

|| ಪೂರ್ಣಮದಃ ಪೂರ್ಣಮಿದಂ ಪೂರ್ಣಾತ್ ಪೂರ್ಣಮುದಚ್ಯತೇ ||
|| ಪೂರ್ಣಸ್ಯ ಪೂರ್ಣಮಾದಾಯ ಪೂರ್ಣಮೇವಾವಶಿಷ್ಯತೇ ||

Pūrṇam

A Journal of Indian Knowledge Systems

(Website: <https://purnam.vercel.app>, <https://purnam.ac.in>)

Portraying the attempts of scholars and scientists.....

..... to understand the contributions of Bhāratiya Heritage and SAINTists™

Pūrṇam

Vol. 2

No.1

January-June 2026

Pages: 49-51

ISSN: 3049-3587 (Print)

Perspective

Restoring Vyādhi-Kṣamatva: Ayurveda's Timeless Blueprint for Immunity and Epidemic Resilience

D K Mahesh Kumar

[Banavasi, Sirsi, Uttara Kannada – 581318]

Abstract

While modern medicine has made remarkable strides in acute care, its siloed approach often struggles with the complex, multi-factorial nature of non-communicable diseases and epidemic vulnerability. India's ancient medical heritage, however, offers a profoundly holistic concept of immunity—Vyādhi-Kṣamatva—which transcends the narrow biomedical model of antibodies. This paper explores the Ayurvedic framework for building unassailable immunity not through isolated supplements, but through a meticulously designed daily (Dinacaryā) and seasonal (R̥tucaryā) regimen. By analysing classical injunctions from the Caraka Saṁhitā and aligning them with modern chronobiology and environmental medicine, we argue that the strategic re-integration of these practices is the single most critical public health intervention we can offer a generation untethered from natural rhythms. This is not nostalgia; it is a restorative and deeply scientific return to a biodynamic way of living that holds the key to both personal wellness and societal resilience.

Keywords: Vyādhi-Kṣamatva, Dinacaryā, R̥tucaryā,

Introduction

The global crisis of the recent pandemic exposed a painful truth: a nation's health security cannot rest solely on pathogen-targeted therapies. True defence lies in the host's terrain. In the race to boost 'immunity,' the market was flooded with isolated vitamins, zinc tablets, and instant decoctions, creating a reactive culture of panic-driven supplementation. Ayurveda dismisses such fragmentary approaches. For the Ācāryas, immunity (Vyādhi-Kṣamatva, literally "the capacity to resist disease") is not a single biochemical entity to be topped up. It is an emergent property of a balanced

ecosystem within the body—a symphony where digestive fire (Agni), tissue integrity (Sāra), mental equanimity (Sattva), and synchronicity with the macrocosm all play indispensable parts.

Caraka defines the purpose of medicine entirely around preserving this equilibrium: "Svāsthya rakṣaṇam, āturya vikāra praśamanam"—first, protect the health of the healthy, then cure the diseased. This makes preventive, rhythmic living not an alternative hobby but the very bedrock of Ayurveda. The key strategic article today, therefore, must shift the discourse from searching for a magic immunity pill to embracing the profound wisdom of

Rtucaryā and *Dinacaryā*, protocols designed to prevent the vitiation of *Doṣas* long before a pathogen can colonise a weakened host.

Dinacaryā; the Circadian Hygiene as the First Vaccine

Modern science has just begun validating what our sages encoded millennia ago: the presence of a master biological clock. Chronobiologists have won Nobel Prizes for discovering molecular mechanisms of the circadian rhythm, yet the average Indian wakes to a jarring alarm, skips the crucial morning window, and eats dinner long after the sun's metabolic signal has waned. *Caraka Saṁhitā* Sūtrasthāna warns that habits contrary to nature's rhythm (*Prajñāparādha*) are the root cause of all epidemic and metabolic disease.

The *Dinacaryā* is a strategic, time-bound protocol for immunity engineering. The day begins with *Brahma Mubūrta* (approximately 48 minutes before sunrise). Rising at this time isn't a ritualistic superstition; it is a deliberate exposure to the charged, oxygen-rich atmosphere where the *Vāta* quality is light and mobile, facilitating complete bowel evacuation and mental clarity. This single practice sets off a cascade of neuro-endocrine benefits, balancing cortisol and serotonin naturally.

This is followed by a sequence of rituals that modern wellness has repackaged in isolation: tongue scraping (*Jihvā Nirlekhanam*) detoxifies the gustatory organ and prevents the reabsorption of overnight metabolic waste (*Āma*). Oil pulling (*Gandūṣa*) strengthens the oral mucosa and gums, acting as a primary barrier against airborne pathogens. *Abhyaṅga* (self-oil massage) before bathing is not just a luxury; it pacifies systemic *Vāta*, mobilises lymphatic drainage, and nourishes the peripheral tissues, directly contributing to *Bala* (strength) and *Ojas* (the vital essence of immunity). When an individual commits to this one-hour daily investment, they are not merely 'cleaning up'—they are systematically removing the fertile ground (*Duṣya*) upon which disease thrives. This is the most profound and cost-effective public health strategy a nation can adopt.

