



## THE MILK TALE IN AYURVEDA

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### THE VEDA BACKDROP OF LIFE

In ancient India, as also now, most of the practices, customs, the so-called superstitions, grandmother's remedies all had their origin in **the vedAs**. For, all ancient Indian knowledge systems were organized so as to enable society to make use of and benefit from this eternal knowledge. Thus, when we examine the ancient texts and treatises, we find that the *smRtis*, the *purANAs* and the *itihAsa* are all an elaboration of the *vedAs* and specifically written to enable easier comprehension. However despite these different treatises, people still did not grasp many of these truths and realities, and yet continued to practise and apply the dictates in their day to day life. This is called **AcAra** which is the practical application of the *vedAs*. Thus all the customs and rituals that are followed traditionally can trace their origin right back to the *vedAs*.

### THE AYURVEDA MILIEU

The same applies to Ayurveda which is also sometimes referred to as the fifth vedA. There were **two streams of knowledge** transfer in those days – the **oral** and the **written** stream. Over the centuries, the written stream became the organized form of knowledge transfer and systems like Ayurveda, Siddha and other traditional medical knowledge systems became codified and organized. The oral stream continued to flourish where knowledge was transferred from father to son, teacher to student,

mother to daughter and so on; however after a point, on many occasions in this lineage, the knowledge of the practice was what was transferred without communicating the rationale or logic behind it.

Still, the practitioners continued to be faithful to the practice and it continued to work for them. Thus these practices continue till date, and for the interested, the rationale or **logic** behind these practices can invariably be found in the texts of Ayurveda or the vedAs.

Hence we should not dismiss practices that we do not understand to be mere superstition. In this background, let us go on to the **understanding of Milk in ancient India.**

#### **OF MILK & AYURVEDA**

**Ayurveda** emphatically states that milk can be consumed by all healthy individuals; in fact, it goes one step further and says that **everyone should take milk**. Thus, a person who is unable to consume milk can be deemed to be unhealthy or diseased and needs to take treatment to flush out the problem so that he or she can again begin to consume milk. There is absolutely no doubt that human beings should drink milk on a regular basis. This is confirmed by the following verses which mean to state the importance of drinking milk regularly:

*Milk is beneficial for healthy individuals; by drinking milk one does not get diseases; hence there is no better aphrodisiac than milk; there is no better life -prolonger than milk.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> तत्स्वस्थवृत्तौ ज हितां वदन्ति ।  
क्षीरं सर्वेषां देहिनां चानुशेते क्षीरं पिबन्तं च न रोग एति ।।  
क्षीरात् परं नान्यदिहास्ति वृष्यं क्षीरात् परं नास्ति च जीवनीयम् । Ka.Ka. 7/90

*The **regular intake** of milk will pacify all diseases and also slow down the ageing process.<sup>ii</sup>*

*According to Ayurveda, milk is **prescribed therapeutically** especially for people who underwent vamana, virecana and vasti; those who are suffering from mental diseases, kSaya, mUrcchA, bhrama, grahaNi, pANDuroga, dAha, tRSNA, hRdroga, udarazUla, udAvarta, gulma, vastiroga, zrama, klama, garbhasrAva, kSatakSINa; and for bAla, vRddha and those tired due to exertion of various types.*

Thus if you go back to your childhood days and try to analyze the compulsion behind your grandmother's insistence that you drink a glass of milk every morning and every night, it is only because she was quite aware that milk is the one substance that can be termed **universally healthy** and which every individual needs to take. This is especially so, in the case of cow's milk which possesses properties very similar to the **ojas or the energy system** of the body; which sustains or destroys the body based on its nourishment or neglect.

### **THE OJAS FACTOR**

Cow's milk instantly nourishes the **ojas** owing to its similarity and this explains why milk was the universal answer in varied situations – after a day at school when the child returns home tired; before going to play; after returning from play; after a day of hard work; when one feels weak; in all the above situations, any Indian household would instantly resort to a glass of warm milk as the first remedy. For, it is the **ojas** that is depleted in all these instances, and as is repeatedly emphasized, milk recreates **ojas** instantly.

