



Review Article

CLASSICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND VARIOUS ASPECTS OF *BHOJANA* (MEAL) AND *BHĀJANA* (UTENSIL) AS PER ĀYURVEDA- A CLASSICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Food is considered to be the path of health and salvation. Desire of food, easy digestion of ingested food, proper excretion of feces, urine and flatus, lightness of body, longevity and happiness are known to be features of health. Health is dependent upon food and the food looks for proper method. In the present era, everyone wants to know only about tasty food, but people are not much aware of the rules of food preparation, rules of proper intake, and proper utensils for food intake, etc. Practicing appropriate diet-regimen, pertinent demeanor, appropriate sleep and wake up makes a person devoid of distress. In this way a vast description of salutary diet regimen is available in the treatise of Āyurveda. This paper deals with the use of utensils and methodology of food intake mentioned in Kaśyapa Saṃhitā and other Ayurvedic scriptures.

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INTRODUCTION

Food is very important for life. It is the base of life of living beings. In Indian spirituality and Āyurvedic tradition, a deep and broad description of food is given and purity of food is considered to be the path of salvation. The purity of food purifies the mind and purity of mind results in the perseverance of memory^[1] (Chāndogyopaniṣada:7.26.2 pg.742). Perseverance of memory means that the person in higher consciousness lives with awareness. At every moment he is aware of his duties. So he is always carefully determined to fulfil his duty. The ultimate source of human welfare is the purity of food. According to *Bhagavad Gītā*^[2] (6.17 pg. 130) practicing appropriate diet-regimen, appropriate sleep and wake up makes a person devoid of distress. In this statement of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, an appropriate diet is also considered as the main source of healthy living.

There is a context in *Caraka Saṃhitā*^[3] (Sūtrasthāna 25.31 pg. 463) that a great council of sages in Himalayan valley strongly pondered over the causes of disease and health. At the end they

concluded that food is the chief cause of health and diseases. There, in conclusion, it stabilized the theory that balanced diet promotes health where as an imbalanced diet causes disorders. In this way a vast description of salutary diet regimen is available in the treatise of Āyurveda.

Importance of food

Limited food has been prescribed to keep indigestion at bay. According to Ācārya Cāṇakya^[4] (Cāṇakyaśūtra: 218 pg. 27) health lies in limited eating. It is the main cause of health. Indigestion lies at the root of ailments, and the basis of indigestion is irregularity of meals. *Mahṛṣi Kāśyapa*^[5] and other sages have instructed the methodology of meals. A person who takes food according to it is never inflicted with indigestion and other ancillary ailments. If food is used well, it bestows life; pleases all senses; enhances the *Dhātu*; augments memory, intelligence, vitality and *Oja*; and improves complexion. On the contrary, if food is not taken well, it makes man suffer.

Period of Meals and its effect (Anna kāla)

Period of meal is very important for health. A person desirous of having health, long life and vitality should take food on appropriate time described in various Ayurvedic treatise.

1. Effect of food taken in proper Time (Tasmāt kāle): According to Kāśyapa^[5] and Suśruta (Sūtrasthāna. 46.466)^[6] The food eaten at a proper time does not cause any disorders and complications.

2. Appropriateness (Sātmyam): According to Kāśyapa^[5], Suśruta (Su.Sū. 46.466 pg. 283)^[6] and Caraka (Ca.Vi. 1.20 pg. 698)^[3] naturally favourable (sātmya) does not causes any disorders.

3. Effect of food taken in appropriate quantity (Mātrāvad): According to Caraka-saṁhitā (pg. 698-699)^[3] and Suśruta-saṁhitā (Sūtrasthāna. 46.468 pg. 284)^[6] and Kāśyapa (pg. 486)^[5] the food taken as per the quantity gets digested easily and that does not become contradictory to health.

4. Effect of warm Food (Uṣṇam): The warm food tastes good and illuminates the appetite. According to and Kāśyapa (pg.486)^[5] and Suśruta (Sūtrasthāna. 46.467 pg. 284)^[6] oily (snigdha) and warm food gives vitality and illuminates the appetite.

5. Effect of unctuous food (Snigdham): According to Kāśyapa (pg.486)^[5] the oleaginous food enhances vitality, strength and improves the complexion.

