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Review Article

GREESHMA RITU AND RITUCHARYA: A LITERARY REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda has been developed on the firm grounds of maintaining the health of the healthy and treating the diseases of the diseased. The aim of Ayurveda is to preserve the health of the individuals by averting causes at their primitive stage. The preventive branch of Ayurveda may be traced to the following headings. Dinacharya- the daily regimen; Ritucharya-the seasonal regimen; Sadvritta-proper codes and conducts of living; Trayopasthambha- Ahara, Nidra, Brahmacharya; Rasayana-Rejuvenation through Ahara Rasayana and Achara Rasayana; Vajeekarana-Virility and improving the health of the progeny. Ritucharya holds great significance in Ayurveda. A good seasonal routine helps in achieving a balance of the Doshas. Following a seasonal routine is intended to nullify the influence of changing climatic conditions on the body. Ritucharya has developed as a cost-effective intervention for all seasonal based ailments. Various possibilities like sunstroke in summer can be controlled by following Ritucharya. India is a tropical country and reports the highest casualties in summer. Simple changes in routine as advised in Ritucharya Adhyaya can avert this menace. Shashanka Kirana Bhakshya is one among the interventions of Greeshma Ritu as Daha Prashamaka and Ruchya. It is relevant to review the description available in the Ayurvedic textbooks in relation to Ritu and Ritucharya. One should follow a dietic regimen and activities as ascribed in Ayurveda in respective seasons to maintain normal health. The present article throws some glimpses at Greeshma Ritu and Greeshma Ritucharya.

Keywords: Greeshma Ritu, Greeshma Ritucharya, Shashanka Kirana Bhakshya.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the science of life is the most ancient system of medicine. It deals with all aspects of life in relation to health-prevention of disease and treatment. It is a promotive, preventive, and curative aspect of medicine. Man is a part of this universe and depends on nature for his need. The ultimate aim of person's life is the attainment of Purushartha Chatushtaya i.e., Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha and the person can achieve these only when he is healthy¹

As per Ayurveda – Equilibrium of Dosha Dhathu, Mala, Agni, Prasanna Atma, Indriya and Mana is said to be Health.² Ayurveda is a holistic approach, that deals with the prevention of diseases by following proper codes and conducts like Dinacharya, Rathricharya, Ritucharya etc. Ritucharya has great significance in Ayurveda. A good seasonal routine helps in achieving the balance of the three Doshas ³. Following seasonal routine is intended to nullify the influence of climatic changes on the body. In Greeshma Ritu, the environment is prevalent with intense heat⁴ resulting in Kshaya of Kapha day by day and Vriddhi of Vayu occurs. The strength of the individual reduces⁵, develops Klama (tiredness) Daha⁶ (burning sensation) and Aruchi (loss of taste) as the main features of climatic effects on the human body. Ritucharya is the cost-effective solution for all the season related problems. In fact, Greeshma Ritucharya has many inexpensive measures to counter the seasonal manifestation like sunstroke etc. To prevent the effects of Greeshma Ritu, different regimens have been explained like Saktu kalpana (semi-solid form of a powdered drug) Paneeya (juice) etc ⁷. To prevent Daha and

Aruchi in Greeshma Ritu, Shashanka Kirana Bhakshya is advised.⁸ Thaleesa pathra churna, Karpoora along with Sithopala and Mahisha Ksheera as Anupana (beverage) is good for relieving Daha and Aruchi of Greeshma Ritu.

The word Ritu is derived from its Sanskrit root- Ri which means "to go". Ritu means Kaala Visheshha i.e, suitable time. Charya means Acharana i.e, "Regimen to be followed"⁹

Classification of season-The year is divided into two Ayana according to Ayurveda, depending on the movement of the earth around the sun, namely Uttarayana and Dakshinayana. Each Ayana is formed by three Ritus. Uttarayana is also called as Adanakala, which consists of three Ritus ie Shishira, Vasanta, Greeshma. In this season sun and wind become very strong and dry, due to this it will take away the Soumya Guna of earth¹⁰ and strength of the person is also becoming significantly less. Dakshinayana is also called as Visarga Kala, and it consists of Varsha, Sharad and Hemanta Ritu. In this Kaala, the moon is more powerful than the sun. In Dakshinayana, strength of the person gradually becomes more.

Greeshma Ritu

Ritu Lakshana-Greeshma Ritu is the last Ritu in Adana Kala. In this Ritu, sun rays become more powerful, and the wind becomes very dry. Sun appears like Atasi Pushpa (red) and dries up the water reservoir. Trees shed their leaves and there is no greenery around. All living creatures will search for water bodies to quench their thirst.

