

Role of Ahara according to Manasa Prakruti- A Conceptual Study



Dr. Durga E.

Associate Professor

Kayachikitsa Department

Ahalia Ayurveda Medical College, Palakkad, Kerala

Email: drdurgae@gmail.com

Abstract

Ayurvedic principles state a strong connection between food and the human mind. The mind is directly influenced by the quality, method of preparation, appearance, freshness and aroma of the food. Ayurveda advocates that the quality of food influences mental agility and vigour and even emotion. Ahara improve nutrition, immunity and health when used in proper time and in a suitable individual. The purpose of life is to achieve fourfold objectives, viz. virtuous acts (Dharma), acquisition of wealth (Artha), gratification of desire (Kama) and salvation (Moksha). These pursuits can be achieved through austerity (Tapa), studies (Adhyayana), celibacy (Brahmacarya), fasting (Upavasa) and religious vows (Vrata). Diseases are major impediments to these sacred duties and lone remedy is that of preventing the body from falling ill by achieving a state of positive health. Thus health (Arogya) stands at the very root of achieving the four pursuits of life. The very objective of Ayurveda is achieving healthy status of the body. Both Caraka and Susruta outline similar objectives. They are to maintain the health of the healthy and to cure the disease of the diseased. Caraka in different context states that the object of the science is the maintenance of the equilibrium of the tissue elements (Dhatu). Disequilibrium among tissue elements is postulated as disease and equilibrium as health.

Keywords: Ahara, Ayurveda, Satvika, Rajasa, Thamasa

1. Introduction

Health is a state of wellbeing at all the four planes of life, viz. Soma, senses, psyche and the spirit. Balanced state of the constituents of body (Dosha, Dhatu, Mala and Agni) and satisfaction or pleasure of senses, mind and the soul constitute health.

Upastambha

According to Ayurveda the Upastambha (supporting pillar triads) required for the maintenance of human body are Ahara, Brahmacharya and Nidra. The individual is no longer healthy unless he receives a healthy food. Hence a proper selection of food is also inevitable to drive out the susceptibility of disease. In modern science they only consider the quantitative values in the body like electrolyte, fat, proteins, iron etc. in percentage concerned with the maintenance of health. As a feedback, only they advise various restriction in food intake. Relevant theory regarding this is a famous one that 'A healthy mind dwells in a healthy body'. [1] Meanwhile Ayurvedic treatises provide a vast collection of information regarding the action of food influencing mind. They have explored deeply along the various action by studying Rasa, Guna, Veerya, Vipaka, Prabhava etc. The relationship between

food and mood is bidirectional. Food affects the person's mood through physiological mechanisms and the person's mood plays a strong role in determining the choice of food. The food we eat has a significant influence on our mind. The nature of our mind and feelings depends on the food we have eaten. And conversely, the state of our mind, emotion, intellect and senses and our overall state of contentment-all these, in turn, affect the digestion, absorption and elimination of the food we have eaten.

In the present era the whole behavior and food habits have been changed. Most people now a day used to take certain trend of food habits like fast food, preserved foods etc. They are not ready to discriminate what is good and what is bad for health. The foods, which is easy to cook, and good in external appearance, good in flavor and attractive, preference goes in this way. The prior prepared and preserved foods, food that is readily ingestible, chilled beverages, etc. are only taken in to account. Even water itself is used in packed form as a status symbol.

According to naturopathy man is considered basically as a fruitarian. The scientific analysis of the anatomy and of physiology of human digestive system by the modern science also approves the same. The holy bible says the great grandparents of the mankind were provided an Eden garden, which was full of fruits. Even though our Acharyas have given enough references regarding vegetarian and non-vegetarian foods, in very few instances they advise non-vegetarian foods for ingestion. But here in this context the food those exerts any influence on mind only comes under the purview. In fact, Ayurveda Considers the body including the faculties as well as mind sets substratum for every disease. There is close relation between psyche and soma and so the psychosomatic concept is much appreciated. The body humors in their normalcy perform much psychological function as well. In general practice people indulged in non-vegetarian food seems to be more aggressive emotional and sentimental in nature. This is not mere an assumption because medical experts can easily compare the relationship between food and behavior.

Chandogya Upanisad links the origin of mind with food and states that the tenuous (subtlest) portion of food becomes the mind, the basis of the so-called physical nature of mind.

