|| (Ch.Chi.1/1/7-8)

Rasayanas are of two types-*Dravyabhoota* and *Adravyabhoota*. *Dravyabhoota rasayanas* are the drugs which purify and nourish tissues but *adravyabhoota* are behavioral conducts which act like *rasayana*.

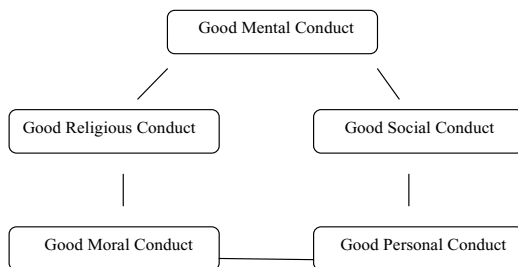
Achara rasayana is an *adravyabhoota* type of *rasayana* which strengthens the inner as well as outer sphere.

Achara rasayana is behavior that enhances health, happiness and longevity. *Achara rasayana* do more than just tell us how to behave. They provide practical methods such as eating *sattvika* foods and practicing meditation to improve our ability to choose positive behaviors effortlessly and avoid making mistakes that cause ill-health and unhappiness.

There are five canons to describe the *achara rasayana*:-

- Good Mental Conduct
- Good Social Conduct
- Good Personal Conduct
- Good Moral Conduct
- Good Religious Conduct

Achara Rasayana (Ayurvedic Lifestyle Modification)



GOOD MENTAL CONDUCT:

1. Satyavadinam (Speak the sweet truth):

There is saying from *vaidika* literature that goes, “*Satyam brooyat priyam brooyat*” which means speak the sweet truth. Speaking truth creates *ojas* in body, the biochemical correlate of bliss

and health. Speaking lies, on the other hand, creates *ama* or impurities.

But at same time, you should find a pleasant way to convey a truthful message. For example, suppose a child has not washed his face properly. It would be true to say, “Your face is dirty”, but that could offend your child. Instead you could say, “Your face looks good, but if you were to wash it with lots of water and cleanser, it would look even better. If you something encouraging first, a suggestion for improvement that comes later will be less likely to be taken in the wrong spirit. It’s important to find a way to tell the truth without hurting anyone.

In the other way, the whole phenomenon is *maya* or illusion, *asat* or unreal and the aspirant should be aware of this fact because it is said that-”*Brahmasatyam jaganmithya*”.

This is also applicable to an individual that he should say what that means. Sincere words are meant to clarify one’s ideas. It can be realized only by speaking truth and observing truth in thought, word and deed. There are thirteen forms of truth- truthfulness, equal vision, self control, and absence of envious emulation, forgiveness, modesty, endurance, absence of jealousy, charity, thoughtfulness, disinterested philanthropy, self-possession and unceasing and compassionate harmlessness. These virtues are attainable only by the unselfishness.

Truth means strength to abide by positive principles. Speak the truth, but let it not be pleasant and speak not pleasing falsehood-this is eternal religion. If you are established in truth, all the other virtues will cling to you.

2. Akrodham (Stay free of anger):

Anger is within everyone in seed form. Like a fire with a small flame, if you put oil on it, it can flare up. By practicing unconditional forgiveness, you can prevent the seed of anger from becoming an uncontrollable wildfire.

In practicing forgiveness, it’s important to also forgive yourself, or that anger will reflect to others. Sometimes people enjoys being angry and they think it’s their birthright to be angry all the time. But they should be aware that anger not only creates *ama* and *amvisha* - flooding the body with harmful hormones – but it also burns *ojas*.

In angry condition, if highly nutritive food is taken in proper amount, food is not digested

properly and produces *ama* and *amdosha*. The *amdoshas* are *alaska* and *visoochika*.

Matrayapyabhyavahrtam pathyam channam na jeeryati|

Chintashokabhayakrodhadukhashayyaprajagaraih|

Tam dwividhamamapradoshamakshate bhishajah- visoochika alaskam cha|| (Ch.Vi.2/9-10)

If you forgive yourself and other people, anger can be prevented.

GOOD SOCIAL CONDUCT:

3. Anahamkrtam (Get devoid of egoism):

Ego is state of mind in which one feels that he is everything. It reflects the diseased mind cover up with *moha*. By avoiding this, one can get the blessings of god and other wise persons.

1. Upasitaram vrddhanam (Keep the company of wises):

Even if you are committed to eating *sattvika* foods, meditating daily and practicing *achara rasayana*, it can become difficult if, due to social pressures, you find yourself drinking alcoholic beverages or eating *tamasika* foods. This is why it is important to stay in the company of the wise, to choose like-minded, *sattvika* friends who will support your desire to follow *achara rasayana*.

