

IMPORTANT VALUES OF FOOD IN THE VIEW OF AYURVEDA

¹Chaudhari Maheshkumar Nilkanth

¹Associate Professor , Dept. of Shalya Tantra ,Hon. Annasaheb Dange Ayurveda Medical College ,Ashta , Sangli-416301 (Maharashtra) INDIA.

ABSTRACT :

Today's fast life has no sufficient time for taking a peaceful meal. Every day comes with new problem & man is continuously trying to overcome that but during this fast & the furious life , we people completely forget the importance of food & the rules & regulations of taking the meal . No other substance is important rather than food for life. In this article, I (Author) elucidate the very important points regarding Aahar (food) like quality , quantity , utility , classifications , time , drinking of water , Ayurvedic view regarding non-veg. , the Vedic & mythological importance , preservative & packaging of food in modern era .Scientists of today, are inventing new things day by day in every field to make our life more comfortable but we the people are giving no importance to very precious but very important point like food (Aahar) . A person who wish to live healthy long life, he should read this article thoroughly & for more details one should refer original scripture of Ayurveda . If following these simple phenomena of food consumption, I assure that he should be 100% fit for long life, no disease will occur to him. Only such thoughts are explained in Ayurveda , so we can proudly say that Ayurveda is not only science but the complete science of life .

Keywords: Ayurveda , Importance & utility of Aahar (food) , management , life .

Key Message: For long healthy life, one should follow the rule of consumption of Aahar of Ayurveda .

INTRODUCTION: Even-though much implemented and observed in practice , has been investigated and searched out in the field of food and nutrition, by the modern science, even if people are following the modern theories of food with full faith in their practical life , we the Ayurvedists , have certainly , something still more to furnish with .Most of the people , the scientists , research-workers and scholars are seen to have paid very less interest to peep into the treasury of our ancient sciences like Ayurveda particularly because the scriptural fund of knowledge of them is in Sanskrit language , which the concerned modern experts , etc. are not well conversant with. Lack of proper propagation is also one of all the significant causes. I humbly think , better say , I suppose , if scientifically a research work could be planned and systematically

the points illustrated here , would no doubt , prove not merely a support but a good contribution to the modern world . I am sure, people who observe these denoted points in their daily diet, would be benefitted more and realise more contentment than the satisfaction by the food intake.I want to present my particular points in a nut-shell because a gist is always better than a list.Full growth of body with its full nourishment is chiefly kept in view by the modern research workers. Taking it for granted, that most of you are well acquainted with the modern concept regarding food, I wish only to state and stress here, that material which throws light on the subject of food in the view of Ayurveda .“ *Aahaar* ” is a particular term for food in Ayurveda .

According to Ayurveda , food is that particular entity , due to contact of which one is inspired to catch it , seize it , eat it and digest it for the satiation and contentment . Here in this context, I must make it clear that the term ‘satiation’ indicates bodily or physical requirements and ‘contentment the mental ones. In these particular sense Ayurveda has used the term ‘*aahar*’ in the literature throughout .Moreover, it must also be noted that the concept of ‘aahar’ includes not only the food-stuffs but also the intake of water and other drinking substances. Therefore, the ‘food in Ayurveda’ deals with both of these entities as well. Food is the only and prime source. Animation of life rests only on the food. Food has the potential of the creation of every living being. Even if spermatozoa, ovum and some other elements are the causative factors of fertilisation , the start of life , one should not forget that food is the root cause of all .It is at present, an all admitted fact that the main cause of the built of great personalities in the world, is prominently related with the potential purities of their parents. Probably, keeping this type of theory in mind, Ayurveda ‘*rishis and munis*’ must have given much more stress and attention towards the qualitative potentials of the food than its quantitative ones. By the proper pure and potential food, they wish to produce powerful man with dynamic personality, description of which can be witnessed in Viman Sthan of Charak Samhita , chapter II in details . The class of food or food stuff differs as per the species of the living being differs. One animal’s food may become another’s poison. It is rightly said - the strong animal victimizes weaker ones as food. It supports the doctrine -

“**Survival of the fittest**’ . So to say to become fittest man in all respect, the wholesome food is a must. Perhaps, in the view of Ayurveda , something more is expected . Fitness of physical, mental as well as spiritual domains. This is the most distinctive thought in the science of Ayurveda . It would not be out of place to elucidate this conspicuous concept of Ayurved in this context. As the body built rests upon the food, the spirits and the life itself also rest upon the food. Food not only causes nutrition and growth of body , but it enriches *dhatu*s (elemental seven factors of the Body) strengthens the physical power , mental abilities , ‘*Ojas*’ (the purest and the finest substance in the body, out come as an essence of seven dhatu) and all the spiritual activities too .In this authentic version of charaka , two important points have been brought to light . Unless and until the action of digestion is complete, the food does not exhibit its effective results. Power of digestion is a conspicuous concept of Ayurveda which is termed as ‘*agni*’ in Ayurvedic literature . Unless there is proper digestion of food, the food itself cannot exhibit its effects on the body and in the body . If so , one realizes from food ; the longevity , fairness of complexion , strength , healthiness , energy , attractive , built of body , spiritual splendor , vitality and vigour , the formation of other dependent systems of ‘*agni*’ (perhaps the metabolism) and the spirits or panchapranas , etc. All these attributes, says Ayurveda , inseparably belong to the food . I assume, if scrutinised carefully, all of these attributes of food lie beyond the measurable scope of modern science. They do not belong to merely aesthetics, they are the subject of *yoga* and *adhyatma* sciences.