6. Effect of unfavourable Food (Aviruddhānna): Unfavourable food is not good for health. It quickly destroys life^[5].

7. Effect of hygienic Food (Śucau deśeśuciṣu pātreśusuciparicareṇopanītam): Hygienic food create satisfaction^[5].

8. Effect of food taken in sacred place, clean pot, facing eastward and in calm environment (Prāṇmukha), (Prāṇmukhastūṣṇīm): According to Kāśyapa (pg. 488)^[5] it causes longevity, happiness and psychological congeniality.

10. Effect of eating with concentration (Tanmanā): According to Kāśyapa (pg.488)^[5] eating with concentration cause health.

11. Effect of eating with taste (Āsvādayam): According to Kāśyapa (pg. 488)^[5] a person having sense to ingredients, who eats food enjoying the ingredients can feel the diversity of the ingredients, and also attains their qualities.

12. Effect of food eating Rapidly (Nātidrutam): According to Kāśyapa (pg.488)^[5] it can cause various disorders like constipation, anorexia etc.

13. Effect of food eating too Slow (Nātilambitam): According to Kāśyapa (pg. 488)^[5]

when food is eaten too slowly, it cools down. In this way, food is eaten in a larger quantity yet it does not satisfy and it leads to difficulty in digestion.

14. Effect of very food (Nātyuṣṇam): According to Kāśyapa (pg. 489)^[5] intake of extremely hot food can cause causes burning and lead to terrible diseases like stomatitis, delirium and fever.

15. Effect of very Cold Food (Nātiśitam): According to Kāśyapa (pg. 489)^[5] consumption of very cold food causes diseases like cough and hiccups.

16. Effect of dry (Rukṣa) Food (Nātirukṣam): According to Kāśyapa (pg. 489)^[5] dry and hard food causes constipation, flatulence, colourlessness and feeling of being unwell.

17. Effect of Extremely Oily Food (Nātisnigdham): According to Kāśyapa (pg. 489)^[5] intake of very oily food can cause indigestion and other ailments of the stomach and throat.

18. Effect of overeating (Nātibahu): According to Kāśyapa (pg.490)^[5] intake of too much food can causes various ailments like constipation, spasmodic pain, uneasiness, sluggishness and cholera etc.

19. Effect of less diet (Nānistokam): According to Kāśyapa (pg.490)^[5] intake of too little food can causes weakness.

20. Effect of over liquid food (Nātidravam): According to Kāśyapa (pg.490)^[5] intake of too much liquefied food can cause nausea, polyuria (excessive urination), flanks pain, rhinitis and watery faeces.

21. Effect of too Dry Food (Nātiśuṣkam): According to Kāśyapa (pg.490)^[5] very dry food causes difficulty in digestion.

22. Effect of eating in absence of desire (Nākāṅkṣito): According to Kāśyapa (pg.491)^[5] it causes indigestion, anorexia, vomiting, pain and abdominal distention, etc.

23. Effect of repeated eating (Nāpratānto): According to Kāśyapa (pg. 491)^[5] when a person eats food despite of being suffering from heightened maladies, suffers from various disorders.

24. Effect of consuming one type of Food (Naikarasam): According to Kāśyapa (pg.491)^[5] consumption of one type of food can cause weakness and infirmity (lack of vitality).

Importance of Cookware's in food

The world today has progressed on many aspects and it has affected the kitchen greatly too. While in ancient times, it was of utmost importance as to what material is used for serving and eating purpose. Food is very important for life and purity of food is considered to be the path of salvation^{[7],[8]}.

Since centuries metal and earthen utensils are used in India. *Āyurveda* also prescribes such utensils to cure various ailments as they are considered to provide innumerable health benefits. Our body needs base metals like Iron, Copper, Gold, Silver, etc. for better health. It is still a common practice in India to use cast iron, earthen pots and brass utensils for cooking^[9]. The food cooked in earthen pots are high in iron, calcium, magnesium and sulfur which plays an important role for the well being of a human body. These are also ecofriendly. Cooking in earthen pots is a slow process and involves the use of a minimum amount of oil thereby helping in retaining food's natural oil and moisture. Due to slow cooking, earthen pots allow moisture and heat to circulate through the food, thus retaining the nutritional level.

