



## Review Article

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### IDEAL LONGEVITY OF LIFE AS PER AYURVEDA

- Bedekar Swati <sup>1</sup>, Uma B. Gopal <sup>2</sup>, Kulkarni Bhagawan Gangadhar <sup>2</sup>, Jahagirdar Gururaj <sup>3</sup>, Thomas Anju <sup>4</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>Professor, Department of Shareera Rachana, SDM College of Ayurveda and Hospital, BM Road, Thanniruhalla, Hassan, Karnataka, India  
<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Shareera Rachana, SDM College of Ayurveda and Hospital, BM Road, Thanniruhalla, Hassan, Karnataka, India  
<sup>3</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Shareera Rachana, SDM Institute of Ayurveda, Bangalore, Karnataka, India  
<sup>4</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Shareera Rachana, SDM College of Ayurveda and Hospital, BM Road, Thanniruhalla, Hassan

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#### \*Corresponding author

Dr. Swati Bedekar, Professor, Department of Shareera Rachana, SDM College of Ayurveda and Hospital, BM Road, Thanniruhalla, Hassan, Karnataka, India. E-mail: lswati68@gmail.com

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#### ABSTRACT

As per Ayurveda normal state of dosha (Humour), agni (Fire element), Dhatu (Tissues), malakriya and prasanna Atma Indriya and mana (mind) is responsible for Swastha Purusha (Healthy Person). Health is the ideal state of mankind. It is normal, when one is in health, his organs function properly. Life is pleasant, for his brain responds by generating thoughts in setting optimism and courage. The longevity of life should not be viewed only on the parameter of age. An individual should possess vigor, freedom from symptoms of disease, cheerfulness, enthusiasm nurtured every day of his life. Life should be viewed not only with respect to longevity but also in terms of quality, mental status, balanced diet, adaptation of individual to diurnal variation and environmental influences, compatibility, Morales, Satisfaction, achievements, interpersonal relationship with his kith and kins, neighbors, colleagues etc. Some of these points have discussed in the article with respect to longevity of life from Ayurvedic perspective.

**Keywords:** Longevity, Health, Dimensions of Life

#### INTRODUCTION

The term longevity means length of life span or maximum span of life with respect to age factor. As per samhita references in Satyayuga, Tretayuga and Dwaparayuga the life span of human being has been quoted as 400, 300, and 200 years respectively while in Kaliyuga it is of 100 years. Gradually the life span goes down at the rate of one year on the lapse of 100 years.<sup>1</sup> Maha Pani (hand), Pada (foot), Skanda (Shoulder), Lalata (Forehead), Roma (hair follicles) etc. are Dirghayu lakshana (Symptoms of Longevity) used in classics to explain the health status of an individual.<sup>2</sup> Swastha means psychosomatic constitution of a person in the state of complete homeostasis without any disturbances in his health status.<sup>3</sup> Aarogya means absence of disorder but not of complete state of healthiness, a state of dosha samya.<sup>4</sup> Ayu is the root for achieving all four objects of life like dharma, artha, kama, moksha. Both kama and moksha denote happiness.<sup>5</sup> Ayu means the combination of body (shareer), sense (Indriya) mind (sattva) and soul (atma).<sup>6</sup>

Getting early in the Brahmi Muhurta, danatadhavana (Brushing), Gandusha (Gargling) improves physical health and mental vigor.<sup>7</sup> If an individual practices routinely anointing medicated oil his body, it slows down the aging process, improves vision, nourishes tissues and enhances sound sleep.<sup>8</sup> Regular Exercises (Vyayam) increases the working capacity, regulates the digestion and maintain physic of the body.<sup>9</sup> It is hard to define health without mentioning disease, for the state of health includes freedom

from disease. The two are related by being at opposite extremes of a scale. They are thus exclusive of each other, for a person in health does not have disease, and a person who is ill is no longer healthy.<sup>10</sup>

In humans though health is in normal state, it is not self-perpetuating. Health must be nurtured and cultivated for its persistence by following the sadvrittha (codes and conduct) regimes like dinacharya (daily regimen), rutucharya (seasonal regimen) etc. as prevention is better than cure.

In order to understand the health, we must understand the life at its best –at its longest, at its broadest, at its deepest. Health gives way to disease when these dimensions of life are diminished.

#### Length of Life

Usually we measure life in months and years. “How old are you?” is the most important queries on personal matters. An oldster asks a child to assess the timely normal growth and mental progress. A person is asked before he is legally given right to vote and likewise. We assume that life should move along a predetermined pace like milestones of an infant, start walking when he is one year, ready for school when he is six years, matures physically in his teens, capable of leading marital life after twenty years, spectacles in forties, enjoy life with grand children in fifties, retirement at sixties and life after seventies depends on fundamental vitality still in reserve. As the age advances, the attitude of a person changes with the passing of time.<sup>10</sup>

During first twenty years a youngster feels that the life should move faster. Person will be impatient and will not give importance for conserving his life forces but interested in what lies on other side of twenty. Once past forty a person wants to postpone the evidences that life is running out as it reminds the unpleasant of aging.<sup>10</sup>

Life processes can be made to cease gracefully if this vitality is conserved without squandering. Average life expectancy of a child has increased over seventy but will not represent the qualities of swastha purusha (healthy individual) in relation to fundamental advances of human body or increase in a person's vitality.