I suppose , it is not necessary to stress and stage before the scholars like you the importance of *yoga* and *Adhyatma* , which are the integral part of Ayurveda and the life span and such other attributes hold prominent place in our life . They are and must for the attainment of the whole-health in the life.

View regarding quantity of food -

Ayurveda is more a subjective science than an objective one. Therefore, the rule of the quantity-intake is stated in general. No specification like modern calories – measurement is stressed.

[1] Sarth Vagbhat Sutra Sthan 8 /46

Two parts of the stomach are only to be filled up with the food-stuff. One part with water intake and the remaining fourth is advised to be kept up filled or empty for the existence of ‘*Vata*’ for its easy movements . More over – While taking the food, when one feels half of the stomach is filled up , one should stop taking the food , which is supposed to be heavy for digestion and the food stuffs light to digest can be consumed to one’s full contentment .What and how much quantity of food one can easily digest is said to be one’s specific dose of food intake. Food dosages differ according to an individual. The man of ‘*kapha Prakruti*’ in the view of Ayurveda requires naturally a very meager , quantity of food . Man of ‘*pitta*’ group , requires medium quantity and frequently too . ‘*Vata-Prakruti*’ group is naturally , mostly hungry and eats more quantity of food . Meagre quantity of food in ‘*Kapha-Prakruti*’ Group yields full benefits required and in the *Vata* group , on the contrary more quantity does not exhibit all the qualities and benefits thereof .

Taking into consideration, Ayurveda recommends it regarding the quantity of food (*Aahar-rashi*) that is:

- 1) There should not be a standardization of food quantity,
- 2) Quantity of food varies according to the individual,
- 3) Quantity of *Rashi* - depends upon the ‘*Prakruti*’ group to which one belongs,
- 4) “*Matra*” & “*Aahaar Rashi*” is detrimental according to the age , quality of food , the seasonal changes , place of resort , ability to digest , occupation , condition of the body , state of mind at the time and the surroundings . Hence the point of *Aaharmatra* and *Rashi* must be viewed distinctively.

Food Utility - a distinctive point of Ayurveda :Including the point quantity of food (*Raashi*) there are eight points in Ayurveda , which throw light on this subject .

- 1) **Prakriti** : The nature of the substance , as : ‘*Maasha*’ (*Teramnus labialis*) is not easily digested , it has ‘*guru*’ as an inherent property , while ‘*Mudga*’ (*phaseolus mungo*) is easily digested in the body . It is its inherent property. Thus to consider the effects of any food-stuff such a point must be taken into account.
- 2) **Karanam** : It is nothing but to put the edible drug and undergo particular processing on it . It is called ‘*sanskar*’ in Ayurveda . ‘*Sanskaras*’ of certain types are done to transform the original or natural properties in the substance and create in it the expected qualities & new qualities. For instance, the milk or tea both have inherent qualities / properties to increase ‘*kapha*’ in body. The addition of turmeric (*Haridra*) or piper longum powder (*Pippali*) abolishes *Kapha* increasing property and transforms them harmless.

3) **Sanyoga** : A process of combination of two or more substances , which combination exhibits mixed or some more effective properties . As for example , *Ghee* and Sugar create more effective properties of '*Madhura*' *Rasa*' some way , sometimes particular mixtures like honey and pure *ghee* , when consumed in equal quantity the mixture becomes poisonous . There are so many food stuffs described and enlisted under the caption '*Viruddha-aahar*' in all original volumes of Ayurveda . Even though , we call this an age of scientific advancement , we should not ignore such points , which hold much more significance in our success of life. *Viruddha-aahar* is unwholesome food . Intake of such unwholesome food for a considerably long time , results in creating in the society the dangerous diseases like : impotency , blindness , various skin diseases , ascitis , fainting , blood pressure , anemia , etc. It is every day, witnessed that the percentage of the patients of such diseases is increasing with a galloping speed and to our wonder no trace of aetiological factors of these diseases is detected by even all types of modern investigation therefore on this point, modern scientists must pay their valuable attention to make the people free from the clutches of these diseases. (To get satisfactory information, please refer Charak Sutra Sthan 26)

4) **Raashi** : That much quantity of food which suits the individual to decide one's dosage.

