



Role of Visha in Chikitsa- A reminder

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chikitsa, vishaguna, ojas

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ABSTRACT *Visha are the substances which when administered prove fatal either sooner or later. This fatality is due to the qualities of visha that are exactly opposite to the nature of oja which is the vital component of life and causes destruction of life. Though they are previewed as visha, the same qualities can be utilized in the treatment after proper shodhana, which alters basic toxic properties like vyavaayi, vikasi, sookshma and yogavahi. Thus many visha are used in the formulations in order to increase the potency, bioavailability, therapeutic values. Hence Ayurveda highlights that when visha is utilized in a proper way can become the best medicine. Though basically they are visha, when properly administered along with pathyas they act as vishaghna, rasayana in many conditions. The present paper discusses about utility of visha in the making of formulations which are indicated in the untreated, chronic, auto immune diseases and also in acute management.*

Introduction:

Agada Tantra is the branch of Ayurveda which is always depicted as the science which deals with the different sources of poison, types of poison, their signs and symptoms of poisoning, complications and their management.¹ The word visha itself conveys that these are the drugs which take prana (life) of the person. Hence they are always looked in a pessimistic way rather than an optimistic approach. Though they are deadly but they also have potential benefits when used in a correct manner. Hence acharyas explained different formulations in which most of the times visha dravyas are added after proper shodhanadi samskara. Vishas are said to be yogavahi² so when added to a formulation they not only enhance the quality of the formulation but also help in quicker action and relieve the conditions.

Conceptual contrive:

The very first definition of visha says that these are the drugs which are going to vitiate the Rasadi dhatus and kill the person. ¹ Thus visha is the drug possessing the qualities which can act on all the dhatus in a short span. This is a prime essential quality for an ideal medicine.

The various qualities of visha are Laghu, Ruksha, Aashu, Vishada, Teekshna, Vyavayi, Vikasi, Sookshma, Ushna, Anirdeshiya rasa as quoted by Charaka,³ but acharya Vagbhata explains Apaaki and Avyakta rasa instead of Anirdeshiya rasa;⁴ Chedi, Madavaham, Aagneyam, Jivitaharam, Yogavahi are explained by Sharangadhara.² Critical appraisal of these qualities can be done in the following ways.

Laghu-Vishada-Sookshma: Laghu guna refers to the nature of the drug.⁵ It can be understood in terms of low molecular weight, in terms of easier/better digestion.⁶ Vishada is the quality which is said to enhance the permeability in the dhatus,⁵ i.e. it can even cross the Blood brain barrier(BBB). Sookshma refers to the metabolites of visha after biotransformation, due to which it can penetrate and

enter sookshmanu srotas⁵ (Minute channels- capillaries, alveolar ducts, etc)? Where only gaseous and nutrients exchange are possible). Diffusion of the molecules is higher in case of low molecular weight.⁶ When the drugs are easier for digestion it indicates the better absorption of the same, and a quick distribution in the plasma concentration. Thus when the plasma concentration is quickly reached, rapid actions are expected.

Ruksha-Madavaham-jivitaharam: the word Rukshana indicates drying up or desorption of the fluid secretions. This may be seen either locally or systemically. Madavaham refers to the properties of those which can even cross the blood brain barrier and show their actions. It also shows the actions of these drugs on the sensory pathways. This is a mechanism exerted in the body by the parasympathetic action and these drugs show typical anti-cholinergic effects. Jivitaharam is the property which takes away the life or chetana of the person from its sites. So visha can reach and act on vital organs in a very short span when it has got all the qualities and when given in a dose sufficient to kill.

Ashukaari-Vyavaayi: Ashukari means expedite and Vyavaayi means that which spreads into body first and later digested.⁷ Hence there will be quicker absorption, rapid distribution, so quicker action is also seen. The Paaka here refers to the Metabolism (1st pass or 2nd pass metabolism) which makes a drug either active or inactive. So they escape this mechanism and directly enter into circulation thus they act quickly.⁸

Vikashi-Teekshna-Chedi: Vikasi means which does karshana / himsana of dhatus that is exasperation of tissues in response to the visha.⁷ Teekshna indicates potency of drug to penetrate the srotas⁸ and chedi is explained as that which keeps the lumens (srotas) intact and free from adherence of doshas in it, i.e. severe gastric/abdominal spasms, increased peristaltic motility (diarrhea), increased secretions

(saliva, sweat, gastric acid, intestinal secretions and urine etc) are expected due to vikasi, teekshna and chedi.

