

***ACHARA RASAYANA (A MENTAL VITALIZER) AS BEHAVIOURAL MEDICINE IN
MANASA ROGA***

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ABSTRACT

Being a holistic science with equal focus on the body, mind, and soul, Ayurveda also describes a type of Rasayana for psychological and spiritual health, called as “Achara Rasayana”. Charaka Acharya introduced the unique concept of Achara Rasayana. The fundamental principle of Achara Rasayana “behavioural medicine” in Ayurveda is how to adopt right choices in order to live with ease and in harmony with nature, in short a code of behaviour or code of ethics which is being described by Ayurveda as certain rules for maintaining a healthy state of mind. Practicing these rules gives balance and peace of mind. Ayurveda has been effectively using preventive or longevity measures, such as Achara Rasayana “behavioural medicine,” for a long time. AcharaRasayana gives us tools to find balance in our daily life. The behavioural medicine plays an important role to solve the challenges we face in day to day life dealing with chronic conditions as a result of stressful life resulting from unhealthy lifestyle.

Keywords: Achararasayana, behavioural medicine, stress.

INTRODUCTION

Being a holistic science with equal focus on the body, mind, and soul, Ayurveda also describes a type of Rasayana for psychological and spiritual health, called as “AcharaRasayana”. Charaka Acharya introduced the unique concept of Achara Rasayana. AcharaRasayana is a right

code of socio-behavioural conduct; it teaches us a preferred life style with defined do’s and don’ts. In other words following proper *achara* and *vichara* is nothing but AcharaRasayana.^[1] AcharaRasayana plays a key role in maintaining the equilibrium state of mankind. By following

some rules and regulations complete physical, mental and social wellbeing can be obtained.

Mode of action:

AcharaRasayana may act as a Rasayana in three dimensions:

1. In improving the personality
2. In improving the social relationship
3. In improving the physical health

DISCUSSION

A recent discovery about stress is that it depletes the immune system of the body. The fundamental principle of AcharaRasayana “behavioural medicine” in Ayurveda is how to adopt right choices in order to live with ease and in harmony with nature, in short a code of behaviour or code of ethics which is being described by Ayurveda as certain rules for maintaining a healthy state of mind. Practicing these rules gives balance and peace of mind. Acharya-Charaka has introduced the unique concept of AcharaRasayana. It is not only for prevention but also it can cure the Psychiatry illness. Among many concepts two of them are very important in treating psychiatry problems. One is Meditation and another one is *Japa* (remembering the creator). When the mind is passive and withdrawn in to its own recesses, AcharaRasayana suggests dietary pattern, which enhance the *SatvikaGuna* (goodness), like milk and ghee, improves the personality (*Sattva*). Probably the *Japa* (remembering the creator) and *Tapas* (meditation) normalizing the important neurotransmitters like serotonin, nor epinephrine, gamma amino butyric acid metabolism and regulates a wide variety of neuropsychological processes like mood disturbances, sleep induction etc. There by it normalizes the deranged Manodoshas. This paper aims at find-

ing the scientific basis of the achararasayana in terms of its beneficiary effects on sense organs, nervous system and stress management. The probable mode of action may be improvement in the traits of personality developing fine-tuned social skills and over all physical health. There are certain principles in *achararasayana* which are described below. Table.1 and Figure-1.

1. Truthfulness

According to the ancient text of Upanishad, truth is the following:

Truthfulness is very important as it directly shows persons moral character and reputation. Truthful person is always given more reputation in the society. And as the saying goes once you tell a lie, it needs ten more lies to hide one lie, so better to tell the truth at once. The integral connection of mind and body is now fully embraced by the modern science. The physiological changes in the body due to stress created in the mind by not being true to “self” or others can be a self-destructive act.^[2]

2. Avoid anger

Anger creates a rush of blood, which then raises the blood pressure as well as the heart rate. Stress triggered by anger disturbs the harmony of the physiological environment of the body. This can make the weaker tissues and organs in the body vulnerable, which then get exposed digestive system is doing its part in getting rid of things we no longer need in our body. For all of these processes to happen simultaneously, we do need to have a stable non-violent body and mind. Violence affects the nature of neutral mind and relaxed nature of body. The attitude of nonviolence (*Ahimsa*), sometimes called reverence for life, is at the root of life-nourishing behaviour.^[5]

3. Avoid overexertion

It is not recommended to over exert because it aggravates *Vata*, which is the air quality of our body physiology. Ayurveda says to exercise to fifty percent of your maximum capacity. If you are pushing yourself to win the game or to prove that you can keep up with someone else, your attitude is needlessly punishing your body.^[6]