5) **Desha**: Ayurveda asserts the importance of this point wherefrom the food stuff originates. Because, the properties vary according to the birth place of the food substance, even if '*Shaali*' type of rice is said to be '*laghu*' (easily digestible), if it is obtained from

'Himalayan region' it is not found so much '*laghu*' to digest. This change of the nature of rice is related with its particular type of origination.

6) **Kaal** : The properties of food-stuff are experienced to be a little bit changed , due to the effect of seasonal changes. '*Kaal*' is a time factor, which according to Ayurvedic view creates changes in the properties of the substance. Mango fruit generally ripens in the May or June (*Greeshma*) season. If by some processing or eventually, it is available in other months or seasons, it does not exhibit the same type of relish and taste.

7) **Upayog Sansthan** : Dietetic rules , observance of particulars rules at the time of diet are found traditionally prevailing , which are found responsible for food property changes . As for instance, Utterance collectively of some vedic hymns, etc. creates enchanting atmosphere, which is proved to be giving satisfactory results in the digestion and

8) **Upayokta** : He who takes food . The condition of his body and mind, etc. must also be considered while one studies the food properties. Thus to obtain pleasing and health giving results, one must pay attention to these eight points also.

Rules for taking food:

Even though, whole-some food article is eaten, one must observe some rules too, to get expected results of it. The food articles must be well and timely prepared. The feel must be pleasingly warm at the time of meals. It must be unctuous. One should try to avoid laughter and gossips while taking food. One should take food, when previous meals are digested completely and one feels appetite for the food. All of these rules are suggestive, that one should concentrate towards food eating to one's full extent.

Selection of place: To take food, carries much importance in Ayurvedic view . Clean , well equipped , pleasing and where no stress , strain , tensions would arise , such a pleasing and pious place is supposed to be helpful in getting advantages from food .One should never be in hurry, in taking the food; quietly one should perform this procedure of food intake. One should not take food very slowly. By this, system of digestion is disturbed. Too much of taking and laughing at the time disturbs the concentration at the food and consequently this causes various troubles of digestion.

Suitability and the liking toward particular food stuff must always carefully be observed and utilized. Such a type of food is preferable for the benefits thereof. Curd, for instance, is to some persons, pleasing and suitable too. They should eat curd, there is no harm. To some, curd is pleasing but not suitable, as it creates 'Kapha', etc. It is harmful to them. They should avoid it. These are some of the rules for taking the food. One should observe them always, so that, one enjoys the benefits of food to the full extent.

Preliminary Arrangements : Suitable cooking place, which is arranged and artistically decorated pleasing dinner hall, adornment of the ground place where dishes of food are to be served, with powders of various colourful stones. (*Rangoli* , as it is called) , fragrance of incense – kindled sticks .Prayer Offerings of vedic hymns before one starts taking meals , is also a note worthy tradition . These hymns are replete with meaning. It is a prayer to Almighty, who controls everything and an earnest desire is expressed that man and his every action, including the food and its digestion is totally dominated by him and gratefulness

is expressed. Same way, it is supposed to be a duty of man to offer some part of his food to those who are dependents upon him. This includes the guests, beggars, the dog, cat, parrot and other pet animals also. They are to be given priority. All these points, in the view of some thinkers, are of no use. Even some modern food specialists think about these traditional customs of blind faith. They ignore these points. On this back ground, we must better peep into the matter probe into it and critically see, how far correct this impression is.

The points under the topic, arrangements are of various types. They encompass the required urge for food. Particular fragrance of food pleases the sense organ; nose, colour of different types attracts the attention of eye and so on. The whole picture of arranged food, surely attracts the man, creates proper hunger taste and appeases man. It is certainly nourishing the material body and nurturing the immaterial field of sense organs. The view exhibits clearly, that food, food material with its proper arrangements, is not only a support of the body, it is a contribution of the sense organs also in the body. The food thus prepared, arranged and consumed strengthens the body as well as energises the sense organs and the mind. Man is the only animal on this earth planet, who can think of obligatory system of Nature, who can think of intrinsic values of his divine gift of sense organs, mind and the soul or spirits. Man can only think of being grateful to the Almighty. This whole thought regarding food, is perhaps the complete thought. Here growth and nourishment of body is a thought. Some Naturo-paths proclaim that plain and natural vegetables, etc. should be the only food of man . Giving artificial flavours , odours and palatable tastes are unnatural

and are harmful because man uses them only with particular allurements or temptations. In this case, the man is to be held responsible, who eats food with temptation and not the food.