Utensils used for consuming food: It is a common practice to just use any metal or material nowadays. In fact, aluminium and plastic are the most harmful material to use for food. But Ayurveda suggests to use the utensils made from metals, mud, wood and leaves for good health.

Metal utensils

Gold utensils: In *Āyurveda*, gold is known as *Swarna*, *Hema*, *Kanaka*, *Hātaka* and *Tapanīya* ^[10-16]. It acts as *Rasāyana*, *Smṛtikāraka* and *Kāntikāraka* ^[13]. Utensils prepared from *Haima* (gold) used for eating and drinking pacify Doṣa and enhance vision ^[17].

Silver utensils: In *Āyurveda*, silver is known as *Raupya*, *Rajata*, *Tāra* and *Śubhra* ^[12-14,16]. It is astringent, *Madhura* and *Amla* in taste. It acts as *Rucya*, *Rasāyana* and used to treat *Vātapitta* associated disorders ^[13,15,18]. Utensils prepared from *Raupya* (silver) are ophthalmic and pacifies *Vāta*, *Pitta* and *Kapha* ^[17].

Bronze utensils: Bronze is known as *Kāsa*, *Ghoṣa*, *Śwetaloha*, *Dīptaloha* and *Kāśapuṣpa* ^[10,11] ^[13,14]. It is *Kaṣāya*, *tikta* and *uṣṇa*. It also acts as *Dīpana* and *Pācana* ^[13]. Utensils prepared from *Kāmsya* (bronze) enhances wisdom; are taste imparting and cause *Raktapitta* ^[17].

Brass utensils: In *Āyurveda*, brass is known as *Rītikā*, *Pittala*, *Pīta*, *Rājarīti*, *Kharalauha* and *Kapilā* ^[10,12,13,15]. It is *Tikta*, *Ruṣa*, *Śīta* and *Kaṭu* ^[13,19]. Utensils prepared from *Pittala* (brass) aggravate *Vāta*; are dry, hot; treat vitiation of *Kapha* and are vermifugal ^[17].

Iron and Glass utensils: In *Āyurveda*, iron is known as *Loha*, *Adrisāra*, *Girisāra* and *Maṇḍūra* ^[11,12,14]. Glass is known as *Nāga*, *Sisaka*, *Muraga* and *Bhujāṅga* ^[11,12,13,14]. Utensils prepared from *Āyasa*

(iron) and *Kāca* (glass) give prosperity. Treats swelling, jaundice, anemia and are tonic ^[17].

Stone utensils: In *Āyurveda*, stone is known as *Aśma*, *Grāvā*, *Prastara*, *Upala* and *Śīlā* ^[13]. Food consumed in utensils made up of *Śāila* (stone) or clay causes poverty ^[17].

Wooden utensils: Food consumed in *Dārūdbhava* (wooden) utensils is especially taste imparting and aggravates *Kapha* ^[17].

Copper and Earthen utensils: In *Āyurveda*, copper is known as *Śulva*, *Raktadhātu*, *Udumbar*, *Mihira* and *Mlekṣmukha* ^[10,11,12,18]. It is *Madhura*, *Tikta* and *Kaṣāya* in taste and *Kaṭu* in *Pāka* ^[13]. Utensils used to store water should be of *Tāmra* (copper) and in absence of it *Mṛda* (earthen) pot is beneficial ^[17].

Crystal utensils: In *Āyurveda*, it is known as *Swakṣamaṇi*, *Śītopala* and *Maṇi* ^[13]. *Shpatika* (crystal) utensils used for storage of water are holy and cold ^[17].

Glass and Cat's eye utensils: In *Āyurveda*, *Vaidurya* is known as *Keturatna*, *Vārṣika* and *Vidūraja* ^[13]. *Vaidūrya* (cat's eye) and *Kāca* (glass) utensils show similar properties as of crystal utensils ^[17].

Utensils prepared from leaves (Patra):

Leaf utensils are very healthy for a human body. As per various ancient literatures when food is served on fresh leaves it reduces acidity to the point of uprooting it from your system and also it removes toxins from your body. Thus, it is advisable to always be conscious of the utensils you are using for eating and cooking purpose ^[7].

Leaves utensils: Food consumed in utensils made up of *Patra* (leaves) is taste imparting, carminative, pacifies poison and sins ^[17] (Plate 1&2).

