



ROLE OF USHAPANA IN PREVENTION OF DISEASES

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda the ancient Indian medical science has purpose to protect health of the healthy and alleviate disorders in the diseased. In ancient texts *Acharyas* has mentioned so many procedures to prevent and to maintain the health of an individual. To maintain the health *Swasthviritta*, recommends daily routine (*Dincharya*), seasonal routine (*Ritucharya*), eating habits, sleep, codes of good conduct (*Sadviritta*) etc. *Ushapana* is one of the *Ayurvedic Dincharya* (day regimen) procedures which play a very important role in preventive *Ayurveda*. *Usha* means dawn, *Pana* means to drink/intake therefore *Ushapana* (dawn water) means intake of water in early morning. In *Ayurveda* the root cause of all diseases is “*Ama*” which can be best understood as the accumulation of toxic metabolic by-products of poor digestion, therefore drinking water in morning can help prevent the disease caused by *Ama*. So, it is very important to review about the benefits of *Ushapana* and its role in the prevention of the diseases.

Keywords: *Ushapana*, *Ama*, *Dincharya*, prevention, health.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, India's 5000-year-old medical system empowers us to take our health into our own-hand, by

providing simple practices that can be easily implemented over time to ensure a happier, healthier life.

Dincharya is the Sanskrit term for daily *Ayurvedic* rituals which, when practiced regularly, help to support a life of optimal wellness through routine, detoxification and nourishment. When we are healthy and balanced, we are able to fulfill our *Dharma*. Among *Dincharya* *Brahma Muhurta* is the first step. *Ushapana* in *Brahma Muhurta* is explained by *Bhavaprakash*. The exact time of *Brahma Muhurta* varies from region to region as time of sunrise is not uniform throughout the world. There are thirty *Muhurta* in one day-night (One *Muhurta*=48 minutes) i.e. fifteen *Muhurta* in day and fifteen *Muhurta* in night and it is said that fourteenth *Muhurta* of night is considered as *Brahma Muhurta*.^[1] Therefore, *Brahma Muhurta* is a period one and half hours before sunrise-or more precisely, 1 hour and 36 minutes before sunrise.^[2] *Brahma Muhurta* is considered as *Panchamrutha vela*^[3] i.e. essence of *Vipula Vayu*, *Vipula Jala*, *Vipula Aakasha*, *Vipula Desha* and *Vipula Kala*. *Usha* is a Sanskrit word which means dawn, early morning and *Pana* means to drink/intake, therefore, *Ushapana* means consuming water or drinking water at *Brahma Muhurta*.

“*Savituh Samudyakale Prasriti Salilasya Pibedashtau| Rogjaraparimukto Jivedvatsalshatam Sagram*” (Bz.P.Pu. 5/317)^[4]

Acharya Bhavaprakash advice the dose of *Ushapana* should be eight *Prasriti* (one *Prasriti*=80ml) which is approximately 640ml and mentioned that the person who drinks 640ml water every day before sunrise, becomes free from all ailments. He lives for 100 years and the weakness and other problems of old age do not even touch him. Indeed, people used to have hundreds of years of youthful life in the ancient age. In some texts it is mentioned that who drinks water before sunrise will live for 100 years after removing all the ailments of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*.

Acharya Bhoja considers here water which is kept overnight i.e. stale water. Practice of drinking such water help in removing the diseases caused due to *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* and *Kshat* (injury). It prevents the ailments of ear, eye, throat and head and it prevents the pain of back. It helps get rid of many diseases in the body such as piles (*Arsh*), edema (*Shotha*), sprue (*Grahni*), *Jvara*, *Udara Roga*, lipid disorders

(*Medovikara*), Urinary problem (*Mutraghata*) and bleeding disorders (*Raktapitta*), skin disorders (*Kushtha*).

“*Vigatghannishethe Prataruthaya Nityam Pibati Khalu Naro Yo Ghranrandharen Vaari. Sa Bhavti Matipurnashchakusha Tarkshayatulyo Valipaliviheen Sarvarogermuktah*” (B.P.Pu.5/319)^[5]

Acharya Bhavaprakash also mentioned about *Nasa Jalapana* which has more beneficial effects on health. Those who take water through nostrils before sunrise is full of intellect has sharp eyesight like an eagle and has no problems like wrinkles and graying of hair and also free from all diseases. Three *Prasriti* of water i.e. 240ml should be taken through nostrils. This also aids in prevention of *Vali* (wrinkles), *Palita* (Gray hair), *Pinasa* (Rhinitis), *Swarabhanga* (Hoarseness of voice), *Kasa* (cough), *Shotha* (edema) and acts as *Rasayana* and improves eyesight. *Neti kriya* which is one of the *Shodhana* procedure explained under *Shatkarma* mentioned in *Hathyogapradipika* and *Gheranda Samhita* is similar to this process.

Contraindications for *Nasajalapana*- Person who has consumed *Sneha*, who is injured, undergone *Panchakarma*, *Adhmana* (Abdominal distension), *Mandagni*, hiccoughs and who have *Kapha* and *Vata* related diseases.