The food is classified under these points:

- 1) Qualitatively: Edibles, chewables, drinkables and lickables.
- 2) Quantitatively: The measuring quantity in general of the food intake and the dosages according to an individual demand and capacity to digest.
- 3) With colourfulness of food stuffs and articles.
- 4) With fragrance and smell.
- 5) Palatableness of food.
- 6) Sense of touch or feel of food.
- 7) Particular type of hearing the sound from the food at the time of its preparation and when it is consumed as well.
- 8) Freshness, warmth and according to appeasing effect of food.
- 9) Hot or cold effect making.
- 10) Light or heavy to digest.
- 11) That type of food is recommended which enhances the digesting and the metabolic power in the body.
- 12) Food articles, quantity, etc. must differ corresponding to the *prakriti* (Vata-Pitta-Kapha etc.), *Vikriti* (the disease), "Dosha" (Vata, etc.), *Kala* (season at the time), *bal* (the strength of man), *desha* (food differs and is easily digested at a particular place and region) etc.

Time – (when to take food): It has no sense, in the view of Ayurveda to say, to take the food in the morning, lunch in the noon and supper in the night. Food taking has no connection with the morning, noon, etc. it is inseparably related with the time of its demand or an urge by the body.

^[2] *Sarth Vagbhat Su. 8/55*

One is expected to take food, when the following conditions are fulfilled –

- 1) Excreta pass out and bowels are cleaned.
- 2) No feeling of the slightest pain in the chest, near the heart.
- 3) "Vata-Pitta & Kapha doshas" are excreted.
- 4) Digesting power, when it is known by noticing the hunger,
- 5) Sensitivity and sharpness of all the organs both motor and sense organs is experienced,
- 6) When body is felt (to be) light.
- 7) Natural eruption of 'Vata'.
- 8) Urge for the food is also noticed.
- 9) (Gases) 'Vata-apan' passed out and the stomach is evacuated,
- 10) If there is no appetite, one should not take food.

These are the points advocated in Ayurveda, regarding the proper time of food intake. This is the food time. It is based on the nature's laws. We suppose no challenging appropriate food time can be devised, other than this view of Ayurveda. Same food and same rules of food consuming are not recommended in Ayurveda. As food stuff varies according to '*Prakriti Bala*', etc. it also differs according to the season. In the winter season the digestion is naturally powerful, man feels hungry just early in the morning. '*Snigdha*' (Unctuous), '*Ushna*' (creating warmth in the body), '*Guru*' (heavy to digest) and '*paushtik*' (nourishing) food articles are recommended. While in the rainy season -'*Ushna Paachak*' (digestive), '*laghu*' (easily digestible) and '*Deepak*' (that which promotes digesting power), food articles are recommended. This type of change of thought regarding food changes in the seasons is founded on the principle of '*dosha and dhatusamyam*' in Ayurveda which means, maintain the equilibrium of the body elements in the seasons

Covetousness, fear, anger, greediness, feeling of helplessness, indifference, hatred or contempt – affliction of these all mental contingencies is a great hindrance to proper digestion. Even though, a good nourishing and rich diet of vitamins, etc. is consumed, mental disease is sure to happen.

[3] Sushrut Su. 46/451 Place to cook the food is called mahanasa or 'muda paak-khaana', it must be at a remote and clean place, experts and only those who are loving and well wishers like the mother or wife, etc. only should be allowed to stay there.

From whom one should not accept the food : From a patient, a man of lower behavior, impotent man, cruel, prostitutes, covetous, enemy and from those who are dirty and are always sickly. In the above reference, effects of the food dishes of metals, mud and glass, etc. are described. If the food is served in the plate of gold metal, it is pleasing, carries cooling effects in the body and it promotes nourishment of the body. Food plate of silver, if used for a long time regularly, is beneficial to the eyesight, diminishes burning due to vitiated 'Pitta', etc. Food in the steel and glass plates is useful to alleviate swelling, anaemia, kamala or jaundice, etc.

Water Drinking -The thought of food is incomplete; water drinking is the remaining significant part of the topic. To elucidate it in brief, we may say - "Jeevanam" is a synonymical term in Sanskrit for water, which means the life itself. It being an inseparable part and parcel of life, it holds the 2nd importance in the food. Two parts of stomach are to be filled up with the food and out of four, the one forth with water. The remaining forth is to be left unfilled for the proper movements of the element 'Vata', which is

also almost for good digestion. Ayurvedic view regarding water drinking as of food, there are some rules to the drinking water. As a food, water is also a food stuff or food article. Therefore, as it is recommended for food, it must be recommended for the water also, that water must also be drunk only when the thirst is felt.

Even though, inseparable part of body requisites, water is a foreign substance to the body. One must borne in mind, there are many a distinguishing characteristics, attributes and properties of the water in the body and the water we drink. Therefore, requires to be digested properly. Secreted juices in the body (kledka-kapha, pachak pitta, etc.) generally digest the food. When they fall short, the body exhibits it through the media of thirst. Urge for water is felt and it indicates the necessary of water to the body at the particular state. Water drunk at such a demand, is easily digested by the body and when digested, it is helpful for the remaining digestion of food. Water taken at an unwanted time, when there is no urge or demand for it, it is harmful to the body.

