

**AYURVEDIC DIETETICS: AWAY TO GOOD HEALTH**

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*Ayurveda, the Science of Life, has given much importance to the preservation of health and the prevention of diseases. Naturally it has dealt very deeply the aspect of dietetics in view of the social and climate conditions.*

*Ayurveda defines 'Diet' as that which is 'beneficial' (Hitakaraka), taken in appropriate and moderate proportions and taken at proper time of the day. Here the word 'beneficial' or 'Hitakaraka' has a special meaning of food which keeps the person healthy, maintains normal body functions, at the same time corrects the irregularities that may occur in the body, leads to proper functioning of the organs and prevents diseases. Ayurveda regards that, diet is the origin of strength, life activities, the bright texture of the skin, health and normal activities, of all the organs. These essential qualities of a healthy or 'Swastha' person is due to the intake of proper food in quality and quantity.*

**Keywords:** Diet, Body Constitution, Rules of food consumption.

**Introduction:**

*Ayurveda* has a well planned daily diet which is quite suitable to climate and society, of easily available food grains and of most important quality which is, within the reach of a common man. The famous *Ayurvedic* expert *Sushruta* advice intake of food which is easily digestible, energetic, soft, warm, and to be taken in proper quantities when one is hungry. Thus *Sushruta* has very clearly described the essence of ideal dietetics in one sentence. Modern Science also regards that when there is proper secretion of digestive juices, one feels hungry, which is the proper time for food intake. Easily digestible food is always much beneficial to health. Energetic, soft and warm food is regarded as the proper one for the normal digestion. If such food is taken in proper quantities it would be 'beneficial', otherwise small quantity of food would be insufficient for nutrition while heavy meals would definitely cause indigestion.

**Review:**

Before taking concept of *ayurvedic* dietetics, one should know the harmful effect of eating improper food.

**Results of improper food intake -**

*Ayurveda* strongly regards that eating far less than actual hunger or eating before or after the usual timings of meals is unhygienic or '*Swasthyavighataka*'. It causes physical and mental ailments.

Eating less than actual hunger causes physical and mental dissatisfaction, weakness, exhaustion apathy and abdominal discomfort. Eating before the proper eating timings disturbs the health as normal appetite is absent, it results in disorders like intense headache, heaviness etc. Eating after the usual; proper timings, causes Dyspepsia, Indigestion, Anorexia, Weakness etc. Non-taking of meals when one is hungry is also improper and causes Anorexia, exhaustion, weakness etc.

### **Timings of daily diet –**

In dietetics 'when we should take food' has much importance. *Ayurveda* has given due consideration to this factor also. According to *ayurveda*, it is better to take diet in the morning and evening. *Ayurveda* regards these two timings as the '*Pittakala*' when there is maximum secretion of digestive juices. *Ayurveda* also regards, taking meals is not only of eating something but as a 'pious *yagnakarma*' (Holy Deed). It is thought that, once the meals are taken, nothing should be eaten within three hours. Now modern dietetics also supports this opinion with the view of proper digestion.

### **Variations in diet timings -**

Seasonal variations in the proper timings of taking daily diet are also given proper thought in *ayurveda*.

In spring and autumn seasons, the days and nights are of equal duration. Hence the first meals should be taken in the afternoon and another after 6-8 hours at night.

In winter season, the days are of short duration while the nights are long, hence the first meal should be taken in the morning while the another one in the evening.

It would be hence clear that, *Ayurveda* has deeply thought of the scientific aspect regarding timings of daily meals also. Now-a-days it is observed that the morning meals are taken hurriedly by urban people. But *Ayurveda* advocates not taking daily meals only because you have to hurry to your work, but to be sure beforehand whether -

- 1) One is really hungry.
- 2) The previous meals are completely digested.
- 3) There is normal evacuation of urine and stools, and,
- 4) One feels physically and mentally comfortable for meals.

*Ayurveda* is of the opinion that the proper timings for daily meals is one, when one is prepared not only mentally because he wishes to eat or physically as a daily routine but when one is really prepared, both mentally and physically for it.

