



A Review on *Dinacharya* (Daily routine) Modalities With Special Reference To *Snana* (Bathing)

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Abstract:

Ayurveda is the eternal science of life. The goal of Ayurveda is to maintain the health and cure of the diseases. To achieve one such goal of maintaining the health, *Dinacharya* is one of the means. According to lay man *Dinacharya* means to follow certain things like waking up early in the morning, brushing teeth etc whereas in Ayurveda along with these things there are different procedures like *Nasya*, *Tambula*, *Abhyanga*, *Snana*, etc. *Dinacharya* includes things which are mandatory to follow regularly so as to maintain normal equilibrium of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala* and *Agni*. Practising *Dinacharya* is easy to understand and implementation of it; in our daily routine is of prime importance to keep away diseases. *Snana* is one among such *Dinacharya* and its importance in maintaining health is discussed.

Key words: *Ayurveda*, *Dinacharya*, *Snana*

Introduction:

Dinacharya is known as Daily routine, the ideal life style for a day explains various duties which systematically and scientifically highlights and explains various duties from one day to the next. *Dinacharya* helps to establish balance in one's constitution. It also regularizes a person's biological clock, aids digestion, absorption and assimilation and generates self esteem, discipline, peace, happiness and longevity.¹ It starts from waking up in the morning in *Bhramhimuhurtha*, *Ushapana*, *Mala-Mutra Visarjana*, *Achapana*, *Dantadavana*, *Kavala*, *Gandusha*...etc. *Snana* is one of the regimens of *Dinacharya* mentioned by *Acharyas* of Ayurveda and other ancient literatures of India. The procedures, time, duration and benefits of *Snana* along with different types of *Snana* have been explained in our classics. By considering the explanation given in our classics regarding *Snana* in our *Dinacharya*, one can surely say that *Snana* is important and unique concept explained among the regimens of *Dinacharya*.

Snana should be done every day as said in manu (*Snanam Samachareth Nithyam*...)². *Acharya charaka* says that *Snana* is the best way to remove fatigue (*Snanam Shramaharaanam Shreshtam*)³. Cleanliness is one among the *Dinacharya* which has two kinds; external and internal. External cleanliness is to keep the body clean by *Snana*, etc while internal cleanliness is to keep the mind free. The cleanliness is necessary for health, growth and development of the body. *Snana* is the best form of cleaning.

Definition of *Snana*: *Snana* is the regimen that is to be done daily and which removes *Mala*, *Sweda* and makes the person healthy. *Snana* is purifying, libidinal stimulant and gives longevity. *Snana tarpanaparyantham kuryad ekena vasasa*⁴. It removes fatigue, sweat and dirt (*Srama Sweda Malapaham*)⁵. Taking bath is auspicious, enhances virility, longevity, strength, compactness and *Ojas*⁶.

Matra of *Snana* : Some classical reference gives us the reference that *Snana* should be performed like an elephant which means water used to take bath should be more in order to clean the whole body. According to modern science, 140-150 litres per person for daily purpose and it include bathing⁷.

Time of *Snana*: *Acharyas* have told one should take bath early in the morning⁸. Among *Dinacharyas*, *Snana* is explained after *Vyayama* as there will be *Ayasa* (tiredness) after doing *Vyayama* and *Snana* is practised to relieve the *Ayasa*.

Types of Snana: *Snana* are seven types as explained in *Yagnavalka*⁹ which are *Mantra*, *Bhouma*, *Agneya*, *Vayavya*, *Divya*, *Varuna* and *Manasa* in order. Bathing by uttering *Auponishadi Mantra* is called as *Mantra Snana*. Bathing by smearing the whole body with the mud is called *Bhouma Snana*. Application of *Basma* (Ash) i.e. burnt powder of cow dung is *Basma* and other *Basma* can also be used. This *Snana* is also called as *Agneya Snana*. Bathing with dust that arises while cow is walking is called as *Vayavya Snana*. That dust itself is considered as most auspicious and this *Snana* is called *Vayavya Snana*. Bathing in sun rays or the glare of the sun combined with rain is called *Divya Snana*. Bathing in river water is called *Varuna Snana*. Thinking about the sacred soul is called *Manasa Snana*. According to Mahabharata, *Varuna Snana* is considered as best among the types of *Snana*.

