

A REVIEW OF ACHAR RASAYANA FROM CHARAK SAMHITA

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ABSTRACT

Acharya Charaka has given the unique concept of *Achara rasayana* i.e. the code of conduct which provides good mental, physical, social and spiritual health to the person who regularly follows it. It plays an important role in prevention and management of psychosomatic disorders, behavioural, social issues and also provides all the benefits of *rasayana*. So, multiple effects can be obtained without any pharmacological intervention by *Achar rasayana*. Practicing these techniques helps to avoid stimuli or circumstances that disturb the biological rhythms and also leads to emotional harmony. The principles of *Achar rasayana* are more relevant today than ever. It goes into the heart of the issue i.e., stress that we are trying to overcome in order to be well and healthy. So, it can be stated as socio – behavioural norm of conduct which leads to happiness and good health in people and society. Acharya Charaka has highlighted the importance of good conduct throughout the samhita. So, the present article focusses on to study all the aspects of *Achar rasayana* from Charak samhita.

KEYWORDS: *Achar rasayana*, code of conduct, behavioural therapy.

INTRODUCTION

For fulfilling the aim of Ayurveda, the therapeutics is categorized in 2 types i.e. one which promotes strength and immunity in healthy and second which alleviates disease.^[1] out of this, the first one includes *rasayana* (rejuvenative) and *vrushya* (aphrodisiac) drugs.^[2] The one which is said to protect youthfulness and delay the process of ageing, encourage life span, intellect, physical as well as mental strength also helpful in alleviating the disease is *Rasayana*.^[3] There are 3 types of *rasayana* therapy – *Achar rasayana* having code of good conduct, *Ajasrik rasayana* having use of healthy food, *Aushadhi rasayana* having use of medicinal drugs.^[4]

In the modern so-called sophisticated society, we have become increasingly disconnected from our true self. Our senses are heavily influenced by constant stimulation from computers, cell phones, television and other electronic devices. Besides all these, the pace at which we are living is exerting excess pressure on the nervous system. Hectic lifestyle, competitive society, departure from natural rhythms is getting reflected in our physical and mental health.^[5] Also, the speed of crime is growing vastly due to inappropriate social behaviour and personal dissatisfaction.^[6]

To tackle with these problems, ayurveda advocates a unique concept of positive behaviour to maintain the mental and emotional balance under the concept of

Achara rasayana. *Achara* means ethics, conduct, manners and *rasayana* refers to science of promoting longevity and maintaining optimal health.^[7] So, it implies moral, ethical and benevolent conduct including truth, nonviolence, personal hygiene, devotion, compassion, social behaviour leading to health and happiness. It brings about rejuvenation in body – mind system. It may act as *rasayana* in 3 ways – by improving personality, improving social relationships, improving physical and mental health by developing psycho – neuro immunity.^[8] One who adopts such conduct daily gains all benefits of *rasayana* therapy without physically consuming any rejuvenative remedy.^[9] so, also known as *adravyabhut rasayana* and *nitya rasayana*.^[10] Those who take other *rasayana* without following code of conduct does not receive optimum benefits of *rasayana*.^[11]

Acharya Charaka has highlighted the importance of good conduct throughout the samhita for maintenance of good health, longevity, rejuvenation, prevention and treatment of many diseases. So, the present article focusses on to study all the aspects of *Achar rasayana* from Charak samhita.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Charak samhita along with Chakrapani commentary were studied for the references regarding good conduct. Apart from this, research articles from reputed journals,

textbooks and websites were studied for the same. The data was collected, analysed and concluded.

OBSERVATION AND RESULT

Acharya Charaka has highlighted the importance of good conduct throughout the samhita. The references are as below

Table 1: References of Code of conduct.