### **Meals:-**

Before taking meals, one should preferably taken clean bath or at least clearly wash his hands and feet beforehand. He should wear separate clean clothes. One should make sure that his parents, guests, small kids, elderly persons, servants and even the pet animals and birds of his family have already taken their meals beforehand. This is the most important psychological and social hygienic view of the *Ayurvedic*

dietetics. It is further suggested that daily meals must be taken in a closed but airy, holy, decorated, clean scented, calm, quiet place free from traffic and other noisy atmosphere. It should be taken in a calm, quiet mental mood, seating aside all worries and tensions, preferably in the joyous company of our dear relatives and friends. Also it should preferably be served by mother, wife or dearly relatives. The person serving meals wear clean, neatly dressed, should wear scented flowers, articles etc., and should be of a loving nature and not him or her hungry. The only idea behind all these *ayurvedic* dietetic rules is in complete physical and mental relation.

#### **Kitchen:-**

While considering deeply about dietetics, *ayurveda* has well thought of the importance of kitchen or *Mahanasa* in dietetics. The Kitchen should be in a quiet place, spacious, clean, airy but free from dust and dirt. Food should be as far as possible prepared by mother, wife or dearly relatives. The idea behind this rule is that food should have a touch of gentle, warm feelings beforehand.

The prepared food should be well protected from insects, animals and dirt, dust and properly covered. Food should be purified by sprinkling medicated water and holy water processed with ant poisonous hymns or mantra.

#### **Utensils for preparations of meals:-**

Utensils used for preparing and serving meals should be made up of gold, silver, brass, glass, stone, wood or earthenware. Golden utensils are medicinally regarded as the best while others in lowering order and earthenware utensils are not advisable in dietetics.

#### **How much to eat:-**

*Ayurveda* is of the opinion that, human diet varies according to the country, season, surroundings and the individual constitution. Hence as a standard rule, *Ayurveda* advises that, one should imagine four equal parts of his stomach and eat about half of it. He should reserve a quarter almost empty. Modern dietetics also supports this *Ayurvedic* view in view of better digestion.

#### **Ideal dietetic substances:-**

*Ayurveda* has deeply thought of Medicinal properties of hundreds of food substances commonly used in daily vegetarian and non-vegetarian diet. Out of those, considering various factors in dietetics and common availability, some are described here. *Ayurveda* regards some food substances as the proper one for an ideal beneficial diet. They are:-

- 1) **Food Grains** - Rice, especially red variety of Rice, Millet, Wheat, Barley etc.
- 2) **Pulses** - Green grain, *Chanaka* (Gram), *Tur* (*Tuwar*) etc.
- 3) **Green Vegetables**- *Chucra*, *palevata*, *Mulka* (Raddish), *Jievanti*, *Patola*, Coriander leaves etc.
- 4) **Fruits**- Grapes, Mango, Dates, Coconut, Banana, Apples etc.

5) **Non vegetarian substances** - They include flesh of animals like deer, goat, Hen, Chicken, birds like pigeons and some variety of fishes.

6) **Mixed Articles** - Sugar, cow milk and ghee, honey, salt, sesame oil, *jaggery* etc.

*Ayurveda* regards that, any food grains should be of one year preservation, green vegetables must be green, fresh and non dried, fruits should be sufficiently ripe and animals and birds used should be healthy and well fed. Due to limitation of this book, it is impossible to describe *ayurvedic* dietetics in details. But now it has been established that the above mentioned articles have definite best nutritive values in view of the modern dietetics.

Food is any substance consumed to provide nutritional support for the body. It is usually of plant or animal origin, and contains essential nutrients, viz carbohydrates, fats, proteins, minerals, vitamins and water. The substance is ingested by an organism and assimilated by the organism cells in an effort to produce energy, maintain life, and/or stimulate growth.

### **Diet for Vata Constitution**

*Vata* individuals have dry, cold, light, subtle, mobile and rough qualities in them. They need food atmosphere of opposite qualities like warm, smooth and humid qualities. This means they need qualities of *Pitta* and *Kapha*. *Vata* starts accumulating in middle of June and aggravates in rainy season. So these people should take the following diet especially in these seasons.

#### **Diet:**

1. Take nutritive, strengthening, diet, which is with sweet, salty tastes.
2. Food should be fresh, warm, moist and soothing.
3. Take frequent and regular meals considering your digestion capacity.
4. Avoid too much fasting or dieting.
5. Use spices in cooking to regulate digestion. Eat foods, which are warming and spicy like Mexican or Indian, twice a week.
6. Take creamy soups, hot cereals, bread, pasta with rich sauce containing butter or cream

*Vata* has cold, dry and light properties. Therefore opposite qualities are good to balance *Vata*.

