

## SEASONAL REGIMENS (*KAALA OZHUKAM*) IN SIDDHA LITERATURE – AN APPRAISAL

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### ABSTRACT

*Kaalam/ Pozhuthu*, the season is classified by different features that express different effects on the body, also environment. *Siddha* system of medicine has described many rules and regimens. The leading principle of *Siddha* is preventive aspect, can be attained by the alteration in diet and practices in response to change in climatic condition. Lifestyle disorders are very common in the present era, basically originating from lack of following seasonal regimens due to lack of concentration in seasonal characteristics. In this review article, various regimens in diet and lifestyle as mentioned in the classics of *Siddha* and their importance on lifestyle disorders has been

discussed.

**KEYWORDS:** Seasonal regimens, Seasonal variations in India, Kaalam, Pozhuthu.

### INTRODUCTION

Siddha system of medicine is one of ancient medical system that is largely followed in south India. *Siddha* system does not consider preventive and curative aspects separately, but as one; for, every possible attempt has been made to prevent rather than to cure the diseases. “Wealthy life is that which is free from diseases” (Health is wealth). The human body is not only to enjoy the pleasure of the world but also to attain the salvation through various means and hence maintaining the body with good health and strength is a must. Saint *Thirumoolar* also stresses the same in *Thirumanthiram*.

According to our ancestors, mere preventive measures alone are not enough to be free from diseases but the virtuous deeds and good conduct and character are also the important criteria for healthy longevity. Hence, they have formulated daily and seasonal regimens for the sake of healthy living. If we follow the principles and regimens as advocated by our ancestors, no doubt, we can live a disease free, happy and healthy life more than hundred years. It is noteworthy that the ancient customs and principles are based on scientific principles. For examples, spraying of cow dung water in the court yard in the early morning acts as insecticide; Brushing the teeth with the twigs of Neem (*Azadirachta indica*), Banyan (*Ficus benghalensis*) and Indian Babul (*Acacia nilotica*) strengthens the teeth and gums and prevents dental disorders; Taking head bath with gingelly oil twice a month reduces body heat and gives good health and complexion.

The nature and qualities of the people depend not only on land but also on time (seasons). Hence it is also essential to know about the seasons or period in detail. According to *Agaththinai Iyal* the period consist of two divisions namely ‘*Cirupozhuthu*’ or a day and ‘*Perumpozhuthu*’ or season. <sup>[1]</sup>

***“Perumpozhu thenraa cirupozhu thendraa***

***Irandu koottra thiyambiya poozhuthae”***

- *Agaththinai iyyal suuthiram-11*

**Cirupozhudhu/Day**

The 24 hours duration for one complete rotation of the earth by itself is known as Cirupozhudhu or one day which is divided into six divisions according to *Ilakkana Vilakkam*.<sup>[1]</sup>

***“Maalai yaamam vaikkuru vendraa***

***Kalai nanpaga laerpaa denraa***

***Aaruvaigath thenba cirupozhu thavaithaam***

***Padusuda ramaiyanth thodangi yaieru***

***Kadigai yalavai kaanug kaalae”.***

- *Agaththinai iyyal suuthiram-14*

The six division of the day are *Maalai* (evening), *Nadu iravu* (mid night), *Vaigarai* (dawn), *Pakal* (morning), *Nadu pakal* (noon) and *Erpaadu* (afternoon) respectively. The time is calculated from the sunset and each division consists of 10 *Naalaigai* (4 hours).<sup>[1]</sup>

### Perumpozhudhu/Season

The duration of 12 months or 1 year period taken by the earth to revolve around the sun is known as Perumpozhudhu. It is divided into six, namely *Kaar kaalam*, *Koothir kaalam*, *Munpani kaalam*, *Pinpani kaalam*, *Ilavenil kaalam*, *Mudhuvenil kaalam* respectively. Each season consist of 2 months starting from *Aavani*, they are listed below;<sup>[1]</sup>

