

## A LITERARY ANALYSIS ON THE CONCEPT OF SHAREERACHINTHA

Rekha B. V<sup>1</sup>, Sufal Pious<sup>2</sup>, Venkatakrishna K.V<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>MD (Ayu) PhD, PGDND Professor and Guide, <sup>2</sup>PG scholar, <sup>3</sup>Head of the department, Department of Swasthavritta, Government Ayurveda Medical College, Mysuru, Karnataka, India

Corresponding Author: [s3pious@gmail.com](mailto:s3pious@gmail.com)

<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj.1409012021>

(Published online: January 2021)

### Open Access

© International Ayurvedic Medical Journal, India 2021

Article Received: 06/11/2020 - Peer Reviewed: 14/11/2020 - Accepted for Publication: 18/11/2020



## ABSTRACT

Ayurveda states man as an epitome of universe. It is considered as a holistic medical branch. Health promotion in Ayurveda is achieved by *Dinacharya*, *Nishacharya* and *Rtucharya*. Amongst *Dinacharya*, *ShareeraChintha* is a unique and rarely discussed concept. *Shareerachintha* is mentioned foremost after getting up early in *Brahmamuhurta*. Instead of concealing the concept of *Shareerachintha* as a physiological aspect of metabolism it can also be analyzed in the purview of social, behavioral and mental dimensions. *Shareerachintha* is the evaluation and assessment of oneself, his body and mind with respect to *Desa* (place) and *kala* (time). The present situation of pandemics, busy schedule and fast-moving life has undoubtedly made man the victim of somatic and mental illness. The concept of *Shareerachintha* holds prime importance in this aspect. The study tries to analyze the concept of *Shareeachintha*

**Keywords:** *Shareerachintha*, *Dinacharya*, *Rtucharya*, *JeernaJeerna Niroopana*

## INTRODUCTION

As postulated by *Charaka* in *Sosha Nidana*, leaving everything else one should maintain the body for if there is no body there is nothing that can be made available to the individual. So, a wise person should

perform various activities with due regard to his own strength. The body is sustained by the vital strength (*Bala*) and individual by the body<sup>1</sup>. Health promotion in Ayurveda is attained by *Dinacharya*, *Nisacharya*,

and *Rtucharya*<sup>2</sup>. WHO defines Health as a state of complete physical, mental, social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity<sup>3</sup>. Amongst *Dinacharya*, *Shareerachintha* is mentioned foremost after getting up in *Brahmamuhurta*. Instead of concealing the concept of *Shareerachintha* as a physiological aspect of metabolism it can be divulged in the purview of mental, social, behavioral aspects of human nature.

### Aim and Objectives

Reviewing the information regarding the concept of *Shareerachintha* in relation with *Agni*, *Rtu*, *Vega* and *Sadvrutta*

### Materials & Methods

This study is carried out by literature search and critical review of the obtained facts. The various medical research data basis like PubMed, Google scholar and other national research data basis. Manual search was made by going through the reference list of retrieved articles to identify relevant additional study.

## Review of Literature

### Definition

As per *Sarvanga Sundari*, commentary on *Ashtanga Hrudya Shareerachintha* is defined as *Jeernajeerna Niroopana*<sup>4</sup> that is evaluating the state of the food which has been consumed in the previous night, whether it is digested or undigested and to implement further actions so as to satisfy the physiological needs of the body and to assess the metabolic activity.

**Shareera:** *Sheeryathe anena iti shaeram*, that which constantly undergoes destruction

**Chintha:** *Nama alochana, kalpana*, Critical analysis, creative imagination

*Indu*, the commentator of *Ashtanga Sangraha* mentions, after getting up in *Bhramamuhurta* a person should himself fulfill *Jeernajeerna niroopana* that if one finds that the food consumed in the previous night has not fully digested he may sleep for some more time but not beyond sunrise on any other day<sup>5</sup>.

