



# “Critical study of Ahar pariksha explained in charak sanhita sutrasthan adhyay 27 under the vision of Atidesh tantrayukti.”

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## Abstract

The word *ahara* is familiar since ancient times, anything that is taken in via mouth and swallowed through throat is termed *ahara*. It is considered as one of the three upastambhas<sup>1</sup> of life. Ayurvedic classics have explained many concepts revolving around *ahara* – *ashta ahara vidhi visheshaytana*<sup>2</sup>, *ahara vidhi vidhan*<sup>3</sup>, *ahara matra*<sup>4</sup>, *kshudha veg dharana and chikitsa*<sup>5</sup>, *trayopstambha*<sup>6</sup>, *ama dosha*<sup>7</sup>, *guna karma of ahara dravyas*<sup>8</sup>, *vargikaran of ahara dravyas*<sup>9</sup>, etc of which *ahara pariksha* is one such unique concept. *Samhitas* not only provide us knowledge regarding about *ahara* but also tell us that even *pathya ahara* can cause harm if it is contaminated or consumed along with other incompatible *dravyas* or in improper quantity. Thus it is necessary to examine our food before consuming it. For this purpose, *ahara pariksha* is mentioned in *Charaka Samhita Sutrasthan* chapter 27 and *Sushrut Samhita Sutrasthan* chapter 46. The criterias of this *pariksha* are mentioned in the context of *maansa dravyas*. But with the help of *Atidesha tantrayukti*, these criterias can be applied on *ahara varga* other than *maans varga* also.

This paper makes an attempt to apply these criterias for other *ahara dravyas* as well.

**Keywords** : Aahar, pariksha, maans varga ,ahar vargas, Atidesha tantrayukti.

## Introduction:

As mentioned, any thing taken in via mouth and swallowed through throat is termed as *ahara*, which has been given utmost importance in all sciences. Many different concepts have been described related to *ahara*. One of the novel concept amongst them is *ahara pariksha*, described in *Charak Sutrasthana* chapter 27 and *Sushrut Sutrasthana* chapter 46 in the context of *maans varga*. It describes nine different criterias which impact the properties of *maans dravya* viz. *Chara, shariravyava, swabhava, dhatu, kriya, linga, pramana, sanskara and matra*.

Rather than restricting these criterias only upto *maans varga*, they can also be used to study properties of *dravyas* of other *varga* with the help of *atidesha tantrayukti*.

The method of study in which one law or rule studied for a given group is made applicable to other

similar groups as well, is termed as *Atidesha tantrayukti*

Present article focused on study of *Ahara pariksha* on different *ahara vargas* under the vision of *Atidesha tantrayukti*.

## AIM & OBJECTIVES

**Aim:** To apply criterias of *ahara pariksha* explained by *Chrakacharya* in context of *maans varga* on different *ahara dravyas* with the help of *Atidesh Tantrayukti*.

### Objectives:

- 1) To study *ahara pariksha* explained in *charak samhita sutrasthan adhyay 27*
- 2) To try applying these criterias on other *ahara vargas*.
- 3) To find references of examples from ayurvedic classics that fit into these criterias.

### Methodology:

To apply aahar pariksha described in *charak Samhita sutrasthan 27* in context of *maans dravya* to different *ahar vargas* with the help of Ayurvedic *samhitas*, research articles.

