

 <p>ISSN NO. 2320-5407</p>	<p>Journal Homepage: - <a href="http://www.journalijar.com">www.journalijar.com</a></p> <p><b>INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)</b></p> <p>Article DOI: 10.21474/IJAR01/12162 DOI URL: <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/12162">http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/12162</a></p>	 <p>INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR) ISSN 2320-5407 Journal Homepage: <a href="http://www.journalijar.com">http://www.journalijar.com</a> Article DOI: 10.21474/IJAR01/12162</p>
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## REVIEW ARTICLE

### ROLE OF AYURVEDA FOR BLISSFUL AGEING

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#### Manuscript Info

##### Manuscript History

Received: 15 October 2020

Final Accepted: 19 November 2020

Published: December 2020

##### Key words:-

Ageing, Blissful life, Dincharya, Ratricharya, Ritucharya etc

#### Abstract

Ageing is a part of life cycle. The ageing process involves multidimensional changes in physiological, pathological, social and psychological condition of a person and this change over from youth to death comprises of many painful, dependable episodes - that makes the human life miserable. According to Ayurveda Jara (ageing), being a Swabhavabala pravritta roga, occurs due to vyadhi-hetu called Kala/Parinam. The great maharshi like Charaka and Vagbhata named the very first chapter of their samhita granthas as Deerghanjivitiyam and Ayushkamyam respectively. Ayurveda is the art of living life to get stress life. In Ayurveda considered Hitayu and Sukhayu concept. "Hita" being healthy living while "Shukha" is comfortable and Blissful life. Ayurveda emphasis on prevention and promotion for the maintenance of health through Hita-charyas, which includes Dincharya, Ratricharya; Ritucharya for Ayu, Bala, Pusthi and Swasthya. Saddvrita, its aims to develop the right balance between mind and body for growth of a healthy life. Rasayan therapy, which destroy age related diseases and delaying ageing which helps in graceful ageing. Specific Aushadha Vargas like Vayasthapana, Jeevaniya, Brimhana, Vajeeakaran and other group of drug are available, which maintain youthfulness. According to Ayurveda, Dhirghayu or longevity means complete balance in body, mind and soul associated with longevity, without this a person cannot enjoy the real benefit of longevity i.e. a state of permanent blissful and peace.

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#### Introduction:-

'Ayurveda' literally means the science of life or the science of longevity. Ageing is a process of physical, psychological and social changes in multi dimensional aspects. It is a natural but miserable part of life. In Ayurveda considered Hitayu and Sukhayu concept. "Hita" being healthy living while "Shukha" is comfortable and Blissful life. Ayurveda emphasis the cure of disease as well as blissful long life. The Ayurveda stresses on prevention rather than cure only. According to Charaka the average longevity is 100 years. In order to maintain the complete longevity Ayurveda has prescribed a specific lifestyle regimen such as diet and other health conduct like Dincharya, Saddvrita, Ratricharya etc.

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**Concept Of Ageing As Per Ayurveda:**

The term jara has been derived from the root “jrs vayohanou” this term indicate of lack of life span. Ageing process has been described in all classical of Ayurveda. According to Ayurveda, the jara (Ageing) is natural phenomenon like hunger thirst and sleep. Jara (Ageing), being a Swabhavabala pravritta roga, occurs due to Vyadhi-Hetu called Kala/Parinam. Jara, is of two types: 1.) Kalajara - is sahaja in nature and appearing at the proper time. 2.) Akalajara (Premature Ageing) - is untimely i.e. a process, occurring ahead of time.<sup>1</sup> In old age, Vata dosha is physiologically in a dominant state and Rasadi Dhatus are in a deprived state. This potent combination is responsible for the various degenerative changes and process of decay in the body.

**Aims and Objectives:-**

1. To elaborate the concept of Ageing as per Ayurveda.
2. To review and elaborate the Blissful Ageing as per Ayurveda.

**Dinacarya (Daily Regimen):**

The Ayurvedic regimen of right living is designed for maintenance of health achievement of a long, healthy active life, providing relief from pain and disease there by achieving satisfactory enjoyment of life and attainment of self-realization.

