

## CONCEPTUAL REVIEW ON AGNI IN AYURVEDA

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## ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient holistic healing system that focuses on the balance of mind, body, and spirit to promote overall health and well-being. The majority of diseases we are facing nowadays are the result of improper diet and lifestyle patterns. According to Ayurveda, the prime factor for life to sustain is Agni, and it is a very superior entity responsible for digestion and metabolism. Unwholesome consumption of dietary materials leads to Agni dushti and so various types of disorders. Proper maintenance of Agni helps a person to live a long life and its disturbance gives rise to various diseases. On the basis of function and site of action, Agni has been divided into 13 types – Jatharagni (1), Bhutagni (5), and Dhatvagni (7). Acharya Charka has mentioned the importance of Agni, when the Agni of an individual is sama i.e. in equilibrium, then the person would be absolutely healthy and would live a long, healthy, and happy life but if the function of Agni stops then the individual dies.

**KEYWORDS:** Agni, Agni dushti, Jatharagni, Bhutagni, Dhatvagni.

## INTRODUCTION

In *Ayurveda*, the Human body is considered a replica of the universe; whatever is available in the universe they are represented in the human body, maybe in a modified form. The physiological *Agni*(fire) is directly linked up with the biological *Agni* inside the human body. To understand the physiology and pathology occurring in the human body according to the basic concepts of *Ayurveda*, which is entirely and greatly different from modern medical science it is very important to understand the concept of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*; which constitute the human body. It is stated in *Charaka Samhita* that the equilibrium and vitiation of dosha depend upon Agni and in *Sushruta Samhita* it is mentioned that for the well-being of humans all the *dosha*, *dhatu*, *mala*, and *Agni* should be in equilibrium with their normal functioning. In *Ayurveda* the concept of *Agni* plays a crucial role, *Agni* represents the metabolic and transformative processes within the body, including digestion, absorption, assimilation, and transformation of food into nutrients and energy. It is considered one of the fundamental factors responsible for maintaining health and vitality. The strength and balance of *Agni* are considered crucial for maintaining optimal health. When *Agni* is functioning optimally, it ensures proper digestion, elimination of waste products and the generation of vital energy (*ojas*) within the body.

However, when *Agni* becomes imbalanced it can lead to various health issues, including indigestion, malabsorption, and the accumulation of toxins (*ama*) in the body. Treatment strategies in *Ayurveda* often focus on balancing *Agni* through various approaches, including dietary modifications, lifestyle changes, herbal medicines, and purification therapies (*Panchakarma*).

## NIRUKTI OF AGNI

The word Agni is derived from – *Ang Dhatu & Gati Pratyaya* which means widely spreading.

## SYNONYMS OF AGNI

According to *Shabdikalpadrum*, there are 61 synonyms of *Agni* e.g. *Vaishwanara*, *SarvaPaka*, *Tanoonpata*, *Amivachantana*, *Damunasa*, *Shuchi*, *Vishwambhar*, *Rudra*, *Tejasa*, *Shikhi*, *Anala*, *Vanhi*, etc.

## AGNI IN VARIOUS LITERATURE

In *Brahmasutra*, *Agni* has been intended to be evidence that something is going on under the surface of the body.

In *Shabdakalpadruma*, 61 equivalent words of *Agni* have been ordered. These equivalent words help in making sense of the nature and elements of the *Agni*.

*Nyaya* and *Vaisesika Darshana* partitioned *Agni* into the following classes.

- *Bhauma* or the actual fire,
- *Divya* or the divine fire like the easing up, beams of the sun, moon, and stars,
- *Audarya* or the stomach fire which is liable for the processing as well as digestion and,
- *Akaraja* which is available in the metals like gold and silver.

*Acharya Charaka* referenced that the strength and balance of *Agni* are vital for proper digestion and metabolism. When *Agni* is weak or imbalanced, it can lead to various health issues and the accumulation of

toxins in the body. If the function of *Agni* stops then the individual dies.

As per *Acharya Sushruta*, there could be no other type of *Agni* in the body with the exception of the *Pitta*, and when this *Pitta dosha* is vitiated or reduced the processing of the food material is impacted the same way as the ignition of fuel is impacted with lessened or vitiated fire in the external world and both the circumstances are handled likewise.

*Chakrapani* has remarked on "*Pittantargatta*", "that the capability of *Pitta* inside the body isn't ignition however its work is to give Intensity energy of *Agni*."

