

SIGNIFICANCE OF BASIC FIVE SYMBOLISED ELEMENTS (PANCHAMAHHUTAS) IN RELATION TO HEALTH

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Here the basic five elements, as we all know are AIR, WATER, EARTH, FIRE and ETHER. To bring these elements in applied form they have been symbolized by replacing Air with Oxygen and Fresh Air, Water as Water, Earth with Food, Rest and Sleep, Fire with Solar Energy and Sunlight, and Ether with Sportsman Spirit and Exercise.

(1) Firstly AIR in the form of OXYGEN and FRESH AIR:

1.1 Air is readily accessible medium for sound waves to travel and which will enable us to hear beautiful, exciting, sad, melodious, warming notes etc. We cannot produce sound or vibrate our vocal cords in spite of good health and size without the medium as air.

1.2 Oxygen in the air combines with our food and supplies energy to our brain to think, heart to beat and muscles to contract for performing physical movements.

1.3 Air helps to evaporate the perspiration on our skin to feel cool after hard play or work.

1.4 Germs which create diseases by entering into the lower cluster of air sacs in our lungs can be cleared off with deep breaths of fresh air.

1.5 Fresh air speeds up circulation resulting in supply of oxygen and nutrition to all our cells which increases the thinking and working efficiency also removing the wastes from the smallest part of living organism i.e., cell.

1.6 Sleeping in fresh air was an early remedy on tuberculosis.

1.7 Pollution free air at country side, hiking or camping will help us inhale fresh air resulting in calming nerves and enabling us to sleep more soundly.

1.8 Deep breathing will enhance oxygen percentage which in turn keeps our brain alert and gives lifts to chase away depression.

1.9 Over exposure of cold air is harmful as it increases our blood pressure and also puts load on our heart to keep body warm. Because of exposure to cold air our white blood cells become less active and this may result in lack of immunity against cold and other infections.

1.10 Too warm air is also harmful as it reduces our normal working capacity. The ideal temperature is about 60° to 80° F with 30 to 65% humidity.

1.11 Sir Philip Sidney quoted "The ingredients of health and long life, are great temperance, open air, easy labor and little care".

(2) WATER in the form of WATER:

2.1 Drinking lot of water with meals will dilute the saliva, gastric and digestive juices effecting digestive process. Hence, Dr. Mervyns Harding of Loma Linda University, California, prescribes "drinking water 15 minutes before meals and 90 to 120 minutes after meals will help our digestion better, provided we do not miss to drink enough water in between times".

2.2 Much of the water is dissipated through kidneys, skin, lungs and colon, so we need to drink more water.

- 2.3 Our digestive juices work best at normal body temperature, so drinking ice water or other very cold or hot beverages slows down the digestion until the stomach contents returns to our normal body temperature.
- 2.4 Drinking at least six to better eight glasses of water between meals is advisable.
- 2.5 Water cannot be said only a thirst quencher, but is a mainstream of our life. It is a solvent and dispersion medium for nutrients, electrolytes, minerals (sodium and potassium) and waste products.
- 2.6 Accumulation of wastes in our body make us feel tired, weak and may be sleepy, so plenty of water will help every cell flush impurities and other wastes and carries it to blood and lymph. From there it is taken to skin, lungs, kidneys for excretion.
- 2.7 Oxygen from air dissolves in thin layers of fluid in the air sacs of lungs and makes its way through.
- 2.8 Blinking of eye lid is possible only with the help of lubrication and that is water.
- 2.9 The grey matter of brain is 85% water.
- 2.10 Glands that make digestive juices secrete two to three gallons of water a day.
- 2.11 Water delays fatigue in hikers, mountain climbers and marathon runners.
- 2.12 Water lubricates every part of the body protecting it from injuries and making it supple.
- 2.13 Cold water may be applied for sprains and strains for first 24 hours avoiding swelling and pain.
- 2.14 Water application on burns stops tissue destruction and speeds up recovery.
- 2.15 A hot footbath is an excellent means of relieving a headache, as it dilates the blood vessels in our feet and this draws the blood away from our head.
- 2.16 Refreshing shower or bath stimulates our circulation, which clears our brain, helps digestion, circulates more white blood cells, thus building resistance.
- 2.17 Water is often called as the universal solvent.

