



CONCEPT OF HITA AND AHITA AHARA IN CHARAKA SAMHITHA

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Abstract: Ayurveda aims to maintain the health of a healthy person and to cure the diseases of the patients. Ayurveda has given three sub pillars- Ahara, Nidra, and Brahmacharya, which support the body itself, Ahara is one among them. The food articles which maintain the equilibrium of Dhatus are to be regarded as Hita Ahara, otherwise, they are Ahita ahara. Such physicians are conversant with the Ahara dravyas in ascertaining the Hita Ahara in practice according to the disease and patient. Hence an attempt is made here to throw light on the concept of Hita and Ahita Ahara in Charaka Samhita.

Key words— Hita ahara, Ahita ahara, Ahara dravyas

I. INTRODUCTION

Acharya Charaka emphasizes the importance of food. The body, as well as diseases, are formed by Ahara, Hita, and Ahita Ahara are responsible for happiness and misery respectively¹. Ahara is very important to sustain life and maintain the functioning of the human body. Ahara provides longevity, complexion, satisfaction, strength, nourishment, and immunity.

Ahara enhances the process of growth and development, improves the functioning of sense organs, and imparts physical and mental well-being².

Ahara provides health benefits when through its nutritional value when food is not prepared/consumed in a proper manner then such food deprived of nutrition does not provide significant health benefits. For all living beings in the universe, the body and disease are the outcomes of all food. While selecting the diet one should select a diet that will be useful for the maintenance of health and prevention of disease.

The definition of Ayurveda itself says that the Hita and Ahita for Ayu are maintained by wholesome and Unwholesome habits.

Hita Ahara is one of the causes for the growth of living beings and Ahita Ahara for the growth of diseases³. In this Article, an attempt is made to understand the concept of Hita and Ahita Ahara in Charaka Samhita.

II. DEFINITION OF HITA AND AHITA AHARA:

The food articles which maintain the equilibrium of bodily dhatus and help in eliminating the disturbance of their equilibrium are to be regarded as Hita Ahara, otherwise, they are Ahita Ahara⁴.

III. CLASSIFICATION OF AHARA⁵:

According to Yoni: Sthavara, Jangama

According to Prabhava: Hita, Ahita

According to Upayoga: Pana, Asana, Bhakshya, Lehya

According to Rasa: Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya.

According to Guna: Gurvadi gunas-20

According to Combination: Innumerable

According to Texture/ Form: Asita, Khadita, Pita, Lidha⁶

IV. IMPORTANCE OF AHARA:

Ahara is considered as Prana or life because it is a cause for improvement of Prana.

They promote Satva, Orja, Nourishes Dhatu, Bala, Varna, and Prasadakara⁷.

Varna (Complexion), Prasada (clarity), Sausvarya (good voice), Jivita (longevity), Pratiba/Prajna (Geniuses), Sukha (Happiness), Tushti (Satisfaction), Pushti (Nourishment), Bala (Strength) and Medha/ Dharanavati Dhi (Intellect) are all conditioned by Ahara⁸.

V. CONCEPT OF HITA AND AHITA AHARA:

The meaning of Ahara is that the substance which is deglutition through mouth¹⁰.

Intake of Hita and Ahita ahara is responsible for the maintenance of health and production of diseases respectively¹¹.

Hita Ahara Upayoga is responsible for the purusha vridhnikara (the growth of human beings).

Ahara is considered a prime factor for the development and nourishment of sharira¹².

Ahita Ahara upayoga are the causes of the vyadhi. All food and drugs which dislodge the various Doshas from their proper place, but do not expel them out of the body are to be regarded as Ahita.

Hita Ahara and Ahita Ahara bring about opposite effects, depending upon Matra, Kala, Kriya, Bhumi, Deha, Dosha.

It is not only by taking wholesome food one can overcome all diseases. Apart from an unwholesome diet, there are other factors responsible for the causation of diseases. They are Kala Viparyaya, Prajnaparadha, and Shabda Sparsha Rupa Rasa Gandha Asatmya. These factors may produce diseases even in individuals accustomed to Hita Ahara.

Due to certain factors, even unwholesome food does not produce diseases immediately. All unwholesome food articles are not equally bad, all doshas are not of equal strength, or are all the bodies capable of resisting diseases¹³.

Ahita Ahara becomes more harmful depending upon the Desha (nature of the locality), Kala (time), Samyoga (combination), Virya (potency), and Pramana (excess of quantity).

The wise person who always avoids the intake of unwholesome foods is unavoidable and will become free from the discussion of a sadhu. A wise person should not worry about diseases, which cannot be cured by any measure.

The Dosas are exceedingly painful, acute, and difficult to cure if they are combined if they require mutually contradictory therapies if they are deep-seated if chronic if vitiated in one of the ten resorts of life, and if they afflict the vital organs.

