

CONCEPT OF AGNI – IN AYURVEDA AND IT'S IMPORTANCE

The metabolic function of Agni i.e. dehadhatwagni holds the same vital position in fundamental structure of the ayurvedic concept as that of the tridosas and this is amply demonstrated by well-known definition of swasthya, which equate the normality of dosic balance with that of Agni balance in an individual. Not only that, the importance of dehadhatwagni is further emphasized by the text when they described etiopathology of serious ailments. They described vitiation of the related Agni *

In ayurveda Agni word oftenly come with the dehadhatwagni. Dehadhatu is one that's responsible for maintainence, protection and construction of body. Agni, on the other hand, is involved in the formation of various tissues.

. In Bhagvad Gita, Lord Krishna says' *
*aham vaisvanaro bhutva
praninam deham asritah
pranapana-samayuktah
pacamy Annam catur-vidham*

"I am the fire of digestion in the bodies of all living entities, and I with the help of prana & apan, digest the four kinds of foodstuff." That is Bhaksya, Bhojya, Lehya, and Choshya.

The Agni is called "vaishavanaragni" or sometimes "jatharagni" Sushruta called sadhakagni or sadhakpitta and narayanupanishada said like "agni is situated in the heart and is responsible for maintaining the heat of the entire body." Further they describe this body has nine openings and circulatory systems. Jiva induced by his prarabdha makes effort to own his body after getting entrance in the space of heart. His first effort produced it and this is called ojas or

sadhakagni following which the pranas are created. Maharushi atraya called it aakashagni and susruta called it sadhakagni or sadhakpitta.

The sounds produced by Agni are called “jwala shubda” it is sounding like bhak bhak. If you are aware of this similar sound, you can hear when you stand near by any boiler or chimney or any ygnakunda or when they pump the air in the boiler and ignite the fire, sound coming like bhak bhak—same sound you can hear in the body with your both hands closing the ears. So truly Punarvashu atreya also called it bad prognosis of pt. if he can't hear the sound like that. Modern physician consider this sound the heart beat.

Anyways, back to the point, Agni according to ayurveda is an important concept for any physician who wants to treat pt. When we are talking about Agni, most of us think about digestive metabolism, we call it jatharagni. Does the word Agni means limited to jatharagni only or not? It's a little confusing. So many times ayurveda texts talks about agni that is jatharagni or pachakagni or pittagni, but in the whole context, agni is situated in the center of all anabolism and catabolism or one can say, all metabolism is Agni. In ayurveda text particularly charaksamhita or kaychikitsa they described 13 types of Agni. Five bhatukagni, seven dhatvagni and one jatharagni. They consider jatharagni is the center of all Agni

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Translation: lifespan, complexion, strength, health, enthusiasm, corpulence, luster, immunity, energy, heath process and vital breathe- all these depends on body fire. One dies if his fire is extinguished. If it is functioning properly, one may live long free from disorder. Get it ill if it is deranged hence Agni is the root cause of all for health.

Panch bhutagni:-

According to the physical concept of ayurveda both the human body and food that goes to built our body, it is pancha bhautica in structure

.But inspite of the basic identity of ultimate components of food and consumer-human body, The final and finish protoplasmic matter are physically, physiologically and psychologically too different than the food. That agency has to be postulated to initiate the process of metabolism culminating in the conversion of the simple constitution of food into the highly complex and specialized human tissue. This agency consists of the 5 agnis of the respective 5 bhutas.

Now we try to understand how each portion of the food disgest with respected Agni.

1. Digestion of aakash portion of food—susruta called sathakagni and aakashagni are the same. Actually when the jivatma tries to manifest, Agni is produced even before the aakash came into the being. This sadhakagni is responsible for digestion of akashbhuta portion of food. No sooner, the food is digested then it reaches udhva amashaya and that increase the activity of the heart through which satakagni is transferred to the circulation and this Agni helps the digestion of aakash portion of the food.

2. Digestion of vayu portion: this Agni residing in the upper part of pakavasaya is responsible of digestion of vayu and call as vayagni. Maharushicharak quote that, samanagni seated as it is in the swadavaha and jalavaha strotas and bringing out of the bhrajakapitta of skin helps the digestion of vayu portion of our food when the vayu agni is uniformly spread the skin gets luster when the agni is deranged there is a decoloration of skin and disturbances in the sense of touch-sparsha. Sense of touch is a function of vayu .Application of cold neutralize Agni induces vata pracopa in the form of shivering and application of heat relieves it. When a person got feared or terribly excited, there is a vaat prakopa we seen.

Now this is a point of research to establish relation between adrenal secretion “pumping” and vagus nerve exertion ends in shivering the body and cooling of the extremities of the skin. How?