2. Acharyaguruvrddharchaneram (Be reverencing to elders and teachers):

Teachers and elders can teach us invaluable lessons by sharing their wisdom and experience. It's easy to read a book to gain knowledge, but it's often very difficult to apply that knowledge in daily life. An elder or teacher can tell you how they tried to practice unconditional forgiveness, for instance, and what the results were. Only wise elders can share such valuable life experiences. They are the best guides. And it is when one respects teachers and elders then they will offer their advice freely.

GOOD PERSONAL CONDUCT:

1. Param dheeram (Practice self-control):

It cuts the roof of all desires and one should be satisfied with what is obtained through luck or the grace of god. It bestows peace, one pointed mind, serenity and satisfaction.

2. Ksheeragrtashinam nityam (Take sattvika food regularly like milk and ghee):

All of these foods are *sattvika*, meaning they are pure and convert easily to *ojas*. They are *medhya*, supporting the physical brain, and enhancing the coordination of mental functions, such as *dhi*, *dhrti* and *smriti* (learning, retention and recall). When the mind remains strong, it is able to effortlessly command the senses, like a skilled charioteer who can guide wild horses without force. The mind that rules the senses, rather than the other way around, makes positive choices and engages in positive behaviours.

Aharashuddhou sattvashuddhih
sattvashuddhou druvasmriti smritilambhe
sarvagranteenam vipramokshah/
(Chhandogyaopanishad 7/26/2)

Tamasika foods are the opposite of *sattvika*—they break down the coordination between mind and body and inhibit the experience of pure consciousness. They create darkness rather than light. *Tamasika* foods include alcohol, garlic, onions, red meat, leftovers, and packaged foods, which have little life force. Anyone who wishes to practice *achara rasayana* should avoid them.

3. Adhyatma achara and samajagaranasvapnam nityam (Practice meditation and stay balanced in sleep and wakefulness):

By practicing the meditation twice a day, one can open his mind to pure consciousness, releasing stress and strengthening the intellect to allow him to make healthy choices in life. He will find himself naturally growing in positive behaviours without strain or effort. Along with the practice of meditation, it's important to follow the *ayurvedic* routine of rising before six a.m., and sleeping before ten at night. This allows your body and mind to become attuned with nature's rhythms, creating maximum clarity and alertness during the day and deep rest at night. It is said that-

Nidrayattam sukham dukham pushtih
karshyam balabalam|

Vrshta kleebta jyanajyanam jeevitam na cha||
(Ch.Su.21/36)

It is when people are tired and stressed that many behavioural problems begin. All of the facets of the *ayurvedic* routine (massage, exercise, yoga, eating the main meal at noon and eating lightly at night) help to promote positive behaviour.

4. **Shaucha (Cleanliness):**

It reflects internal and external purity both. External purity means pure food and cleanliness. Cleanliness means brushing of teeth twice daily, cleaning of nose and nasopharynx by drawing salted water (It removes *malas* of these places), scraping of tongue and a bath early in the morning helps one to get into the meditative mood quickly. With the practice of *shaucha*, one gradually gives up attachment to the body and it becomes easier to maintain *brahmacharya*.

Removal of lust, anger, greed, jealousy etc. constitutes internal purity. Internal purity is more important than external purity. It makes the mind one-pointed, bestows serenity, cheerfulness, poise happiness. It instills love, patience and magnanimity. Therefore develop internal purity through vigilant effort. A pure or *sattvika* mind can be attained through spiritual practices.

5. **Anayasam (Avoid overstrain):** **Overstrain is said in Charaka Samhita-**

Sahasa atmashaktimanalochya kryata iti sahasam| (**Chakrapani on Ch.Su.7/26**)

It means deeds done with overlooking one's own power. Overstrain causes diseases like *rajayakshma*(**Ch.Chi.8/13**) and also causes stress & strain to mind. By avoiding overstrain; one can reflect peace, calmness of mind.

6. **Prashantam and adhyatmapravanendriyam (Be in tranquil of heart and spiritual in temperament):**

If one is tranquil of heart, then his temperament strengthens and person become develops himself with spiritual virtues.

GOOD MORAL CONDUCT:

1. **Asankeernam, jitatmanam and tapasvinam (Be endowed with understanding, given to alms-giving and diligent in spiritual endeavor):**

A pure or *sattvika* mind can be attained through spiritual practices. All of the facets of the pure ayurvedic routine (massage, exercise, yoga, eating the good amount of meal at noon and eating lightly at night) help to promote positive behaviour.

2. **Madyamaithunat Nivrttam (Abstain from alcohol and sexual congress):**

For liberation from life and death cycle and to meet *brahma*, whatever code of conduct followed, is called *brahmacharya* like avoiding eight fold of coitus in thought, words and action. As said by *Acharya Chakrapani* –

Brahmane mokshaya charyam brahmacharyamupasthanigrahadi| (Chakrapani on Ch.Su.1/6)

Brahmacharya is included in three standing base pillars for body stability.(**Ch.Su.11/35**) When controlled, the part of human energy, which is expressed in sexual union, becomes transmuted into a special energy called *Ojas Shakti* and is stored up in the brain. A yogic practitioner with an abundance of this energy keeps his audience spell bound. There is a peculiar charm in his smile and power in his words emanating from his heart. He produces a very profound impression in the minds of all.