**Table 1:** *Jeernahara Lakshana*<sup>6</sup>

<i>Prasrushta Vit Mutra</i>	When faeces and urine is excreted
<i>Hridi Suvimalo,</i>	Mind becomes clear
<i>Vishudha cha Udgararam</i>	Belching becomes clear
<i>Kshut Pakamane</i>	Hunger arises
<i>Vatanusarana</i>	<i>Vata</i> functions properly in <i>anuloma gati</i> /downward movement
<i>Agnivridhi</i>	Digestive power/fire ignites/increases
<i>Vishudha karane</i>	Sense organs capable of perceiving the Senses
<i>Deha laghutwam</i>	Body becomes light
<i>Dosha swapathago</i>	All <i>Tridoshas</i> functioning properly
<i>Sroto vishudhi</i>	when the metabolic pathway becomes clear

**Matrvat Ahara**<sup>6</sup>: One should take the right quantity of food always. The quantum of food for each person depends upon the *Agni* and this right quantity helps

further in the maintenance of the digestive fire. As per *Acharya Charaka*, *Matrvat Ahara* is that one which satisfies the below mentioned criteria's<sup>7</sup> (table no.2).

**Table 2**

<i>Aharasya anpayi parinamam</i>	Digests without any complications
<i>Kukshi parswa apeedanam</i>	Not causing discomfort to the abdomen
<i>Hrudaya abadhe jatarasya na gouravam</i>	Not causing heaviness to chest and abdomen
<i>Chakshuradeenam preenanam</i>	Nourishing the sense organs
<i>Kshut pipasa samanam</i>	Satisfying thirst and hunger
<i>Diva nisi cha sukhenam parinamam</i>	Digests normally within the next morning

*Vagbhatacharya* mention's that half of the stomach should be filled with food, and 1/4<sup>th</sup> with water and the rest to be kept empty for free movement of *doshas*<sup>6</sup>.

**Table 3: Ajeerna Lakshana<sup>6</sup>**

<i>Vibandho atipravathirva</i>	<i>Constipation or diarrhea</i>
<i>Glani</i>	<i>Weakness/malaise</i>
<i>Marutha moodatha</i>	<i>Metabolic stagnation</i>
<i>Vishtabdam</i>	<i>Abdominal distention with constipation</i>
<i>Gouravam</i>	<i>Heaviness</i>
<i>Bhramam</i>	<i>Giddiness</i>

### Overnight Fasting and Late Nighttime Eating

It is well known that in humans, even a single fasting interval (overnight fasting) can reduce basal concentrations of metabolic biomarkers associated with chronic diseases. Studies in rodents and nocturnal mammals support the hypothesis that intermittent fasting and restricting the availability of chow to normal nighttime feeding cycle improves metabolic profiles and reduces the risk of obesity, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, diabetes and cancer. In healthy, normal weight or obese adults there is little evidence that intermittent fasting regimes are harmful physically or mentally. When food is consumed late night typically outside the circadian cycle the body more likely store calories and fat rather than burning it as energy which can raise the risk of chronic disease<sup>8</sup>.

Late night eating could lead to circadian misalignment, reduced energy expenditure, increased appetite, and weight gain. In addition, the disruption of circadian cycle has been associated with altered metabolism resulting in negative health outcomes. Greater energy intake in the late evening has been associated with higher risk of obesity. The nighttime eating behaviors as well as skipping breakfast were independently associated with higher prevalence of overweight<sup>9</sup>. It is crucial that the Gastro-intestinal tract needs specific time for complete digestion and assimilation of food. Ayurveda mentions that if the food consumed overnight has not digested properly, time has to be spared for completing the digestive process. The western concept of "breakfast at time" has to be critically analyzed by this point of view. Ayurveda put forwards the idea of *Adhyashana* as an unwholesome practice.

