

RELATION OF UPAYOGASAMSTHA (DIETETIC RULES) TO FOOD DIGESTION

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ABSTRACT

Health as well as diseases is dependent on various factors. As Acharyas had described that Ahara, Nidra and Brahmacharya are Triupstambha (three sub pillars), which support the body itself. Here Ahara has been placed first, which shows that it is most important to maintain and sustain the life. Food plays a decisive role in development, sustenance, reproduction and termination of life. Beside the quality and quantity of the food it is very much important that how it is taken, because food taken in improper way can lead to various diseases. Keeping these things in mind 8 factors (Aharavidhivisheshayatana) has been mentioned in Vimana sthana of Charak Samhita. 'Upayogasamstha' is the Seventh factor among these which deals with the dietetic rules. The study was planned to evaluate

the relation between 'Upayogasamstha' (dietetic rules) and digestion of the food. It is found that each and every rule mentioned in Upayogasamstha (dietetic rules) has very essential role in the process of digestion. Along with balanced diet, incorporating the dietetic rules in our daily routine can prevent many diseases. The Ahara Vidhi (Dietetics) is an ancient, empirical and elegant art, it is the heritage of Indian culture that can be clearly observed in Ayurvedic views.

KEYWORDS: Aharavidhivisheshayatana, Upayogasamstha, Dietetic rules.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has emphasized diet as one of the essential part of healthy life. It is likely that no other science has described the unique effect of diet as thoroughly, as *Ayurveda* described thousand years ago. *Ayurveda* has given detail discipline and process to take the *Ahara* for an

individual and in general both. This discipline is titled as *Ahara Vidhi*, where all the law about the diet and the drinks are given. Basically *Ayurveda* is having an introducing concept that the health and the disease both are the product of *Ahara*, only the distinction is *Hita Ahara* constitutes the health and *Ahita Ahara* dis-constitutes the health. *Acharya Charaka* has given a single lined sutra regarding the *Vidhi* of diet, which contain a lot for a person who wishes to lead a healthy life. The person who wants to be free of different *Rogas* should eat *Hitakar Ahara* in appropriate amount on appropriate time.^[1] Wholesome diet is a main cause for the growth and development of the body, on the contrary, unwholesome diet is cause of several diseases^[2], So in our classics diet is having a very important place, but to be a wholesome diet does not mean only the food items, but it includes so many factors, which are titled as "*Ahara Vidhi*", where the law of do's and don'ts about the diet and drinks are given. A wholesome diet requires a lot more than just having nutrients and our ancient *Ayurvedic* texts have laid an immense emphasis on all aspects of *Ahara* and *Ahara Vidhi*. The present review deals with '*Upayogasamstha*' (dietetic rules) which governs the process of digestion as all these rules can be included under the factors which are necessary for the digestion. Also this review explores the importance of *Upayogasamstha* (dietetic rules) and evaluates the relation between *Upayogasamstha* (dietetic rules) and digestion.

MATERIALS

The data has been collected from *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, compiled and analyzed for the discussion and attempt has been made to draw some conclusions.

DISCUSSION

Ayurvedic nutrition is a vast topic that takes into account the individual constitution, the medicinal value of culinary spices, the theory of *shad rasa* (or six tastes, which should all be present for a meal to be balanced), and more. The founders of *Ayurveda* had affirmed food as the essential source of sustenance and strengthening of health. However, they had also alerted that "what one eats and how?" could be the major factor for or cause of illness. According to modern science, 'people who are eating according to the rules of a traditional food culture are generally healthier than those of eating a modern western diet of processed foods. *Acharya Charaka* has described '*Ashta Aharavidhivisheshayatana*' (eight factors determining utility of the food).^[3]

These eight factors are associated specifically with the useful and harmful effects of the food and they are conditioned by one another. '*Upayogasamstha*' is the seventh factor among

these which indicates the dietetic rules. Healthy as well as diseased individuals should follow these rules even while using wholesome food by nature. According to *Charaka; Ushma* (heat), *Vayu, Kleda* (moist), *Sneha* (Unctuousness), *Kala* (time) and *Samayoga* (appropriate intake) are the '*Aharaparinamakara bhavas*'^[4] (Digestive factors). The rules mentioned under *Upayogasamstha* and their relations with *Aharaparinamakara bhava* are as.

