ROLE OF ĀHARA AND USHNODAKA IN HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the ‘Knowledge of life’ mainly aims at positive health by preventing a person from getting any diseases as well as on the treatment of diseased person. A balanced state of tridosha, dhatu,mala,agni, etc: helps to keep one’s life healthy. So day to day routine should be planned accordingly and strictly following the Dinacharya,Ritucharya, and Satritta.Among them Āhara ,which comes under Trayopastambha is important to keep the development and homeostasis of body..From different classics, we get references about the different types of Āhara. Rules while taking Āhara such as Āharavidhvidhanam, Dwadasha ashana vichara, its importance etc: are also mentioned in different Samhitas. Susrutacharya declares that the life of a living creature is water itself. Benifits of Ushnāmbu,Sitābu, Sṛtāmbu, their restrictions,qualities ,benefits should also consider for maintaining the Avikutāvastha of tridoshas and Agni. Thus Āhara and Ushnodaka played their own role in the Vīkara Prashamana as well as on the Swasthya samrakshana.

Key words: Āhara, Ushnodaka Pāṇa,Swasthya samrakshana

INTRODUCTION

The condition where all Dosha, Dhatu, and Mala in their normal state or in equilibrium and performs normal functions can be defined as Health in Ayurveda. According to Susruta, a man is said to be in Svastha (health) when all his Doshas,Dhatus, Malas, and Agni are in the state of equilibrium along with mental, sensory and spiritual pleasantness and happiness.¹ Kashyapa elaborates the features of health such as Annabhilasho , Bhuktasyaparipaka kam sukhena etc.:² Opposite to health is disease that is the abnormal state of dosha , dhatu etc: which produces unhappiness is a Disease or Vikara³ . So Acharya mentioned certain regimens that should be followed daily for preventing diseases and to keep health, such as Dinacharya, Nishācharya, Ritucharya . Charaka emphasises on food which are wholesome to the body like shaali, mudga, yava, saind-hava, jangala mamsa etc: They should be consumed regularly for the health maintenance. Similarly there are several references where Acharya mentioned that Ushnodaka Pāṇa also has equal importance in determining the health of a person.

The main aim of this article is to provide an awareness about the types of Āhara that can be given in some of the diseased conditions in the form of Semiliquid or liquid along with Ushnodaka pana and to aware about the dietic rules, time for food consumption etc: Āhara-has been given prime importance since the time of evolution. It is considered as Brahma in Upanishad (Titeeriopani-shad) because it is necessary for the growth and developments of all. Hiita Āhara is responsible for the happiness and formation of the body and Ahiita Āhara causes several types of miseries and dis-
Ahara increases the Varna (colour or complexion), Prasada (happiness), tushhi (satisfaction), pushhti (nourishment), pratibha (intelligence), and Ojas (good voice) etc. Acharya Susruta mentioned that Ahara increases Ayu (life span), Teja (luster), Utsaaha (enthusiasm), and Ojas (energy). Bhagavatgeeta says Consumption of Satvika ahara makes the mind clear, increases the memory power.

Ahara prescribed for some diseases
Kāmala:- Charaka acharya mentioned that for Kāmala (Jaundice), the Ahara should be of that kind which should be able to alleviate both Pitta and Kapha. He emphasizes the usage of Rookha Amla Katu Mamsa Rasa (ununctuous, sour and pungent Soup) of Peacock and Cock, Yoosha (another type of soup) of Moolaka and Kulatha (Raddish and Horse gram), Matulunga juice (pomegranate) mixed with honey, Pippali (Piper longum), Maricha (Piper nigram), Sunti (dry ginger). These all will aggrave Pitta dosha, but are responsible for alleviating Kapha dosha and remove the obstruction to the bile passage. This aggravated Pitta, then comes to the Koshta (GIT) from Sakha (periphery), thus the Vayu Vaishamyata can be reduced. The intake of these kinds of food can be continue till the patients stool acquires the colour of Pitta from its white colour and then the treatment for Kāmala can be prescribed.