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<sup>ii</sup> जरासमस्तरोगाणां शान्तिकृत्सेविनां सदा ।

भावप्रकाश दुग्धवर्गः 8

There is one more property of milk which needs to be highlighted here, namely the fact that it is the best among those which invigorate the body i.e. it is ***jIvanIya*** – which makes one really live, or bestows one with the energy to live. These two properties, by themselves, make the consumption of milk indispensable; if one is allergic to milk, it helps one to understand that one is not really in good health and should immediately take the necessary corrective measures.

### **AYURVEDA TEXTS SAY...**

The properties of the **milk of eight living beings** are described in Ayurveda texts, namely the milk of cow, she-buffalo, she-goat, she-camel, human, she-sheep, she-elephant and single-hoofed animals like horse, donkey etc. Each one of them has their **characteristic properties** and is to be consumed according to situation. For example, the milk of the goat is most similar to the human milk and hence it is referred to as the best substitute for mother's milk (where mother's milk is not copious or in sufficient quantity or of good quality) for the young baby. On closer observation, this practice continues to this date in many Indian villages.

Similarly, in some parts of Tamil Nadu, there exists a practice of drinking the milk of a donkey which is specifically said to be *zAkhaVAtahara* which could explain the fact that most of these people do not develop aches and pains in the joints, and children do not become prone to conditions like polio. The intake of camel's milk in the deserts of Rajasthan would be ideal to prevent conditions like salt depletion, as it, unlike other varieties of milk, is a little salty in taste. Buffalo's milk is deemed to be excellent in conditions of sleeplessness provided one can digest it.

Actually, the milk of different animals is endowed with a set of different properties. It is the cumulative effect of these properties that is seen in people in different age groups, living in different climatic zones in different times of the year, having different constitutions, different diet patterns and accustomed to different types of food and lifestyle – all these **variable factors** need to be considered before deciding the **type of milk** that is best suited for the particular individual. Thus while there is no doubt whatsoever that milk **MUST** be consumed by all individuals irrespective of the above

mentioned variables, one must consider the above factors and then decide the type of milk best suited to one's individual need at a given time.

The general “**allergies**” attributed to intake of milk, like indigestion, gas, bloated feeling etc can be caused even by drinking plain water. If the digestive power is good, milk will only nourish.

### **AYURVEDA ON & IN COW'S MILK**

Ayurveda goes on to study the properties of cow's milk in the following **different stages**:

- a) directly from the cow's udder
- b) milk consumed after some time without boiling it
- c) milk which is boiled and consumed warm
- d) milk which is boiled and consumed cold
- e) milk to which water has been added in varying proportions
- f) milk from different varieties of cow – black coloured, cream coloured, variegated coloured, red coloured and white coloured
- g) milk of cows based on their diet patterns
- h) milk of the cow which has been milked in the morning as against the cow which has been milked in the evening
- i) milk which is consumed in the morning, afternoon, evening or night
- j) milk which is consumed by different age groups

Each of the above factors, singly and in combination, creates a different effect on the individual who drinks the milk. To briefly explain the properties of milk in each of the above situations:

**Warm fresh milk** directly taken from the cow's udder is like nectar<sup>iii</sup>. If the milk is consumed after some time **without boiling**, it is difficult to digest; if **boiled** properly,

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<sup>iii</sup> धारोष्णमृतोपमम् ।

it is easily digestible. Milk taken **warm after boiling**, helps to destroy *kapha* and *vAta*, while **milk taken cold** after boiling destroys *pitta*.

Milk to which **water** has been added in the ratio of 2:1 is very easy to digest. If water is added to milk in the ratio of 1:4 and then boiled and consumed, this milk can be taken in many disease conditions, and it gives strength and energy, as also it increases the *ojas*.



The milk drawn from a black **coloured cow** is the best and has many beneficial properties, the primary one being that it destroys all the three *doSAs*. The milk drawn from a cream coloured cow destroys *vAta* and *pitta*, while that from a red coloured cow quells only *vAta*. Milk drawn from a cow of many colours also quells only *vAta* while the milk from a white coloured cow actually creates *kapha* and is difficult to digest.

A study conducted in US showed that cows grazing pastures produce five times more of s cancer-fighting compound – conjugated linoleic acid – than cows that feed on conventional diets.