Another example,

Why the application of cologne water reduces temperature of skin during fever. Why the application of brandy on the skin heats the body, we have to mind that they both have a unique quality of aakashguna “evaporating”. Brandy has the hidden heat so its application heats up the body and visa versa with cologne water. *3

3. Disgestion of tejus protion of food: Every type of Agni has tejus guna, then why is it a different tejus Agni? Because, it has a dominance of teja. The main function of tejus is prakash “visual perception”. Roop is the main quality. We all know that pitta seated in the eyes-aalochakpitta-is responsible for the visual perception. This Agni digest tejus portion of the food, but now the question is that what is the relation between allochakpitta seated in the eyes and pachakpitta produced by krom-pancreas. We all know about diabetic retinopathy. Why the Agni mandata seated in agnashaya pachakpitta reduces aalochakapitta and vice versa pachakpitta nourishes aalochakpitta

4 Yat Satve Yat Satvam anvayah, Yadbhave yadbhavo vyatirekah”

This unvaya vyatirac principle shows that pachakpitta nourishes aalochakpitta. So, susruta says pachakpitta which is secretion of pancreas is tejusagni. Tejus qualities are tikshna, Ruksha, ushna, vishad, lagu, tikta, katuvipik and daha paka and varnaprakashak-burning digestive better for complexsion. Same as Chitraka, haldi, shilajatu have, so we use in this tejusagni kshya. There are many researches on insulin metabolism with our tejusagni.

4. Digestion of jaliya portion of food: Both charaka and susruta accept that rasa derived from digested food is transformed into rakta by means of particular Agni. This Agni also helps in the digestion of all other jaliya portion of food, namely in rusa rakta Lasika etc. Chakrapani also mentioned that the rusa derived after the amasaya is

circulated throughout the body by the action hridaya. Is separated of its mutra portion by gavini where after this rusa is called posyarasa, which nourishes all the dhatus.

5. Digestion of purthvi portion of food: Because food is punchmahabhuta, rasa and rukta derived from food, also punchamabhuta. Susruta shows the partihiva quality present in rukta purisha and pitta of pittashaya. When the quality of vishra is lost in purish and pitta they form stone like body. Since the purisha of ahar is colored by pitta it is logical to conclude that pitta of pittashaya is the partivagni, responsible of digestion of parthiv portion of food.

Thus we described all the punchmahabhutagni. Basically shushruta Pachak pittas are not different from punchmahabhutagni.

Jatharagni: - The one occurring between pakwashaya & amashaya. Although 5 types of pitta and is composed of 5 bhutas, situated in this pakwashaya and amashaya – we call it grahani. Jatharagni has more of the quality of tejo bhuta. It digests food and isolates the refines and waste products and helps the rest of the pittas. This pachakagni situated at grahani. Now, so many Acharya have different views about grahani. Punarvashu atreya concurs with Sushruta opinion that is the sixth pittadharakala situated between pakwa and amashaya as grahni. Dalhana points out nabhi are grahani. Hamedri said the grahani is between the amashaya and pakwashaya.

But all said pitta is release in grahanians this is responsible for digesting food and that is important for us. So, all the five bhutagni by the name of vaishwanara and in the form of pachakagni situated in grahani. The food first split into the simpler substances (Sanghat Bheda Sanghat Vishirna) ** by jatharagni and the five bhutagni later digest their portion. So this jatharagni is the master of all the agnis**

Thus increase or decreases of other Agni is depended on this digestive fire. Hence once should maintain it carefully by taking properly the whole some food – diet and drinks because on its maintainence depends on the maintenance of life span and strength.

One thing I has to mention that, in most of our mind & belief, when the word Agni came, we think about Jatharagni. Is that only Agni describe in Ayurveda.No, we have to consider ‘KAY’ Agni, and that is not only that 13 types but kaphagni, pittagni & vatagni too.

Though, we all called “kay chikitshek”

-‘Jathara: praninam Agni: kay iti abhidhiyate/Ya: tam chikitshet sidentam sa vie Kaychikitsa: //-Acharya BHOJ

Kay is jatharagni, so whomever is treating this, is Kaychikitsa-A physician.

Anyways, now we talk about dhatvagni. What is dhatus? We all know ***7

Dhatu- a substance, whichever contain body structure nourishing and strengthening him. Not only that, it produces other things like this that is dhatu or deha dhatu.

As we all know there are seven dhatu and so there are seven dhatvagni.

After the eating of food, chew with our teeth and soak with lalastravah (kladak kapha), with the help of pranavayu (to swallow) goes to annvaha strotas to udhava amashaya (stomach). Then churn out food (Sanghat Bheda Sanghat Vishirna) * digest with Jalagni – ranjakkpitta, become lavana amla. Further rolling down, digest by parthaivagni-yakrutapitta – biles and become little amla – sour. Agnashaya (klom)’s secretion of katuk tejashagni digest their tejas portion, this tejas amsha of food – we call it annarasa nourishes all the dhatus one by one***9 than after it’s vayviya ansha digest by vayagni

in adho pakwashaya and after digestion by vayagni malla kitta bhag purisha coming out of the anus. Anarasha absorb by intensine goes to liver by pratiharinishira there digest by raktagnithen with the help of samanvayu goes through adhara mahashira to heart. From heart through dhamini circulated with deha klade (Dhatu sar kitta mala bhaga) goes to left and right kidney to filter it , separate urine from then, go back to heart with the dhatu sar ojas that nourishes the heart. This way rasarakta dhatu and its mala nourishes by annarasa.