**Waking at brahma muhurta:**

A healthy person has to awake or get up from his bed in the Brahma Muhurta to safe guard his own life. Brahma Muhurta i.e. ‘two hours before the ‘sunrise’ (preferably between 4 am to 5:30 am). Brahma symbolically, denoting Buddhi or intelligence. Physical and mental functions are sharp and active during this time.<sup>2</sup>

**Danta dhavana & Jihva nirlekhana (Cleansing of the mouth):**

Cleansing of teeth and mouth should be practiced after every meal in addition to early morning and before going to bed. The soft brushes made out of twigs of Khadira, Nimba, etc. should be used for this purpose. Tongue can be cleaned with scrapers of metal or any other suitable substances. This will remove the dirt, bad taste and smell of tongue, mouth and teeth; and produces better taste, cleanliness of the mouth, and dispels the diseases of the tongue, mouth and teeth.<sup>3,4</sup>

**Ushahpana ( Drink water in the morning ):**

drinking warm or room temperature water on an empty stomach cure disease. drinking water which kept overnight perfectly in copper vessel help clean bowl. It does not let old age set in and a person leads a long life for 100 years. Regularly drinking water in Bramha muhurta cures disease like piles, IBS, excessive fat and help in detoxifying the body by flushing out metabolic waste.

**Malootsarga (Eliminate waste ):**

Natural urges should not be suppressed and proper evacuation is a sign of a healthy person. A healthy lifestyle begins with the elimination of waste from the body through urination, defecation and sweat.

**Gandusa and kaval (Oil holding and gargling):**

Keeping the mouth filled with oil daily will prevent cracking and roughness of lips, dryness of mouth disease of the teeth and disorders of voice. Decoction of Khadira, Kshiri Vrksas etc. used daily for Kavalgraha (mouth gargles) will cure loss of appetite, bad taste, dirt and excess salivation.

**Dhumapana (Herbal smoking):**

Dhumpan means medicated smoking. It is totally different from cigarette smoking. It strengthens the hair, skull bones, sense organ and voice. The ailments pertaining to the head and neck arising out of Vata and Kapha Dosha do not affect the person who does Ayurvedic herbal smoking.

**Nasya (Nasal drops):**

Person who begin to use Nasya daily, will have their skin, shoulders, neck, face and chest strong/firm, raised and good looking ; their mouth having pleasant smell, voice also pleasant, sense organs clean and efficient and they become devoid of wrinkles, grey hair and black patches.<sup>5</sup>

**Eye Care:**

Anjana should be applied to daily; use of collyrium removes burning sensation, itching, dirt, moistness and pain of the eyes; bestows brightness, good appearance and ability to bear breeze and sunlight and no diseases of the eye develop.<sup>6</sup> Regular eye wash with Triphala and Yashtimadhu Kwath is also beneficial for eye health.<sup>7</sup>

**Tambula Sevana (Betel Chewing):**

Tambul is called pan or betel leaf. Pan chewing is part of ancient Indian custom. Those desirous of good taste, cleanliness and good smell of the mouth may keep in the mouth tender leaves of Tambula along with Jaiphala, Lavanga, Karpura, Kankola with Pugaphala. This (Tambula) is good to the heart.<sup>8</sup>

**Abhyāṅga (Oil Massage):**

According to ancient ayurvedic text, regular Abhyāṅga (oil massage) delays the Ageing process and feels the pleasure. Abhyāṅga should be undertaken daily which provides strength to all parts of the body. It enhances better vision and relieves all scalp disease. Growth of hair will be strong, black, thick hair grows continuously.<sup>9</sup> and massaging of oil in feet (padabhyāṅga), it prevents - sciatica, cracking of feet & muscle stiffness in leg.

**Karṇātarpaṇa (Ear Care):** Karṇa-purana can be used every day by saturating ears with oil, ear disease due to Vata, stiffness of back, neck and jaws do not simply occur and senile deafness also does not develop.