Grahani:- Yoosha, prepared with Panchakola and Moolaka by adding Pepper and Ghee is mentioned. Here both Katu rasa and Snigtha ahara is mentioned, because both can maintain the function of Agni. Mamsa rasa making sour by adding Dadima and butter milk can also administer. Aranala (a sour drink), Arishta, Buttermilk, can stimulate the Agni, and they are Grāhi, Laghu (constipative, light for digestion),do not cause pitta aggragation, reduce the burning sensations. Yoosha of Kuladha or Moolaka mixed with Katu amla kshara dravyas are also indicated.

Swasa and Hikka: Sushka Moolaka Yoosha (soup of dry Radish), Kasamardda Yoosha (Cassia occidentalis), Leaves of Vārtaka rasa (brinjal) mixed with Trikatu, mixed in ghee are said to be useful in Swasa rogas. Patients should take food prepared of Saali (red rice or Paddy), Shashtika (a variety of rice), Godhuma (wheat) and Yava (barley). Yavagu, the thick gruel mixed with Hingu (Asa foetida) and other dravyas are also indicated. Dasamoola Kwatha and Maricha Kwatha (water boiled with Dasamoola and Maricha) will be helpful. The usage of these foods can reduce further complications on Urah pradesha (chest region), which occurs due to Vata predominance.

Kasa:- Intake of boiling rice or Peya, prepared with decotion of Dasamoola by adding panchakoola choorna and jaggery. Intake of Peya with equal quantity of Sesame seeds with Saindhava (rock salt). Leaves of Vastiaka Mulaka, which are made Snigdha (oily). Food preparations from milk, sugarcane, Jaggery. Ingredients which are sour, and sweet in taste are useful in Vatika Kasa.

Atisāra: - when the patient is hungry, light foods which are Deepana (digestive stimulant) and Grāhi (constipating) can be prescribed. Like yavagu, Butter milk, Tarpana (roasted flour of cereals mixed with water), alcoholic drinks or honey are also useful. Slowly can start up with Vilepi (a thick gruel), Khada (a sour appetiser), Yū-
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sha (vegetable soup), boiled rice mixed with meat soup which are Deepana in action. Food selecting during Atisara should be Deepana (digestive stimulant) Pāchana (carminative), Grāhi (constipating), Balya (promoter of strength), and Rochana (appetiser). If we follow the Pathya Āhara along with the treatments, they can assist the action of medicines or they themselves act like medicine. That is the reason why Acharya stress the importance of Pathya Āhara.

Time for taking normal food - different opinion: Man should take food twice daily, in the morning and in the evening. In between, it is contra-indicated. Susrutacharya mentioned Prasasta Āhara Kala. He said, we should advice others to take food after avoiding faeces and urine. When the sense organs are pure, when there is desire for food, fatigue is relieved and abdomen is loose—that is the ideal time for food. Doing like this, one’s Vayu gets activated and increases the action of Agni, causing Laghutva (lighteness) to the body, clear belching and finally provide a healthier body and mind. Yoga Ratnakara says if one feels hunger, he can consume food otherwise Agni in the absence of food digest Dhatus, ultimately the Prāna (the life). So one should take food at the appropriate time based on his capacity—neither too less nor too much. Consumption of food before the feeling of lightness can produce Mandagni or indigestion and even death. If one takes food after a long gap regularly, his Jataragni, will be destroyed by the aggravated Vayu and produce difficulties in the digestion of food and the person does not desire to partake the second meal. Many Acharyas contra-indicated the use of food at night. Charakacharya gives explanation for this. He said that at the night time, like a lotus, both the Hridaya (heart) and the Srotas (channels) get drooped or closed and the Dhatus are in Klinnavasta (wet). As the cold milk mixed with hot milk gets vitiated, the Aklīnna food at night gets more vitiated by the morning food. So the food once consume at the day time, if digest properly, then the night food can be advised and vice versa. So Charaka gives high importance for the intake of food at proper time for the maintenance of positive health and he mentioned wholesome and whole food articles also. He mentioned three factors that can cause khora vyadhies (dreadful diseases) and Mruthyu (death) through diet. They are Samaśana, Vishamāśana, and Adhyaśana. He also mentioned about eight factors that should be considered before taking food - Āharavidhi viseshayatanāni-Prakriti (natural quality of food), Karana (processing), Samyoga (combination), Rāsi (quantity), Desa (place), Kāla (time), Upoyoga samstha (rules of taking food), Upayoktra (one who habitually takes food).