### Review of literature :

Aahar is the most important factor of sustenance of life and hence describe in all the *Samhitas* of Ayurveda. In *Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana chapter 5- Matrashityadhyaya and chapter 27- Annapanavidhi adhyaya. Vimanasthana chapter 1- Rasavimanam adhyay* in *Sushrut Samhita Sutrasthana chapter 45- Dravadravya vidhi adhyay and chapter 46- Annapana vidhi adhya. In Ashtang Sangraha Sutrasthana chapter 6,7,8- Dravadravya vigyaniya adhyay Annaswaroop vigyaniya adhya, Annaraksha vidhi adhyay* respectively. In *Ashtang Hridaya Sutrasthana chapter 5- Dravadravya vigyaniya adhyay, chapter 6- Annaswaroop vigyaniya adhyay, chapter 7- Annaraksha adhyay, chapter 8- Matrashitiya adhyay.* In *Bhavprakash Takra varga.* In *Yog Ratnakar Matsyadijala jantava, Ikshuguna, Nityapravruttiprakara, madhuguna, dugdhaguna, sharkaraguna, shiit-ushna vaariguna, ghritaguna, navneetagona, siddha annadipaka guna.,*

## DISCUSSION:

### 1. Chara

The term *chara* is defined by commentator *Chakrapani* as – *the desha where the animal survives and the food that it consumes*<sup>10</sup>. Commentator *Dalhana* defines it as *the ahara and vihara of that animal*<sup>11</sup>, the *desha* where the animal lives, kind of food that it consumes (*guru /laghu /ushna /shita / snigdha/ ruksha, etc*) as the properties of meat of that animal depend on the properties attained by *ahara and vihara* of that animal. Eg: Animals born in *anupa desha/ living in anupa desha/ consuming guru ahara* have *guru gunatmaka flesh*<sup>12</sup>

*Acharya Sushruta* adds more examples: Birds consuming fruits have *ruksha gunatmaka* flesh, those consuming fish have *pittakaraka* flesh<sup>13</sup>, etc. Comparison of *laghutva* of animals and change in properties of animal fat based on different origin and habitat is also mentioned in *Sushrut Samhita* Eg- Animals surviving in *gramya, anupa and udaka* habitats have *guru, ushna, madhu* and *vatanashaka* fats<sup>14</sup>.

Some more examples that fit into *chara pariksha* are as follows:-

## Matsya

We find references of properties of fish based on their habitat in *Sushrut Samhita* as well as in *Yog Ratnakar*. Eg: Fishes of river – *bruhanakaraka*, *vatanashaka*. Fishes of Sea – *guru*, *vatanashaka*, *balavardhaka* (as they eat smaller fishes), *vrushya*, do not increase pitta<sup>15,16</sup>

## Milk

*Ashtang Sangraha* mentions that milk of animals consuming *pinyaka* and *amla rasatmaka* is *guru* and *abhishyandi*.<sup>17</sup>

## Water

Depending on land

The properties of water are said to be inferred from the properties of its container. *Acharya Charaka* mentions the properties of water found under different color, consistencies and origin; eg- water found under white soil is *kashay rasatmaka*, water found from mountains is *madhura rasatmaka*<sup>18</sup>. *Acharya Vagbhata* further adds- water found under *kshara pradhan bhumi* is *lavana rasatmaka*<sup>19</sup>. *Acharya Sushrut* explains properties of water based on *panchabhautikatva* of the land. Eg- *Jaladhikya* land possess water with *madhur rasa*, etc<sup>20</sup>.

Depending on the river, direction of flow

All the three *Samhitas* (*bruttrayee*) have mentioned that properties of water differ with respect to the river it flows. Eg: water of *hima nadi* – *pathya*. *Vindhya*, *pariyatra*- *shiroroga*, *kushtha karaka*<sup>21,22,23</sup>, etc.

Source of water

Again, references of properties of water differing with respect to their source are found in *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* and *Ashtang Sangraha*. Eg- sea water – *lavana*, *tridoshakaraka*; Well-*vatanashaka*; Waterfall- *tridoshahara*<sup>24, 25,26</sup>

## Dhanya

Properties of grains as per the properties of land is also described in *Sushruta Samhita*.

Eg- *Jangal desha* – *kapha vata nashaka*, *agnivardhaka*, *kashaya*, *tikta*, *swalpa katu*, etc<sup>27</sup>.