Upyoga Samstha (Dietetic Rules)^[5]

It simply means the dietetic rules. It contains everything related to Diet, how to eat, when to eat, what to eat. These are called as *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* which indicates the method of taking *Ahara*.^[6] These are—*Usna, Snigdha, Matravat*, Is consumed after the digestion of previously ingested food, *Viryā Aviruddha Ahara*, Is to be taken into *Iste Dese* where it provided with *Ista Sarvopakarana*, Not to be taken speedily, Not to be taken too slowly, Taken without talking with others, Taken without laughing, Taken with the concentration of the mind.

Usnam Asniyat^[7]: (Food should be warm)

The first requisite regarding prepared meal is that it should be taken *Usna(hot)*. If one's taking hot food, feel of proper taste, Stimulate the Agni (digestive power), *Vata Anulomana* and Reduction of Kapha are achieved. The specific sequence of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhan* is practically very important. Besides the whole meal being *Usna*, it must begin with *Usna Anna*, so that profuse flow of saliva and gastric Juices are achieved for the next food items.

Snigdham Asniyat^[8]: (Food should be unctuous)

The meal taken should be *Snigdha* (Unctous), The *Snigdha Ahara* causes feel of proper taste, *Agnideepana*, facilitate early digestion, *Vata anulomna* and It makes the body Plump, Strengthens the sense organs, increases in the brightens the complexion.

Matrvat Asniyat^[9]: (Food in proper quantity)

It means eat in adequate amount. The *Lakshna* by which a person can decide that this is *Matrvat* are,^[10] Freedom from distress in the stomach, Absence of any cardiac discomfort, The non-distension of sides, Freedom from excessive heaviness of the stomach, Gratification of the Sences, Subsidence of hunger and thirst, Sense of ease in the standing, sitting, lying down, walking, inhaling, exhaling, talking. Easeful digestion and assimilation of food in the evening and the morning, the imparting of strength, complexion and plumpness.

Jirne Asniyat^[11]: (Intake after digestion of previous meal)

It simply means eat after digestion of the previous meal. If one takes food before the digestion of the previous meal, the digestive product of the previous food, i.e. undigested ahara rasa gets mixed up with the Ahara Rasa of food taken afterwards, it provokes all the Doshas (humor).

While the food taken when the previous meal has been fully digested, the humors have returned to their normal places, the gastric fire is kindle, hunger is born, the channels are clear and open, the eructation from the mouth is healthy, the stomach is clear, the peristaltic movement is normal and when the urges for evacuation of flatus, urine and feces are well attended too, that food not vitiating any of the body elements, serve the sole purpose of promoting life.

Virya Aviruddham Asniyata^[12]: (Intake of food having no contradictory potencies)

Eat those food articles which are not antagonistic in Virya (potency). Eating the food that is not antagonistic in potency one will not afflicted with disorders born of incompatible Dietary.

Virya is the power of substance by which action takes place; nothing can be done in absence of the Virya.^[13]

Iste Dese Ista Sarva Upakarnam Asniyata^[14]**(Intake in proper place and with all accessories)**

Eat in a congenial place provided with all the necessary appurtenances. One eating at congenial place does not get depressed in the mind by the depressing emotions produced in unpleasant environment, similarly with appurtenances. Therefore one should eat in a congenial place and circumstances.

In Sushruta samhita there are some specific guidelines for Desa for Bhojana, the place where food to be prepared and where should be stored before serving^[15]. He advised to take food in such a place that is devoid of unwanted people, The place should be free from the defects of construction, the defect of ventilation and light can affect the health directly and indirectly. It should be properly leveled. The place should be pleasant also which can provide calm and healthy state of mind. Now days we can see special dining rooms in the houses of affluent class. Everyone always tries to keep the dining place pleasant.

