

DIET MANAGEMENT IN HATHAYOGA TRADITION FOR WELL-BIENG

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Received: 10.01.2023 Revised: 25.01.2023

Abstract

The fundamental requirement for life is holistic wellness. Anyone can succeed in life if their health is good. However, a number of factors, including how we think, live, and eat, affect our health. Wherein the care of one's health is greatly influenced by food. Food is a need of life; thus, we should focus on eating foods that are healthy in our diet. If we look closely, the "Yogic Diet" is of utmost significance in several dietary categories. Dietary management or balanced diet plays an important role on the development of physical, mental as well as spiritual well-being. Therefore, the following article aims at extrapolating the Scientific, philosophical and practical aspects of diet as per various Hathayoga texts and its relevance and role in maintaining a healthy life.

Key words: Hathayoga, Diet, Triguna, Tridosha.

Introduction

Yoga is a science of spirituality that greatly contributes to the harmony of the body, mind, and soul. Yoga is typically translated as "union," which denotes the merger of the human body, mind, and spirit. It has gained popularity from the beginning of time for the sole purpose of highlighting the value of health. It is one of the skills in leading a healthy lifestyle, along with eating a balanced diet and practising regularly.

There are several approaches to achieving a condition of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being within the yoga system. These include the paths of knowledge (Jnanayoga), Devotion (Bhaktiyoga), Hathayoga, mantra yoga, laya yoga, kundalini yoga, and others.

However, all of these sadhanas practiced in conjunction with a moderate diet, and it has long been stressed that adhering to dietary restrictions is important. While there have been numerous studies on diet generally, there have only been a limited number of studies on dietary aspects from ancient yogic classical scriptures. That is why the objective of the current study was to illustrate the significance of a healthy diet from a particular period of Hathayoga tradition for wellbeing.

Diet Management

Diet plays an important role in the development of the good physical body and mind, a proper diet with rich nutrients makes one's body function well and enhances mental abilities.

Each diet differs from person to person and depending on the type of work they carry on, improper food or wrong diet leads to various health problems and diseases therefore it is very important to properly choose the diet for the particular body functions. A healthy diet is essential for good health and it protects against chronic and various communicable diseases, such as heart disease, Diabetes and cancer. Ayurvedic texts say that proper diet is the best medicine “nacāhārasamamkiñcibhaiṣajya” and it can cure diseases without the intake of any medicine “bināpibhaiṣajairvyādhiḥpathyādevanivartate”; hence it is called as Great Medicine “mahābhaiṣajyamucyate” (Anurag). So Indian food system has been formulated such that it includes proper amount of nutrient which helps in body growth both physically and mentally along with it contains immunity power which helps in avoiding many diseases and infections.

Diet in Hathayoga tradition

In recent years, Yoga has attracted a lot of attention both as a science and as a method for managing health and fitness. Its components include things like asanas, breathing techniques, kriyas, bandha mudras and meditation. Additionally, Especially Hathayoga has always discusses about Diet management which is called as “Yogic Diet”, a variety of classical works on yoga from the past, such as the Hatha Pradipika, Gheanda Samhita, Hatharatnavalli, and GoraksaSatakam, has discussed about diet and food. Food is a fundamental requirement since it is necessary for all living creatures to exist. Everyone, whether they be people, animals, or plants, requires food for general growth. The major advantages of eating healthy food are that it increases life span, cleanses the mind, and gives you physical vigour. A "Yogic Diet" is a diet that promotes peace because it modifies one's mental state, makes it possible for

them to accept greater spiritual light, and gives them a fuller, happier existence.

Concept of Mitahara in Hathayoga

There are several instructions given by notable seers or sages in their doctrines about taking a reasonable diet along with yoga practise for those who desire for physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Yogic diet has been also called as “Mitahara” (Moderate diet) in hatha yoga scriptures “Eating the sweet, nutritious, and lubricating meal known as Mitahara” In the ancient hatha yogic scripture the sage swatmarama’s hathapradipika has defined the mitahara as ‘Eating sweet unctuous food offered first to the almighty and not eaten for one’s own satisfaction, leaving one quarter of the stomach empty (1-58).

