



UNDERSTANDING THE MOOLA OF ALL ROGAS - THE "AGNI".

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is the ancient Indian system of life sciences and Medicine, its historicity going back to the Vedas. *Ayurveda* has described an important factor of digestion and metabolism in our body as *Agni*. *Agni* is responsible for strength, health, longevity; vital breath and it determines the quantity of food to be consumed. Ingested food is to be digested, absorbed and assimilated, which is unavoidable for the maintenance of life, and is performed by *Agni*. In *Ayurveda*, the term "*Agni*" is used in the sense of digestion of food and metabolic products. According to the functions and sites of action, *Agni* has been divided into 13 types, i.e. 1 *Jatharagni*, 5 *Bhutagni* and 7 *Dhatvagni*. About the importance of *Agni*, *Acharya charak* has mentioned that after stoppage of the function of *Agni*, the individual dies, and when the *Agni* of an individual is *sama*, then that person would be absolutely healthy and would lead a long, happy, healthy life. But, if the *Agni* of a person is vitiated, the whole metabolism in his body would be disturbed, resulting in ill health and disease. Hence, *Agni* is said to be the base (*mool*) of life.

KEYWORDS : *Agni*, *Bhutagni*, *Dhatvagni*, *Jatharagni*, Digestion, Absorption.**INTRODUCTION:**

Agni is the one which brings about the transformation of consumed *Aahaara Vihaaraadi Dravya of Vijaateeya* (incompatible) origin to *Sajaateeya* (homogeneous) nature. *Agni* digests food when in optimum stage. Due to various reasons there may be fluctuation in intensity of *Agni* in the form of *Vridhi*, *Kshaya* or *Agni Vishamata*. Therefore to compensate these fluctuation one has to follow proper *Ahara Sevana Vidhi* to maintain *Agni*. A good *Agni* only can provide energy, good health and long life. *Agni* is a basic essential of life and has been a proof of our evolution and a source of lot of innovations through ages. Even today much of our life activities depend on fire and its utility in one or the other form.

AIM AND OBJECTIVE

The main aim of this article is to review *Agni* from various Ayurvedic texts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Information regarding *Agni* is collected from various Ayurvedic Samhitas.

Kosthagni Vyapara (functions of digestive fire)

The food ingested, is acted upon by the normal *Kosthagni* vis a vis *pachaka pitta* and cooked properly to produce two substances, the *Sarabhaga* or the *Ahara rasa* (the essence of food) and *Kitta bhaga* (the waste products of food). The *sarabhaga* or *ahara rasa* undergoes further changes being acted upon by the *bhutagnis* and gets converted into *Rasadhatu*- the first *dhatu* (first tissue) of the body. The activities of *kosthagni* and *bhutagnis* together form the *Ahara paka* or digestion of food. The *rasadhatu* contains the nutrient materials derived from the food and required by the *dhatu*s (tissues), This *rasa dhatu* circulates all over the body supplying the nutrients to all the other *dhatu*s, which utilize this material for their growth (metabolism).¹

Pitta Is Agni²

- *Agni* in the body is *Pitta* = The *Pitta* expressions of heat and digestion sustains the Life
- Five groups (5 *Pitta*) of *Agni* derivatives disposed in wholesome body distributes the effects of *Agni*

Forms of Agni³

- *Sariram* in the solar region - *Adityaloka*
- *Indriyam* - in the eye *chakshu*
- *Vishaya* - object.

- *Divyam* - lightning etc.
- *Audaryam* - the cause of digestion of ingested food
- *Akarajam* - produced in mines - gold etc.

Agni And Body

- Thus *Chikitsa* is based upon *Agni* and its regulations.

Agni derivative⁴

- *Ayu* - Longevity
- *Varna* - Complexion
- *Balam* - Strength
- *Swasthyam* - Health-
- *Utsaaha* - Enthusiasm
- *Upachaya* - body accumulation
- *Prabha* - Luster
- *Ojas* - tissue essence
- *Agnayah* - Bio fires
- *Prana* - Life (*Pranavata*)

The Place Of Agni⁵

- The seat of *Agni* is *Grahani*
- *Grahani* is named as it receives the food
- It's placement is between *Amashaya* and *Pakwashaya*

Functions of Agni⁶

- *Agni* is the cause of digestion
- It converts the food in to *Ahara Rasa*
- *Rasa* nourishes the tissues
- Tissues build the body Without *Agni* the food cannot convert food and develop the tissues.