As the study made a realization that the properties of *maans* change with respect to *ahara*, *vihara* and *desha*, it also can be understood in the same way that the properties of animal products also depend on the same. Also it can be concluded that the properties of other *ahara dravyas* like water, grains

## 2. Avyava

*Avyava* refers to the body parts of given animal- eg: limbs, thorax, etc<sup>28</sup>. *Acharya Charak* has quoted that *gurutva* increases successively in the muscles of lower limbs, shoulder, thorax and head<sup>29</sup>. As compared to other organs, testis, kidney, liver, etc. are more heavier<sup>30</sup> *Acharya Sushrut* has also illustrated the comparison of organs in the same way. It is also mentioned that generally in all types of animals, the muscles from their mid-body (thorax, abdomen) are heavier. In male, thorax and in female, muscles from lower body are heavier. In birds, the thorax and neck region muscles are heavy.<sup>31</sup> *Ashtang Sangraha* mentions that *amashaya* is heavier to digest than *pakvashaya*<sup>32</sup>

More examples of *ahara pariksha* are as follows-

### 1. Matsya

*Madhya sharira* of fishes living in rivers is heavier. The head portion of fishes from lakes and ponds is lighter. Fishes belonging from waterfalls are heavier in whole body except head.<sup>33</sup>



## 2. Ikshu

A change in *rasa* is found in different parts of sugarcane. *Acharyas* mention it as-

The *agra bhaga – salavana, Madhya- sadharan Madhur, Mula- atyanta Madhur, Granthi- salavana*<sup>34, 35,36,37</sup>

## 3.Shaka

*Acharya Sushruta* states that in *shaka varga – flowers are lighter than leaves and leaves are lighter than fruits.* <sup>38</sup> Even further it states, *naala and kanda* are even heavier than fruits<sup>39</sup>.

## 4.Tambul

*Yog Ratnakar* has this unique mention of *tambul patra* where it has illustrated properties of each part of *tambul patra*. The *mula bhaga* cause *vyadhi*, *Agra bhaga* cause *paapa*, *Madhya bhaga* cause *ayu nasha*, *Sira bhaga* cause *buddhi nasha*<sup>40</sup>.

As the main reference explains that properties of *maans* differ with respect to the part of body concerned, study of similar references in context of other *ahara dravyas* like *ikshu, tambul, matsya and shaka* reveal that their properties also differ with respect to the part concerned.

## 3.Swabhav

Swabhav refers to the properties that are naturally present in the *dravyas*.<sup>41</sup> Eg: *mudga* are naturally lighter than *masha*. Meat of *lavaka and kapinjala* is naturally lighter than that of *varaha*.<sup>42</sup>

Other examples that fit into *swabhav pariksha-*

### 1. vasa majja

Animal fats are *ushna Or shita* depending on the animal concerned. They are *madhura, bruhana and Balavardhaka* naturally.<sup>43</sup> **2.dugdha**

In *Yog ratnakar*, it has been mentioned that milk quality differ with cow species.

Eg- black coloured cow yield best milk & is *tridoshanashaka*

White coloured cow yield milk with *kapha karaka and guru* properties.<sup>44</sup>

## 3.Ikshu

All *samhitas* mention different properties of *ikshu* depending on different types of *ikshu*.

Eg- *paundrika, vanshaka, kantara, naipala, etc.*<sup>45-49</sup>

## 4.madhu

Different properties of different types of *madhu* made by different species of honeybees is mentioned in *Samhitas*.<sup>50-52</sup>

Eg- *Bhramara, pauttika, kshaudra, makshika* are successively better than the following one.

<sup>53</sup>

## 5.sharkara

*Sharkara* made from different *padartha* differ in properties depending upon *guna karma* of the *padartha* by nature. Eg- sugar made from jaggery- *shukravardhaka, snehayukta* Sugar made from honey- *ruksha, vaman, atisara nashaka*.<sup>54</sup> *Yog ratnakar* has mentioned more types of sugar. (*Mishri, khanda, etc.*). These also exhibit properties present in them by nature.