4. Be calm and peaceful in mind

The body heals itself when the mind is tranquil and is not in a state of emergency. We can gain clarity about our actions and deeds so we can make better choices each and every moment. To listen to our own deepest nature and make correct choices in life, it is crucial to have a sense of stillness and peaceful mind. Calm and quiet mind make precise choices, which benefits not only to a doer but also to others. Meditative mind is a neutral mind, which is *Sattvik* (the impulse to evolve, to go forward, to progress). Meditation helps the practitioner to become mindful of feelings, thoughts and sensations. It will give the capacity to observe them in a non-judgmental way. This holy practice is believed to result in a state of greater calmness and physical relaxation, and psychological balance as many scientific researchers have been carried out in this area. Practicing meditation helps to change how a person relates to the flow of emotions and thoughts. There is increasing demand of mindfulness and mindfulness training as it gives a solution to decrease stress and increase psychological functioning.^[7]

5. Not to hurt others with your speech. Speak pleasantly

Do not harm is the core principle of every medicine practices. Physical, emotional or verbal abuse is to be avoided to live in harmony with our self and others. Words have consequences; once said it cannot be taken back. Our intention

should reflect the true essence of our character. We can offer healing and comfort just by speaking pleasantly.^[8]

6. Remember always the creator of the Universe (God)

Having connection with the creator develops focused mind and cultivates centeredness and grounding. Divine creator could be nature, river, ocean, or a statue depending upon one's faith and belief system. Whatever it may be, spiritual connection with the creator makes us a conscious being. This will help us take right choices and actions in life for our health and well-being. We are not separate from god, nor are we separate from one another. The felling of oneness cultivates love, compassion, and empathy in our lives. Life becomes much richer and fuller if we recognize the beauty in all things. The concept of "me" or the self-centred nature of modern society is one of the epidemics of imbalanced lifestyle. Meditation and yoga can bridge that gap of separation.^[9]

7. Purity

Personal hygiene and cleanliness are major indicators of one's good health. Impurities on both internal and external body clog up the channels or tissues in our body that is key to healthy metabolism. External source of germs like bacteria and viruses can be avoided to enter into our body if we stay clean and pure. Neat and clean people are often healthier and happier people.

8. Patience

Being courageous for good purpose mean giving up those habits that no longer serve us and implementing those that benefits for our overall well-being.

9. Charity

Accumulation of things we do not need or over consumption creates not just the physical clutter in the space we live in but it reflects the lack of

clarity in mind. We keep what we need just like we do things that uplift our spirit. Donating things or money helps make us align with what Gandhi once said, "Simple living higher thinking." We are not only here to consume and be wealthy. The joy of living for others is a true healing in it.

10. Austerity

The best way to weave through life is to understand one's own belief and living in virtue. Imposing one's own religious views and beliefs on others can be self-destructive. A garden has many flowers with different smells and colours but they are always living in perfect harmony with one another. No one religion or a belief system is ideal for all. In this multi-racial, multi ethnic society, every religious view has its own essence and pitfalls. People like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, and Dalai Lama followed their own spiritual guidelines and made a lasting impact on others of many faith and religion.

11. Be respectful

Knowledge and wisdom are acquired from parents, teachers, elders and gurus. No one is born enlightened or has attained self-mastery. There is always a trainer or teacher involved in one's evolutionary process. We are influenced by their vision and the insight. Giving respect to peers and elders are a common decency of a healthy society. Our teachers and sages have gone through the discipline required to gain that knowledge and wisdom. To respect their journey and the process is to respect our own existence.

12. Do not be cruel to anyone

Cruelty makes our heart and mind unsettled. There should not be mental satisfaction in being cruel; but the joy of being kind and generous spreads around as in what goes around comes

around. If we want to be loved and cared for, we can reciprocate by being kind to others.

13. Be merciful to all who are in need of help

The poor, sick, and the vulnerable always need a hand to uplift them in society. Self-centred people often have fewer friends and few good neighbours. Human beings have the capacity to rise to the occasion and give to those in need. Sympathy and empathy are essential in one's own evolutionary process

14. Swapna

Maintain balance in waking and sleeping. Do not stay up long in the night and do not sleep in the daytime. According to Ayurveda, different organs of our body are active at different times of day and night. For example, liver is active between 12-2 am in the morning while small intestine is active between 12-2 pm in the day. For optimum functioning and health of these organs, we have to be in a restful state of sleep during the time when liver is processing the toxins and on the other hand it should be awake during the day when small intestine is actively digesting foods. If we are awake in the middle of the night, the organs, which are active during that time, could not do its job effectively.