Charaka says : that " The digestion is nothing but a process of transformation of food (inclusive of drinking water) into the bodily tissue elements ". Rice, water or any receipt of particular colour, density and other attributes, when digested are transformed or converted into particular type of body elements; the blood flesh, bones, etc. The water so taken in as a food article is also digested properly and only then we realise its existence in the body in the liquid form of blood, urine, sweat, etc. One may think, this much explanation on this point as un-necessary. I must better make it clear, that this is deliberately done on the back ground of

the modern established concept regarding water drinking . Generally three to five litres of water intake is advocated to be necessary by the modern research . For the clearance of bowles and other chanells in the body , to cool the body and for good digestion this much quantity is recommended a must . Over functioning of kidneys by more water intake is said to be necessary for maintainance of sound health .

Ayurveda on the other hands , states the other view by Vagbhata - Unless there is a demand of water from inside , one should not drink water . It must be used in a moderate quantity to the extend to meet the quantity , to meet the demand . Why more and excess of water ? Excessive water itself is not digested properly in the body . To digest excessive intake of water the digesting potential (*agni*) is utilized , diminished and sometimes it is lost . Many a troubles start of '*agni-mandya*'. I have maintained a record of such patients who were victimed of excess water drinking . Diarrhoes , Dysentary , Running of nose , recurrence of heaviness of head , headache , acidity , joint pains , excess of sweating and fatigue thereof , frequency of urination and the weakness thereby, occasional swelling on some parts etc.

In most of these cases , it is witnessed that no cause is ever detected . The patient realizes relief as soon as we advise the patient stop excess intake of water .If taken before meals the water exhibits its effects on the lower portion of the body, when it is consumed to satiate the thirst at the dinner , it helps to keep in the body in proportion and while taken after dinner , it's effects are seen on the upper portion of the body . (portion above coller bone)

[4] **Vagbhat Su. 8**

Such aphorismsin Ayurveda are awaiting to be put to clinical research work in the modern age . Hot water holds heat creating properties in it , while the cold one is said to be cooling the body . Such a type of water shows the result according to the '*prakriti*', the type of disease , demand of body , seasonal changes in atmosphere , etc.

Warm or hot water holds the properties as under : It dissolves '*kapha*'. Alliviates accumulated '*Vata*'. Deposited substances (*malas*) like sticky and thickened ones are released from their places . It clears up the bowels . Gases in the stomach pass out . Of course the acuteness of pains due to '*Vata*' or gaser becomes mild . Tolerable and disappears too . Internal parts of the body are heated systematically and sweating takes place which causes lightness of body . So many are properties that hot water alone holds .Excessive thirst , when it is due to some sticky (*snighdha*) food stuff like '*Basundi* , *Gulab jam*' , etc.If it is not at all satiated by drinking cold water . Cold water increases it and belly is distended . In such a condition , the warmthness of the hot water melts the '*snigdha*' substance relieves it from the place and the thirst is quenched . The use of cool water in such a condition is seen not only useless , but a bit harmful too .

This peculiar view of Ayurveda regarding water drinking is stated in brief as above , it is a distinctive view of Ayurveda from the modern view regarding food and water . It must therefore , be contemplated over , consumed, absorbed , digested in the mind and be assimilated carefully to reap out benefits thereby .

Restorative measures through 'Aahaar' : After the use of elimination or '*Panch Shodhana*' therapy or when the patient is kept under a long standing treatment

continuously , we see him in an emaciated state of body . The patient is reduced and becomes weak . To promote him with proper health to enhance his 'agni' (digestion) and to put on some weight , a specific type of food and food articles are advised in Ayurvedic literature . It should be started with 'laghu' food articles like 'shali-shashtik' . (particular kind of rice , which is said to be easily digested) . Next comes the term of the utility of lesser 'laghu' or a bit 'guru' food like ; vilepi (gruel) , and this way the use of 'guru' – 'gurutar' (more guru) and 'gurutam' (the most 'guru') food articles . This is a particular way or process of acceptance way or process of acceptance of food gradually , when the disease is over . This process is called '**sansarjan**' or '**sansargee**' in Ayurveda . By adoption of the **sarnsarjan** , food is easily digested . It promotes 'agni' and the healthsystematically . This is an old thought in Ayurveda , which would be perhaps new thought to new world .

Some worth remembering points :

Whatever properties of food article may hold , those properties do not remain the same forever .The grain , suppose the wheat or rice , is said to be heavy to digest , when it is ripe . After an year's lapse or more it becomes easily digestible . This change happens due to the dominating unknown power , (or time) . Any type of grain-corn or seed that which is edible , undergoes such a change . It becomes transforms into 'light' or 'laghu' property . Wheat or rice or any other food article , when undergoes some specific processings , it's inherent properties do not remain the same .Boiled rice with water is easily digested . When added with ginger or spicy element it is becomes more *laghu* . If boiled with milk , it becomes a bit little

heavy to digest , with suger and milk , heavier and same way , with the same principle in view , in the disease like diabetes or '*madhumeha*' such a rice is advised to be fried dry and then to be used . This point elucidates nicely by Vagbhat .

