

## “SWABHAVOPARAMA VAADA” AND EXPLORATION OF ITS APPLIED ASPECTS

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the ancient Holistic healing system encompasses several profound concepts and philosophies. One of them is ‘swabhavoparamavaada’. It is an important concept contributed by Acharya Charaka. The term ‘Swabhava’ means *prakruti* or the nature of the substance, and the term ‘Uparama’ means destruction. The word for natural ‘Swabhavoparama’ stands destruction or self-destruction. The process of self-healing is termed as ‘Swabhavoparama Vaada’. Birth, growth and senescence which ultimately lead to death and are inevitable. This physiological event is going on at every moment of our life. Nobody can get rid of this unavoidable process. Destruction is a passive phenomenon as *kala* (time) moves continuously, passes away, and is irreversible. It also emphasizes to disturb the Continuum of the cause that is ‘*Hetur avartnanam*’ which is removing the causative

factors (*hetus*). It creates the absence of positive factors called ‘*Nidana parivarajana*’ which hampers the progress of the disease. For every physician it is essential to understand this phenomenon to build a healthy society. This article explains about the Theory of innate destruction and its various applied aspects in treatment.

**KEYWORDS:** Swabhavo parama vada, kshanika vada, swabhava vada, padamshika karma, swabhavika vyadhi, langhana chikitsa.

### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda deals with the biological processes, predominantly concerning the human body.

This may be why *Charaka's* treatise discusses the self destruction and its place and utility for physicians. *Swabhavoparama vaada* is a theory of innate/self destruction.<sup>[1]</sup> The 'Swabhav vada' of *charvaka Darshana* and 'Kshanika Vada' of *Bauddha Darshan* are essential to consider in the light of concept of *svabhavoparama vaada*. For every manifestation a specific cause is essential. The same is applicable to human health. Effect of exposure to 'vishama' *Hetu* and conversely applies to 'sama' dhatus. The things which manifest will undergo destruction due to their inherent nature there is no need for a separate cause for the destruction. This *Vada* explains the importance of intervention and continuous practices of good diet and lifestyle to preserve health and manage diseases. *Ayurveda* as ancient realistic science it is based on different schools of philosophies and has a strong scientific background. Essential principles are laid down after many times of experimentation. This is the reason that these principles are still valid even in present Era.

Functional, pharmacological, psychic and physiological principles of *Ayurveda* are based on fundamentals of Indian philosophy like '*Panchabhoutik siddhanta, triguna, tridosha shatkriyakaala*' concepts and various other principles. Disturbance in the equilibrium of *dhatus* causes imbalances of *dhatus* of the body and on the other hand the maintenance of the former maintains the equilibrium of the latter once. Purpose of this study is to understand the theory of innate destruction and its applied aspects in maintenance of good health.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1) To understand the concept of *Svabhavoparama vaada*.
- 2) To explore the applied aspects of *Swabhavoparama vaada*.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

*Ayurvedic* texts like *brihatrayee* specially *CharakaSamhita* and its commentaries.

## Literature Review

- *Acharya Chakrapani* described that there is a cause in *samyata* and *vishamta* of *dhatus* but there is no cause in their destruction and this is known as '*Swabhavparamavada*' and he compares it with '*Kshana bhangura*' *vada*. But *Acharya Charaka* was a former to *Buddha*, so inference can be made that '*Swabhavoparama vaada*' is original contribution of *Acharya Charaka*.
- *Acharya Gangadhar* explains destruction of qualities/form is known as *Swabhavoparama*

*vada*’ and he supports the view of ‘*Svabhavo Paramvaada*’, that the *Dehadhaaraka dhaatus* are produced from their cause and disturbance in these *hetu* will produce imbalance in the *dhaatu* also.

- By giving example, *Acharya Chakrapani* supports view, *Deepaka* require a cause that is oil, thread and *deepaka* etc for its continuation but it doesn't need any cause for its destruction which is automatic.

### Need For The Study

*Swabhava* means a state of being, innate or inherent disposition, nature, impulse, and spontaneity, natural state or constitution.<sup>[2]</sup>

*Uparama*- means to cease from motion, be inactive or quiet, stop, cessation or discontinuance, ending, desisting from, or death. In other words *Uparama* means *vinaasha*, destruction or abstinence or, discontinuance.<sup>[3]</sup>

*Vaada* means discussion. Thus the word '*swabhavoparama vada*' means discussion on the theory *Acharya* of innate or natural destruction.

Destruction of any object's nature, qualities, or form is known as '*Swabhavoparamvaada*'.<sup>[4]</sup> *Swabhavoparam vada* forms the basis for managing causative factors

(*hetuviparita chikitsa*). Thus all beings are produced due to certain causative factors but they perish automatically without caring for any cause. *Acharya Chakrapani* explained that although the *Dhatu vaishamya* in the body will be destroyed naturally.<sup>[5]</sup> But if there is no cause present which produce *Dhatu samayta*, the *dhatuvaishamya* will dominate due to its continuous production from its cause and on the other hand presence of *Dhatu samaya Janaka Hetu* will produce *Dhatu samaya* and *Dhatu vaishamya* will be destroyed automatically and will not produce again. Physicians only try to maintain equilibrium of *Dhaatu*'s and by this phenomenon the diseases perish automatically. This in fact is the prime duty of the physician. Purpose of such action is to prevent the disturbance of the equilibrium of *Dhaatu*'s and maintain their equilibrium.

