

ETERNAL IMPORTANCE OF AHARA AND VIHARA IN ADVOCATING HEALTH - A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Good diet and positive way of living contributes to healthy existence. Sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy eating habit causes obesity, hypertension, heart disease, diabetes etc. These are chronic non-communicable lifestyle disorders affecting more of population in the world. The good conduction of *daily and seasonal regimen, yoga, rejuvenation therapy, personal and social hygiene, suppressible and non-suppressible urges, panchakarma therapy for detoxification and correct nutritional management* is the finest remedy offered by Ayurveda to keep an individual healthy. It synchronizes natural harmony amongst body, mind and soul. In Ayurveda, *Pathya-apathy* does-not just boost health but also increases the effectiveness of medicine. According to *Acharya Sushrut*, being healthy involves

having a joyful mind and soul as well as absence of disease. This literary study aims to review the perspective of traditional *Pathya-apathy* with respect to *Ahara, Vihara, Manasik, sharirik and Aushadha*, in both the healthy and diseased person; and promote its global applicability.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, *Ahara* (dietary regimen), *Vihara* (lifestyle) and *Swasthya* (health).

INTRODUCTION

A common question asked by a patient coming to an ayurveda consultant is – Do I need to follow a diet regimen during Ayurveda treatment? It may be, they are curious to know and follow the diet or afraid if doctor might cut off the favourite food from their plate.

Everyone, in today's era wants to live a healthy life but no one wants to follow a healthy regimen. Over-crowding and rapid unplanned urbanization have led to sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy eating habits. Hence, increasing the occurrence of many non-communicable lifestyle disorders that includes arteriosclerosis, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, ALD etc. Ayurveda helps to prevent the disease prevalence rather than only treating them.

All drugs and diet which dislodge the various *doshas* and do not expel them out of the body are regarded as *Apathy*.^[1] All the etiological factors in accordance with *Ahara*, *Vihara*, *Aushadha* etc. are considered as *Apathy*.^[2] The *Ahara vihara* which do-not adversely affect the body and mind and give happiness are regarded as *Pathya*.^[3]

Ayurveda says *Sama Dosha*, *Sama Agni*, *Sama Dhatu*, *Sama Mala kriya* brings the natural harmony amongst body, mind, soul and restores the physical and spiritual wellbeing(*Aatma*, *Mana*, *Indriya*, and *Sharir-prasannata*).^[4] Good diet and lifestyle changes- plays a powerful role to bring this natural harmony in an individual's life. Hence their good conduction leads to disease free individual.

Concept of Diet

In modern perspective only components of diet(vitamins, proteins) are taken into consideration. While, Ayurveda deals with various aspects of diet like combination of food articles, their quantity, methods of preparation, their effect on mind, nature of consumer including environmental considerations. Depending on various factors like dose, time, quantity etc. even a most tasteful object might turn into *Apathy* and vice versa.

If a person takes the wholesome food then, there is no need of medication. If a person continuously consumes unwholesome food, then also there is no need of medicine; as it will not prove effective.^[5] If a person consumes *Apathy-Ahara*(unhealthy), illness will never leave the body.^[6]

Six key elements for the wholesome Diet.^[7]

Matra	Quantity
Kala	Time or season
Kriya	Mode of preparation or cooking
Bhumi	Habitat or place/ climate
Deha	Constitution of person
Desha	Body, environment/climate

Concept of lifestyle

A person's lifestyle is a collection of behaviour, attitudes, or possessions connected to a specific individual or group (Lynn R. Kahle, Angeline G, 2011). i.e., the manner in which location and time a person sleeps, plays, wanders, eats, walks, etc. According to *Acharya Sushrut* there are 4 types of therapy modalities – *Samshodhan*(purification), *Samshaman*(palliative), *Ahara*(food) and *Acharya*(activities) (Anant Ram Sharma 2008). *Acharya* is divided into three categories *Kayika*(physical), *Vachik*(verbal) and *Mansik* (psychological behaviour) (Acharya Y.T. 2012). The concept of *Vihara*(daily and seasonal regimen), *Aharavidhi*(dietary regulations), and *Acharya* as described in the classics of ayurveda can be categorised under the term lifestyle.

