

## CONCEPT OF AAHARA SEVAN KAALA - A LITERARY REVIEW

Dr. Shital S. Dhote<sup>1\*</sup> and Dr. Milind Nimbalkar<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor in Department of Samhita Siddhanta, DMM Ayurved College, Yavatmal.<sup>2</sup>Reader and HOD in Department of Samhita Siddhanta, DMM Ayurved College, Yavatmal.

\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Shital S. Dhote

Assistant Professor in Department of Samhita Siddhanta, DMM Ayurved College, Yavatmal.

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## ABSTRACT

Whatever taken by mouth is Aahara. It includes food and drink of all kind. Food sustains the life of all living being. All living being in the Universe require food. Complexion, clarity, good voice, longevity, happiness, satisfaction, nourishment, strength and intellect are conditioned by food. All the above characteristics do reflect in an individual only if he is taking food according to the rules of Ayurveda. Aahara sevan kaala i.e. meal timing is one of the basic and very important rule regarding consumption of food. Akaala Aahara sevan may lead to impairment of Agni followed by Ajeernadi vikaras and after a long duration may get converted into complicated diseases as well as death. Hence food should be taken according to the rules of Ayurveda.

**KEYWORDS:** Aahara, Aahara sevan kaala, Ajeerna lakshanas.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the Veda of life which explain how to live healthy, happy life forever.

“आयुः कामयमानेन धर्मार्थसुखसाधनम् |

आयुर्वेदोपदेशेषु विधेयः परमादरः ||” अ.सं.सु.१

A person who desires long life, which is the instrument for attaining virtue [Dharma], wealth [Artha], happiness [Sukha] should shows respect in the teaching of Ayurveda.

“आहारः स्वप्नो ब्रह्मचर्यमिति

एभिस्त्रिभिर्युक्तियुक्तैरुपस्तब्धमुपस्तम्भैः.....” च.सु.११/३५

Aahara, nidra, brahmacharya are the three upstambhas in Ayurveda. Ayurveda places great emphasis on prevention and encourages the maintainance of health through close attention to balance and proper diet. Knowledge of Ayurveda enables to understand one's own individual constitution and food intake time and capacity to maintain healthy body.

आर्हियते इति आहारः अन्नपानादी सर्वम् |

Whatever taken by mouth (eaten) is Aahara. It includes both food and the drinks of all types.

“प्राणाः प्राणभृतामन्नमन्न लोकोऽभिधावती |

वर्णः प्रसादः सौस्वर्यं जीवित प्रतिभा सुखाम् ||

तुष्टीः पुष्टिर्बल मेधा सर्वमन्ने प्रतिष्ठीतम् ||” च.सू. ४२/ ३४९-३५०

Food sustains the life of living beings. All living beings in the universe require food. Complexion, clarity, good voice, longevity, happiness, satisfaction, nourishment, strength and intellect are all conditioned by food.

“विसृष्टे विण्मुत्रे विशदकरणे देहे च सुलघौ |

विशुद्धे चोद्गारे हृदि सुविमले वातेच सरति ||

तथाऽन्नश्रद्धायां क्लमपरिगमे कुक्षौ च शिथिले |

प्रदेयस्त्वाहारो भवति भिषजां कालः स तु मतः ||” सु.उ. ४६/८६

Therefore, food is taken

1. After digestion of the previous food,
2. While the *Doshas* are in the their proper places and *Agni* is provoked,
3. There is appetite,
4. The entrance of the channels (*Srotasas*) are open,
5. Eructation is purified,
6. There is an unimpaired cardiac function,
7. Download passage of the wind,
8. Proper manifestation of urges for voiding flatus, urine and faeces.

In classics it is explained that whenever there is sensation of thirst, one should take water not meal and viceversa,

when a person is hungry, he must take meal not water or any drink at that time. Diet should be taken in the morning after sunrise. It should not be taken in early morning or in the late night or in the time when there is sunset. Timing of diet is either our usual daytime or physiological time. Usually day time is the time of our meal and we are habitual to it. For the partaken of food there is no specific exact time written. The time of taking food is differ according to age, sex, constitution, season, Vyayam, healthy and unhealthy status of person, job conditions etc. but whenever a person feels hunger sensation or desire to take meal is the time for taking diet for that person.

“अर्धरात्रेऽपि भुञ्जानः परमार्थं बुभुक्षितः |  
क्षुधी वैद्यपरित्यागी व्याधिभिर्नाभिभूयते ||” यो. र.

Other Acharya explained that person who is extremely hungry at the midnight and as he takes meal at that time then there is no illeffect of that meal. Also, when there is paka of rasa, dosha, malas, the hunger sensation occurs. That time, the meal should be taken. Because the paka of rasadi dhatus and doshas and sensation of hunger, is the idealmeal time.