**Udvartana (rubbing the body with starches):**

Udvartana mitigates Kapha, liquefies the fat, makes the body parts firm and is highly beneficial for skin.<sup>10</sup>

**Mukhalepa (cosmetic to the face):**

Applying cosmetic on the face bestows prominence to the cheeks and face, makes the face free of coloured patches and eruption and bestows brilliance like the lotus flower.<sup>11</sup>

**Samvahana:**

Bestows affection and sleep; is aphrodisiac, relieves Kapha and Vata (aggravation) and fatigue; stimulates the muscles, blood and skin and gives happiness.<sup>12</sup>

**Vyayama (Exercise):**

Vyayama has its vital role in Dinacharya. Vyayama (exercise) is defined as any bodily activity that enhances or maintains the physical fitness and overall health and wellness. Regular exercising makes the body light, improves work efficiency, enhances digestive fire, makes the body strong with proportionate musculature and helps in preventing the diseases of affluence such as cardiovascular disorders, Type-2 DM, obesity and reduces the risk of osteoporosis. It may also help to prevent depression, promote or maintain positive self-esteem, improve mental health.<sup>13,14</sup> Daily walking (Adhva) is the best exercise that can be advised to old people.<sup>15</sup>

**Snana (Bath):**

Snana improves appetite, sexual vigor, span of life, valor and strength; removes itching, dirt, exertion, sweat, stupor, thirst, burning sensation and sin.<sup>16</sup>

**Sadvritta / Achara Rasayana (Code Of Conduct):**

It comes from two words "Sad" which means good and "Vṛtta" which means solution. It aims to develop the right balance between one's mind and body for the growth of a person. All the do's and don'ts prescribed in Sadvritta. These regimens of right conduct and behavior will not only help individuals to obtain and maintain their health but also help to build a most civilized society and nation, worthy of emulation.

**Achara Rasayana** Acharya Charaka has mentioned the Achara Rasayana for perfect mental, physical, social, spiritual health of human being. Achara Rasayana is a right code of socio-behavioral conduct; such as worship to god, speaking truth, speaking sweet words, practicing Mantra-Japa, avoiding excessive alcohol, balanced sleep, regular use of milk, ghee and other nourishing element of diet, practicing meditation and studying religious text; abstinence from anger, violence, jealousy etc.<sup>17</sup> By adopting these measures, a person can be free from the emotional disturbances, physical and mental stress are reduced and life becomes blissful.

**Kesha- nakha- roma apamarjana** removing ugly/ undesirable hairs of the head, nails and hairs on the body (mustacles, beard, hair in the axilla, pubis etc.) ward off sin, bestows happiness, lightness, auspiciousness and enhances enthusiasm.<sup>18</sup>

#### **Adharaniya Vegas (controlling of urges prohibited):**

The urges of the flatus, faeces, urine, sneeze, thirst, hunger, sleep, cough, heavy breathing, on exertion, yawn, tear, vomiting and seminal discharge, should not be suppressed. The physiological functions of the body are related to natural urge; by suppressing of these urges, lead to a pathological state that path way to many non-communicable disease in long run.

#### **Dharaniya Vegas (Urges to be controlled):**

control some psychological urges such as Lobha (greediness), Shoka (depression), Bhaya (cowardliness), Krodh (anger), Ahankar (ego), Nirlajata (shamelessness), Irshya (jealousy), Raga (attachment) . These are suppressible urges of mind necessary for mental health.

#### **Pranayama, meditation and Yoga therapy:**

Pranayama helps to procure oxygenated blood to various organs and body tissues and elimination of waste product in form of carbon dioxide. Pranayama helps to improve bio-energy and proper conjugation of respiratory and nervous system.<sup>19</sup> Meditation produces positive changes in the brain. It is great stress reducer and providing peace. Yoga is beneficial in the prevention and control of common health and emotional problems that are linked with old age.

#### **Ritucharya:**

Seasonal changes bring about diseases and which may be prevented by adopting certain seasonal regimen.

Season	Diet and regimen
Hemanta ( Nov.- Dec.)	Abhyanga, Vyayama, sweet, sour, salty food
Sisira (Jan. – Feb.)	Ushna Griha Asraya, protect against coldness
Vasanta (march- April)	Vyayama, consume Sidhu, Mardvika, light food etc
Grishma (May – June)	Seasonal fruit like Amra, Jambu, sweets, butter milk etc.
Varsha ( July- Aug.)	Amla lavan snigdha food, Dwelling in upper storeys of houses.
Sarda (sept. – Oct.)	Madhura, laghu, sheeta,tikta food; Hansodakapana

