

Pancacara – Ethics for a Healthy Life

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Abstract

The last Tirthankar of this time cycle – Bhagwan Mahavira after attaining Keval Jnana delivered deshana about Soul, Karma, Matter, Atoms, Astronomy, Life Science, Satvik Food, etc, for twenty nine and a half years. The things which he has told about health are so clear that it seems that today's science is still far behind.¹ The concept of this topic is to make understand the most precious and healthy mind by following the principles of Pancacara in our life. One has to plan in such a way so has to keep the nutritional science and principles of Bhagwan Mahavira in daily routine.

Key Words: Health, Body, Mind, Thought, Diet, Asana, Meditation, Accomplishment

Introduction:

The health philosophy of Mahavira renders a new thought in this area. Decaying and destruction of disease give us a good health. Proper diet in proper time and where there is oath of yoga and meditation provides the life a new destination, new faith, new inspiration. One should master the art of living. Acharya Tulsi in "Vyahara Bodha" has said every art and every skill is worthless, even scholarly persons are considered un scholarly, when they are not skilled in art of living, their name and fame is only of worldly appreciation.²

Aarogya Bohi Labham

Viewing/Exposing/Inauguration of new horizons. Today our concept of health is like a puppet in the hands of medicines. But in reality, health is defined by possession of will power, creative thinking, positive thinking and good thoughts. These are our inherent powers, by nurturing these we will always remain healthy.³

What is knowledge and what is faith?

It is revealed in the Agamas (Jaina Scripture) that "Nadansanissanam" without faith, knowledge cannot be attained. If faith is wrong – knowledge is wrong. If faith is right – knowledge is right. This means that knowledge is dependent on faith. Dharshan/Faith is that power on the basis of which our assumption and our beliefs are determined.⁴ On the basis of vision the person gathers information and knowledge. His entire knowledge, thought process and decision is influenced by his vision and beliefs. This real vision is nature, it is that which conforms to nature and living within its boundaries is called Darshanacara or Ethical faith, knowing this faith in a limited way is termed as Jnanacara or Ethical knowledge, and putting the same into practise is called Caritsacara or Ethical conduct.⁵

Essence of Sense Organ:

Health of the body is dependent on the five sense organs, and in the highest dependency is the taste bud of the mouth. Bhagwan Mahavira has described nine causes by which one is diseased by misuse of this sense- organ.⁶ Sense-Organs is the

basis for a healthy life. One of the procedures described to keep the sense-organs in control is not eating after sunset. Eat only as long as the sun is out, which means the best time to eat is between sunrise and sunset. Our digestion system its productivity becomes very low. Bile and other acids required for digestion are not generated properly after sunset. It is up to us to believe that this is the principle of religion or not, but it is the principle of healthy life to follow and strengthen this fact one requires a healthy mind.⁷

Mental Fitness:

The basis for healthy mind is intake of simple or Satvik Food. We are what we eat. Swami Vivekananda has said, to understand a person one need not see his face. Just show me the plate of food he eats every day and I can tell you about his character.⁸ Physical fitness is necessary but more than physical fitness, mental strength and mental fitness is important. Mind can be strong who consumes Satvik food. Rajsik and Tamsik food weakens the mind. Hence without a strong mind set we cannot make the right food choice. For example, a tinned fruit when kept in closed bottles contains an acid called sodium benzoate. If we take two grams of this and feed it to dog, it will die instantaneously.⁹

Can stale, tamasic food help in strengthening our mind and keep it morale?

A strong morale can provide stability to thoughts and decision and this stability make our efforts successful. It is a popular custom to sprinkle salt after a dead body is buried as this helps in decomposition of bones and flesh. Hence it is important to understand that the salt in our food is constantly melting away our bones and

body. Now Americans have left their food style and have adopted our Ayambil like food just boiled grams/pulses.¹⁰

Thoughts:

The process of making, eating food and most importantly feeding with love helps in improving our thoughts and aura thereby having a deep impact on our overall health. There are many diseases which do not arise from the body, nor from the mind but arise due to thoughts.¹¹ Fromresearch it has been established that one can identify the onset of sickness from one's aura. A person's aura gives clear indication that this diseases is going to attack in 3/6 months. It is an abstract disease which can be diagnosed only from the aura. If our thoughts are pure then no disease can stack us. One,who's thought mechanism is excellent, is pure – he is able to fulfil the requirements of body inherently. He is able to produce such enzyme that makes his entire body healthy and happy.¹²

Satvik Diet/Ahara:

For good thoughts as satvikahara is important so is the process of excretion. Excretion also includes removal of dirt and toxin particles from every cell of the body. Such excretion is only possible through fasting. Choice and limit of food, excretion and fasting – these three are tools for a healthy life. Just limiting food alone cannot guarantee good health. We need to include fasting as well to ensure holistic improvement.¹³

If we plan our routine by keeping both nutritional sciences and principles of Bhagwan Mahavira, we can obtain a healthy life. Food and health cannot be separated – they are synonymous.¹⁴

Fasting:

Fasting is one of the twelve types of austerities described by Bhagwan Mahavira. Dr. Dyui, one of the profound thinkers has stated that- stop giving food to a sick man but ensure that the fear is not installed that he will die of starvation. There is a high potential that his death will die due to starvation. Dr. Cailbu and Nobel Laureate Dr. Alex Carel have proved on the basis of their research that fasting not only prevents weakness in old age but it also promotes long life. This is because fasting enables purification of body and sustains youthfulness. Those who cannot undertake complete one-day fasting, can follow another technique called Unodari – where in one eats a little less than stomach –full state. If you want to be healthy, give up eating breakfast.