3. **Ahimsakam and anrshamsyaparam (Hurt no one and stick to non-violence):**

It comes first because one must remove one's brutal nature first. One must be non-violent and develop cosmic love. Only then he becomes fit for *Yoga*. It is non-harming, not causing trouble to the people, animals or the environment or not feeling envy. One's job must be considered in this respect because this rule doesn't applicable to persons who may kill like soldier, fish farmer. In this regard, *Acharya Chakrapani* also said that-*Himsa vidhirahita pranipeeda| (Chakrapani on Ch.Su.7/29)*

Those whose job doesn't involve killing are advised not to kill. It should be done by mind, words and body. It result s in no one feels enmity to you.

GOOD RELIGIOUS CONDUCT

1. **Devarcane ratam (Devoted to repetition of holy chants):**

Listening to Vedic chanting, such as the *Samaveda audiotapes*, helps enhance coordination between heart and mind, senses and mind, and aligns our awareness with the laws of nature, so we can live a mistake-free life.

2. Deshakalapramanajyam (Get conversant with the sciences of season knowledge):

One, who knows the rules of *dinacarya* and *ritucarya* i.e. the sciences of daily routine and season, will maintain his body and mind stable and stout. E.g. Early awakening in morning i.e. approx. 96 min. before sunrise (*Arundatta on As.Hr.Su.2/1*) provides purified air, space and earth which nourishes body in a proper way.

3. Dharmashastraparam (Gain vaidika knowledge):

The Vedas contain pure knowledge, the knowledge of how to enliven pure consciousness and live an enlightened daily life. They reveal the reality of life, and give us the guideposts along the path to enlightenment.

Satatadhyayanam *vadah*
paratantravalokanam/

Tadvidyacharyaseva *cha*
buddhimedhakarogu(ga)nah||

Ayushyam bhojanam jeerne veganam
chavidharanam|

brahmacharyamahimsa cha sahasanam cha
varjanam|| (Su.Chi.28/27-28)

If money is lost, nothing is lost.

If health is lost, something is lost.

But if character is lost, everything is lost.

(Anonymous)

DISCUSSION

Liberation has been considered as the ultimate goal of human life. Liberation is detachment of self from the recycling of repeated birth. For achieving this target, different rules and regulations have been advocated. Such rules and regulations are described as *achara rasayana* in *Charaka Samhita Cikitsasthana*. It is the way of life to improve lifestyle in all four perspective of health. (*Ch.Su.1/41*) By the following of *Achara rasayana*, our mental faculty becomes lucid and immune. Mind is connector between body and soul. A healthy mind keeps away the person from *prajyaparadha* which is a reason for disease

production. A mind, free from *raja* and *tama*, does not precede any activity and the stipulated actions become suppressed (*Ch.Sha.1/138*) and the man can achieve the state of liberation or absolute attachment with supreme soul.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded from the above discussion that there is need of uplifting the physical, mental, social and moral values in the current era. *Achara rasayana* is a possible way to fulfill the requirement. *Achara rasayana* brings detachment of mind from physical body and helps the mind to get attached with the self. (*Ch.Sha.1/142*) Liberation, as described by the various philosophies, is the detachment of every lively action done by the self. The means, described for gaining that stage, are only postulated to uplift the state of self. *Ayurvedic* philosophy is also emphasized the means of liberation in a different way. Proper execution of the means described in the *achara rasayana*, uplifts the mental status and helps to free the self from the material bondage. This is the dimension of spirituality in *ayurveda*.

References

1. **Charaka:** Charaka Samhita with Ayurvedadipika Commentary by Chakrapani Dutta, Edited by: Vaidya Yadavajitrikamaji Acharya, Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashan Varanasi, Reprint Edition (2011)
2. **Sushruta:** Sushruta Samhita with Nibandhasangraha Commentary by Dalhana and Nyayacandrikakhyapanjika Commentary by Gayadasa on Nidanasthana, Edited by: Vaidya Yadavajitrikamaji Acharya (Upto 9th Chapter) and Narayana Rama Acharya 'Kavyateertha' (Rest), Chaukhamba Samskrta Samsthana Varanasi, Reprint Edition, (2011)
3. **Atharvaveda:** Dayananda Samsthana, New Delhi-5, Reprint Edition (2004)
4. **Chandogyaopanishada:** With translation and with Shankarabhashya, Gitapress, Gorakhpur, Third Edition (1954)
5. **Vagbhata:** Ashtangahrdaya with Sarvangasundara Commentary by Arunadatta & AyurvedaRasayana Commentary by Hemadri, Edited by: Pt. Harisadashivashastry Paradakara, Reprint Edition (2007)