Ideal place for Snana: One should do *Snana* daily in river, sacred places, ponds, *Sarahasu*, *Garta*, *Prastravana* as said in *manusmriti*¹⁰.

Benefits of Snana: *Acharyas* have clearly explained about the qualities of *Snana*. Bathing is purifying, libidinal stimulant, longevity and it removes fatigue, sweating and dirt. It also brings about strength in the body and is an aid par excellence for the enhancement of *Ojas*¹¹. It also improves the appetite, removes itching, drowsiness, thirst, burning sensation, sin¹². *Snana* is *Hridya* (good for heart), *Sarvendriya* (purifying all organs), *Tushtidam* (gives satisfaction), *Pumsavatvardanam* (enhances virility), *Deepanam* (improves appetite), *Rakta Prasadanam* (clears the blood)¹³. *Yogaratanakara* advised that *Snana* should be done in early morning as it is bestowed with qualities like; *Papa Nasaka* (relieves all sins), *Dukha Swapna Vidhwamsana* (destroys the *Dosas* of bad dreams), *Pavithram* (auspicious), *Deha Mala Nasakam* (removes all morbid matters of the body), *Tejo Vardhanam* (improves lustre), *Rupadhyokaram* (helps in beautification of body), *Shareera Sukha Dayakam* (brings pleasing or happiness to the body), *Kayagnideepanam* (increases the digestive fire), *Streenam Manmatha Gahanam*, *Sramaharam* (increases the work of women)¹⁴. Rubbing the entire body with cloth soon after bathing improves lustre, removes itching and disorders of skin^{15,16}.

Effects and indications of Ushna and Sheeta Jala Snana: Bathing with *Sheeta Jala* (cold water) relieves *Rakta-Pitta* (bleeding disease) whereas *Ushna Jala* (hot water) *Snana* increases strength and even relieves *Vata* and *Kapha Doshas*¹⁷. *Ushna Jala Snana* to *Adha Kaya* (body below the clavicle level) increases strength whereas to head decreases the strength of hairs and eyes. Hot water bath to head causes harmful effect to eyes in all the *Kalas*(always)¹⁸.

Bathing is necessary not only for cleanliness of skin but also for their action on the internal organ as it helps in circulation. The sebaceous secretion of the skin and the sweat requires daily removal. Bathing is the last form of cleaning the body. The warm bath has stimulation action on the skin and reflex excites the heart and circulation.

Hot water when put on the body does vasodilatation wherein cold water has a contrasting effect of vasoconstriction. This is more of localized action than generalised one.

Indications of *Snana*: Bathing in cold water mitigates the aggravation of *Rakta* and *Pitta*. Warm water bath strengthens body and mitigates aggravations of *Vata* and *Kapha*. Bathing in hot water over the head is bad for eyes but it is beneficial in aggravation of *Vata* and *Kapha*. Bathing in Luke warm water, drinking milk, copulation with young women, eating food which are healthy and less in quantity are good for men always¹⁹.

Contraindications of Snana: Bathing is contraindicated for persons suffering from *Arditha*(facial palsy), *Atisara* (diarrhoea), *Aadmana* (distension of abdomen), *Pinasa* (rhinitis), *Ajeerna* (indigestion), *Bhuktavata* (immediately after taking food), *Jwara* (fever), *Karna Shoola* (earache), *Anila*(*Vata*), *Arochak* (anorexia) and also persons suffering from *Netra*(eye), *Aasya* (oral), *Karna* (ear) *Rogas* (diseases)^{20,21}.

Bathing in very cold water and in cold seasons aggravates *Vata* and *Kapha*. And bathing in very cold water and in hot season causes aggravation of *Rakta* and *Pitta*. A person should not bath when he had enough food, diseased, at mid night, with much cloth and near unknown ponds. One should not see his own image in water, looking down into the water standing on the lake, splash the body with either by hands, beat out the

water from the hairs, cover the body with wet cloth or with the head dress, use the same dress, oil etc. warm earlier to bathing.

Gunas of Snana Sheela Manushya: Acharya manu has explained 10 Gunas of *Snana Sheela Manushya*. *Bala*(strength), *Roopa* (enhances beauty), *Swarashudhi*(clear voice), *Varnashudhi*, *Sparsha*(touch), *Gandha* (pleasant odour), *Parishudhatha* (cleaniness), *Shanty* (peace), *Saukumarya* (delicacy), *Uttam Strilaba* are the *Gunas* (qualities) of *Snana Sheela* person²².

Rules for taking bath: Bath should be taken in the morning and is pre- requisite to the morning meal. Bathing should be done with Luke warm water, rubbing the entire body with cloth soon after bathing improves lustre, removes itching and disorders of skin. Dress should be changed after bath, sleep, while going out of the house and worshipping gods. Bathing entering into reservoirs of water and sleeping should not be done naked. While taking bath in a well or pond which is built by others bathing should not be done without taking out handful of mud from floor for five times (taking out mud signifies digging the well ourselves and making the well his own. This was another ancient custom).

Baths fixed on special occasions: After the child birth, women will have two or three ceremonial baths, the time for which is fixed upon the advice of the priest. The women after menstruation must have a purifying bath. The practise of an oil bath is a good Indian custom. Women folk in country side use a paste consisting of gram, mustard oil and turmeric powder and rub it on the body before bath. One who bathes with *Amlaka* water in which *Amlaka* fruits are soaked, always will surely gets rid of wrinkled skin and grey hairs and lives hundreds years²³.

Bathing procedure:

Balneotherapy (healing with water)- This excerpt is reprinted from healing springs, the ultimate Guide to taking the waters, by Nathaniel Altman. One of the most important activities that takes place at a traditional spa is balneotherapy, a natural, approach to health and healing that uses hot spring water, gases, mud and climatic factors (such as heat) as therapeutic elements.

Simple solution: In addition to bathing, modalities such as hydrotherapy, mud therapy, physical therapy, massage, steam baths, physical exercises, inhalation of water vapour, and drinking mineral water are often used as part of a complex therapy for both health and preservation and treating disease.

Over the past four centuries, the science of balneology has evolved into a medical speciality in Europe and Japan, where special courses in balneotherapy are offered to both physicians and nurses by major medical schools. Doctors believe that thermal springs facilitate healing in number of important ways.

Eight ways balneotherapy heals:

- Bathing in hot springs gradually increases the temperature of the body, thus killing harmful germs and viruses.
- Thermal bathing increases hydrostatic pressure on the body, thus increasing blood circulation and cell oxygenation. The increase in blood flow also helps dissolve and eliminate toxins from the body.
- Hot springs bathing increases the flow of oxygen –rich blood throughout the body, bringing improved nourishment to vital organs and tissues.
- Bathing in thermal water increases body metabolism, including stimulating the secretions of the intestinal tract and the liver, aiding digestion.
- Repeated hot springs bathing (especially over 3 to 4 week period) can help normalize the functions of the endocrine glands as well as the functioning of the body's autonomic nervous system.
- Trace amounts of minerals such as carbon dioxide, sulphur, calcium, magnesium and lithium are absorbed by the body and provide healing effects to various body organs and system. These healing effects can include stimulation of the immune system, leading to enhanced immunity; physical and mental relaxation; the production of endorphins; and normalized gland function.
- Mineral springs contain high amounts of negative ions, which can help promote feelings of physical and psychological well-being.

- The direct application of mineralized thermal waters (especially those containing sulphur) can have a therapeutic effect on diseases of the skin, including psoriasis, dermatitis, and fungal infections. Some mineral waters are also used to help the healing of wounds and other skin injuries.

Conclusion: *Snana* as one of the Dinacharya procedures which has promotive, protective and curative effect on the body and should be practised as a prophylactic measure to attain its benefits and to maintain health.

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