**Table 4: Unhealthy Food Habits<sup>6</sup>**

<i>Samasana</i>	Mixing wholesome and unwholesome food in diet
<i>Adhyasanam</i>	Eating before the previous meal remaining undigested
<i>Vishamasanam</i>	Untimely/irregularity in food consumption

These unhealthy food habits cause *Ajeerna* further leading to *Ama* and should be avoided as they generate multiple diseases in the body as well as mind. In all types of *Ajeerna* sleep during daytime without intake of food is recommended. So, from all the prevailing ideas it is understood that a person after *Jeerna* should analyze the metabolic activity of his system and should restrict himself from food consumption and certain activities mentioned in the *Dinacharya*.

### *Dinacharyas* Contraindicated in *Ajeerna*<sup>4</sup>

*Danthadhavanam; Abhyangam; Vyayamam; Snamam; Navanam; Anjanam*

### *Agni and Dinacharya*

*Ayurveda* teaches that *Jataragni* as the basis of the human survival. It is responsible for all the physiological activities in the human body. Acharya *Susrutha* defines *Swastha purusha* is a state of equilibrium/normalcy of *Tridoshas, Jataragni, Dathu, Mala, sense organs and the mind*<sup>10</sup>. The critical analysis of *Dinacharya* throws light to the fact that they are spe-

cifically mentioned for supporting the biorhythm of human body especially the *Agni*. *Jataragni* is substratum for all the metabolic activities in the body. As mentioned in *Ashtanga Hrudaya Dosadivijnaniya*, the *Dhathavagni* is directly in relation with *Jatarani* (or is part and parcel of the latter itself). *Ajeerna* is a state of metabolic stagnation. *Jataragni* is in *Maandhyavastha*, it should first digest the undigested/*Ama* in the *Koshta* and kindled by *Langhana/Upavasa*. *Dinacharyas* like *Abhyanga*, *Snana*, *Vyayama* are directly focused on *Bahya srotas* or *Bahya roga marga* will stimulate the *Dhathavagni* and disrupting the inefficient *Jataragni*. The *Dosha Gathi*

(from *Shaka* to *Koshta*) has to be examined in this point of view. Performing certain *Dinacharyas* leads to the navigation or dislodgement of *Ama Dosha/rasa* into the *Bahya Srotas/Dhathus*. Further leading to other metabolic disorders. Strict scrutiny of one's *Jataragni* is crucial for a person to perform the daily activities including *Dinacharyas* which is only possible through *Shareerachintha*.

#### 4.2. Shareerachintha with respect to *rtu*<sup>11</sup>

The human ecosystem is highly influenced by the seasonal variations/*Rtu Bheda*. The *Jaataragni* which is the root cause for all the metabolic activities alters as the season varies

**Table 5:** Shareera/Agni Bala In Different Rtu

<i>Shishira/Hemantha</i>	<i>Pravara</i> /intense
<i>Vasantha/Sarath</i>	<i>Madhyama</i> /moderate
<i>Varsha/Greeshma</i>	<i>Alpa</i> /mild

*Ayurveda* mentions that *Agni Bala* and *Shareera Bala* varies in different *Rtus*. For example, the digestive fire is less in *Greeshma / Varsha Rtu* and if we consume substantially it will further lead to *Agni Dusthi* and *Ajeerna*. So, in this particular *rtu* it is recommended to take *Samadhura Snigdha Laghu Ahara*. To prevent *Dhathu Soshana* and *Vata Prakopa Vyayama* is contraindicated and *Divaswapna* is advised in these *Rtus* to maintain health. As well as in *Hemantha/Sisra Rtu Agni Bala and Sareera Bala* is more, in the absence of adequate fuel, the strong digestive fire breaks down he

body tissue, so it is advised to consume *madhura amla lavana rasas* and heavy foods like *Navadhanya*. *Vyayama*, *udhvarthan* are specially mentioned here and *Divaswapna* is contraindicated.

**Kala Shodhana**<sup>12</sup>: *Ashtanga Hrudayakara* states one should be always vigilant to eliminate seasonally vitiated *Doshas* in time because if neglected they aggravate and take the life. *Dohsas* pacified with *Shamana chikitsa* may attain *Prakopa* stage later but if eliminated by appropriate *Shodhana* they will never recur again.

**Table 6:** Rtu Shodhana (Seasonal Eliminatory Procedures)

<i>Varsha (sravanam)</i>	<i>Vasthi</i>
<i>Sarath (karthikam)</i>	<i>Virechanam</i>
<i>Vasantha (chaithram)</i>	<i>Vamanam</i>

- **Varsha Rtu:** *Vata Prakopa*
- **Sarath Rtu:** *Pitta Prakopa*
- **Vasantha Rtu:** *Kapha Prakopa*

The seasonal changes in the eco system lead to physiological changes in the human body. As these variations can afflict the body in an adverse condition, specific purificatory procedures are mentioned in each season.

#### Influence of Seasons in Human Body<sup>13</sup>

Changing seasonal and environmental factors, such as temperature, sunlight, rain, wind and humidity has a direct link with increasing number of infectious diseases. The change of environmental factors influences the host susceptibility of infection, either as a result of seasonal change of host immune function or as a result of direct environmental effects. The mechanism of

seasonal influence on the host immune system varies, evident from the data of the experiments that have been performed on animals and human. For example, significant variation in total number of white blood cells, with peak occurring in winter and troughs in summer and seasonal variation in number of circulating T and B lymphocytes were observed. Whereas the CD8<sup>+</sup> percentage was higher during the rainy seasons than the dry seasons. The mechanism underlying the circannual change in immune function has been linked with adrenocortical hormone activity. Adrenocortical hormones vary on circannual basis with increased levels of secretion in winter and decrease in summer. Significant seasonal Vitamin D level variations were observed in several communities which reveal a variation of values of 25-(OH) D, increased during summer and spring while gradually decreasing in autumn and winter. Melatonin is a powerful natural hormone that is well known for its association with circadian and seasonal rhythm, and its synthesis is regulated by the environmental light/dark cycle. Melatonin participates in various functions of body, among which its immunomodulatory role has assumed considerable significance in recent years. Melatonin has been shown to be involved in the regulation of both cellular and humoral immunity.

#### **Shareerachintha in relation with socio-psychological aspects**

As per *Bhavaprakasa*<sup>2</sup>, Morning invocation and adoration of gods and guru brings prosperity to the people. As per *Ashtanga sangraha*<sup>14</sup>, *Prabhathē kara Darsanam* and *Ghritha eva Darpana Darsanam* is considered *Mangalakara*, *Lashmi prapthikara* it helps to come out from mental conflictions and promotes longevity (*Ayushpradam*). *Ashtanga hrudayakara* mentions *Dharma pradhanya*<sup>4</sup>, there is no comfort without dharma and hence everybody should be virtuous. good friends shall be honored, and others abhorred. Further explains, never adopt deeds that fall short of the *Trivarga: Dharma, Artha, and Kama*. Always follow the middle path in all your actives of body and mind (*Sarvadarmeshu Madhyamam*). Avoiding intellectual errors and having control over one's senses in cognizance and proper orientation with

*Desa, kala* and oneself helps in the prevention of both *Nija* and *Aganthu* variety of diseases<sup>12</sup>. While explaining the proper code of social communication (*Bhashanam*) Acharya explains, always talk to the relevant topics in a pleasing manner, to the point attractively without giving chances for raising expostulations. The talk should magnetize others. Share the enjoyments of life with others. Never trust anybody excessively or be too suspicious<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Sadvritta And Social Health<sup>15</sup>**

Social health often deals with how people relate to each other, and how an individual is able to socialize with other people and form relationship. Social health has become of increasing importance within the greater overall concept of human health and wellbeing. Ayurveda has explained social health under preventive, curative and promotive aspects. The psychic, emotional, social, and behavioral changes are also responsible for producing psycho somatic diseases. Ayurveda has explained codes of good conduct under *Sadvritta* which are related to social, emotional, psychological and ethical aspects of life. By following them individual is able to maintain physical, mental and social health and also able to socialize with the society positively. Emotional factors which are main root cause for many psychosomatic disorders can be cured by following the good conduct and restraining the urges which are to be restrained. by following regimen of good conduct, behavior, personal hygiene and coping up with seasonal changes can promote the health of an individual. All these measures are endowed with a view in ceasing the diseased person and promoting physical mental and social health.

#### **DISCUSSION**

*Ayurvedic* science follows the golden rule "*Swasthasya swasthya rakshanam Aturasya vikara prasamanam*". which means to maintain health of the healthy and cure to the diseased. *Dinacharya*, *Rtucharya*, and *Sadvritta* are exclusively mentioned for the balance of human ecosystem thereby improving the quality of life. *Shareerachintha* is *kalpana, alochana* of the human body which means it is a continuous process of understanding the biorhythm of

human nature both internal and external. As the scriptures wisely say, “man is the epitome of universe”, he is invariably in relation with it. All the states of universal matter (solid, liquid, gas, plasma) reside in human body.

**Relation of Shareerachintha with Agni:** Agni is the basis of human existence. Without the proper functioning of Agni, the human metabolism ceases. The prime importance of Shareerachintha is to analyze the metabolism of human body by Jeernajeerna Niroopana. It is a beautiful concept of a person having realization of his Agni /metabolic activity thereby indirectly having the mastery over his physiology. Ushmano Alpa Balatwa (impotent digestive fire) is the cause for Ama and it is the cause for all the psychosomatic illness in the human body. So, maintaining the normalcy of Agni is crucial. This awareness of his metabolic activity is highly in demand for leading a healthy life. Most of the lifestyle diseases are a product of unhealthy lifestyle. Metabolic and biochemical irregularities in the body are the byproduct of unwholesome lifestyle. The man in 21<sup>st</sup> century is a baggage of lifestyle disorders. Once the concept of Shareerachintha is adopted into the lifestyle he can avoid multitude of systemic illnesses. It helps the person to be in orientation with the circadian rhythm.

**Relation of Shareerachintha with Vegas:** Understanding the Shareerika vegas/natural urges is another dimension in Shareerachintha as Malotsarga is an important factor in organic life. Malotsarga is a result of metabolic activity. It is very important to know that there are still numerous people especially a group of working population who are unsatisfactory with their lavatory facility. Suppression and forceful excretion of natural urges are both equally hazardous. Ayurveda postulates “Roge Sarve Api Jayanthe Vego Dheerana Dharanath”. The natural urges shouldn't be alerted at will. One who has the reflexes should satisfy them prior to any other involvement. Studies show that voluntary retention of natural urges gives rise to neuro humoral changes, alteration in the vitals (Blood pressure, pulse rate, respiratory rate) as a result of stress induced during the suppression. There is an adverse

aggravation of persisting clinical features especially in cardiovascular, gastric, endocrinal conditions<sup>16</sup>.

**Relation of Shareerachintha with Rtu/kala:** Humoral changes also take place with the seasonal variations. Immunomodulatory, metabolic and biochemical activities are highly influenced by seasonal changes. Awareness of the Rtu/season with helps the person to manage the adverse conditions that can happen in the near future. There is change in both flora and fauna and the qualities of food we consume also varies with the season. Agni Bala and Shareera Bala should be always maintained for healthy living. Lifestyle modification with respect to Desa and kala is crucial, which we can attain by proper Shareerachintha.

**Relation of Shareerachintha with Sadvritta:** Man is a social animal. Emotional disorders which are caused by intellectual errors, interrupt the social conduct of a person leading to psychosomatic diseases. Man should learn to control the emotions which hampers the social harmony, and which causes mental illnesses. The rules of good conduct/Sadvritta are related to social, emotional, psychological and ethical dimensions of life. It should be followed in the aspects of personal, social, emotional, religious and occupational circumstances to maintain peace with oneself and the society.