## TYPES OF AGNI

Sr. No.	Acharya	No.	Names	Reference
1.	Acharya Charaka	13	<i>Jatharagni-1, Bhutagni-5, Dhatvagni-7</i>	Ch. Chi.15/38
2.	Acharya Sushruta	5	<i>Pachakagni, Ranjakagni, Sadhakagni, Bhrajakagni, Alochakagni</i>	Su. Su.21/10
3.	Acharya Vagbhata	18	<i>Bhutagni-5, Dhatvagni-7, Doshagni-3, Malagni-3</i>	As.hr. Sha. 3 / 49, 56, 59,
4.	Sharangadhara	5( <i>Pitta</i> )	<i>Pachaka, Ranjaka, Sadhaka, Bhrajakaga, alochaka</i>	Sha.Sa.Pu.Kh.5/32
5.	Bhavamishra		<i>Same as Acharya Charaka and Vagbhata</i>	Bh.Pu.kh.3/169,180

According to the function and site of action, *Agni* has been divided into 13 types-

### These are

1. *Jatharagni* – One *Agni* present in the stomach and duodenum.
2. *Bhutagni* – Five *Agni* from five basic elements.
3. *Dhatwagni* – Seven *Agni* present, one in each of the seven dhatus.

### 1. JATHARAGNI

This *Agni* is viewed as the *Pradhantam* (chief fire) of all the *Agni*. As per *Ashatanga Hridaya*, *Jatharagni*, the seat is *grahani* (duodenum), purported on the grounds that it keeps the nourishment for a specific time frame inside the *Amasaya* (stomach) to work with processing. *Jatharagni* is considered to be the most important because each and every nutrient that one ingests first comes to the *Jathara* and is subjected to the action of *Jatharagni*. *Jatharagni* digests the food materials that consist of the five basic elements and transforms it for utilization by the respective *Dhatus paramanus* (tissues). It is also responsible for the separation of the food material into the essence portion (*Prasad*) and the waste products (*kitta*) in our body. *Jatharagni* is also classified into four categories according to its performance of digestion in the human being namely *Vishamagni*, *Tikshanagni*, *Mandagni*, and *Samagni*.

**A. SAMAGNI-** *Samagni* relies upon whether the *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*) are in the ordinary

stage. *Samagni* specifically indicates the ideal state of *Agni* where it is functioning optimally and in balance. A strong and balanced *Agni* contributes to efficient metabolism, strong immunity, and overall well-being.

**B. VISHAMAGNI-** The stomach-related fire is upset by *vata*. *Vishamagni* specifically refers to a type of *Agni* that is irregular or variable in nature. People with *Vishamagni* may experience fluctuations in their digestive capacity. They may have periods of increased appetite and robust digestion, followed by times of weak digestion, reduced appetite, or indigestion.

**C. MANDAGNI-** *Mandagni* refers to a condition characterized by low digestive fire or weak digestion. The term "*Manda*" translates to slow or sluggish, and "*Agni*" refers to the digestive fire or metabolic processes in the body. Here the stomach-related fire is upset by *kapha*. When *Agni* is weak or impaired, it can lead to incomplete digestion, poor absorption of nutrients, and the accumulation of toxins in the body.

**D. TIKSHANAGNI-** The stomach-related fire is upset by *pitta*. In these cases, *Agni* is typically high and both *pitta* and *Agni* share the same properties. In these cases, resistance against sicknesses is great. People with *Tikshanagni* tend to have a faster metabolism and efficient digestion. They may experience a strong appetite, a tendency to feel hungry frequently, and the ability to digest heavy or

complex foods more easily.

## 2. BHUTAGNI

The word "*bhuta*" in Sanskrit refers to the five elements—earth, water, fire, air, and ether—which are believed to compose everything in the universe, including the human body. "*Agni*" translates to fire. In *Ayurveda*, it is believed that each element has a corresponding *Agni*, and *bhutagni* specifically refers to the fire related to the element of fire. *Bhutagni* is partitioned into five sorts of *Agni* which follow up on these *Panchmahabutas*. They are *Parthivagni*, *Aapyagni*, *Agneyagni*, *Vayavyagni*, *Nabhasagni*. They digest their own piece of components present in the food materials. After the processing of food by *bhutagni*, processed material containing the component and characteristics of each *bhutas* feeds their own particular *bhoutika* components of the body. Thus, every one of the exogenous substances should be exposed to *Bhutagni Paka* to become endogenous. In this manner cause proper sustenance of tissues. The food that we eat would be additionally *Panchamahbhovatic* - full of five components. In this manner to process food into amazing energy, every one of us additionally requires a particular *Panchamahbhoot Agni* which could process all components in the least difficult structure in our body to give us the energy and strength.

