

THE IMPORTANCE OF AHARA W.S.R TO LONGITIVITY

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ABSTRACT

Whatever we swallow constitutes the diet. Similarly whatever nourishes our body from within is *Ahara* -The Diet. Ayurveda -A science of lifetimes, has said *Ahara*, to be one of the pillars to the healthy life. Ayurveda has described the *Trayopstambha*-The Three Pillars Of Life. with the *Ahara being the first followed by Nidra (Sleep)* and *The Bramhacharya* (celibacy). In today's era people are constantly seen to rat race to meet the targets, deadlines, meetings and are constantly under stress. Under these circumstances they are completely ignorant about health. Have an unhealthy lifestyle, lack exercise, Indisciplined routine, improper sleep cycles and improper diet. Consuming a wholesome diet with balanced nutrients on the daily basis can simply avoid occurrence of any disease. A proper diet regulates proper digestion in the body by right absorption and assimilation of the food component. Improper ways of eating and disturbed quantities can seriously affect the digestive power causing illness which in long-term develops serious lifestyle disorders. Life style disorders are the diseases very difficult to treat and are developed due to abnormal relationship of the person with its environment. According to Acharya Charaka:-...28-45 Which means both the human body are originated from the *ahara (The diet)*. **Aims And Objectives:** To study the proper methods and procedures of diet intake according to Acharya Charaka. **Discussion:** Ayurveda is a life science which is undeniably sticking to the truth till date and does not change with time. It not only focuses on the treatment of the disease but also emphasizes on the total well being of the patients. Acharya Charak being the father of the medicine with this remarkable contribution in samhitas explains the three pillars of life. With *Ahara* being the first all says about its importance. Modification in the right ways can help prevent lifetaking chronic illnesses emerging today. **Conclusion:** The *Ahara* is the most essential in not just maintaining the health but also in restoring the health back of the diseased. Hence it is the need of era to study and discuss Acharya Charaka's valuable insights regarding the diet. So Here it is the study of importance of *Ahara* with special reference to longevity of life.

KEYWORDS: Diet, *Ahara*, Lifestyle disorders, Longevity.

INTRODUCTION

- Looking at the present scenario world wide, we see a majority of the people unhappy with themselves. It is said that –we cannot serve from an empty cup. Which means we have to be happy with ourselves in the first place.
- Happiness comes from a healthy body, healthy mind and soul.
- To keep the health happy it is important to focus on what we are eating? How we are eating?
- After all a good gut is a good health.
- It is very hard to find a diseased person living happily.
- In this era of junk food, fast food, it is very important to see and get acquainted about what our ancient texts say about the diet. What things have

been put down by our ancient sages through ayurveda.

- Here a brief study about some important rules, methods and procedures to diet intake are put forth according to Acharya Charaka.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aims: To study about Acharya Charaka's references about *Ahara*.**Objectives:** To discuss proper methods of food intake and the procedure of diet consumption.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

- In the Charak Vimanasthana, Acharya has described about the “*bhojan vidhi*”
- This includes proper procedures,
- The do's and don'ts about diet.

