

Significance of *Trigunatmaka Ahara* in Maintenance of Health – A Review

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda emphasizes on the concept that man is miniature of nature. This suggests that entities that are present in universe are also present in human beings. Maintenance of health, prevention of disease, achieving longevity and treatment of disease depends on this fundamental theory of understanding human beings. For maintaining health, the needs of each individual are different. People may prefer different *ahara* and *vihara* to remain healthy. *Ahara* is one among the basic requirements to continue life. One cannot survive without *ahara* for many days. Type of *ahara* being included by a person in his daily routine highly have an impact on standard of living. A person becomes what he eats so *ahara* should be included as per its qualities and how it will affect the basic unit i.e *Tridosha* and *Triguna* factors in an individual. Balance of *Tridosha* and *Triguna* maintain health whereas slight disturbance in these may cause disease. So, *ahara* intake should be as per body constitution and requirement of body to continue a healthy and long life.

Key Words *Ahara, Triguna, Health, Ayurveda*

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INTRODUCTION

Ahara, Nidra and *Brahmcharya* are the *trayoupstambha* (sub-pillars) of *Ayurveda* which contribute to the maintenance of health¹. *Ahara* being the first one which sustains body by providing energy and nutrition which is necessary for healthy living from birth till the person is alive. Different *Acharyas* have explained about *ahara*-

- *Shabda Kalpadruma* opines that *ahara* is something which is swallowed.
- *Acharya Sushruta* opines whatever is ingested and swallowed in the form of solid or liquid is called *ahara*².

- *Acharya Kashyapa* opines *ahara* is considered as *mahabhaishajya*³.

Synonyms of *ahara*-

Jagdhi, lepa, bhojana, nyada, nighasa, jemana are the synonyms of *ahara*.

Role of *ahara*

Deha and *aharadravyas* are *panchbhautika* i.e composed of *panchmahabhuta* namely *akasha, vayu, agni, apa,* and *prithvi*⁴. So, *apanchbhautika deha* requires *panchbhautika ahara* to fulfil its needs and for its proper growth and development. *Vayu* is originated from *Aakash, Teja* from *Vayu, Apa* from *Teja,*

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Prithvi from *Apa*, *Aushadha* from *Prithvi*, *Ahara* from *Aushadhi* and *Purusha* from *Ahara* is originated⁵. *Ahara* is vital for life, it provides complexion, speech, life, innovation, happiness, nourishment, strength and intelligence. One should be specific about their food as per their lifestyle⁶. *Ahara* is best for health status of living being⁷. Persons following healthy diet lives for 36000 nights or 100 years⁸.

Classification of *ahara*

Different types of *ahara* is explained by different scholars.

Types of *Ahara dravya* as per *Acharya Sushruta*⁹

EkantaHitakar- The food which does not harm the body even though used always like water, milk, ghee and *audana*.

EkantaAhitakar- The food which harms the body quickly and so cannot be used even for short period, which are always unsuitable and caused *dahana*, *pachana* and *marana* in which *agni*, *kshara* and *visha* are used respectively are *Ahitakara*.

HitaAhita - The foods which do not harm in certain conditions but cause harm in certain other conditions.

Acharya caraka classified *ahara* according to *rasa*- *Madhura*, *amla*, *lavana*, *katu*, *tikta* and *kashaya*. Food is resident of six tastes and these *rasas* are responsible for normalcy of *doshas* and its increase or decrease causes vitiation of *doshas*. The composition of food, taste, properties, potency, taste after digestion and its nutritional value, prepared in the different forms

such as eatables, drinkables, likable and chewable, by the combination of many substances followed by process of *samskara*, maintains the health of an individual and prevents diseases¹⁰.

Acharya Kashyapa opines *Aharaas Mahabhaisjya-Ahara* is the best medicine in diseased as well as in healthy individuals. In diseased person even *aushadh* does not give results if the *ahara* is not proper. Chief theme of maintenance and sustenance of body is *ahara*.

Triguna

All human beings are composed of *gunas* and these features promote different kinds of personalities based on the dominance of one or the other *gunas*. These three *guna* i.e *sattva*, *raja* and *tama* in different proportions influence the mental and intellectual potential of every individual. Human mind functions with the attitude which is indicated by *guna*. Dominance of *guna* determines the individual's personality. *Prakriti* is ultimately the personality of an individual which is made up of dominance of *guna* and *dosha*. *Prakriti* is made up of *triguna*- *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*¹¹. *BhagavadGeeta* explains *trigunas* with a wider view¹² along with this *Acharyas* also mentioned about the *Triguna*.

According to *Sushruta*¹³

Sushruta explained a man's personality on the basis of *Triguna* i.e *Satvika*, *Rajasika*, *Tamasika*. Kind, merciful, *samvibhagaruchita*, patience, truthful, follows righteous way, belief in God, *jnana*, *buddhi*, intelligent, *smruthi*, courageous, the one who is not blamed by

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anyone, these are the characteristic features of *Satva Guna*. *Rajo Guna* predominant persons are always in grief, wandering, unhappy, *ahankara*, telling lies, *akarunya*, deceiving, respectful, joyous, *kama* and *krodha*. *Tamo guna* predominant persons are in sadness, lack of belief in existence of God, doing unrighteous things, *buddhirnirodha*, *agyani*, foolish, lazy and *nidralu* (sleepy).

