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A review of *Kala Virudh Ahaara* in different seasons

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ABSTRACT

The wellbeing of a person mainly depends on the food intake. Ayurveda emphasizes on different rules and regulations on diet. Although the quality of diet plays an important role in maintaining health of a person, but dietary strategies also influence body metabolism. The concept of *Kala Virudh Ahaara* (food incompatibility with respect to time) has been mentioned in Ayurvedic Literatures. The intake of cold and dry foods items in winters and hot and pungent foods in summer is known as *Kala Virudh Ahaara* (incompatibility of food with respect to time). Seasonal variations affect metabolism in human body. The potent cause of various metabolic disorders is incompatible food intake. In present era, people suffer from various lifestyle disorders when climate fluctuates and seasons change. Such disorders may originate due to ignorance or negligence in following seasonal dietary regimens. The present article deals with a review of *Kala Virudh Ahaara* in terms of food incompatibilities in seasonal diet.

Key words: *Virudh Ahaara, Kala Virudh Ahaara, Incompatible foods, Ritucharya.*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the science of health that prioritizes health and wellbeing over treatment. Diet plays an important role in maintaining wellbeing of a person. It is mentioned that those who consume appropriate diet regimen do not need medications, similarly those who do not take appropriate diet, appropriate medicine does not work for them.^[1] *Ahaara* is considered to be one of the *Triupstambha*^[2] - *Ahaara, Nidra, Brahmacharya* (three supporting pillars of life – food, sleep, celibacy). Diet is the basic need of body as it is required to carry out all the metabolisms in the body. It is observed that people encounter various

health disorders when seasons change due to negligence in following diet according to season. Thus *Kala Virudh Ahaara* may become the reason of various metabolic disorders.

VIRUDH AHAARA

Literally, *Virudh* means opposite. The concept of *Virudh Ahaara* has been widely mentioned in Ayurvedic literatures. According to *Charaka Samhita*, the food which is inaccurate in combination, has been processed wrongly, or is consumed at inaccurate time of the day or in appropriate season is called as *Virudh Ahaara* or incompatible diet.

Further it is also mentioned that certain food or its combination, that interrupts the metabolism of *Dhatus* (body tissues), that inhibits the process of formation of *Dhatus* and which have properties opposite to *Dhatus*, is known as *Virudh Ahaara*.^[3]

Charaka Samhita states that such consumption of *Virudh Ahaara* can lead to disorders such as fever, infertility, blindness, ascites, anemia, abdominal distension, food poisoning, hyperacidity, indigestions, insanity, various skin diseases, disease etc.^[4]

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Types of Virudh Ahaara

Various types of *Virudh Ahaara* or incompatible diet have been mentioned in Ayurvedic literatures. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned 18 types of *Virudh Ahaara*:^[5]

1. *Desh Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to place)
2. *Kala Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to time)
3. *Agni Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to gastric fire)
4. *Matra Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to quantity)
5. *Satmaya Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to homologation)
6. *Dosh Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to body humors)
7. *Samskaar Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to processing)
8. *Veerya Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to potency)
9. *Koshtha Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to bowel tendency)
10. *Avastha Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to state of health)
11. *Kram Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to sequence)
12. *Prihaar Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to rules of prohibition)
13. *Upchaar Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to contraindication)
14. *Paak Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to cooking)
15. *Sanyog Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to combination)
16. *Hridya Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to palatability)
17. *Sampad Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to richness of quality)

18. *Vidhi Virudh* (incompatibility with respect to eating method)

Acharya Sushruta has mentioned various types of *Virudh Ahaara*^[6] in *Sushruta Samhita*.

1. *Karma Virudh* (incompatible due to functions)
2. *Maana Virudh* (incompatible due to quantity)
3. *Samyoga Virudh* (incompatible due to combination)
4. *Rasa Virudh* (incompatible due to taste)

Kala Virudh Ahaara

The importance of food intake with respect to climacteric change has been mentioned in various Ayurvedic literatures. *Charak Samhita* clearly explains that the intake of *Sheeta* (cold) and *Ruksha* (dry) food products in *Sheeta Kala* (winter season) and the *Ushna* (hot), *Teekshana* (bitter) and *Katu* (astringent) food products in *Ushana Kaala* (summer) is *Kala Virudh Ahaara*.^[7] The intake of incompatible diet may lead to unhealthy state and can cause deteriorative effects on individual's physiological metabolism.

