



RITUCHARYA APPROACH TO LIFESTYLE DISORDER

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ABSTRACT

Ritu, the season, is categorized by several characteristics that exhibit various influences on the body and the surroundings. *Ayurveda* has outlined a number of guidelines and routines (*Charya*) on diet and behavior to help people adapt to seasonal changes without disrupting their body's balance. The primary goal of the *Ayurvedic* medical system is prevention, which may be accomplished by altering one's food and lifestyle in reaction to climatic changes. According to writings from the *Ayurvedic* tradition, this is a crucial element of preventative treatment. The main cause of lifestyle problems in the modern period is a lack of adherence to seasonal routines brought on by a lack of focus on seasonal features. The foundation is a sound scientific analysis that is still relevant to date.

Keywords: Lifestyle disorders, seasonal regimens, seasonal variations in India

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, has traditionally placed more emphasis on maintaining health and preventing diseases via healthy nutrition and lifestyle choices than on treating and curing illnesses. The fundamental tenet of the *Ayurvedic* medical philosophy is *Swasthyashya Swasthya Rakshanam*, which

translates as "maintaining the health of the healthy" as opposed to "curing the illnesses of the afflicted" (*Aturrashya Vikara Prashamanancha*).¹ The *Ayurvedic* texts have made reference to the *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen) and *Dinacharya* (daily regimen) for this reason.²

The environment in which we live has undergone significant alteration as a result of the season. We see numerous changes in the bio-life around us, such as plants blooming in the spring and losing their leaves in the fall, many animals going into hibernation as winter approaches, and so on. As a member of the same ecosystem as humans, the external environment has a significant impact on the body. Many external and endogenous rhythms interact and synchronize with one another because they have a specific phase connection with one another. If the body is unable to adopt 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.³ The ability to adjust to changes is essential for life, making understanding *Ritucharya* (seasonal schedules) crucial. People's ignorance or disregard of the appropriate diet, clothing, and other regimens to follow during a specific season results in a breakdown of homeostasis and a variety of ailments, including obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, and others. Lifestyle disorders are brought on by improper interactions between individuals and their surroundings. These lifestyle illnesses have a sneaky onset, and slow progression, and are challenging to treat.⁴ Because of the rapidly changing illness profile, the situation in our nation is rather worrying. India is one of the countries the World Health Organization predicts to have the majority of lifestyle problems in the foreseeable future. These days, lifestyle problems are not only more prevalent but increasingly impact a younger demographic. The population at risk changes from 40 and older to maybe 30 and older or even younger. India is already regarded as having diabetes. lifestyle-related illness capital. According to a study done in collaboration between the Max Hospital and the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences, the prevalence of heart disease, obesity, and hypertension is rising alarmingly, especially among young, urban populations. The physicians believe that cases of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and other related conditions are caused by a sedentary lifestyle coupled with a rise in the use of fatty foods and alcohol. *Ritucharya* is prominently

discussed in the first few chapters of most of the *Samhitas* of *Ayurveda*. The primary goal of the holistic science of *Ayurveda* is illness prevention in order to sustain health. The *Charaka Samhita's Tasyashitya* chapter has the phrase "*Tasya Shitadiya Ahaarbalam Varnascha Vardhate.*" *Tasyartusatmayam Vaditam Chestaharvyapasrayam*, which translates to "the strength and complexion of the individual understanding the right food and regimen for every season, and exercising accordingly," are improved.⁵ Making people aware of how-to live-in harmony with the environment is the chapter's main focus. The *Ritucharya* stated in the traditional texts of *Ayurveda* has been reviewed in this article, with emphasis placed on the potential effects of *Ritucharya* on lifestyle illnesses.

CLASSIFICATION OF SEASON

According to *Ayurveda*, the year is split into two halves, *Ayana* (solstice) is divided into *Uttarayana* (northern solstice) and *Dakshinayana* according to the orientation of the sun (southern solstice). Everyone is made up of three *Ritus* (seasons). *Ritu* translates as "to go." It is the way that nature manifests itself in the present in a definite and ordered sequence—in other words, the seasons.⁶ Six seasons make up a year: in *Uttarayan*, *Shishira* (winter), *Vasanta* (spring), *Grishma* (summer), and in *Dakshinayana*, *Varsha* (monsoon), *Sharata* (autumn), and *Hemanta* (late autumn). *Ayurveda* originated in India, hence the aforementioned seasons Most changes are seen on the Indian subcontinent.