The rules we should consider before consuming food are Eat warm food, unctuous food, eat according to quantity, eat when we feel hunger, eat food which is not contradictory, eat in desired place with desired articles, not in hurry, not very slowly, eat with full concentration without laughing and talking, etc.

Ushnodaka: The water which is reduced to 1/8th part or ½ part or simply boiled water is known as Ushnodaka. They are laghu (light), Accha (clear) and sudha (neat). They are Deepana and Vastishodhana. They can be administer in Paryusita Jala, which has been kept for a long period

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and which is sour because it increases Kapha. It is not good for one who is suffering from thirst, alcoholic intoxication diseases and pitta disorders. Such water is considered as Agrahyajala. The water which is kept overnight is also not wholesome and it should not be use. Sritaseeta Jala—which is boiled well and then cooled, is the ideal one. Drinking Ushnodaka is hita (wholesome) for those suffering from Vata and Kaphaja Jvara because they can promote the Agni, removes Srotorodha and expel kapha promote appetite and sweating. For Pittika Jvara, water should be first boiled with bitter drugs and allowed to cool for drinking. Generally Ushnodaka can be recommended in several conditions like Jwara (fever), Netra roga (eye disorders), Kushtha (skin disorders), Mandagni (less digestive power), Pratisyaya (sinutitis) etc: 21
SētaJalapāna is Prohibited in certain diseased conditions: Navajvara,Pratisyaya,Galagrahā, Kasa,Svasa, Vatakapha roga, Grahāni , Svasa,Kasa etc: as it possess reverse properties. It can increase Jvara. But good in Glaani (tiredness), Moorcha (giddiness),Charddi (vomiting), Shrama (weakness),Bhrama (vertigo), Trushnoshna (excessive thirst),Daaha (burning sensations) , Pittaastras (bleeding disorders),Visha (poisoning). 22
Water also has action on one’s body weight: If one drinks water in between food, he will get medium body; at the end of food he becomes obese, before taking food becomes emaciated, according to Acharya Charaka.24

DISCUSSION:
Gradual withdrawal from unwholesome practices and food intake and adoption of wholesome practices and food , results in the maintenance of health for all. Most of the incurable diseases are produced through the intake ofAhita Āhara and Virudha Āhara. Less and excess quantity of food can also leads to several disorders. So awareness should be given to all kinds of people about the proper timing, and Rules of taking food. An intelligent, educated and self controlled man should consume conducive food in proper quantity, at the right time to prevent diseases. Through proper diet, it is possible to make a person disease free. So we can say that the health of a person completely depends upon the food he consumes. Ideal intake of food during the diseased conditions can prevent the further complications. That is why most Acharyas strictly says to follow Pathyaahara and restrict the sevena of Virudha Ahara. The Pathyaahara which has been mentioned in our classics ,definitely will have some intensions like Deepana, Pachana, Lekhana, Vishodhana, Grahi ,etc: actions that will help to cure the diseases or they increases the action of medicinal drugs .Now a days, the fast life force people to take Fast-foods and soft Drinks. Instead of taking such Cold drinks, if one consumes Boiled and Cooled water or water boiled with any bitter drugs or medicinal drugs will be cost effective as well as good for the health. While boiling we can make water free from all pathogens, free from harmful chemicals, pleasant tastes and useful for all domestic purposes. So, pure water is considered as the ‘life of living creatures’ by most of our Acharyas’. Hence both Āhara and Ushnodaka should be taken into consideration before planning a treatment.

CONCLUSION
Āhara, and Ushnodaka Pāna, have equal importance in the life of an individual. Person who follows Hitaaahara, Vihaara and who is not interested in worldly mat-
ters and who follows *Apta Vachana* does not develop any diseases. So man should not hold any types of Vegas or urges and follow all regimens in proper time and quantity to prevent diseases. Thus we can build up a healthy body in a healthy mind.

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