Sr no	Good conduct synonyms	Reference
1.	Characteristics of good companion to be followed	Ch.su.7/58-59
2.	Important measures to be followed for complete wellness.	Ch.su.7/60
3.	<i>Sadvrutta</i>	Ch.su.8/17-29
4.	Benefits of <i>sadvrutta</i>	Ch.su.8/32-33
5.	<i>Anukta sadvrutta</i>	Ch.su.8/34
6.	Path of eternal duty	Ch.su.11/33
7.	Characteristics of happy and healthy life	Ch.su.30/24
8.	General treatment of epidemics	Ch.vi.3/14-18
9.	Means of attainment of <i>moksha</i>	Cha.sha.1/143-146
10.	Principles for having disease free life	Ch. Sha.2/46-47
11.	Means of attainment of <i>moksha</i>	Ch.sha.5/12-19
12.	<i>Achar rasayana</i>	Ch. Chi.1/4/30-38
13.	<i>Visham jwara Chikitsa</i>	Ch.chi.3/314
14.	<i>Agantu Unmad Chikitsa</i>	Ch. Chi. 9/93
15.	<i>Atatvabhinivesh Chikitsa</i>	Ch. Chi. 10/63
16.	<i>Rajyakshma Chikitsa</i>	Ch.chi.8/187

The code of conduct mentioned in above references can be broadly divided into 5 categories – verbal, mental, behavioural, physical and spiritual which are as below –

- **Verbal code of conduct**

1. One should timely speak useful, measured, sweet & meaningful words.
2. One should always speak the truth.
3. One should not speak ill of noble persons and preceptors.
4. One should not pronounce words in low, high, weak or deranged voice, without proper accents and morphological symmetry, neither too fast nor too slow, nor with excessive delay and nor with too high or too low pitch of sound in learning.
5. One Should be soft spoken.

- **Mental code of conduct –**

1. One should be free from anger.
2. One should be nonviolent.
3. One Should be self-controlled & virtuous.
4. One should be zealous to the cause but not be anxious about the result/outcome.
5. One should be free from anxiety, fearless, shy (from committing bad deeds), wise, highly enthusiastic, skilful, fore bearing, religious, with positive attitude.
6. One should not tell lies and should not take other's possessions.
7. Should not covet other's women or property.
8. Should not indulge in enmity, sinful acts, or be vicious (even to a sinner)

9. Should not point out defects of others and should not try to know other's secrets.
10. One should not take interest in crooked things, take refuge of wicked persons and indulge in frightening/terrorising acts.
11. One should not initiate quarrels.
12. One should not be impatient, or overexcited/ over exhilarated.
13. One should not be the person who does not support his attendants, confide in his kins, be happy alone and has unpleasant conduct, behaviour and attendance.
14. One should not rely on everybody nor suspect all and should not be critical (too meticulous) at all times.

- **Behavioural code of conduct**

1. One should be loving and compassionate.
2. One should be well behaved, simple.
3. One should be keeping company of elders, positivist, self-restrained.
4. One should not be in a habit of postponing things at the time of action.
5. One should not indulge in any activity without properly examining it.
6. One should not be submissive to his senses nor should let his fickle mind move around.
7. One should not overburden his/her intellect or senses.
8. One should avoid procrastinating.