Food partaken long after the usual (ideal) time, will cause obstruction to (the movement) of Vata, undergoes digestion with difficulty, makes the body weak and destroys the desire of food. It is necessary to decide a suitable time to take food both during day and night and stick to it. The digestive organs and their functions get conditioned for effective digestion, if this habbit is maintained. The other functions of the body also depend upon the condition of digestion. It is now established that many disorders of digestion and even some other diseases are due to irregularity of time of food. The various digestive juices are secreted in the digestive tract at the accustomed time of food. If the food is taken before the scheduled time, it does not undergo digestion because of absence of these juices. If food is taken long after the scheduled time, also these juices are absent in the tract. Both these give room for occurrence of many diseases. Hence deciding a specific time for taking food is essential for maintance of health. For the healthy state of person, Acharya already stated that convinence and regulation of routine, they described the Dinacharya and Nishacharya. They explained two meal timings in a day in morning and evening. The diet should be taken as a “Agnihotra. for example-

In a Havan (laukikagni), there is addition of ghee, seasom seeds, yava in morning and evening compulsorily. Same way there must be meal for two times for maintaining the function of Agni. Similarly, by observing in nature birds, animals do not eat anything after sunset. Our ancestors used to take their evening meal before sunset and experienced full fledged health throughout their lives.

This is explained in details by Sushrutacharya as the first session of the day i.e. pratham prahara, before 9 am meal should not be taken. And after 12pm means after dvitiya prahara meal should not be taken. That means the ideal time for lunch is 9 to 12 in morning. The meal taken before 9 am do not get digested because of rasodvega. Similarly, the meal taken after two prahar causes bala nasha. To explain this according to season Acharya stated that.

“अतीवायतयामास्तु क्षपा येष्वनृपु स्मृताः |  
तेषू तत्प्रत्यनिकाद्यम भुञ्जित प्रातरेव तु ||  
येषु चापि भवेयूश्च दिवसा भृशमायताः |  
तेषू तत्कालविहितमपराहणे प्रशस्यते ||  
रजन्यो दिवसाश्चेव येषु चपि समाः स्मृताः |  
कृत्वा सममहोरात्र तेषू भुञ्जीत भोजनम ||” सु.सू. ४६/ ४६७-४६९

Acharya su.explain in sutrasthana adhyaya 46/467-469

In seasons which have nights of longer duration like Hemanta rutu, ones should take food containing plenty of snigdha and ushna guna in the morning itself for resistance of bal pravutta dosha. In those which have days of longer duration one should take food prescribed in that season like drava, laghu, shita gunatmaka in the afternoon. One should take food evenly dividing day and night in season when nights and days are of equal duration. e.g. Hemanta (early winter) and Shishira (late winter) have nights of longer duration. Grishama (summer) and Pravrt (early rainy season) have days of longer duration while in Sharad (autumn) and Vasanta (spring) nights and days are equal. Krutwa samana ahoratram means dividing day and night equally e.g. in midday. This in junction is for person who takes only one meal in day and night. Those who take twice should consume delicious and light food one –half or one-third of total quantity of two meals, of these, the morning meal should be taken at 1 ¼ prahara while the second one after 4 ½ prahara, where 1 prahara = 3 hours. however equal division of day and night means taking food at 1 1/3 prahara in day and the same in night. According to Panjikakara, the rule of aahara sevan kala holds good in the case of persons who take a single meal in the course of a day and night. Those who are used to take two meals a day, should eat light half meal at one and quarter Prahara in the morning and another between the third and the fourth Prahara in the afternoon.

According to Jejjata, the meals should be taken between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> Prahara both in the day and night. Similarly, From the reference of A.Hru.Su. 1/7.

Vata Dosha is predominant in old age (after 50 yr of age), at the end of day and night, also at last session of digestion i.e. katu avasthapak. Pitta dosha is predominant in middle or younger age (16-50 yrs of age), at the middle time of day and night, also in middle session of digestion

i.e. amla awasthapak Kapha dosha is predominant in child age (birth-to 16 yrs of age), at the beginning time of day and night, also in first session of digestion i.e. madhura awasthapak. According to time in hours in a day and night, the kapha kaala is from 4 am to 8 am., pitta kaala is from 8 am to 12 pm and vata kaala is from 12 pm to 4 pm respectively. Also these are same in evening time.

So, in pitta kaala, there is a hunger sensation normally. And diet taken at that kaala digest properly due to secretion of digestive juice i.e. pachak pitta.