- ❖ **Grains-** Wheat, Oats and rice. Stay away from all other grains.
- ❖ **Beans** - *Moong* beans, red lentils, red gram (*Tur dal*). Fresh green peas. All other beans should be avoided, as they are very heavy for digestion and produces gases.
- ❖ **Vegetables-** Beet, carrots, cucumber, Zucchini, radish, watercress, white gourd, red gourd, cilantro, spinach, mint, cooked onion, garlic, fenugreek, mustard. Avoid potatoes, eggplant, sweet potatoes, cauliflower, and cabbage
- ❖ **Dairy Products-** Milk, ghee, soymilk, lassi, fresh homemade yogurt and buttermilk are excellent. Cheese, butter is also good. Avoid Ice creams, dry milk powders stale and sour dairy products.

- ❖ **Fruits**- All fresh sweet fruits, plum [date] figs, raisins, grapes are well tolerated. Papaya, mangoes like heat producing fruits are good. Citrus fruits like orange, lemon are well tolerated. Avoid sour apples raw fruits, astringent fruits like pomegranate cooling fruits like banana, water melon. Dry Fruit may be eaten after soaking overnight.
- ❖ **Oils**- Sesame oil is best. In small amount almond oil; peanut oil or groundnut oil and walnut oil.
- ❖ **Sweetener**- All sweeteners, sugar, sucinat (*jaggery*) honey, molasses, maple syrup are good.
- ❖ **Spices** - Hot pungent spices like cinnamon, cloves, cayenne, dry ginger, fresh ginger, fenugreek seeds and especially asafetida mustard seeds are very good. Avoid coriander having cooling effect on body.

### **Diet for Pitta Constitution**

*Pitta* persons have hot, penetrating or sharp, flowing, liquid, slightly oily and light qualities in them. These persons should take food and drinks opposite to these qualities - cool, mild and maintaining, dry, heavy qualities. This means they require qualities of *Vata* and *Kapha*. *Pitta* accumulates in rainy season and gets aggravated in October. Hence people of *pitta* constitution should especially follow the below diet during that period. Some considerations for diet for *pitta* constitution are-

- 1) A balance strengthening diet with mainly sweet bitter and astringent tastes will be perfect for your constitution.
- 2) Prefer cool foods and drinks, especially in hot weather. Also eat mostly vegetarian diet which suits the constitution.
- 3) Adequate intake of raw food and juices is indicated.
- 4) Even water should be taken cool. Coffee, alcohol and more black teas should be avoided.
- 5) You should avoid pickles, vinegar, chilies, vegetable oils, bakery products, canned foods, instant foods and hybrid grains etc.

*Pitta* has sharp, hot sour, oily, fluid properties. Opposite will be good option to pacify *pitta*.

- ❖ **Grains**- Wheat, Oats and rice and large millet (*Jowar*) are good, Avoid corn, small millet, and brown rice.
- ❖ **Beans** - *Moong* beans, red lentils, Red gram dal in small quantity (*turdal*), black gram dal (*Urad dal*) black lentils. Horse gram (*hulaga*) aggravates *Pitta*. Stay away from Bengal gram (*chole*), dried green peas or yellow peas and cow gram.
- ❖ **Vegetables**- Asparagus, snake gourd, white gourd, red gourd, carrots, cucumber without central portion, beet cauliflower, cabbage, spinach, lettuce, amaranth, cilantro or coriander. Stay away from eggplant, potato, fenugreek green (*Methi*, tomatoes and sour vegetables).
- ❖ **Dairy Products**- Ghee is excellent, Milk, fresh yogurt, fresh butter milk which is sweet in taste are good. Avoid sour and stale dairy products.

- ❖ **Fruits-** All sweet fruits, plum, date, figs, raisins, grapes are well tolerated. Papaya, mangoes like heat producing fruits are good. Stay away from sour and citrus fruit, lemon, papaya, alphonso mango and dry fruits (Almonds, walnut, cashew nuts).
- ❖ **Oils-** In small amount groundnut, sunflower and coconut are good choice. Avoid corn, almond, safflower oil and sesame oil.
- ❖ **Sweetener-** Avoid succinct (*jaggery*), white sugar, honey, molasses, maple syrup.
- ❖ **Spices -** Mild spices having cooling, bitter taste like coriander seeds, cumin, fennel, saffron, mint and turmeric in moderate amount are all good. Avoid pungent hot spices like cloves, cayenne, dry ginger, and fenugreek seeds.

