

## Similarities And Differences Between Yogic Shatkriyas And Ayurvedic Panchakarmas

Dr. Nisha Gokul Tandale<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Ganesh Barahate<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Uday Neralkar<sup>3</sup>,

PG Scholar Of Panchakarma Department,

Associate Prof And Guide Of Panchakarma Department,

Hod Of Panchakarma Department.

Csmss Ayurveda Medical College, Kanchanwadi, Aurangabad.

### Abstract:

Ayurveda and Yoga both have their roots in Vedas. Both are globally accepted and researchers are eager to reevaluate these traditional sciences to put forth its workings in front of the world. Yoga means not only the asana and breathing techniques but it has many more aspects like Mudra, Bandha, Shatkriyas (cleansing processes). Similarly Ayurved is being accepted globally for not only its herbal medicines but also Detox methods or cleansing activities known as Panchkarma.

Many studies have been conducted on Ayurvedic Penta bio purifactory processes and yogic six unificatory processes. Here have discussed the similarities and differences in these two practices.

**Key words:** Panchakarma, shatkriya, yoga.

### Introduction:

Ayurveda is the oldest form of science. It is the science of day to day life. It helps to improve and maintain disease free lifestyle by its principles of swasthvirita palan and penta bio purifactory processes. The classics of ayurveda states that the healthy person is one with equilibrium of doshas, agni, mala and enlightened soul, senses and mind. This equilibrium is maintained by removing the excess of doshas from the body by panchkarmas. Yoga consisting various classic texts but specially Shatkarma are mentioned in Gherand Samhita and Hath Yog Samhita. To attain Moksha ( one of the 4 purushartha of ayurveda ) yoga describes 7 steps. The first amongst them is Shodhana i.e. purification of body through Shatkriyas.

### Aim and Objectives

- To understand Yogic Shatkarmas and Ayurvedic Panchkarmas from various texts available.
- To study the similarities and differences between them.

### Material and Methods:

References from yoga literature are collected, websites, articles, have been searched to compare with Ayurvedic panchkarmas.

### Review:

#### Yogic Shatkarmas:

धौतिर्बस्तिस्तथा नेतिः त्राटकं नौलिकं तथा । कपालभातिश्चैतानि

षट् कर्माणि प्रचक्षते ॥ (ह०प्र० 2 / 22)

According to Hath yog pradiipika and gherand samhita, there are 6 cleansing techniques called as Shatkriyas. They are dhauti, basti, neti, tratak, nauli and kapal bhati.

Main aim of these cleansing processes is to detox our body so that body will be prepared for the further steps and reach the ultimate aim of yogi i.e. to achieve Moksha which is one of the Purushartha stated by Ayurveda.

**1. Dhouti :** is a cleansing process of gastro intestinal tract. types:

**A) Vaman dhouti:** In this, person drinks saline water (salt added water) and thus induces the vomiting. Vaman dhouti brings out the toxins from stomach by voluntary vomiting. After vaman dhouti laghu ahar is taken.

Along with vaman dhouti Dand dhouti and Vastra dhouti are also seen.

**B) Dand dhouti:** Soft banana stem is used to insert in to the stomach through mouth. Here throat, oesophagus and stomach are cleaned. Stem used is about 2 feet long and half inch in diameter. No such procedure is practiced in

panchkarma .

**C) Vastra dhouti :** 20 feet long and 2 inches wide white cotton cloth is swallowed keeping one end outside the mouth and removed in 20 min . All the toxins ( ama and kledak kapha) get adherent to the cloth and are removed along with it.

**D) Laghu Shankh Prakshalan:** also known as Varisar dhouti . Here Shankh means conch shaped intestine and prakshalan means wash completely. Alimentary canal is cleansed through this process.

Saline water( salt added water) is asked to drink sitting in veerasana till the stomach gets full. Particular aasnas are performed by which an urge of passing stool happens. This process is repeated until water is free of stool.

**2) Basti :** person stands in flowing water upto the navel bending forward expanding the spincter muscles and applying the uddiyan bandh and nauli, water is drawn inside by anus. Now a days yogis use the rubber catheter .Then nauli kriya is done and lastly water is expelled out so that the gastrointestinal tract is cleansed .