Annamasitam tredha Vidheeyate tasya ya stavishto dhatu tat pureesham bhavati, somadhyamastanmamsam, Yo anishtastanmana

Annamayath hi Soumya manah. The testimony is further given by the incident of Svetaketu who did not eat food for fifteen days and lost all his memory. On eating food on 16th day, he could recall his knowledge. Implications of this concept are dealt elsewhere. Chandogyopanishad again emphasizes the relation between the food and mind. The mind is what we eat and a food that is pure results in a clean state of mind.

Ahara shudhou Satva Shuddhi, Satva Shudhou Dhruva Smriti

A clean mind has memory which transcends many births. This very verse probably is the basis for Gita's classification of food into Satvika (pure), Rajasika (pungent) and Tamasika (impure) varieties. In Bhagavad Geetha some references can be seen accessible to the same theory. From Satva results knowledge, from Rajas only greed and from Thamas delusion and ignorance itself.

Satvika food

Normally they like the foods that augment life energy, strength, health, happiness, joy and which are savory, nourishing and agreeable. In Ayurveda the fourfold type of food mentioned should possess the above qualities. For demonstration foods like milk ghee, fresh and sweet fruits can be included in this Class.

Rajasa food

Rajas itself is to be of the nature of passion the source of desire and attachment. It prompts the self by attachment of action.

The foods that are very pungent, sour, hot, saltiest, dry and burning are liked by Rajasa and it will be conducive to pain grief and disease. Generally, the food habits of population are going in such a way. Consequently, from the society itself a lot of live examples like evil acts, quarrels, and impatience suicidal and homicidal tendency etc. are vividly common.

Thamasa food

Thamas to be born of ignorance and deluding all embodied being it binds through inadvertence, laziness and inactivity. The food cooked three or more hours before i.e., which has become cold, worthless, from which the essence has gone, putrid, foul smelling, the balance after somebody's use, not good for intellect is liked by Thamasic people

As a part of time saving, the preservation and further use of cooked food is common now. Ayurveda also consider it as toxin and harmful for body and mind. Food preserved in fridges, cooked tin foods, Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages belong to this category. Uchchishta food clearly indicates the possibility of contamination of various Microbes.

Eight factors determining the utility of food

The eight factors which determine the utility of various types of food are: (i) *Prakrti* (nature of the food articles), (ii) *Karana* (method of their processing), (iii) *Samyoga* (combination), (iv) *Rasi* (quantity), (v) *Desa* (habitat), (vi) *Kala* (time) i.e., stage of the disease or the state of the individual), (vii) *Upayogasamstha* (rules governing the intake of food) and (viii) *Upayoktra* (wholesomeness to the individual who takes it).

Prakrti indicates the nature of the substance, i.e., inherent attributes (heaviness etc) of diets and drugs. Eg. Masha is heavy and Mudga is light and meat of Sukara (Boar) is heavy and that of Ena (Deer) is light

Karana means the processing of the inherent attributes of substances. Processing results in the transformation of the inherent attributes of substances. Transformation of the attributes is affected by dilution, application of heat, cleansing, churning, storing, flavoring, impregnation, preservation, container etc.

Samyoga is the combination of two or more substances. This results in the manifestation of specific attributes which cannot be manifested by individual substances e.g., combination of honey and ghee or honey, fish and milk

Rasi is the quantum of total (Sarvagraha) or individual (Parigraha) substances which determines the results of their administration in proper and improper dosage. The quantity of food taken in its entirety is 'Sarvagraha' and the quantity of each of its ingredients is 'Parigraha'. Quantity of all things involved is Sarvagraha and that of each and everything individually is Parigraha.

Desa relates to the habitat. It determines attributes due to procreation (growth) or movement of substances in a particular locality or their acclimatization to that region.

Kala stands for both the time in the form of day and night and the states of the individual, (viz. condition of Health and age). The latter is relevant to see disease whereas the former for the determination of the wholesomeness to different types of seasons.

Upayogasamstha stands for the dietetic rules. They are for the most part dependent on the symptoms of digestion.

Upayokta is he who takes food. He is, in the main, responsible for the wholesomeness by the habitual intake of things (Okasatmya).

Rules for taking food

Healthy individuals as well as the patients should observe the following, even while using such of the food articles as are most wholesome by nature. One should eat only that food in proper quantity which is hot, unctuous and not contradictory in potency and that too, after the digestion of the previous meal. Food should be taken in proper place equipped with all the accessories, without talking and laughing, with concentration of mind and paying due regard to oneself.