AIM

To study the role of *Pathya-apathy* in

- Healthy individual to promote health
- Diseased individual to cure illness

OBJECTIVES

To study the role of good food and lifestyle changes in modern era. This preserves health and prevents disease in an individual.

MATERIAL

We have collected the primary data from various Ayurvedic *Samhitas* like Charak, Sushruta, Vagbhata. Different Scholarly research articles and modern medical textbooks are thoroughly studied.

METHODOLOGY

HEALTH V/S LIFESTYLE

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| • Daily regimen of health conduct | <i>Dincharya</i> |
| • Regimen for night | <i>Ratricharya</i> |
| • Regimen for various season | <i>Ritucharya</i> |
| • Personal and social hygiene | <i>Sadvritta</i> |
| • Suppressible and non-suppressible urges | <i>Dharniya-Adharniya vegas</i> |
| • Nutrition and diet | <i>Pathya and apathya</i> |
| • Avoidance of unwise courses | <i>Trividha nimitas</i> |

- Periodical biological cleansing *Panchakarma*
- Restorative remedies *Rasayana*
- Eight-fold yoga path described *Astang yoga in Patanjali yoga sutra*

TRAYOPASTHAMBH

Three pillars of life – *Ahara, Nidra, Brahmacharya*.^[8]

Ahara- a balanced diet, *Nidra*- complete and sound sleep, and *Brahmacharya*- abstinence or regulated sex are the sub pillars of the body that regulates the main pillars i.e., *Tri-doshas(vata, pitta, kapha)*. The good conduction of above principles restores the physical and spiritual wellbeing.

SADAVRITTA PALAN

‘*Sad*’ means good and ‘*Vritta*’ means region^[9] i.e., a code of conduct to keep a balanced condition of body and mind. The conduct of *Sadvritta* leads to *Arogya*(health) and *Indriyavijay* (control over sense organs).^[10] *Sadvritta* is good mental, social, personal, moral and religious behaviour The vitiation of this conduct may lead to *Pradnyaparadh* which is the main cause to many diseases.^[11]

Types of *Sadvritta* by Charak – 4

Vyayaktik sadvritta (ethical codes of conduct)

Dharmik sadvritta (religious codes of conduct)

Samajik sadvritta (social codes of conduct)

Sharirik sadvritta

DHARNIYA – ADHARNIYA VEGAS

According to Ayurveda, there are thirteen types of natural urges in the body which should not be suppressed or given out forcefully.^[12] These urges, if not suppressed maintains the equilibrium of doshas and dhatus, and eliminate toxins out of the body. This long-term suppression of natural urges (physiological body reflexes) may give rise to acute, sub-acute or chronic symptoms.

Thirteen Adharniya vegas include^[12]

Urge to pass urine(*mootra*), Urge to eliminate faeces (*purish*), Urge to eliminate semen(*retas*), Urge to pass flatus(*vata*), Urge to vomit(*chhardi*), Urge to sneeze(*kshavathu*), Urge to belching(*udgara*), Urge to yawn(*jhrumbha*), Urge to hunger(*kshudha*), Urge to drink

water(*trishna*), Urge to shed tears(*bhaspa*), Urge to sleep(*nidra*), Urge for heavy/fast breathing due to exertion(*shrama-shwasa*).

Astang hriday(*vagbhata*) explains *kasa vegadharana* and included *Udgara vegadharana* in *vata vega*.^[13]

Three types of *Dharniya vegas*^[14] i.e the urges which should be controlled includes-

- *Manasik vegas*- that arise at our thought level and affect our behaviour (*Lobha, Krodha, Bhaya, Shoka, Irshya, Mada, Vishada, Nirlajja, Abhidhyay, Atiraganam*).
- *Kayik vegas*- the bad physical deeds (*Para stree sambhog, Chori, Hinsra*).
- *Vachik vegas*- bad speech deeds (*Parushya, Anrutasya, Ati-matrasya, Suchakasya, Vakyasya akalyuktasya*).