<sup>55</sup>

In *swabhava pariksha* it can be understood that similar to *maans dravyas*, other *dravyas* also have properties that are present naturally and this, *swabhav pariksha* can be applicable to all *dravyas*.

#### 4. **Dhatu**

*Dhatu* refer to *sapta dhatu*.<sup>56</sup> *Raktadi dhatu* are successively heavier.<sup>57</sup>

#### 5. **Kriya**

Kriya is considered to be the activity or movement of the animal.<sup>58</sup> animals that are physically active have lighter meat than that of animals who does not show much physical activity<sup>59</sup>. Animal products are also affected by physical activity of the animal. Eg: milk collected in morning is *guru*, *vishtambhi*, *shital* (as there is no physical activity at night)<sup>60</sup> Similarly we find that milk of goat is *laghu*<sup>61</sup> and milk of Buffalo is *ati guru*<sup>62</sup>; even this difference is owing to their physical activities. Another example of activity is plantation of *shali varga dravyas*. Eg- *raupya* (removed from one place and planted in other) *Araupya* (removed and planted to other places many times). These plants yield grains with *laghu*, *mutral*, etc properties. When a plant is cut and again allowed to grow, such plants *ruksha*, *badha varchas*, *kaphapaha*, etc properties.<sup>63</sup>

Thus, it can be concluded that as the activity of animal impacts the properties of its meat and other animal products as well; And similarly activities done over plants do impact the properties of grains.

#### 6. **Linga**

*Linga* refers to gender of the particular animal. In same species, meat of male animal is heavier than female<sup>64</sup>. In bird species, meat of female animal is heavier than male.<sup>65</sup>

#### 7. **Praman**

*Pramana* refers to the size of the animal. It has been mentioned that, in same species, animals who have comparatively larger body have meat with *guru* property, while those with smaller body have lighter meat.<sup>66</sup> Same follows for milk yielding animals, animals having smaller bodies yield milk with *laghu* property and vice versa.<sup>67</sup> Even in fishes, *Yog Ratnakar* has reference saying: small fishes have meat with *madhura*, *tridoshanashaka* etc properties. *Ati sukshma* (very small) fishes have *punsatvanashaka*, *ruchikara*, *kasaghna* properties.<sup>68</sup>

#### 8. **Sanskar**

*Sanskara* means the processing of *dravyas* which lead to alteration in their inherent properties.<sup>69</sup>

*Acharya Charak* mentions that we can bring about *laghu* action from a *guru dravya* (and vice versa) with the help of *sanskara*. Eg- *vrihi dhanya* is *guru* in nature, but when it is processed to form and *laja*, it becomes *laghu*.<sup>70</sup> 10 types of such procedures are mentioned in *charak samhita* – *toy sannikarsha* (processing with water), *agni sannikarsha* (processing with heat), *shaucha* (clarification), *manthana* (emulsification), *desha* (storage), *kala* (maturation), *vasana* (flavoring), *bhavana* (impregnation), *kala prakarsha* (preservation), *bhajan* (material of receptacle).<sup>71</sup>

With the help of these processes we can bring about desired modifications in any *dravyas*.

Few examples of which are as follows-

##### **Agni sannikarsha Udaka**

##### **paka**

When 1 part of Water is heated and reduced to 3/4<sup>th</sup> then it is said to be *pathya and vata vikara nashaka*. Reduced to half – *vata pitta nashaka and when reduced to 1/4<sup>th</sup> – tridoshanashaka*<sup>72</sup>

##### **Dugdha**

Similarly in context of *dugdha*, it is mentioned that,

*Ama dugdha- guru, abhishyandi Dharoshna*

– *amrit samana Shrita- laghu, anabhishyandi*

73-76 **Anna**

Properties of rice as per *agni sanskara- Shital – durjara*

*Ati klinna – glanikaraka, durjara*

*Ati drava – shwas, kasa, pinasa hara, purush vata nirodhkrit*

*Bhrishta tandul – ruchikaraka, kapha nashaka, laghu.* <sup>77</sup>

### **kala**

It has also been mentioned that properties of *dravyas* change with time.

