

A CONCEPT ON DINCHARYA MODALITIES IN HEMANTA RITU

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ABSTRACT

According to *Ayurveda*, *Samvatsara* i.e a period of one year is divided into two parts namely *Uttarayana* and *Dakshinayana* or *Aadana Kaala* and *Visarga Kaala* respectively. *Ayurvedic* texts describe a particular pattern of rhythm of three *Dosha* in relation to six seasons and with these seasonal variations, the change is very evident in the environment as well as body. If body is unable to adapt itself to stressors due to changes in specific traits of seasons, it may lead to *Dosha Vaishamya*, which in turn may render the body highly susceptible to one or other kinds of disorders. Thus, there is a great need of care of these rhythmic seasonal variations by adhering to appropriate diet and lifestyle. Proper adjustment of diet and lifestyle according to chronobiological changes occurring over the six seasons may help an individual to protect oneself from exaggerated *Tridoshika* variations. *Hemanta Ritu* as explained by all *Acharya* comes under *Visarga Kaala* in which *Bala* and *Agni* are in increasing strengths. Therefore, this article focuses on appropriate *Dincharya* to be followed in this *Ritu* to keep all *Dosha* in balance in the body.

KEYWORDS: *Samvatsara, Aadana Kaala, Dakshinayana.***INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda conceives life as a four dimensional entity comprising of *Sharira* (physical body), *Indriya* (senses), *Satva* (psyche) and *Atma* (soul) i.e. the conscious element. In accordance with the four dimensional concept of *Ayu* the science of life *Ayurveda* propounds an equally comprehensive four dimensional concept of 'Swasthya' or health. The expression 'Swasthya' connotes a state of well being of body and mind, a condition in which one is not dependent on other human beings or on any drug for his own physical and mental welfare. It is defined as the state of body and mind which provides the foundation for vigour and strength expressed in wholesome living involving pursuit of the values of life.

The measures of preservation of health have been described both in terms of the individual and the environment. The individual factors to be considered are *Prakriti, Satva, Vaya, Bala, Agni, Oja* etc. In order to keep healthy, the individual has to adopt appropriate measures and lifestyles in consideration of the above mentioned individual factors. Similarly, the impact of environmental factors such as *Desha, Kaala, Vaayu, Udaka* etc. have been emphasized.

According to *Ayurveda*, *Samvatsara* i.e a period of one year is divided into two parts namely *Uttarayana* and *Dakshinayana* or *Adana Kaala* and *Visarga Kaala* respectively. During *Adana Kaala*, Sun absorbs energy and vigour from Earth and its inhabitants whereas in *Visarga Kaala*, Moon showers energy and life to creatures.

Each of *Adana Kaala* and *Visarga Kaala* is subdivided in three *Ritu* or seasons namely *Shishira, Vasanta, Greeshma* and *Varsha, Sharada, Hemanta* respectively. *Ayurvedic* texts describe a particular pattern of rhythm of three *Dosha* in relation to six seasons and with these seasonal variations, the change is very evident in the environment as well as body. If body is unable to adapt itself to stressors due to changes in specific traits of seasons, it may lead to *Dosha Vaishamya*, which in turn may render the body highly susceptible to one or other kinds of disorders.

Thus, there is a great need of care of these rhythmic seasonal variations by adhering to appropriate diet and lifestyle. Proper adjustment of diet and lifestyle according to chronobiological changes occurring over the six seasons may help an individual to protect oneself

from exaggerated *Tridoshika* variations. *Ayurvedic* texts describe in detail the appropriate lifestyle and dietetics for each season. This is called *Ritucharya*.

Thus, exploration of seasonal characteristics of a particular *Ritu* along with its effect on human body is important.

CONCEPT OF HEMANTA RITU

The winter season is marked as *Hemanta Ritu* in *Ayurveda*. *Hemanta Ritu* starts from mid-November and ends in mid-January. Since winters impart certain changes in our body and surroundings that may trigger *Dosha* in our body, it's imperative that we incorporate few modifications in our lifestyle, diet and routine to keep *Dosha* in balance. These specific *Ayurvedic* lifestyle modifications and regimen is categorized as *Hemanta Ritucharya*. Not all geographies experience all the six seasons, but *Ritucharya* can be formed based on the climate that are dominant in respective geographic locations.