#### **Ahara (Dietetics / Ageing and Nutrition):**

In Ayurveda, food is called ‘mahabhaisajya’ which means the superior medicine. Food energizes the mind. It's Sattavic, Rajasic, Tamsic Gunas depending on which food is consumed. Elderly people have different nutritional requirement compared to the normal adult people. With increasing age, people become more vulnerable to malnutrition reasons including Arochaka due to Ageing; Manoavasada, poor dentition, poor digestion. The food taken in proper quantity provides certainly strength, complexion and happy life to the person without disturbing normalcy.<sup>20</sup>

Following things may be considered while planning dietary for old age, such as:

1. The food should be tasty, nutritious and fresh.
2. Inclusion of adequate amount of vegetables and fruits in diet.
3. Too spicy, Salty and pungent food should be avoided. Ice, oil, fried stuff specially prohibited.
4. Liquid intake should be more frequent and in small amount.
5. Offering with pleasant mind and without any hurry.
6. Avoided over eating.

#### **Nishacarya (Night Regimen):**

Laghu bhojana should be taken. In case of going outside holding a stick, dispels the fear from dogs, reptile and wild animals. Nidra (Sleep) enjoyed at the proper time bestows nourishment, complexion, strength, enthusiasm, digestive power wakefulness and maintains normality of the tissues.

#### **Rasayana (Rejuvenation):**

Rasayana therapy is one of the eight major clinical disciplines of Ayurveda. The object of this branch of knowledge is to remove the disease and prevent Ageing process. Rasayana chikitsa boosts the Ojus (vital force of life) and immune system. It helps a person to maintain good health or to establish impaired physical or mental health.<sup>21</sup> A

number of Rasayana drugs have been prescribed which have the property of keeping the balance of the bodily Dhatu. The various types of Rasayana are mentioned in Chakra Samhita, Susruta and Astanga Hridaya; such as Vayasthapana and Ayushkara, Medhakara, Urjaskara. Rasayana contributes - to long life, lasting memory, healthy physique, youth, luster, bright complexion, strength of body and senses, truthfulness and glowing body.<sup>22</sup> Many Rasayana drugs like Amla, Ashwagandha acts as Antioxidants so they help in delaying Ageing. Another Rasayana described in Ayurveda i.e. Ajasrika Rasayana, which refers to daily rejuvenative dietetics. Ajasrika Rasayana can be used daily as diet, milk, ghrita, fruit and vegetable.<sup>23</sup>

#### Medicinal Plants Useful In Old Age:

Numerous single drugs are available which help in prevention and cure of diseases of old age.<sup>24</sup>

Suggested drugs	Karma	Indication
Asvaghanda, Satavari, Bala	Balya	General debility, Oja kashya
Arjuna, Puskaramula, Amra	Hridya	Hypertension, IHD
Vacha, Pippali, Draksha, Mulethi	Kanthya	Throat and speech related problems
Haridra, Khadira, Chandna	Tvachya	Skin disease
Triphala	chakshushya	Eye problem in elderly
Brahmi, Guduchi, Sankhpushpi	Medhya	Dementia, Depression, Alzheimer disease
Tulsi, Hingu, Sirisha	Svashara	Anti asthmatic Bronchitis
Eranda, Pippali, Sunthi	Sulaprasmana	Arthritis
Musli, Kapikacchu, Bala, Shatavari	Vajikaran	Aphrodisiac
Amalaki, Haritaki, Guduchi, Satavari,	Vayasthapana	Premature Ageing

#### Discussion:-

Ayurveda has adapted holistic approach to maintain healthy and long life. A healthy mind is as important as healthy body. Factor like social, cultural and environmental aspects that are influence the ageing process. Ayurveda has two main objects first to maintain the healthy state and second to cure the disease. The major preventive Ayurvedic approaches for maintaining and improving the quality of life includes Dinacharya, Ratricharya, Ritucharya, Sadvrita, Rasayan therapy and specific Aushadha varga. Adoption of ideal life style has positive influence on mind and body, and improves the quality of life and happiness.

#### Conclusion:-

Since, the number of aged population is increasing; the age related problems have shown immense burden over the family and government. The currently available therapy for the management of geriatric problems are limited and costly; therefore, the traditional knowledge plays important role for this; because our traditional knowledge is not related to only eliminate disease, it is related to joyful and self satisfactory life.

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