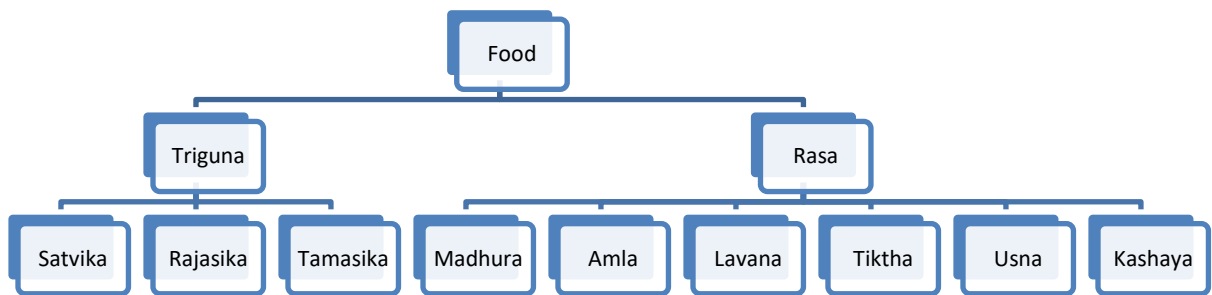
Whereas in one of the important hathayoga scripture’s Gheranda Samhita also described the concept of mitahara. The sage Gheranda muni illustrate the mitahara is a controlled diet which is to fill only half the stomach with pure, sweet, lubricated and palatable food and one quarter stomach with water and forth quarter should be reserved for the movement of the air. Here the Sweet food doesn’t mean the sugary food rather than the food which gives pleasant feeling after eating and which provides energy.

Food ingredients which should be avoided have also been discussed in these scriptures. Eating good grains such as wheat, rice, barley, sastika, milk, ghee, butter, sugar, sugar candy, dry ginger, the patolaka fruit, jaggery, ripe plantain, coconut fruit, pomegranate, grapes, laveli, dhatri, dates, rose apple, cloves, paurusa, nutmeg, rain water which collected when the sun in magha. They also recommended five leafy vegetables- balasaka, kalasaka, patolapatraka, vastuka and himalosika. These are considered wholesome food or agreeable food for those people to keep the health in good condition.

A Person should eat which is easily digestible, soft and sticky, which nourishes

the elementary substances of the body and which is desirable and proper, Hatha yogis also recommended food that which are not agreeable to people, that contained the foods such as excess salty, pungent, sour, bitter and hot, green vegetables, sour gruel, oil, mustered and sesame, butter-milk, curds, liquor, palm-
 Classification of Diet

nuts, jack-fruits, kulatta, masura, pandu, kusmanda, lasuna, palasaka, kadamba, jambira and consuming alcohol, fish, meat and food should be avoided that which extremely hard, contaminated, putrid and stale, increasing body inside heat and extremely cold and hot foods. These all known as Apatya foods in hathayoga.



Indian food system, classifies the food into two types one according to triguna and according to Rasas. Which are both interrelated, almost ancient hathayogis prescribed the diets based on these trigunas and Sadrasas.

Triguna Diet

Satvika– this is one of the vital of three qualities, which influenced by combination of two gross elements like air and ether. This contained fresh fruits, vegetables, milk products, all grains and cereal. Lightness, purity, cleanliness, freshness Clarity, Graceful, contentment, heightened awareness, peaceful, disciplined, intuitive, sensitive these are the qualities of sattvik foods. Most of the sattvik foods that suggested by hathayogis in their doctrines as a patya food.

Rajasik – this one of the active qualities in the nature. This quality accumulated by the influence of tejas and water elements. Foods with excess Salty, Sour, hot, Bitter, Pungent, oily foods, Alcohol and other drugs, Jaggery, mustard, ginger and garlic foods increasing the rajasik quality. The attributes of rajasik are creative and action oriented fickleness, duality, restless,

aggressive and others. Hathayogis recommended this all to avoid for being healthy with calm and peaceful.

Tamasik – this is lowest quality in the nature, which originated by combination of elements like earth and water. Heavy digestible foods like meat and fish, partly spoiled and putrid foods, poultry, eggs and food that prepared more than three hours before these all have the tamasik quality. This quality creates feeling heaviness, lethargy, sluggish, dullness and illusion. That’s why hatha yogis strongly mentioned these foods in non-agreeable (Apatya) category.

Sadrasas

According to Indian system especially Ayurveda, empathizes mainly on tastes of the food one eat, it is described that the tastes of the food will determine the nature and potency one gains by consuming it. So, our ancient texts have mentioned a total of six rasas they are, Madhura-sweet, Amla-Sour, Lavana-Salt, Tiktha-Bitter, Usna-Pungent, Kashaya-Astringent. Sweet taste imparts maximum energy to the body and astringent, the least.

Madhura-Sweet taste:

Comprising the elements of earth and water, sweet taste balances vata and pitta dosha in the body and increases kapha dosha. Of the six types of tastes, this one is said to be the most nourishing. When taken in moderation, they are known to provide you with longevity, strength and healthy body fluids. But remember to not go overboard with it as it can lead to health conditions like weight gain, obesity, and diabetes among others.