Utrayan Kaal (Northern Solstice):

The northern hemisphere is receiving direct sunlight at this time of year. Summers are experienced by the nations above the equator. It is the stage that leads up to the summer season in the Indian context, which lasts from January to June. This phase is also referred to as Aadan kaal and is agneya, or very hot. This phase is exposed to the sun's ferocious beams and heat. The sun's rays have the ability to dry out the air, heat it, and remove all of the air's existing coolness. Due to this quality of air, all of the moisture in the air dries out and the air becomes rough. This results in the development of the *Ruksh* (dry) and filled with

Katu (pungent), *Ticket* (bitter), and *Kashaya* (astringent) *rasa* in all creatures and plants (taste). These elements weaken a person's strength. Additionally, the environment surrounding him has a role in this. These elements have an impact on his diet as well. You may have seen that individuals lose weight and get easily exhausted during the summer. Additionally, their energy levels drop as their stamina wanes. *Shishir*, *Basant*, and *Hemant* are the three *Ritus* (seasons) identified by *Ayurveda*.⁷

Dakshaiyan Kaal (Southern Solstice):

This phase has significant heating effects on the southern hemisphere since the sun's rays are falling straight on that hemisphere, whereas the sun's rays are falling slantingly on the northern hemisphere. Between July and December is when this period occurs. The sun's rays are falling slanting as the northern hemisphere moves closer to winter. The flora is also juicy and pulpy during this period, and the air has a significant amount of moisture. This stage shows how the body is growing. There is a considerable lot of development throughout this phase. A person has great energy levels and excellent stamina. *Visarg kaal* is another name for this stage. because the *rasas* that are sweet, sour, and salty (*Madhur*, *Amal*) have increased. Good nutrition is given to the body, which is crucial for healthy growth. The body's strength is also increasing throughout this time. Both the environment and the body lose their dryness. According to *Ayurveda*, it included three *ritus*, these are *Varsha*, *Sharad*, and *Hemant*.⁸

Hemant Ritu and Shishir Ritu:

It is referred to be the season that precedes winter. The months of the Indian calendar are *Magha*, *Phagun*, *Chaitra*, and *Vaishakh*. According to *Ayurveda*, the atmosphere is particularly dusty during this time of year. Fog makes it harder to see. There is a chilling air blowing from the north. Rivers begin to freeze due to the cold, which lowers the water level. Reptiles and birds begin to hibernate. Seasonal plants like *Lavly* (*cicca acidc Merrih*), *Lodhra* (*Symplocos racemosa*), and (*Priyangu*) *callicarpa macrophylla* begin to bloom. According to the current calendar, it occurs in the months of *Hemant Ritu* in November

and December and *Shishir Ritu* in January and February.

Effect of Hemant Ritu and Shishir Ritu on Body:

Appetite grows when the digestive fire, or *jatharagni*, is stoked. This ability allows the body to assimilate *Guru Aahar* readily (heavy food). The body increases because of an increased hunger because this is the *Dakshaiyan* phase. When a heavy meal is not taken properly, the body's high metabolism begins to deplete the body's *Dhatus*, which causes weakness.

Grishma (summer):

About mid-May to mid-July is regarded as the *Grishma* (summer) season. There is a lot of hazardous wind and extreme heat. The riverbeds have dried up, and the vegetation appears to be dead. Agni and Vayu make up the Mahabhuta, and the main Rasa is the pungent *Katu*. During this season, the vitiated *Kapha Dosh*a is calmed while the person's vigour decreases and *Vata Dosh*a deposits. The person's agni will continue to be in a modest stage.

Lifestyle

Being in a cool environment, using sandalwood and other scented pastes on the body, wearing light clothing, accessorising with flowers, and napping during the day are all beneficial. One may enjoy the breeze-cooled moonlight at night. Avoid excessive physical exertion or labour; abstain from excessive sexual indulgence and alcoholic beverages.

Varsha (monsoon):

Approximately from mid-July to mid-September is known as *Varsha Ritu*. The sky is cloudy during this time of year, and rain falls without thunderstorms. There is water in the ponds, rivers, etc. *Amla* (sour), *Prithvi*, and *Agni* are this season's predominant *Rasa* and *Mahabhuta*, respectively. The vitiation of *Vata Dosh*a, the deposition of *Pitta Dosh*a, and the vitiation of *Agni* all result in the person's power decreasing once again.

Lifestyle

It is advisable to take a bath in heated water and to properly spread oil all over your body thereafter. In order to remove vitiated Doshas, medicated

Basti (enema) is advised. It is forbidden to get wet in the rain, day sleep, exercise, work hard, engage in sex, be in the wind, sit by the river, etc.

