



AHARVIDHIVISHESHAYATAN A DETAILED REVIEW OF A HEALTHY AND BALANCED DIET IN AYURVEDA ACCORDING TO ASHTANG SANGRAH: A CRITICAL REVIEW

Naresh Dattatray Shinde¹, Pankaj Manikrao Gahunge²

¹PG Scholar, Department of Ayurveda Samhita and Sidhhanta, Yashwantrao Chavan Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Chh. Sambhajinagar, Maharashtra, India.

²Professor, Department of Ayurveda Samhita and Sidhhanta, Yashwantrao Chavan Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital, Chh. Sambhajinagar, Maharashtra, India.

Corresponding Author: shindenaresh19@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

To live healthy life healthy patterns are necessary to sustain physical and mental health, which is mostly rely on Diet pattern. *Ayurveda* suggests the right ways of having meals for proper digestion, metabolism, nutrition and excretion. The correct way of taking meals in daily life is *Aharvidhivisheshayatana* mentioned in *Ashtang Sangraha*. There are 7 *Aharvidhivisheshayatana* described in *Ashtang Sangraha*. *Swabhav, Sanyoga, Sanskar, Matra, Desh, Kaal and Upyogvyavstha*. In *Ayurveda* physical and mental well-being is a must and it totally depends on *Ahar* (diet), if these 7 methods are followed correctly then there are less chances of having diseases in future and it will maintain the health of healthy individuals.

Keywords: *Aharvidhivisheshayatana, Ahar, Ashtang Sangraha*

INTRODUCTION

Lifestyle depends on the healthy food and behaviour of an individual. Balanced diet or healthy food

means, balance of basic things like proper quantity, good quality, perfect timing of food. In the modern

era, there is a lack of basic fundamentals which lead to manifestation of diseases. To avoid the further impact of serious disorders, it is necessary to follow proper way of having *Ahar* (Food).

In *Ashtang Sangraha*, there are 7 factors mentioned for method of dieting. It includes *Swabhav*(behaviour), *Sanyoga* (combination), *Sanskar* (processing), *Matra* (quantity), *Desh* (Place), *Kaal* (time), *Upyogvyavstha* (rules while taking diet) ⁽¹⁾. In today's era, many people are suffering from physical and mental tiredness, with lack of enthusiasm. Everyone is trying to find the answer to these day-to-day life problems, through medications. But as *Acharya* mentioned in *Ashtang Sangraha* about *Nidanparivarjan* ⁽²⁾ (to stop causes leading to pathophysiology), with the help of *Nidanparivarjan* we can stop current unhealthy eating habits and through *Ahar Vidhi Visheshayatana*. *Ahar* means food and *Vidhivisheshayatana* means proper methods of having food. These 7 factors are most important and beneficial for maintaining an individual's physical and mental health.

Definition of *Ahar* :

Ahar is a substance swallowed through the throat after eating, as explained by *Shabdakalpdruma*. ^{According to *Charak*, *Ahar* offers *Varna*, *Prasad*, *Jivita*, *Pratibha*, *Souswarya*, *Pushti*, *Trupti*, *Bala*, *Sukha*, *Medha* etc., so, it is a just that individual should be aware of what he eats and what it will cause to the body. ⁽⁴⁾ *Ahar* (food) mainly contributes to lifestyle disorders. *Mithyaahar* (unhealthy food) means taking *Guru* (heavy), *Snigdha*, and *Amla* (sour) food in large quantity without any *Sanskar*, i.e. food without proper processing; it's hard to digest it by *Jatharagni* (digestive fire). Maintenance of appropriate *Jatharagni* also primarily depends on proper *Ahar* only. ⁽⁵⁾ Therefore, the disturbance in the digestive system starts to occur. Considering all of these crucial factors it is necessary to study the *Ahar vidhi Visheshayatana* mentioned in *Ashtang Sangraha* according to different aspects and to follow these seven factors consciously to prevent lifestyle disorders and enhance quality of life.}

7 AHARVIDHIVISHESHAYATAN ACCORDING TO ASHTANG SANGRAH:

These are some special ways or rules explained in *Ayurveda* for diet. *Acharya Charak* mentioned eight factors which determine the utility of different types of foods. ⁽⁶⁾ In *Ashtanga Sangraha*, *Acharya Vagbhat* explained seven ways of *Aharvidhivisheshayatana*, quoted as "*Saptavidha Ahar Kalpana*". He has combined '*Upayoga Samstha*' and '*Upayokta*' under '*Upyoga Vyavastha*'.