“Egabhaattam Cabhoyanam” – to be disease free – eat only meal a day. Bhagwan Mahavir was able to bear afflictions only due to discretion while eating. The third tool for healthy life is Vrutti-Sankshap-limiting the number of items to eat. Fourth tool is Rasa-Parityaga-giving up (Vigaya) products like milk, sugar, yoghurt, ghee and oil. These four austerities can ensure that he never requires medical treatment. Apart from these one can also follow – Navakarsi (not eating/drinking only 48 min after sunrise), Porsi (not eating/drinking 3 hours after sunrise), Ekasana (having only one meal per day etc). These austerities prevent expenditure of energy. By saving energy we save power for our future.¹⁵

Asanas/Body Posture:

One of the external austerities is Kayakleshe which means to accomplish this bodily postures are mandatory.

Bhagwan Mahavir has elaborated in detail on the various bodily postures. Apart from detailing them, he has practised it as well. One of his principles states that- for a saint five places are mentioned, which are optimum, they are glorified:

- Sthanaytika (Steady Posture)
- Utkatukasanika (Squatting Posture)
- Pratimasthayi (Statue-like Posture)
- Veerasanika (Heroic Posture)
- Naishadyika (The same posture all through the night)

The practise of bodily postures is done with the perspective of accomplishing the body master it in such a way that it never tortures you or makes you suffer.

Bhagwan Mahavira expounded on various topics like Postures, Soul, Scriptures etc., and all these included the health perspective as well. If health perspective was not important why would he propagate so many postures? Just doing Goduhika asana (posture of milking the cow) would have annihilated so many karmas- then why did he demonstrate so many other types. For a saint-various kinds of treatments are difficult to undergo-hence Bhagwan propagated various postures to keep oneself in good health. In Jain Scriptures we find references to postures in many different places.¹⁶

Health and Accomplishment:

We have two sides to choose from health and accomplishment. If health is weak then accomplishment will also not be possible. There is a deep connection between health and accomplishment. If health is not good, can anything be achieved? There are any people who breathe 40 times a minute. There are not able to breathe deeply. Their lungs are so

weak that they do not have the strength even to take a deep breathe. In such a state how can one do Sadhana. There are some people, as soon as they sit to meditate-they start burping continuously. How can these people meditate? How can they accomplish anything? Hence to remain healthy one must understand the 'physical anatomy. One must understand all bodily mechanisms. One must also know how one can make each part work efficiently. Bhagwan Mahavira had propounded the science of postures not only for spiritual accomplishment but also with health as one important perspective. The main objective of asanas is to annihilate the karmas and purify the soul. If these are done with only health as the goal shrinks. We should as our main focus.¹⁷

Conduct:

There are many chemicals which can curb oldage and diseases. There are many types of chemicals. It is said that conduct/ethics is one of the important chemicals. If conduct is not right, no other chemical can perform fruitfully. Even after consuming a variety of chemicals he is not healthy. On the topic of health-ethics/conduct cannot be ignored.¹⁸

Conclusion:

The vision of consciousness of health would be able to open new horizons in life. Desire to be healthy is the basis of success, holistic approach, incorporates emotional and spiritual well-being.

In this world we find many kinds of pandits. Some pandits are rigid, whereas some keep postponing and some are only

behind money. The pandits who keep procrastinating are well known to delay today to tomorrow, tomorrow to day-after and so on. The rigid scholars only debate on rules, present arguments based on logic- what will happens if you sit like this? What happens if you sit like that? What happens by changing outer appearance? What will happen if we do this? They are completely bound by rules and logic always. The fights we see are between two types of people – Religious fanatics and the Agnostics (question the existence of god). A virtuous person does not involve in any fight-he focuses all his energy in the practise of good values, learning many skills or different languages will not help in attaining moksha, instead we need to erase the root causes of karma which are attachment and hatred, need to wipe away our inner desires which causes sins. One who understands these, attains freedom from them and also annihilates the past baggage of karmas, can attain moksha.

“Pakkipatam Samadhaya”- watch a sparrow or a crow or any bird for that matter-they pick out their own feathers which do not aid in flying. The birds don't allow such useless feathers to stay on the body. Bhagwan Mahavira says that live life just like this. Whether it is your own body or born from your womb-if it is not aiding in accomplishment of your goal-there is no need to take care of such burden. If a bird starts accumulating useless feathers then he can forget the dream of flying in the sky. Similarly use that in life which helps you and don't store those things will never have any use.¹⁹

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