

CONCEPT OF AGNI - A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, the term *Agni* is used in the sense of power which converts ingested substances from one form to another. *Agni* converts food in the form of substances which are acceptable by body. *Ayurveda* considers that *Dehagni* is the fundamental cause of life, complexion, strength, health, nourishment, lusture, *Oja*, *Teja* and *Prana*. *Agni* as pondered upon in *Ayurveda* is related with digestion, metabolism, assimilation & thermoregulation. All the metabolic processes leading to genesis of body tissues are the outcome of *Agni*. The balanced state of *agni* is a prime factor of health. The derangement of *agni* leads to production of diseases of nutrition, digestion and metabolism. The of *Agni* is associated with health of an individual as well as closely related with formation of diseases. The improper diet or faulty life style causes *agni Dushti* which causes abnormality of Dhatus and ultimately results in various diseases.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Dhatu, Agni.

INTRODUCTION

The term “*Agni*” literally means fire. But here in the context of human body it does not actually mean fire. In Ayurveda, the concept of *Agni* is directly linked up with the biological *Agni* in form of *pitta* inside the human body. As per sage *Charaka*, the living body is a product of food and nutrition. The *dosha*, dhatus and malas require food for their formation, maintenance or functioning of various physiological actions in the body. The food substances which are ingested are not similar to the tissues of the human body. So, the food must be converted in such a manner that it is absorbed into the system to reach every cell of the body. This conversion of food substance at different levels in various ways till they ultimately become tissue of the body is brought about by *agni*. The balanced state of *agni* in the body is also called health. Power or condition of *agni* determines the quantity of food to be consumed. The *Ayu*, *varna*, *bala*, *strength*, *swasthya*, *utschhaha*, *upachaya*, *prabha*, *oja*, *teja* and *prana* of the body, are depend upon *Agni*. The ceasation of *agni* and the disorders of *agni* in the body cause death and disease respectively. Thus *Agni* is considered as the root cause of the body.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

To study the concept of *AGNI*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Literature search- Review of literature regarding “*CONCEPT OF AGNI*” is collected from Brihatrayi, Laghutrayi and available commentaries on it and research articles are also searched from various websites.

Type of study

1. Conceptual study

2. **Synonyms of Agni** *Vaisvanara*, *sadhakagni*, *sadhak pitta*, *suci*, *sarvapaka*, *tanunapata*3. **Types of Agni:** There are 13 types of *agni* present in the body. They are Jatharagni (5) -1. Parthivagni. 2. Apyagni.3, Taijasagni 4. Vayaavagni. 5 Nabhasagni Dhatwagni. (7) - 1. Rasadhawagni 2. Rakta dhawagni. 3. Mamsa dhawaagni 4. Medodhatwagni 5. Asthidhatwagni 6. Majjadhatwagni 7. Shukradhatwagni

1. Acharya Sushruta has described only five Agnies 1. Pachakagni, 2. Ranjakagni, 3. Alocakagni, 4. Sadhakagni 5. Bhrajakagni.

2. Vagbhata has described different types Agni, - 1. Bhutagnis - 5- Dhatvagnis -7, Dhoshagni - 3 and- Malagni - 3.

3. Sharangadhara has recognized five pittas 1. Pachak, 2. Bhrajak, 3. Ranjak, 4. Alochaka 5. Sadhak

4. Inside the body has been divided in to four group. 1. Bhauma 2. Divya 3. Udarkya. 4. Akarja.

4. Jatharagni

The term *JATHARA*” means udara (abdomen). Due to presences in the region of jathara (abdomen) , it is so called *jatharagni*. This is also called *pachaka pitta*, *kosthgni*, *kayagni*, *antaragni*, *pachakagni*, *dehagnias per Ayurveda* the human body is constituted by the requisite combination of seven dhatus and degeneration and decay stated to afflict the body are affect these dhatus only. This degeneration and decay can be arrested by the intake of food which when digested and assimilated nourishes the body. Therefore, an individual in order to sustain life has to take nutritive food indicating that the man is dependent upon food and also that the body is the product of food. *Vagbhata has mentioned kayagni* the fire like agent present in the body, its site being *koshtha* it is called as *kosthagni*, *jathara* being its seat it is *jatharagni*. *Acharya sushruta praised Agni (Jhathragini)* as God. Because of its miraculous nature & action, one can never be understood. This Agni is *Paramasukshma* (subtle form) and transforms the food substance just to suit the physiological & psychological requirements of the Individuals. Agni and pitta in the body are identical. At the same time *marichi* has mentioned in *charaka Samhita* that it is *agni* alone represented by *pitta* in the body. *Acharya chakrapani* has mentioned that *agni* with in body represents the heat of the *pitta* as distinct from the external *Agni*, that its physical fire having flame etc. Its is not that the biological Agni is indential.

