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AYURVEDA-THE HEALTHY WAY OF LIVING

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda emphasizes on prevention of disease rather than cure of disease. For this 'swasthavritta' is given the prime importance in Ayurvedic treatment. Ayurveda believe that by following swasthavritta any person can maintain the healthy status and prevent the disease. Under the broad concept of swasthavritta 'dinacharya (daily regimen) is important one. In dinacharya starting from early wakeup to the sleep the ideal schedule to maintain the health is explained. Individual healthcare is given due emphasis by laying down rules- do's and don'ts regarding dinacharya (daily routine) right from rising from the bed in the morning up to falling in sleep at night in order to maintain balance of the dosha and dhatu in our body. As health in Ayurveda is defined as the state of dhatusamyam (balanced condition of body elements) resulting in sukha (ease) and prasannatma (sense of wellbeing). This goal of healthy state is achieved by maintaining equilibrium state of dosha dhatu and mala for which dinacharya is the way.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's life, the body is constantly being worn out & liable to be thrown out of balance. It must be nourished & maintained by the right foods, truthful conduct & practice of hygiene that're conducive to health & longevity.

"In all of creation there are no better & more powerful medicines, tools or techniques than to tune in with the rhythm & laws of Divine & Almighty Nature."

Ayurveda emphasizes the importance to maintain health of the healthy & cure the disease of the ill. To maintain the health some activities are prescribed in Ayurved under the term Dinacharya (daily routine). Ayurveda recommends that in order to be optimally healthy we should tune our bodies to the nature's master cycle which in turn regulates various other rhythms. 'Aachar se aayu praapt hoti hai'-Here Aachar term doesn't directly refer to behaviour of person but it is to be interpreted in a broader sense as the lifestyle you lead, the daily routine one follows.

Aachar=Aahar+Vihar. Herein under Aahar we learn about the regulated intake of food substances according to their suitability with respect to their potency (veerya), active principle (rasa), constituent elements & the season. Vihar teaches us everything related with the daily regime we ought to follow, the do's & don't's.

"Sleep is that golden chain that ties health & our bodies together."

Wake up in the Brahmamuhurta should you want to live long. Brahmamuhurta or amritvela-the ambrosial hours-the period an hour and a half before sunrise. The 5 beauties of nature are-pure air, pure water, elemental earth, abundant sunlight & space-which are best available in their non-polluted forms at that hour of the day. This is the time when there is a preponderance of sattva in the air. During these hours the vata element is dominant. Waking up two hours before dawn you utilize the vata qualities in nature. Vata is light, subtle, clear & this helps in tuning the body to the delicate messages the nature sends.

Apart from the physical benefits derived from being awake in this time period, there also open up doors to one's self via spiritual realization obtained through meditation which is best suited to this time period. On the contrary, people not having this habit are likely to suffer from halitosis, constipation, indigestion, fatigue, & indolence.

"Natural forces within us are the true healers of disease"

As soon as possible empty your colon & bladder. This is a time when one shouldn't be in a rush, allowing the rhythms of one's body to carry out the natural functions. If you wait until later in the morning or during the day you're slowly poisoning yourself & creating an opportunity for chronic conditions to arise. Regular cleansing of mouth should be done with tender twigs of *babool*, Indian barbeech, catch tree & *neem*-as these trees contain such alkaline materials & oils which strengthen teeth, eradicate any oral diseases in their quiescent stage, kill germs & worms, prevent bleeding of gums.

An element named margocin of bitter taste is present in *neem* which alongwith sulphur found in oil content of *neem* acts as germicide. *Babool* is a source of tannin, Arabic acid, calcium & magnesium. Indian beech also known as *Karinj* contains an active element *karinjan* which kills worms. Following that we're supposed to scrape off the tongue clean as ayurveda considers the coating of tongue as an indicator of toxins in the colon. This step is significant in removing tastelessness feeling. Like any other instruction we've got do's & don'ts here too. The people who fall in the 'don'ts' category for brushing of teeth are the ones suffering from indigestion, vomiting, dyspnoea, cough, fever, facial paralysis, excessive thirst, ulceration of mouth, cardiac disorders, ophthalmological disease, disease of head & ears.

Cleaning your senses which actually play a role as vital as perception of your surroundings throughout the day is the motive of the next step-that is collyrium application. Preferably use rose water or water containing some amount of antimony oxide in it to improve vision. Once in a week we should wash our eyes with water containing extracts of the Indian barberry-this eliminates the impure/polluted lachrymal secretions still leftover inside. This is to be followed by nasal instillation of drops. For this purpose, milk, herbal decoctions, herbal oils are generally used. This is a caretaking step for the neck & pectoral region. It purifies sinuses. Also, gargling with warm water or herbal decoctions is done to improve voice. Dinacharya also recommends that you inhale the smoke of medicinal herbs to purify the mind, head, face, neck & lungs. Hereafter it has been advised to massage with warm sesame oil. The massage need not be long & cumbersome-principally massage the scalp, forehead, temples, hand & feet. This has multiple benefits-

- Wards off ageing
- Relieves tiredness
- Helps heal injuries if any
- Bequeaths good vision
- Nourishes tissues
- Increases tactile sensitivity
- Induces good sleep
- Improves skin tone & complexion

Treatment of a few drops of oil to the ear helps to treat lock jaw, torticollis, headache. Avoid massage in case you've recently undergone any of *Panchkarma* treatment processes or currently facing indigestion problems.

"Those who do not find time for exercise will have to find time for illness."