Sharat (autumn):

Sharat Ritu is the period between mid-September to mid-November (autumn). The Sun gets brighter during this period, the sky is clear and occasionally covered in white clouds, and the soil is covered in moist muck. The prominent *Mahabhutas* are *Apa* and *Agni*, while the dominating *Rasa* is *Lavana* (salty). The person's strength is still at a medium level, vitiated *Vata* and *Pitta doshas* are pacified, and *Agni* activity rises throughout this season.

Lifestyle

It is advised to develop the habit of just eating when you are truly hungry. For drinking, bathing, and other purposes, one should use water that has been cleaned by the sun's rays during the day and the moon's rays at night. Wearing flower garlands and applying *Chandana* paste (*Santalum album*) on the body is encouraged. It is believed that the first three hours of the night, when the moon is shining, are healthy. This is the time of year to do medical operations like *virechana* (purging), *rakta-mokshana* (bloodletting), etc.

Hemanta (late autumn):

Hemanta (late autumn) *Ritu* is seen as lasting from mid-November until mid-January. A coldness begins to blow and is felt. *Madhura* is the main *Rasa* while *Prithivi* and *Apa* are the prominent *Mahabhutas* during this season. A person's power stays at its peak, while their vitiated *Pitta Dosha* is subdued. The activity of *Agni* is increased.

Lifestyle

It is advised to exercise, massage your body and head, use warm water, take sunbath, apply *agaru* to your body, wear heavy clothing, participate in monogamous sex, and live in a warm environment. Avoidance advice includes things like habitual daytime sleeping and exposure to chilly winds.⁹⁻¹⁴

Ritu Viparyaya (Perverted Season):

Ritu Viparyaya is the term for unnatural and unexpected seasonal symptoms, also known as different symptoms throughout a season. For in-

stance, we anticipate clear skies, a hot climate, and sharp sunrays in the months of May and June (Grisham Ritu), but instead experience hot weather in January and February (Shishir Ritu). However, if that month is overcast and rainy, it is said to be a perverse season.

One of the reasons why the body's doshas become unbalanced and create sickness is Ritu Viparyaya. Environmental changes also significantly harm human resources, such as agriculture, and eventually contribute to the disruption of human body physiology.

Ritu Satmyam:

Man is the pinnacle of the cosmos. Human beings are always impacted by environmental changes. But there are other ways in which man adapts to seasonal variations. As an illustration, fewer people perspire excessively during the heat than other people, such as *Pitta Prakruti*. Therefore, it is critical to comprehend a person's *Prakruti* and how it affects his health.

DISCUSSION

This is the way the ancient sages set up the regimen for various seasons on analytical reasoning to obtain *Swastha* (health) and prevent diseases. The characteristics of the land, the water, and different atmospheric phenomena, such as temperature, humidity, wind, rain, clouds, and air pressure, are considered environmental elements. No two moments are precisely comparable in a given location since all these environmental elements are always changing. As a result, as the Sun rises, the temperature continues to rise and eventually declines at night. Although the maximum and minimum temperatures vary every day, summer and winter are the warmest and lowest times respectively. All of these components exhibit seasonal and diurnal change, and these variations for a certain period of time are referred to as seasons.¹⁵

According to a study by *Jangid et al.* on the concept of *Ritus* and their impact on *Bala*, *Hemanta Ritu* had the greatest overall impact on the *Bala* of healthy volunteers, *Vasanta Ritu* had a moderate impact, and *Varsha Ritu* had the least significant impact. The study came to the conclusion that *Hemanta* is the *Ritu* of *Pravara Bala*, *Vasanta* is the *Ritu* of *Madhyama*

Bala, and Varsha is the Ritu. The study's findings provide credibility to Ayurvedic concepts.

It should be noted that Roga develops from an imbalance of the three doshas—Vatu, Pitta, and Kapha (disease). The science of Ayurveda has as its goal of maintaining equilibrium. Dietary and lifestyle changes result in changes in the condition of Tridosha, which inevitably affects us and results in discord and lifestyle illnesses. Ritu contributes to the progression and appearance of sickness by acting as Vyanjaka or Nimittakarana. For instance, a late (afternoon) headache is mostly a Vata condition. Vata-related illnesses have a propensity to get worse during the rainy season.¹⁶

CONCLUSION

The season has a significant impact on bodily humors, resulting in aggravation, accumulation, and pacification in the distinct seasons. As a result, sensible men should follow a rigid seasonal routine in order to recover complete and sound health. To remove undesirable pollutants, different purifying methods are suggested in the respective seasons. Ayurveda strongly believes in following a daily regimen, seasonal regimen, and so on in order to live a healthy life.

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