### **Diet for *Kapha* constitution**

*Kapha* persons have heavy, cold, soft, stable, slimy qualities. They should therefore prefer food and drinks which are opposite to these qualities- light, warm, hard and pungent taste. Diet *Kapha* accumulates in December and gets aggravated in early summer. Therefore *Kapha* constitution people should especially follow this diet during that period.

- 1) Your diet should be light, with pungent, bitter and astringent tastes.
- 2) Food should be warm, light, dry and with hot spices.
- 3) Low fat, high carbohydrate diets without sugars are good
- 4) Occasional fasting is good for you.
- 5) Avoid frequent eating.
- 6) Cold water and frozen edibles should be avoided.

*Kapha* is cold, heavy, wet, smooth, soft. Hence the opposite qualities like warm, light, dry, and rough are good for balancing *Kapha*.

- ❖ **Grains-** Millet, barley, oats, corns are favorable grains. *Jowar* or large millet is also good. Stay away from new rice & wheat (Rice kept more than 6 months is considered as old).
- ❖ **Beans -** Red lentils, moongbeans, pulses, red gram *dal*, Bengal gram dal are well tolerated. Avoid- tofu, soya products, black gram *dal*( *Urad dal*).
- ❖ **Vegetables-** Most vegetables raw or cooked are suitable. Beets, carrot, radish, cabbage, cauliflower, sprouts, baby corn, bamboo shoots and eggplant are fine. Try to avoid potatoes, tomatoes, cucumber, zucchini, and pumpkin. Leafy vegetable like fenugreek, drumstick is good.
- ❖ **Dairy Products-** Light dairy products like cow's milk, goat milk which are easy to digest are good. Buttermilk from fat free yogurt will be good. Rich dairy products like ghee, cheese butter, cold milk, ice creams should be avoided.

- ❖ **Fruits-** Dried fruits almond, cashew nut walnut. Apple, grapes, pomegranate papaya, mango in small amounts are good. Avoid heavy and nutritious fruits like banana, grapes, date, oranges, Cooling and water containing fruits like pineapples, watermelon increases *Kapha*.
- ❖ **Oils-** Sunflower oil and corn oil in small amount are permissible. Stay away from all other oils.
- ❖ **Sweetener-** Avoid all other sweetener except honey. Honey old than 6 months is good; as the new one increase *Kapha*.
- ❖ **Spices -** Almost all hot, pungent spices are good for *Kapha* constitution. Being cold cardamom should not be used Cayenne, red pepper, black pepper are well tolerated, ginger, turmeric, garlic, mustard are very good for this body type.

### **Diet for Dual constitution**

*Vata – Pitta:* *Vata* controlling diet in rainy season and *Pitta* controlling diet in spring and summer.

*Pitta-Kapha:* *Pitta:* controlling diet form late spring through Fall *Kapha* controlling diet from winter.

*Kapha-Vata:* *Kapha* controlling diet in winter and spring and *Vata* controlling diet in summer and fall (rainy season).

### **The Good Diet and the Bad Diet:-**

It has been described by Charaka in terms of *hitaahar* i.e. wholesome diet and *ahita* i.e. unwholesome diet Lord *Atreya* has stated this term as “ The food which maintains the balance *dhatu*s as normally and restores the equilibrium in the mal balanced ones, should be taken as wholesome otherwise unwholesome. This definition of wholesome and unwholesome is without any exception.<sup>1</sup> But when asked by *Agnivesa* that the instruction imparted in this way would not be understood by the majority of Physician, Lord *Atreya* replied “*Agnivesa* those to whom the dietetics is known in terms of properly, substance, effect and the factors like quantity etc. are able to understand the above instruction as regards the way which the majority of Physician would grasp this instruction, I will explained these in same way by illustrating the factors like quantity etc. because they have got multiple variation.<sup>2</sup> Lord *Atreya* categorically mentioned the importance of wholesome diet by saying, “Only the use of wholesome food promotes the growth of person and that of unwholesome one is the cause of disease. The relation of wholesome diet and healthy and unwholesome diet and disease was known to *Charaka*. At the same time he was aware of the intimation of this concept. That is why when Lord *Atreya* while describing this concept says, “Thus this body is the product of food eaten, drink, licked and devoured. Similarly the disease also is produced by the food. Wholesome food produces good and bad effect respectively. Then *Agnivesa* asked – It is observed, Sir, that the person taking the wholesome food are bath by how the difference in good and bad effects can be distributed to the intake of wholesome and unwholesome food respectively.” Lord *Atreya* said *Agnivesa* ! the

