



QUALITIES OF ALCOHOL MENTIONED IN ĀYURVED

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Abstract

Āyurved is the ancient science of life. Purpose of Āyurved is to cure the disease of patient and to maintain the health of healthy person. Āyurved contains eight sub-branches hence it is called *Aṣṭāṅg āyurved*. Vāgbhaṭa is one of the scholars of *āyurved*. He wrote *Aṣṭāṅghṛday*. 5th chapter of this book named *dravadravvyavijñyaniya* focuses on all liquid state food. That is knowledge of liquid substances. Along with water, milk, oil, honey Vāgbhaṭa also explains characteristics of wine with its types and benefits in chapter *madyavarga* that is group of alcoholic beverages. This paper tries to find out the characteristics of alcohol mentioned in *Aṣṭāṅghṛday*.

Keywords: Āyurved, *Aṣṭāṅghṛday*, *madyavarga*, alcoholic beverages

Introduction:

Āyurved is known as the science of living a healthy disease-free life. Āyu means life and *veda* stands for knowledge, science. Unity of body and soul is considered *asāyu*, life. And the science which deals with *āyuis* called *āyurved*. (1) Thus Āyurved is the ancient science of life. According to the Suśrut purpose of Āyurved is to cure the disease of patient and to maintain the health of healthy person. (2). Life is the medium for religion, wealth, happiness. So the person who wants healthy life must respect the teachings of *āyurved*. (3) Āyurved is the *upved* of Atharvaved. Tradition believes that lord *brahmā* created *āyurved*. Mahārṣi Bhāradvāja learned it from *brahmā*. Aacārya Suśrut, Aacārya Carak and Aacārya Vāgbhaṭa spread it to

the common people. Āyurved contains eight sub-branches hence it is called *Aṣṭāṅgāyurved*. Eight branches are as below.

- Kāyā-cikitsā - Internal Medicine
- Śalyacikitsā - Surgery
- Balacikitsā - Pediatrics
- Grahacikitsā- Bhūtavidyā - Psychiatry
- Urdhvangacikitsā-Treatment of eyes, ears, nose, throat and head
- Damstracikitsā- AgadTantra - Toxicology
- Jaracikitsā- Rasāyana- Gerontology
- Vrīshyacikitsā- vajikarāṇa- Aphrodisiacs

Along with all these, *āyurved* deals with concept of ideal health, effects of climate on human body, precautions of diseases, ideal diet, ideal daily routine etc.

Vāgbhaṭa is one of the scholars of *āyurved*. He was born in Sindha. Avlokita, a Buddhist monk was his father who taught him *āyurved*. Vāgbhaṭa wrote *Aṣṭāṅghṛday*. It includes eight branches of *āyurved*. There are sections on personal hygiene, the causes of illness, types and classification of medicine. 5th chapter of this book named *dravadravvyavijñyaniya* focuses on all liquid state food. That is knowledge of liquid substances. Along with water, milk, oil, honey Vāgbhaṭa also explains characteristics of wine with its types and benefits in chapter *madyavarga* that is group of alcoholic beverages. This paper tries to find out the characteristics of alcohol mentioned in *Aṣṭāṅghṛday*.

At the beginning of *madyavarga* Vāgbhaṭa mentioned common qualities of group of alcoholic beverages (4). Alcoholic beverages increase the appetite and perception of taste. Gives Satiety and nourishes the body. They are having sweet, bitter, pungent, sour and astringent in taste;

sharp, dry, light and mobile; hot in potency and become sour at the end of digestion, imparts pleasant voice, good health, intelligence and complexion to the skin. It is beneficial for both the conditions such as sleeplessness and excessive sleep.

Vitiates *pitta* and *raktadosa*. Judicious intake of alcoholic beverages moulds the lean persons as stout and vice versa. Cleans the body channels and mitigates *vāta* and *kaphadosa*. Consumption of alcohol as per the guidelines given in the classics bestows all these benefits; otherwise it acts as a poison.

New and old wine

Fresh alcohols are not easy to digest and increase all the three *doṣas*, whereas old wines are having exactly opposite qualities, that means they are easy to digest and decreases the vitiated *tridoṣas*.

With all these benefits Vāgbhata also mentions the disadvantages of over and improper consumption of alcohol.

Contraindications

Alcoholic drinks should not be taken, those who are consuming hot substances along with hot comforts. Alcoholic drinks should not be taken by persons if they are suffering from diarrhea or they had undergone purgative therapy. It is also contraindicated when the individuals are suffering from hunger. Wines, which are very strong or very weak, and are very thin or turbid and spoiled, should not be used for drinking.

