

ACHAMANA - AYURVEDA CLASSICAL PURVIEW W.S.R. DINACHARYA HEALTHY LIFESTYLE**Kashinath Samagandi¹, Durgawati Devi¹, Haritha T. N², Swati Prajapati³**¹Associate Professor, ²P.G Scholar, ³PG Scholar

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Article Received:28/01/2022 - **Peer Reviewed:**08/02/2022 - **Accepted for Publication:** 09/02/2022**ABSTRACT**

*Achamana*¹ was a part of Hindu tradition, and it was performed as a ritual, thus one can find the references of *Achamana* in various religious texts other than Ayurvedic classics. Ayurveda, being the science of life, advises good conduct that has to be followed in all aspects of daily life to lead a healthy and substantial life. It can not only prevent lifestyle disorders but can also influence the incidence of communicable diseases, by following various modalities which are mentioned in the classics like *Dinacharya*² (daily regimens), *Ritucharya*³ (Seasonal regimens), *Sadvritta*⁴ (Good conducts). *Achamana*, is a simple procedure described in *Dinacharya*, can prevent infections to an extent, which can be acquired in daily life.

Keywords: *Ayurveda, Achamana, Dinacharya, Ritucharya.***INTRODUCTION**

We are all living in this civilized era, which has the burden of Lifestyle disorders. Lifestyle disorders are the departure from health, which is linked with one's lifestyle, which kills 41 million people each year, equivalent to 71% of all deaths globally, according to

WHO⁵. The word 'Lifestyle' is comprised of patterns of behaviour, interaction, consumption, activity and interests in which a person spends time. The diseases arising from fallacious lifestyles can be prevented only by adapting veracious customs. Primordial pre-

vention is a preventive modality, receiving high appreciation nowadays, which primarily focuses on preventing the population from adopting harmful lifestyles by interventions such as individual and mass education⁶. Ayurveda, the ancient science which emerged thousands of years ago, spells out the importance of following the right way of living to achieve healthy life and longevity⁷. The major goals of Ayurveda are maintenance of health in healthy individuals and cure of diseases in ill⁸. To achieve the first goal, Acharyas annotated various regimes viz *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Ratricharya* and *Sadvritta*; and for the second goal, expounded various treatments. Ayurveda not only prevents lifestyle diseases by adopting the above-mentioned regimes but also prevents communicable diseases to an extent, by modalities like *Achamana*, *Prakshalana*⁹, *Nasya*¹⁰, *Snana*¹¹ etc which are mentioned in the context of *Dinacharya*. *Dinacharya* delineates the daily regimes which have to be followed by an individual. The sequence begins with *Brahmamuhurta Jagarana*¹², i.e., waking up before sunrise and followed by numerous other reigns.

Achamana is one of the modalities, which refers to the cleansing of extremities by water followed by drinking a sip of water. It is described in numerous religious texts related to Hindu tradition pertained to worshipping aside from Ayurvedic texts. But while reading through the glasses of Ayurveda, it has to be perceived distinctly, as a safeguard to protect an individual from suppuration.

Materials and Methods

Achamana is mentioned in the *Dinacharya adhyaya* of Ashtang Samgraha written by *Vridha Vagbhata*, mentioned after *Souchavidhi*, in which he specifically counselled a set of circumstances for performing it. This procedure throws light on the cleansing procedure of various possible contaminations that could happen in daily life to pose a deleterious health effect. Contamination is the presence of an infectious agent on a body surface. Also on clothes, beddings, toys, surgical instruments or dressings, or other inanimate articles or substances including water, milk and food¹³. Infection can be transmitted by two modes -