Material and Methods - *Ushapana* is a simple process with many benefits. Main objective of *Ushapana* is to hydrate the thirsty body in morning with water. In this process one should take 640ml of water before sunrise. It should be taken without cleansing the mouth, brushing or even taking anything. Lukewarm water must be taken during winter season. As *Acharya Bhoja* has mentioned about consuming stored water before sunrise so it is important here to discuss about the type of vessel in which water should be stored so that it becomes more beneficial for people.

Different types of vessels for water storage and its benefits-

“*Sauvarne Rajate Tamre Kansye Manimayaapi Vaa| Pushpavatsam Bhaume Vaa Sugandhi Salilam Pibet*” *Su.Sutra 45/13*^[6]

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned, the vessels of *Suwarna* (Gold), *Chandi* (Silver), *Tamra* (Copper),

Kaansa (Bronze) and *Mitti* (Mud) should be used to store water for drinking. The method of storage is essential in maintaining water purity and safety for drinking purposes. The most easily available and for many benefits on health, copper vessel is mostly suited vessel for storing water:

As copper is an essential trace mineral that is vital to human health.^[7] Our ancestors used to store water in containers made of Copper, Copper from the vessel leached into the water and helped in purification.

Properties of Copper

Rasa- Tikta, Kashaya, Madhura, Amla, Veerya- Ushna, Vipaka- Katu, Guna- Sara, Laghu, Karma- Netrya Shodhana, Deepan, Lekhana, Amapachana, Action on Dhatu- Rakta Prasadana, Mamsa, Meda Lekhana^[8] Therefore, it is advised that water stored in copper vessel should be taken for better results. It can kill all the microorganisms, molds, fungi, algae and bacteria, present in the water that could be harmful to the body and make the water perfectly fit for drinking.^[9]

DISCUSSION

The main objective of *Ayurveda* is- “*Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam, Aturasaya Vikara Prashamnam Cha*” It means *Ayurveda* aims at the protection and maintenance of good health of the healthy people and elimination of and control over the ailments and disorders of the unhealthy. *Ushapana* is one of the procedures of *Dincharya* (daily regimen) which fulfills this objective of *Ayurveda*. After long hours of fasting at night so many harmful substances are accumulated in the body, drinking water early in the morning helps to flush out harmful substances that is accumulated and will help in cleansing the body from within. Morning water is also the greatest neutralizer, diuretic and anti-bacterial in nature. It also balances the three *Doshas*, maintains fluid balance in the body, helps to maintain the required output of urine thus cleansing the system, since salvia contains antibacterial properties by taking water in the morning without cleansing the mouth, as mentioned by *Acharya Bhoja* helps in treating many diseases and helps body to produce antibodies and improves immunity. In *Ayurveda* it is

believed that root cause of all diseases is problems of *Amashaya* and drinking water before sunrise helps prevent such problems and it is more beneficial if water is stored in copper vessel. There are so many studies which show storing water in copper vessel helps in purifying the water from bacteria, algae, molds etc. A study published in Journal of health, population and nutrition in 2012 shows that copper helps in inactivation of *E.coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Campylobacter jejuni*. Findings of studies suggest that copper can act on a range of organisms under different conditions. Copper is an essential trace mineral that is vital to human health. It has antimicrobial, antioxidant, anti- carcinogenic and anti-inflammatory properties. It also helps neutralize toxins. When water is stored in a copper vessel or bottle, for eight hours or more, copper releases some of its ions in water, through a process called *Oligodynamic effect*. It assists in the formation of hemoglobin as well as cell regeneration and unfortunately, the human body cannot create the trace amounts of copper, therefore, copper has to be a part of our intake either through food or water. Copper is one of the most important metals described in *Ayurveda* possessing various therapeutic properties. It is indicated in the management of several diseases like *Gulma, Grahni, Sthoulya, Udara Roga, Prameha* etc.^[10] Because of its properties like *Mamsa Meda Lekhana* and *Katu Vipaka* and *Ushna Veerya* drinking 2-3 glasses of copper enriched water in morning speeds up the metabolism and facilitates the breakdown of fat cells. Drinking water early morning relieves constipation as it helps in increasing peristalsis. Since ancient times *Ayurveda* has advocated the benefits of drinking water from copper vessel. *Ayurveda* states that when water is stored in copper vessel it has ability to balance all the three *Doshas* (*Vata, Pitta* and *Kapha*) in the body.^[11]

CONCLUSION

Ushapana is the wonderful gift of *Ayurveda* to humans and has tremendous effect on our body. When water is stored in copper vessel has increased its effects manifolds. This will help in prevention of many diseases as drinking water in empty stomach purifies

human body. The mucus folds of colon and intestines are activated by this method, peristalsis increases and then the nutrients of the food taken several times a day will be absorbed properly that will help in the formation of *Rasa Dhatu* and if *Rasa Dhatu* is formed properly that will lead to the proper formation of further *Dhatu*s (*Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja* and *Shukra*) along with this it has ability to balance all three *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*) and this will help in prevention of diseases as quoted by *Acharyas* that *Samyak Dosh*a and *Dhatu*s lead to *Arogya*.

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