Rtucaryā; the micro-cycles

If *Dinacaryā* handles the micro-cycles of the day, *Rtucaryā* governs the macro-cycles of the year—and its neglect is the primary driver of epidemic transitions. The Indian subcontinent traditionally observes six seasons, each a distinct interaction of solar radiation, wind direction, and ecological change, which in turn directly modulate the body's

Doṣas. The transition between seasons (*Rtusandhi*), when the body is in a fragile state of adjustment, is identified in Ayurveda as the period of highest disease risk. The wise, therefore, gradually taper the regimen of the outgoing season and adopt the incoming one over a two-week window.

Consider the *Śarada* (autumn) season, a time of high Pitta and the season typically associated with viral outbreaks. *Caraka* prescribes specific foods: sweet, light, bitter, and cold to pacify the accumulated heat of the monsoons. He recommends eating only when the previous meal is fully digested, and consuming clarified butter (*Ghṛta*) medicated with bitter herbs to fortify the blood and skin—the seat of *Bhrajaka Pitta*, which governs the skin's immune barrier. Furthermore, the classical recommendation to observe a moderate harvest moon fast and wear garlands of purifying pearls or cooling flowers is not poetic whimsy; it is a psycho-somatic intervention. Cold-water bathing, moon-bathing at night, and the deliberate consumption of *śali* rice and moong beans create an internal environment so cool and resilient that the *Pitta*-aggravated pathogens of the season fail to colonise.

In stark contrast, the modern urbanite continues consuming the same refrigerated drinks, cold salads, and heavy non-vegetarian fare across all seasons, completely disregarding the *Agni*'s seasonal flux. By reviving *Rtucaryā* as an educational module in homes and schools, we equip communities with a dynamic, predictive health tool. The Ayurvedic axiom "*Rakṣet Kaleva kāleṣu*"—protect health by observing time-bound conduct—becomes the most scientific shield against seasonal epidemics.

The Inner Dimension

No discussion of immunity is complete without addressing the subtle body. Ayurveda proposes a fascinating model where physical strength (*Bala*), immunity (*Vyādhi-Kṣamatva*), and spiritual vitality are all downstream products of a supreme essence called *Ojas*. This *Ojas* is the final, refined nectar of all bodily tissues, and it is rapidly depleted not only by physical disease but also by negative mental states like worry, anger, grief, and excessive talking—causes modern medicine is only now recognising as chronic low-grade inflammation.

The classical texts state unambiguously: "*Viśeṣādasattvavataḥ... vyādhayah*" — those who are mentally strong resist disease. The pathway to such strength lies in the cultivation of *Sattva*, the quality of clarity, compassion, and restraint. The *Ācāryas* thus prescribed a diet and lifestyle of *Sāttvic* conduct: truthfulness, non-violence, regulated sexual activity,

and the daily practice of *Yoga Nidrā* or meditation (*Dhyāna*). In the context of an epidemic, fear alone can induce a state of *Śoka* (grief) and *Bhaya* (fear), vitiating *Vāta* and rapidly incinerating *Ojas*. A society armed with the tools of *Prāṇāyāma* and meditative introspection possesses an immunological armour that no external pathogen can easily breach. The strategic revival of this inner dimension is perhaps the most urgent cultural reformation we need—an entire populace shifting from anxiety-driven reactivity to a calm, *Ojas*-preserving resilience.

A Strategic Call for Integration

The profound tragedy of the 21st century is that the nation which gave the world the science of life is seeing its citizens suffer from the very diseases its systems could prevent, simply due to a colonially induced amnesia. The resistance we often face—that *Dinacaryā* and *Rtucaryā* are impractical or time-consuming—is a failure of strategic communication, not a failure of the science itself. The pandemic taught us that health systems can collapse overnight, but personal and community immunity cannot. Re-learning to live in alignment with the *Kāla* (time) and *Deśa* (environment) is the most empowering, democratic, and decentralised form of health security available to humanity.

Therefore, the crucial article for this age is not a complex treatise on obscure herbal formulations, but a clarion call to revive the very rudimentary, non-negotiable daily and seasonal codes of conduct. These are the strategic tools that make medicine ‘preventive’ in its truest sense.

Conclusion

It’s time to re-establish Indian culture for a stronger nation, and the message worth passing here is; “Immunity is not bought in a bottle; it is cultivated every morning at sunrise, in a fragrant oil bath, in a conscious meal, and in the quiet, unwavering stillness of a Sāttvic mind.” Rebuilding this foundational health architecture is the greatest patriotic and spiritual service we can render to the coming generations.

References:

1. Agniveśa. *Caraka Saṁhitā*, Sūtrasthāna, 5/13, 7/35, 30/26; *Cikitsāsthāna*. Translated by Sharma, P.V., Chaukhambha Orientalia.
 2. Suśruta. *Suśruta Saṁhitā*, Sūtrasthāna 15/48. Translated by Prof. K.R. Srikantha Murthy, Chaukhambha Press.
 3. Svoboda, Robert. *Prakriti: Your Ayurvedic Constitution*. Sadhana Publications, 1989. (For contemporary correlation on *Ojas* and *Dinacaryā*)
 4. Panda, A.K., & Hazra, J. (2012). “Regimen of the seasons (*Rtucaryā*) – A holistic approach towards the maintenance of health.” *Ayu*, 33(4), 512-516.
-