Hemanta Ritu encompasses dusty environments, drop in the temperature, chilly and cold winds that may lead to the disequilibrium of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*. The various changes in this *Ritu* is responsible for development of *Uttama Bala* (strength) in our body. Due to more coldness in the environment, the inner heat of the body gets trapped that results in the good strength of the *Jatharagni* which is capable of digesting food irrespective of the heaviness of substances (*Guru Dravya*) and more quantity (*Guru Matra*) and this properly digested food is responsible for the nourishment of all seven *Dhatu*. It means when the body does not get *Indhan* (fuel) as *Guru Aahara* (heavy substances) adequately the increased *Jatharagni* will burn the foremost formed *Rasa Dhatu* and results in the vitiation of *Vata Dosha*.^[1]

Also, during *Hemanta Ritu*, *Agni* increases with the support of *Vata Dosha* which in-turn marks an increase in the appetite. A person feels hungry early in the morning due to longer nights.^[2] Thus, the frequency of food consumption increases. So, one needs to keep a watch on the type of food they consume to satisfy their appetite during *Hemanta*.

DINCHARYA DURING HEMANTA RITU

1. *Brahma-Muhurta Jagrana* (To wake up early in the morning)

A healthy person should wake up early in the morning especially in *Brahma-Muhurta* i.e., one hour 24 minutes before sunrise, after evaluating his/her bowel condition that whether the food consumed last night has been digested properly or not. It helps in leading a long and healthy life.^[3]

After waking up in the morning, one should bow to God and then look into *Darpana* (Mirror). If possible, one should also look and touch *Dadhi* (Curd), *Ghrta*,

Sarshapa (Yellow mustard), *Bilwa*, *Gorochana*, and garland of flowers which may have some religious and spiritual values.^[4]

The timing of sunrise varies according to geographic location and season of the year. During *Hemanta Ritu*, Sun rises late compared to other *Ritu* except *Shishira Ritu*. So, the time period of *Brahma-Muhurta* will be late i.e. around 6 to 6:30 am during *Hemanta Ritu* as compared to other *Ritu*.

2. *Ushapana* (To drink water on waking up in the morning)

It has been mentioned by *Acharya* to drink water in the quantity of eight *Prasrita* (aprox. 640 ml) in the morning before sunrise.

Quantity of water is three *Prasrita* (aprox. 240 ml) if a person consumes it through nose but in *Hemanta Ritu* the water used should be luke warm.

The time period of *Ushapana* starts from fourth *Prahara* of night up to just before sun rise.^[5]

According to *Acharya Charaka* it has been recommended to drink hot water in *Hemanta Ritu* to prevent the occurrence of diseases and increase the longevity of an individual.^[6]

3. *Mala-Utsarga* (To pass the natural urges)

After waking up one should go for *Mala-Mutra Utsarga* and should not perform any other activity while defecating and should not hold the urges forcefully. It is recommended to wash hands and feet after defecating.^[7]

4. *Achamana* (To sprinkle water on face)

According to *Ashtanga Samgraha*, *Achamana* should be performed after passing the natural urges in the morning and one should sit facing north or east direction and it should be done in an isolated place.^[8]

It has been recommended to use water not heated on *Agni* for *Achamana*⁹ but due to cold environment prevailing in *Hemanta Ritu*, *Acharya* have advised to use warm water for *Snaana/ Shodhana/ Shoucha Kriya*.^[10]

Hence, warm water can be used for *Achamana* during *Hemanta Ritu*.

5. *Danta-Dhawana & Pratisarana* (To brush & massage teeth & gums respectively)

During *Hemanta Ritu*, one should clean their teeth by using *Katu*, *Tikta* and *Kashaya Rasa* dominant *Datauna* (twig) because it pacifies accumulating *Kapha Dosha*.

