

CONCEPT OF VYADHIKSHYAMATWA (IMMUNITY AND IMMUNIZATION)
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ABSTRACT

Diseases produced by the viruses or bacteria, which are exogenous invaders, brings in certain changes inside the body by means of which, it renders the host immune at least for some time to its subsequent invasion. A system called immunological system, comprising few organs and cells, is known to take part in these processes and the knowledge of the same has been establishing itself into a separate branch called immunology. Turning towards Ayurveda, it differs in its concepts, whether it is of health or of diseases. The science derived by the direct observation of the nature, aims at curing the disease and preserving the health by natural methods. Therefore various methods are found described under the name of *Dinacharya*, *Ratrichrya*, *Ritucharya*, *Sadvritta* and *Swasthavritta* which are aimed at the prevention of diseases and preservation of health. The phenomena of *Vyadhikshamatva* denotes immunity as per Ayurveda.

KEYWORDS: Immunity, *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Sadvritta*, *Vyadhikshamatva*.

INTRODUCTION

The word *Vyadhikshamatva* is first mentioned by Charaka in the Sutra sthana 28th chapter, while explaining about the causation of diseases. The author says that all *Doshas* are neither of equal strength nor all the bodies capable of resisting diseases equally.^[1] The commentator Chakrapanidatta comments—*vyadhikshaatvam naamavyaadhiBala viroditvam vyadyutpada pratibandhakatvam iti*—i.e. when etiological factors come into contact with the body they try to produce the diseases. At the same time the body tries to resist the diseases. The power of the body which prevents the development of a disease or resists a developed disease is called *Vyadhikshamatva*. Keen observation substantiates that human beings have two different varieties of strengths.^[1] The strength required for the growth of the body and to perform routine activities is called energy (*Bala*). The strength required to protect the body against several diseases is called resistance (*kshamatva*). Though much difference. For its detailed analysis the knowledge of the following aspects holds essential.^[2]

I. Concept of Bala (Immunity)

It can be classified into two

1. That requires for bodily growth and to perform the routine activities (energy). The various methods are found described under the name of *Dinacharya*,

Ratrichrya, *Ritucharya*, *Sadvritta* and *Swasthavritta* which are aimed at proper growth, development and social manners.

2. *Bala* - *Bala* in a broad sense can be stated as the inherent or acquired strength that aids in the maintenance of health and sustenance of life. Every human is born with a latent potential for certain strength – limitations of which can be reached through sustained physical exercise and healthy living. But there can be individuals who because of sheer negligence fail to harness their real potential –they may even deteriorate ending up with disease and degeneration. Thus it is vital to know the various aspects of *Bala*, so that the inborn potential can be put to the best use. The term *Bala* literally means power, strength, might, vigor, force, validity. Charaka describes that the maintenance of health depends entirely upon the *Bala*. Sushruta says that, a patient whose *Bala* has been extremely reduced becomes disorder state of *Dosha* and brings back the *Doshas* in to normalcy.

By concluding the above references it can be said that, *Bala* is the power to exercise control over the harmful activities of *Dosha*, which resides in every *Dhatu* of the body.^[3]

The *Bala* occurs in the body mainly in three types, they are from three sources – *Sahaja* (constitutional), *Kalaja* (temporal) and *Yuktikrita* i.e. acquired.^[4]

i. Sahaja Bala – Natural constitutional strength: This is gained from the formation of the embryo onwards. Hence it depends on the healthiness of *Shukra*, *Artava*, *Kala* and *Garbhashaya*. This depends on.^[5]

- Birthplace – e.g. people of Sindhu valley are powerful and strong by birth.
- Time of birth–time of birth is also has important role in the body strength
- Genetic factor – depends on the quality of ovum, sperm and uterine environment.
- Physical health – the compactness and muscle strength will contribute to *Bala*.
- Natural providential gift – by deeds of previous life.
- Suitability of foods – suitability of all kinds of foods indicated good *Bala*.

ii. Kalaja Bala – Temporal time bound strength: The temporal *Bala* is the one which is gained from the favorable condition of time, such as youth and favourable season. This depends on –

- Favourable season – the season like winter is good for *Bala*
- Favourable age – the *Bala* will be more in the youthful age.

iii. Yuktikrita Bala- Acquired strength: The acquired strength is one which is achieved by the proper combination of the diet, exercise and other regimens. This depends upon –