5. The Sites of This Agni Is In The Grahani

Acharyas have different opinion about *Grahani*. Some *Acharyas* consider duodenum as *grahani*. *Acharyas* accept *grahani* as the region from pyloric end of the stomach to ileo-cecal junction. Some *acharyas* consider small intestines as *grahani*. The terminology like *Adho-amashaya*, *Pittadhara Kala*, *Agnidhara kala*, *Agnisthana* & *Nabhi* are used as the synonyms of *grahani*. *Jatharagni* is also classified into four categories according to its performance of digestion in the human being namely *Vishmagni*, *Tikshanagni*, *Mandagni* and *Samagni*. *Doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha)* are in normal stage. When the *Pitta* is higher than normal, the condition is known as *Tikshmagni*. When *Vata* and *Kapha* are higher than normal, the condition is known as *Mandgni*.

6. Functions of Jhathragini

The Main fuctions of the *jathragini* is to digest all the food substances which we take in the form of *chavya*. The second function of this *agni* is to produce temperature in the body. By both the actions the *jatharagni* controls and gives strength to all other *agni* in the body. In modern science, the different digestive juices and enzymes corresponding to the gastro-intestinal tract, that are involving the splitting of complex food substances into their simpler components, protein into amino acids, carbohydrate into glucose and fats into fatty acids and glycerol, so that they may be rendered fit for absorption. *Susruta* says is there any *agni* in the body

other than *pitta*, or is the *pitta* itself *agni*, we do not perceive any *agni* other than *pitta*. but *pitta* is not *agni* it self, it is *agneya*. The heat of *pitta* is *agni* the liquidity of *piia* is due to something else. due to its heat, *pitta* brings about combustion and digestion, and so its called *Agni* in a secondary sense.

According to its intensity, the digestive power *jathagni* can be divided in four categories. 1. *Tiksagni* 2. *Mandagni* 3. *Visamagni* 4. *Samagni*

1. **Tiksagni-** It is capable of tolerating of irregularities. It is common in person, having dominance of *pitta* dosa. The persons owing to this type of digestive power are able to digest easily even heavy food in heavy quantity.
2. **Mandagni-** Persons having mild digestive power are inferred bearing *mandagni*. Even small irregularities in food habits and material, impair the functions of digestive system. These individuals have dominance of *kaphadosa* in their physical constitution.
3. **Vismagni-** It is opposite to balanced type of *Agni* in nature, as some time it gets impaired and some time it does not get impaired by the irregularities. In case of individuals having the dominance of *vata* dosa in their constitution, due to the afficiation of site of *agni*, their *ahnis* are irregular.
4. **Samagni-** *Agni* belonging to this group is most beneficial for healthy living. *Samagni* gets impaired even by minor irregularities. It maintains its normalcy so long as there are no irregularities.
5. **5.Bhutagni:** There are five type of *bhutaagni* in the body, They are- 1. *Parthivagni* 2. *Apyagni* 3. *Taijasagni* 4. *Vayavyagni* 5. *Nabhasagni*

After the digestion of food by *jatharagni*, the *bhootagni* *paka* starts continues. It is stated that the animated body is composed of five *mahabhutas* and the food we taken from outside also contains the five *mahabhutas*. The *jatharagni* digest the whole of the food mass into a common digested substance, by their *bhootagni* act in this substances which contains five *bhutas* by their respective parts like *parthivagni* act on *parthivansa* parts of food, *Apyagni* act on *apyansa* parts of food, like wise the other and convert them into the respective *bhootadravyas* useful for the formation of different dhatus.

