



Pathya-Apathya- A Peculiarity of Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT-

Ayurveda is not merely a medical science. It is a complete life science. The first aim of Ayurveda is to maintain the health of a healthy person so that no diseases should manifest. Treatment of diseases is the second aim of Ayurveda. To maintain the health of a healthy person *Acharyas* had described various dos and don'ts such as *Ritucharya* (seasonal regime), *Dinacharya* (diurnal regime) etc. The concept of *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathaya* (unwholesome) is one such concept. Apart from being a part of regime of healthy living, *Acharyas* had also extended the concept of *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathaya* (unwholesome) as a part of the treatment of the diseases. This indicates the importance of *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathaya* (unwholesome) in Ayurveda. The concept of *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathaya* (unwholesome) is the peculiarity of Ayurveda.

Keywords- Ayurveda, Pathya, Apathaya, Healthy living.

1. INTRODUCTION-

The aims and objectives of Ayurveda are to maintain the health of a healthy person and to cure the diseases of the patients¹. As evident the first and foremost aim of Ayurveda is preventive in nature rather than curative. It signifies that "prevention is better than cure". To maintain the health, Ayurveda laid many basic principles like *Ritucharya* (seasonal regime), *Dinacharya* (diurnal regime) etc. The concept of *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathaya* (unwholesome) is the peculiarity of Ayurveda to fulfill its aims and objectives.

The word *Pathya* derives its origin from root word *Patha* which literally means a way or channel. *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathaya* (unwholesome) are defined as the substance or regime which do not adversely affect the body and mind are regarded as *Pathya* (wholesome); those which adversely affect them are considered to be *Apathaya* (unwholesome)². As evident from above definition, *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathaya* (unwholesome) include both material substances and specific regimes but in general these words had been particularly used for food articles in the texts of Ayurveda.

Charak had stated that wholesome food is one of the causes for the growth and wellbeing of humans while unwholesome food is the root of all diseases³. *Charak* had counted food first in the series of three supporting pillars of life along with sleep and controlled sexual activity⁴. *Sushrut* had further supported the fact by stating that food is the cause of vitality, strength, complexion and *Oja*⁵.

2. SYNONYMS-

2.1 Pathya-

*Satmya, Swasthhitakara, Upshaya, Swavasthaparipaalaka, Hita Ahara, Swasthaaurjaskara, Sharmakara, Dhatua virodhi, Sukhparinaamkara, Dhatu Saamyakara*⁶

2.2 Apathya- *Asatmya, Swastha Ahitkara, Anupashaya, Ahitkara, Asukha Parinaamakara, Ashrmakara, Dhatuasamyakara.*

3. ANTIQUITY OF PATHYA & APATHYA-

History deals with the past. It is a guideline for development in any field of the life. The past experience about drugs/ food articles is of great help with regards to their quality, individuality, uniqueness etc. thus making it more fruitful for future generations.

3.1 Veda-Vedas are the earliest known documentation, the sacred literature of India. Various evades about *Pathya & Apathya* are present in *Veda* right from *Rigveda* e.g. *Soma* is the functional part of wholesome food which is a powerful medicine of all diseases. Wholesome food acts as a medicine and it should be strictly followed (*Rigveda* 8/73/17).

Yajurveda explained many cereals and fooding ingredients like *Masha (Phaseolus moongo* Linn.), *Tila (Sesamum indicum* Linn.), *Moodga (Phaseolus radiatus* Linn.), *Priyangu (Setaria italic* Beauv.), *Shyamaka (Echinochloa frumentacea)*, *Neevara (Hygroryza aristata* Nees.), *Godhuma (Triticum sativum* Lam.), *Masoora (Lens culinaris* Medic.) etc. *Yajurveda* states that water, food, air etc. when purified by *Yajna Karma* acts as medicine. (*Yajurveda* 18/12).