SEASON		MONTH	
<i>Kaar kaalam</i>	Early rainy season	<i>Aavani - Purattasi</i>	Mid-August to Mid-October
<i>Koothir kaalam</i>	Latter rainy season	<i>Iypasi – Karthigai</i>	Mid-October to Mid-December
<i>Munpani kalam</i>	Early winter season	<i>Markazhi – Thai</i>	Mid-December to Mid-February
<i>Pinpani kaalam</i>	Latter winter season	<i>Masi - panguni</i>	Mid-February to Mid-April
<i>Ilavenil kaalam</i>	Early summer season	<i>Chithirai - Vaikaasi</i>	Mid-April to Mid-June
<i>Mudhuvenil kaalam</i>	Latter summer season	<i>Aani - Aadi</i>	Mid-June to Mid-August

### Utharayanam

*Utharayanam* indicates the ascent of the sun or northward movement of the sun. In this period the sun and the wind are powerful. The sun takes away the strength of the people and the cooling quality of the earth. It brings increase in the bitter, astringent, and pungent taste during *Pinpani* (Latter winter), *Ilavennil* (Early summer) and *Mudhuvennil kaalam* (Latter summer) respectively, which brings about dryness in the body and reduces the strength. It is also called *Aadhana Kaalam*.<sup>[1]</sup>

According to modern science, this can be compared with the gradual movement of earth around the sun to the position, in which the rays of the sun falls perpendicularly at 30 degree meridian of the North Pole on June 21<sup>st</sup> every year, called as summer solstice. The northward journey of the Sun from Tropic of Capricorn to Tropic of Cancer happens.<sup>[2]</sup>

The period can be compared to *Thai to Aani* (mid-January to mid-July), when warmness and dryness in weather increases. It has an overall debilitating effect on environment, to which human being is also a part.

### Dhakshinayanam

*Dhakshinayanam* indicates the descent of the sun or movement of the sun in southern direction. In this period, the wind is not very dry; the moon is more powerful than sun. The

earth becomes cool due to the clouds, rain, and cold winds. Sour, salty, and sweet taste are predominant, so the strength of person enhances during this period. It is also called *Visarga Kaalam*.<sup>[1]</sup>

According to modern science, this can be compared with the gradual movement of the earth around the sun to the position, in which the rays of the sun fall over 30 degree meridian of the South Pole perpendicularly on December 21<sup>st</sup> every year, is called as winter solstice. The southward movement of the Sun occurs from Tropic of Cancer to Tropic of Capricorn.<sup>[2]</sup>

During *Dakshinayana*, the seasonal changes occur in the Indian subcontinent from *Kaar* (Early rainy), *Koothir* (Latter rainy) and *Munpanni kaalam* (Early winter) respectively. This period can be compared to *Aani to Thai* (mid-July to mid-January), when cool sets, and due to which anabolic activity dominates over the catabolic activity in the environment.

#### **Kaar Kaalam (Early Rainy Season)**

**General condition:** Mid-August to Mid-October is considered as *Kaar kaalam* (early rainy season). During this season the north winds (*Vaadai*) blows, causing rain. Due to dense clouds, humidity increases. The water in the ponds becomes impure during rainy season that causes the derangement of *Vatham*, *Pitham* and *Kabham*. The body which has been already week due to *Muthuvenil kaalam* (Late summer season) is again affected by the derangement of the three humours in this season. *Pitha* increases in its state and *Vatham* gets deranged due to sourness of water. To neutralize the *Pitha* humour and other humours, hot potency (*Veppa thanmai*) emetic and purgatives treatment should be given.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Diet regimen:** Sour, salty, soft and parch less food stuffs mixed with honey should be consumed in large quantities. Cooled / refridged food items should be avoided. Buttermilk mixed with five carminative substances (Panchakolam), meat, honey and old grains may be consumed. Drink rain water, well water and hot water. Avoid drinking river water and fatty butter milk.<sup>[3]</sup>