(3) EARTH in the form of FOOD, REST and SLEEP:

3.1. FOOD:

- 3.1.1 To start with the day a citrus fruit or juice, one another fruit, whole grain cereal, low fat milk, high protein food is a good breakfast to keep us feel energetic and alert during the mornings.
- 3.1.2 Researchers found that the urge for food intake during morning is comparatively more than in the noon's.
- 3.1.3 Breakfast will keep us energetic in mornings and we can accomplish our work easily. It also helps us to cope with the problems arising during the day. Breakfast intake enhances if a good walk, jog or run is preceded.
- 3.1.4 A study revealed that the children who eat a really good breakfast stay more alert and can concentrate better than those who eat a skimpy breakfast. Also it is noticed in factory workers that breakfast eaters produce more and suffered fewer accidents during the hour just before lunch than their counterparts who ate poor breakfast.
- 3.1.5 Good breakfast will keep optimum blood sugar levels. Brain cells entirely depend on glucose and if anything that drops the blood sugar level below normal, it directly affects the working of brain cells.

3.1.6 Heavy meals at dinner associated with immediate going to bed leads the ground work for heart attack or stroke, because the calories are not burned and which produces fat that is embedded in the inner walls of blood vessels.

3.1.7 Some benefits of high protein breakfast are, it produces greater work before lunch, keeps mentally alert, delay muscular fatigue, greater endurance, less accident ratio, requirement of oxygen is below normal as is needed, neuromuscular tremor reduces, low nervous irritability etc.

3.1.8 A study confirms that to burn every grain of sugar vitamin B1 (Thiamine) is used (also known as happiness vitamin) to release energy and more sugar will exhaust up thiamine stock resulting in irritability.

3.1.9 Inter society commission for Heart Disease Resources Recommends “a more vegetarian diet with excess calories” for heart. This will result in lowering our cholesterol levels.

3.1.10 A study by David Nieman says “The latest studies have concentrated on the importance of carbohydrates in the diet. Vegetarian diets can easily provide for high carbohydrates intake that can double or triple endurance time”.

3.1.11 Benefits of a vegetarian diet are low cholesterol, less total fat, less saturated fat, greater endurance, fewer calories help in not adding up excess kilograms, more economical, less likely to cause cancer, reduces other diet related diseases, more vitamins, minerals and fiber.

3.1.12 Dr. Scharaffen Berg also says that “our risk of heart attacks can be reduced by 90% chiefly by not smoking and by using a vegetarian diet, which can also reduce our risk of cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis and a whole host of disease”.

3.1.13 To save our hearts it is recommended to cut down on sweets, fewer fatty foods, maintaining optimum weight, eating low salt, low cholesterol diet, substitute Soya proteins for meat.

3.1.14 Dr. James Blankenship of the department of Nutrition says “Contributing factors of heart disease are reduced by the consumption of olive oil, because the arteries become more pliable, more elastic and therefore able to respond to the pressure.]

3.1.15 Dr. John Scharffonberg at last suggests “Eat at proper times a variety of natural foods in quantities to maintain ideal weight”.

3.2 REST and SLEEP (As Earth is with Gravity):

3.2.1 Quote by Ovid “Take rest, a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop”.

3.2.2 Dr. Charles Thomas, of the Banning prevention health care and education centre, insists to rest, because rest for half an hour increases white cells in our body dramatically, which in turn increases immunity against diseases.

3.2.3 Because of overtiredness, not only muscles, but brain also gets sluggish, the treatment is to rest for a while. This result in increased sharpness, keenness, alertness, refreshed to make wise decisions. Plenty of sleep is good program to our 10 billion brain cells to flash correct answers to our problems.

3.2.4 Dr. W. Proctor, Harvey, Georgetown University, classifies people into A, B, C and D types. According to his grouping, if you are of type A, you are alert and active in morning and slow and inactive in the evening. Types B are more awake and active at night. Types C are good both times, and type D neither time. He says “We should pay

attention to which type we are and if possible, do our most important thinking and work during the time we are alert”.

3.2.5 Sleep also helps us to rebuild cells of our skeletal muscles, heart muscles, kidneys, bone marrow, stomach and brain. It prepares us for greater speed, accuracy, efficiency both physically and mentally. During sleep the waste is eliminated from various body parts and replenished with oxygen and glucose.