Though the life expectancy has increased due to advent in science and technology, the principle cause of death nowadays are accidents, degenerative diseases, stress and cancers. Though a person escapes death the tissues will finally wear out. There is a holistic approach by various systems of medicine and also progress in medical science in conquest of diseased condition and prolonging life of person by sparing him from death due to chronic illness, but he may live only for few years longer to die of one of the wear out diseases.<sup>10</sup>

The process of aging within the body's tissue makes them increasingly vulnerable to degenerative processes. If a person is spared by heart disease, the arteries in brain may deteriorate until he passes away by a stroke. If arteries are healthy, kidney may fail to function. Hence there is global awareness in understanding the prospects of health as there is no meaning in prolonging the life merely by taking treatment for disease.<sup>10</sup>

People have started healthy practices which keep their body and mind fit and healthy like yoga, aerobic and anaerobic exercises, wholesome food habits, and meditation and life style changes.

There is more inclination of people globally towards Ayurveda, the science of life and the nectar hidden in the verses said 5000 years back by seers related to its fundamental principles, constitution of an individual, use of medicines prepared by using plants having medicinal value, dosage which varies from one to another, characteristic features of longevity of life (Deerghayu lakshana), diet and nutraceuticals, revitalizers (Rasayanas) and lest to avoid degeneration of tissues and to maintain the life of a person in terms of disease free longevity.

### **Breadth of Life**

Length of life if cherished is not at all important but quality of life has to be maintained. A person's heart continues to beat significantly during his eighties when compared to a person who died at sixty even though the eighty year old spent half of his life in bed hence cannot be said to be having better life in terms of breadth when compared to sixty year old passing

Ideally a person should have vigor, freedom from symptoms of disease, zest, cheerfulness enthusiasm nurtured every day of his life. When these qualities are present, life has breadth. Every illness takes its role in down casting the body resources with minimum left over to provide optimism and courage which a healthy person has. After recovery from illness vitality will replenish for certain extent to lead life.<sup>10</sup>

A person who has suffered from endemics and secondary complications will suffer from reduction in the store of general vitality and loose resistance to face further health problems and become more and more vulnerable, sooner or later he become causality to disease. Series of illness reduced the length of life as well as its breadth. Along with shorting the life span in length, there is decrease in breadth because between illness, person has lacked the zest which a full quota of vitality would have provided. Overcasting, emotional exercises, troubled conscience, stress and strains, intoxicants, practice of devitalizing habits reduces the vital energies and reduced the life expectancy in terms of breadth.<sup>10</sup>

### **Depth of Life**

Depth is another dimension of life which is made up of factors that composes more abundant living. It requires much more than the normal functioning of all the body's organ. A person may be physically fit with excellent health, but is considered as a living entity in his influence with the family, in his participation with official /public affairs, in his cooperation with community enterprises and in his prospects for accomplishment in life. To make living more abundant, an individual with a mission in life, with a goal to reach and with a service to render, his life has depth. A person who loves his neighbor as thy self-love the God, with all his soul, mind and heart. Love is said to be magic factor to one's life. A person should live with clear conscience; render selfless service to humanity which is going to revitalize the life activities.<sup>10</sup>

This is said to be the magic of more abundant living, for when life has depth, it will have and as a consequence greater breadth and greater length, as the human body is designed for activity. It thrives best when its muscles are in action, when blood circulates briskly, when there is rapid exchange of gases in lungs, and when brain is actively concerned with pleasant and stimulating thoughts and challenged with a purpose to live. Hence activity tempered with moderation brings in more abundant living.<sup>10</sup> Ayurvedic perspective of an ideal lifestyle includes following Dinacharya (daily regimen), rutucharya (seasonal regimen), sadvritta (codes and conduct) all of which are instrumental in the prevention of diseases and promotion of ideal health<sup>11</sup>.

### **CONCLUSION**

An Ideal longevity of life includes all in terms of length, breadth and depth. An individual has to lead a life keeping in mind what is good, what is bad for his life, what creates happiness and what things are responsible for his sorrows and miseries. Each fraction of a second is important in maintaining homeostasis and any disturbance in this may act as a triggering factor and lead to some or the other disorders/disease manifestations. Ayurveda basically stands on the principle of prevention, and says that one has to follow Dinacharya, rtucharya, pathya-apathya, ahara sevanakala, constitution, habits and lifestyle that is pro for making a person physically, physiologically and mentally fit. It includes dyana, yoga, pranayama, positive attitude, optimistic thinking, awareness regarding wholesome and

unwholesome diet, morals and to lead life with clear consciousness.

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