**Lifestyle:** After eating, the fragrant pastes such as Pachai karpooram (*Cinnamomum camphora*), Kasthuri (musk deer), eaglewood (*Aquilaria agallocha*) and sandalwood may be applied all over the body. During night one can enjoy the cooled moonrays with breeze. Devoid from some seasonal diseases one should follow some hygienic measures like;

- Hot water bath

- Wear dried cloths
- Expose to incense especially after taking bath
- Wear footwear while going out
- Avoid hard work, day sleep and sun exposure
- Live in damp free place.<sup>[3]</sup>

### **Koothir Kaalam (Latter Rainy Season)**

**General conditions:** The period between Mid-October to Mid-December is *Koothir kaalam*. Cool breeze blows in this season and water becomes clear. Nights are longer in this season. Due to presence of *Agasthya star*, the water sources become scared. The increased *Pitha* in the previous season become deranged because of cold and reduced heat. To bring down the deranged *Pitham* to its normal state, bitter tasted purgatives and ghee's should be taken.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Diet regimen:** The water in the storage tanks will be very clean and it may be used even without boiling. Easily digestible foodstuffs with bitter, astringent and sweet tastes should be taken in large quantities. Samba rice, pulses, sugar, gooseberries (*Emblica officinalis*) and honey are good for health in this season.<sup>[3]</sup>

**Lifestyle:** In this season, Mist, dews, sun exposure, east-ward wind, salt, toddy, curd, fatty foods, strong intoxicating drinks and oleation should be avoided. After eating, sandalwood paste with khus-khus grass (*Vetiveria zizaniodes*) and Pachai karpooram (*Cinnamomum camphora*) may be applied.<sup>[3]</sup>

### **Munpani Kaalam (early Winter Season)**

**General conditions:** The period between Mid-Decembers to Mid-February is considered as *Munpani kaalam*. East wind (*Kondal*- East breeze) blows in this season. Nights are longer in this season to. Due to cold east wind, appetite increases, subsequently the body needs more heat to bear the coolness. The body heat is converted into digestive fire and the appetite increased, hence more food is consumed that is easily digested and metabolised, raising the body temperature. Thus the strength of the body is increased. If sufficient food is not available then the metabolism occurs by utilising the energy from the body tissues, by which the body becomes emaciated.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Diet regimen:** Foods that are sweet, sour and salty in tastes, fatty meats, cakes made up of black gram (*Vigna mungo*), wheat and sugarcane, beverages made of jaggery, rice and grapes should be consumed.<sup>[3]</sup>

**Lifestyle:** During this season, physical exercises should be done in early morning and medicated oil that is helpful in *Vatha* diseases should be rubbed all over the body. After taking bath, head and body have to be exposed to incense fumes. A paste made of Saffron flowers, zedoaria tuber (*Curcuma zedoaria*), musk deer, eaglewood paste (*Aqualaria agollocha*), sandalwood and the perfume secreted by civet cat is triturated with rose water, should be applied all over the body.<sup>[3]</sup>

### **Pinpani Kaalam (Latter Winter Season)**

**General condition:** Mid-February to Mid-April is considered as *Pinpani kaalam*. In this season southeast wind (*Ulavai*) blows. Though the season possess the characters of the *Munpani kaalam* (early winter season), *Kabham* gets deranged in its state.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Lifestyle:** In *Pinpani kaalam* dryness occurs, so the practices mentioned for *Munpani kaalam* may be followed in this season too. In both the seasons, after taking food, a paste made of Saffron flowers, zedoaria tuber (*Curcuma zedoaria*), musk deer, eaglewood paste (*Aqualaria agollocha*), sandalwood and the perfume secreted by civet cat is triturated with rose water, should be applied all over the body through which the body gains physical strength, spermatogenesis, libido, beauty, wealth and joy, thirst, insanity, *Kabha* diseases and pruritus are cured.<sup>[3]</sup>