Yogavahi:Yogavahi is the guna which is said to be catalytic (?) in nature. It carries the qualities of the adjoin molecules and enhances their actions also by carrying with it without losing their own inherent quality. Many alkaloids and other molecules are having a free end chain which is active and combined with other compounds, by this mechanism they are easily transported into cells and later when they are detached each individual molecules exert their own actions

Bheshaja kalpana-Visha samyoga:

Ideal qualities of formulations is/are a drug or a formulation is prepared by keeping in mind about the rasa, guna, veerya, vipaka and actions of these over the dosha and dhatus. Thus usually medicines are said as Deha-Avirodhi i.e. that which is not against the physiology of the body. To ensure better actions following qualities are attributed to bheshaja.

Formulation should be efficient even in its minimal dose (Alpa Maatra) should act on the vitiated doshas present in multiple systems (bahu dosha hara) to the Drug Metabolism. i.e. ADME of the drugs- Absorption, Distribution, Metabolism and also Excretion (maha vega).¹⁰An ideal drug should be such that it should be eliminated from the body without any residues. A formulation should have a sufficient potency (ushna and teekshna) to reach the target drug site (sookshamanu srotas) and act there, then only doshas will be alleviated from those srotas.

Hence to say an ideal formulation, it should possess Laghu guna -(low molecular weight, easy for digestion), Sookshma and Teekshna guna (should penetrate till the khavaigunya), Aashu- quick acting, Alpa maatra, and act on multisystem (bahu dosha hara)

Thus visha possess all these prime qualities, and hence acharyas said it as uttama bhaishajya.¹¹ Apart from this the drug also possesses properties such as Vyavayi, Vikasi, and Yogavahi which are the beneficiary effects expected from visha.

Similarities between Visha and Bheshaja is that, Visha is said to be or should be used when diseases are not cured even by the administration of Rasaoushadhis (Alchemical drugs) at the end stage of conditions (pravruddha dosha prakopa), visha should be administered along with formulations which are indicated in such conditions.¹² When the drugs fail to reach the target sites, they fail to exhibit the pharmacological actions. Hence in such conditions visha is given to make sure that the formulations reach the target site and produces the pharmacological effects.

In a formulation small quantity of samana veerya dravya will be more beneficial than having viruddha virya dravya in larger quantity. The formulation efficacy may also be enhanced by (samyoga) adding of the desired drug, (vishlesha) removal of the drug, considering the (kaala), the (samskara) processing needed, and the method of administration.¹³

It is said that even a potent drug can act as a fatal poison when used in a manner that is not recommended and when a fatal poison is used in recommended manner act as a potent medicine.¹⁴ Hence while using any poison as a medicine or in any formulation, one should give prime importance to the Roga and Rogi bala, Desha, Kaala etc. If anything goes wrong in that the patient may land in complications.¹⁵

The Contraindications while using visha are dravyas which are katu, amla, lavana rasa pradhana, taila, sleeping during day time (divasvapna), exposure to cold wind (anila), exposure to high temperature (aatapa), varsha rutu, durdina.¹⁶

Under following circumstances one can receive visha bheshaja i.e. one who has undergone shodhana, satvika purusha, in sheeta and vasanta rutu; in the morning after the sunrise, in serious or emergency conditions visha can be used in Greeshma rutu also.¹⁷

Visha bheshaja prayoga should be avoided in- one who is in anger, suffering from klaibya,

thirst, hunger. Debilitated by excessive walking or disease. The one who is pregnant

(Garbhini), young (baala), old (Vruddha), emaciated and the diseases involving marma.¹⁸

When visha is utilised properly, it can be administered in diseases like Nava jvara, Jeerna jvara, Vishama jvara, Raktapitta, Shvasa, Kasa, Hikka, Chardi, Kshaya, Grahani, Mutrakricchra, Udavarta, Asmari, Gulma, Shoola, Kushta, Vicharchika, Shvitra, Moodagarbha, Timira, Pilla roga, Karana shoola, Khalitya, Palitya, Dushta vrana, Apachi, Sarpavisha, Lootavisha, Kitavisha, Gara visha.¹⁹ which shows the wide potentiality of the therapeutic values of visha.

Conclusion:

Visha which is having the extravagant properties when used in the formulation after proper shodhana samskara considering the yoga, ayogya, pathya and apathyas will be efficacious and the desired effect will be seen in the short period by which we can use this in clinical practice to treat the diseases whether acute or chronic.

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