## CONCLUSION

Healthy body is the union or equilibrium /hemostasis of Dosha, Dathu and Mala. Commencing from Jeernajeerna Niroopana, Shareerachintha should satisfy or should be practiced in the facets of physical, mental and social aspects. It is an important method for preventive health care/Swasthya Rakshana. It is stated that, one who always resorts to wholesome food and regimen, is objective, apathetic to sensual affairs, straight forward, honest, patient and who values traditional wisdom will never be afflicted with diseases<sup>12</sup>.

## REFERENCES

1. Acharya JT, editor. Charaka Samhitha with Ayurveda Deepika commentary (Sanskrit). Varanasi: Choukamba oreintalia; 2015. p. 220
2. Brahmasankara Misra, editor. Bhavaprakasa with Vidyotini commentary (Hindi). Varanasi: Choukamba Sanskrit Bhavan; 2018. p. 110

3. Vidya Ratan, Handbook of preventive and social medicine, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, New Delhi: Jaypee Brother's Medical Publishers(p) Ltd; 2010.p.1
4. Bhashagacharya Harisastri Paradakara Vaidya (ed) - *Ashtanga Hridayam*, Chaukamba Orientalia, Varanasi,10<sup>th</sup> edition,2017, *Sutra Sthana* Chap. 2
5. Mitra J, editor. Ashtanga Sangraha with sasilekha commentary (Sanskrit). Varanasi: Choukamba Sanskrit series Office;2006, *Sutra Sthana* Chap. 2
6. Bhashagacharya Harisastri Paradakara Vaidya (ed) - *Ashtanga Hridayam*, Chaukamba Orientalia, Varanasi,10<sup>th</sup> edition,2017, *Sutra Sthana* Chap. 8
7. Acharya JT, editor. Charaka Samhitha with Ayurveda Deepika commentary (Sanskrit). Varanasi: Choukamba oreintalia; 2015. p. 238
8. Patterson RE, Laughlin GA, LaCroix AZ, Hartman SJ, Natarajan L, Senger CM, Martínez ME, Villaseñor A, Sears DD, Marinac CR, Gallo LC. Intermittent fasting and human metabolic health. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. 2015 Aug 1;115(8):1203-12.
9. Kinsey AW, Ormsbee MJ. The health impact of nighttime eating: old and new perspectives. *Nutrients*. 2015 Apr;7(4):2648-62.
10. Acharya JT., editor. Susrutha Samhitha with nibandha-sangraha commentary (Sanskrit). Varanasi: Choukamba Sanskrit Sansthan; 2012, *Sutra Sthana* Chap.15
11. Bhashagacharya Harisastri Paradakara Vaidya (ed) - *Ashtanga Hridayam*, Chaukamba Orientalia, Varanasi,10<sup>th</sup> edition,2017, *Sutra Sthana* Chap. 3
12. Bhashagacharya Harisastri Paradakara Vaidya (ed) - *Ashtanga Hridayam*, Chaukamba Orientalia, Varanasi,10<sup>th</sup> edition, 2017, *Sutra Sthana* Chap. 4
13. Fares A. Factors influencing the seasonal patterns of infectious diseases. *International journal of preventive medicine*. 2013 Feb;4(2):128.
14. Mitra J, editor. Ashtanga Sangraha with sasilekha commentary (Sanskrit). Varanasi: Choukamba Sanskrit series Office;2006, *Sutra Sthana* Chap. 3
15. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7897/2321-6328.02124>
16. NCBI.[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22556468](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22556468)

**Source of Support: Nil**

**Conflict of Interest: None Declared**

How to cite this URL: Sufal Pious et al: A Literary Analysis on The Concept of Shareerachintha. *International Ayurvedic Medical Journal* {online} 2021 {cited January, 2021} Available from: [http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/109\\_115.pdf](http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/109_115.pdf)