Milk drunk in the **morning** gives strength and bulk and also stokes the digestive fire; milk drunk in the **middle of the day** also gives strength, increases appetite and is useful in conditions of difficult urination, stones in the kidney, bladder etc.; milk consumed at **night** quells all the *doSAs*.

In **children**, milk increases the digestive fire and makes way for good digestion; and as one approaches **old age**, consumption of milk increases the sexual vigor.

When the different types of **after-drink** (liquids to be taken after food) are described, milk is mentioned as the best after-drink after eating rice; it is also said that for children as well as aged, and those who are debilitated with fasting, long walk, speaking, sexual intercourse and exercise, milk should be consumed to quickly regain vigor.

The above is a brief description of the **actions of milk in different conditions**. It can thus be seen that different variables affect the quality and hence one should take all this into consideration while determining the type of milk to be consumed, quantity of milk to be drunk; time of the day or night when to consume milk etc. This effect of variables is not only on milk; they affect all our food and drink and hence there *is no fixed action* for any food substance. There is a continuing **dynamism** which requires the consumer to be constantly aware of one's individual needs and to act accordingly.

#### POINTS OF VIEW ON MILK

*Generally all milk is madhura in rasa and pAka; snigdha, ojasya and dhAtuvardhana; vAtapittahara, vRSya and zleSmala; guru and zItala<sup>iv</sup>.*

<sup>iv</sup> स्वादुपाकरसं स्निग्धमोजस्यं धातुवर्धनम् ।  
वातपित्तहरं वृष्यं श्लेष्मलं गुरु शीतलं ।।

प्रायः पयः

A.S.Su. 6/51

Ayurveda considers a substance from several different angles before concluding the nature of its action in a given circumstance. Thus every substance is studied from the point of view of **rasa** (or its composite taste before digestion); **guNa** (or its properties in terms of density, viscosity and 18 such other factors); **vlrya** (its potency) and **vipAka** (its primary property (composite taste) after digestion); and composite action on the **doSAs** and disease. Each of the above have their role to play in creating health or ill-health, and each of them work in different circumstances based on the most favourable factor. Thus when the characteristic properties of a substance are described, it takes into account all these above factors and then stresses upon the special root-factor, eliminating factor or the disease-eliminating factor of the particular substance.

Hence the above verse clearly elucidates the fact that milk is primarily quelling the increased **vAta** and **pitta** and at the same time increasing the **kapha**; it is **ojasya** as explained earlier; it is **vRSya** or works as an aphrodisiac.

*Cow's milk has got ten **properties** namely svAdu, zIta, mRdu, snigdha, bahala, zlakSNa, pichchila, guru, manda and prasanna. Thus it increases the ojas having the same properties due to its similarity. Hence milk has been said as the best one among jIvanIya dravyAs and as rasAyana.<sup>v</sup>*

The above verse only confirms what is given previously as the general properties of milk. Here it is further affirmed that cow's milk is the best one among the different types of milk. Though all milk increases **ojas**, cow's milk is specifically recommended for this; further it is said to be the best among the **rasAyanAs**.

<sup>v</sup> स्वादु शीतं मृदु स्निग्धं बहलं श्लक्ष्णपिच्छिलम् ।  
गुरु मन्दं प्रसन्नं च गव्यं दशगुणं पयः ॥  
तदेवगुणमेवौजः सामान्यादभिवर्धयेत् ।  
प्रवरं जीवनीयानां क्षीरमुक्तं रसायनम् ॥

Ch.Su. 27/217

What is a *rasAyana*?

It is a substance which enables one to lead a **long and healthy life**, endows one with good memory and intellect, keeps one young and healthy, improves one's communication skills as also one's prowess in all activities and improves one's strength and complexion. Thus this is a very special group of substances which if consumed in the right manner, in the appropriate combination and according to the given dictates, will endow one with all the above qualities. And it is in this special group that milk has been given a very special place.

### HOW SHOULD COW'S MILK BE CONSUMED?

Generally, milk is said to have the **best properties** immediately after taking from the cow's udder. This milk, which is slightly warm, is especially good for bringing down the increased *vAta*. Thus it is said that **warm fresh milk** is the equivalent of nectar.