15. Take milk and ghee (clarified butter) in moderation in your diet

In ayurveda, ghee and milk are advised for daily consumption as these products possess nourishing quality.^[10] Warm milk is easy to digest yet grounding in quality. Milk nourishes the deepest tissues and tones the body. The sedative quality of milk when used with a pinch of nutmeg is often recommended for people with insomnia. Ghee or clarified butter lubricates the tissues and nourishes the body. It is the only dairy product considered to be good for people with high cholesterol. It raises the healthy cholesterol (HDL) while maintaining the bad cholesterol

(LDL) and not raising it when consumed in moderation. Ghee enhances Ojas, the subtle essence of all tissues. It increases all digestive fire, all digestive energies and enzymes of the body. It promotes the digestive fire dwelling in the small intestine. It promotes the elemental fires which dwell in the liver and govern transformation of food in the body. It does not clog the liver, as do other oils and fats, but strengthens it.^[11]

16. Be a knower of place, time, and measures of activities

Our body takes time to adapt to a new climate and weather conditions. The diet and lifestyle of India may not be compatible in Northern California and vice versa. Damp and cold mornings of the Bay Area during summer call for warm cooked foods like oatmeal or warm cereals versus the hot sweaty mornings of Bombay calling for cooling and lighter foods regardless of your body type. When we live in harmony with nature and the season, we experience greater health of body, mind and spirit.

17. Plan ahead to achieve your goals

Without a clear path, there is no destination. Similarly, without plans, it is difficult to reach the objectives. Tools like meditation and yoga help to gain clarity so we can plan our future effectively. Without a clear plan of action, life can be overwhelming and challenging.

18. Avoid super egotism

Breaking the ego is the best possible practice in the modern day world. When body, mind, and soul are aligned, ego is shaken up and crushed, manifesting the best deeds and actions from one's soul. The onset of disease processes is intimately connected to a deficiency of ego gratification. What are these deficiencies? They are quite common things: lack of feeling important,

lack of appreciation, lack of approval and encouragement, lack of love.^[12]

19. Maintain good behaviour established by saints and sages

Apta are the great sages and saints of society.^[13] The good behaviour established by sages is the bi-product of their discipline set through their experiences of the ups and downs of ever changing life. These can be guiding principles for our own personal journey through life.

20. Be generous and sharing

Being generous doesn't mean giving everything away or renunciation. Sharing cultivates caring of others and in turn, caring for yourself. Generosity creates harmony with family and friends, neighbours and co-workers.

21. Be conscious

No matter how small an act is, if we are engaged with pure consciousness, we achieve the highest outcome. A conscious mind is a pure mind. *Sattva* is the impulse to evolve, to go forward, to progress. Increase in mindfulness helps to mediate the relationships between formal mindfulness practice and improvements in psychological functioning. It establishes that the practice of mindfulness meditation leads to increase in mindfulness, which results reduction in the symptoms and improved well-being.^[14]

22. Respect and serve your elders

Elders have showered us with so many blessings – giving birth, raising us, and giving us knowledge and wisdom in order to weave through life with the utmost grace. They do not just earn our honour and respect but we are who we are because of them. Serving them is serving your own soul.

23. Respect and serve priests, sages, and saints

They are priests, sages, and saints who serves our religion, because they have lived their life

with moral excellence. We can learn much from their path of righteousness. One way to learn that goodness is to serve them or have respect for their path of excellence.

24. Respect and serve the people

Ayurveda mentioned three kind of desires that all human beings will have i.e., desire of life, desire for money and desire for divine soul.^[15] But, We are pulled in so many directions because of our desires to be healthy, wealthy, and powerful. Healthy desires are good for overall wellbeing, however, we are often engaged in unhealthy desires such as excessive sex, unethical or fraudulent ways of making money and hurting others to satisfy one's own desires. People who have conquered their senses have conquered their own existence. Serving them can bring great insight into how to live without being ruled by our senses.

25. Keep yourself busy in religious activities

Whatever your belief system or your religion may be, it is utterly important to have devotion and faith in your practice. A focused and devoted mind can conquer any obstacle in life with utter grace. Having engaged in religious activities gives us a meditative mind, which has clarity and precision.

