

## ***Varsharitucharya*-An Ayurvedic Concept of Healthy Lifestyle in Monsoon**

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### **Abstract**

*Ayurveda* is a science of life. *Ayurveda* states that *Arogya* (good health) stands at the root for attainment of *Dharma* (virtuous acts), *Artha* (wealth), *Kama* (gratification of desire) and *Moksha* (salvation). In *varsha ritu* (monsoon), the people are susceptible to diseases owing to their decrease immunity, *dehabala* (body strength) and *agnibala* (digestion strength). With an aim to keep people healthy in this season, *Ayurveda* has mentioned the concept of *varsharitucharya*.

### **Keywords**

*Varsharitu, dehabala, agnibala, varsharitucharya*



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## INTRODUCTION

*Ritucharya* generally means as “mode of living in different seasons<sup>1</sup>”. An year is divided into six seasons namely *sisira* (late winter), *vasanta* (spring), *grisma* (summer), *varsha* (monsoon/rainy season), *sarad* (autumn) and *hemanta* (early winter). Out of them *magha* and *phalguna* makes *sisira*, *caitra* and *vaisakha* makes *vasanta*, *jyestha* and *asadha* makes *grisma*, *sravana* and *bhadrapada* makes *varsa*, *asvina* and *kartika* makes *sarad* and *margasirsa* and *pausa* makes *hemanta*<sup>2</sup>. The three commencing with *sisira* (*sisira*, *vasanta* and *grisma*) together pertain to northern solastice (*uttarayana*) also known as *adana kala*<sup>3</sup>. The southern solastice (*Daksinayana*) relates to the three *ritus* the *varsa*, *sarata* and *hemanta*. It is referred as the *visarga kala*<sup>4</sup>. The sun, the moon and the wind being governed by the time, nature and path they follow, constitute the causes of time, season, taste (in drugs and diets), (vitiation of) *dosas* and bodily strength<sup>5</sup>.

In the beginning of *visarga kala* (*varsa*) and end of *adana kala* (*grisma*) weakness prevails in human beings. In the middle of both i.e (*vasanta* and *sarad*) strength becomes moderate. At the end of *visarga kala* (*hemanta ritu*) and beginning of *adana*

*kala* (*sisira ritu*) human beings get considerable amount of strength<sup>6</sup>.

It is considered that, generally people are susceptible to weakness during *adana kala*, while they gain strength during *visarga kala*. But this is a general statement which cannot be taken too seriously. In fact, the rate of weakness or strength is to be determined according to the seasons rather than the period as a whole. Thus, even though the *sisira* season happens to come in the period of *adana kala* people gain strength during this season. Similarly, though the rainy season is one the season of *visarga kala*, people are susceptible to weakness during this season. The susceptibility to weakness is in fact to be determined according to the following principles.

As regards in *adana kala*, the first season, *sisira* is conducive to strength and good health, the second season spring gives rise to moderate strength and the third season the summer causes weakness. The process is reversed during *visarga kala*. Its first season, rainy season causes susceptibility to weakness, the second season autumn gives moderate strength, while the last season winter is conducive to strength and good health.

The principle mentioned above is quite simple. One who has gained enough strength during the last season of *visarga kala* will not altogether lose it during the first season of *adana kala* even though the weakening process has already started<sup>7</sup>.

As it is shown above, *varsha ritu* causes susceptibility to weakness. So in order to remain healthy one should follow diet and regime namely *varsharitucharya* as mentioned by our *Acharyas*.

### **VarshaRitu**

The digestive activity (*agni*) remains weak in individuals during the rainy season as they are debilitated by the summer (*adanakala*). The *agni* undergo further decrease and get vitiated by *dosas* in the rainy season.

The *dosas* in turn get provoked by

- The effect of hanging, thick clouds full of water.
- Cold wind having snow and blowing suddenly.
- Water getting dirty because of rain<sup>8</sup>.

The *vata dosa* especially get provoked (*prakopa*) due to consumption of tissue elements caused due by inadequate production of the nutrient material responsible for the nourishment of tissue elements<sup>9</sup>. According to *Acharya Susruta* the

herbs and water during summer become devoid of *sara* (sapless), roughened, devoid of unctuousness. This herb due to roughness and lightness causes accumulation of *vata dosa* in person dried by the intense sun. That accumulated *vayu* excited by cold winds and rain produces *prakopa* (discord) of *vata* in rainy season<sup>10</sup>. In case of *pitta dosa* rainfall after *adana kala* on hot earth are responsible for increase of acidity in water, which causes hyperacidity during digestion and causes *sanchaya* (accumulation) of *pitta*.