Atharveda states that a person who maintains *Agni* (fire), *Jala* (water), *Vayu* (air) and *Prithavi* (earth) by wholesome food and celibacy becomes energetic and healthy. He progresses towards the transcendent state attained as a result of being released from the cycle of rebirth (*Atharveda Dwityakanda* 28/5). In *Atharveda*, some cereals like *Virihhi (Oryza sativa* Linn.), *Yava (Hordeum vulgare* Linn.), *Tila (Sesamum indicum* Linn.), *Masoora (Lens culinaris* Medic.), *Masha (Phaseolus moongo* Linn.) etc. had been described (*Atharveda Shastha kanda* 2/140).

3.2 Ramayana- *Payasa* (rice pudding) increases the power of reproduction and provides the wealth and health, thus is good and *Pathya* for human (*Valmiki Ramayana* 1/16/19).

3.3 Bhagwad Geeta- Food has been classified as *Saatvika*, *Rajasa* and *Tamasa* in nature.

Saatvika food increases life span, purifies the mind and soul and provides health, happiness and strength. This type of nourishing food is sweet, juicy, fatty and palatable.

Rajasa foods are too bitter, too sour, salty, pungent, and dry and hot. Such food causes a in, distress, and disease.

Tamasa foods are food that are being cooked more than three hours before consumption, which is tasteless, decayed, decomposed and unclean (*Bhagwad Geeta* 17/7-10).

3.4 Hatha Yoga- *Hatha Yoga Samhitade* scribed *Pathya Ahara* for *Yoga Shishya* (disciple of *Yoga*). *Ahara* (food) for *Yoga Shishya* (student) should include *Godhuma (Triticum sativum* Lam.), *Shali-Shashtika (Oryza sativa* Linn.), *Yava (Hordeum vulgare* Linn.), *Shobhananna (Shyamaka, Nivara, etc)*, *Ksheera* (milk), *Aajya* (clarified butter), *Navneeta* (freshly extracted butter), *Sita* (sugar), *Madhu* (honey), *Shunthi (Zingiber officinale* Rosc.), *Patola (Trichosanthes dioica* Roxb.), *Panchashaka (Jeevanti (Leptadenia reticulate* W. & A.), *Vastuka (Chenopodium album* Linn.), *Matsyakshi (Enhydra fluctuans* Lour.), *Meghanada (?)*, *Punarnava*

(*Boerhaavia diffusa* Linn.), *Mudga* (*Phaseolus radiatus* Linn.), *Aadhaki* (*Cajanus indicus* Spreng.) and *Divyodaka* (*Hathayoga Samhita* 1/59-63).

4. IMPORTANCE OF *PATHYA* & *APATHYA*-

The importance of *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathya* (unwholesome) in Ayurveda can be deduced from the fact that *Charak* had stated *Pathya* (wholesome) as a synonym for treatment⁷. *Charak* stated that when channels of circulation become hard by aggravated and vitiated *Dosha*, *Pathya* (wholesome) helps to soften the *Srotasa* (channels of circulation) and *Dosha* alleviation⁸. *Charak* had elaborately described the concept of *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathya* (unwholesome). He had given a general list of *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathya Dravya* (unwholesome) along with specific *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathya Dravya* (unwholesome) for patients and *Sansarjana Karma* (specific food regime) for patients who have undergone *Panchkarma Therapy*.

Further, *Sushrut* had specifically written a chapter named *Hita-Ahitiya Aadhyay* in *Sutra Sthan*.

Kashyap explored the medicinal potential of *Aahar* (food) along with its prophylactic value of maintaining health. *Kashyap* stated that food is the best medicine. No drug can match the benefits of food in diseased state. Only wholesome food can keep a person healthy⁹.

Harita stated the importance of *Pathya* (wholesome) and *Apathya* (unwholesome) by stating that if a person ignores the concept of *Pathya-Apathya* and devours *Apathya* (unwholesome), illness will never leave the body. Hence persons should use *Pathya* (wholesome) according to his/her physical and pathological condition regularly. Even in the absence of medicine, if a patient takes only *Pathya* (wholesome) according to disease he will become healthy, but even if a patient takes more and regular medicine and avoids *Pathya Ahar* prescribed by physician, he will never become healthy¹⁰.