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<sup>1</sup> Ch. Su. 25/33

<sup>2</sup> Ch. Su. 25/35

person taking wholesome food do not suffer from the diseases cause by same because the use of wholesome food alone is not able to avert the cause of all disease as there are other etiological factors even except the use of unwholesome food such abnormality in time factor, i.e. *Kalaviparyaya*, *Pragyaparadh* i.e. intellectual error and unsuitable sound, touch vision, taste and smell. These etiological factors affect the person in spite of his taking proper food. That is why the person taking wholesome food is also seen as disease. In case of those taking unwholesome food to the fault does not produce the derangement immediately due to certain reason such as unwholesome food article are not equally deranging nor have the *doshas* equal strength, all persons also are not (equally) capable to insist the disease (have no equal immunity) . The same faulty regimen becomes more obvious due to place, time, combination, potency and excessive quantity. The same faulty regimen becomes more obvious due to place, time, combination, potency and excessive quantity. The same *dosha* too, in combination with other *dosha*, having contradictory therapy, deep seated, with long duration, located in the organs of vital breath, affecting the vital parts become curable with difficulty and even fatal emergently. The person too obese, too lean, having incompact muscle, blood and bones, weak, indulged in unsuitable food, under nourished and having weak mind are not able to resist the diseases, contrary to them are resistant to the disease, because of variation in faulty diet, innate pathogenic factors and the condition of the body, diseases become mild or severe, acute or chronic, the same *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*, vitiated in different reactions produce different disorders, *Agnievsa*.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Classification of Diet:-**

According to *Charaka* diet is one from the point of view of intake. It is of two types according to sources immobile i.e. Plant Kingdom and mobile i.e. animal kingdom also of two types according to effect wholesome and unwholesome. It is of four types according to the way of intake, drinks, eatables, chewable and lick able. It is of six types according to taste. It is of twenty types according to properties. It has innumerable variations due to abundance of substances their combinations and preparations<sup>4</sup>, for all practical purposes *Charakacharya* has classified the food articles into twelve different groups:

1. *Sukadhanya* i.e. class of corns and monocotyledons
2. *Samiadhanya varga* i.e. legumes
3. *Mamsa varga* i.e. meat
4. *Saka varga* i.e. vegetables
5. *Phala varga* i.e. fruits
6. *Harit varga* i.e.salads or greens
7. *Madya varga* i.e.wines
8. *Jala varga* i.e.water

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<sup>3</sup> Ch. Su. 28/6-7

<sup>4</sup> Ch. Su. 25/36



9. *Goras varga* i.e. milk and milk products

10. *Iksu varga* i.e. sugarcane and its products

11. *Kritanna varga* i.e. cooked food

12. *Aharyogi varga* i.e. adjuvants of food<sup>5</sup>

#### **Dietetic Codes & Conducts:-**

*Charakacharya*, along with rules and regulations regarding diet, described the code of good conduct to be followed at the meal timings. Though they are not directly related to the science of food, but they show the sense of responsibility towards our family and society too. It appears that they are good for our mental health and discipline which has a positive effect on our health. Some of them are related to hygiene some with religion and some with sense of responsibility. One should not eat without bath, without washing hands, feet, face and mouth. Not only that but having disloyal, indiscipline and unclean attendants, in unclean plates, in crowded surroundings and with contempt and dirty meals one should not take in any doubt about it. One should not eat without reciting mantras, without offering ablation to Gods, without making offerings to forefathers, without making offering first to fire without purifying mantras and in the presence of hungry attendants. One should eat only facing towards north. All these conducts are either related to cultural beliefs or mutual for purifying our meals. The aim is to offer judicious part of our diet to everyone who is connected with our life directly or indirectly.