9. One should not do things in a fit of anger or rejoicing.
10. One should not be under continuous grief.
11. One should not be conceited over achievements or desperate in loss.
12. One should always remember his own constitution of mind (nature).
13. One should have faith in the correlation of the cause and effect that is good and bad deeds and their corresponding results and should always act on it.
14. One should not be despondent and assume that now nothing can be done.
15. One should not lose spirit (give up courage) nor should remember his insults.
16. One should not deviate from generally approved social practices and should not break any code of conduct.
17. One should not move in the night or in an inappropriate place. One should not indulge in taking food, studies, sexual relations or sleep during the dawn or dusk.
18. One should not make friendship with children, the old, the greedy, the fools, the persons under affliction and the eunuchs.
19. One should not have interest in taking wine, gambling and making physical relationship with prostitutes.
20. One should not disclose secrets and should not insult anybody. One should not be self-conceited, unskilled, inexperienced and envious.
21. One should not insult the brahmins nor should beat the cow with sticks. One should not abuse the old, the preceptors, the administrative class and the king.
22. One should not speak too much nor treat kins, persons attached, that stood along in difficult times and the persons who know the secrets disparagingly.
23. One should not insult women and should not place too much of faith in them. One should not disclose secrets to them nor should give authority indiscriminately.
24. One should not perform sexual intercourse with a woman during her menstrual period, with a woman suffering from a disease, or one who is impure, inauspicious, with undesirable appearance, with bad behaviour/conducts and manners or with the one devoid of skills.
25. One should not perform sexual intercourse with women who are not friendly, or one who is not having passionate desire or has passionate desire for some other person or is married to some other person.
26. One should not perform sexual intercourse with other animal species except human being, and with other body parts except genitals.
27. One should not perform sexual intercourse under holy trees, at sacred places, public courtyard, on a crossroad, in a garden, at cremation ground, execution place/ slaughter house, near water reservoir, in the medicine stores. Sexual intercourse is also prohibited in the houses of brahmins, teachers and in temples.
28. One should not perform sexual intercourse during the dawn and dusk and on inauspicious days i.e., on full moon days and *pratipadas* (first day of lunar month), etc. One should not perform sexual intercourse if unclean, if not taken aphrodisiacs, without prior determination and desire, without having proper erection, without food or after excessive food intake, on uneven place, while under the urge of micturition or defecation, after exertion, physical exercise, during fasting, after exhaustion or in a place having no privacy
29. One should not sneeze, eat and sleep in curved position.
30. One should not be engaged in other works while urge for the natural urges. (One should pass natural urge first and then do other works).
31. One should not spit out sputum, pass faeces and urine in front of the winds, fire, water, the moon, the sun, Brahmins and the preceptors.
32. One should not urinate on the road, in crowded (public) places and while taking food.
33. One should not let out oral or nasal excreta at the time of recitation of mantras, oblation, studies, and sacrifice, religious and auspicious acts.
34. One should not covet other's women or property.
35. One should not indulge in enmity, sinful acts, or be vicious (even to a sinner).
36. One should not point out defects of others and should not try to know other's secrets.
37. One should not keep company of the unvirtuous, those hated by the king, insane persons, those not following social ethics, foetus killers, wretched and wicked ones.
38. One should not ride on defective vehicles, sit on hard place of knee height, sleep on uncovered hard bed or having no pillow, not having sufficient dimensions or uneven.
39. One should not move on uneven tops of the mountains, climb trees, and take dip in water with strong currents.
40. One should not tread on the shade of a bank or move around the place that are prone to fire hazards, should not laugh loudly, release flatus with sound, should not yawn, sneeze, or laugh with uncovered mouth, should not contort the nose, grind teeth, make scratching sounds using nails, strike the bones, scrape the earth, cut the grass, press the earthen lamp, perform any improper actions of body parts .
41. One should not see light, undesirable, impure and inauspicious objects, should not produce any abnormally loud sound at the sight of corpse and tread on the shadow of sacred persons, teachers, revered ones or any such persons.
42. One should not stay for long in the temples, sacred places, raised platforms, crossroads, gardens, cremation grounds & places of execution during nights, and should not enter a deserted house or forests alone.

