food can be ground by the gastric juices. Most illness comes either from eating unwholesome food or excessive amounts of wholesome food. One of the sages quoted in the SA cautions that “He who eats little from harmful food is not as much harmed as he who eats excessively from wholesome food.” During youth, the digestive system is strong; therefore, more regular meals are the order of the day, but as the body ages, less quantity with more quality is the prescription. The heat during hot summer days weakens the digestive system necessitating smaller portions of food than that taken on cooler days. A proper guideline dictates eating only two thirds of a normal cool day’s fare on warm ones.

A person ought to exercise (by walking or by work) before dining. Loosening the belt is advisable before eating, as is sitting rather than standing. If a person must recline during a meal, he or she should do it on the left side. After the meal, a person should not promenade or tire himself out nor should he take a nap immediately. A period of two hours is needed to insure that gases do not enter the brain, causing injury. Additionally, it isn’t good to take a bath or engage in sexual intercourse too soon after eating!

People differ in their temperaments: some are hot; some are cold; and some are medium. The wise person eats those foods which are slightly opposite his own temperament. For example, a soul with a hot temperament should eat foods like fruits and most vegetables but avoid things like spices and balsam plants, while a cool-hand-luke type ought to take moderately warm foods. In the summer one should eat such items as lamb, goat, and chicken, but in winter the best foods are those that heat the body. A cold climate calls for warming foods, while a warm or tropical climate necessitates cooling ones.

The best kind of bread one can eat is a wheaten type not baked with too fine a flour; because the finer the flour, the longer the digestive process must take. The bread should contain some bran, be moderately leavened and salted, then baked in an oven. Other foods made from wheat are not advised. The best meat is from young animals, lambs, calves, etc., but intestines and the head are not good to eat. Old cows, goats, and aged cheese make bad and heavy food which taxes the bodily functions. Poultry is much easier to digest than cattle-meat and the best fowl of all is hen. One should never eat the heart of an animal or fowl because it harms the memory. The same is true of any food which has been partially eaten by a feline or a rodent.

Generally, a healthy and strong person should eat twice a day while those along in years should eat small amounts several times a day so as not to tax the stomach. If one wishes to preserve his physical condition, he or she should not eat until the stomach is emptied of the previous food. The usual time for digestion of food, for people who eat moderate foods and engage in moderate exercises, is six hours. It’s advised to refrain from eating at least one meal each week to enable the stomach to rest, thereby strengthening its digestive power. A good rule to re-