One should not eat without wearing gems and hand and the meal served by unloyal attendant or enemy or opponent. All these conducts are useful to prevent us from food poisoning. Offering first to fire can be used as a test for poisonous food by the experts. One should not eat with depressed mind and without purifying fragrance and garland. This is to keep the mind delightful at the time of meals. One should eat wholly except in case of curd, honey, salt, roasted grains, flowers and ghee. One should not take curd in the night. One should not take roasted grain flour singly, in night, after meals, excessively twice, interrupted with water intake and tearing with teeth.<sup>6</sup>

General rules regarding how to take meals, at what time etc. These are described by *Charakacharya* in the first chapter of *viman sthana* under the heading *ahar vidhi vidhan*. One should eat warm<sup>7</sup> food because it tastes well, the eaten food stimulates the digestive fire, gets digested quickly carminates flatus, reduces mucus, hence one should eat warm. One should eat unctuous; because it tastes well eaten food stimulates the digestive fire, gets digested quickly carminates flatus, develops the body, provides firmness to sense organs increases strength, produces clarity or complexion; hence one should eat unctuous.<sup>8</sup> One

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<sup>5</sup> Ch. Su. 27/6-7

<sup>6</sup> Ch. Su. 8/20

<sup>7</sup> Ch. Vi. 1/25

<sup>8</sup> Ch. Vi. 1/25

should eat in proper quantity.<sup>9</sup> Food taken in proper quantity without disturbing *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* only promotes life span easily passes down to anus doesn't disturb the digestive fire gets digested with comfort, hence one should eat in proper quantity. One should eat when the previous meal is digested because in one eats during indigestion, the eaten food mixed with the product of the earlier meal with that of the later one vitiates all the *doshas* quickly, on the contrary, when one eats after the previous meal is digested well the *doshas* are situated in their own locations. *Agni* in the stimulated appetite is increased entrances of the channels are open, eructation is pure, heart is normal, flatus passes down and larges of flatus, urine and faces are attended to, the eaten food promotes only the life span without affecting any *dhatu*, hence one should eat after the previous meal is digested.<sup>10</sup> One should take food consisting of the items non antagonistic in potency, while doing so one is not afflicted with the disorders caused by food antagonistic potency.<sup>11</sup> One should eat in favorable place and with favorable accessories. While eating in favorable place one does not fall victim to psychic disturbance due to such factors found in otherwise places. Similarly while having favorable place and with favorable accessories.<sup>12</sup> One should not eat fast because by eating fast the food may enter into wrong passage, there is depression and the food is not established in its place, over and above detection of the defects of food and achievement of the merits of the same are not certain, hence one should not eat too fast.<sup>13</sup> One should not eat too slowly because by eating too slow one does not get satisfaction, eats much; food becomes cool & is digested irregularly. Hence one should not eat too slowly.<sup>14</sup> One should eat with concentration without talking and laughing much. By taking food while talking or laughing or with the diverted mind, he is inflicted with the same defects as by eating too fast. Hence one should eat without talking & laughing & with concentration.<sup>15</sup> One should eat after due consideration to himself. This is suitable or unsuitable for him if known in this way, and then it becomes suitable to him. Hence one should eat after considering his self well.<sup>16</sup>

There are six seasons in India viz. *varsha*, *sharad*, *hemant*, *shishira*, *vasanta* and *grishma*. These six are divided into two basic groups on the relative movements of the sun. When sun appears to go to north it is called as *uttarayana* or *adankala*. When the sun appears to the south it is called *Dakshinayana* or *visargkala*. The meaning of the Sanskrit word *visarga* is bending forth, emission shedding, pouring, dropping, giving away, or gift, donation and a southern course of the sun and the meaning of the word *adan* is taking accepting, earning and getting. *Adana* is called *agneya* meaning the *agni* or heat property is dominating this

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<sup>9</sup> Ch. Vi. 1/25

<sup>10</sup> Ch. Vi. 1/25

<sup>11</sup> Ch. Vi. 1/25

<sup>12</sup> Ch. Vi. 1/25

<sup>13</sup> Ch. Vi. 1/25

<sup>14</sup> Ch. Vi. 1/25

<sup>15</sup> Ch. Vi. 1/25

<sup>16</sup> Ch. Vi. 1/25

period. *Varsha*, *sharad* and *hemant* these three seasons come under *visargakala*. *Adanakala* starts from *shishira ritu* and continues till the end of *grishma ritu*.