- Charaka has explained each and every small detail about how to consume the diet.
1. Ushna –means sufficiently enough to consume. Lukewarm food tastes good than cold and kept for a longtime. Mild hot temperature of the food aggravates the *jatharagni*. (*The digestive power*).
 - Also it helps the absorption of kapha dosha and does not cause the post meal laziness.
 2. Snigdha Bhojana –Means having enough moisture. Freshly cooked enough with moisture content mostly by ghee, oil, butter makes it easy to chew than the dry. Dry state of food is not good for health. Right amount of agni increases the agni and does the right digestion. It helps vayu dosha mobilise in right direction, gives strength and enhances beauty.
 3. Matrapurvah Ahara –Here Charaka acharya talk about the quantity. A sufficient quantity, not too less not too more. Which can be digested easily is the right quantity.
 - This amount might vary person to person depending upon their Agni.
 4. Jirne-Means consuming the diet only after the digestion of the previous meals
 5. Virya viruddha Bhojana –Virya means the potency of the drugs. some drugs are of hot potency and some are cold potency. Hot ones create the kinetic energy and increase the heat of the body, are catabolic in nature.
 - This is the most most important phenomenon explained in terms of diet consumption in Ayurveda.
 - Ayurveda highly suggests not to combine opposite potency substances in the diet at a time
 - Eg-The Milk and the fish. This combination should be highly avoided due to their opposite potencies and action. As it may cause various illness.
 6. Ishta Deshe –which means a pleasant happy place to eat meals. Preferably neat and clean.
 7. Ishta Sarvopakaranam –Having enough cooked things and are well served. When the food is well cooked and served the taste and smell of the food triggers the salivary gland and secretes more saliva that facilitates digestion. and alongside satisfies the taste buds.
 - The Role of *Mana* comes into play here as well it is very important to consume the diet that makes you and your heart happy. It aids in psycho somatic health of the body...Lifts your. Mood.
 8. Ati Shighra Bhojanam –Means Not to eat too fast. It delays digestion. Also can cause choking. It is important to bite the food properly and chew it and swallow in a proper pace. Hasty meals cause laziness says acharya.
 9. Ati Vilambit Bhojana –Not too slow as it delays satiation and food is more consumed.. Also the cold food later causes improper digestion.
 10. A Jalpan –Jalpa means to talk. Do not talk while eating as it takes long to finish and might cause choking.
 11. A Hasana –Means not to laugh a loud. It reduces the risk of choking.
 12. Tanmana Bhunjita –Means being focused only on the food while eating and enjoying. The meals for psycho somatic benefits. such. Ways leads to happiness.
 13. Atma Manabhi Samikshya–Means a diet you are used to consuming, gives you easy digestion causes no allergy or uneasiness. Mindful eating thinking about the goods and bads of the health is focused on here.
- Explanation of Ashtau Ahara Vidhi visheshayatana in charak chikitsa sthana 1/21.**
1. Prakriti –Nature of the substance to be consumed.
 2. Karan –Procedures conducted on the food while cooking like treating it to fire, frying, roasting etc.
 3. Sanyoga-Different combinations of the food and ingredients.
 4. Raashi
- A. Sarva graha** –it includes nourishment factors designed in one whole meal acc to the total quantity.
- B. Pari graha** –Means separately desired nourishment values and then put together according to the quantity.
5. Desha –Means Cultivating area of the food eg-Apples are mostly produced in Kashmir. It is mostly seen that it is easy from the people of Punjab to eat heavy punjabi meals in comparison to people living in hot and dry climate like Rajasthan. Food should be consumed considering the region.
 6. Kala –Considering the time factor to consume the meals.
 - A. Nityag –Diet to eat daily
 - B. Awasthik –Diet changes when the seasons change also in the diseased conditions. Eg. it is preferred to have a light diet in fevers.
 7. Upayoga Sansthan-means following all the rules previously explained in the Ahara Vidhi vidhana. like consuming the diet only after the previous meals have well digested.
 8. Upayokta –Means the person himself who is going to consume the diet. His requirements of nutrition, Age, Body built, Occupation, Agni, Diseased or pregnant condition. etc should be accounted.
- All these factor should be considered while we eat.
- Viruddhasana** –The concept of viruddha asana is most important concept explained in Ayurveda. In charak sutrasthana 26/86-87 Charakacharya has said about this. The concept of viruddhasana talks about Dietic Incompatibility. To Avoid it's ill effects on the diet following 18 types of Wrong combinations should be considered.
1. Desha Viruddha -Consider the compatibility to the region.