As per Ayurveda, lunch is the most important meal of the day, which should ideally be taken between 9 am and 2 pm, when the Sun is at its peak and so is the Pitta in our bodies, which take care of digestion. Since that is the time the digestive Agni is working at its maximum potency. As the Sun goes down, so does our Agni. Dinner should be lighter than lunch and should ideally be taken before 8 pm. There must be a gap of 3 hours between the dinner and bedtime. Late night meals interfere with sleep and after 10 pm the body is working to burn off toxins and continue to digest food of the day. If we eat after 10 pm, the food may cause toxins to accumulate in the system and as a result the next day we wake up tired. Our body expects us to respect it by following its rhythm for whatever we do which means not sticking to a particular time, but sticking to the „right“ time meant for eating, sleeping, excreting whatever is supposed to come naturally to us. If we eat a particular meal at a particular time every day, then our body gets used to it. It all becomes a part of the body's cyclic rhythm, which means that the associated processes will also happen accordingly at the same time every day. The body will crave for food and feel hungry at the same time every day, and we might feel like emptying our bowels at the same time every single day. At the same time, One when feel hungry is the best meal time for that person. e.g. According to ch.vi.8//96-98, Person of vata prakruti has vishamagni. Due to the laghu guna of vata, the vata prakruti person takes meal in small quantity again and again. Similarly, person of pitta prakruti has tishnagni. Due to tishna guna of pitta or intense fire, person has excessive hunger and thirst and they take plenty of food and drinks. They doesn't hold hunger sensation for long time and eat again and again. Person of kapha prakruti has mandagni due to shit guna of kapha. Hence they feel hunger and thirst sensation very slowly.

At this way, when Rasa, dosha (vatadik) and mala gets digested then there is sensation of hunger. so whenever there is bhojan kaala or not, and hunger sensation occurs one must take food as this is best time for consumption of food.

“काले प्रीणयते भुक्तं सात्म्यमन्नं न बाधते ।” सु.सू ४६/ ४६६

According to Sushruta, Food eaten with a good appetite feels pleasant and tasty. The food which is beneficial to

ones usual mood causes no discomfort after the eating.

According to Dwadashashan

“अतं ऊर्ध्वं द्वादशशानप्रविचारान वक्ष्यामः ।

तत्र शीतोष्णसंनिग्ध रुक्षद्रव शुष्कैक कालिक

द्विकालीकौषधयुक्तमात्राहीन्नप्रशमन वृत्त्यर्थाः ॥”

सु.उ.६४/५६

एककालं भवेद्देह्यो दुर्बलाग्निविवृद्धये ।

समाग्नये तथाऽऽहारो द्विकालमपि पूजितः ॥ सु.उ. ६४/६३

According to Su.U.64/56

A person who has weak digestive power (i.e. durbal pachakagni), one should take meal only once for ignition of agni. Because durbalagni occurs due to increased in quantity of Kapha and in various disease conditions. On the other hand, person who has samagni or proper digestive power takes meal at morning and evening. Because in samagni person, when there is ignition of Agni and at the same time due to lack of food, the agni digest the Mansadi dhatus. food only after digestion of the previous meal.

In classics it is explained that whenever there is sensation of thirst, one should take water not meal and viceversa, when a person is hungry, he must take meal not water or any drink at that time. Diet should be taken in the morning after sunrise. It should not be taken in early morning or in the late night or in the time when there is sunset. Timing of diet is either our usual daytime or physiological time. Usually daytime is the time of our meal and we are habitual to it.

Akaala food consumption i.e. irregular meal timings can be divided into following categories.

#### A} Vishamashana

**Aprapta kaalashana:** Having meals before digestion at previous meal i.e. sensation of hunger.

**Ateeta Kaalashana:** Not having meals in spite of hunger.

**B} Adyashana:** Having meals immediately after eating something.

These all if followed, may lead to impairment of Agni followed by Ajeernadi vikaras and after a long duration may get converted into complicated diseases as well as death.

The symptoms of Ajeerna are constipation, body ache, headache, syncope, vertigo, back and lumbar stiffness, yawning, thirst, fever, vomiting, straining, tastelessness, indigestion. This type of food is as dangerous as poison.

Hence, to avoid Agnidushti, and ultimately to maintain Tridoshasamyā, Dhātu samyā i.e Swasthya, maintenance

of *Aahara sevana kaala* is the most important factor.

## DISCUSSION

It is necessary to decide a suitable time to take food both during day and night and stick to it. The digestive organs and their functions get conditioned for effective digestion, if this habit is maintained. The other functions of the body also depend upon the condition of digestion. It is now established that many disorders of digestion and even some other diseases are due to irregularity of time of food. The various digestive juices are secreted in the digestive tract at the accustomed time of food. If the food is taken before the scheduled time, it does not undergo digestion because of absence of these juices. If food is taken long after the scheduled time, also these juices are absent in the tract. Both these give room for occurrence of many diseases. Hence deciding a specific time for taking food is essential for maintenance of health.

## CONCLUSION

Diet, taken in accordance with the rules of *Ayurveda* in proper meal timing leads to normal *Dosha, Dhātu, Mala* etc. If not consumed properly, it affects body metabolism and becomes causative factor for various diseases. Thus, proper timing for intake of food needs to be defined with the irregular timings and their adverse effects on the body.

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