Plantain leaves utensils: *Kadalī* is known as *Rambhā*, *Swādupalā*, *Sukumāra*, *Vāraṇabuṣā*, *Muktasāra* and *Mocā* ^[13,20,21]. Consuming food on *Rambhāpatra* (plantain leaves) is cardiac, taste imparting and aphrodisiac. It imparts strength, stimulates *Anala* (digestive power), it treats poisoning, fatigue, *Vāta* associated diseases and *Raktapitta* but is not useful in case of jaundice ^[17].

Sacred tree leaves utensils: *Palāśa* is known as *Kinśuka*, *Vātapoṭha*, *Raktapuṣpa*, *Kṣāraṣreṣṭha* and *Bramhavr̥kṣa* ^[13,20,21]. Consuming food on *Palāśa patra* (leaf of sacred tree) treats *Vāta* and *Pitta* associated diseases, *Gulma*, abdominal diseases and common cold. It is taste imparting and stoutening ^[17].

Hastikarṇī leaves utensils: In *Āyurveda*, it is known as *Gajakarṇī* and *Vāraṇakarṇaka* ^[11,22]. Consuming food on *Hastikarṇī* (hathikana) leaf is alkaline, hot and pungent. It treats worm infestation

and fever and pacifies *Kapha*, gives relief in malarial fever and is wholesome [17].

Calotropis leaves utensils: In *Āyurveda*, it is known as *Sadāpuṣpī*, *Vikīraṇa*, *Āsphoṭa*, *Śukaphala*, *Kṣīraparṇa*, *Rupikā* and *Viṣkīra*[13,14,16]. Consuming food on *Arka* (calotropis) leaves causes excessive dryness, is vermucidal and highly aggravates *Pitta*. It treats *Gulma*, pain, poisoning, dyspnea, jaundice, leprosy, vitiation of *Kapha* and *Vāta*, is ophthalmic, light in attribute, is carminative and digestive[17].

Castor oil plant leaves utensils: In *Āyurveda*, it is known as *Eraṇḍ*, *Āmaṇḍ*, *Vardhmānaka*, *Rubuk*, *Hastikarṇa*, *Citra* and *Pañcāṅgula*. [13,14,15,16] Consuming food on *Eraṇḍa* (castor oil plant) leaves pacifies *Vāta*, aggravates *Pitta* and is vermucidal [17].

Latex producing tree leaves utensils: Consuming food on the leaves of latex producing trees treats polydipsia, burning sensation and *Raktapitta* [17].

Fragrant padri tree leaves utensils: In *Āyurveda*, it is known as *Pāṭalā*, *Sthālī*, *Amoghā*, *Kāmadūtīkā*, *Kṛṣṇavṛntīkā* and *Pāṭali* [12,14,15,16]. Consuming food on leaves of *Pāṭalā* (fragrant padri tree) treats jaundice, swelling and *Somaroga* (type of gynecological disorder) [17].

Kewaḍā leaves utensils: In *Āyurveda*, it is known as *Ketaka*, *Kambuka*, *Sūcipuṣpa*, *Halīmaka*, *Krakcchada* and *Sugandha* [11,15,16,22]. Consuming food on leaves of *Ketakī* (kewda) treats all cysts, is pleasant, taste imparting, ophthalmic and light in attribute [17].

Lotus leaves utensils:In *Āyurveda*, lotus is known as *Kamala*, *Nalina*, *Jalaja*, *Śatapatra*, *Tāmrarsas*, *Puṣkara* and *Rājīva* [15,19,21,22]. Consuming food on *Nalina* (lotus), *Kumuda* (white water-lily), *Raktotpala* (red variety of lotus) and *Utpala* (blue variety of lotus) leaves is wholesome for passengers, is aphrodisiac and best fatigue alleviator [17].

Procedure after dining: Clean the mouth after having food or drink small amount of water. Remove food particles stuck between teeth slowly by brushing or using toothpick because these particles which are stuck between teeth produce foul smell. Consider the outer layer of teeth similar to teeth. It should be kept in mind that this layer should not be damaged while removing the stuck material through strong rubbing, etc. processes (*Bhojanakutūhala*). Sleeping is prohibited after meal because sleeping immediately after meal causes vitiation of *Kapha* and that vitiated *Kapha* diminishes the *Anala* (*Jatharāgni*). Walking slowly hundred steps slowly after meal makes the bolus of food digestible in abdomen. Walking in this manner after meal gives relaxation to neck, knee and back.

