



TRAYO UPASTAMBHA – AN EXCERPT OF LIFE

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ABSTRACT

Trayo upastambha, literally translated as the three pillars which help in perpetual living, encompasses of dietary regimen, sleep and fair indulgence in copulation. Considering the modern hasty lifestyle and the generational changes, we are ought to follow proper regimen to control, manage and prevent a good number of metabolic anomalies. This context has been formerly given by all the treatises of ayurvedic medicine stating that these pillars are the basic needs of the living system and the over indulgence or total abstinence of any of the three will initiate discomfort. The food is mainly concerned with providing the body with nourishment, strength, energy production and maintenance of living tissues. Sleep mainly constitutes to the relaxation of body, mind, soul and restores potential of the individual. Then finally the controlled indulgence in copulation will provide us with intellect, memory and the flourish of senses. Hence the maintenance of health and prevention of diseases can be achieved through food and lifestyle specific to individual needs which is in line with the seasons and cycles of nature. Amidst the rapid moving life, we could at least look after our own body by just keeping an eye on these triads and strive for an energetic and bright lifetime.

KEYWORDS: Regimen, Sleep, Copulation, Nourishment, Relaxation, Senses.

INTRODUCTION

Kalidasa the renowned classical Sanskrit author quotes, the body has been given to a us to lead a blissful life by divine practices, ethical earning, positive desires, and finally peaceful separation of body and soul. To have such life, we are ought to nurture our body by focusing on three pillars of life called Trayo upastambha being the vision of Vagbhata.

The three pillars are- Ahara (right food), Shayana (right sleep) and Abhramhacharya (fair indulgence in copulation). For making any stable building, the role of pillars is requisite. Similarly, body supported by these pillars maintains strength, complexion and its growth till annihilation. The word trayopastamba is made up of two words - traya meaning three and upastamba meaning a strong pillar that helps in sustaining life. If these three are maintained in equilibrium by best practices, a heavenly life can be experienced. Now let us look upon our propounder Vagbhata's emphasis on these three pillars.

DISCUSSIONS

1. Ahara- right food

Food is described by ayurveda as anything which is in form of solid, semi-solid or liquid and is ingested through the mouth. Food sustains life of all the living beings and brings upon nourishment, happiness, satisfaction, strength and intellect. The food articles which maintain equilibrium of body tissues and help eliminating the disturbances of the tissues are regarded as nutritive and the food articles which brings upon disturbances are considered unwholesome.

i) Wholesome food materials

Wholesome foods according to vagbhata include- paddy, wheat, barely, condiments prepared out of meat of animals surviving in marshy lands, radish, basil, gooseberry and green gram are some of the wholesome foods mentioned. Vaagbhata explains the cereals and rice varieties which are unctuous, aphrodisiac, provide with good health are easily digestible. He then explains an important group of food called as kritanna group, which includes, rice water, rice gruel, thick gruel and cooked rice. The rice water is light, relieves thirst and weakness, increases digestive power and maintains

equilibrium of the bodily tissues. The rice gruel relieves hunger, thirst, weakness, fever, and facilitates evacuation of faeces. The thicker gruel is stomachic and carminative, desirable for persons suffering from wounds and eye disorders.

ii) Unwholesome food

Food materials like curd, alkaline preparations, vinegar, uncooked radish, meat of undernourished animals, meat of cow and sheep, black-gram, tuberous roots, fibre of lotus, sprouted seeds, dried leaves and molasses are all undesirable for regular use.

iii) Time of food intake

The right time for intake food is when the previously consumed food has undergone proper digestion, the bodily humors remaining in their original state, movement of air in the downward direction causing easy elimination of urine and faeces, the belching being clear, the body feeling light, beginning of hunger due to the increase in digestive fire is the scientifically recommended as the right time for food intake.

iv) Quantity of food

A person should always consume food according to their own digestive capacity. What is the ideal capacity? An ideal capacity is where the food does not cause any discomfort, obstruction and heaviness. The quantity of foods which are heavy in nature are supposed to be taken only to half of one's satisfaction and for those foods which are light are to be taken in normal quantity. The use of food in less quantity causes emaciation and diminishing of strength. On the other hand, food consumed in more quantity produces indigestion and constipation. In this same context, vaghbhatta explains the fate of the undigested food. The undigested food materials that stay in the stomach for a longer duration of time due to the inability of the bodily fire to digest the food is called as "Ama". The ama invades the body tissues, block the channels of the body, causing heaviness of the body, laziness and accumulation of waste products in the body. The management of ama can be achieved by either by emesis (upward route) or by purgation (downward route). Hence to avoid the complications of overeating, the filling up of half the stomach with food and one-fourth with water and the rest one-fourth is left empty to aid normal digestion.