For example, any plant to grow, it needs proper weather, proper field, fertilizer, and seed same way to produce a dhattu also needs same four like field (strotas), heat (agni), food and fertilizer, dhatu seed so this heat is dhatvagni*10** all the body's metabolism conducted by enzymes and hormones are dhatvagni.

To produce a particular dhatu, particular strotas are the field, and that strotas productive Agni (metabolism) is that dhatu's Agni. So all the dhatu are ripening in their strotas by their own Agni. In all that dhatvagni rasagni is very essential and important because after ripen by rasagni, all the dhatu will nourish.

11** There are three vipaka ,so ripen anarasa received by the liver through pratiharini shira also analyze by 3 vipaka some of its vipaka converts in to sharkara- glycogen and stays in t he liver other remaining goes back into rakta and circulative system. Most of the amla and vipaka secrete as rakta mala comes to liver and gallbladder, rest of the vipaka stays in the rakta to maintain body heat. Madhura dravya (carbohydrate) and sneha (fat) both are parthiva jala pradhan mostly vipak madhura. Both digest and ripen by parthivagni (liver secreted pitta -biles) so in liver ripen foods (annarasa) divided and its kattu amla agnaya portion convert into parthivagni -bile.

**12 mostly, we see all the disease, there is a dhatvagni vikar. So we discuss about dhatvagnivikar nidan, purvarupa and samprapti.

Charak described ghor-amannavisham. What is ghor-amannavisham? It's a annarjirna and rasasheshajirna both. Everybody knows difference about annajirna and rasa-sheshajirna. *13*

Before the digestion of earlier taken food, if one eat then this ingredient of food mix with semi digested food and become rasasheshajirna and Annarjirna is that if ripen, semi-ripen –semi digest food is contaminated by kapha, pitta, vata that is annajirna . Aamarjirna with kapha, vidaghatajirna with a pitta and vishtambhagirna with vatta

So rashasheshajirna is a condition occurred during whole digestive process from annavaha strotas to rasavaha strotas, from GI track to liver and liver to heart. Annajirna is condition of only annavaha strotas *** is related with amashaya

Now back to nidan of dhatvagni***14(ch.chi.chap.15-42-44)

So the nidan of the dhatuvikar is that annavisha- aamavisha – unripe digested food – goes to any of the strotas, get vitiated, dhatvagni vitiated, dhatu production vitiated that strotas agni – metabolism of that strotas disrupted --.....

Now the purvaropa of dhatvagni .All the signs and symptoms of annavisham, that are dhatvagni vikar purvaropa **15(ch.chi.chap.15-45-49)* stasis of food, malaise, headache, fainting, giddiness, stiffness in the back and waist, yawning, bolyache, thirst, fever, vomiting, griping, anorexia, and improper digestion of food. This all are purvaropa of dhatvagni.

Now we come to the treatment part of dhatvagni. In our ayurveda text every type of dhatvagnivikar they use gold preparation. In vedic literature and marabharata suvarna (gold) was a son of Agni (shurya-sun). We also can treat all of them with dipan, pachan aushdham, and langhanam, abhyanga or panchakarma upakrama.

Now the last, what is modern correlation of Agni? It is very hard to explain because our basic concept and modern science concept are very different. We don't have to think like their way. Our vision for insight the disease are far differ from modern science .But we all have to consider that today's science is based on modern technology.

Modern science is a very big beneficiary of technology and we are still in the bullock cart arena. We have to do our research in our field based and support with this cutting edge technology. So if we found some correlation with modern laboratory findings, we can more penetrate with our own vision and maybe patient will understand well and more susceptible with our therapy. Our scholars have to find relation between c-reactive protien and Agni vikar –Aama with documented data, with cholesterol and Dhatvagni vikar, etc.

In my view, Agni concept has a great potential to understand all this, the ball is now ours ayurveda scholar's court, they research more and more with all their techniques and establish correlations with laboratory values.

Maybe I am a little more enthusiastic or optimistic but we can see a little light coming from this possibility. As our AAPNA website said ayurveda is a lamp at door to enlighten inner and outer world but with this lamp, we have to find switches and conceal wiring in our modern house.

Truth is always one and so cosmic truth, whether described in Vedas, ayurveda or modern science will be the same. This compilation and its method of research throw much light and pave the way for the scientific coordination of the fundamentals of the ayurvedic and concepts of the modern science. This compilation and further research in the same direction can bring the two great medical systems of the two great civilizations of the world; the Aryans and Greek civilizations nearer to each other, to comprehend better, contrive adjustment in harmony, combine for noble purpose and consolidate

the world's wisdom to make the world physically more sound, healthy and happy as enjoined in. I summaries with RUGveda Mantra-

**16*

Come together; speak in harmony and May your minds see alike, even as the gods of yore in agreement look for their offering.

Uniform be your deliberation and uniform being the result you achieve; uniform be your mind and uniform our thought. A common prayer do I utter forth for you and common oblation do I offer for you.