Na atidrutum Ashniyat^[16]: (Intake not in hurry)

Do not eat hurriedly. One should not take food too hurriedly. If food is taken too hurriedly it enters into a wrong way or it is not properly placed, as food taken in hurry can obviously affect the power of digestion by increasing the Vata.

Na ativilambitam Ashniyat^[17]: (Intake not too slow)

Do not eat too leisurely. One eating too leisurely is not satisfied even if he eats much. The food would become cold and there will be irregularity in digestion.

Ajalpana, Ahasan, Tanmana Bhunjita^[18] : (Intake with concentration)

Do not talk or laugh while eating, one who talks and laughs while eating is liable to suffer the same disorders as the one who eats too hastily. In this most important one is that the food should be eaten with concentration. Talking and laughing divert the attention from the meals and the food is eaten too slowly or too hastily.

Aatamanamabhisamiksya Bhunjita^[19]: (Intake with self confidence)

Eat rightly, considering your constitution. The food will agree with me, this food will not agree with me, such knowledge makes for the determination of what is wholesomeness for each individual. This one is very important, as rules of Ahara are definitely wholesome, but they are general rules. They should be applied by considering own self.

These were the dietetic rules for both healthy and unhealthy persons but Sushruta has given Dwadasa-Asana Pravicharana^[20], especially for unhealthy peoples. These Pravicharana facilitate the use of different type of Ahara and Ahara Vidhi according to the status of health of a person but whenever a person takes food.

Proper Time of Meal

It is a very important aspect regarding dietetics that when to take food. In classics mentioned that the proper time for giving *Ahara* to a person is when he gets free of stool, urine, and eructation's, and feel his body and sense organs light and free. When he gets free action of heart as well as natural courses of his bodily *Vayu*, when he feels hungry and has got relish for food and when his *Kukshi* becomes light.^[21] Once food is taken, it should not be taken again before one *Yama*, as it infers with Raso-utpatti and creates Ama. But the food should be taken before two *Yama* because if person fast for more than two *Yama* he will experience *Bala Kshaya*. One who known the place, digestive power, strength and period when ever observes

hungry, should give the food according to congeniality with the gap of one or two *Kala* (periods). After the digestion of *Rasa*, *Dosha* and *Mala* one should consume food without giving consideration to time. Proper belching, clarity, enthusiasm, proper evacuation of urges, lightness of body, hunger and thirst are the features of proper digestion. In seasons where the nights are lengthy, one should consume food in morning only and when days are lengthy food should be taken in first Prahara at night and in afternoon. Seasons where days and night are of same length food should be taken at indicated time.^[22]

Ahara Vidhi for taking different types of food items

Considering the sequence of taking different food items, *Acharyas* were very much particular. According to them, one should first take sweet dish, then food item containing *Amla Lavana*, *Katu* and other *Rasa*.^[23] The sweet food item firstly would naturally go to subdue the *vayu* located in stomach, *Amla* or *Lavana rasa Pradhan aahara* taken in middle would rise up the *Agni* in *Agnyasaya*. While *Katu* rasa would tend to subdue the *Kapha*.

The person should take fruit like pomegranate etc. at the beginning then the *Peya Padartha*.^[24] The solid food item should be taken at the onset, while some classics give the contrary view for this. In fruits, the *Amalaka* has the greatest *Dosa* eliminating properties so recommended at the outset, middle and close of meal. but *Mrinalam* (item of lotus plant), *Bisam* (lotus bulb), *Saluka*, *Kanda* and Sugarcane should be taken at the beginning of a meal and never at its close.^[25]

Acharya Susruta has described methods of par taking of diet (*Āhāropacāra*) as items of *Āhāra* should be served in the successive order of increased sweetness. One should wash his mouth with water often in between the dinner; when his tongue is clean, relish for food will be greater than ever before; the tongue is becoming satiated with sweet taste in the beginning itself will not be able to appreciate other tastes, hence it should be washed in between.^[26]

Item taken in the beginning of meal should be *Guru*, *Snigdha*, *Madhura*, food having *Manda* and *Sthira* properties like coconut, mango, and sweets. In the middle of meal, one should take *Shukta* etc. *Amla* food items at the end one should consume *Laghu*, *Ruksha*, *Katu*, *Tikshna* and food items which are of mild laxative in nature. *Saindhava lavana* and *Ardrika* are always palatable before meal as it is *Pathya* aggravates *Agni*, increases taste of food, cleans tongue and throat.