Trividha Nimitas^[15]

Ayurveda has identified the three main causative factors responsible for all sorts of diseases.^[15] Avoidance of these factors prevent the manifestation of disease i.e., *Nidana parivarjana*.^[16]

- *Pragnyaparadha* (misuse of intellect): *Dhi, Dhruti, Smruti vibhransh* i.e., loss of control on mental activities causes vitiation of spiritual, mental, physical and social harmony which leads to illness.
- *Asatmya Indriyarth Sanyoga*: Incompatible correlation of sense organs.
- *Ritu viparyaya*: Abnormal cycles of seasons.

Rasayana

We consume anything in the form of food or medicine, is first resynthesized into *Rasa Dhatu*(finest or essential juice of body)^[17] which is plasma tissue of our body. *Rasayana* is one of the eight branches of Ayurveda (*Astang Ayurveda*)^[18] It is a measure to prevent aging, antioxidant, prolongs longevity, avoids senility, protects youthfulness, promotes immunity, enhances metabolism sharpens memory and both prevents and cures disease.^[19] *Achar Rasayana*(cha.chi 1:4/31-35) i.e., behavioural therapy if followed in our daily routine will hasten the action of mind rejuvenating diet and medicine.

Astang Yoga

It brings harmony to mind and body. It is a classification of classical yoga, as set out in his *yoga sutras* by *Patanjali*.^[20] It includes-

- *Yama*(principles/moral code)- has *Ahinsa*(non-violence), *Satya*(truthfulness), *Asteya* (non-stealing), *Brahmacharya*(continence), *Aparigraha*(non-hoarding).
- *Niyama*(personal discipline)- has *Saucha*(purity), *Santosh*(contentment), *Tapa* (endurance), *Swadhyay*(self-study), *Eshwar pranidhan*(dedication).
- *Asana*(yoga)- a stable and comfortable posture which helps attain physical and mental equilibrium.
- *Pranayam*- control of breath.
- *Pratyahar*(withdrawal of senses)- increases power of mind.
- *Dharana*- concentration on one object.
- *Dhyana*- withdrawing mind from all the objects and focusing it on one point and meditating.
- *Samadhi*- union between *Jivatma* and *Paramatma*.

***Dincharya*- Daily Regimen Of Health Conduct**

Ayurveda describes some daily regimen to be followed for healthy living.^[21]

- *Brahma-muhurta jagrana*: wake up at *brahma-muhurta* i.e., early morning (90 minutes before sunrise).
- *Dant-dhaavan*: i.e., brushing of teeth. Mouth diseases mainly caused by *Kapha dosha*. The brush used for *Dantdhavana* is made of *Katu*, *Kashay* and *Tikta-rasa*(fresh twig of *Nimb*, *Khadir*, *Karanj*) to prevent dental disorders.
- *Jivha-nirlekhan*: scrapping of coated tongue.
- *Kavala and Gandusha*: gargles with medicated oil for healthy gums.
- *Mukh-Netra prakshalan*: washing of eye and face prevents eye diseases, pigmentation etc.
- *Anjana*: *Netra* is a *Pitta* predominant so it should be protected from *Kapha dosha*. Collyrium with *Rasanjana*.
- *Shauchvidhi*: the natural urges should be eliminated daily.
- *Nasya*: nasal instillation of oil pacifies *Vata dosha* in head and neck region.
- *Dhoomapana*: inhalation of herbal smoke. Smoke should be taken from nose and expelled from mouth to prevent harm to eyes.
- *Tambul-sevan*: chewing of oral fresheners with betel leaf.
- *Abhyanga*: body massage with oil.

- *Vyayama*: exercise
- *Udwartana*: massaging with powder of *Kaphahara* drugs.
- *Snana*: hot water is contraindicated for head bath as it causes harm to eyes and hair. Bath should-not be taken after food as it causes indigestion.
- *Bhojana-vidhi*: food should be taken when hunger is felt. For healthy people two times meal is advised. Exercise, drinking water, sexual activities, sleep should be avoided immediately after food. Full stomach meal should not be taken in night.

Ritucharya- Regimen For Various Seasons^[22]

As Adaptations according to changes, is the key for survival – the knowledge of *Ritucharya* is thus important. As Ayurveda has origin in India, the below seasonal changes are observed predominantly in Indian subcontinent.