**3) Nethi:** Nethi is done with water ( jal nethi) , thread ( sutra neti) and milk ( dugdh neti). In Jal neti saline water is instilled from one nostril and it comes out from another thus clearing the nasal track.

This is done in forward bending position or sitting position.

In sutra neti ( catheter used now a days) Catheter is inserted from one nostril and that comes out from mouth, holding the catheter by one hand it is moved to and fro few times. This is done in sitting or standing position.

Jal neti ,sutra neti also eradicates all the mucous (kaph) from nasal track, effective in asthma ,sinusitis, allergic rhinitis and also effective in eye disorders ,ear and throat disease. But specific duration for jal neti or sutra neti is not fixed yet.

**4) Tratak:**Tratak means to gaze at one point. It may be flame,small dot, tip of nose, omkara etc. Tratak brings the equilibrium in sympathetic and para sympathetic nervous system which makes the alpha waves more stable

and thus helpful in depression. Trataka cleans the eyes ,corrects weakness and certain defects of eyes ,relaxes mind. No such procedure is followed in panchkarma.

**5) Nauli:** It rolls, rotates and agitates the entire abdomen and the associated muscles and nerves. Contract the rectus abdominus muscles,so that they form a central arch ,running vertically in front of the abdomen. Contract muscles without strain. Then release the contraction and raise the head. Nauli purifies the manipur chakra , helps to increase mental clarity . It massages the pelvic region , stimulates the nerve plexus and maintains the secretions from ovaries, testis, pancreas.

**6) Kapalbhati :** is performed by flopping of the abdomen by active exhalation and passive inhalation

Has cleansing effect on lungs, balances and strengthens the nervous system ,tones digestive organs and purifies the nadis and energizes the mind. However it is said that this kriya acts on vata , so this will stimulate Vata vaha Nadis there by curing mental disorders.

**Panchakarma:**

**Vaman: In Vaman process various decoction , medicated milk,sugarcane juice,etc are used.**

Time period for vaman procedure is about 7 days approx. Before Vaman, purva karma like snehan and swedan (oleation and fomentation is done). Vaman procedure along with its purva karma removes the toxins from cellular levels . After Vaman (pradhan karma) , some principles are followed about ahar ( diet) and vihar known as paschat karma to bring back the agni to its normal state.

During Vaman procedure the purva karma loosens all the doshas which get collected into the koshta and the prabhav of the vaman dravya expells out all the toxins through urdhva marg i.e.mouth.

**Virechan :** Virechan karma expells out the vitiated pitta dosh by dravya prabhav from adhobhag(anus). It plays important role in rakt and pitta pradhan vyadhis.

**BASTI:** Basti karma includes decoction ( Niruha basti) and oil ( Anuvasan basti ) administered

from anus using the basti yantra ( now a days catheter). Basti is said to be ardhachikitsa . It is the best treatment in Vata pradhan vyadhis. These Niruha and Anuvasan Basti not only cleanses the gastrointestinal tract but has its effects on whole body.

: Medicated oil, decoction ,ghee are used in specific quantity lying in the supine position. These nasya dravyas work by Ayurvedic principle

“NASA HI SHIRSO DWARAM”; nose is the gate way for brain. So all the drugs used for nasya karma not only work in nasal track but also the higher centers in the brain.

It is said that essence of Nasya or Nasya dravya is reaching the brain and acting on important centers controlling different neurological, endocrine and circulatory functions and thus showing systemic effects.

Mechanism of drug absorption, Transcellular passive diffusion, Drug diffuses through membrane. It is an active transport process. More suitable for lipophilic drug , Sneha nasya may absorb through this process.

Para Cellular Passive Diffusion- drug is transported between the cells and transcytosis by vesicle carrier. It is suitable mechanism for hydrophilic drugs e.g. avapeedak, dugdh and kwathnasya.

Nasya is effective in urdhva jatrugat vyadhis, kaph dosha , shirorog, ear nose throat disease, asthma, sinusitis etc. Duration for Nasya karma is fixed about 7 days.

RAKTAMOKSHAN: this Panchakarma procedure is used for vitiated pitta dosha and rakta ,pitta Pradhan vyadhi. Jalauka ,alabu ,shrunga,ghati yantra,siravedh are used for raktamokshan procedure.

