

## An Insight into *Aahara Parinamakara Bhava*

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### Abstract

*Ayurveda* has given immense importance to a healthy state of body and mind. The aim of *Ayurveda* is to maintain the health of a person and cure diseased one. *Aahara* (diet) plays an important role in sustaining life and maintaining normal physiological functions. The digestion process and its stages transform the food into body tissues. The factors which take part in the digestion are *Aaharaparinamakara bhava*. These *Aaharaparinamakara bhava* not only help in digestion but also enhance the quality of digestion and its end products. Every factor of *Aaharaparinamakara bhava* has a unique role in the process of digestion.

**Keywords :** *Aaharaparinamakara bhava*, *Aahara*, digestion

### Introduction

*Ayurveda* has described the importance of Trayopastambh, i.e. *Aahara* (diet), *Nidra* (sleep) and *Bramhacharya* (refraining from all sensory attractions). They are three pillars of healthy life<sup>(1)</sup>. And to maintain a healthy life, good quality of *Aahara* and its proper digestion by *Agni* (fire) are two equally important elements. *Aaharapari- namakara bhava* consists of factors which play a significant role in digestion. In *Charak Samhita Sharir Sthana*, *Aaharaparinamakara bhava* are elaborated in detail. They are *Ushma*, *Vayu*, *Kleda*, *Sneha*, *Kala* and *Samayoga*.<sup>(2)</sup>

### Aims And Objectives

- To understand concept of *Aaharaparinamakara bhava*.
- To understand and highlight the importance of *Aaharaparinamakara bhava* in the process of digestion and metabolism.

### Material and Method

For a review of *Aaharaparinamakara bhava* and to understand its role and importance, all the available Samhitas and the respective commentaries have been referred.

### Review of Literature

While understanding *Aaharaparinamakara bhava*, they can be categorised into-

- 1) Physical *Aaharaparinamakara bhava*
- 2) Physiological *Aaharaparinamakara bhava*

The factors that contribute during preparation of the food are physical factors and factors which are present within the body and help in digestion are Physiological.

As heat is essential for different cooking activities such as boiling, melting; in a similar way *Ushma* (heat) helps in *Pachana* (digestion). As external heat is required to transform hard food material into cooked soft one, in similar way

*Ushma*, the first factor, digests food in the body<sup>(3)</sup> and helps to transform into body tissues. In *Pachana*, *Ushma* changes properties of food and makes it easily absorbable in the body. Modern science talks about various digestive enzymes and specific pH in the GI tract. These digestive enzymes act in the bio-transformation of complex food into a simple absorbable product.

*Vayu*, the next factor, *Vayu* (air) helps to keep igniting the fire similarly *Samana Vayu* is required to protect *Jatharagni*.<sup>(4)</sup> Also, *Vayu* or gas is seen as a physical property of some food items and it also helps in the fermentation process. *Vayu* regulates all movements of *Annavaha srotas* such as propulsion of food from mouth to stomach and further towards intestines.<sup>(5)</sup> also mixing, churning, peristalsis and segmentation. These movements of *Annavaha srotas* help food particles come in contact with *Pachak Pitta*, *Kledak Kapha* by all sides. Additionally, *Prana Vayu* regulates the process of deglutition and swallowing due to which masticated food reaches the stomach. Once food reaches the stomach, under the influence of *Samana Vayu*, churning of chyme occurs. Further *Samana Vayu* takes part in *Saar-Kitta Vibhajan*. At the last stage of digestion, *Apana Vayu* controls functions of *Purisha* and *Mutra*.

Similarly, all peristaltic movement and stimulations for secretions work under the control of nervous system.

*Kleda* is the broad umbrella term used in *Ayurveda*. It can be learnt as moisture or body fluids. *Kleda* is mainly composed of *Jala mahabhuta*. Water is useful in food preparation to have proper consistency of food, cooking, washing, soaking and dissolving of the food content.