Right time for food intake

When faeces and urine are excreted, Hridaya becomes clear, Doshas traverse in their right pathways, belching becomes clear, hunger begins and Vata functions properly, digestive power increases, the body becomes light and capable of perceiving the senses; food is to be taken, as it is the right time scientifically recommended for food intake.

Manasa Prakruti

Prakruti in Ayurveda refers to an individual's inherent nature, the inborn tendencies which influence the consciousness and activity. Different meanings of Prakruti are nature, temperament, constitution, form, origin etc. Prakruti lakshana by Susrutacarya "Prakopo Va Anyadha Bhava Kshayo Va Nopajayate Prakrutinam Svabhavena Jayate Tu Gatayusha". The temperament of a man is never aggravated nor does it suffer any deterioration. A change or deterioration in any particular case should be regarded as the harbinger of death. Before undertaking the examination of the patient, it is necessary for the physician to have a thorough knowledge of the normalcy of the human being in all aspects. Nothing can be judged abnormal without knowing the normal. So it is essential that Prakruti Pariksha is to be done first and Vikriti Pariksha later. Acarya Charaka considers Prakruti as one of the Bhavas, while describing Dasa vidha Pareekshya Bhavas. According to Sankhya, there are three major attributes - Satva, Rajas and Tamas. All human beings have been basically grouped under these triads. Ayurveda considers Rajas and Tamas as Manodoshas capable of producing diseases and Satva as Manoguna. According to Ayurveda, the digestive enzymes and metabolic processes are likened to a

fire, called Kayagni in Sanskrit. How well we digest the food depends upon the strength of our Agni. We can say that the entire health and happiness of each individual depends on the strength and functioning of our Kayagni. In fact, one of the major limbs of Ayurveda is called Kayachikitsa, which is concerned with balancing Kayagni to bring health and happiness to the entire body-mind system. So both food and our moods have an effect on our digestion, and conversely the strength of our digestion has an effect on our moods.

Ayurveda is the science of life and life according to Ayurveda is the state of union of four components namely, the body (Sareera), the sensory and motor faculties (Indriyas), mind (Manas) and soul (Atma). Mind is considered as Ubhayendriya. It is located in the body itself and can be considered as the super faculty. According to Caraka, mental faculty is of three types-Satvika, Rajasa and Tamasa. The Satvika one is free from defects as it is endowed with auspiciousness. Rajasa type is defective because it promotes wrathful disposition. The Tamasa one is similarly defective because it suffers from ignorance. More over the word Satva is also used as a synonym of mind. Rajas is a factor of aggression (Rosh) and Tamas is a factor of confusion (Moha). Mind influenced fairly and constantly by the predominance of Rajas is called Rajasa satva and similarly influenced by Tamas is called Tamasa satva. Mind that is not affected by Rajas and Tamas is in its pure form and hence is called Suddha Satva.

Distinctive features of the different classes of mental temperaments:

Satvika features according to Ashtanga hridaya[2]

Saucam	Cleanliness
Astikyam	Belief in gods
Sukla dharma ruci	Inclination to follow the path of pure virtue

Satvika features according to Susruta Samhita[3]

Anrsamsyam	An absence of hostile propensities
Samvibhaga rucita	Judicious distribution
Titiksha	Forbearance
Satyam	Truthfulness
Dharmam	Religious acts
Astikyam	Belief in gods
Jnanam	Spiritual knowledge
Budhi	Intellect
Medha	Retentive faculty
Smrti	Memory
Dhrti	Comprehension
Anabhishangam	Doing good deeds irrespective of consequences

Rajasa features according to Ashtanga hridaya

Bahu bhashitvam	Talkativeness
Manam	Pride
Krudha	Anger
Dhambha	Vanity
Matsara	Jealousy

Rajasa features according to Susruta Samhita

Dukha bahulata	Feeling of much pain and misery
Atana seelata	Wandering tendency
Adrti	Non comprehension
Ahamkara	Ego
Anrtikatvam	Untruthfulness
Akarunyam	Unkindness
Dhambha	Vanity
Manam	Pride
Harsha	Joy
Kama	Lust
Krodha	Anger

Thamasa features according to Ashtanga hridaya

Bhayam	Fear
Ajnanam	Ignorance
Nidra	Excess sleep
Alasyam	Laziness
Vishadita	Grief