Eg- newly formed *guda* is *kapha karaka & agnimandyakara* and *Guda* which is atleast 1 year old is *hridya, pathya, rasayana.* <sup>78-81</sup>

Many more examples are found that illustrate that properties of *dravyas* change with time, like- *madya* <sup>82-85</sup>, *madhu* <sup>86-87</sup>, *ghrita* <sup>88-90</sup>, *navneeta* <sup>91-93</sup>, *phala* <sup>94-95</sup>, etc.

### **Manthan**

Emulsifying *dadhi* to make *takra* is an example to *manthan sanskara*.

*Dadhi* which is *shotha karaka*, turns into *takra* which is *shotha hara* with the help of *manthana sanskara*.

*Takra* is further classified on the basis of emulsification along with addition of a ratio of water and removal of fats. <sup>96</sup>

### **Bhaajan**

*Bhaajan sanskara* is the effect that the material of receptacle has on the *dravya* held within, and thus properties of the *dravya* show variations with respect to container.

Eg- gold- *netrya, pathya*

Soil – *lakshmi nashaka*

Leaf – *ruchikaraka, dipana, etc.* <sup>97</sup>

Another example of the same –

Same type of Food cooked in *kakula* (steaming), *karpara* (baking on hot mud), *bhrashtra* (deep frying), *kandu* (baking on furnace) and *angaar* (roasting on live coal) is successively lighter to digest. <sup>98</sup>

### **9. Matra**

*Matra* is a very crucial factor in the entire picture, as action of *dravyas* finally depend on *matra*.

Eg- when *guru ahara* is taken in less quantity, it shows *laghu* effect and similarly, *laghu ahara* taken in larger quantity shows *guru* effect. <sup>99</sup>

Therefore *Acharya Charaka* has also mentioned that *guru ahara* should be taken *tribhaga / ardha sauhitya* and *laghu ahara* should be taken *na ati sauhitya.* <sup>100</sup>

*Ahara matra* depends on *agni bala.* <sup>101</sup>

There has been a trend in taking more and more water these days, but again, *Samhitas* say that, even water if consumed more than required may cause *kapha pittaj vikaras.* <sup>102</sup>

Other examples justifying *matra* are as follows-

*Madya* taken in *matra* works against *madya vikara*. *Hinmatra*

*ahara – vata prakopa*

*Ati matra ahara- tridosha prakopa*<sup>103</sup>

Justifying the importance of *matra* in the context of *ahara*, *Acharya Charak* has also included *matravat ashniyat*<sup>104</sup> & *rashi* in *ashta ahara vidhi visheshaytan*.<sup>105</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Our *samhitas* hold infinite treasure of knowledge hidden into every single verse of it and the key to that knowledge is application of *tantrayukti* and *nyaya*. This key helps us to expand our horizons and not restrict ourselves only upto the word to word translation of the verses. An attempt was made here to understand the verse describing *ahara pariksha* using *atidesh tantrayukti*, thereby viewing all the *ahara Vargas* under the vision of this verse. The study allows one to rethink on whether just knowing about the *guna karma* of the *ahara dravya* is enough or even other factors need to be considered? It also gives us an answer of why even healthy and light food ingested in larger amounts cause indigestion, what difference does the way of cooking make on the properties of food? It also takes us back to the place where the animal/plant originates, survives, it's physical activity, body parts, food it consumes and all other things that also impact the properties of the given eatable.

The need of the hour is to rethink and rediscover all these criteria as per the lifestyle today, not only ours but also of our sources of food, thus ending up eating good food resulting into our good health & constitution.

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