Before we start taking meals : A separate clean pleasing dress is advised for and at the dinner .The dress which we generally wear , knowingly and unknowingly comes into contact of various dirty and poisonous articles .This vicinity to the food . 'Sowale' is a particular term used to such a 'dinner dress', which Bharatiya or Indian peoples are witnessed using traditionally .

Seats and seating accommodations are of various types . The decorations and artistic pleasing arrangements have been described previously .Meals and food serving are also described to be pleasant to all of the sense organs .At the time of meals no foot wears are allowed in Indian and Ayurvedic ancient systems .All of the members in the family , the bosom friends , nearby relatives and alikes all are to be invited for the dinner . Dinner must be with them .

All the pet-creatures in the house like the cow , dog , parrots and the others like crow-sparrow are also expected to be given priority to take the meals . The beggars , guests and the crippled dependants are also suggested for being given priority while taking the food .

Food taking is considered to be a '**yadnya**' (an important religious sacrificial performance) and hence it has a great significance in the life .

Hence all the above said performances , food is a divine gift and blessings of God and it is a result of strenuous incessant efforts or so many ; therefore he who takes food , must suppose it to be a duty , to be grateful them all .

With this concept in mind , Indian Food science advocates , that one could not eat oneself selfishly ; a little part of the food must be generously offered to them . He who does not offer such food sacrifices are hence , supposed to be the thieves .

View regarding non – veg. food :

Particulars anatomical structure & physiological food digesting function and also some distinguishing characteristics of the man this all is suggestive of the fact , that man is a born vegetarian animal .As for the non-veg. killing of an animal is a must , Hindu scriptures are generally hateful to this act of taking non-vegetarian food .On this back ground , it is worth considering , how Ayurveda describes and advocates the properties of the food of meat , etc. of animal kingdom .To throw more light and make the picture clear , I better quote the authentic , as described by Arundatta , a well known critic on Vagbhata .Killing as well as meat eating of birds and certain animals is permitted by scriptures .The Life of man is stated to be the most valuable amongst all the creatures . When the life of a man seems to be ceasing , due to some disease or so and when it could just be possibly saved by meat – eating , meat – eating is permitted in Ayurveda . It is advocated in this context only , I feel myself much grieved , I am unable to quote here the exact book of reference , where from I have stated this particular view of Ayurveda regarding meat - eating as above . I correctly and exactly remember , furthermore , the author has stated :- he who eats the meat , must have the dire need of it . He must be in such a condition , that the meat eating is a must for him . Only for the palatable satiation non veg. food is supposed to be unjust '*Himsa*' as it is termed .

There are some important and peculiar points in Ayurvedic literature regarding the processes and properties of meat and meat – eating . I humbly think , they require an attention of great thinkers as well as of the research workers , to obtain the benefits of them in their full extent .

The properties of a goat differ , according to other view of Ayurveda as per the habitat of the goat , food type , activities of it sex , size and part of its body to be used . To make it clear : - the goat – meat from sandy dry and hot region like '*Sahara*' , holds good qualities . The meat is lightly digested , it emaciates and reduces fats in the body . The goat – meat from marshy lands like North Saiberia is not comparatively easy to digest . It is '*guru*' by nature due to dominating factor of marshy atmosphere there . '*Jaangal*' and '*Anupa*' *desha* is a particular term for the natural environmental conditions respectively . Such properties vary in accordance with '*Bhoomi desha*' .

Similar movements of the animal also affect the properties of the meat of the animal . A cow , if not released from its pen , the meat and milk of such a stably sitting cow and also of a she goat differs in its properties from other cow's meat and milk . The effect of such a long – timely seating of animal is witnessed '*guru*' in Ayurveda . This theory is also applicable to any other animal and its way of action or movements .

The heavy food taking animal yields the milk of meat with heavy properties .The meat of a he buffellow is stated more '*guru*' compared to the meat of a she buffellow . In this case sex of the animal is stated to be dominating .Flesh of the shoulder is heavier than that of the thigh . The meat of the chest is heavier than that of the leg . Such a comparison is made of