If taken later, milk should be boiled and then taken lukewarm; **it should never be taken cold** for it is already having the *zIta guna* (or cold property) and if taken cold, some of its properties are rendered inactive. Thus Ayurveda clearly says that milk should be taken warm as is the age-old practice in many Indian villages. Experience also suggests that the present day problem of **lactose intolerance** in many western countries can mostly be overcome by taking warm milk instead of cold milk as is the common practice.

Milk can be drunk in the early part of the **day**, the middle part of the day or the later part of the day (night). However at **night**, it should not be drunk after intake of food for it is difficult to digest. In case it is to be consumed, the food should be taken early and only after its digestion, should milk be taken.

Milk drawn from the cow, in the **early morning** is more difficult to digest as compared to the milk which is drawn in the **late evening**. This is primarily because the cow has been inactive all night and this vests the morning milk with heaviness whereas during the day, the cow is active and this makes the evening milk easier to digest. This may also explain why in certain parts of Andhra Pradesh (and also in other parts of India), the morning milk is used mainly for the rituals in the temples and it is only the evening milk that is consumed.

Similarly the quality of the milk also varies according to the **lifestyle of the animal** – that which stays in the shed will yield heavy milk, while that which grazes yields lighter milk.

Milk should **never be taken with sour substances or with salt**, for in combination, it works like poison. Thus a milk derivative like *panneer* which is so commonly used in India, may not be really healthy and can cause untoward problems like loss of vigor, strength, memory, sense perceptions and intellect, to name just a few – these problems occur only if it is not digested properly. It is not that these problems occur immediately; it is the continued, improper use of milk over a period of time that causes such problems. It may however be mentioned here that the text also says that for one with very good digestive capacity or for one who is naturally healthy, this may not be applicable.

The only people **who should not be taking milk** are those who are suffering from conditions like fresh fever, weak digestion, problems due to Ama, certain skin conditions, certain painful conditions of the intestine, increase of *kapha*, cough, loose bowel movements and intestinal worms – In such conditions, milk should not be taken. Though it is indicated in hRdroga, it is not good in all types of hRdroga. It is good only in vAtika hRdroga and that too when the digestive strength is good. It should be avoided in other types of hRdroga.

This is a brief description of milk in general, and cow's milk in particular.

## THERAPEUTIC PROPERTIES OF COW'S MILK

Apart from the **preventive** and **promotive** properties of cow's milk as mentioned above, it is also highly **curative**.

*Cow's milk is kshatakshinahita, medhya, balya, stanyakara, sara; cures zrama, bhrama, mada, alakSml, zvAsa, kAsa, atitRTkSudha, jIrNajvara, mUtrakrchhra and raktapitta.<sup>vi</sup>*

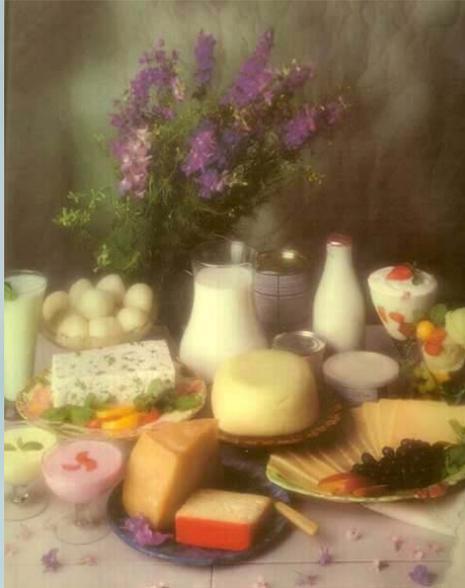
Cow's milk may be consumed in conditions of wasting due to injury, in memory loss, in loss of strength, in absence/decrease of breast milk; it actually destroys conditions of fatigue, loss of consciousness, breathlessness/asthma, cough, excessive thirst and hunger, blockage of urine flow and haemorrhage – both external and internal. Actually in most of the above conditions, milk is processed with other herbs based on the specific condition and then given to the patient. In almost all conditions, after subsiding of the main problem, cow's milk is given to promote immunity, strength and energy. Again it all depends on the individual patient and the variables affecting him or her.

