

DIET IS DIVINE - PART 2

(MODERN, AYURVEDIC AND SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS OF DIET)

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Preface

The word 'Ayurveda' means the 'Veda of life', i.e. knowledge about life. Sages like Charak and Sushrut have always insisted that whatever information and knowledge are available for a useful and happy life should be incorporated in Ayurveda. All medical sciences should be considered branches of Ayurveda.

Modern medicine provides detailed information on the functions of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals and water and their quantity in every food item. It describes in detail the ill-effects of consuming these food items inadequately or excessively. It also describes a balanced diet and the proportion in which various food items should be included in the diet.

Ayurveda has described in detail how the ritual of eating should be, the effects of diet on the mind, qualities of food items and the effects of taste of food on the body. It also mentions how the diet should be adjusted according to one's constitution and the seasons. Ayurveda has also studied how ailments like indigestion occur due to not consuming an appropriate diet or consuming an incompatible one. Another special feature of Ayurveda is that it has studied in depth, the qualities of each food item and their effects on the three humours (doshas) namely, vata, pitta and kapha, tissues like body fluids, blood, etc. and organs like the heart, brain, etc.

Ayurveda accords equal or rather a greater importance to diet than medication in ailments; hence a Vaidya advises observance of dietary restrictions to maintain good health in every individual and to cure the patient. It emphasises that a patient may not take medication but he should certainly observe dietary restrictions. The reason is that one takes medicines in small doses of a teaspoonful or a tablet; however food is consumed in a large quantity.

Since non-violence is important, religion preaches that 'one should not partake meat'. But the aim of Ayurveda is to maintain good health and to cure illnesses;

hence Ayurveda allows consumption of meat. It states that a patient suffering from tuberculosis can consume meat of any animal.

Ayurveda has classified food items and has stated the most beneficial and most harmful food item in each clan.

Ayurveda has also described the diet for the sense organs, mind and intellect. It gives the message of maintaining a healthy mind and a healthy body and attaining liberation from the cycle of birth and death by observing righteous conduct and following Spirituality to permanently rid oneself from all diseases and sorrow in this birth itself.

योगे मोक्षे ल सर्वासां वेदनानां अवर्तनाम् ।

मोक्षे निवृत्तिः निःशेष योगो मोक्षप्रवर्तर्विः ॥ - लरर्वे शारीरस्थान १:१३६

To facilitate handling of this book, it has been divided into two volumes for the sake of convenience of the readers. The science of dietetics will be understood totally only after reading both these volumes.

This book is useful not only to Vaidyas, doctors and students but to every individual. If one takes diet by studying this book, one can enjoy a long, healthy, useful and happy life.

Lord Vishnu is the Deity of food. We fervently pray unto Lord Vishnu to bless everyone with the best possible food so as to make physical, mental and spiritual progress and through it enjoy the Bliss of the Divine nectar.

ॐ विष्णवे नमो, विष्णवे नमो, विष्णवे नमः ।

Dr. V. B. Athavale

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