Hetu of Agni Dushti⁷

- Excessive Water Intake
- Untimely Food Intake
- *Vegadharna*
- *Nidra Viparyaya*

- Psychological Causes like Hatredness, Anger, Fear, and Grief.
- *Dosha Vaishamya* causes disease and the same causes *Agni Vaishamaya*.
- Long standing disease will also deteriorate the quality of *Agni*.

Samprapati of Agni Dushti

- *Agnimandya* is a main step occurring in pathogenesis of

much disease. *Hetu Sevan* cause *Dosha-Prakop*. These *Prakupit Dosha* vitiate *Dushya* and their *Samuurchhana* which leads to many diseases, mostly it start with *Agnimandya*.

- Due to decrease in intensity of *Agni*, the *Apachitahar Rasa* is produced lead to *Strotorodh* and *Rasa Aamanirmiti*. There while treating any disease always to be start with *Amapachan* and *Agnivardhan Chikitsa* to get fast and complete cure.

Types of *Agni*⁸

- *Jatharagni/Pachakagni* - is digestive secretions
- *Bhootagni* - are 5 elemental enzymes that are responsible for micro-elemental converters
- *Dhatvagni* - are 7 corresponding tissue building enzymes.

(a). *Jatharagni*

Jatharagni is the *Agni* or bioenergy present in the *Jathara* (stomach and duodenum). According to *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Jatharagni*, the seat is *grahani* (duodenum), so called because it withholds the food for a certain time inside the *Amasaya* (stomach) to facilitate digestion. In the opinion of *Dhanvantari*, it is the *Kala* known as "*Pittadhara*," situated at the entrance of the *Pakvashaya* (intestine) and acting as a bolt to the door of the pathway/channel of food. It is responsible for the duration of life, health, valour, *ojas* (essence of the *dhatu*s), strength of all the *bhutagni* and *dhatvagni*. The strength of the *grahani* is from *Agni* itself, and the strength of *Agni* is from *grahani*.

When the *Agni* undergoes vitiation, *grahani* also gets vitiated and produces diseases.⁹

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 *Dhatu paramanus* (tissues). It is also responsible for separation of the food material into the essence portion (*Prasad*) and the waste products (*kitta*) in our body.¹⁰

Jatharagni is directly related to *Dhatvagni* or bio-energy in the cells and their metabolic processes, with ultimate tissue metabolism or *Dhatu-Paka* process. All the *Dhatvagni* depend on the normal, healthy state of *Jatharagni*. If the *Jatharagni* is hyperactive (*Tikshna*) or hypoactive (*Manda*), it will cause an excessive or retarded action of the *Dhatvagni*. This disturbed action ultimately leads to various disorders. *Jatharagni* is the main important *Agni* that controls the function of all other 12 *Agnis*. All the *Agnis* are totally dependent on the status of *Jatharagni*.¹¹

Jatharagni is also classified into four categories according to its performance of digestion in the human being namely *Vishamagni*, *Tikshanagni*, *Mandagni* and *Samagni*.¹² According to *Hareet Samhita*, *Samagni* depends on whether the *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*) are in normal stage. When the *Pitta* is higher than normal, the condition is known as *Tikshnagni*. When *Vata* and *Kapha* are higher than normal, the condition is known as *Mandgni*.

(b). *Bhutagni*

Bhutagni is the one that is present in a basic element (*Bhutas*). There are five *Agnis* in each of the five basic elements, namely – *Parthiva* (earth), *Apya* (water), *Tejas* (*Agni*), *Vayavya* (*vayu*) and *Nabhasa* (akash).

Each and every cell in our body is composed of the five *mahabhutas* or five basic elements. Naturally, each cell (*dhatu paramanu*) consists of these five *Bhutagni* also. All the nutrients in this world that we eat also consist of the same five

basic elements with their respective *Agni* or bioenergy. Thus, they are completely similar with respect to the five basic elements with their *Bhutagni* in our body cells as well in the entire outside nutrient that we ingest for the nutrition of our body. *Acharya Charak* has mentioned that the five *Bhutagni* digest their own part of the element present in the food materials. After the digestion of food by the *Bhutagni*, digested materials containing the elements and qualities similar to each *bhutas* nourish their own specific *bhautika* elements of the body.¹³ These *Bhutagnis* act after the *Jatharagni* present in the stomach and duodenum, acting on the food and causing their disintegration. In the modern physiological perspective, the action of *Jatharagni* can be equated with the digestion in the stomach and duodenum, and the action of the *Bhutagni* can be equated with the conversion of digested materials in the liver.

