

CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF SNANA AND ITS APPLIED ASPECT

¹*Vd. Supriya Ashok Shelke and ²Vd. Poonam Vikram Dound¹Assistant Professor, Department of Swasthavritta, Dhaneshwari Ayurved College and Research Institute, Sambhajinagar, Maharashtra, India.²Assistant Professor, Department of Swasthavritta, Matoshri Ayurved College and Hospital Eklahare, Nashik.Article Received on
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*Corresponding Author

Vd. Supriya Ashok Shelke

Assistant Professor,

Department of

Swasthavritta, Dhaneshwari

Ayurved College and

Research Institute,

Sambhajinagar,

Maharashtra, India.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient science of life or longevity based on Indian philosophy. The main goal of which is to maintain health and cure the diseases. To achieve these goals, *Ayurveda* described *swastha chatushka* which includes *Dinacharya*, *Rutucharya*, Rules for taking *aahar*, Importance of natural urges. In *dinacharya*, they described daily routine activities in detail. *The ayurvedic* daily routine includes *Snana* (bath) every day in the morning after *Abhyanga*, *Vyayama*, *Mardana*, and *Udvardhana*. Its daily and sensible use has a prime role in maintaining health. But still, its importance and practical utility are not fully recognized. Hence efforts are made to explain *Snana* in detail as described in *Ayurvedic* literature.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Dinacharya*, *Snana*, *Swastha chatushka*, *Rutucharya*.

INTRODUCTION

Prevention of disease by cleanliness is ancient in *Ayurveda* and *Purana*. In *Mahabharata* five types of *saucha* are mentioned they are *Mana*, *Karma*, *Kala*, *Sharir*, and *Waka saucha*. *Gita* and *Vasistha Samhita* also mentioned two types of *Saucha* as 1) *Bahya Saucha* (External cleanliness) and 2) *Abhyantara Saucha* (Internal cleanliness)^[1] Everyone should always follow those procedures which keep them healthy always. For that *Acharya*, *charaka* mentioned *swastha chatushka* which includes a Daily regimen, seasonal regimen, and *Sadvrutta* should be followed as mentioned to maintain health because the main goal of *Ayurveda* is to maintain health and cure the disease.^[2] To achieve this goal *Ayurveda*

describes *dinacharya* in detail. *The Ayurvedic* daily routine includes *snana* every day in the morning which has a prime role in the maintenance of health but still its importance and practical utility are not fully recognised. Hence efforts are made to explain *snana* in detail because cleanliness is necessary for the health, growth, and development of the body. *Snana* is the last form of cleaning our body it will be a therapeutic, rejuvenating, ritual for the body, mind, and soul. As per *Ayurveda* regular bathing keeps the body healthy, fresh, energetic, and rejuvenated for the whole day's activity. *Snana* is a purifying, libidinal stimulant and gives longevity as explained by *Charak*.^[3] *Snana* is an important and unique concept explained amongst the various regimens of *Dinacharya*. *Snana* should be done every day as explained in *Manusmriti* (*Snanam Samachareth Nithyam*).^[4] *Acharya Charaka* says that *Snana* is the best way to remove fatigue (*Snanam Shramaharaanam Shreshtam*).^[5] Cleanliness is necessary and beneficial for the health, growth, and development of the body. *Snana* is the best form of cleaning explained.

AIM: To find out the importance of *snana* for a healthy life.

OBJECTIVES

- To compile and study all references about *snana* from *Ayurvedic* text and modern literature.
- To study the principal behind *Snana*.
- To find out the use of *snaan vidhi* as a preventive measure against the disease.

Materials

This is a conceptual type of study. All sources of references collected from various classical texts of *Ayurveda* like *Charak samhita*, *Sushrut samhita*, *Ashtang Hrudaya*, *Ashtang Sangraha*, *Yogratnakar*, and available commentary on them. Various research articles are also searched on websites about *snana* or bathing. All matter is analysed, and time has been made to draw some beneficial conclusions.

Definition

It is the regimen that is to be done daily and which clears away mala, and *sweda* and makes the person healthy. In *Mahabharat* definition of *snana* is given as simply soaking the body with water is not *Snana* but clearing the dirt of *sham* and *dam Guna's* of *Mana* is called *snana*.

Procedure

First, do *aachmana* three times then wash the face two times and then clean all the parts of the body with water and then take a bath or wash from hairs or head. Use hot water below the shoulder and cold water for the neck, head, and face.^[6] And if the head bath is not possible due to mental, or physical weakness or aging then below the shoulder water should be taken and if that is also not possible then one should do sponging which is cleaning your body with the help of wet cloth called *sharir parimarjan*. One should take a bath two times a day.

Timing

Acharyas have mentioned that one should take a bath early in the morning.^[7] Among *Dinacharyas*, according to *the ayurvedic samhita*, the *snan* should be done after exercise. After finishing the exercise, one should massage the body with medicated oil and then one should take a bath to reliving tiredness.^[8]

Matra

The exact *matra* is not mentioned clearly but it is said by *Acharya* that one should not take a bath in less quantity of water and one classical reference said that is performed like *Gajavatsnana* that the bath like an elephant which means water used to take a bath should be more in quantity in order to clean whole body because it gives the mental satisfaction to the elephant in same manner taking bath for more times with more water gives mental peace with cleanness. According to modern science, 140-150 litres per person for daily purposes and including bathing.^[9]

Place

According to *Manusmruti*, one should use to perform *Snana* Daily in *Nadi* (river), *Pavitra Tirth* (temple), lake, and pond. The place must avoid when one should not know the depth of a river or lake.^[10]

Classes of Snana

There are 3 classes of *Snana*.^[11]

1. *Nitya Snana* – Normal bathing when at home on a daily routine.
2. *Naimittaka Snana* – Special occasional *snana* like the death of a relative, hair cut, etc.
3. *Kamya Snana* – Bath has taken for special vows under-taken like in a temple tank etc.