The routine of every season, popularity is called as *ritucarya* is described in all classics of *Ayurveda*. It takes into account what *doshas* are likely to be vitiated, what diseases are more likely to rise than others and what food tastes, fruits, vegetables etc. are available and advisable to maintain the health. The dietetic regimen for every *ritu* is as follows.

During *hemant* the digestive power of human being possessing good health and strength is enhanced due to the restraint caused upon it by the cold wind so much so that it is capable of digesting any food stuff irrespective of heaviness and quantity when it does not get the proper fuel, the digestive fire affects the nutritive fluids, resulting in vitiation of *vata* having cold quality. Therefore during *hemant* one should take unctuous, sour and salty juices of the meal of aquatic and marshy animals which are fatty. One should also eat the meat of burrow dwelling animals and *bhruta* (a preparation of meat by mincing it) prepared of animals of *prasaha* type (who eat by snatching). There after one should drink *madira* and *sidhu* type of wines and honey.

If one habitually takes preparation of cow's milk, sugarcane, juice, fat oil freshly harvested rice and hot water during the winter, his span of life never decreased. One should avoid food and drink which are light and which are likely to vitiate *vata*.<sup>17</sup>

The *hemant* and *shishira* are almost similar in nature with the only difference that in the latter, dryness caused by *Adana* and cold caused by cloud, wind and rains prevail. So the entire prescription for *hemant* is to be followed in the *shishira* as well. One should avoid taking such of the diet and drinks as are possessed of pungent, bitter and astringent, tastes because they are light and they therefore vitiates *vata*.<sup>18</sup>

During *vasanta* the accumulated *kapha* is liquefied by the heat of the sun and such it disturbs the power of digestion and causes many diseases. So one should avoid heavy, unctuous, sore and sweet diet and take food consisting of barley and wheat meat of *sarabha* (wapiti), *sasa* (rabbit), *ena* (antelope), *lava* (common quail and *kapinjala* (gray partridge).<sup>19</sup>

During summer the sun evaporates the moisture of the earth by its rays. In that season the intake of sweet, cold, liquid and unctuous diet and drinks is prescribed. One, who takes cold *mantha* (a type of gruel) along with sugar as well as meat of animals or birds of arid climate, ghee and milk along with Sail rice during this season, does not suffer from any disease. One should not drink alcohol in this season and even if one drinks it should be in very little quantity and with plenty of water. One should further avoid taking diet which are salty, sour pungent or hot.<sup>20</sup> The digestive power which is already weakened in *grishma ritu* is

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<sup>17</sup> Ch. Su. 6/11-13, 18

<sup>18</sup> Ch. Su. 6/19-21

<sup>19</sup> Ch. Su.. 6/23-25

<sup>20</sup> Ch. Su. 6/27-29

further weakened due to the vitiation of *vata* and other *dosha* during *varsha ritu*. The power of digestion in this period is also affected due to fumes or gas coming out of the earth. One should abstain from taking *mantha* (groat) diluted in excess. Honey should be used liberally in preparing diet and drinks. In order to maintain normal power of digestion, one should take old barley, wheat and *Sali* rice along with the meat of arid animals and vegetables soup. One should drink the *madhvika* or *arista* type of liquor, pure rain water or boiled water mixed with little honey.<sup>21</sup>

The body adopted for rains and cold is suddenly exposed to the heat of the sun with the beginning of *sharad ritu*. So the *pitta* accumulated during the rains gets generally vitiated. In this season sweet, light, cold and bitter food and drinks which are there is good appetite. The meats of *lava* (common quail) *Kapinjala* (gray partridge) *ena* (antelope) *urabhra* (sheep), *sarabha* (wapiti) and *sasa* (rabbit), rice, barely and wheat are prescribed during this season. One should avoid taking fat, oil and meat of aquatic and *marshy* animals and alkaline salt preparations and curd along with food.<sup>22</sup> Some rules regarding the intake of curd mentioned in *Charaka Samhita* e.g. one should not eat curd at night.<sup>23</sup> One should avoid the curd in *sharad*, *vasanta* and *grishma ritu*.<sup>24</sup>

The substances which are contrary to *dehadhatu* behave with antagonism with them. They are discussed under the dietetic incompatibility by *Charakacharya*. They are antagonistic in respect of place and time also. If in arid zone (*Anup desa*) rough and sharp substances and in marshy region (*jangal desa*) unctuous and cold ones are used, it is known as antagonistic in respect of place. Likewise if one takes rough and cold etc. in winter and pungent hot etc. in summer it is antagonistic in terms of *Charakacharya*.<sup>25</sup>