According to *Caraka*¹⁴

Satvika, *Rajasa* and *Tamasa*. The *Satvika* is free from negativities as it is endowed with optimism. The *Rajasa* promotes wrathful disposition. The *Tamasa* is the one which encourages ignorance.

According to *AstangaHridaya*¹⁵

Satvika persons bears *guna* like purity, cleanliness, have faith in god, ethical, honest and intellect. *Rajasika* persons are talkative, having feelings of anger and jealousy along with ego. *Tamasika* persons are non-courageous, illiterate, sleepy, lazy and non-enthusiastic.

According to *sankhyadarshan*¹⁶

Satva Guna is the indicator of purity, creativity and happiness. *Rajas* is distinguished by motion, dynamic activity and reactivity or *Raga*. *Tamas* is characterized by ignorance, delusion and resistance power.

According to *BhagwadGeeta*¹⁷

Satva is of highest quality among the three. It is pure. It brings about bliss, wisdom and illumination. The second one is *Rajas* which promotes passion manifested by intense attachment and greed. It causes dejection and

suffering. *Tamas*, arises due to ignorance and results in darkness, lethargy and delusion. *Rajas* should be controlled and mastered by wisely diverting it towards good deeds. *Satva* should be carefully cultivated, developed and conserved in order to enable us to attain immortality.

Trigunatmakaahara

Ahara is of three kinds; *Satvika persons*, like food that promotes longevity, vitality, energy, health, happiness, cheerfulness and foods that are juicy, soft, nourishing and agreeable. Persons who are *Rajasikaa* by nature like food that are *Katu*, *Amla*, *Lavana*, excessively *ushna*, *Teekshna*, *Ruksha*, *Vidahi* and thirst producing, as also which brings on uneasiness, depression and diseases. Persons who are *Tamasika* by nature like food that is stale, tasteless. Persons in the mode of goodness prefer foods that promote the life span and promotes health, lifestyle, happiness and satisfaction. Such foods are juicy, succulent with natural fats, wholesome and nourishing, conducive to the heart health and naturally tasteful.

*SattvikAhara*¹⁸

The cooking and processing of *Satvik Ahara* is to be done in a *Satvik* environment and with *Satvik* mood, affection, love and care. *SatvikAhara* is not only the physical composition of food but also involves the feeling or emotions with which the food is cooked and ingested.

Preventive aspect of *SattvikAhara*

Such a diet encourages mind orientation and provides a better sense of sympathy and

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compassion. Most of the fruits are considered *Satvik*. As they are taken fresh with the rhythms of time and according to season they are considered pure, natural, eco- biofriendly. Fruits promote mental energy and quieten the lower organs.

It may include fruits, milk and *ghee*, coconut, sesame, honey, *raktaShali* (Red Rice) (Unpolished), *panaka*, Saffron, *dravyas* like *brahmi*, *amla*, *satavari*, etc.

RajasikaAhara

This food is too bitter or too sour, very hot, pungent, spicy and dry food. Intake of such food produce pain, grief and diseases.

Preventive aspect of RajasikaAhara

Rajasika Ahara augments movement and agility. *Pitta* and *Agni* attributes gets increased in the biological system and increases basal metabolic rate. *Rajasika* food intake, augments *rajoguna* in system, cause hyperacidity, irritability, restlessness, Hypertension, peptic ulcer, anxiety and insomnia, so one should avoid such food to remain free from such ailments. For those who are lazy and dull, it may be appropriate to advice consuming a larger quantity of *rajasika* food items.

It may Include Junk food, Refined oils, Refined grains, Sour food, Deep fried, Excess salt, White Rice, Tea & Coffee, Green chilli, pepper & Hing, etc.

TamasicAhara

This food is stale, tasteless and putrified food. This *ahara* is impure and is favoured by person in the mode of ignorance.

Facet of TamasicAhara¹⁹

TamasikaAhara induces inactivity and inertia. It augments *kapha* and difficult to digest. *Tamasika Ahara* should be avoided, as it leads to dullness, enhances anger and criminal tendency and hinders betterment of a society. It may include fermented food, meat, fishes, eggs, alcohol & cigarette, tobacco, fried food, overcooked food items, burned food, food full of preservatives etc.