Milk is also used as an apt **medium for administration** of various medicines. Certain medicines like Chyavanaprasam give a better result when the dose is followed by a cup of warm milk. In pitta conditions, hot seasons and warm places, certain decoctions are prepared in milk, to cope better.

<sup>vi</sup> क्षतक्षीणहितं मेध्यं बल्यं स्तन्यकरं सरम् ।।  
श्रमभ्रममदालक्ष्मीश्वासकासातितृट्क्षुधः ।  
जीर्णज्वरं मूत्रकृच्छ्रं रक्तपित्तं च नाशयेत् ।।

A.S.Su. 6/52-53

## MILK PRODUCTS



**Ayurveda** does not look at milk products as an extension of milk or as a method to prolong the life of milk. Ayurveda ascribes specific **properties** to different milk products which can be quite different from the properties of milk – thus, while milk has got *seeta veerya* or is cold in potency, curds and buttermilk have *usna veerya* or are hot in potency; while milk has got *sara* property or a laxative effect, curds and butter have got *grahi* properties or a constipating effect. Hence it is important that milk products are not treated as an extension of milk; each of them have their characteristic properties and usages based on specific need.

Three milk products are of especially great interest – namely curds or yoghurt, buttermilk and ghee or clarified butter.

### 1. Curds

*Dadhi is amla in both rasa and pAka; it is grAhi, guru, uSNa and vAtahara; produces medas, zукра, bala, zleSma, pitta, rakta, agni and zopha; helps for good taste and so ideal in aruci, viSamajvara preceeded by rigors, pInasa and mUtrakRchhra; after removing its fat, it is useful in grahaNi disorders.*

*It should not be taken at night, made hot, in vasanta, grISma and zarat Rtus without the addition of soup of green gram (mudgasUpa), honey, ghee, sugar candy or Amalaka fruits; nor should it be eaten daily, nor the manda; otherwise there will be jvara, raktapitta, visarpa, kuSTha and pANDu.<sup>vii</sup>*

Curds or yoghurt has many good **properties** as elucidated above. It helps to increase adipose tissue, semen, strength, pitta, blood, digestive fire. Some of its negative properties are that it helps to put on weight if consumed wrongly and if not digested properly; it is difficult to digest, constipating and is hot in potency. The improper use of curds leads to the occurrence of fever, haemorrhage, skin diseases like ersyepelas, leprosy etc. and anaemia.

Thus, though curds are consumed in great quantities all over India, it is a fact that Ayurveda does not really recommend the use of curds unless the individual has the **digestive capacity** necessary to digest curds. Curds are extremely difficult to digest and quite slimy by its very nature. If it is not digested properly, it can create blockages in the different channels like the arteries, the veins etc.

It is commonly thought that curds cool the system; its actual effect is just the opposite in that it is **heat-producing** and hence its intake is specifically forbidden in the **seasons** – spring, summer and autumn. Its usage is also prohibited at **night**, in view of the fact that it cannot be digested easily.

<sup>vii</sup> अम्लपाकरसं ग्राहि गुरुष्णं दधि वातजित् ।  
मेदःशुक्रबलश्लेष्मपित्तरक्ताग्निशोफकृत् ॥  
रोचिष्णु शस्तमरुचौ शीतके विष्मज्वरे ।  
पीनसे मूत्रकृच्छ्रे च रूक्षं तु ग्रहणीगदे ॥  
नैवाद्यान्निशि नैवोष्णं वसन्तोष्णशरत्सु न ।  
नामुद्गसूपं नाक्षौद्रं नाघृतं नासितोपलम् ॥  
न चानामलकं नापि नित्यं नो मन्दमन्यथा ।  
ज्वरासृक्पित्तवीसर्पकुष्ठपाण्ड्वामयप्रदम् ॥

A.S.Su. 6/62-65

Many people will not agree with the above view and may actually dispute the fact that **regular consumption** of curds is harmful to the body. But Ayurveda clearly states that one of the characteristic properties of curds is *zophakara* – which means it creates swelling. This can be interpreted differently, but it also gives good food for thought – Could the excessive use of curds (in different forms and combinations) in many parts of India be the cause for the weight (and associated) problems that many people in these states experience? Further, for those with sedentary lifestyles, it certainly fits in, for there is absolutely no possibility for the curds to get digested.