Arrangement of food items when we serve meal.^[27]

- In front:- Soup of pulses in attractive and wide bowls and utensils, Rice in fanciful trays and other food articles which are to be licked.
- On the right side:- All types of fruits, dry fruits and other *Bhaksya* and dried food items.
- On the left side:- All the *fluid food* items, Soup of meat, Drinking Water, *Panaka*, Milk, Soup of pulses.
- In between left and right:- Eatables prepared from Jaggery, *Ragsadva*, *Sitaka* etc. should be served at midway between the food items described above.

The arrangement of soup is in front as it is generally used as starter and to look attractive is kept in fanciful bowl. The fluid items will be taken in between and will require less effort to pick up so are on the left side, as usually humans are right handed. The food items which are heavy to pick up as fruits and hard eatables are kept in the right side so that they can be easily picked up. Rest of the items is eaten in very less amount and act as fillers of food as Jaggery, *Ragsadva*.

Before taking food person should remember

Acharya Charaka says, that partake not of a meal without wearing a jewel on the hand, without having had a bath or clad in tattered clothes, without saying your prayers, without offering to the household gods and the manes, without first feeding to elders, guests and dependants or unscented, without cleansing hands, feet and face or with unclean mouth, with the face towards in north or listlessly, or waited on by an undevoted, unmannerly, unclean or hungry attendant or in improper vessels, in an improper place or at an improper time or amidst a crowd, or without first offering to *Agni*, or without sprinkling the food with sanctified water or without saying spiritual chants over it or while reviling any one, nor eat food of a vile description, served by ill wishes, nor consisting of stale articles with the exception of flesh, greens, dry vegetables and fruits.^[28]

After taking Food the Person Should Do

After taking meal one should wash his hands to clean his hand, with a proper instrument should clean teeth so the food pieces hidden in teeth come out which prevent their purification and foul smelling from mouth & then mouth must be cleaned with water.

There is increase of *vayu dosha* in body after digestion of food, during digestion process there is increase in *Pitta*, *Kapha* gets increased immediately after taking food so to pacify *Kapha*,

Dhumpana, Kashaya, Katu dravya like betel nut, cubeba, camphor, Lavanga, nutmeg should be taken. Betel leaves along with other Katu; Tikta & Kasaya Dravya cleans the mouth & pacify Kapha. After taking meal one should sit like a king i.e. in straight posture. Then he should walk at least 100 steps slowly and they lay down with left supine position. After taking meal listen the music or should perceive favorable Shabda, Sparsh, Rupa, Rasa, Gandh, so that the food remains properly in stomach and gets digested.^[29]

CONCLUSION

In *Ayurveda* food plays a prominent role in promoting health and is therefore considered medicine. *Ayurvedic* concept of digestion takes into account many things viz. food, its quantity, place, time, factors affecting it, dietetic rules, digestive factors, *Agni* etc.; which is the most ideal than any other science. Along with *Agni* there are many other factors which are found useful for proper digestion and by taking care of which one can eliminate the causes of imbalance. Each and every rule mentioned in *Upayogasamstha* has very essential role in the perspective of digestion. Conflicts of these rules are directly mentioned as the causative factors for the production of *Ama*, which is the cause for several diseases. Along with balanced diet, incorporating the dietetic rules in our daily routine can prevent many diseases. All the rules mentioned under '*Upayogasamstha*' (dietetic rules) strengthen the '*Aharaparinamakar Bhavas*' (digestive factors). Hence these ten rules are directly related with the '*Aharaparinamakar Bhavas*' (digestive factors) and govern the digestion process.

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