direct and indirect¹⁴. The direct mode of transmission includes direct contact, Droplet infection, contact with soil etc., whereas airborne viz. droplet nuclei & dust, unclean hands & fingers, fomite etc. come under the indirect modes of transmission. Acharya Sushruta mentioned *Oupasargika Rogas*¹⁵, i.e., Communicable diseases, which are transmitted by direct contact. By performing *Achamana*, one can break the chain of infections by limiting the chances of being contaminated. The possibility of contamination and thereby infection is very high after faecal evacuation, micturition, sneezing, touching body secretions like nasal mucous, sweat etc. Vagbhata recommends the practice of *Achamana* after *malatyaga* (excretion), *Bhoktumana* (before meal), *bhuktwa* (after meal), *Kshutwa* (after sneezing), *Rathaakraama* (After travel) etc. From the modern point of view, the faecal matter may contain pathogens of cholera, typhoid, hepatitis, ascariasis, schistosomiasis etc. Scientific research suggests the practice of washing up hands after excretion, especially when the extremities are soiled with faeces is an effective way to combat infection and illness. Compared to faeces, urine might be less infectious if the individual is not harbouring any pathogens, but it is not sterile. Some infections like botulism, salmonella infection, typhoid, paratyphoid, listeria infection, Shigella infection can be spread when urine is transferred from soiled hands or objects to the mouth. Norovirus¹⁶ can be transmitted by touching bathroom surface which is contaminated by human excreta or vomit. Due to these reasons, it's best to wash hands after every use of the toilet. Similarly, coughing and sneezing hold a big role in contamination¹⁷. A single act of sneezing can release approximately 40,000 pathogens to the surroundings along with mucous containing foreign particles or irritants from the nasal cavity. The expelled droplets may directly come in contact with the conjunctiva, oro-respiratory mucosa or skin of close contact, and may cause serious respiratory illness like influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), whooping cough, covid-19 etc. The droplets which are transferred to the air by various acts like sneezing and coughing will be settled on surfaces and contaminate them.

This can also lead to infectious diseases. So, it is always recommended to cover the nose and mouth while coughing and sneezing and wash hands thereafter.

Sweat can act as an infective material for the transmission of diseases like cold, flu, hepatitis B, herpes, impetigo etc¹⁸. One can be exposed to different pathogens during travelling in the same way. Examples of common travel-related diseases are Hepatitis A, Dengue fever, Malaria, Parasitic infections, Tuberculosis, Typhoid, Covid-19 which are acquired by consumption of contaminated food & water and by the contact of contaminated surfaces. As these transmissions can be prevented by following some hygienic practices, it has a high influence on the incidence of infectious diseases.

Time for Achamana –

- After *Malatyaga* (After elimination of urine and faeces)
- *Keshanakhacyutan* (after cutting hairs and nails)
- *Snatwa* (Soon after taking bath)
- *Bhoktumana* and *Bhuktwa* (Before and taking food)
- *Suptwa* (Soon after getting up from bed)
- *Kshutwa* (After sneezing)
- Before *Suraarchana* (Worshipping)
- *Rathamakramya* (Soon after travelling)

The procedure of Achamana-

A person with clean hands and feet should sit in a squat position facing North or East direction, in a secluded place. Hands are not supposed to go beyond the knees while sitting and concentration should be the water that is going to be sipped. The person should be quiet and should put a cloth on their head and sit as straight as possible. A hand full of water has to be taken and it should be shipped through *Brahma tirtha*, i.e., the root of the thumb without making any sound.

Quality and Quantity of water advised for Achamana:

The water should be clean and devoid of turbidity and alkalinity. It should not be hot or polluted.

For *prakshalana*: Quantity sufficient; Temperature of water should be appropriate for the season

For Sipping: One Anjali; It should not be boiled or heated

CONCLUSION

We can't predict the presence or absence of pathogens with our naked eyes. They can be responsible for morbidity and even mortality. As it is said, "prevention is better than cure", there is a need to promote hygienic practices which can prevent the causation and spread of infections. *Achamana*, the procedure of washing hands and feet and sipping water can thus prevent the entry of pathogens into the body and can reduce the risk of infections. *Achamana* is described in *Dinacharyaadhyaya* of Ashtang Samgraha which indicates that it should be practised daily. Acharya has added a specific set of circumstances when it has to be performed. These could be observed as conditions of high risk for infections and can logically conclude that *Achamana* can prevent infections up to an extent.

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