v) Admixture of food

Admixture is the combination of two or more food substances together. This produces special effects which are not particular to the individual substances of the combination. These effects might be satisfactory or produce discomfort. The combinations which produce discomfort to the body are called as "viruddha" foods. All sour fruits and vegetables mixed with milk; milk along with fish or prawns; meat of animals of marshy land consumed along with milk/honey/pulses; honey, ghee, muscle-fat, oil and water mixed in equal quantities,

all these are considered as incompatible foods and cause profound imbalance in body.

iv) Regimen of food intake

A person should take food only after taking bath, wearing clothes, after offering oblations to fire and the supreme god and after satisfying the pet birds and animals. One should take food only when he is hungry, staying at a secluded place, fully devoted and wearing ornaments and scents. The food should not be contaminated with hairs or flies, should not be leftovers of others, not made hot for the second time, not overcooked, and prepared well. Hence a person who follows the above regimen given by acharya, obtains strength similar to a statue, free from even minor diseases and attains a life filled with comfort.

2. Shayana- Regimen of sleep

Vaagbhata primarily explains the manifestation of sleep in our body. He says that, when the channels of the body gets blocked, when the body is fatigued by exertion and when the sense organs are not functioning, sleep prevails the body. Even though the sense organs have stopped cognising their objects, the mind still functions which results in dreams.

Vaghbhatta emphasises many aspects such as strength and misery, nourishment and emaciation, strength and debility, virility and impotence, knowledge and ignorance, life and death - of the body which are dependent upon sleep. According to acharya, the sleep is caused by various factors such as accustomed time, effect of diseases and dominance of darkness.

Sleep indulged in improper time, excess or decreased sleep destroys happiness and results in life similar to darkness. Excessive sleep may lead to gain in weight, loss of thinking and lethargy. Loss of sleep causes pain all over the body, heaviness, frequent yawning, laziness, indigestion and stupor. Vaghbhatta also recommends persons who get insufficient sleep should use milk, sugarcane juice, jaggery, buttermilk, black-gram which are foods that provide sense of satisfaction, fulfilment and bestow happy sleep. Hence everyone should sleep at proper time according to their habits to have an energetic and radical future.

3. Abhramhacharya- Regimen of copulation

In the context of sexual intercourse, it is explained that a man should avoid a woman who is in her menstrual period, who is not liked by her activities (behaviour, speech etc.), who is pregnant, recently delivered, who has deformed organs, who is a prostitute, who is not capable of conception (sterile) and who suffers from diseases of the genital organs. He should avoid genital organs other than of a woman; a woman who is not his wife, especially who is more aged and who belongs to his own sanguinous group. He should also restrain from women who is the wife of his teacher, friend, relative or a servant and nuns. Places such as temples, cross roads

(lanes), meeting place of four roads, gardens, burial ground, slaughter house, reservoirs of water and herbs, gods and kings, should be avoided. Adults who are very much interested in copulation should engage themselves with pleasant mind with the person they like and adopting suitable posture. A person who does not follow the above regimen loses vision, life span, semen, and becomes a victim of STDs. A person who indulges in sexual intercourse in a controlled manner will have high intellect and memory, long life, proper health, nourishment and powerful senses. On the other hand, excessive indulgence in intercourse will cause debility of thighs, decrease in strength of the tissues, fall in the capacity of the sense organs and even premature death. Semen being the last formed tissue according to ayurveda is very much potent that it can produce a new human. Hence the valuable essence of the body should be protected by self-control and thus protected semen will produce an excellent progeny.

CONCLUSION

Trayo upastamba is one of the basic tools for human beings which helps in maintenance of well-balanced life. So, from the above explanation of the three pillars we enlighten ourselves about the selection of food which should be according to the body constitution of the individual. A well-balanced diet according to the regimen, quantity, time and admixture of foods must be followed for a disease-free and comfortable life. The second pillar being sleep, which is one of the natural functions of body, we are advised to provide our body with ample rest according to the activities performed so that it helps to restore the strength and virility. The third pillar being proper and controlled indulgence in copulation, it will provide the person with strength, intellect, long life and provides the family with excellent progeny.

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