Rajasa features according to Susruta Samhita

Vishaditvam	Despair
Nastikyam	Not believing in existence of god
Adharma seelata	Irreligious stupefaction
Budhi nirodham	Perversion of intellect
Ajnanam	Ignorance
Durmedastvam	Silly thoughts
Akarma seelata	Lethargy in action
Nidralutvam	Sleepiness

The Satvika type of mental faculty is of seven types depending upon the disposition of Brahma, Rishi, Indra, Yama, Varuna, Kubera and Gandharva. Rajasa type having six types, namely Asura, Rakshasa, Pisacha, Sarpa, Preta and Sakuni. Tamasa type is of three types; Pasava, Matsya and Vanaspatya

Different types of Satvika individuals

1. Brahma (sharing the traits of Brahma)

Clean, love for truth, self restrained, power of discrimination, material and spiritual knowledge, freedom from passion, anger, greed, ego, ignorance, jealousy, dejection and intolerance and favourable disposition equally for all creatures.

2. Arsha (sharing the traits of Rsis)

Devotion to sacred rituals, study, sacred vows, oblations and celibacy, hospitable disposition, freedom from pride, ego, attachment, hatred, ignorance, greed and anger, intellectual excellence, power of understanding and retention.

3. Aindra

Lordship, authoritative speech, performance of sacred rituals, bravery, strength and splendour, far sightedness, devotion to virtuous acts, earning of wealth and proper satisfaction of desires

4. Yamyā

Observance of the propriety of actions, initiation of actions in time, non violability, memory and lordship, freedom from attachment, envy, hatred and ignorance.

5 Varuna

Bravery, patience, purity, dislike for impurity, observance of religious rites, fondness for aquatic sports, exhibition of anger and pleasure in proper place.

6 Kaubera

Possession of honour, luxuries and attendants, constant liking for virtuous acts, wealth and satisfaction of desires, purity, liking for pleasures of recreation.

7 Gandharva

Fondness for dancing, singing, music and praise, expertness in poetry, stories, historical narrations and epics, constant fondness for scents, garlands, association of women and passion.

Of the seven types of Satvika mental faculties described above, Brahma is the purest.

Different types of Rajasa individuals

1. Asura

Bravery, cruelty, envy, lordship, movement in disguise, terrifying appearance, ruthlessness, indulgence in self prais

2 Rakshasa

Intolerance, constant anger, violence at weak points, gluttonous habit, fondness for non-vegetarian food, excessive sleep, cruelty.

3 Paisaca

Gluttonous habit, fondness for women, unclean habits, cowardice and terrifying disposition, resorting to abnormal diet and regimens.

4 Sarpa

Bravery when in wrathful disposition and cowardice when not in wrathful disposition, sharp reaction, taking food and resorting to other regimens with a fearful disposition.

5 Praita

Excessive desire for food, excessively painful disposition in character and past times, enviousness, actions without discrimination, excessive greediness.

6 Sakuna

Attachment with passion, excessive food and regimen, unsteadiness, ruthlessness and unacquisitiveness.

Different types of Thamasa individuals

The Thamasa type of mental faculty represents ignorant disposition and is of three types.

1. Pasava

Forbidding disposition, lack of intelligence, hateful conduct and food habit, excessive sexual indulgence and sleep.

2 Matsya

Cowardice, lack of intelligence, greediness for food, unsteadiness, fondness for constant movement and desire for water.

3 Vanaspatya

Indulgence in food and deficiency of intellectual faculties.[4]

Conclusion

Ayurveda advocates health not only as the fitness of physique but also as the wellbeing of soul, mind and faculties. So, the persons who prefer the attainment of the goal should follow the advice of this health science not only to cure the disease but also for the prevention of psychological and somatic

miseries. Shortly the way to pure knowledge is through a clear mind and the same clear food itself.

Ahara Suddhai Satva Suddhi Satva Suddhai Dhruvo Smruthim

The concept of Manasa Prakruti in Ayurveda should be elaborated with the help of modern psychology. Each individual has a different temperament. The descriptions of personalities available in Ayurveda are the simplest account of the genetically determined temperament of man. Manasika prakruti has significant implications as regard to the problems of mental health and psychiatric medicine [5]. Thus Susrutacarya says, kayanam prakrutim jnatva anurupam kriyam caret, that is the physician should first of all ascertain the prakriti of the individual and thereafter initiate the treatments suitable to him. Everybody should take Satvika ahara to attain longevity, health and prosperity.

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