the properties of certain parts of body of the same animal .Birds , which always or most often fly and float in the air , are lighter to digest than those which live on the ground . It is because due to incessant contact of the wind and the sky . (which represent *Vata & Aakaash Mahabhutas* those attributes of them become dominant) Meat of an impregnated female quadruped animal is supposed to be heavy to digest . Vagbhata says : the lower part of the female quadruped (animal) is heavy to digest and the upper part meat of a male quadruped most often heavy to digest . These points are perhaps unknown to the modern world of meat – eaters .There is a system , traditionally observed , exactly where a particular food recipe is to be served . The dish so served attracts the attention and is pleasing .There is also a system or order , recommended and also traditionally followed , which of the served food – articles one should consume first . To Start with one should consume that receipt , which is ‘*guru*’ (heavy to digest) , ‘*Snigdha*’ (unctuous), ‘*swaadu*’ (sweet in taste) , ‘*manda*’ (slowly digesting) , ‘*sthir*’ (solid) .This is because when we start our food taking or dinner , we are hungry .The digesting fire or ‘*agni*’ is able functioning to its full strength . Therefore , naturally such a food-article as stated above is very easily digested .In the second stage , sour and salty articles are advised . They hold the properties , enhancing the digesting power , they are a bit little ‘*snigdha*’ and so comparatively lighter to digestion than the previous ones .In the last stage of the dinner , ‘*Katu-tikta-Kashaya*’ (hot , bitter and astringent) articles are said to be used . They hold , ‘*laghu – rukhsha and ushna*’ properties in them .One can surely conclude , after careful scrutinisation of the above said order of food , that the

principles of governing of the laws of nature are studiously been implied in this system .Amongst the three foundation pillars of life , ‘*Aahaar*’ (food) is an important one .The wholesome food is the only cause , which promotes growth of body , mind and the life – span itself . Unwholesome food causes disease .

They ably digest all types of the food who undergo regular practice of exercise , who are accustomed to take , unctuous food , whose digesting capacity is extensive , who are young in the age , who are bodily strong enough , etc.Absolutely wholesome food – articles for the human being are : Water , pure *ghee* (most often cow’s ghee) milk and the rice .

All of these are not harmful even if , they are consumed in excess quantity . All are conducive to the bodily and mental health . Hence , all of these food articles have been carefully grouped as – [5]

Old barley , wheat (*Oryza sativa*) a variety of *Shali* , *kodrav* (a particular kind of rice) . *Ghrita* (*Phaseolus radiates*) – pure *ghee* , meat of an animal from ‘*Jaangal*’ *Pradesh* , pomegranate , *saindhav* , a kind of salt , *triphala choorna* powder mixture of *myrobalan* , etc. dry and ripe grapes and pure water to drink (water of rain in the ‘*Ashwin*’ month - September and October) . All these are advocated to be consumed daily. They would maintain the health .It is generally known to the world that excess quantity of the food intake , creates so many diseases .

People also are aware of the diseases of low quantity consumption of the food stuffs .Ayurveda describes , what happens if the food quantity is controlled and used in low quantity ?

Vagbhata Says : If one deliberately takes major quantity of food or we can even say , more fasting , it reduces the strength , it

emaciated energy and potential powers are also decrease gradually and this can create any of the *Vataj* – diseases. It is very much interesting , as well as significant in the context with the disease and life , that gastric fire or ‘*agni*’ works always incessantly . It requires the fuel of food for its proper functioning . It thus , digests the food intake . When one feels hungry one must take the food or dinner as the fuel . If appetite is felt , urge for food is realised and the food is not given , the ‘*agni*’ after a certain time , starts consuming the unwanted deposited body substances , which are supposed to be harmful in the long – run . Ayurveda names it , the ‘*doshas*’ vitiated . ‘*Agni*’ consumes them and it sustains . Same can be said in relation to the water intake . When thirst is felt and water is not provided , other harmful accumulated liquid substances in the body are consumed . Thus non – providing of the food or water as per requisite or demand of body the *agni* , does consuming of the vitiated ‘*doshas*’ in the body . This system is useful to be adopted in the treatment of a group of ‘*Santarpan*’ diseases . This process is called (‘*Langhan*’ or fasting , which is well adopted and also we digested by the modern medical world in the modern age .

Food Intake as a Sacrifice : All the sciences , originated in India , go always hand – in – hand , in their the oritical concepts . Food is described as a ‘*Yadnya*’ , even in Ayurveda .An individual should always control and consume those food and drinks , which are conducive to him . A man , who does so , who behaves accordingly , who takes such a conducive food and who takes resort to a meditation of Lord Brahma , enjoys full bliss , without any physical or mental disease . He never falls a victim of any disease .

Importance & Utility of Foods :

Food sustains life of every living being . Every living being even lord Brahma & others in the universe require food . Food is useful not merely to sustain life , growth of body and creating energy as is viewed by modern science , but it also enhances complexion , joy of perpetual happiness , good voice , longevity, genius , happiness , satisfaction , contentment , nourishment , strength of body and brain faculties , all these are inseparably connected with the food , When body and mental health is fine , one can even attain peace , penances and the complete salvation . Thus , in Ayurvedic view food is the basic factor in the attained of mundane life and the life here after .In the food – article and other all of the things , ‘*guru – laghu , ruksha – snighdha , ushna – sheet* and all other properties (*gunas*) exist inherently . The same properties exist in the body also . Therefore , the exist and of the body, nourishment and growth of body and decrement or diminishing of body all these physical and mental activities are related with the (food) substance .