### Utility of The Concept

The *Swabhava-vada* of *Charvak* school and *kshanikavada* of the *Buddha* school of philosophy are essential to consider in the light of *Swabhavoparama vada*.

According to *Charvak's* philosophy, *Swabhava* is the instrumental cause (*nimitta karana*) for evolution. Thus, *swabhava vada* is accepted as a cause of origin or manifestation. In *Charak samhita*, *swabhava* is accepted in many places. In the present context, the doctrine of *Swabhava vada* is taken as the logical foundation behind *destruction*.<sup>[6]</sup>

***Kshanika vada* (theory of momentary): Vasubandhu explains the below.**

"An object, which possesses the nature of coming into being and vanishing immediately without any interval, is called *kshanika*".<sup>[7]</sup> Thus *anitya* (impermanence or momentariness) is a central concept of *Buddhism*. Any matter in this universe is momentary. It tells about the uncertain and unstable nature of the things in this universe which undergo continuous.

### Transformation and Destruction

Though the matter is momentary, by continuous analogous transformations that occur every second, we assume that it is the same substance. All these theories form the basis for the construction of *Swabhavoparama vada*. Being a medical health care system, the prime objective of *Ayurveda* is to maintain the equilibrium state of *dhatu*s and it has the impact of various ancient schools of Indian philosophical teachings on its foundational structure. Thus, *Acharya Atreya* establishes the importance of treatment by constructing the theory of *Swabhavoparama vada*. *Swabhava* is the cause behind destruction. The view of the doctrine mentioned above of continual decay of things (*kshanikavada*) is being acknowledged to construct the role and utility of the treatment. Although the imbalance of *dhatu*s is destroyed transiently, the role of *chikitsa* is admitted necessary to produce homogeneous *dhatu*s. Thus, based on the theory of causation, the role of treatment could be established to disrupt the disequilibrium and restore and maintain the continuum of *sama dhatu*. Thus *Swabhavoparama vada* is built on the three basic philosophical doctrines viz.

1. *Swabhava* (nature) is the cause/reason of the destruction of all things (*swabhava-vada*)
2. Every manifestation needs a cause (cause-effect relationship- *karya-karanasiddhant*)
3. All the things in this universe are momentary (momentariness-*kshanika vada*)

### Contemporary approach Apoptosis

In a multicellular organism, the cells are highly organized and regulated too. If cells are no longer needed, they are removed through a tightly regulated cell destruction process. This process is called as programmed cell death or apoptosis. Apoptosis (Greek word) meaning "falling off," as leaves from a tree. Apoptosis typically happens in cells that have been around in the body long.

Enough to be worn out, so they need to make way for nice, new young cells. Programmed cell death, including apoptosis is required for normal cell turnover and tissue homeostasis.<sup>[8]</sup> In apoptosis a suicide' program is activated within the cell, leading to fragmentation of the DNA, shrinkage of the cytoplasm, membrane changes, and cell death without lysis or damage to neighboring cells. This process shows alteration on the cell surface. This acts as an indicator. In response to this, it was phagocytosed by either a neighboring cell or a macrophage. They can also kill themselves when damaged or stressed by triggering and activation from within the cell.

Apoptosis, can be activated in physiological or pathological conditions and free the organism from undesired cells. Cell proliferation and physiological cell death are highly coordinated and tightly controlled during normal development. Apoptosis takes part in several processes during embryonic development. It is now apparent that cell death and cell death-like processes are likewise major aspects of gametogenesis, organogenesis, tissue turnover, etc. In developing vertebrate, nervous systems, for example, up to half or more of the nerve cells normally die soon after they are formed. In a healthy adult human, billions of cells die in the bone marrow and intestine every hour. In adult tissues, cell death exactly balances cell division. If this were not so, the tissue would grow or shrink. Thus, we can say that the regulation of cell death is as necessary as the regulation of cell life maintain a healthy individual.<sup>[9]</sup> In the context of the human body, apoptosis can be based on the theory of '*Swabhavoparama vada*'. Both of these physiological processes converge to the point of self-destruction'. Apoptosis is a highly regulated and controlled process that confers advantages during an organism's lifecycle. Homeostasis is necessary to maintain health, but the natural death of every living object is inevitable. So, the cells adopt the mechanism of programmed cell death. In adulthood, about 10 billion cells die every day to keep balance with the number of new cells arising from the body's stem cell populations. This normal homeostasis is not just a passive process but is regulated through apoptosis.<sup>[10]</sup>

### **Autophagy**

Autophagy plays an essential role in maintaining cellular homeostasis, and dysregulation may participate in the pathological process of many human diseases. Autophagy is responsible for degrading long-lived proteins and damaged or superfluous organelles. It is also part of the cellular response to intracellular and extracellular stress. This process plays an important role in cellular protein metabolism, waste removal, structural reconstruction, growth, and

development, it may be considered a cellular 'recycling factory' that promotes energy efficiency through ATP generation and mediates damage control by removing non-functional proteins and organelles. Fasting therapy works on the principles of autophagy.

Importance and utility of swabhavoparamvaada. Swabhavoparama vada ascertains the importance of Chikitsa and the duties of a qualified physician. This concept also emphasizes to disrupt the continuum of the cause (Hetoh avartanam) which is removing the causative factors (hetus). It creates the absence of causative factors called 'nidana-varjana'. It hampers the progression of the disease. