

BATH IN AYURVEDA, YOGA AND DHARMAŚĀSTRA

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ABSTRACT

The tradition prevalent now is that bath with cold water early in the morning is the best. Ayurvedic classics mention the detail routine of work from waking up in brāhmanuhūrta. Before bath several other works are to be attended to and this verily brings the time of taking bath to after sunrise. In Yoga texts early bath is prohibited. Similarly, bath with cold water is also prohibited in Yoga and Ayurveda texts. However, in Ayurveda bath with hot water is mentioned wholesome to body below the neck while harmful to the eyes and hair. References from āyurvedic classics like Carakasamhitā, Suśrutasamhitā and from Yoga texts like Haṭhapradīpikā, Gheraṇḍasamhitā are given to support the different views.

I. INTRODUCTION :

Bath has an important place in the socio-religious life of India. It is supposed to be an act of purification not only of physical body but also of mind. It is deemed necessary for the internal purification.

The general practice prevalent till recently and still in vogue among orthodox and deeply religious or tradition oriented people is to wake up early morning before sunrise and take bath with cold water. A study of the authorities in different classics on this practice is presented here.

II. WATER, THE SUBSTANCE REQUIRED FOR BATH :

The substance required for bath is water. Water has been regarded as a great purifier from very ancient times in India. Hymns addressed to water as divinities are found in Rigveda and Atharvaveda and waters are described as themselves pure and purifying others. The Śatapathabrāhmaṇa mentions water as the means for purification. In āyurveda and yoga also these views are found.

III. TIME OF TAKING BATH :

The tradition is to take bath in the early morning before sunrise. In āyurvedic literature we find detail rules laid down for the different

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acts of the day, under the heading *dinacaryā*. The exact time for taking bath is not mentioned directly. But one has to get up from bed early in the morning in *brāhmamuhūrta* and attend to certain acts before bath. Last watch of the night is called *brāhmamuhūrta* and it is about 1½ hours before sunrise. Getting up in *brāhmamuhūrta* is accepted by *āyurveda*, *yoga* and *dharmaśāstra*.

The first thing after getting up is to look at some auspicious things. According to *dharmaśāstra* after getting up, one has to reflect over *dharma* and *artha* that he would seek to attain that day and over the bodily efforts that he would have to undergo for securing his object and think out the real meaning of Vedic injunctions. Then follow *śauca* and *dantadhāvana*. Then one has to attend to the natural urges of passing stools and urine. Other acts that follow are—tooth brushing, tongue cleaning, *tāmbūla*, *abhyaṅga*, *vyāyāma*, and *udvartana* and then *snāna*. These acts as mentioned in different *āyurvedic* classics are slightly different.

Bhelasamhitā describes the effects of *nasya*, *gaṇḍūṣa*, tooth brushing etc., but not in order. Unfortunately, effects of bath are also not found.

Sequence of acts in *Suśrutasaṃhitā*: tooth brushing, tongue-cleaning, cleaning of mouth, *añjana*, *tāmbūla*, *śirobhyāṅga*, *abhyaṅga*, *pariṣeka*, *vyāyāma*, *udvartana*, *udgharṣaṇa*, *utsādana* and then *snāna*.

In *Aṣṭāṅgasaṅgraha* the sequence of acts mentioned to be performed after getting up is as below :

Waking up, attending to nature calls, *ācamana*, brushing teeth, tongue cleaning, *añjana*, *nasya*, *gaṇḍūṣa*, *dhūmapāna*, *prasādhana*, *tāmbūla* *abhyaṅga*, *vyāyāma*, *udvartana* and then *snāna*.

Sequence in *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* : waking up, calls of nature, tooth brushing, *añjana*, *nasya*, *tāmbūla*, *abhyaṅga*, *vyāyāma*, *mardana*, *udvartana* and *snāna*.

Kalyānakāraka mentions tooth brushing, *abhyaṅga*, *vyāyāma*, *udvartana*, and then bath.

When the time required for all these acts is taken into account, the time for bath comes to not less than 1-2 hours after sunrise.

The minimum period required for each act may be as below :

Śauca	...	15 minutes
toothbrushing and } tongue cleaning }	...	5
añjana, nasya gaṇḍūsa and tāmbūla.	...	10
abhyañga	...	10
Vyāyāma	...	40
Śīrobhyaṅga, udvartana udgharṣaṇa	...	10

90 mts = 1 hour - 30 mts.

This clearly indicates that bath is not to be performed before sunrise.

When yoga is referred to, yama and niyama are among the eight aṅgas of Patañjali's Yoga. Niyama are the rules of conduct that apply to individual discipline, while yama are universal in their application.

Among the five niyamas listed by Patañjali, one is śauca, which is essential for one's well-being.

According to Vasiṣṭhasaṁhita, śauca-purity is two fold - external and internal.

शौचं च द्विविधं प्रोक्तं बाह्यमाभ्यन्तरं तथा ।

मृज्जलाभ्यां स्मृतं बाह्यं मनः शुद्धिस्तथान्तरम् ॥

I-50,51

The external purity is attained by clay and water and internal purity is purity of mind. Patañjali does not mention snāna directly as it is included under śauca. Direct instructions to perform bath are also rare, as it is a practice known by custom, and due to that only some limitations or rules regarding snāna are given.

Bath in the early morning and bath by cold water are prohibited in yogic treatises. This is indirectly supported by āyurveda also. According to dharmasāstra a bath with hot water is allowed only to children, old men and persons that are ill.

Śrīnivāsa in his Haṭharatnāvalī quotes Gorakṣa. to prohibit bath in the early morning.

वर्जयेत् प्रातःस्नानोपदासादिकायक्लेशविधिं तथा I-74

Not only bath in the early morning but fasting and all acts causing discomfort to the body are prohibited. Gheraṇḍasaṃhitā also quotes this. Śivasamhitā includes bath in the early morning among the prohibited.

बहुलं भ्रमणं प्रातः स्नानं योगी त्यजेदतानि निश्चितम् ॥ III-33

Yugaladāsayogendra, in his Yogamārgaprakāśika or Yogarahasya quotes the traditional view of prohibition of early bath.

प्रातः स्नानं जनद्वेषं मोहं च प्राणिपीडनम् ॥ III-82

While āyurveda and yoga are not in favour of bath before sunrise, dharmasāstra prescribes bath just before sunrise. The morning bath is to be taken immediately after brushing teeth before day break when one sees the eastern directions lit up by the morning rays of the rising sun.

The tradition in vogue appears to be a development during medieval period due to the political upheavals and other disturbing circumstances in the country.

IV. NUMBER OF BATHS:

The ancient and medieval Indians insisted in a daily bath for all and recommended two baths a day in certain cases and three baths to a hermit. Śātātapa provides for one who has sexual intercourse with his wife during the period from 5th to 16th day after monthly illness begins, but for intercourse after these days the purification is the same as for urination and voiding ordure; bath is also prescribed for vomiting after sunrise after shaving, after a bad dream, on the touch of a foul man etc.

Some dharmasāstra works prescribe two baths a day, one before day break and another at noon. Āyurveda prescribes two baths a day.

द्वौ कालावुपस्पृशेत् ।

The usual rule is to bathe once a day, which has also been the general rule for centuries. The third bath by hermits is to be performed before sunset. Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā, a yogic work mentions trikālasnāna - three baths a day.

V. QUALITIES OR EFFECTS OF BATH :

Carakasāṃhitā mentions that bath is purifying, libidinal stimulant and life giving; it removes fatigue, sweating and dirt. It brings about strength in the body and is an aid *par excellence* for the enhancement of ojas.

According to Kalyāṇakāraka bath gives satisfaction, strength, lustre, health, longlife, normalcy of the humours and smoothness and also increases gastric fire. It is pure and subsides drowsiness, sleep and sin. It also develops the desire to eat i. e. creates appetite.

Effects of bath in Suśrutasaṃhitā: Bath removes somnolence, (inordinate) bodily heat and sense of fatigue. It allays thirst and checks itching and perspiration, brings on a fresh relish for food, removes all bodily impurities, clears the sense-organs, gladdens the mind, purifies the blood, increases the appetising power, destroys drowsiness and sin, and increases semen. The sight of a man is invigorated by applying cold water to the head at the time of bathing, while the pouring of warm water on the head tends to injure the eye-sight.

According to Aṣṭāṅgasaṅgraha and Aṣṭāṅgahrdaya bath increases the digestive fire, acts as an aphrodisiac and increases the span of life; it also gives strength and spirit; it removes itching, impurities, fatigue, sweating and drowsiness, thirst, burning sensation and sin. Taking bath with hot water of lower body i. e. without drenching the head is very strengthening but the same drenching the head is harmful to the hair and eyes.

VI. CONDITIONS WHERE BATH IS PROHIBITED :

In religious literature, taking bath during night is strictly prohibited. However, on special occasions like eclipses, bath is permitted during night. The general rule is not to take bath at night. Āpas-tamba says 'let him avoid a bath at night'. Parāśara says that a bath by day purified by the rays of the sun is commended and that bathing at night is not commended except on seeing an eclipse. Viṣṇudharmottara agrees with this view but recognises several exceptions. Bhaviṣyapurāṇa says that one should not take a bath at night, but a bath may be made at night on proper occasions.

Suśrutasaṁhitā says that in case of an aggravation of the deranged vāyu and kapha, the head may be washed with warm water, as a medicine, after careful consideration of the intensity of the disease. Bathing is also not beneficial in fever, diarrhoea, earache, tympanites, ādhmāna, aversion to food and indigestion, and in the diseases due to the actions of the deranged vāyu. It should not also be taken just after a meal.

Bath is prohibited in Kalyānakāraka for the persons suffering with following diseases : vomiting, earache, bloating of the abdomen, indigestion, eye disease, recent nasal catarrh, diarrhoea and fever. It is also prohibited immediately after food.

VII. OTHER DETAILS RELATING TO BATH :

Several dharmasāstra works prescribe daily bath in natural water like rivers, tanks connected with temples, lakes, deep reservoir etc.

One should not bathe in water belonging to an individual (i. e. a well or reservoir dug or dammed by him) but if one has to bathe when no other source is available, one may bathe after removing 3 or 5 lumps of clay from the bottom of the reservoir. This condition is mentioned in Aṣṭāṅgasaṅgraha only among the āyurveda works.

Prohibition of taking bath naked is also found in dharmasāstra works; besides they prohibit bath with all clothes on; one is also not to rub the body in water but outside on the bank.

After bath one is not to shake one's head (for getting rid of water); nor should one rub off the water on one's body with one's hand or with the garment already worn by one; one has to cover one's head with a turban (to dry the hair) and wear two fresh garments already washed and dried. These rules are mentioned in Aṣṭāṅga-saṅgraha.

Bath should not be taken without drenching the head. Bath in cold water or in a source with scanty water is not advisable. Taking bath entering into a source of water like tank, river and going to sleep in a naked state is prohibited. One should not put on after bath the dress already worn before bath and touch oil and fat.

Bathing in extremely cold water in winter tends to enrage the bodily vāyu and kapha, while bathing in hot water in summer agitates the blood and the pitta.

Hot water bath is advised by Sunderadeva. In his Haṭhasaṅketakalikā, Sunderadeva says :

प्रातः शिरः स्नानमथो न सेवयेत्
आवश्यके तूष्णजलैर्विधेयं स्नानं न कार्यं हिमवारिणा तु ॥

Here baths over the head and by cold water are prohibited. Bath by hot water is suggested. He also advocates bath without drenching the head i. e. Kaṅṭhasnāna. Svātmārāma in his Haṭhapradīpikā does not mention anything about bath but recommends hot water in case of vāta going astray or vitiated.

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सारांश

आयुर्वेद योग तथा धर्मशास्त्र में स्नान

बी. रामाराव

यह परम्परा प्रचलित है कि प्रातःकाल ठण्डे पानी से स्नान करना उत्तम होता है । आयुर्वेदिक ग्रंथों में ब्राह्ममूर्हत में जागने से लेकर क्रमवार कार्यों के विवरण का उल्लेख किया गया है । स्नान से पूर्व अनेक अन्य क्रियाओं से निवृत्त होना पडता है और इस प्रकार स्नान का समय सूर्योदय के बाद निश्चित हो जाता है । योग की पुस्तकों में प्रातःकालीन स्नान निषिद्ध है । ठीक यही प्रकार योग और आयुर्वेद के पुस्तकों में ठण्डे पानी से स्नान भी निषिद्ध है । किसी प्रकार आयुर्वेद में उष्ण जल से गर्दन से निचले भाग तक के लिये स्नान के पूर्ण औचित्य तथा आँखों और बालों के लिए हानिकारक होने का उल्लेख किया गया है । विभिन्न दृष्टिकोणों के समर्थन में चरकसंहिता सुश्रुतसंहिता जैसे आयुर्वेद ग्रन्थों तथा हठप्रदीपिका घेरण्डसंहिता आदि योग ग्रन्थों में उपलब्ध प्रसंगों का उल्लेख है ।