



The Critical Interpretation on Ahar (Food)-An Ayurvedic Prospective

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KEYWORD

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ABSTRACT

Healthy diet is the foundation of a healthy life. The most significant aspect of existence is Aahar. Diseases and health are dependent on the Aahara. When taken correctly, Aahar can either promote improved health or cause sickness. For living things, food is the source of their Oja, power, life, and color. food in return. is derived from the six basic Flavors that are present in all food-containing ingredients. The unique tastes, characteristics, potencies, and digestive changes of the substances are what maintain the balance between dosha and dhatu. Food has a direct correlation to growth, health, complexion, and sensory awareness; inequity in nutrition leads to disease. According to Ayurveda, three characteristics of mind—Rajasika (quality of passion and manipulation), Tamsika (darkness, destruction), and satvika (quality of purity and harmony)—are supported and brought forth by food. The Satvik diet seems to be akin to a cautious, contemporary eating plan.

1. Introduction

Ahara, or diet, is considered one of life's Upastambhas. A bad diet causes changes in how the body works. This is the justification for the emphasis on dietary factors (apathya) in the explanation of disease etiology. Acharya Charak asserts that if food is taken sensibly and assiduously, it may sustain life. Ahara is essential for maintaining health as well as treating a wide range of illnesses. According to Ayurveda, the hāra is the source of nourishment for all of the body's components, including complexion, vital essence, and other things. But the hāra's capacity to do so is reliant on Jatharagni's sound functioning. The six Rasas that comprise the hāra Dravyas transform into three distinct Vipaka kinds (Madhura, Amla, and Katu) as a result of Jatharagni's activity [1][2].

Consuming the right meal gives one power, immunity, firmness/steadiness of the body, and contentment. According to Ayurveda, three characteristics of mind—rajasika (quality of passion and manipulation), thamasika (darkness, destruction), and satvika (quality of purity and harmony)—are supported and brought forth by food. The satvik diet is ideal for preserving physical stamina, mental clarity, longevity, and mental calmness as well as mental purification. It seems to resemble a contemporary, albeit cautious, eating regimen[3].

1.1. RASA (TASTE) AND FOOD

A nutritious diet is essential for both physical and mental well-being. The six rasas, or tastes, that are recommended in the classics of Ayurveda constitute an ideal diet. Rasa is the Arabic term for flavor and sensation of the tongue[4].

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1.2. MADHURA RASA

The body's sturdiness and strength are connected to madhura rasa. The human body is used to this flavor from birth. It is good for the skin, hair, sense organs, and overall body growth. Sweet-tasting herbs improve breast milk production, relieve parched throats, and aid with male erectile dysfunction. When consumed in excess, they lead to diabetes, obesity, and disorders associated with obesity. Kapha dosha is elevated by madhura rasa. Sweet-tasting foods and herbs are typically high in simple sugars or carbs and pack a punch in terms of calories. These calories also supply a plenty of energy [5].

1.3. AMLA RASA

Amla rasa increases salivation and digestive heat. It improves heart health and stimulates hunger. When applied externally, it functions as a coolant and alleviates burning feelings. It heightens mental alertness and attention span. Other uses of amla rasa include brumhana. Any substance consumed in excess will have negative consequences on the body, according to Ayurveda. In a similar vein, excessive use of amla rasa disrupts bodily homeostasis, causing looseness, weakness, blindness, pallor, edema, and other symptoms [6].

1.4. LAVANA RASA

To make meals more enjoyable, it stimulates the digestive system, permeates the tissues, induces perspiration, and improves food flavor. In Ayurveda, five types of lavanas are often utilized; the best one is called saindhava lavana. Chemically, Saindhava lavana is also known as rock salt. Saindhava is a mildly sweet, slightly pleasant, aphrodisiac, and beneficial to the heart (or mind) and the three doshas (humors) of the body [7].

KATU RASA

Katu rasa is beneficial in treating skin illnesses, allergic rashes, leprosy, and throat ailments. In addition, it lessens inflammation, enhances digestion, circulation, opens channels, promotes sweating, purifies blood and muscles, and lowers cholesterol. It improves perception and mental clarity and sharpens focus. Excessive consumption of it leads to thirst, tremors, fainting, and loss of sperm and strength [8].

1.5. TIKTA RASA

Tikta rasa is a flavor that has medicinal benefits. Although many people despise it, it has numerous therapeutic benefits. It typically possesses anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and anti-pyretic qualities and is dry, light, and chilly in nature. By promoting the release of digestive fluids and enzymes, it treats anorexia. In addition, it helps the body get rid of toxins and treats skin conditions, nausea, and burning sensations. Alkaloids, anthraquinones, sesquiterpenes, and some glycosides contain it. Overindulgence in bitter foods can result in dry mouth, nausea, and dizziness as well as tissue wasting and weakening[9].