Sweet taste is prominent in food items like wheat, rice, pumpkin, maple syrup etc.

Amla-Sour taste :

Consisting of the elements of water and fire, it is known to stimulate pitta and kapha dosha in the body and decrease the vatadosha. Foods with sour taste are also known to increase appetite and production of saliva. Of the six different types of tastes that exist, sour taste is known to awaken thoughts and emotions and improve digestion. It needs to be taken in moderation else can lead to aggression in the body in no time. Some of the sour taste food items are lemon, vinegar, pickled vegetables and tamarind among others.

Lavana-Salty taste :

Salty taste consists of the elements of earth and fire and leads to decrease of vata and increase of pitta and kapha doshas. Because of its hydrating nature, of the 6 tastes in Ayurveda, salty taste aids in digestion and cleansing of the tissues. But too much of it can also lead to increase in blood pressure and have impact on your skin and blood. So, it's intake in moderation is recommended. Examples of salty tasting foods are sea vegetables, sea salt, and black olives among others.

Usna-Spicy (pungent taste) :

Pungent taste consists of the elements of fire and air and of the 6 tastes in Ayurveda, it is the hottest and so is known to aid digestion, improve appetite, cleanse tissues and enhance blood circulation. Pungent taste also helps in balancing of kapha but if had in more than prescribed quantities can aggravate pitta and lead to other health

related issues. Vata handles pungent taste when combined with sweet, sour or salty foods. Some of the best examples of spicy foods are chilies, garlic, ginger, hot peppers and onions etc.

Tikta-Bitter taste :

Bitter taste is made up of the elements of air and space and is considered to be the coolest of all the six tastes. Naturally detoxifying in nature, it helps remove waste and toxic material from the body and purifies the body. Bitter taste is best suited for pitta and kapha doshas and least beneficial bodies with vatadosha. Turmeric, green vegetables, and herbal teas fall in the category of foods with bitter taste.

Kashaya-Astringent taste :

Made up of air and earth elements, astringent taste is said to be cool, firm and dry. People with vata are advised to consume less of astringent taste as it can lead to problem of gas in them. It benefits people with pitta dosha. Unripe bananas, cranberries, and green beans etc., are said to have astringent taste.

Each taste possesses a different property and render different benefit to the body while playing a vital role in the digestion process. A balance or a mix of all these tastes is what makes the experience of eating and tasting the food palatable. Each taste in the aforementioned lists of taste are a combination of two of the five elements mentioned in Ayurveda. Their unique property reflects in their predominant elements and act on the body as per the three doshas. For example, the sweet taste is a combination of the elements of earth and water, which are the same elements that make up the kapha dosha. For those with kapha dosha, sweet taste can lead to an increase in kapha dosha and qualities of heaviness, coolness, slowness and stickiness. On the other hand, sweet taste in those with vatadosha, when taken in moderate quantities, can prove to have a positive effect on the health and balance out disorders.

Yogic Diet in view with Triguna and Sadrasas

The Yogic diet which includes food ingredients like wheat, rice, barley, sastica, milk, ghee, butter, sugar, sugar candy, dry ginger, the patolaka fruit, jaggery, ripe plantain, coconut fruit, pomegranate, grapes, laveli, dhatri, dates, rose apple, cloves, paurusa, nutmeg, rain water which collected when the sun in magha etc... these food ingredients have sattva quality in abundance and some of them have rajasik quality and a least amount of tamasic quality which helps in balancing tridosha and these yogic diets mainly have madhura-sweet tastes which provides one with abundant energy, vitality, longevity, strength and healthy body fluids, always keeps one with happy thoughts and calm mind and healthy body, this diet system also helps to elevate the spiritual levels.

Yogic diet contains balanced tridosha levels which will eliminate all the diseases and keeps one in a state of complete health of body, mind and emotions. With the

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concept of the mitahara in the yogic diet which makes one with less susceptible to overeating or wrong eating and gives a wide knowledge about the food which has to be avoided. Hatha yoga texts have empathized about the avoiding the food which are tamasic in quality and food which develops imbalance of tridosha in the body.

Conclusion

The basic requirement of human being especially if you are in the path of Yoga is the complete well-being of your body, mind and soul. In order to achieve this apart from asanas and pranayama Yogic diet work has a base material. Yogic diet which consists of rich sattva quality ingredients boosts energy level and vitality keeping one away from the diseases, it can be totally considered has diet which provides strength, vitality and elevate the inner energies to a whole new level and helps in maintaining physical and mental well-being.