- ***Swabhav***
- ***Sanyoga***
- ***Sanskar***
- ***Matra***
- ***Desh***
- ***Kaal***
- ***Upyogvyavstha***

Swabhav: *Swabhav* means the nature of food. There are two types of *Swabhav*, *Guru* and *Laghu*. *Guru Ahar* means food which is heavy. It takes time to digest and needs *Teekshanagni* (sharp digestive fire). *Guru Ahar Dravya* are *Prithvi* and *Apa Guna* predominant. The qualities are opposite to *Agni*; it produces more *Dosha* defects if taken up to the saturation point, so *Guru Ahar* should never be taken in large quantity as they are *Agni Asama* (contrary). ⁽⁷⁾ Due to this, there is *Sanchay* (saturation) of *Ama* (Poisonous substance) of *Doshas* in the body, causing various disorders of *Kaph Dosh*. *Guru Ahar* mentioned in *Samhita* is *Dugdha*(milk), *Ganna* (sugarcane juice), *Anup Mansa* (Mea), etc ⁽⁸⁾ *Laghu Ahar* means food that is light. It is said to be conducive to good health but should only be taken in large quantity once the excess satisfaction because it hampers the *Agni*. It is *Vayu* and *Agni Guna* dominant, so it stimulates the appetite and is considered to be less harmful. ⁽⁹⁾ It will digest quickly and can be easily consumed by *Mandagni* (light digestive fire). *Moong*, *Laal Chaval*, *Sathi*, *chaval*, and *Varshajala* come under *Laghu Ahar*. Excessive intake of *Laghu Ahar* cannot provide nutrition to the body, *Dhatu* (body tissues), it may also cause *Vataprakop*, which leads to *Vatajvyadhi*. So, it is necessary to understand the na-

ture of food and consume it according to individuals *Prakriti* and *Agni* for better body health.

Sanyoga: *Sanyoga* means a combination of two or more *Dravya* (food). It cannot be separated after combining. If *Madhu* (honey) and *Ghrit* (Ghee) are consumed separately, it gives healthy effects, but after combining them together in the same quantity, then it has very harmful effects like poison. ^{So}, *Sanyoga*, the right food is very important because the combination of some products is very beneficial for the body. *Virudhhahar* is the concept that comes under this, which is the cause of many disorders. It is considered poison due to some *Ahar Dravyas*. ⁽¹¹⁾ Therefore, *Sanyoga* is a very important part of *Aharvidhivisheshayatana*.

Sanskar : *Sanskar* is processing. In *Ashtanga Sangraha*, there are a few *Sanskar* explained, like *Jala*, *Agni*, *Shaucha*, *Manthan*, *Desh*, *Kaal*, *Bhavana*, and *Bhajan*. If Rice is cleaned with *Jala* (water) repeatedly, it becomes *Laghu*, which is easy to digest. Proper food processing makes it tasty, increases its nutritious value, metabolises correctly, and is easy to digest. *Agni Sanskar* is used in the daily cooking process for better digestion and to make it light, e.g. If rice is cooked on fire, it becomes light and tasty. *Manthan Sanskar* in *Dadhi* is *Shothkarak* (inflammatory) in nature if *Takra* (buttermilk) is made by stirring, which is *Manthan Sanskar*, it becomes (anti-inflammatory) Like this, *Sanskar* of *Ahar* needs to be done. ⁽¹²⁾

Matra : *Matra* means quantity of food. There are two *Matra* explained in *Ashtang*, 1. *Samudayarup* 2. *Pratidyavya*. *Samudayarup* is the *Matra* of whole food of a one meal, in this *Kukshi* (abdomen) is considered by dividing it into two parts instead of *Guru* and *Laghu Ahar*. *Pratidravya* is the quantity of each food item in one meal. If food is taken according to proper quantity, then it will be easily digested and unwanted waste is excreted properly, Metabolism is maintained, *Agni* is stabilised, body factors like *Dosh*, *Dhatu*, *Mala*, *Oja*, *Strotas* etc. functions maintained correctly. Excessive quantity of food can cause pressure on the *Agni* so complete food will not be digest-

ed as such results in the whole body getting disturbed. ⁽¹³⁾

Desh: *Desh* comes under the term place means *Desh* of *Dravya* (food) and *Desh* of *Upyokta* (individual taking food). *Dravya Desh* e.g. *Dravya* in *Himalaya* is *Saumya* (mild), and *Dravya* in *Vindhya* is *Agneya* (severe). *Anup* and *Jangam Desh* are also mentioned in *Ayurveda* which are necessary for *Prakriti* and Consumption e.g. *Ahar* should be maintained by right *Desh* to avoid manifestation of diseases. *Upyokta Desh* eg. In *Bengal Roti* is *Pathya* in *Jwar* and rice is *Apathya* because rice is their main food in healthy condition. Like this, for stability of healthy living *Desh* should be considered while taking food.