2. Kala Viruddha –Considering the seasonal changes in the diet like use of sweet fluids in the summers.
3. Agni Viruddha –Consider the digestive power of the consumer. Heavy meals in the manda agni person can cause I'll effects on the body and obesity in the long-term.
4. Maatra Viruddha-Consider the proper quantity for right nutrition.
5. Saatmya Viruddha-Considering the allergic tendencies of the person.
6. Dosha Viruddha-Considering the doshas like people with aggravated pitta dosha should avoid too oily hot and spicy foods.
7. Sankara Viruddha –While the consuming the food, procedures like frying, boiling might sometimes introduce toxicities in the food like frying the pigeons meat in the mustard oil, Heating the curd and consuming it is viruddha sanskara
8. Koshtha Viruddha –Considering the gut health.
9. Virya Viruddha-Combination of substance with different potency like combining milk and fishes are said to cause skin diseases in Ayurveda.
10. Avastha Viruddha –Consider the general conditions of the patients.
11. Parihara Viruddha –Absence of following proper rules of diet like consuming lukewarm water after heavy meals is said in the texts.
12. Paaka Viruddha –Stale foul smelling foods should never be consumed.
13. Sanyoga Viruddha-Putting wrong combination together like sour citrus fruits and milk.
14. Hrud Viruddha –A diet that does not make you and your heart happy is not a right one.
15. Sampad Viruddha –Unripe, stale, uncooked meat etc whose attributes and qualities are not well established.
16. Upachara Viruddha –Opposite to the treatment. Like eating hot spicy food in hyperacidity.
17. Krama Viruddha –Improper order of the diet like consuming madhur rasa in the beginning of the meals for better digestion should be practiced.
18. Vidhi Viruddha –Not following proper rules explained in the Ashtau ahara vidhi vishayatana and ahara vidhi vidhana.

DISCUSSION

A majority of the population worldwide is either seen to be malnourished or overnourished. With increasing love for fast food and disturbed lifestyle the percentage of obese is like a pandemic giving rise to the term Globesity.

Similarly on the contrary a large no of population is seen to be malnourished and affected by vitamin deficiency diseases like scurvy,beri beri, pellagra etc.

All of these problems have their roots in improper ways of consuming the daily diet

According to Charaka charya explained in sutrasthana 23/5-6, excessive intake on greasy oily heavy, dairy

products, newly harvested crops and wine, improper ways to eat sea food and meat.

Lack of exercise, sedentary lifestyle causes Ama formation or toxins in the body disturbing the normal functions of the arteries, veins and ultimately the organs

This gives rise to the lifestyle disorders like diabetes, sebaceous cysts, lipomas, eczema, jaundice, skin diseases, anorexia, Laziness, infertility, obesity, oedema, anxiety, CHD, hyperlipidemia, and hypertension.

Acharya also describes the diseases by malnutrition like anorexia nervosa, anaemia, oedema, marasmus, giddiness, kwashiorkor etc.

13 which means a diet that nourishes the body from within, maintains the health and does not cause any illness is said to be the healthy diet and such diet should be taken everyday.

CONCLUSION

It means all the creatures on this land are held upon by the food they intake and that is why they are prone to eating.

The color, complexion, beauty, good tone, life, attributes, happiness, satisfaction, nutrition, strength, memory all are dependent on our healthy diet.

Which means the diet nourishes the body, the sapta dhatus (from rasa to shukra) the oja (their elixir) strength, power and complexion.

Ayurveda has described the dhatu poshan by various phenomenon like the ksheer dadhi nyaya, Kedari kulya nyaya and even the khale kapota nyaya. After the impact of jatharagni the food is rightly digested in the body and it is seen to nourish the sapta dhatus from rasa to shukra one by one. This leads to the production of good quality dhatus in the body.

Production of good elements creates a powerful defence mechanism in the body by adding to the immune system.

The right amount of nutritive elements build a good coordination of the Tridoshas (Vata pitta and kapha).

This keeps the body in good homeostasis and harmony leading to the longevity of life.

More than a long life, a healthy life matters. In the current covid 19 pandemic scenario the whole world has bowed down to ayurveda for its amazing references in strengthening the immune system to fight against covid.

This is a proof that a great immune system can save us from any opportunistic and emerging diseases be it a pandemic.

A regular balanced diet such influences a good immune power in a person's body that keeps him free from illness and thereby enhancing the quality of life.

Hence "A GOOD DIET IS A KEY TO LONGITIVITY".

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