43. One should not be attached to women, friends and servants with sinful conduct, should not oppose or antagonize superior persons and be attached to inferior persons.
 44. One should not take interest in crooked things, take refuge of wicked persons and indulge in frightening/terrorising acts.
 45. One should not indulge in undue courage or excessive sleep, night awakening, bath, drinks and food. One should not stay for long with knees up and approach fierce animals and those having prominent teeth and horns.
 46. One should not be exposed to easterly winds, the sun, dews and the strong currents of wind.
 47. One should not initiate quarrels.
 48. One should not pass the respectable and the auspicious on left and others on right side.
 49. One should take an initiative during discourses and remain pleasant faced.
 50. One should save persons in dire situations or distress.
 51. One should offer oblation, perform religious sacrifices, donations, pay respect to road crossings, offer *bali* (religious offerings or ritualistic sacrifices).
 52. One should offer hospitality to guests, offer *pindas* (rice balls) to forefathers.
 53. One should be devoted to the teachers, accomplished persons and to those who are superior in modesty, intellect, learning, clan and age.
 54. One should behave like brother to all living beings (i.e., should be compassionate), should pacify the angry and the discontent, and console the frightened.
 55. One should help the poor, be truthful & peaceful.
 56. One should be tolerant of harsh words and should curb the practice of intolerance.
 57. One should always concentrate on the qualities of peaceful life and should be the remover of the causes of attachment and aversion.
- **Physical code of conduct**
 1. One should bathe twice a day, and one should clean his excretory passages and feet frequently.
 2. Cut of hair, shaving & nail cutting should be done thrice a fortnight.
 3. One should always wear untorn clothes, should be cheerful, use flowers and fragrance. The attire should be gentle, and style of hair should be as commonly in practice.
 4. One should apply oil to head, ear, nose, and feet daily and should resort to (healthy) smoking.
 5. One should walk with an umbrella, stick, turban & footwear, and look six feet ahead.
 6. One should adopt auspicious conduct, should avoid places with dirty clothes, bones, thorns, impure articles, hairs, chaff, garbage, ash, and skull and one should bathe & sacrifice.
 7. One Should discontinue exercise before feeling of fatigue.
8. One should not ride on defective vehicles, sit on hard place of knee height, sleep on uncovered hard bed or having no pillow, not having sufficient dimensions or uneven.
 9. One should not move on uneven tops of the mountains, climb trees, and take dip in water with strong currents.
 10. One should not tread on the shade of a bank or move around the place that are prone to fire hazards, should not laugh loudly, release flatus with sound, should not yawn, sneeze, or laugh with uncovered mouth, should not contort the nose, grind teeth, make scratching sounds using nails, strike the bones, scrape the earth, cut the grass, press the earthen lamp, perform any improper actions of body parts.
 11. One should not see light, undesirable, impure and inauspicious objects, should not produce any abnormally loud sound at the sight of corpse and tread on the shadow of sacred persons, teachers, revered ones or any such persons.
 12. One should not stay for long in the temples, sacred places, raised platforms, crossroads, gardens, cremation grounds & places of execution during nights, and should not enter a deserted house or forests alone.
 13. One should not be attached to women, friends and servants with sinful conduct, should not oppose or antagonize superior persons and be attached to inferior persons.
 14. One should not indulge in undue courage or excessive sleep, night awakening, bath, drinks and food. One should not stay for long with knees up and approach fierce animals and those having prominent teeth and horns.
 15. One should not be exposed to easterly winds, the sun, dews and the strong currents of wind.
 16. One should not wear spotted clothes. One should not take bath when tired and exhausted and should rest and wash the face before taking bath. Should not touch the head with dirty clothes nor should strike at hair tips and should wear fresh clothes after bathing.
 17. One should not leave without touching the gems, ghee, the respectable, the auspicious and flowers.
 18. One should not eat without wearing precious stones in the hand or without taking bath or while wearing torn clothes, without reciting mantras, without offering oblations to God, without offerings to the departed forefathers, teachers, guests and dependants.
 19. One should not eat without applying purifying fragrance and garland, without washing hands, feet and face, without cleaning the mouth, facing towards the north, with depressed /stressed mind, surrounded by the disloyal, undisciplined, unclean and hungry attendants, in unclean utensils or at improper place and time, in crowded surroundings, without first offering to the fire, without sprinkling with sacred water, without sanctifying it with mantras, with contemptuous disposition towards the food.

20. One should not take contaminated meal or food which has been served by enemies or opponents.
21. One should not take stale food (meat, salad, dry vegetables, fruit and hard eatables).
22. One should not finish all food (served in the plate) articles except the curd, honey, salt, roasted grain flour and ghee (these should be finished).
23. One should not take curd at night. One should not consume roasted grain flour without mixing it with ghee and sugar, in the night, after meals, in large quantity, twice daily or interrupted with water intake or tearing with teeth.
24. One should consume routinely ghee extracted from milk.
25. One should consider the measure of place and time with propriety.

• **Spiritual code of conduct**

1. One should observe charity, penance, worshipping gods, cow, *brahmanas*, gurus, preceptors and elders.
2. One's senses should be well concentrated to spirituality.
3. One should be devoted to holy books.
4. One should follow the path of *brahmacharya* (chastity/celibacy), knowledge, charity, friendship, compassion, cheerfulness, detachment and peace.
5. One who is desirous of well-being should not offer oblation to the fire with cow ghee, whole rice grains, *tila* (*Sesamum indicum* Linn.), *kusha* grass (*Desmostachya bipinnata* Staff.) and mustard seeds while in impure condition. One should touch water, reciting mantra. After touching the lips and feet, one should daub water on all the orifices of the head (two nasal, one buccal, two auditory, and two ocular orifices), the seats of his soul (mentally), heart and head.
6. One should not perform spells, worship of sacred trees and superiors, and studies while remaining impure.
7. One should worship God, cows, Brahmins, preceptors, elderly persons, highly accomplished persons and teachers.
8. One should honour fire with oblation, should put on auspicious herbs.

