

DINA CHARYA – MASTERY OF EACH DAY

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'Dina' refers to the day. Diurnal means each solar cycle of about 24 hrs. Acharya is someone who has mastered a subject; hence Dina Charya refers to our daily opportunity for practical and spiritual balance and progress towards life realization. 'Charya' also means movement or doing, indicating humans must move and do actions, bringing observation or witnessing of one's self to help inward realization of the Self, Doer.

Each day, the sun rises and provides an awakening to the Creator's blessings, illuminating our way to take full advantage of each day, for building our physical, mental and spiritual health. Daily routines help in our path to self-realization and ego-less-ness. When our life is ordered, there is no disorder, and we do not have to visit the physician; we can become our own physician. Daily habits can bring harmony to the bio-rhythms of Prakruti, and our individual relationship to the family, community and cosmos within which we exist.

'Amrit Vela' refers to the time between about 3am and sunrise when all is quiet in the world and the divine nectar of inner communion can be 'tasted' by the soul or individual 'Jiva' in quiet contemplation, meditation or emptying of the mind, and its inclination to inaction. Prayer is active and meditation is passive. Purusha is sometimes translated as 'conscious passive awareness'. Consciousness awakens at this early morning time, while birds and trees are still quiet.

'Brahma Muhurta' refers to the time just before sunrise, blessed by the Creator to provide moments of grace showered on humanity and all creation, for alignment with divine timing. The color of the light at this time is said to be purple, bringing the descent of pure consciousness. Effortlessly, the mind turns to personal and global peace, and under the principle of 'like increases like', we naturally support the healing of our planet Earth, which supports our life.

Our birth occurred at a fixed time and our breaths are sustained throughout our earthly life by divine grace until the last breath. We are born nameless, and gradually develop knowledge of our ego identity. Being is true and lasting, but ego is 'false' and transiting. Each day, and even each breath, brings a type of new birth, when we can 'forget' the past and future, and recognize the present moment, the all-important moment in which ego becomes forgotten.

The first action of the day is evacuation of bladder and bowel contents, to cleanse the autonomic nervous system and prevent accumulation of 'ama' or toxic, undigested food particles. Drinking of triphala tea, which has been soaked in water overnight, may be necessary.

Next comes 'Danta Dhavan' or cleaning of the teeth, 'Kavala' (swishing), and 'Gandusha' (gargling) with individually chosen substances according to need. 'Neti' or washing the nostrils and sinuses with warm water or a mild salt-water solution comes next. Then, 'Jihva Nirlekhana' (tongue scraping) is done to help stimulate the internal organs for cleansing, and activation of enzyme production. It also helps mucous and toxins to move from the deeper tissues to the central gastro-intestinal tract, from where they can be eliminated, and not digested to become bodily tissues.

Next, do 'Ushapan' at dawn, or drink a glass of warm or hot water, when it passes quickly from the stomach to the kidneys and to the 'rasa dhatu' or plasma, to help flush toxins.

Now, you are ready for yoga asana, or gentle stretching postures, to suit your individual constitution. A Vata person or someone with Vata vikruti will do a gentle program to help calm the nervous systems, a Pitta person or someone with Pitta vikruti will do a moderate program to promote moderate digestion and hormonal balance, and a Kapha person or someone with Kapha vikruti will do a vigorous program to help promote normal weight, metabolism and help cure and prevent asthma, allergies, diabetes, etc.

Always rest in the 'Shavasana' (corpse) pose after your stretching program. We all need to prepare our mind for the last breath and transition to the life beyond this body.

'Pranayama' or breathing exercises can now be performed according to your prakruti and vikruti. 'Anuloma Viloma' or alternate nostril breathing will help in a Vata condition, 'Shitali' or cooling breath will help in a Pitta condition and 'Utjayi' or 'Darth Vader' breath will help for Kapha conditions. Pranayama helps calm the mind and induces slow respirations, which support quieting of the mind for 'Dhyana' or contemplation. Other breathing practices can be performed according to individual needs, and are best supervised by an experienced practitioner.

'Abhyanga', or self-massage, is also called 'Snehana' or 'love'. It involves the application of warm oil throughout the body for the many benefits given below. This technique is perhaps one of the most useful for westerners from Ayurveda. Leave the oil on for about 20-30 minutes while doing self-massage of the whole body, including orifices, to protect and nourish all seven tissue levels.

Bathing or 'Snanam' can be showering, tub bath, river bathing, lake bathing, sea bathing or sponge bath, depending on the circumstances. Then towel off using an old towel, which can be laundered separately and discarded earlier than other towels. Avoid soap, except perhaps shampoo. Now you are ready for 'Vastra Dharan' or dressing with clean clothing.

Now is the time for making offerings to your 'God', whether to the energy of Love and Compassion, to a Saint, Deity or to your Guru. Dyan or absorption in Light is now.

After meditation, if you are hungry, take breakfast now according to your constitution and current dietary needs. Then, you are off to work, which is ideally well-suited to your mind-body type. Work for livelihood is suggested to consume half your available energy and capacity, while the other half is for exercise, errands, calling your Mom and all other important activities of life.

Lunch is to be taken when the hunger occurs, and a little walk after lunch helps the digestion to settle. A light supper is best taken before sundown after a short meditation. Evening is for gentle walking, rest, contemplation and if the energy permits for service to others. Prepare for sleep by quieting the mind and introverting the attention to the Pure Existence, giving thanks for a day well spent. Plant a seed of anticipation of a rested awakening for the next day's morning.