## 2. Buttermilk

If one were to examine the people of Kerala, though they consume curds, the preference there is for buttermilk. And further, the buttermilk is invariably lightly heated after adding a pinch of turmeric, coriander leaves/curry leaves, ginger etc. and is consumed only with the afternoon lunch. This is the right practice, and buttermilk prepared as mentioned above is extremely good, as explained by Ayurveda:

***Un-boiled buttermilk** mitigates kapha inside the stomach but increases it in the throat.<sup>viii</sup>*

*In conditions of rhinitis, dyspnoea, cough and others, **processed buttermilk** (with spices etc.) is ideal – in fact, bland buttermilk should not be used<sup>x</sup>.*

Thus it is interesting to see how this specific dictate of Ayurveda continues to be in practice to this day. And further, whenever one is affected with conditions like cold or cough, one of the main remedies that the grandmother recommends is the intake of buttermilk as prepared above.

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<sup>viii</sup> तक्रमामे कफं कोष्ठे हन्ति कण्ठे करोति तु ।।

A.S.Su. 7/237

**Regular use** of buttermilk is best among those which cure haemorrhoids (piles), swelling and duodenal disorders.<sup>x</sup>

Buttermilk is prepared mainly in two ways:

1. By **churning the curd**, removing the butter completely from it and diluting the remaining liquid with equal quantity of water.
2. By **diluting the curd** with four times water and mixing it properly.

It is again interesting to see how two milk products like curds and buttermilk are vested with diametrically opposite properties – where curds creates swelling, buttermilk is considered as the best among those substances which cure swelling. The main **properties** of buttermilk are as follows :

*Takra is laghu, kaSAya and amla in rasa, dIpana, kaphavAtahara, and cures zopha, udara, arSa, grahaNI doSa, mUtragraha, aruci, gulma, pIha, ghRtavyApad, gara and pANDu.*<sup>xi</sup>

### 3. Ghee

Ghee or clarified butter is a substance that is used in great quantities all over India. In Kerala or Andhra Pradesh, the ghee is used at the commencement of the afternoon meal – it is taken along with rice and a pinch of salt and only after that, does the main meal commence. In the north of India, ghee is liberally spread on the *rotis* and taken; thus in some form or the other, ghee forms an important item in the Indian food habit. Yet today, it is widely believed that ghee is unhealthy and should not be taken.

<sup>ix</sup> पीनसश्वासकासादौ सिद्धमेव प्रशस्यते ।।

A.S.Su. 7/259

<sup>x</sup> तक्राभ्यासोऽर्शः श्वयथुग्रहणीदोषघृतव्यापत्प्रशमनानाम् ।।

A.S.Su. 13/4

<sup>xi</sup> तक्रं लघु कषायाम्लं दीपनं कफवातजित् ।

शोफोदरार्शोग्रहणीदोषमूत्रग्रहारुचीः ।।

गुल्मप्लीहघृतव्यापद्गरपाण्ड्वामयान् जयेत् ।

A.S.Su. 6/65-66

Ayurveda holds a different view. It upholds the practice of a **judicious intake** of ghee which actually protects the body. Ayurveda says, that even as one pours ghee into the sacrificial fire in the course of a ritual to keep the fire burning; similarly one should pour ghee into the digestive fire in the human body to keep it burning. Thus if the right quantity of ghee is taken and if it is digested properly, it keeps the digestive fire burning to enable the remaining food to be digested easily and without any problem. However if ghee is ingested in inappropriate quantities, and without consideration of one's digestive capacity, age, time of the year, time of the day etc. then it can lead to associated problems. Hence though one should certainly consume ghee, the nature and quantity of its consumption should be carefully studied based on the individual need.

If it is consumed judiciously, then ghee prolongs life, enables good digestion, endows one with intellect, memory, strength and reproductive strength, and good complexion; it is especially good for the eyes; and it protects the entire body. Thus **Ayurveda** supports the intake of ghee.