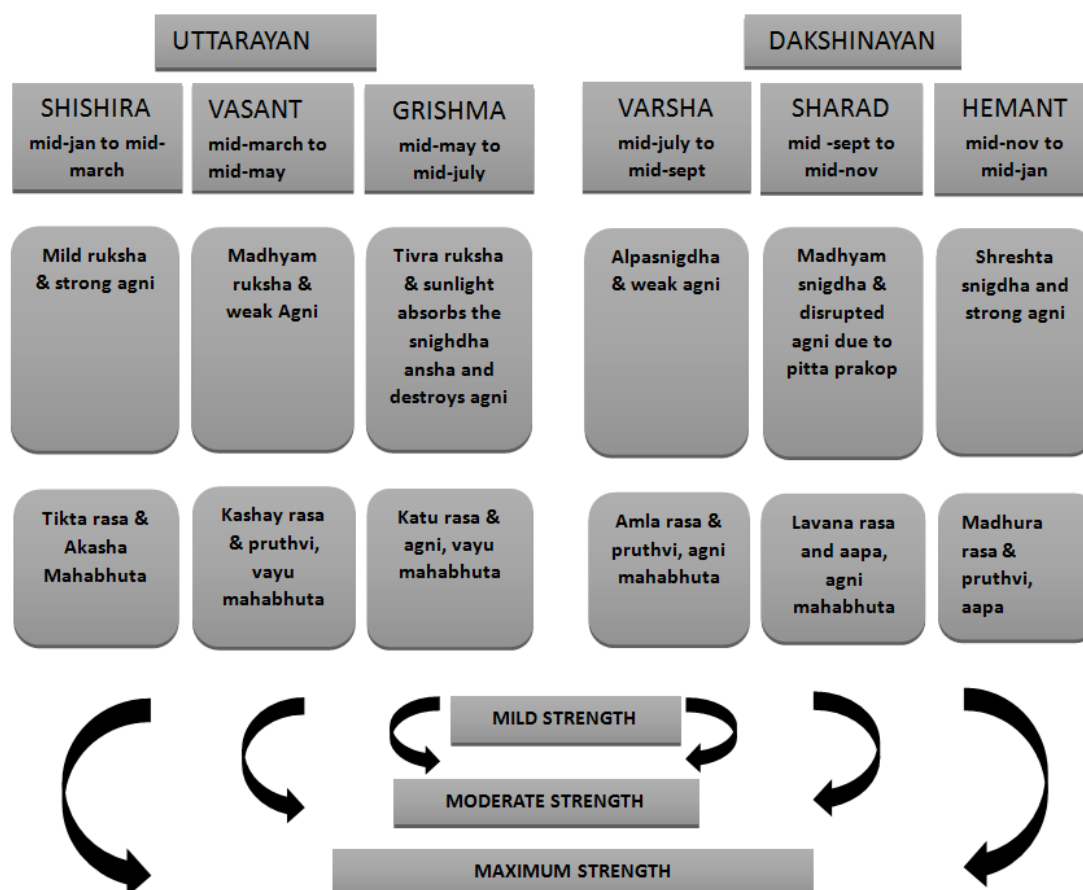
The year consists of six seasons divided into two *Ayanas*.

Uttarayana–Shishira(winter), *Vasanta*(spring), *Grishma*(summer). It indicates the northward movement of the sun. It is also called as *Adana kala*.

Dakshinayan – Varsha (monsoon), *Sharada* (autumn), *Hemanta*(late autumn). It indicates the movement of the sun in southern direction. The moon is more powerful than sun. It is also called as *Visarga kala*.

Tridoshas According To Ritu (Season)

Stages	<i>Vata</i>	<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Kapha</i>
Accumulation(<i>sanchay</i>)	<i>Grishma</i>	<i>Varsha</i>	<i>Hemanta</i>
Aggravation (<i>prakopa</i>)	<i>Pravritta</i> (Basti karma)	<i>Sharada</i> (virechana karma)	<i>Vasant</i> (Vaman karma)
Pacification (<i>prasham</i>)	<i>Sharada</i>	<i>Hemanta</i>	<i>Grishma</i>



SHISHIRA

Diet: Sweet, sour, hot and salty food is taken in cold season. The fat and protein rich diet can be consumed due to ignited *Agni* and good digestive system. *Amla-rasa* is recommended to combat *Kapha dosha*. *Haritaki*, *Pippali*, ginger is advised.