Shareera Lakshana—Because of excess heat from the sun, it will dry up the moisture present in the environment. It dries up the Jaleeyamsha from the body which leads to depletion of Kapha and increase of Vata in the body. As Shleshma is considered as Bala¹¹, lack of Kapha leads to decrease in Deha Bala. Agni of the person will remain in mild state.

Greeshma Ritucharya –

Hitakara Ahara¹²

- 1) Madhura, Laghu, Snigdha, Sheeta and Drava substances should be added to food habits. Sharkara mishtrita Saktu should be taken in Leha form. Shali (rice) which is white as Kumuda (*Jasminum multiflorum*) and Indu (moon) should be taken along with Jangala Mamsa Rasa.
- 2) Drink Rasa (meat soup) which is not much thick.
- 3) Rasala (churned spicy curd).
- 4) Raga-soft drink prepared with Dravyas of Madhura (sweet) Amla (sour) and Lavana (salt) Rasas.
- 5) Kandava (soft drink prepared with Dravyas of Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu and Kashaya Rasas),
- 6) Panchasara or Panaka (soft drink prepared with Madhu Kharjura, Mrdvika, Parushaka and Sita) prepared with thin slice of Mocha (Banana) Chocha (Jack fruit which is stored in new clay pot till turned to a little sour and served in an earthenware shell like spoon.)
- 7) Drink cold water flavored with Patala flower and mixed with Karpura.
- 8) Person who is regularly taking Sheeta Sasharkara Mantha and Jangala Mriga Pakshi Mamsa, Ghrita Paya Sashalyanna-will not suffer during summer.
- 9) Take **Shashanka Kirana Bhakshya** (powder of Talisa Patra mixed with Karpura and Sita) at nighttime along Mahisha Kshira (buffalo milk) which attains Swanga Sheetala by keeping it under moon and the stars during summer.

Ahitakara ahara¹³

Madya should be taken in little quantity or with plenty of water or should be avoided.
Lavanaamla Katoosha Ahara should be avoided.

Hitakara Vihara¹⁴

- 1) Day time should be spent in the park or forest where the tall trees like Sala (pines), Tala (palm) embracing the sky that will prevent the hot rays of sun or around which bunch of flowers and grape wines are surrounded.
- 2) Staying inside the house which is made up of Venu (bamboo), Curtains made up of clothes wetted by scented cool water.
- 3) Mango trees bearing Fruits and tender Leaves all around, in such places set up a soft bed for sleeping in the noon hours with petals of flowers like Kadali, Kalhara, Mrunala, Kamala, Nila Kamala or sleep in the house cooled by nearby water fountain.
- 4) One should sit on the top of the house with whitewashed walls which makes night pleasant by soothing rays of Moon and Stars.
- 5) Apply paste of Chandana on body, wear Garland made up of Pearls, light, and thin clothes, fanning the body with fans made up of wet leaves of Tala or large Leaves of Padmini, or also with Peacock feathers which are said to be Shramaghna.
- 6) Spending time in a place where children are prattling with joyful accents, prattling of colourful birds like Shuka (Parrot) etc.

Ahitakara Vihara¹⁵ Avoid exercise, sexual intercourse and exposure to sun.

DISCUSSION

Even though Ayurveda explains the consumption of Shadrasayukta (all the 6 Rasa) Ahara, but according to Ritu, we have to balance the intake of Rasa. And in Greeshma Ritu as

strength of the Shareera and strength of the Agni both are significantly less, one must use Yukthi to decide the type and Matra of Ahara. Ayurveda has given many such formulations which are to be taken as per the Ritu. One among them is Shashanka Kirana Bhakshya. Acharya Vagbhata has mentioned it under Ratricharya (to be taken at nighttime) in Greeshma Ritu. Talisa Patra Churna, Sitopala, Karpura and Mahisha Ksheera are the key ingredients of Shashanka Kirana Bhakshya. It acts as Ruchya as well as Daha Prashamaka.¹⁶ In Astanga Hridaya in Rajayakshma Chikithsitam Adhyaya, in the context of Arochaka Chikitsa, this Yoga has been mentioned.¹⁷

CONCLUSION

Ritucharya is an untapped tool of Ayurveda, developed to counteract seasonal variations. Greeshma Ritu, by its Ruksha Ushna Guna, imparts Balahani, Klama, Daha and Aruchi Lakshanas in healthy individuals. Simple interventions like Shashanka Kirana Bhakshya are more applicable practical remedy to address Daha and Aruchi in Greeshma Ritu.

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