*Ghee is **best suited** for those desirous of dhl, smRti, medhA, agni, bala, Ayu, zokra and cakSuSa; for children and old people, for those desiring offspring, good complexion, softness of body (sukumAra) and good voice; for those suffering from kSata, kSINa, parisarpa, disorders of vAta and pitta, viSa, unmAda, zoSa, alakSml and jvara; it is best among all snehAs, is zIta, vayasasthApana; possesses a thousand good qualities, and does a thousand actions, when processed properly.<sup>xii</sup>*

<sup>xii</sup> शस्तं धीस्मृतिमेधाग्निबलायुःशुक्रचक्षुषाम् ।  
बालवृद्धप्रजाकान्तिसौकुमार्यस्वरार्थिनाम् ॥  
क्षतक्षीणपरीसर्पशस्त्राग्निग्लपितात्मनाम् ।  
वातपित्तविषोन्मादशोषालक्ष्मीज्वरापहम् ॥  
स्नेहानामुत्तमं शीतं वयसः स्थापनं घृतम् ।  
सहस्रवीर्यं विधिभिः शृतं कर्मसहस्रकृत् ॥

A.S.Su. 6/68-71

*Old ghee(1 – 10 years old) cures diseases such as mada, apasmAra, mUrchhA, and diseases of the ziras, karNa, akSi and yoni; it cleanses and heals ulcers; it possesses all the qualities ascribed to fresh ghee and does these functions in greater measure or more effective and hence it is also similar to nectar<sup>xiii</sup>.*

The characteristic **properties of ghee** are its ability to improve memory, digestive fire, strength, longevity of life and semen; it is also extremely good for the eyes. Its therapeutic qualities are used in conditions like wasting, fatigue, skin disorders, spread of poison within the body, mental diseases, and certain types of fever. It is the best among all uncting agents (others being oil from different sources and animal fat). The qualities of ghee get better and better the longer it is kept. Thus ghee kept for 10 years or even 100 years is of far superior therapeutic quality than fresh ghee.

#### 4. Milk Sweets

There are some traditional practices which do not necessarily have the sanction of Ayurveda and which need to be studied further- For instance, the preparation of milk sweets in certain parts of India especially in Bengal and Gujarat. Though in terms of space, the Ayurveda texts clearly refer to these regions as being ideal for the inhabitants to consume milk on a regular basis, the mode of preparation and use of milk does not find any scope for validation. Yet, the fact that they are consumed habitually may mean that another Ayurvedic principle namely *sAtmya* or getting habituated (in this case, to milk sweets) is working here due to which not much untoward effect is found. Again when these sweets are consumed in moderation, they may not be really harmful. However, only further studies will indicate whether these milk sweets are actually beneficial or harmful to the health of the individual consuming them.

<sup>xiii</sup> मदापस्मारमूर्च्छायशिरः कर्णाक्षियोनिजान् ।  
पुराणं जयति व्याधीन् व्रणशोधनरोपणम् ॥  
पूर्वोक्तांश्चाधिकान् कुर्यात् गुणांस्तदमृतोपमम् ॥

A.S.Su. 6/72

## CREAM OF THE MILK STORY

As seen here, the various milk handling customs as they existed in different parts of India are only an extension of what is advised in the Ayurvedic texts. However with the passing of times, there has been considerable change in many of these practices to the extent that these days, the milk of different animals are mixed together and preserved and distributed according to need. Ayurveda does not validate this practice – its effect on the quality of the consumed milk needs to be studied in-depth.

Generally, many Ayurveda physicians list the deterioration in the quality of milk consumed, as an important factor which contributes to several modern diseases and also the declining immunity of young children. Further, to increase the yield of milk, various unethical and unhealthy practices are resorted to wherein even the calf is deprived of its rightful share. Again, Ayurveda very clearly mentions that the cow should be milked only after the calf has had its share. It is also extremely important for the cow to be able to move freely in open spaces and graze uninhibitedly if its yield is to be copious and of good quality. This is all about good Milk as seen through the Ayurveda eye, for the well-being of humans.