Avoid: *Katu*, *Tikta*, *Kashay rasa*, *Laghu* and *Sheeta* food items.

Lifestyle: Oil/powder massage, exposure to sunlight, and activities that gives warmth to body.

VASANTA

Season of flowering and origin of new leaves.

Diet: The easily digestible foods are advised due to diminished appetite than winter season.

Food items tasting *Tikta*, *Katu*, *Kashay*, Meat of rabbit.

Avoid: *Madhura*, *Amla*, *Snigdha*(unctuous), *Guru*(heavy), cold food items, day sleep.

Lifestyle: *Udvartana, Kavala, Dhooma, Anjana* and evacuative measures such as *Vamana* and *Nasya* are advised.

GRISHMA

Environment is prevalent with intense heat, hot winds and appears to be dried. Bowel activity decreases.

Diet: *Madhura, Snighdha, Sheeta* and *Drava* (liquid) *guna*, light to digest and energy rich food items are advised.

Avoided - *Lavana, Katu, Amla-rasa* and *Ushna* (warm) food items. Heavy, spicy foodstuffs, excessive exercise and sexual activities, exposure to heat.

Lifestyle: All the activities that keeps the environment around the person and the body cool are recommended. It includes staying in cool places, applying sandal wood etc.

VARSHA

Diet: *Amla, Lavana rasa* and *Sneha guna* foodstuffs, Medicated water or boiled water is advised.

Avoid: Drinking river water, excessive liquid items, wine, food items hard and heavy to digest, excessive sexual indulgence, unhygienic street food, junk food, day sleep.

Lifestyle: Use of boiled water for bath and oil massage. Medicated *Basti*(enema) is prescribed to expel the vitiated *doshas*.

SHARADA

During this season the sun becomes bright, sky remains clear or covered with white clouds and the earth is covered with wet mud. Bowel strength increases.

Diet: *Madhura, Tikta rasa, Sheet guna* light to digest and food that calms the vitiated *Pitta* is advised.

Avoid: Hot, bitter, astringent food, fat rich food, oily food, daytime sleep, aquatic animal meat, excessive exposure to sunlight.

Lifestyle: Eating food only when there is feeling of hunger. Water purified by rays of sun at daytime and rays of moon at night time should be used for drinking, bathing etc. The activities that cool the mind and body and protects it from *Pitta dosha*. *Virechana* and *Raktamokshana* are advised.

HEMANTA

Diet: Sweet, sour and salty foods, milk products, sugarcane products, fermented preparation and so on are to be consumed.

Avoid: *Vata* aggravating foodstuffs like *Laghu*, cold and dry foods and exposure to cold winds.

Lifestyle: Exercise, massage, sunbath, sexual indulgence and warm regimen.

ROLE OF PATHYA-APATHYA IN DISEASED PERSON

Nidana parivarjana^[16] i.e., avoid the known disease causing factors in diet and lifestyle of the patient. It is the first line management for any disease and if done in the accumulation stage(i.e., first stage of disease manifestation) inhibits the prognosis of the disease.^[23] For ex- *Vata-vardhak ahar-vihar* is avoided in *Vataj* disease.

Ahar-Vihar

Ahara is said to be the base of life- *Prana*.^[24] Kashyap denotes *Ahara* as a *Mahabhaishajya*.^[25] Ayurveda describes three sections of stomach while eating- one section should be filled with solid food, second with the fluids and the third should be left empty for the *Doshas* to function properly.^[26] Stress, anxiety, night awakening, etc should be avoided.

Panchakarma (detoxification)

These has both therapeutic and preventive effects. Five active bio-purification techniques are included in.

- *Vaman*- Emesis is done mainly in *Kaphaj* disorders. In *Vasant ritu* it is preventive measure.
- *Virechana*- Purging is mainly done in *Pittaj* disorders. In *Sharada ritu* it is preventive measure.
- *Aasthapan Basti*- Decoction Enema is mainly done in *Vataj* and *Kaphaj* disorders.