In *Yogaratanakara*, it is said that for the treatment of diseases etiology, drug treatment and *Pathya* (wholesome) are three important factors which should be studied thoroughly before starting the treatment. Judicious planning of treatment by proper understanding of these three factors always yields a successful eradication of disease. *Yogaratanakara* uses the metaphor of *Ankura* (seedling) for progressive form of disease. This *Ankura* (seedling) will dry and be destroyed if it is not nourished by water; similarly disease will be destroyed if a patient does not consume *Apathya Ahara* (unwholesome food)¹¹.

Vaidya Lolimbajra indicated the importance of *Pathya Aahar* (wholesome food) by stating that if a patient intakes wholesome food then there is no need of medicine and if a patient continuously consumes unwholesome food then also there is no need of medicine. In the latter case, medicine will not be effective¹².

Charak had also given equal importance to *Pathya Vihar* (wholesome routine) along with *Pathya Aahar* (wholesome food) for maintenance of health. As *Charak* has stated that in conditions of *Chinta* (anxiety), *Shoka* (sorrow), *Krodha* (anger), *Dukha Shaiya* (uncomfortable bed) and *Ratrijagarana* (insomnia), even the small amount of *Pathya Ahara* (wholesome food) is not digested, thus have given equal importance to both *Pathya Ahara* and *Vihara*¹³.

Bhela Samhita also explains about merits of *Pathya* and demerits of *Apathya* in the *Sutrasthana*. *Pathya Ahara* nourishes all *Dhatu*s (body elements) and *Srotasa* (channels of circulation) leading to complete nutrition of body. *Pathya Ahara* also helps to detoxify the body by getting rid of vitiated *Dosha*. Contrary to this, *Apathya Ahara* helps in vitiation of *Vata* etc. *Doshas*. Hence for maintenance of health and treating diseases *Pathya Ahara* should be consumed¹⁴.

5. GENERAL PATHYA AND APATHYA-

Acharya Charak indicated some food articles which should always be consumed by healthy persons. These food articles include *Shashtika* (variety of rice), *Shali* (variety of rice), *Mudga* (*Phaseolus radiatus* Linn.), *Saindhav*, *Amalaka* (*Embllica officinalis* Gaertn.), rain water, *Ghee* (butter), meat of animals dwelling in arid climate and honey¹⁵. Similarly, *Acharya Charak* had also indicated some food articles which should be avoided by healthy persons. Such food articles are *Vallura* (dried meat), dried vegetables, lotus rhizome and stalk and one should never consume meat of diseased animals¹⁶.

<i>Varga</i>	<i>Pathya</i>	<i>Apathya</i>
<i>Shuka Dhanya</i>	<i>Rakta shali, Shastika and types of Shastika, Godhuma, Yava</i>	<i>Yavaka</i>
<i>Shami Dhanya</i>	<i>Mudga, Masura, Mangalya, Chana ka, Aadhaki,</i>	<i>Masha</i>
<i>Mansa Varga</i>	<i>Ajameda, Ena (antelope), Godha (inguana), Rohit Matshya, Chuluki (Gangetic dolphin), Vasa Jangala Mansa etc</i>	<i>Go mansa, Kankapota mansa (young dove), frog, Chilchim fish, Kumbhir (crocodile) fat, Kakamudga (water fowl) fat, Chataka (sparrow) fat</i>
<i>Shaka Varga</i>	<i>Vastuka, Patha, Sunishnaka, Jeevanti, Tanduliyaka, Mandukaparni, Kushmanda, Patola Kakmac Rajakshawaka, Nadi</i>	<i>Sarshapa Shaka, Kusumbha Shaaka etc.</i>
<i>Phala Varga</i>	<i>Dadima, Aamlaka, Haritaki, Vibhitaki, Mridvika,</i>	<i>Nikucha (Atrocarpus lakoocha)</i>
<i>Harita Varga</i>	<i>Sringawera, Baal moolak, Sursa, Haridra, Dhanyaka, Yavani, Methika</i>	
<i>Madya Varga</i>	<i>Purana Madya, Madhwika, Matravata Pana</i>	
<i>Jala</i>	<i>Eindra Jala, Shrita Sheeta jala,</i>	<i>Kalushita (unclean) Jala</i>
<i>Gorasa varga</i>	<i>Go dugdha, Aja dugha, Mahisha Dugdha, Go-Ghee, Takra, Navneeta.</i>	<i>Avi (sheep) Dugdha, Aavika (Sheep) Ghrita</i>
<i>Ikshu Varga</i>	<i>Guda, Sharkara, Madhu</i>	<i>Phanita (treacle)</i>
<i>Kritanna Varga</i>	<i>Manda, Peya, krishara, Audana, Yusha. Saktu</i>	
<i>Aharayogina Varga</i>	<i>Tail, Vasa, Hingu, Pippali, Saindhava Lavana</i>	