## 3. DHATVAGNI

*Dhatvagni* refers to the metabolic fire responsible for the transformation and assimilation of the seven bodily tissues, known as *Dhatus*. According to Ayurvedic principles, the human body is composed of seven *Dhatus*, which are *Rasa* (plasma), *Rakta* (blood), *Mamsa* (muscle), *Meda* (fat), *Asthi* (bone), *Majja* (marrow), and *Shukra* (reproductive tissue). *Dhatvagni* represents the specific digestive and metabolic processes that occur at each *Dhatu* level. It is responsible for breaking down the ingested food and extracting the necessary nutrients to nourish and replenish the respective *Dhatus*. Each *Dhatvagni* corresponds to a specific tissue and governs its formation, maintenance, and elimination of waste products. For example, *Rasa Dhatvagni* acts on plasma and regulates the formation and nourishment of the plasma tissue. Similarly, *Rakta Dhatvagni* governs the transformation and maintenance of blood tissue, and so on.

The strength and balance of *Dhatvagni* are crucial for overall health and well-being. When the *Dhatvagni* is functioning optimally, it ensures the proper development and functioning of the *Dhatus*. However, if there is an imbalance or impairment in *Dhatvagni*, it can lead to various health issues, including nutritional deficiencies, tissue malformation, and the accumulation of toxins in the body.

## CONCEPT OF PITTA AND AGNI IN AYURVEDA

There is simply one type of *Agni* in the body, according to *Acharya Sushruta* and when this *Pitta dosha* is vitiated

or diminished, the digestion of food is influenced in a similar manner to how the combustion of fuel is impacted by diminished or vitiated fire in the outside world. Both conditions are treated in a similar way. *Pitta* possesses the characteristics of an *Agni* and because of this, it causes combustion and digestion in the body without which there cannot be any other *Agni* in the body. According to the *Charaka Samhita*, the *Agni's* presence in *Pitta* can have either advantageous or detrimental effects. According to *Acharya Chakrapani*, *Agni* is a component of *Pitta* in the human body rather than flaming fire as it is in the phenomenal world. *Acharya Sushruta* responded to the question of whether *Pitta* and *Agni* are the same or distinct by claiming that *Pitta* is the only form of *Agni* that can be seen or felt in the body.

Since *Pitta* accomplishes *Dahana* (burning, combustion, or oxidation), *Pachana*(digestion), and comparable actions performed by *Agni*. *Pitta* is known as *Antargani*. *Pitta* arises whenever *Agneya Guna*, such as *Dahan Pachan*, etc, develops in the body and *Pittahara Dravya* suppresses *Pitta*, which is *Agni* in the form of *Pitta*.

## IMPORTANCE OF AGNI

1. *Bala* (strength), *varna* (colour), *swasthya* (health), *utsaha* (enthusiasm), *upachaya* (development of the body), *Prabha* (complexion), *ojas* (strength), *Tejas* (courage), *vaya* (age), and even *ayu* (life) - all depend on *Agni* and its function (fire-like activity). So long as *Agni* is in the equilibrium state, man can have a healthy and long life, loss of *Agni* leads to loss of life. Foods containing the nutrient materials of the *dhatus* can be of help to the *dhatus*, only after they are cooked (digested) well by the *Agni*. A strong and balanced *Agni* ensures efficient digestion, prevents the accumulation of toxins (*ama*), and promotes the assimilation of nutrients.
2. Detoxification: *Agni* plays a crucial role in eliminating waste and toxins from the body. A healthy *Agni* prevents the formation of *ama*, a sticky, toxic substance that can hinder bodily functions and lead to disease. Proper functioning of *Agni* supports the detoxification processes of the liver, kidneys, and other organs, promoting overall wellness. When *Agni* is weak or imbalanced, it can lead to malabsorption and nutrient deficiencies, even if the diet is nutritious. This can result in various health issues, such as weakness, fatigue, and compromised immunity.

## CONCLUSION

After a detailed discussion on *Agni*, it can be concluded Maintaining a healthy *Agni* is considered crucial in *Ayurveda*, as it influences not only physical health but also mental and emotional well-being. When *Agni* is weakened or imbalanced, it can result in digestive issues, sluggishness, fatigue, and an accumulation of toxins in the body.

Conversely, a robust and balanced *Agni* contributes to improved energy levels, mental clarity, and overall vitality. *Ayurveda* recognizes different types of *Agni*, each associated with specific qualities and functions within the body. Balanced *Agni* ensures efficient digestion, absorption, and metabolism, promoting the nourishment of tissues and organs. It also supports the elimination of toxins and waste, preventing the accumulation of harmful substances that can lead to imbalances and diseases.

*Ayurveda* offers various practices and remedies to support and enhance *Agni*. These may include dietary guidelines, herbal preparations, lifestyle modifications, and mindful eating habits. By following Ayurvedic principles and nurturing *Agni*, individuals can optimize their digestion, absorption, and overall health.

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