- *Anuvasan Basti*- Oil Enema mainly in *Vataj* disorders. In *varsha ritu* it is preventive measure.
- *Nasya*- Instillation of drug mainly in *Kaphaj* and *Tridoshaj* disorders.
- *Raktamokshan*- Blood-letting therapy by *Siravedh*, leech etc. mainly done for toxic blood in *Pittaj* and *Raktaj* disorders.

Supportive and other primary methods include

- *Snehana* i.e., oiling(internal ghee consumption or external oil massage).
- *Swedana*- Medicated decoction steam to dissolve toxins in the body.
- *Shirodhara*- applying oil to head.

Daivya vyapasryaya chikitsa^[27] It includes *Mantra*((hymns) *Aushadhis* and various *Manidharans*(wearing of gems), *Mangal karma*(propitiatory), *Bali*(offering to God), *Upahara*(gift), *Homa*(oblations), *Prayashchit*(atonement), *Upvasa*(fasting), *Swastyayan* (ritual social activity). All these activities produce a positive mental health. It guards the psychosomatic diseases like anxiety, depression etc.

Yukti vyapashraya chikitsa(rational therapy)- It is a judicious use of *Ahara* and *Aushadha* according to proper use, plan or *yogana*.^[28] Charaka mentions three types of therapies- *Antahparimarjana*(internal cleansing), *Bahirparimarjana*(external cleansing) and *Shashtra Pranidhana*(surgical methods).

Satvavajaya chikitsa (trance therapy)- It implies to that modality which is therapeutic for mental or emotional stresses and disturbances. This is secured best by restraining the mind from desire for unwholesome objects, directing it towards wholesome objects^[29] and the cultivation of *gyana*, *vigyana*, *dhairya*, *smriti* and *samadhi*.^[28]

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda gives more importance to food in management of disease, both as a curative factor by *Apathy sevana* and as a part of therapy by *Pathya Sevana*.

A balanced diet gives good complexion, clarity, good voice, long life, understanding, happiness, satisfaction, growth, strength, intelligence and mainly elevates oja.

As per Ayurveda every individual differs from each other(Cha.su 1) and so the concepts of *Pathya-Apathya* changes from person-to-person, according to *Prakruti*, *Kala*, *Doshas* etc. and

even in the same individual depending on age, psychological condition, *Doshas*, *Dhatus*, geographic region and so on.^[30] Hence, elaborating a diet plan or the lifestyle changes to any individual needs the consideration of all the factors affecting an individual's mental, physical and environmental status. Psychological factors are also taken into consideration as diet or drug will not be effective if taken unwillingly.

Pathya detoxifies complete body and prevents common illness occurring due to toxic accumulation. No treatment in Ayurveda is given without a list of to-do and not-to-do rules. While modern science takes *Pathya Apathya* as a complementary medicine. Modern medicine is mostly palliative, i.e., focuses on reducing the severity of pain or the disease rather than removing the root cause. Cure is achieved undoubtedly but the prevention and longevity are under-focussed. Modern medicine believes in symptomatic treatment whereas, Ayurveda focuses on eradicating the root cause of disease.

RESULT AND CONCLUSION

Ayurveda emphasizes much more on diet and regimen along with medicines. *Pathya-Apathya* is a significant component of almost each and every prescription in ayurveda therapy. Sometimes it itself proves to be a complete treatment.

The good conduction of all the above regimen nourishes the body, boosts mental strength, prevents disease and restores overall health status including physical and spiritual well-being. It keeps the person away from mental and physical illness and one may not require medicine for his/her lifespan. Acharya states the healthy mind and body depends upon the healthy food. Practically *Pathya kalpana* is a regimen- in healthy individual to let them stay fit, in patients to keep their channels in healthy state and in patients getting trated by panchakarma to help their *Mahastrotas* coming back to normal. Ayurveda has holistic and scientific approach in health management. The *Pathya* is the thing which keeps a person healthy, maintains normal bodily function, promote right organ functioning, feeds the mind and intellect, avoids illness and simultaneously corrects any abnormalities that the body experiences. So everyone should avoid *Apathya* and practice *Pathya*, as prevention is best treatment.^[31]

Theurapeutic measures agreeable to the mind and senses promotes *Tushti* (mental satisfaction), *Urja* (mental strength), and *Sukhopabhogata* as a result of which strength of disease get diminished.^[32]

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