### **Varsharitucharya**

*Ahara (diet)*

- Old barley, wheat, *Sali* rice (*Oryza sativum* Linn.).
- Meat of arid animals.
- Soup of pulses.
- Wine prepared from grapes and fermented decoction (*madhvika* or *arista*).
- Intake of whey (*mastu*) processed with *suvarcala* and powder of *pancakola*.
- Rainwater or water from deep wells, well boiled should be used for drinking.
- One should generally use honey in preparing diets and drinks.
- If the days are cooler due to heavy rains accompanied by the storms, one should take such diets as are conspicuously sour, salty, and unctuous; this serves as an

effective antidote to the vitiation of *vata* during rainy season.

- Eatables should predominantly include the sour, salty and dry items and honey that is easy to digest<sup>11, 12</sup>.

*Vihar (Lifestyle)*

- Abstain from day sleep and intake of *mantha* (groat) diluted in excess.
- Avoid exercise, avoid indulgence in sexual intercourse.
- One should wear light and clean apparel.
- One should use perfume, should expose his cloth to fragrant fumes.
- One should reside in places that are devoid of heat, cold and snow.
- The individual should have application of *Asthapanvasti* (decoction enema therapy) after undergoing purificatory therapies like *vaman* (emesis therapy), *virecan* (purgation therapy)<sup>11,12</sup>.

Even though by nature, honey is responsible for the vitiation of *vata*, its intake in small quantity is prescribed in order to overcome dampness (*kleda*) of the rainy season<sup>13</sup>. When it is too cold due to heavy rains accompanied with storms, the sour and salty diets are required to be taken. Even though such diets vitiate *pitta*, they are exceedingly

useful in overcoming the vitiation of *vata*, which is the most harmful of all<sup>14</sup>.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To enlighten the basic concept of *Varsharitucharya* to its full perspective.

## MATERIALS

This article is based on a review of Ayurvedic texts. Reference were taken from *Charaksamhita*, *Susrutasamhita*, *Astangahridaya* along with commentaries.

## CONCLUSION

*Varsharitu* (monsoon) is the first *ritu* of *visarga kala* during which the strength and power of individuals are diminished due to effect of *adana kala*. The appetite and power of digestion during this season is also very poor. The immunity also tends to be at its lowest in this season. Due to *vata dosa* vitiation in this season all painful conditions like rheumatism tends to aggravate and *pitta dosa* aggravation in turn causes problems like acidity, digestive problems, allergies and skin problems.

*Ayurveda*, the age old science of life, has always emphasized to maintain the health and prevent the diseases by following proper

diet and lifestyle regime rather than treatment and cure of diseases. With a view to keep people healthy and prevent from

diseases in rainy season, our ancient *Acharya* has mentioned the concept of *Varsharitucharya*.

**Table 1** Classification of *kala* based on *Ayana, Ritu*

| <i>Ayana</i>  | Seasons                       | Months acc. to Hindu calendar | Months acc. to English calendar |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Uttarayana</i> (the period of dehydration/ <i>adanakala</i> )  | <i>Sisira</i> (late winter)   | 1. <i>Magh</i>                | January - February              |
|   |                               | 2. <i>Phalguna</i>            | February-March                  |
|   | <i>Vasanta</i> (spring)       | 1. <i>Caitra</i>              | March-April,                    |
|   |                               | 2. <i>Vaisakha</i>            | April-May                       |
|   | <i>Grisma</i> (summer)        | 1. <i>Jyaistha</i>            | May-June,                       |
|   |                               | 2. <i>Asadha</i>              | June-July                       |
| <i>Daksinayana</i> (the period of hydration/ <i>visargakala</i> ) | <i>Varsa</i> (Rainy Season)   | 1. <i>Sravana</i>             | July-August,                    |
|   |                               | 2. <i>Bhadrava</i>            | August-September                |
|   | <i>Sarad</i> (Autumn)         | 1. <i>Asvina</i> ,            | September-October               |
|   |                               | 2 <i>karttika</i>             | October-November                |
|   | <i>Hemanta</i> (Early Winter) | 1. <i>Margasirsa</i>          | November-December               |
|   |                               | 2. <i>Pausa</i>               | December-January                |

\*The following table furnishes a comparative view of the seasonal classification.



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