Acharya Harita has specifically mentioned the use of *Arka*, *Nyagrodha*, *Khadira* and *Karanja Datauna* in *Hemanta Ritu*.^[11]

Pratisarna should also be performed with the same above mentioned *Churna*.

6. *Jihva-Nirlekhana* (To scrap/clean the tongue)

After *Danta-Dhawana* one should do *Jihva-Nirlekhana* with *Jihva-Nirlekhani*, which can be made up of metals like *Hema* (Gold), *Rajata* (Silver), *Tamra* (Copper). *Tamra* (Copper) is *Ushna* out of all other metals. Therefore, use of *Jihva-Nirlekhni* made of copper can be beneficial during *Hemanta Ritu*.

7. *Mukha-Netra Prakshalana* (To wash oral cavity and eyes)

After *Jihva-Nirlekhana* cleaning of face with and eyes with decoction of *Ksheeri Vriksha* with added milk, decoction of *Amlaki* or cold water should be done.

As it has been recommended earlier to use warm water during *Hemanta Ritu*, so instead of cold water, one should preferably use warm water and the decoctions used should also be warm.

8. *Anjana* (To apply collyrium)

A person should use *Anjana* daily for protection of eyes. *Ayurvedic* texts have mentioned to use *Souvranjana* & *Srotoanjana* on daily basis but availability of these two *Anjana* is not that easy. Therefore, home-made *Anjana* like black suite formed by burning of *Tila Taila* lamp can be advocated because it is time tested, safe for eyes and used by people since ages.

9. *Nasya* (Oleation of nose)

During *Hemanta Ritu*, *Pratimarsha Nasya* with *Anu Taila* should be done during *Madhyahna Kaala* (afternoon).^[12]

Pratimarsha Nasya of *Katu oil* (*Sarshapa* oil) has also been recommended for daily use.^[13]

Use of *Pratimarsha Nasya* is prescribed since birth till death. Dose of *Pratimarsha Nasya* is two *Bindu* in each nostril. *Bindu* is defined as the total quantity of collected *Taila* that dribbles down when the first two digits of index finger (proximal and middle phalanges) are dipped into it for *Utklesha* of *Dosha* i.e., *Vata* and *Kapha*.^[14]

10. *Kavala & Gandusha* (To swish & rinse *Dravya* in oral cavity):

During *Hemanta Ritu*, after *Nasya* one should do *Kavala* and *Gandusha* with luke warm water.

11. *Dhoompana* (To inhale medicated smoke):

One should do *Prayogika Dhoompana* after *Kavala-Gandusha* to pacify *Utkleshita Vata* and *Kapha* due to these procedures. One should inhale from nose and exhale from mouth. *Dhoompana* should not be used below 18 years of age.

12. *Abhyanga* (To massage the body)

During *Hemanta Ritu*, oils which are *Ushna* in nature i.e. made with *Ushna Dravya* should be used. e.g. *Tila Tail*, *Aguru Tail* etc.

13. *Vyayama* (Exercise)

One should practise *Vyayama* (exercise) in *Hemanta Ritu*.^[14]

14. *Udvartana* (To rub body parts with *Dravya*)

During *Hemanta Ritu*, *Snigdha Udvartana* should be done with *Ushna Veerya Dravya* like *Aguru* powder & *Haldi* or *Tulsi* or *Manjishtha* powder etc. mixed with oil.

15. *Kshoura Karma* (To cut hair, nails etc.)

Kshoura Karma means cutting of nails, hair, beard and moustaches. It should be done in every five days to maintain personal hygiene.^[15]

16. *Snaana* (Bath)

In *Hemanta Ritu*, one should use warm water for *Snaana* (bath).^[16]

A person should bathe the body below head region with warm water. If a person washes his/her head region with warm water it can affect the strength of hair as well as eyes.^[17]

But as the temperature is low in *Hemanta Ritu*, so a person should bathe his/her head region with the water which is at a temperature equivalent to one's own body temperature.

17. *Aahara* (Diet)

During *Hemanta Ritu*, one should consume *Anna-Paana* (food & drinks) predominant in *Madhura*, *Ushna*, *Snigdha* and *Guru* properties.