DISCUSSION

Achara rasayana is boon to Ayurveda which is explained by Acharya Charaka. It is a behavioural therapy which provides all the benefits of rejuvenation and is compulsory before taking any medicinal rejuvenation. Various codes of conduct like physical or personal, verbal, mental or psychological, behavioural and social are included in it. The benefits of *Achara rasayana* are as follows –

- As, the soul and body functions are attributed to mind, the purity of mind by code of conduct achieves mental, physical and spiritual well-being.^[12] The proper coordination between mind and

body results in health and happiness which is achieved by *achar rasayana*.^[13]

- *Manas dosha* can be treated with the help of *dneyana*, scientific knowledge (*vidnyana*), restraint/temperance (*dhairya*), memory (*smruti*) and salvation/concentration (*samadhi*) which all are included under code of conduct. Hence, it is useful in treating psychological diseases.^[14]
- It is said to prevent and treat exogenous disorders.^[15]
- Wellbeing in present world (birth) and in world after death is achieved by following code of conduct.^[16]
- Fruits of *Dharma*, *artha* and *kama* are achieved by it.^[17]
- Brings wellbeing, maintain normalcy of mind with sense organs.^[18]
- (*sadvrutta*), if practiced simultaneously fulfils two objectives – maintenance of positive health and control over sense organs.^[19]
- One who follows the code of good conduct for the maintenance of positive health lives for a hundred years without any abnormality.^[20]
- Those who follow code of conduct are praised by the noble ones, earn fame all over the world, attain virtue and wealth, friendship of all living beings and at the end, with holy acts, attain the excellent abode (virtuous world) of good souls after the death.^[21]
- Beneficial for *hitayu*.^[22]
- It provides *yogaja bala*.^[23]
- All deeds for attaining salvation are there in code of conduct. So, salvation can be attained with the help of *achar rasayana*.^[24,25]
- Helps in attaining disease free healthy life.^[26]
- Can get all the benefits of *rasayana*.^[9]
- Helps in treatment of diseases like *Visham jwara*,^[27] *Agantu unmad*^[28] and *Atatvabhinish*,^[29] *Rajyakshma*.^[30]

Achara rasayana from modern perspective is as below – previous research has observed that -

- It helps to cope up with your life stressors.
- It is a behavioural therapy for changing negative thoughts that can contribute to and exacerbate emotional difficulties, depression and anxiety.
- It improves one's self esteem and increase positive thoughts that provide a positive and happy life.^[7]
- It gives balance and peace of mind.^[8]
- By adopting these measures, mind and senses of person gets controlled gradually and he is capable of avoiding the indulgence of causative factors.^[4]
- It increases immunity of body and mind which is needed for healthy life.^[6]
- Can diminish criminal tendency in society.^[6]
- It helps an individual in getting awareness about the society and to acknowledge the role of an individual in society.^[31]
- The proper circadian rhythm in code of conduct regulates the neurotransmitters, enhance the immune mechanism leading to proper health at all aspects.^[31]

- It brings positive changes in neurochemical functioning of the brain and helps one to evolve and progress effectively. It also reverses the disease process and helps one to stay in balance.^[5]
- It raises the *satva guna*, *develop the balance* of stress response hormones and thereby reduce stress.^[10]

CONCLUSION

Acharya Charaka has given special emphasis on code of conduct in the literature. It includes the ethics regarding physical, mental, spiritual, verbal, social well-being. It is helpful for prevention and treatment of disease, rejuvenation, longevity, healthy life, for having attainment *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*. It raises the *satva guna*, regulates neurotransmitters, mediates stress response, incorporate positive changes in neurochemical functioning in the brain. Hence, it provides a healthy and happy life in all aspects.

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