8. Sites of Bhootagni

Through there is no direct reference with regards to the site of *bhootagni*. In *charak* opinion, all the event like *jathargni paka* and *dhatwagni paka* including absorption of food-stuffs takes place in *amashya* itself, Factually speaking, the available description of this *paka* *bhootagni* *paka* takes place in the *yukrit* and the *jatharagni paka* in the *adho-Amashaya*. This *agni* makes *panchabhutika* components of food to release their qualities while *jatharagni* digests the complex food particle into simpler ones. This happen at level of digestive tract. *Bhutagni* replenish matter of special senses. This *agni* helps to release *prithivi* and *apaya*

mahabhutas at the level of *first avasthapaka*. Madhura rasa and kapha dosha are generated due to this event.

9. Dhatawagni: This *Agni* is responsible for nourishment of seven dhatuvah. It exists in dhatu itself. Hence it is called *Dhatvagni*. When digested nutrients reach this *dhatvagni*, in *Dhatuvahasrotas*, nutrients are digested once more. *Ahararas* is final product of digestion by *pacakagni* in *mahasrotas*. After the *bhootagni paka* in the food substance the *dhatvagni paka* starts continues. *Dhatwagnis* are seven in number corresponding to the *seven dhatus*. they are.

1. *Rasadhawagni* 2. *Rakta dhawagni*. 3. *Mamsa dhawaagni* 4. *Medodhatwagni* 5. *Asthidhatwagni* 6. *Majjadhatwagni* 7. *Shukradhatwagni* transformation of *bhootamsha* of diet into *shareera bhutas* will not serve the purpose, it has to convert the *sarera dhatus*. For this conversion *Dhatwagni paka* take place. As it is seen previously that the *bhutagni paka* provide suitably processed nutrients which up for *dhatwagni paka*. *Dhatwagnis* will act upon the concerned nutrients circulating *asposhakambha* in the diet and result in the production of 1. *Prasadakhya dhatus* and 2. *Malakhya dhatus*. The *prasad* fraction in the transported by *rasa rakta* and made available to the *dhatus* through their respective channels. They are utilised by the *dhatus* to make good the loss sustained by them due to wear and tear. The *kitta* fraction contributes in the parts to the nourishment and synthesis of such structures of the body as hairs, nails.

10. Sites of Dhatwagnis It would seem that the *dhatwagni vyapara* as in the case of *bhutagni paka* may be considered to take place for the most part in the *yakrit*, the final synthesis of *Asthayi dhatus* into *sthaiy dhatus*, obviously takes place in the themselves. All these seven *dhatwagnis* will under the influence of *jatharagni*, because the *amshas* of *jatharagni* is over active the *dhatwagnis* also become over active, combust, the tissue concerned and result in the wasting or reduction of the concerned *dhatus*. Similarly if *jatharagni* is normal, the *dhatwagni* also will be normal and maintain the normalcy of the tissue. When the *jatharagni* becomes defective in action, the *dhatwagnis* also will become defective and result in abnormal growth of the *dhatu*.

11. Agni its utility in health. The main function of internal *agni* are *dahana oxidation* or *combustion* and *paka* or *pacana* physical and chemical transformation of the *ahara*. It is necessary to secure an intimate knowledge of normal states of functioning of the body.

12. CONCLUSION

Agni in common language means fire. However, in the context of the functioning of a living organism, which maintains its integrity and performs its vital activities by converting in *pakadi karmas* or *biophysical* and *biochemical* process, the food consumed in various ways, *licked*, *masticated*, *drunk* etc. not only into its various structural and functional constituents but also to

provide the energy necessary for proceeding with its innumerable vital activities. Four kinds of functional states of *agni*, According *mandagni*, *vishmagagni*, *samagni* and *tikshmagagni*. *Agni* is the factor which is primarily manifested in the new in the body with the effect of *jivatma*. It is the main and first factor which help the individuals in growth through digestive process. The various factors of the body like *life*, *complexion*, *strength*, *health*, *metabolic process*, *growth* and *development*, *lusture*, *ojas* and *tajas*, various factors responsible for transformation and metabolism of the tissue and even life are due to *agni*. Until the digestive fire is in the balanced stage individuals remain healthy for a long time period and when it become abnormal and imbalanced, the individuals become ill. Even when digestive fire is completely lost the person dies. It is the cause why *agnis* are described root of the life.

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