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## GLOSSARY

<i>Ayu</i>	life
<i>agni</i>	digestive fire
<i>akSi</i>	eyes
<i>amla</i>	sour taste
<i>apasmAra</i>	epilepsy
<i>arza</i>	haemorrhoids (piles)
<i>aruci</i>	loss of appetite
<i>bahala</i>	copious
<i>bala</i>	strength
<i>bAla</i>	child
<i>bhrama</i>	giddiness
<i>cakSuSa</i>	good for eyesight
<i>dAha</i>	burning sensation
<i>dIpana</i>	digestive
<i>dhAtuvarhdhana</i>	that which nourishes the dhatus
<i>dhI</i>	intelligence
<i>doSAs</i>	the functional components of the body; balance (harmony) or imbalance of the three doshas are primarily responsible for health and ill health respectively; are composed of the five great elements namely earth, water, fire, air and ether; and are of 3 types – vata, pitta and kapha; the doshas are also referred to as humors and are found in each and every cell of the body
<i>dravya</i>	substance
<i>garbhasrAva</i>	miscarriage
<i>ghRtavyApat</i>	bad effects of indiscriminate use of ghee
<i>grahaNi</i>	duodenal disease
<i>grAhi</i>	binding (constipating) effect
<i>gulma</i>	gaseous and hemorrhagic lumps of abdomen
<i>guNa</i>	property
<i>guru</i>	that which is difficult to digest; or that which promotes bulk
<i>hRdroga</i>	heart diseases
<i>jIvanIya</i>	that which makes one live well
<i>jvara</i>	fever
<i>kapha</i>	composed of earth and water; forms the solid part of the body; is generally cold or cold creating and unctous
<i>karNa</i>	ears
<i>kaSAya</i>	astringent taste
<i>klama</i>	tiredness due to no obvious reason
<i>kSaya</i>	emaciating condition
<i>kSatakSINa</i>	debilitation due to trauma
<i>laghu</i>	which is easy to digest
<i>mada</i>	intoxication
<i>madhura</i>	sweet
<i>manda</i>	slow acting
<i>medha</i>	ingenuity

<i>mUrccha</i>	fainting
<i>mUtragraha</i>	suppression of urine
<i>mRdu</i>	soft
<i>ojas</i>	the most subtle end-product of the metabolic process which can also be referred to as the energy system of the body
<i>pAka</i>	after-taste
<i>pANDu</i> <i>/pANDUroga</i>	disease conditions identified by pallor
<i>picchila</i>	slimy
<i>pitta</i>	composed of fire and water; can be loosely correlated with everything that creates heat in the body; relates to internal fire, bile, body heat, digestive enzymes, physio-chemical, biological, metabolic and endocrine systems; is generally hot and unctous
<i>plIha</i>	enlargement of spleen
<i>prasanna</i>	clear (not turbid)
<i>rasa</i>	taste
<i>rasAyana</i>	rejuvenative (drug)
<i>sara</i>	laxative effect
<i>smRti</i>	memory
<i>snigdha</i>	unctous
<i>svAdu</i>	sweet
<i>tRSNa</i>	morbid thirst
<i>udara</i>	enlargement of abdomen
<i>udarazUla</i>	abdominal pain
<i>udAvarita</i>	Upward movement of vAyu, feces etc.
<i>unmAda</i>	insanity
<i>uSNa</i>	hot in potency
<i>vAta</i>	composed of air and ether; can be loosely correlated to wind, air etc.; it is that which is responsible for motion and maintains the equilibrium between pitta and kapha (inerts); is generally cold and rough (dry)
<i>vAtapittahara</i>	that which destroys vata and pitta
<i>vastiroga</i>	diseases affecting the bladder, identified by changes in urination
<i>vIrya</i>	potency
<i>vipaka</i>	after-taste
<i>vRddha</i>	aged
<i>vRSya</i>	that which makes virile
<i>yoni</i>	vaginal tract
<i>zAkhAvAtahara</i>	that which destroys the vata aggravated in the extremities
<i>zItala</i>	that which creates cold
<i>zIakSaNa</i>	smooth
<i>zIeSmala</i>	that which increases kapha
<i>zopha</i>	swelling (oedema)
<i>zoSa</i>	tuberculosis
<i>zrama</i>	tiredness due to exertion
<i>zakra</i>	reproductive principle