Similarly, *Kledak kapha* as well as *Bodhak kapha* which have abundant of *Kleda*, moisten the hard, coarse food material into small, soft particles so food can be digested easily. *Kleda* can be considered as water in the all-digestive juices, due to

which, food particles loosen their bonds and digestive juices get mixed properly with food<sup>(6)</sup> and undergo the first phase of digestion, “*Madhur avasthapaka*”.<sup>(7)</sup>

*Sneha* and *Kleda* are like two sides of the same coin. *Sneha* means unctuous factor. It is in form of ghee or oil which is useful in preparing food. They are important for softening and mixing food,<sup>(8)</sup> which softens the ingested food material for seamless digestion. Softening of food is essential for propulsion of food in *Annavaha srotasa*.

Along with these factors, Time required for digestion is explained under the heading of *Kala*<sup>(9)</sup>. As different food stuffs need different time durations for cooking, soaking, or melting, in the same way time needed to complete process of digestion and absorption is subjected to the strength of the *Jatharagni* in every individual i.e. *Samagni*, *Vishmagni*, *Tikshnagni*, *Mandagni*. During the digestion, food has to undergo *Madhura*, *Amla* and *Katu Avasthapaka* in a given time and further absorption of *Aahara Rasa* and *Kitta* should be propelled to *Pakwashaya* for the formation of waste products. Normally, food takes around 3hr in the stomach and 4-6 hours in the intestine to digest.

*Samyog* is necessary for an appropriate administration of the food.<sup>(10)</sup> It is a balance of all above five factors and subjected to the rules of *Aahara Vidhi Visheshayatana*.

### Discussion

All these *Aaharaparinamkara bhava* are important not only for digestion of food but also the healthy state of an individual. Any change in any one of the factors of *Aaharaparinamkara bhava* can trigger indigestion and continuous derangement in these *bhavas* may result in genesis of “*Aama*”. *Ushma* helps in the digestion and conversion of food, but variation in *Ushma* can elicit the pathology. *Vayu* and *Agni* share a close relationship in digestion process. Deranged state of *Vayu* in the body may affect all movements of GI tract again leading to pathology like *Anaha* and *Adhmana*. Excess *Kleda* and *Sneha* may disturb function of *Ushma* again leading to similar pathology but their functions are different so quantity of water and unctuous substances should be taken as per individual's *Agni*. Deficiency of *Kleda* and *Sneha* also inhibit digestion of fat as it is observed in *kamala*.

Time taken to digestion is directly proportional to *Ushma Vayu*, *Kleda* and *Sneha*. By *Samanya vishesh siddant* it can be said that decreased state of one *Aaharaparinamkara bhava* may increase another *Aaharaparinamkara bhava* e.g. increased state of *Kleda* can reduce *Agni* or increase state of *Agni* can reduce *Kleda* and *Sneha*.

Same with *Kala*, time required for digestion and absorption vary in every individual according to *Prakriti* (constitution of an individual) and also varies according to *Aahara gunas*

(properties of food). Considering *Agni*, *Prakriti*, *Aahara gunas*, a physician plans for medicines and medication time. E.g., in *Aruchi*, medicine is advised to take *Sagrased* (to be mixed with first morsel), in *Anaha* and *Adhman*, medicines to be taken *Pragbhukta* (immediately before meal) All these factors are interlinked with each other. So, an outcome of this coordination of *Aaharaparinamkara bhava* is *Samyog*.

*Aaharaparinamkara bhava* should be emphasised while taking a patient's history so that proper counselling and medicines can be prescribed.

### Conclusion

Lokpurushsamyak Siddhant, is a foundation of *Aaharaparinamkara bhava* which are equally important for food preparation and food digestion. Physical factors are crucial to maintain nutrition, quality of the food while physiological factors of *Aaharaparinamkara bhava* are important for proper digestion of ingested food. *Aaharaparinamkara bhava* should be implemented in clinical practise for taking history of food habits and food preparation of the patient.

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