CONCLUSION

The definition of health is more than just the absence of disease. Prevention before occurrence of any disease has been already mentioned in ayurveda and which is the primary goal of ayurveda. Prevention from any disease and to achieve optimum health, lots of principles/methods has been practiced in recent years in response to ever increasing incidence of chronic diseases. Ayurveda has been effectively using preventive or longevity measures, such as *Achara Rasayana* "behavioural medicine," for a

long time. Ayurveda is a holistic system of medicine which defines health as a balanced state of physical, mental, emotional, sensorial and environmental health which includes interdependence of mind, body, and the spirit. *Achara Rasayana* gives us tools to find balance in our daily life. The behavioural medicine plays an important role to solve the challenges we face in day to day life dealing with chronic conditions as a result of stressful life resulting from unhealthy lifestyle.

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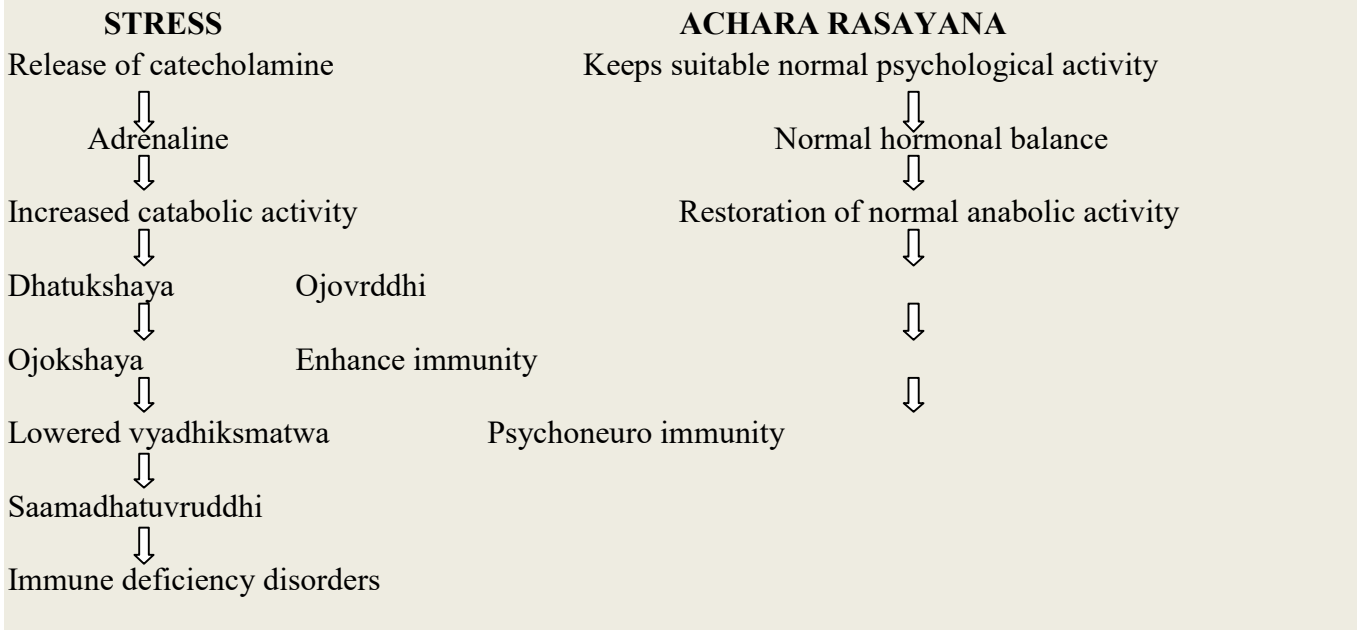
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Table 1: COMPONENTS OF ACHARA RASAYANA

COMPONENTS OF AYU	CONSTITUENTS OF ACHARA RASAYANA
Body(Shareera)	<i>Nivruttamadyamaithunath</i> <i>Anayasa</i> <i>Shoucha</i> <i>Samajagaranaswapnam</i>
Sense organs(Indriya)	<i>Jitatmanam</i> <i>Pravanendriyam</i>
Mind(Satwa/manas)	<i>Sathyawadi, akrodha, ahimsakam, Prashantam, priyavadinam, japa, tapas</i> <i>Dana nityam, devagobrahmana guru vruddarchaneratam, nithyakarunavedinam, anahakrutam, shastrachara, dharnashastraparam</i>
Soul(Atma)	<i>Devagobrahmana guru vruddharchanesatam, adhyatma</i>

FIGURE 1 – COMPARISON BETWEEN STRESSFUL CONDITION AND THE EFFECT OF ACHARA RASAYANA



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