<i>Vihara</i>	<i>Brahmcharya, Nivatashyana, Ushnodaka Snana, NishaSwapana, Vyaayaama, Vegavidhaarna, Maatraavata Asana, Kaala bhojana, Avhyanaaga, Bhojanamjeerne.</i>
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6. GENERAL PARAMETERS TO DECIDE PATHYA-APATHYA-

Corns and grains, one year after their harvesting are wholesome. Old corns and grains are mostly not unctuous while fresh ones are heavy to digest. Corns and grains which take a shorter time for cultivation as well as for harvesting are easy to digest than those taking longer time. De-husked pulses are easy to digest¹⁷.

Meat of animals who have died a natural death, who are emaciated or dried up after death, who are fatty in excess, who are old, who are too young, who are killed by poisonous arrows, who gaze in a land not commensurate with their natural habitat and who are bitten by snakes and tigers etc. are unwholesome. Otherwise, meat is wholesome, nourishing and strength promoting¹⁸.

Vegetables infested with insects, exposed to the wind and the sun for long time, dried up, old and unseasonal are wholesome. When they are cooked without fat and residual water after boiling is not filtered out, vegetables become unwholesome for use¹⁹.

Fruits which are old, unripe, afflicted by insects and serpents, exposed to snow or sun for long, growing in the land and season other than the normal habitat and time and putrefied are unwholesome²⁰.

7. DIFFERENT PATHYA KALPANA-

Various *Pathya Kalpana* like *Peya*, *Vilepi*, *Yavagu* had been described by *Acharyas*. These *Kalpanas* (preparations) are generally used in different diseases according to state of disease and capacity to digest the food in that disease. These *Kalpana*(preparations) helps in stimulating digestive fire. Thus, it will also avoid formation of *Ama* which is often triggered when *Agni* (digestive fire) is hampered.

7.1 *Pathya Kalpana* and Their Uses²¹:

<i>Pathya Kalpana</i>	Method for preparation	Uses
1. <i>Manda</i>	The filtered liquid portion obtained after boiling one Carminative, Digestive part of rice and fourteen parts of water	Carminative, digestive
2. <i>Peya</i>	One part of rice and fourteen parts of water, boiled into Quickly digestible, Stops loose watery consistency	Quickly digestible, stops loose motions, Nourishes the tissues.
3. <i>Vilepi</i>	One part of rice and four parts of water, cooked into Strengthening, Nourishing, Good for thick paste	Strengthening, nourishing, good for heart, Delicious, Diuretic
4. <i>Yavagu</i>	One part of grain rice etc. and six parts of water, Strengthening, Nourishing cooked into thick paste	Strengthening, nourishing

8. PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF CONCEPT OF *PATHYA-APATHYA*-

8.1 *Pathya-Apathya* in a particular season: *Acharya* had described specific *Pathya-Apathya* for every season. The practice of *Pathya-Apathya* as per season will improve overall health e.g. in winter season meat of aquatic and marshy animals and burrow dwelling animals should be consumed. Other wholesome food articles for winter season include preparations of cow milk, cane juice, fat, oil, new rice etc. On the other hand dieting and intake of gruel should be avoided. In *Vihara*, fomentation and warm clothes are wholesome to practice²².

8.2 Concept of *Kritanna Varga*: All these benefits of *Pathya Aahara* can be ripped off with the help of *Kritanna Varga* described in various ancient texts. Properties of these *Kritanna* differ from each other depending upon the method of preparation even if material used is the same. In case of *Manda*, *Peya*, *Yavagu* and *Vilepi*, the amount of water used for cooking and then amount of liquid and solid content is different for each of them. These *Kalpana* become easy to digest according to their state and attain various physiological actions as well. Thus, these can be prescribed for patient as a meal.

8.3 *Pathya-irrespective of disease condition*: These *Pathya Ahara* are described specific to a particular disease condition. According to *Bhavaprakasha* taking ginger and salt before food is always good and it enhances *Agni* (digestive fire)²³. Taste, clears tongue and throat. *Charaka* and *Vagbhata* also describe some regularly consumable food articles. *Rakta shali*, *Mudga*, Rain water, *Saindhava* (rock salt), *Jivanti*, meat of *Aina*, *Godha*, *Rohita Matsya*, cow's ghee, cow's milk, *Tila Taila*, ginger, grapes, pomegranate and sugar are considered as most conducive among food articles.

8.4 *Pathya-for specific disease condition*: Disease specific *Pathya* (wholesome diet/ foods to be consumed) and *Apathya* (unwholesome diet/ foods to be avoided) are explained in various classical texts like *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtangahridaya* etc. but there are detailed descriptions about them in other texts like *Sharangdhara Samhita*, *Pathyapathya Vibodhika*, *Bhaishajyaratnavali* etc.e.g.

8.4.1 *Madhumeha* (Diabetes mellitus):

Item	<i>Pathya</i>	<i>Apathya</i>
Cereals	Barley, special variety of grain (sanvaka, kodrava), wheat	Freshly harvested grains, rice
Pulses	Green gram (<i>Mudga</i>), <i>Kulattha</i> , pigeon pea (<i>Arahara</i>), <i>Alasi</i> , chickpea (<i>cana</i>)	Black gram (<i>Udada</i>)
Fruits and vegetables	<i>Patola</i> , bitter gourd (<i>karavellaka</i>), <i>amalaki</i> , <i>haridra</i> , <i>kapittha</i> , black pepper	Sweet fruits, Potato etc.
Other	Honey, betel nut, rock salt	Milk, curd, butter milk, clarified butter, oil, jaggery, alcohol, sugarcane products, betel, eating before digestion of previous food, incompatible food

8.4.2 *Sandhivata* (Osteoarthritis):

Item	<i>Pathya</i>	<i>Apathya</i>
Cereals	Wheat, rice	Special variety of rice (kodrava, sanvaka)
Pulses	Black gram (udada), kulattha	Peas (matar), chickpea (cana), pigeon pea (arahara), green gram (mudga)
Fruits & vegetables	<i>Patola</i> , <i>shigru</i> , brinjal, garlic, pomegranate, mango, phalasa, lemon, jujube plum (badara, bera), grapes	Bitter gourd (karavellaka), lotus stem
Other	Clarified butter, oil, sesame, milk, coconut water, sour vinegar (kanji), tamarind (imali)	<i>Jambu</i> , betel nut

9. DISCUSSION-

Ayurveda has a holistic approach in health management. It gives due importance to food in the management of disease both as a causative factor (*Apathya*) and as a part of therapy (*Pathya*). As per Ayurveda, most of the ailments develop due to faulty eating habits so Ayurveda deals with the *Pathya Vyavastha* (planning of diet and dietetics) in a very scientific way. Day to day activities, seasonal regimes etc. also plays an important role in the maintenance of health and thus, had also been included in the concept of *Pathya-Apathya* by the *Acharyas*. The above described facts are about the general concept of *Pathya-Apathya* in Ayurveda. The specific *Pathya-Apathya* for a particular person may differ as Ayurveda believes in the concept of uniqueness of each and every individual²⁴. The exact *Pathya-Apathya* for a particular person should be decided after analyzing *Prakriti* (body nature), *Kalpna* (preparation to be given), *Kaal* (time of intake of food), *Matra* (quantity) etc.

CONCLUSION-

Pathya is the one which keeps the person healthy, maintains normal body functions leads to proper functioning of the organs, nourishes the mind and intellect, prevents diseases and at the same time corrects the irregularities that may occur in the body. Thus, everyone should refrain from *Apathya* (unwholesome to body) and follow *Pathya* (wholesome to body) as prevention is better than cure.

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