Madhura

One should consume *Madhura Rasa* predominant *Aahara* during *Hemanta Ritu* as this *Rasa* is the most *Guru* among all other *Rasa*.^[18] It helps in pacifying the naturally increased *Agni* during *Hemanta Ritu*.

Dravya which have *Madhura Vipaka* should also be preferred during *Hemanta Ritu* like milk and milk products, *Ghrita*, *Tila*, *Ikshu* and *Ikshu Vikara*, *Shaali Dhanya* etc.

Ushna

One should use *Ushna Veerya Dravya* which will help to pacify the accumulating *Kapha* and *Vata* during *Hemanta Ritu*.

Snigdha

One should consume *Snigdha Dravya* like *Ghrita*, *Taila*, *Dugdha*, *Tila*, *Urada*, *Dadhi*, *Ikshu* & *Ikshu Vikriti*, *Anoopa Mansa* because these articles take longer time to digest than normal which helps in pacifying the *Vridhdha Agni* prevailing in *Hemanta Ritu*. Consuming *Dravya*

which are *Snigdha Guna* predominant also helps to reduce roughness and harshness occurring due to cold in *Hemanta Ritu*.

Guru

One should consume *Guru Dravya* (heavy in nature). If *Aahara* is *Guru* in nature, and consumed in appropriate amount, it will take time to digest and pacify *Vridhdha Agni* e.g. use of *Ghrta* is recommended by *Acharya* during this *Ritu*. Dose of *Ghrta* affects *Jathragni*. If *Ghrta* is consumed in low amount, it enhances *Jathragni* and if it is consumed in maximum amount it vitiate *Jathragni*.

Method of preparation of various *Aahara Kalpana* can be changed to make it *Guru*.

Contraindicated Aahara:

One should avoid *Vata* increasing, *Laghu* (light food & drinks), *Pramitahra* (restricted diet) and *Sattu* mixed in water.^[19]

18. Chankramana (Slow walk)

Chankramana is usually advised after taking meals which is beneficial to health. In *Hemanta Ritu* one should avoid walking in places where cool wind is blowing.

19. Lepa (To apply paste of different Dravya on body)

In *Hemanta Ritu* paste (*Lepa*) of *Aguru*, *Kumkum*, *Kesara* should be applied on the body. These *Dravya* are *Ushna* and helps in alleviating *Vata* and *Kapha*.^[20]

20. Vastra Dharna (Clothing)

Light, warm clothes which are scented with *Dhoopa* are advised.^[21]

21. Pada Prakshalana (To wash the feet)

During *Hemanta Ritu*, one should use warm water for *Pada Prakshalana* (foot wash).

22. Paduka Dharana (Footwear):

It is specially recommended to wear footwear always during *Hemanta Ritu*.^[22]

Paduka (shoe) protects skin of foot from cold surface of earth during *Hemanta Ritu*.

23. Chhatra Dharana (To carry umbrella)

During *Hemanta Ritu* one can avoid using umbrella because *Aatapa Sevana* (Sun bathing) is indicated in this *Ritu*.

24. Danda Dharana (To carry a stick)

25. Jiwikoparjana Upaya (Measures adopted to earn living)

During *Hemanta Ritu*, one must shift their working hours so as to avoid extreme cold atmosphere.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As *Agni Bala* and *Sharirika Bala* are optimum in this *Ritu*, thus patient should stick to the above mentioned *Dincharya* procedures to keep all the three *Dosha* in equilibrium and protect oneself from *Ritu Janya Vikara*. As an attempt has been made to establish *Dincharya* to be followed in *Hemanta Ritu*, *Sandhyacharya* and *Ratricharya* can also be made and can be modified according to particular *Prakriti* of a person and climatology pertaining in a particular area. During the ending of *Hemanta Ritu* and commencement of *Shishira Ritu*, commonly known as *Ritu Sandhi*, one should gradually start following *Dincharya* practices of *Shishira Ritu* and in a similar way one should gradually revert from *Dincharya* practices of *Hemanta Ritu*.

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