Through digestion , the properties of food articles are converted and transformed into the likewise properties of the body . If the properties in both ; the substance and the body stand in contrast with one another ; they become harmful to the body and create disease . Thus , careful and conducive food articles are only to be consumed with caution and care .

Importance of being tasteful , palatable and pleasing attributes of food :

When the food is pleasing to the mind , it creates contentment energy , taste and strength . (when it is in proper quantity and full of physical properties it creates satisfaction)

On this point , a well known writer Mc. Dowall states in his hand book of Physiology (1948 page 423) : that the articles , which are pleasant to the taste of the individual , evoke more gastric juice than others .

The food should also be mixed of the food – articles of all the six tastes .Out of six tastes or ‘*rasaas*’ one should select – choose and consume particular ‘*Rasa* or *Rassaas*’ in more quantity which suits him – his ‘*prakruti*’ or constitution and the seasonal changes .The frequent use of any one type of ‘*Rasa*’ results in causing emaciation .

When the dinner is over : Sushrut stresses the point , one should sit in an easy relaxed position (if possible in the posture of *Bhadrasana*) for a considerable time . When one finds fresh , should take a slowly walk on foot near about one hundred paces . The food is thus makes its way easily digestion is also easy . This process is traditionally called ‘*Shata – Pavali*.’The eatables like ‘*Tambool*’ cloves , cardmum seeds , nut meg and some others which are palatable and helpful for the digestion . These are recommended to be used after the dinner . The food taking or dinner chapter finishes advising one to give heartfelt blessings or utterance of good wishes toward the best . For the betterment of mankind , *Saatvik – Aahar* is advocated . Sweet liquid unctuous heart pleasing foods are taken into account of *satvik* food .

Ayurvedic view regarding the canned food and food – kept in Refregerator :

Processes of preservations , additions of certain acids- salts , preservatives evacuation of the tin , contact of the tin or other componant of the container are some of the important factors in this tin – foods and canned food

.Ayurveda does not hesitate to accept these new processes. Analysing each and every process and the properties of the additional mixtures , it could very well exercised for the practical purposes . The prominent view must always be implied and found out at every stage , what *Rasa* ? (Sweet , etc.) , what property ? (*guru* , *laghu* , etc.) every process and the mixture holds and accordingly the possible result can be deduced . For instance – freeing or keep any thing cool for a long time , does not only extends its life , but it creates therein the property of coolness or in Ayurveda term ‘*Shaitya*’ . This extends longevity and thus , we can say , freez contact prolongs the factor ‘*longivity*’.

Heating range , cooking and other modern devices may also be placed for proper consideration of further research in Ayurveda .

I believe, this much in a nut – shell would be taken as a place before you just of the salient features regarding distinctive view of Ayurveda towards to issue of food .There are some foods and articles described in Charak Samhita - Sutra Sthan – Chapter - 25 , which are recommended for their best properties they hold , some of them are as follows : -

- 1) Food is the best of all things for sustences of life .
- 2) Water is the best amongst all to give soothing effects .
- 3) Wine - best to dispel off the fatigue .
- 4) Meat in general- best nourishing .
- 5) Salt - best to bring about deliciousness in the food .
- 6) Honey - best to aliviate *kapha* .
- 7) Ghee - best to aliviate *pitta* .
- 8) Buffalo milk - best to induce sleep .
- 9) *Sheep* Milk - best in vitiating *kapha* and *pitta* and so on .

In the end , I believe these distinctive points may be systematically contributed with the modern researches in this field and the whole human race may be benefitted thereby .

DISCUSSION:

- There is high timely need to explain the importance of food for surviving of life & to maintain our health .

- Food has the potential of the creation of every living being .

- 'Agni ' plays the majour role in digestion . Total physiology are depends on 'Agni ' .

- The rules for taking food regarding quantity , quality ,time & other things are described in detail in Ayurveda .

- A distinctive points of food utility in Ayurveda has great significance .

- Cooking , sitting arrangement for food taking , prayer offerings of vedic hymns before start taking of meals , etc. all are has specific importance & finally connects with *Adhyatm* .

- Food taking time varies person to person , it has no fix time . It depends upon the digestion & many other factors . It based on nature's law .

- Drinking of water , it's quality , quantity & time , etc. are most important but modern science yet away from this point .

- Unknown information regarding non-veg. food to modern world , are also very well explained in Ayurveda .

- Quality of canned food & food kept in refrigerator are also not ignored by Ayurveda .

CONCLUSION:

- ' Aahar ' (Food) is one of the most important pillar of foundation of life .
- One should must follow the rule of taking food for long healthy life .
- Aahar(food) has a great significance in life .

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Corresponding Author: Dr. Chaudhari Maheshkumar Nilkanth

Associate Professor , Dept. of Shalya Tantra , Hon. Annasaheb Dange Ayurveda Medical College , Ashta , Sangli-416301 (Maharashtra) INDIA

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