(c). *Dhatvagni*

All the seven *Dhatu*s (seven element tissues of the body) contain their own *Agni* to metabolize the nutrient materials supplied to them through their own *Srotas*.

- Rasagni* present in the *Rasa Dhatu*.
- Raktagni* present in the *Rakta Dhatu*.
- Mamsagni* present in the *Mamsa Dhatu*.
- Medagni* present in the *Meda Dhatu*.
- Asthyagni* present in the *Asthi Dhatu*.
- Majjagni* present in the *Majja Dhatu*.
- Shukragni* present in the *Shukra Dhatu*.

Each *Dhatvagni* or the bioenergy present in each *Dhatu* synthesizes and transforms the essential *Rasa Dhatu* required for that particular *Dhatu* or cell from the basic nutrients present in the *Anna Rasa* or essence of the diet that we consume. Each *Dhatvagni* has got a speciality to synthesize and transform the constituents suitable to its particular *Dhatu*. This action is a sort of selective action. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned the fact that that the seven *dhatu*s that are a support of the body contain their own *Agni*, and by their own *Agni* they digest and transform the materials supplied to them to make the substances alike to them for assimilation and nourishment.¹⁴

Importance Of *Jatharagni*

Functions of various *agni* elaborately discussed above in which *jatharagni* is the chief among all types of *agnis* because function of *bhutagni* and *dhatvagni* depends on this. Aggravation or diminution of *jatharagni* results in aggravation or diminution of *bhutagni* and *dhatvagni*. Therefore by all means one has to protect *jatharagni* by consuming suitable wholesome dietetics and behaviour because longevity and strength depends on normal state of *agni*. On the contrary one, who consumes unwholesome diet due to greed, succumbs to disease caused by the vitiation of *grahani*.¹⁵

Physiological And Pathological State Of *Agni*.¹⁶⁻¹⁹

(a). *Samagni*

First variety is not associated with *dosa* and it is called *samagni* state and it is the physiological state of *agni*. The *Samagni* digests and assimilates food properly at the proper time. This thus increases the quality of the *Dhatu*s (supportive tissues of the body). Persons having *Samagni* are always hale and healthy.

(b). *Vishamagni*

Visamagni is the state in which improper digestion and metabolism takes place i.e. sometimes performs normal functions followed by abnormal one and manifest flatulence, abdominal pain, upward movement of *vata* inside the *kostha*, diarrhea, and heaviness in abdomen, intestinal gurgling and straining exercise for evacuation of stools. When this *Agni* is affected by the *Vata* *Dosha*, it creates different types of

vatavyadhi.

(c). Tikshnagni

Tikshnagni means very quick/very sharp/very fast. *Tikshnagni* is a state of very quick digestion of food, regardless of the type of food. *Acharya Shushrut* states that when the power of digestion is increased from normal to above normal, food digests very quickly and produces hunger or the desire for food. When food is digested, the throat, the mouth cavity and the lips become dry with a burning sensation. This condition is known as "*Bhasmak Roga*" according to *Ayurveda*. *Tikshnagni* state gives rise to manifestation of *pittavyadhi*.

(d). Mandagni

"*Mand*" means slow. The meaning of the *Mandagni* is slow digestive power or digestive capacity. Those who are having *Mandagni* eat very little and are unable to digest the smallest amount of food. *Dhanvantri* says that *Agni* digests the least amount of food in the greatest amount of time and manifest heaviness in abdomen and head, cough, dyspnea, excessive salivation, vomiting and weakness of the body. *Mandagni* state gives rise to manifestation of *kaphaja vikara*.

CONCLUSION

After detailed discussion of *AGNI*, it can be concluded that *AGNI* plays a pivotal role in maintaining good health of a human being. In clinical practice *AGNI PARIKSHA* of the patient is very important, because on the basis of this *pariksha* future treatment plan can be decided. Healthy state of the body and diseased condition depends entirely on *AGNI*. *VATA* (prana, saman, apan, udan) stimulates the digestive fire. *AGNI* should be protected by proper intake of food because this act as a fuel. If a person is deprived of food or takes too much food for quite some time then it results in the disturbance of *AGNI* and disease develops in the body. *Jatharagni* is important because it facilitates secretion of various chemicals, enzymes etc leading to proper digestion of food. Further *Dhatwagni* and *bhutagni* help for the digestion absorption and assimilation of food substances into the body. *AYURVEDA* says that disturbed function of *AGNI* is the root cause of all diseases.

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