Sushruta Samhita also mentions that one should consume diet which has *Guna* (qualities) opposite of the respective season.^[8]

Kala Virudh Ahaara for different seasons

The *Kala Virudh Ahaara* in different seasons has been mentioned in *Ritucharya*^[9] (Seasonal regimen)

1. Shishir Ritu (Winter Season)

Food items having predominant *Katu* (pungent), *Tikta* (bitter), and *Kashaya* (astringent) *Rasa* should be prevented. *Laghu* (light) and *Shita* (cold) foods are prohibited in *Shishir Ritu* (Winter Season). If such foods are taken in winter season it can lead to incompatibility of food with respect to season.

2. Vasanta (Spring)

Foodstuffs which are tough to digest are to be avoided. The foods which are *Sheeta* (cold), *Snigdha* (viscous), *Guru* (heavy), *Amla* (sour), *Madhura* (sweet) should not be favored. New grains, curd, cold drinks, and so on, are also advised to be prohibited.

3. Grishma (summer)

Lavana (salt) and food with *Katu* (pungent) and *Amla* (sour) taste and *Ushna* (warm) foods are to be avoided in Grishma ritu.

4. Varsha (monsoon)

The consumption of river water, churned preparations with more water, too much liquid and wine are to be shunned. The foods, which are heavy and tough to digest, like meat, etc., are forbidden.

5. Sharad (autumn)

The foods that are *Ushna* (Hot), *Tikta* (bitter), *Madhura* (sweet), and *Kashaya* (astringent) should be avoided. Fat, oils, meat of water animals, curds, etc., should be prohibited during this season.

6. Hemanta (late autumn)

The foods that aggravate *Vata Dosha*, such as *Laghu* (light), *Sheeta* (cold), and *Ruksha* (dry foods) are to be avoided. The intake of cold drinks is also prohibited.

Modern Science also mentions that seasonal changes have a huge impact on our metabolism. Our body can adapt quickly to seasonal variations if our diet is modified accordingly. In view of that, as environmental temperature is higher in summers, there is a lot loss of water and electrolytes through sweat from the body. So one must consume more water and electrolytes and should avoid hot and spicy foods to maintain fluid balance and body temperature.^[10]

Similarly intake of cold foods should be avoided in winter. One should consume more fat rich diet and hot foods to keep the body warmer. It may be linked to the fact that environmental factors lead to body susceptibility to different infections. The seasonal changes in immune functions are likely to be controlled by the changes and duration of melatonin secretion. This fact may account for the cyclic pattern symptom manifestation shown by infectious diseases, which become more pronounced at specific times of the year.^[11] A study on animals with seasonal changes revealed the effects of photoperiod on immune function and hormone synthesis which

influence the development of opportunistic disease.^[12]

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda is the science of health in which various literatures elaborate the dos and don'ts in a regimen. The correct knowledge about these do's and don'ts can protect us from various infections. *Virudh Ahaara* is elaborately mentioned in *Charaka samhita* in which *Kala Virudh Ahaara* is an important point. The environmental factors like temperature, humidity, land, water etc. influence physiology of human body. These environmental factors keep altering with time; thus the body needs to adapt itself according to different seasons. The intake of a proper seasonal diet regimen along with the avoidance of *Virudh Ahara* is important. Seasons influence a person's health and immune system in different ways.

People's diet has changed over the centuries. Now diet is more taste friendly rather than health-friendly. It can be also seen that people do not care about the seasons. Most of the people are ignorant of the prohibited incompatible foods and consume food according to their tastes. Thus they fall prey to many infections and health disorders. Whenever there is fluctuation in season, many people experience various disorders like heat strokes in summers, common cold, and cough in winters etc. The reason behind may be linked to intake of *Kala Virudh Ahaara* (food incompatibility with respect to time).

If we do not follow dietary regimen and consume incompatible foods, it will affect our body and mind that can lead to *Dosha Vaishamyā*. In the later stages, these imbalances can lead to various types of lifestyle disorders. So for preventing these disorders, the best way is to understand *Virudh Ahara* [food incompatibility according to seasons]. Growing public awareness about *Virudh Ahara* may help obstruct the rapid increase in the incidence of seasonal diseases.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it is clear that as environmental changes affects body metabolism, the knowledge about food incompatibility is must. The

body becomes prone to diseases when seasons change. Ayurveda has provided different seasonal regimens where the incompatible foods in different seasons are also mentioned. To maintain a constant healthy body, one must avoid *Kala Virudh Ahaara* as incompatible food can lead to various health manifestations.

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