*Charakacharya* has described the properties of water from rainfall in different seasons and also the properties of different river waters in India. Water when fallen on the earth depends (for its properties) on the soil. In white soil it is astringent in pale bitter, in brown alkaline, in *usara* saline, in hill area pungent and in black soil it is sweet.<sup>26</sup> The fresh rain water of the rainy season is heavy blocking of channels and sweet. That of autumn is thin light none blocking of channels. This should be used by the delicate persons using unctuous and too much food in preparing various types of diet such as eatables, chewable, liable and drinkable. In *hemant* water is unctuous, aphrodisiac, strength promoting and heavy. That in *shishira* it is lighter and alleviates *kapha* and *vata*. The water of *vasanta* is astringent sweet and rough. In summer it is not blocking for channels.<sup>27</sup>

The rivers originating from Himalaya and constantly used by the sages and having water obstructed agitated and beaten are wholesome and virtuous. Those originating from Malaya carrying stones and sand have clean

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<sup>21</sup> Ch. Su.. 6/36-39

<sup>22</sup> Ch. Su. 6/42-45

<sup>23</sup> Ch. Su. 7/61

<sup>24</sup> Ch. Su. 27/227

<sup>25</sup> Ch. Su.. 26/88-89

<sup>26</sup> Ch. Su.. 27/199

<sup>27</sup> Ch. Su. 27/203-206

water which is like nectar. The rivers flowing towards west have clean water and are wholesome. While those joining the eastern sea are mostly mild flowing and heavy. Water of the rivers, which are originating from *Pariyatra*, *Vindhya* and *shya*, cause diseases of the head and heart as well as of skin diseases and filaria.<sup>28</sup>

### **Satmya and Oaksatmya:**

*Satmya* means that which suits the self. *Satmya* and *Upasaya* have the same meaning. It is of three types superior, inferior and medium and of seven types according to six *rasas* individually and collectively. Amongst them use of all the *rasas* collectively is superior that of one rasa is inferior and in between these two medium. The inferior and the medium types of suitability are upgraded to the superior type in graded manner.<sup>29</sup>

*Satmya* means homologation and *oksatmya* is homologation by practice. So, whatever is suitable to the person because of regular use is known as *oksatmya*. The wise people who know the wholesomeness define behavior and diet which are opposite to qualities of place and disorders as wholesome.<sup>30</sup>

### **Anupana Vichar:**

*Anupana* is ingestion of liquids including water after meals. The drinks taken after meals should be contrary to the properties of food but not so to *dhatu* says *Charaka*. Eighty four *asavas* and water drinkable and undrinkable have already been mentioned. One should take the wholesome after drink (*anupana*) after examining properly. In *vata* unctuous and hot after drink is suitable, in *pitta* sweet and cold in *kapha* rough and hot and in wasting meat soup is the best *anupana*. For those exhausted by fasting travelling on the foot speech, traffic in women wind the sun and evacuative measures the *anupana* of milk is wholesome as vector. Wine should be prescribed as *anupana* for the lean and thin to produce corpulence. For reducing the obesity, honey water is recommended for those having mild appetite, loss of sleep due to anxiety fear and exhaustion, particularly for those who are accustomed to wine and meat, wine is recommended as *anupana*.

### **Discussion and Conclusion:**

For maintaining good health and physical efficiency one has to take the adequate amount of diet. This does not mean only the volume of diet but also the amount of nutrients required for our body we know very well that inadequate food or partial starvation leads to malnutrition, but of the same time a single foodstuff in adequate amount also leads to malnutrition. That is why *Charakacharya* also condemned the intake of single rasa in excess or the omission of one or sufficient but at the same time variety of food is also essential to get all types of nutrients for our body. Our ancestors were aware of this fact and hence with the

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<sup>28</sup> Ch. Su. 27/209-212

<sup>29</sup> Ch. Vi. 1/20

<sup>30</sup> Ch. Su. 6/49-50

help of long standing experience and wisdom they have established a diet pattern for the society. So, after considering the above facts, one should eat the *matravat* and *Hitakara ahar*, and then person can attain his proper vigor, complexion and life-span.

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