- Food – Balanced and nourishing food substances improve *Bala*.
 - Pleasantness – pleasantness of mind and jolly nature, absence of Provocation, gloom, anxiety, greed etc. improves *Bala*. *Bala vrridhikara Bhava* (factors responsible for promotion of strength)^[6]
1. **Balavatpurushadeshe Janma** (birth in a country where peoples are naturally strong)
 2. **Balavat kale Janma**(birth at a time when people gain naturally gain strength)
 3. **Sukhacha Kalayoga** (pleasant and moderate climate)
 4. **Bijakshetragunasammpat** (excellence of the qualities of sperm and ovum)
 5. **Aharasammpat** (excellence of ingested food)
 6. **Sharirsammpat** (excellence of the physique)
 7. **Satnyasammpat** (wholesomeness of various factors responsible for the Maintenance of the body)
 8. **Satvasammpat** (excellence of the mind)
 9. **Swabhavasamsiddhi** (favorable deposition of the nature)
 10. **Yauvanam** (youth age)
 11. **Karma** (work/exercise)
 12. **Samharsha** (cheerful disposition)

Loss of Bala as Vyadhi hetu - The seasonal variations, the time factor becomes responsible for the precipitation, exacerbation, aggravation or diminution of certain diseases.

The importance of knowing this time factor lies in the fact that it helps the physician in giving instructions regarding diet and medicine before and during the particular period. At other times the physician treats the patient of increasing his *Bala* i.e. *Vyadhikshamatva*.

DISCUSSION

The interrelation between *Bala* and *Ojas*

Dalhana in his commentary states that the body strength i.e. *Abhyantaraprana* or *Bala* is derived from *Ojas*. Thus the *Vyadhikshamatva* depends on *Bala* and *Bala* depends on *Ojas*.^[7] *Ojas* is of *Upachaya* type mainly comprises *Somatmaka* properties like *Snigdha*, *Shukla*, *Dravya* etc. by virtue of which it exhibits stability and compactness. On this line the *Bala* and the *Ojas* are termed identical.

The concept of *Ojas* and *Vyadhikshamatva*: The term *Ojas* is derived from two *Sanskrita* roots which though separate, carry the same meaning. *UrjaBalaprasaranayo* – This means, to confer power and vitality. In other words it is implied with that substance which is responsible for the strength and vitality. *Aburjarnave* – This means, to keep others in their proper place and functional state. It signifies that, the substances of the body due to which every tissue of the body have their resistance.

OJAS AND BALA

It is clear that among various synonyms, *Bala* is the most often used word for *Ojas*. All the classical writers in general and Sushruta in particular have exclusively used this term in their respective works. In the opinion of some, it is because of the fact that *Bala* is implicit in *Ojas* and two can't be separated. The fact becomes more obvious when we explain the root meaning of *Bala*. The term *Bala* is derived from its Sanskrit root *Balaprana*, which means to confer vitality and strength. The substance in which this power is implicit is *Ojas* and by virtue to it the individual retains his health and encounters disease factor. Some hold the view that the relation between *Ojas* and *Bala* is similar to that which exists between cause and its effect.

Concept of improving *Bala* (immunization measures and measures to increase natural resistance)

1. Jatakarma Samskara (Immunization measure)- The Samskara means to bring purification the description of Shodhasha Samskara is aimed at celebrating the functional achievements of a child.

The Samskara are aimed at not only for just purification of the body and celebration in the society but also sanctifying, impressing, refining and perfecting an individual particularly in his childhood period. The descriptions of Shodasha Samskara include all the period of life beginning from conception to death. Even though the sustained efforts of cultivation and refinement beginning from conception will bring fruitful results in an individual but much concentration should be given to the period immediately after birth, when he is exposed to

a hostile atmosphere from a previous protected environment. Keeping in view of the above idea, all the authors of Samhita Granthas advised Jatakarma Samskara to be carried out immediately after birth as a part of Navajatahishu Paricharya. In this they advised to give Madhu Ghrita mixed with various brain tonics for the kid. The pollen of honey is a known antigen as the source is the flower of different Rasa, Guna and Prabhava. The mixture of ghee may be sustaining the said property of honey after entering the system without being immediately metabolized by the liver as the fats bypass the liver so as to reach the systemic circulation. Also the mixture might have different antigenic components and induces the antibody production in the body.

2. Measures to increase the natural resistance

These are nothing but the measures of representative the ojus. Rasayan chikitsa and Vajikarna chikitsa are together called as Urjaskara chikitsa i.e. these two therapies are only to promote Ojus. By these therapies all the 7 Dhatus get properly stabilized and in turn Ojovridhi is achieved.^[8]

CONCLUSION

The concept of Vyadhikshamatva made its appearance as a result of observations. It was noticed that in spite of living in same infected surrounding and utilization of un-wholesome and contaminated food and drinks only some persons get affected while others remain unaffected. It was also seen that some of the diseases persons get rid of their disease even without treatments. It was indicative of some internal energy or force latter on de-cribe as Oajas or Bala. However the relation between Bala and Oajas is parallel to that relation between cause and effect or mass and energy. Oajas is known by Upachaya of all Dhatus while Bala is indicated by work. Thus Oajas and Bala represent the outer and inner aspects of same things. The Oajas is not only providing the power of resistance to diseases but it is source of mental and physical energy and strength. So Oajas should always been restored because it is root cause or pillar for diseases free condition.

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