Exercise brings about lightness, it improves work capacity, strengthens digestive fire & body fitness. It mainly removes stagnation in body & mind and reduces fat. Although people taking oily foods shouldn't fail to exercise during December to May; A point to be noted here is not to make the exercise strenuous. In fact exercising upto one half of your capacity is recommended. Failing which, one may experience emaciation, severe dyspnoea, bleeding disorders, exhaustion, feeling of debility, cough, nausea. This also counts in indulging in long walks, long nights, & such strenuous activities.

"In every aspect of life, purity & holiness, cleanliness & refinement, exalt the human condition.....Even in the physical realm, cleanliness will conduce to spirituality."

- Bathing is purifying, aphrodisiac.
- Improves digestion
- Prolongs life
- Increases enthusiasm & strength

Helps get rid of dermal waste products, fatigue, excessive thirst, burning sensation & microbes. It also brings positive energy to the body, clarity to the mind, sacredness to your life. One should keep the feet & orifices (ears, nose, eyes, urethra & anus) clean of waste to promote intelligence, purity & longevity. Pouring warm water over the torso bestows strength, but the same over the head, makes for loss of strength of the hair & eyes. Bath is contra-indicated for those suffering from facial paralysis, diseases of the eyes, mouth & ears, diarrhoea, flatulence, rhinitis, indigestion & who've just taken food.

"He who takes medicine & neglects to diet wastes the skill of his doctors."

After bathing, with the stomach empty of leftover previously ingested food, one should take a nourishing, wholesome breakfast. Hereafter one can follow up with whatever chores he/she has to do until noon. Lunch should be taken early between 12 & 1PM as this coincides with the peak *Pitta* period, *Pitta* being responsible for digestion. Although one should stop activities of the body, speech & mind before getting exhausted-the sense organs should neither be strained very much nor fondled very much, yet- Sciasta: Anything more than a short nap should be avoided because sleeping in the day is prohibited in ayurveda. One should also keep in mind here not to invade holy places of worship, crossroads, abattoirs, burial grounds.

Other basic guidelines prescribed by dincharya are

Be self aware of your surroundings & adopt required safety measures to protect your body from rain, fire, whirlwind, wild animals (carry a baton if needed), scorching heat. Inculcate in yourself hygienic habits such as covering your mouth when sneezing/coughing, trimming your hair & nails regularly, not unnecessarily blowing your nose/belch, avoid smoke of

cadaver. Take care of your body posture whether you're sleeping, sitting, or walking, i.e.- don't bend knees for too long. Refrain from taking food from foes/sacrificial ceremonies, having food at dawn or dusk, avoid wine brewing/drinking.

The significance of above steps can be understood by the following statement

"To keep the body in good health is a duty, otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong & clear." -Buddha

For an intelligent person the world is a teacher, hence one should imitate the world after considering the meaning & effect of such actions.

Principally these sins should be avoided

Of body: Causing injury/torture, stealing, physical abuse

Of speech: Abusive/harsh speech, speaking untruth, antagonising speech, disrespectful speech.

Of mind: Cruelty, envy, jealousy, criticism, suspiciousness. All creatures are behind happiness. There's no happiness without righteousness. Man only ought to indulge in 3 pursuits- *Dharma* (righteousness), *Artha* (wealth), *Karma* (duty for pleasure). These are the true words of wisdom, better explained by this hidden message:

"Healthy self = Heal thy self."

Where 'self' refers to your soul, your character. Respect all animals in the same manner as any other human being. Be humble, compassionate, helpful & of good conduct in your own regard. At the same time be alert & sensible with respect to people & surroundings around you. Keeping in mind the nature of the people, one should deal with them in such a manner as be pleasant. Avoid speaking of insults/disaffection.

Kaé brūyat= Speak on right occasion Hitaṁ brūyat= Speak courteously Mitaṁ brūyat= Speak little as per necessity. He who unflinchingly observes the gradual developmental changes in oneself can transform his life into one devoid of sorrow. Thus was enumerated, in brief, the rules of good conduct. He who religiously follows it shall attain a healthy, wealthy & long life and also the eternal world.

Time Activity

6am

- Wake-up
- Scrape the tongue
- Brush the teeth
- Splash water on the face
- Gargle with sesame oil for 5 minutes, massage the gums after spitting out the oil
- 620am • Drink 8-16 ounces of hot water (add lemon if desired)
- Have a bowel movement
- 630am • Yoga, Meditation and/or Pranayama
- 715am • Take a warm shower
- 7:45am

- Chew on a spoonful of sesame seeds to stimulate the liver and digestion while taking in essential iron, zinc and calcium
- Eat breakfast; make sure to eat sitting down, slowly and with attention
- 830am • Take a 10-15 minute walk outside
- 12-1pm
- Eat lunch; this should be the largest meal of the day
- Do not eat while working, in a meeting, on the computer or on the phone
- 1pm • Go for a 15-20 minute walk outside
- 5-6pm • Eat a light, simple, easy to digest dinner
- 630pm • Take a 10-15 minute walk outside
- 8pm
- Begin the night-time routine; avoid all electronics including phone calls, computers/emails and television
- Prepare a hot cup of "Sleepy Tea"
- Take a hot bath with calming essential oils (lavender, tulsi, chamomile)
- 830pm • Perform a self-oil massage (Abhyanga) with sesame oil in the winter,
- coconut oil in the summer
- 9pm • Perform a gentle, restorative yoga routine (15 minutes) ending with 5
- minutes of "legs up the wall" or a 10 minute meditation
- 930pm • Get into bed; read a "light" book if desired
- 10pm • Bedtime, lights out!

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