3.2.6 Shakespeare aptly referred to the “Sleep that knits up the revel’d sleeve of care” means: a tangled thread of care or worry is well knitted by the sleep.

3.2.7 Earth provides us food and rest; hence the importance of this element in health cannot be neglected or denied.

(4) FIRE in the form of SUNLIGHT and SOLAR ENERGY:

4.1 Sunlight brings health and wealth of beauty into our lives. It helps blossom color in flowers, green chlorophyll in leaves, heats volatile oils in fruits and flowers scattering their rich perfume and fragrance. It helps in changing starch to sugar in fruits like strawberries, cherries and oranges on the contrary it also changes sugar to starch ripening corn, wheat etc.

4.2 Sunshine melts snow to fill lakes and rivers, awakens the hibernating animals and triggers the nesting hormone in birds.

4.3 Sunlight builds vitamin D in our body, enabling to use calcium for building bones and teeth (study by Ralph Steinman, California).

4.4 Sunlight increases liver activity and saves the lives of premature babies with yellow jaundice. The infrared (heat) rays of sunlight penetrate deeply aiding circulatory and muscular systems.

4.5 Sunlight helps not only to kill germs around us, but facilitate the production of white cells which act as immunity against infections.

4.6 The bright yellow of sunshine brings colors to our vision, vision to enhance our personality, personality to cheer and feel warm.

4.7 People who get up early and welcome the glorious colors, boundless energy and healing rays in the eastern horizon are found always with better health.

(5) ETHER in form of SPORTSMAN SPIRIT and EXERCISE:

5.1 Under open sky, the qualities developed are innumerable and to quote a few the very first is the aim and inspiration to reach high as sky. The vastness and infinity of sky which keeps observing and sheltering the life triggers the quality of understanding every one keeping our spirits high. During the nights heavenly glories and cosmic beauty in the sky seems to keep showering the health on earth.

5.2 By regularly engaging oneself in sports and exercise relieves us from anxiety, depression, allergies, asthma, regulates normal blood pressure, increases resistance increases alertness and keenness.

5.3 A study confirms that exercise with the aim to lose weight scheduled in morning is more beneficial than in the evening. Another advantage of morning schedule is of not missing a session for a single day.

5.4 Dr. Lee S. Berk, assistant research professor of Pathology, California found that “in runners and other routine exercisers, an endocrine hormone called beta-endorphin becomes elevated differently than in sedentary people. A natural opiate (pain killing) substance,

beta-endorphin not only kills pain, but also helps reduce blood pressure, heart rate and respiration”.

5.5 Swimming is a good aerobic exercise and reports that, the swimmers have less tension, depression, anger, confusion and more vigor than those of non-swimmers.

5.6 Several researchers have discovered that during exercise we have an increased alpha-waves in brain, which are associated with a relaxed, meditation like state and that reduces anxiety and depression.

5.7 During exercise the bone marrow produces red blood cells which help carry oxygen to brain and all body parts also speeds up the flow of lymph removing waste products which avoids sluggishness.

5.8 A brisk walk will help in unwinding and discharging strong electrical charge (without side effects), build up by inactive muscles, otherwise done by tranquilizers with side effects.

5.9 Exercise use up the excess electrical charges produced by anger resulting in calmness of emotions and helps strengthening relationships.

5.10 Scientists now readily agree that there is a much closer relationship between our mind and our body than most of us realize, when either is affected, the other is also.

5.11 Studies show that those who exercise regularly reduces heart attack by one third over a seven-year period. It is also advised to enjoy leisure with exercise program and find an excellent life saver.

5.12 Sports and exercise not only develop our physique but also enhances mental qualities like intrinsic motivation, leadership, communication, imagery, managing psychic energy, stress management, attention, self confidence, space orientation, time value, quick decision capacity, sportsmen spirit and may more which may be said as overall development of an individual.

5.13 It is required to balance our emotions with motion. Dryden quotes “The wise for cure, on exercise depend”.

In short the significance of basic five symbolized elements (panchamahabhutas) in relation to health. Lastly to quote Francis Bowen “To become a thoroughly good man is the best prescription for keeping a sound mind in a sound body” and to add up from my side “with the help of these basic five elements in a natural way”.

Panchamahabhutas have their own balance and rhythm to keep the nature pure and they also help us to maintain our balance and rhythm to keep us healthy. Hence, any action polluting or adulterine nature is crime against us.