Directions of specific regimen related to dining:

Sitting, lying down and walking slowly after meal causes corpulence, nourishment and longevity. Death follows one who runs after meal. Here the meaning of last sentence is that do not perform running like hard work after meal. It causes huge obstacle in the digestion as the blood starts flowing towards other body parts instead of the digestive parts. Hence, digestion process is hampered. That's why in *Āyurveda* hard work is prohibited after meal and rest is instructed.

CONCLUSION

Āyurveda which is merely not a medical system but an overall philosophy of life says that the proper and salutary diet regimen, fair deal, proper sleeping, awakening and proper daily routine makes the humans healthy and happy.

A person who regularly follows salutary diet regimen, works deliberately, remains detached to sense-topics, is generous and honest, maintains evenness in tweet-praise, value-offend, profit-loss, vicissitudes. Conflicts, adopts placability and company of wise men always remains healthy. One who performs a result of doing good by balancing a mind, word and action, whose mind is always subjugated and without any sense of naughtiness (anger, malice and sensuality) to acquire the principle. Those who are wise, *jitendra* and devoted towards *Yoga*, they do not get sick.

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Arka [*Calotropis procera* (Aiton) Dryand.]



Vaṭa [*Ficus benghalensis* L.]



Eraṇḍa [*Ricinus communis* L.]



Hastikarṇī [*Lecythis macrophylla* Roxb. ex Hornem.]



Kadalī [*Musa × paradisiaca* L.]

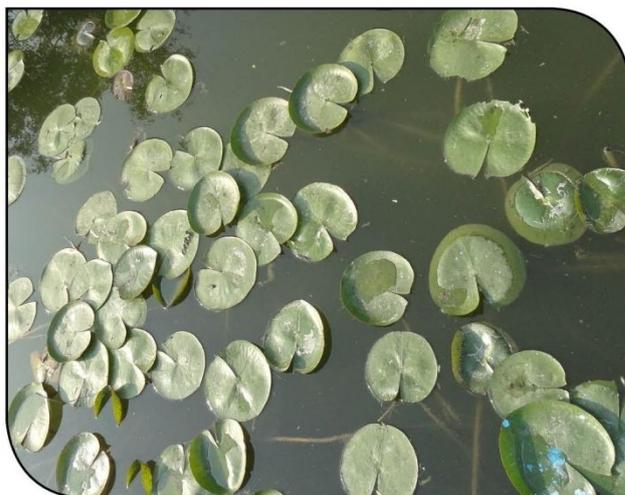


Kamala [*Nelumbo nucifera* Gaertn.]

Plate 1



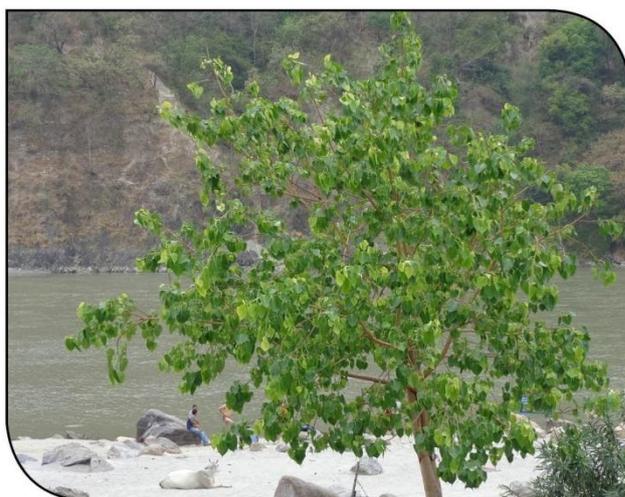
Ketaki [*Pandanus odorifer* (Forssk.) Kuntze]



Kumuda [*Nymphaea alba* L.]



Palāśa [*Butea monosperma* (Lam.) Taub.]



Pippala [*Ficus religiosa* L.]



Udumbara [*Ficus racemosa* L.]



Pāṭalā [*Stereospermum chelonoides* (L.f.) DC.]

Plate 2