### Discussion:

The origin of Shatkriyas might be way back but stated in texts for the first time in Gherand Sanhita and Hath yog sanhita. Ayurveda and its principles of panchakarma stated in texts like Charak and Sushrut Sanhita are the oldest. As explained in one of the article by Dr. Somdatta Tiwari , Shatkarma are influenced by panchakarma E.g given is that : in Hath Yog Pradipika explaining the dhouti karma states

that it cures the 20 types of kapha diseases, but it does not elaborate those diseases, therefore one has to look back to the ayurvedic texts. This explains Shatkarma are picked from Panchkarmas of ayurveda.

And so following similarities are also seen in between them:-

- 1) Vaman dhouti from shatkriyas and Vaman karma from panchkarmas can be correlated with each Other as Vaman and Vaman dhouti both cleanses upper alimentary canal, respiratory system , amashay .
- 2) Shankh prakshalan one of the type of dhouti correlates with Virechan karma among the panchkarmas as Virechan and Shankhprakshalan cleanses Antra and pachak sanstha as well as in some amount shankprakshalan also get control over pitta and vata dosh by expelling toxins through stool.
- 3) Basti karma from panchakarma and jal basti from shatkriya cleanses pakvashay.
- 4) Jal neti and nasya cleanses upper respiratory tract, kantha pradesh and shir Pradesh and acts kaphaghna.

In the same way we could find some of the differences in mode of action, time required, quantity of drug used, etc in panchakarma and shatkriyas:-

- 1) Vaman – madan fal kwath, sugarcane, milk etc. Vaman dhouti- Saline water  
Vastra dhouti – vastra ,saline water Dand dhouti- dand  
Vaman dhouti is a single time procedure but vaman karma requires a time period of approximately 7 days.  
Vaman dhouti has no such purva karma like snehan swedan as performed before vaman karma. During the dhouti kriya vomiting reflex is responsible and no any role of dravya prabhav happens here as seen is vaman karma.
- 2) Shankha prakshalan is a one time procedure , virechan needs a period of approx. 7 days. Shankhprakshalan has no such purva and paschat karma as in virechan.  
Virechan – virechan dravya Shankhprakshalan- saline water

In shankhprakashan excretory urges are induced by various asnas after drinking saline water at the fullest and in verechan ,dravya prabhav acts mainly along with purva karma.

- 3) Basti: Basti karma- decoction, oil . Basti kriya-water ,air. Basti kriya has no purva and paschat karma as in basti karma.  
Basti kriya is a fix process but basti karma varies in drugs, time period like 8days, 15 days, 30 days, alternate oil and kadha basti,according to the diseases,etc.
- 4) Nasya- decoction ,oil .Jal neti – saline water  
Nasya is done for 7 days while jal neti is one time procedure but specific time period is not known. Nasya crosses the BBB , Neti is bounded to nasal track , throat,etc.
- 5) Tratak mentioned in shatkriyas has no similar procedure in panchakarma.
- 6) Nauli is mentioned in shatkriyas. No similar procedure is mentioned in panchakarma.
- 7) Kapalbhathi is mentioned in shatkriyas. No such procedure is mentioned in panchakarma.
- 8) Raktamokshan is one of the panchakarmas used for vitiated rakt and pitta dosha. No such procedure is mentioned in shatkriyas.

**Conclusion:**

- Main similarity is that both the practices are done for Shodhan prakriya ( cleansing practices) Main difference is seen in the mode of action, duration, quantity of drug and drugs used.
- Shatkarmas is the first step for spritual aspirant to reach the aim of moksha among the 7 steps. Shatkarma aims at maintaining the yogic flow between ida and pingla nadis
- Panchkarma are necessary to detox the body and maintaining the tridosh equilibrium and so that the shaman aushadhi works well. Its the most important for the apunarudbhav of the disease.
- Panchakarma acts deeply on cellular level and removes the disease from its roots.
- Shatkriya are the shorter practices of panchkarma but they can not act as purificatory measures as Panchakarma. Shatkriya are only cleansing procedure for internal psychogenic doshas and improveth

mental as well as spiritual health.

- Panchakarma maintains the tridoshaj balance and shatkriya maintains the spiritual balance.

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