Tridosha

Vata, *Pitta*, *Kapha* are the forces acting in the body known as *Tridosha*. This *Tridosha* theory is modification of *panchmahabhuta* theory. As per Theory of *panchmahabhuta*, these primordial elements forms the body and they join together to form three humors (*Doshas*) viz. *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*. *Tridosha* and *Triguna* are inevitable related. *Akasamahabhuta* is dominant in *sattva guna*. *Vayu mahabhuta* in *rajas*, *Agni* in *sattva* and *rajas*, *Apa* in *sattva* and *tamas*, *Prithvi* in *tamas guna* dominance. *Vata dosha* have dominance of *Akasa* and *Vayu mahabhuta*. *Vata dosha* is *Akasha* and *Vayu pradhana* (dominant) and *sattvik-rajas* dominant. *Pitta dosha* is *Tejas pradhana* and *sattva-rajas* dominant. *Kapha* is having *Prithvi* and *Apa* predominantly and contain *sattva-rajas* in dominance.

Vata dosha is considered as leader of *doshas* and abundant in *rajas* quality. It is capable of penetrating minute structure, dry and cool in nature, light and unsteady in nature²⁰. *Vata*

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controls the body as well as mind and its motility.

Pitta Dosha is warm, fluid in nature, yellow and blue in color, *sara* and *katu* in taste, light, unctuous, remain in sour taste after digestion and bears *Satvaguna*.

Kapha Dosha is white, heavy, unctuous, cool and have *Tamasguna*, sweet in taste. These *doshas* travels in various *dhatvahas*. So the *trigunas* can be considered in every physiological as well as pathological events of body²¹.

Body has an effect on mind and the same way mind has an effect on body. The relationship between the body (*sharira*) and the intellect (mind) leads to reach the *samprapti* of disease. *Manas doshas* (*rajas* and *tamas* dosha) leads to *alpa satva* which is impacted by the dominance of *rajas* and *tamas*, *manasavikara* occur and they manifest the disease which harm the body.

DISCUSSION

Human body is made up of biological humours, tissues and waste products. *Ayurveda* tries to establish the harmony in biological humours or *doshas* in the body. *Ayurveda* gives the guideline for the righteous path such as *dharniyavega*, *sadvritta*, *naisthikichikitsa*, dietetic regimen. *Trigunas* plays a significant role on mental state. One should always make the efforts to conquer to *rajas* and *tamas guna* and to increase *sattva guna*. Harmony is health and disharmony is disease. Health is much more

than what we think of absence of disease. Health is a state of complete balance at the level of body, mind and consciousness. In the present era, there are many people who are neither well nor sick. They do not make active efforts to remain healthy or to prevent sickness. A person whose bodily humours are in a state of balance, with balanced digestion and metabolism, in whom the functions of tissues, waste products, *ojas*, sense organs and motor organs and channels are normal and is in a happy state of being is truly healthy. Foods, drinks and environment similar to that of qualities of *doshas*, increase them. The body has its own intelligence to repair this state of accumulation. But if the intelligence is improper then they go increasing and leads to disease. *Ahara* plays an important role in maintenance of health of an individual because from proper wholesome and balanced diet all the body constituents – *dosha*, *dhatu* and *mala* are formed. That is why it is said that “we are what we eat”. Food is not only essential for physical well-being but it provides nutrition for our mind as well. The type of food being followed by a person is responsible for its health, growth and development of the body. Intake of food of similar qualities as that of the person may lead to increase of *doshas* and finally causing disease. *Trigunas*, their effect and manifestation play important role on the mental status and body following on human behaviour. Greater the *sattva*, greater is the experience of ecstasy. *Sattvik* diet consists of fresh vegetables, fruits, grains and dairy like

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milk and ghee. It keeps the body lean and proficient and calms the mind. *Rajasic* foods are spicy, too much salty and sour, wines, pickles, meat especially red meat, and stimulating drinks like coffee and tea. These foods aggravate *pitta* and *vata* and increase impatience, anger and irritability. *Tamasic* foods are stale, re-cooked, too oily, heavy to digest, canned meat and fish products and too cold pasteurized dairy products like milk and yogurt. These foods, increase *kapha*, lethargy, ignorance, apathy and increase in sleep²². Hence, intake of *Trigunaahara* can cause vitiation of doshas leading to various disease. The food consumption can highly affect overall health and lifestyle of a person. All the *ahara dravyas* can be used as *aushadha* (Medicine) with proper *yukti*. So, one should keep a check on diet to live a healthy life and also to avoid suffering from ailments. To maintain the health, every person should advise to follow *dinacharya* and *ritucharya*. *Aharadravya* with their *gunas* (qualities) and their *avagunas* (*doshas*) according to *sharira prakriti* and *mansika prakriti* that are explained in *ayurveda* to maintain well-being. The type of food taken inherits the type of personality (or) mentality develops.

CONCLUSION

Sattva, *Raja*, *Tama* are the *trigunas* which affect the mind, soul and body. *Ahara* is the basic component of living beings. These *trigunas*

reside in *ahara* and affect their properties. Quality food (*Ahara*) nourishes the body and its components, mind, soul. Same way compromised quality of food (*Ahara*) leads to manifestation of disease. As per proverb, “what we eat we become”. So one should wisely choose the *ahara* which is beneficial to physical, mental and spiritual health.

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