Individuals whose body is either very corpulent or too emaciated or has loose muscle, blood, and bone or weak or nourished with wholesome food or accustomed to the intake of less food, or have a feeble mind, are unable to resist diseases.

On the other hand, individuals having the opposite type of physical constitution are capable of resisting diseases.

The intake of wholesome food, as well as the Doshas and physical constitution of the above description, give rise to diseases of many types mild or severe and acute or chronic. The Dosas Vata, Pitta, and Kapha give rise to various types of diseases depending upon the site of their vitiation¹⁴.

Pure products and waste products of food after digestion and metabolism enters into and circulate through channel meant specifically for its circulation. Through these specific channels, the required quantity of nutrition is taken to the dhatus. It is not the same type of food that is responsible for health and diseases.

Table no: 1

Hita Ahara and Ahita Ahara Dravyas⁹:

S.No	Ahara Dravya	Hita Ahara Dravya	Ahita Ahara Dravya
1.	Sukadhanya	Lohita Sali	Yavaka
2.	Samidhanya	Mudga	Masha
3.	Udaka	Antariksha Jala	River water
4.	Lavana	Saindhava	Ushra
5.	Saka	Jivanti	Sarshapa
6.	Mriga Mamsa	Ena	Go Mamsa
7.	Meat of Birds	Lava	Kanakapota Mamsa
8.	Vilesaya	Godha	Bheka
9.	Matsya	Rohita	Cilicima
10.	Sarpi	Go Ghrita	Avika sarpi
11.	Milk	Go Ksheera	Avi Ksheera
12.	Sthavara Sneha	Tila Taila	Kusumbha oil
13.	Anupamriga Vasa	Varaha Vasa	Mahisha Vasa
14.	Matsya Vasa	Culuki Vasa	Kumbhira Vasa
15.	Jalcara Vihanga Vasa	Pakahamsa Vasa	Kakamadgu Vasa
16.	Viskara Sakuni Vasa	Kukkuta Vasa	Chataka Vasa
17.	Sakhada Medsam	Aja Fat	Fat of Elephant
18.	Kandanam	Shringavera	Aluka
19.	Phala	Mridvika	Nikuca
20.	Iksu Vikara	Sarkara	Phanita

VI. DISCUSSION:

The body is constituted of food. Hence one should take Hita Ahara only after careful examination and should not indulge in Ahita Ahara ones out of greed or ignorance¹⁵.

Ahara Dravya is categorized under Hita and Ahita on the base of different Kalpana. He and Ahita effect is completely dependent on individual Prakruti.

Ex. Shastika Sali is Hita for Sama Prakruti person but not for all.

In practice we find that the so-called Hita and Ahita Ahara Dravyas bring about opposite effects, depending upon the variations in Matra(dose), Kala (time), Kriya (method of preparation), Bhumi (habitat), Deha (constitution of the body), Dosha (disease) and Vaya (age of the individual)¹⁶.

Even if an Ahara Dravya is stated to be Hita, In Actual practice it is not always so.

MATRA:

For example, the red variety of Sali rice is regarded as a Hita Ahara but if taken in smaller or larger quantities, it becomes Ahita.

KALA:

Rakta Shali should not be consumed in Hemanta Ritu, because it is Laghu. Hemanta Ritu, Agni is Tikshna, so it is Ahita.

KRIYA:

So is the case with the method of preparation. The Sali rice, if not well cooked or if not well strained becomes Ahita because of the defective method of preparation.

BHUMI:

The same Sali rice, if grown in an Anupadesha is Ahita.

DEHA:

About Deha, for Medasvi, Rakta Shali is Apathya because it is Laghu.

DOSHA:

In the event of the predominance of Vata, the intake of Sali rice is not prescribed¹⁷.

A person who daily offers Hita Annapana to the Antaragni after considering Matra, Kala like an Ahitagni (a man who performs yajna daily) daily performs Brahma Japa and gives donations get a blessing and will not suffer from diseases in the present and future lives¹⁸.

VII. CONCLUSION:

The one which gives the knowledge of life is known as Ayurveda. It is described with references to Sukha, Asukha, Hita, Ahita, Pramana, and Apramana. Knowledge of Hita and Ahita Ahara dravyas is important to practice in day-to-day life and should be adopted by everyone. A good physician should know all this before starting the treatment of various diseases and advice the patient to follow this. A self-controlled man, blessed by noblemen lives for hundred years free from diseases by the intake of wholesome food¹⁹. People who are habituated to intake of wholesome food can increase their life span by avoiding diseases and can lead a disease-free life. Ayurveda gives that much importance to Hita Ahara.

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