Types of alcohol mentioned in Aṣṭāṅghṛday.

Surā (Beer):

Surā is having sneha and guru gunas. It is indicated in gulma, udara, arsas, grahani and sosa. It is useful to mitigate vata. It increases medas, rakta, stanya, mutra and kapha.

Varunisurā:

Varum is having similar qualities to that of Surā. In addition to the above, it is having laghu and Tiksnagunas. It gives strength to the heart. It is useful to relieve *sula*, *kasa*, *chardi*, *swasa*, *vibandha*, *adhmana* and *pinasa*

Vibhitaka Surā:

Vibhitaki Surā is not causing severe toxicity. It is light and wholesome. It is not so harmful in the conditions like *vrana*, *pandu*, *kustha* etc. as that of other alcoholic preparations.

Yava Surā:

Yava Surā (alcohol prepared from barley) is having guru and *ruksaguna*. It aggravates all the three *doṣas* and causes constipation.

Arista (Fermented decoctions):

Generally arista is having similar properties of the drugs, which are used for their preparation. Hence arista is superior in quality among other types of alcoholic preparations.

They are useful in the management of *grahanl- roga*, *pandu*, *kuṣṭha*, *arsas*, *sopha*, *sosa*, *udara*, *jwara*, *gulma*, *kimian d p llha*. They are having *kaṣāya*, *katurasasand* aggravate *vata doṣa*.

Mardvika (Wine prepared from grapes):

Mardvika Surā (alcohol prepared from *drakṣa*) is having *madhurarasa*, *lekhana* & *saraguna* and slightly *usnavirya*. It is good for the heart. It increases pitta and vata slightly. It is indicated in *pandu*, *meha*, *arsasand k rmi*.

Kharjura (Wine prepared from dates):

Kharjura Surā (alcohol prepared from dates) is inferior to mardvika Surā in its properties. It is also having guru *gunānd* aggravates *vāta*.

Sarkara (Wine prepared from sugar):

Sarkara Surā (alcohol prepared from sugar) is having *madhura rasa* and *laghuguna*. It contains pleasant smell and is wholesome for the heart. It is not so toxic.

Gouda (Wine prepared from molasses):

Gouda Surā (alcohol prepared from guda/jaggary) is useful for the proper elimination of urine, faeces and flatus from the body. It also gives satiation and increases the power of digestion.

Sidhu (Wine of sugarcane juice):

Diseases caused due to excessive oblation and due to the vitiation of *kapha*, *medoroga*, *sopha*, *udarāndarsas*.

Sidhu is of two types:

1. Prepared by boiling sugarcane juice (*pakva rasa*).

2. without boiling sugarcane juice (*sitarasa*).

Out of these two varieties *pakva rasa* is superior to *śita rasa* in its quality.

Mādhvasava (Wine prepared from honey):

Mādhvasava (alcohol prepared from honey) is having *tiksnagunā* and is useful to break the solidified materials like *kapha*, *mala* etc. in the body. It is indicated in the management of *prameha*, *pinasānkasa*.

Sukta (Wine prepared from tubers):

Sukta(alcohol prepared from tubers) increases the moisture of *rakta, pitta and kapha*. It is useful for the downward movement of vata. It contains *āmla rasa* and *usna, tiksna, ruksaandsaragunas*. It is wholesome to the heart and increases the perception of the taste. It also increases the power of digestion. It is cold in touch. It is indicated in the management of *panduroga, netraroga and krmiroga*. Suraprepared from *guda, ikSurāsa, madya and mardwika* are superior to one another and easy to digest in their succeeding order.

Alcohols prepared from tubers, roots and fruits are also having similar properties of those from which they are being prepared.

Sandaki:

Sandaki(fried paddy spicy balls, dried and deep fried in oil) as well as sukta, which becomes sour by preserving certain time, are useful to increase the perception of taste and also easy to digest.

Dhanyamla:

Dhanyamla—an alcoholic preparation prepared by fermenting the water in which rice and other grains are cooked is having *tiksna, laghuguna and usnavirya*. It acts as a purgative. It increases pitta. It is cold to touch. It is useful to relieve fatigue and exhaustion. It increases the perception of taste as well as power of digestion. It is useful in the management of pain in the urinary bladder. Dhanyamla is the best drug useful for conducting *asthapanavasti*. It is good for heart. It is useful to mitigate *vāta and kapha*. *Souvlraka* and *tusodaka* also possess similar properties of *dhanyamla*. Both of them are useful for the management of *krmiroga, hrdroga, gulma, arsa and panduroga*. They are prepared from *dehusked* barley and barley grains with husk respectively. These are the qualities types and characteristics explain by *Vāgbhāta* in *Aṣṭāṅghṛday*. Now let us see what modern science says about alcohol.