Kaal: *Kaal* means Time. Correct timing of food consuming is important. In *Ashtang Sangraha*, *Kaal* is explained according to *Rutu* (season), *Vyadhiavstha* (disease stage), *Jeerna-Ajeerna* (Digestion-indigestion). As *Rutu* changes factors like weather, *Agni*, *Doshpradhanya* also changes eg.in *Grishma Rutu* (summer season) intake of *Sheet*, *Guru*, *Snigdha Ahar* is healthy and *Katu*, *Amla*, *Lavana*, *Ushna Ahar* causes increase in *Pittadosha* which is already high in *Grishm Rutu*. ⁽¹⁴⁾ So, according to season intake of food type does not cause diseases. *Vyadhiavstha* means *Nav* (acute) and *Jeerna* (chronic) eg. In *Kaph-pittaj Jwar Langhan* is mandatory in *Navjwar*. *Ghritpan* is helpful in *Jeernjwar*. In *Pravahika*, *Atisar Mrudu Virechan* should be given in *Navaavstha* for excretion of toxic *Ama* instead of *Sthambhan*. *Jeerna* (digestion) is , after complete digestion of *Aushdhi* or *Ahar* next *Ahar* should be consumed to avoid digestive disorders and *Ajeerna* is indigestion of food means, food is not completely absorbed by the *Doshas* and also retard aging process. *Ushna Ahar* increases taste and absorbs excess mucous in the body, maintains *Agni*. There is no satisfaction if *Ahar* is taken with breaks, also quantity of food is more, and it causes *Vishampaka* of *Ahar* (a meal taken before remains undigested and next meal will be digested).

Upyogvyavstha : Rules to follow while having food is *Upyogavstha*. In *Ashtang Sangraha* it is explained

that *Ahar* should be taken after bath only, with proper wearing (clean clothes), before it, prayer to God and ancients is mandatory, food should be fresh, completely cooked, hot. While eating it is a must to not talk, smile or laugh. Avoid *Paryushit Ahar* (stale food) and burned food. Food items like *Dadhi* (curd), *Kheer*, *Chutneys*, *Honey*, *Ghrit* (*Ghee*), *Jala* (water) should not remain in the plate. Do not eat very slowly because food gets cold, hunger is not fulfilled, unknowingly a lot of food is consumed so, avoid slow eating. *Snigdha*, *Ushna*, *Laghu Ahar* ignites *Agni*, detoxify *Koshta*, Keeps *Dhatu* nourished, food gets quickly absorbed, easily *Vataanuloman* occurs. Some basic rules are that *Ahar* should be consumed in the right place, at the correct timings. For better living and health, *Ahar* should be consumed properly by following the above rules to avoid further complications.⁽¹⁶⁾

DISCUSSION

Ashtang Sangraha explained 7 *Aharvidhivisheshayatana* i.e. Methods to follow while eating for better living, to maintain health and avoid further diseases. *Ahar* is the basic need of human and *Aharvidhi* is daily process which gives nutrition to body, proper metabolism of tissues, cells, organs and maintain proper functioning of the body. *Aharvidhivisheshayatana* i.e. *Swabhav*, *Sanyoga*, *Sanskara*, *Matra*, *Desh*, *Kaal*, *Upyogavstha* are necessary to include in daily life as mentioned in *Ashtang Sangraha*. The characteristics of these 7 factors, the way of taking diet is interdependent e.g. a combination of two or more components in the right quantity taken in right season and in right place. If individuals follow these 7 factors in daily life, then, problems related to GIT should be solved without any medications. Physical and mental health will be maintained properly. There are several benefits of *Aharvidhivisheshayatana* like, processes digestion, metabolism, nutrition, and excretion properly done by the body. To avoid Severe disorders in the future one should always follow these factors for better living, longevity of life, healthy state of mind, better physical fitness and peaceful personal and professional well-being.

CONCLUSION

Adhyashana, *Vishamashana*, *Amatrashana*, *Ajeerna* etc. are cause due to the improper way of having food. They are the main *Hetu* for various *vyadhis*, to stop this, *Acharayas* mentioned some concept under which *Aharvidhivisheshayatana* comes explained by *Ashtang Sangraha*. Hyperacidity, diarrhea, gastritis, constipation diseases like this are caused due to vitiation of *Doshas* even after taking healthy food, reason to this is not taking food in proper way so, digestive system gets disturbed and *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kaph* vitiates along with it *Dhatu*s, *Malas*, *Strotas* also get disturbed. After observing many lives challenging diseases caused by irregular dieting, it is must that diet should be wholesome measured in right quantity and it should be eaten on time, according to place, needs to be cooked by correct process. By following *Aharvidhivisheshayatana*, it restrains the unhealthy diet and promotes balanced diet so, it avoids the future diseases and sustain healthy living.

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