1.6. KASHAYA RASA

The primary consequence of Kashaya rasa is throat dryness. Astringent herbs can be used topically or taken orally to halt bleeding and hasten the healing of wounds. For the same reason, several gum care products are made with astringent ingredients since they successfully lessen gum swelling and bleeding. Kashaya rasa is cool in potency, squeezes and heals ulcers, and cleanses the blood through its anti-inflammatory properties. It also facilitates mental clarity and organization. Overconsumption can result in severe dryness of the throat, obstruction of food and feces in the digestive tract, gas accumulation in the stomach as a result of constipation, dryness, and discomfort around the heart [10].

2. FOOD AND MIND

The Bhagavat gita's Karmayoga adhyaya states that all living things originate in ahara. Rainfall is the source of ahara; sacrifice is the source of action, and sacrifice is the source of rainfall[11].

2.1. SATVIKA AHARA

The term "satva guna" refers to spiritual qualities. People who lean more toward sattva love food that is rich, creamy, substantial, aesthetically attractive, and enhances life, strength, firmness of mind, health, happiness, and

pleasure. A satvik diet is recommended by Ayurveda to maintain longevity, good mental and physical health. Satvik diet includes elements such as fresh fruit, pure fruit juices, milk, honey, sprouted whole grains, sea and land veggies, cheese, nuts, seeds, legumes, sprouted seeds, and herbal teas. Foods that do not disturb the stomach are said to as satvik. A satvik diet reduces the likelihood of mental health conditions like anxiety, sadness, mood disorders, and hyperacidity while encouraging a stress-free way of living[12].

2.2. RAJASIKA GUNA

Rajasika guna is the attribute of manipulation and passion. Rajasika ahara are foods that cause grief, anguish, and illness and that are too sour, bitter, salty, pungent, hot, dry, and scorching. Rajasika ahara upsets the mind-body balance and causes agitation and uncontrollability in the psyche. These meals alter sleep patterns, enhance feelings of fury, induce hyperactivity and anxiety in the mind, impair attention, and create sleep disturbances. It could be suitable to suggest ingesting more rajasika ahara for individuals who are boring and indolent [13].

2.3. TAMASHIKA GUNA

The trait of thamas is characterized by apathy, inertia, lethargy, or dullness. Thamasika ahara intensifies the disorientation and inner gloom. meals that affect our pace of activity include fried and frozen meals, foods that are microwaved, fast food, processed foods, foods that are left overnight, onions, meat, fish, eggs, and alcohol. These meals increase inertia, depress, and numb us in addition to slowing down our activities. It is possible to argue that this food category is the healthiest of all. Avoiding Thamasika ahara is advised as it dulls the mind, increases rage and criminal tendencies, and impedes societal advancement. There is no meal more unwholesome than thamasika ahara [14].

EXAMINE THOSE WHO ARE INVOLVED IN DIGESTION.

1. Ushma
2. Pachakagni
3. Sneha
4. Kleda
5. Aharvidhi Samayoga

USHMA: The Jatharaagni found in the Koshtha (mahastrotasa) helps turn food into the dhatu pushtikar bhava, much as in the natural world where food must be prepared before it can be eaten. The Oja, bala, Varna, etc. expand as a result. Jaatharagni plays a vital role in maintaining the balance between the tridoshas. to maintain a cheerful attitude.¹⁵

VAYU: The primary regulator of the body's kinetic processes is the vata dosha. The Vata dosha controls the amount of food consumed and the amount of waste produced after digestion. Gastrointestinal tract function is affected by the three primary vata dosha types: Prana, Saman, and Apana [16][17].

KLEDA: They protect the digestive system and aid in digestion. In this sense, they are essential to better digestion. These ingredients, represented by kledaka kapha and bodhak, damp or saturate the food that is ingested, making it softer and more amenable to the action of the pachaka pitta. They also result in redness [18].

SNEHA: Mucin is a component of both stomach juices and saliva. Saliva and stomach secretions also include mucin, which helps the jatharagni process by transforming food into a liquid, smooth, and soft form[19].

KALA YOGA: Time is also necessary for meals to be fully digested. After eating and thoroughly chewing the meal, it takes one to two hours. to make your stomach ring. It takes four to five hours. to guarantee thorough small intestine digestion of meals. Once most of the water has been absorbed, the large intestine transforms the remaining undigested food into thik form, also called pakwamala. The paka of this avastha is called katu avsthapaka[20-24].

It suggests waiting to eat anything until after their last meal has had time to properly digest. It is called "yamadhe tu na bhoktavyavm," which means that one should wait three hours after eating before consuming any food[25].

3. CLASSIFICATION OF AHARA DRAVYA

The Ahara Dravya (diet/food items) was split into several categories by Acharya Charaka. Depending on whether the food comes from plants or animals, it can be categorized as either Hitahara (wholesome) or Ahitahara (unwholesome) in terms of consumption.