Types of *snana*

According to *Yadnyavalkya*, there are seven types of *snana*.^[12]

They are as follows

1. *Mantra Snana* - *Snana*, pronouncing *Auponishadi Mantra* is called *Mantra Snana*.
2. *Bhouma Snana*- *Snana* by smearing the whole body with mud is called *Bhouma Snana*.
3. *Agneya Snana*- *Snanabybhasma*(ash) i.e., burnt powder of cow dung is called *Agneya Snana*.
4. *Vayavya Snana*- *Snana* with dust that arises while the cow is walking is called as *Vayavya Snana*.
5. *Divya Snana*- *Snana* in sun rays or the glare of the sun combined with rain is called *Divya Snana*.
6. *Varuna Snana*- *Snana* in river water is called *Varun snana*.
7. *Manasa Snana*- Thinking about the sacred soul is called *Manasa Snana*.

Among these *Varun snana* is the best *Snana* described in *Mahabharata*.

Indication of *snana*

Each person should take a bath for *sharir* and *man shuddhi*. Hot water should not be used for the head, but it is used down the clavicle level.

Contraindications^[13]

1. The person who is suffering from *atisara* (diarrhoea)
2. *Ardit* (facial paralysis)
3. *Adhmana* (distinction of the abdomen)
4. *Pinas* (rhinitis)
5. *Bhuktvat* (immediate after consuming food)
6. In *Jwara* (fever)
7. A person suffering from *Netra Rog* (eye disease)
8. *Karnaroga* (an ear disease)
9. *Arochakka* (loss of taste)
10. *Ajirna* (indigestion)
11. Disease caused by *vatdosha*.
12. First three days of menstrual bleeding
13. At midnight
14. With much cloth

15. And near unknown ponds

The person who is contraindicated to *snana* due to disease, aging, or weakness should take sponging which is cleaning body parts with a wet piece, punch, or cloth.

In therapeutic view

Ushna jala snana

It helps in increasing the strength of an individual and pacifies the increased *vat dosha* and *kapha dosha*.^[14] It increases strength only when it is used to bathe the body except the head. If it is used for a head bath it causes harmful effects on the eyes, hair, and heart.^[15]

According to *Sushruta* during aggregation of *kapha* and *vat dosha* one can use lukewarm water for the head as medicine.^[16] Warm water bath should not be taken during the summer season since it imbalances *Pitt dosha*. The warm bath has stimulation action on the skin and the reflex excites the heart and circulation. The most important of these is hypothermic action which warms the body, which warms the blood in superficial vessels thereby by increasing the deep body temperature through circulation. With an increase in body temperature heat-sensitive neurones are exciting. While cold-sensitive neurons are inhibited in the thermoregulatory centres of the hypothalamus causing inhibition of the sympathetic nerves and stimulation of para-sympathetic nerves. Leading to dilation and induced perspiration to decrease the body temperature. Bathing in the warm water exerts sufficient hyperthermic action to induce vasodilation and increase blood flow. Supplying more oxygen and nutrients to the periphery and increasing the elimination of carbon dioxide and metabolic waste materials. The hot water bath is contraindicated at the time of infectious disease, *Rahu Darshan*, Sunday, the person having the urge of Son child, friend, or health does not take a bath with hot water as explained in *Manusmruti*.

Bath with cold water^[17,18]

The cold-water bath or *snan* or *sheet Jal snana* helps in improving eyesight and in stimulating *Agni* which helps in digestion activity. Bathing with cold water cures *Raktapitta*. Bathing in extremely cold water, especially during the winter season leads to an aggravation of *Kaphadosha* and *Vata dosha*. Cold bathing has multiple beneficial effects on health such as improvement of the immune system, cardiovascular circulation, and vitality.^[19] Reducing cortisol which is a stress hormone. Increasing endorphins is a natural painkiller. Increasing norepinephrine which regulates emotions and boosts focus, fights, anxiety, and depression.

Balance out the level of the feel-good hormone that is serotonin. Increases male fertility. It helps to tighten cuticles in your scalp to make sure your hair is well rooted. Increases the metabolic rate of fat and stimulates weight loss. Speed up muscle soreness and recovery so athletes take a cold shower after hard work, anti-aging, better blood circulation, your skin appears healthy and clears, nourish the skin tissue sales. Also, *Acharya charaka* says *Siddharth snan* in *kushtha chikitsa*.^[20] *Agaru chandanadi snana* in *prameh chikitsa*.^[21] *Snan* with *Gaurasarshapa kalpa* in *rajyakshmachikitsa*^[22] *Kulthya sunthyadi snan* in *shothchikitsa*^[23] *Amalaki snan* in *khalitya palitya chikitsa*^[24] (Amlaka water in which Amlaka fruits are soaked always will surely get free from wrinkled skin and grey hairs and lives hundreds of years).

Snana according to the season

Hemant ritu - Ushna jal^[25]

Vasant ritu – sukhambunda^[26]

Sharad ritu - Hansodak snan^[27]

CONCLUSION

Here the main aim of the article is to give an overview and light up the main study of *Snan* already given in different *samhita* and compare it with today's era. After an overview of this, we can conclude that the ancient lifestyle was different lifestyle, *snan* is important for today's lifestyle to improve our health and lifespan we should follow the daily and seasonal regiment of *snan* suggested by *Ayurveda*. *Snan* plays a significant role in maintaining health and prevent from lifestyle disorders. These remarkable *dincharya* regimens must be adopted as a drugless therapy and lifestyle modality which is the highest need of 21 century to maintain positive total health, booting psycho physical parameters, and improving work efficiency.

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