Throughout the 10,000 or so years that humans have been drinking fermented beverages,

BEER

1. Regulates cholesterol
2. Boosts brain power
3. Soothes a cold
4. Contains fibre and B vitamins
5. Prevents kidney stones
6. Strengthens bones

VODKA

1. Aids weight loss
2. Regulates blood pressure
3. Relieves stress
4. Lowers fever
5. Improves digestion
6. Soothes toothaches

they've also been arguing about their merits and demerits. The debate still simmers today, with a lively back-and-forth over whether alcohol is good or bad for human beings. It's safe to say that alcohol is both a tonic and a poison. The difference lies mostly in the dose. Moderate drinking seems to be good for the heart and circulatory system, and probably protects against type 2 diabetes and gallstones. Heavy drinking is a major cause of preventable death in most countries. In the U.S., alcohol is implicated in about half of fatal traffic accidents. Heavy drinking can damage the liver and heart, harm an unborn child, increase the chances of developing breast and some other cancers, contribute to depression and violence, and interfere with relationships. Part of a national 1985 health interview survey showed that moderate drinkers were more likely than non-drinkers or heavy drinkers to be at a healthy weight, to get seven to eight hours of sleep a night, and to exercise regularly. Researchers have statistically accounted for such confounders, and they do not come close to accounting for the relationship between alcohol and heart disease. This, plus the clearly beneficial effects of alcohol on cardiovascular risk factors, makes a compelling case that alcohol itself, when used in moderation, reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease.

The production of alcohol results from a process of fermentation, in which water and yeast act on the various sugars of various types of grains, vegetables and fruit. A glass of red could help you with your weight loss efforts. A study from Oregon State University revealed that the dark red grapes found in some types of red wine can help people manage obesity and a metabolic fatty liver, due to a chemical called *elegiac acid*. This chemical slows down the growth of fat cells and stops new ones from being created, which boosts the metabolism of fatty acids in liver cells

WHISKEY

1. Boosts brain power
2. Protects your heart
3. Prevents cancer
4. Boosts immunity
5. Prevents diabetes
6. Helps weight loss

RUM

1. contains medicinal properties
2. Increases longevity
3. Prevents muscle and bone problems
4. Treats the common cold

TEQUILA

1. Lowers your blood sugar levels
2. Regulates cholesterol
3. Contains prebiotics and probiotics
4. Prevents diseases

GIN

1. Contains a number of medicinal ingredients
2. Prevents malaria
3. Reduces the inflammation associated with arthritis
4. Fights infections
5. Keeps your skin healthy
6. Improves digestion
7. Promotes weight loss

WINE

1. Keeps you young
2. Prevents cancer
3. Reduces the risk of depression
4. Keeps your heart healthy
5. Protects your memory
6. Helps you live longer

BRENDY

1. Improves heart health
2. Slows down ageing
3. Reduces the risk of cancer
4. Soothes colds and coughs
5. Boosts immunity

CHAMPAGNE

1. Enables weight loss
2. Improves memory
3. Boosts heart health

CIDER

1. Contains plenty of antioxidants
2. Makes for a good gluten-free option

Observation and conclusion

At the same time when Aṣṭāṅghṛdaya was written, religion had major impact on society. Religious books were agents the consumption of alcohol and drinking alcohol was considered as one of the greatest sin. Still the scholars of *āyurved* have mentioned the benefits of alcohol. The objective outlook and scientific view of *āyurved* scholars can be seen through their thoughts.

Scholars of *āyurved* have identified and classified the types of alcohol and they have knowledge about the fermentation of different types of alcohol.

Similarities can be found between qualities and characteristics of alcohol mentioned by *āyurved* and modern science.

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3. आयुः कामायमानेन धर्मार्थसुखसाधनम्। आयुर्वेदोपदेशेषु विधेयः परमादरः ॥
4. दीपनं रोचनं मृदंती क्षणोष्णं तुष्टिपुष्टिदम्
सस्वादुत्तक्तकटुकमम्लपाकरसंसारम्
सकषायं स्वरारोग्यप्रतिभावर्णकृत्त्वु

नष्टनिद्रा अतिनिद्रेभ्यो हितपित्तस्रदूषणम्
कृशस्थूलहितरूक्षं सूक्ष्मं स्रोतोविशोधनम्
वातश्लेष्महरं युक्त्या पीतं विषवत् अन्यथा

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