### **Ilavennil Kaalam (Early Summer Season)**

**General condition:** The period of Mid-April to Mid-June is considered as *Ilavennil kaalam*. In this season South wind (*Thendral*) blows. *Kabham* gets deranged in this season due to the hotness of the sun. This diminishes the appetite and many *Kabham* diseases may occur. During this season, to bring back the deranged *Kabham* to the normal state, emetics and nasal drops with sharp potency are preferred.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Diet regimen:** Khus-khus grass roots (*Vetiveria zizaniodes*) and sandalwood soaked water, honey, wheat, mango etc., may be used. Substances which are not easily digestible, cool potency foods, greasiness, sour and sweet taste foods are to be avoided.<sup>[3]</sup>

**Lifestyle:** Physical exercise and dry natured foods are recommended in this season. It is also good to avoid day sleep. Naturally this is pleasure season for lovers.<sup>[3]</sup>

### **Mudhuvannil Kaalam (Latter Summer Season)**

**General condition:** The period of Mid-June to Mid-August is considered as *Mudhuvannil kaalam*. In this season the west wind (*Kodai*) blows, sometimes there will be rain which is known as *Koodai-mazhai*. Due to intense heat, *Kabham* humour retains its state whereas *Vatham* gets deranged in its state.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Diet regimen:** To bring back the deranged *Vatham* to its normal state, greasy liquids, foods, sweet foodstuffs and which are easily digestible should be consumed. Salt, sour, pungent foods, physical exercises and liquors must be avoided. Water kept in a new earthen pot mixed with Khus-khus grass roots (*Vetiveria zizanioides*) and trumpet flower (*Sterospermum chelonoides*), samba rice, meat, plantain (*Musa paradisiaca*) and jack fruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) may be taken.<sup>[3]</sup>

**Lifestyle:** Sandalwood paste may be applied to prevent skin diseases. Light cloths must be worn. Sexual activities should be avoided in this season.<sup>[3]</sup>

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

This is the way the ancient sages set up the regimen for various seasons on analytical reasoning to obtain health and prevent the diseases. The environmental factors include the nature of the land, water and various atmospheric phenomena, including temperature, humidity, wind, rain, clouds and atmospheric pressure. All these factors undergo a continuous change and at a time, no two moments are exactly alike in a given place.

It is to be known that disharmony in the *Trithodam* – *Vatham*, *Pitham* and *Kabham* results in disease. And the aim of the science of *Siddha* is to maintain the *Trithodam*. With changes in diet and lifestyle, there are changes in the state of *Trithodam*, which is bound to affect us, resulting disharmony, causing lifestyle diseases.

It has been observed that there is an increased occurrence of flu, dry skin in winter, heat stroke in summer, pollen allergy in spring, high incidence of air and water borne diseases in rainy season, and skin diseases in autumn. Thus it can be said that physiology indicates the concept of *Kaala ozhukam*. Studies have even revealed the increased incidence of Asthma

attack in winter season. There is also a reference of Seasonal Affective Disorder in modern science.<sup>[4]</sup>

People's diet changed substantially in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, generally with increased consumption of meat, dairy products, vegetable oils, fruit juice, and alcoholic beverages, and decreased consumption of starchy staple foods, such as bread, potatoes, rice, and maize flour. These observations suggest that the diets [or lifestyle] of different populations might partly determine the rates of cancer, and other lifestyle disorders, such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, etc.,<sup>[5]</sup>

With global warming and variation in the advent of season, it can surely be a query, of the importance of *Kaala ozhukam* (seasonal regimen) in the present scenario. It is to be understood that the background of *Kaala ozhukam* is based on *Trithodam* and *Panchabootham* theory. Although today *Kaalam* do not follow uniformity, the level of *Trithodam* and *Panchabootham* can be analysed accordingly, to decide regimen. These principles surely demand a closure observation.

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