They are further separated into four categories based on how they are eaten or drunk:

1. Pan
2. Bhakshya
3. Asana
4. Lehya

Acharya Kashyapa classified foods into five groups, based on the Panchamahabhutas philosophy:

1. Akasheeya
2. Vayavya
3. Agneya
4. Apya
5. Parthiva

Ahara is further classified into six types based on the Rasa:

1. Madhur
2. Amla
3. Lavana
4. Katu
5. Tikta
6. Kashaya

Furthermore, Acharya Charaka classified categories on twenty properties [26]:

1. Mridu
2. Kathin
3. Vishada
4. Pichhila
5. Slakshna
6. Khara
7. Sukshma
8. Sthula
9. Sandra
10. Drava
11. Guru
12. Laghu
13. Sheeta
14. Ushna
15. Snigdha
16. Ruksha
17. Manda
18. Tikshna
19. Sthira
20. Sara.

4. PRINCIPLES OF BALANCE DIET

The stomach should be split into four portions, according to Ayurveda: one area for liquids, one section for solid meals, and one section that should remain empty for the doshas. A diet that is balanced is one that is good for the body and the mind. Meals that are "filled with Shadarasa, necessary Gunas, Veerya, and supplied to the individual

after consideration of Prakrati, Agni, Kosta, and Ritu" (season change) are considered balanced in Ayurveda. Sarvagraha, or a total quantity, is one kind of Matra (amount); Parigrah is another. A well-balanced diet promotes lifespan, improves digestion, and facilitates smooth bodily function. The body's Agni and Bala should be reflected in the amount of food consumed [27].

SEASONAL FOOD CONSIDERING

- Hemant: Light foods and beverages that can vitiate vata, paired with reduced calorie intake and a high gruel consumption.
- Sisira: Foods and beverages that are sour, bitter, astringent, stimulating to the vata system, light, and cold.
- Vasanta: Diets that are rich, sumptuous, sour, and sweet.
- Grishma: Foods that are spicy, sour, salty, or pungent.
- Varsha - Water from the river and Udamantha.
- Sharad: A preparation of alkaline salt, curd, fat, oil, and meat from aquatic and marshy animals.

5. DISCUSSION

According to Ayurvedic scriptures, the year is split into two ayanas, dakshinayana (southern solstice) and uttarayana (northern solstice), depending on which way the sun travels. Again, this falls within the category of ritus; an ayana is composed of three ritus. Six seasons make up a year: late autumn (Hemanta), winter (Shishika), spring (Vasanta), summer (Grishma), fall (Sharat). The first three are under uttarayana and the latter three are under dakshinayana. Since the Indian subcontinent is where Ayurveda began, the aforementioned seasonal fluctuations are mostly observed there [28]. The transitional seasons in Uttarayana, from Vasanta (spring) to Grishma (summer) and Shishira (winter), are similar to the dry spell that occurs between mid-January and mid-July. The effective functioning of Ahara Vidhi enhances Dhatus and prevents the generation of toxins and ama [29].

5.1. DIETARY RULES AND ITS EFFECT ON AHARA

- The right use of dietary rules helps to balance an individual's Prakriti and soothe vitiated Pitta, Vata, and Kapha. Pitta hence helps with the treatment of hyperacidity, indigestion, and diarrhea.
- Food gives you the energy you need to survive when it is eaten correctly.
- Raja's quality rises when he eats healthily, which improves his capacity for thought and decision-making.
- Tamas, which controls emotions, stress levels, and sleep, is aided by a well-balanced diet.
- In a similar vein, a rise in Satva quality encourages peace and relaxation.
- By keeping channels clear, Aahar Vidhi Visheshayatan enhances the flow of nutrients and builds both physical and mental power.
- It also offers immunity, accelerates growth and development, improves sexual vigor and luster, and increases Dhatus, which in turn improves Balya/Oja. Lastly, it improves sensory activity.

It is crucial to consider Kala in order to preserve Dosha balance [30]. Joint pain and stiffness are relieved when vitiated Vata is calmed by thinking about the Ahara Vidhi Vishesh Ayatan concept. By calming vitiated Pitta, fever, diarrhoea, and gastrointestinal problems subside. The vitiation of Kapha, which governs anorexia and weight growth, is stopped by Ahara Vidhi. Correct food consumption balances the doshas, dhatus, and agni. Appropriate diet affects spiritual, mental, and physical well-being in unison. The concept of Ahara Vidhi Vishesh Ayatan, which aims to optimize the nutritional content of food, was presented by Ayurveda. Ahara Vidhi Vishesh's observations of ayurveda state that ayatan provides, among other benefits, longevity, complexion, vitality, and immunity. Following the guidelines for meal consumption optimizes the nutritional value of the food consumed and has various favorable health consequences; nevertheless, disregarding the Ahara Vidhi Vishesh Ayatan concept leads to a host of health issues, including diarrhea [31].

6. Conclusion

Ayurveda has been describing the advantages and disadvantages of Ahara since ancient times. Although contemporary dietitians have clearly classified Ahara based on the nutritional worth of its constituent parts, the Ayurvedic description of Mahabhaisajya lacks a scientific classification based on Prakruti, Desha, Kala, and other factors that appear too practical. Consequently, contemporary science is approaching the idea but is still distant from the Ayurvedic elements. All contribute to the development of our body immunity and protect individuals from a variety of negative effects that can appear as nutritional deficiencies and other lifestyle disorders.

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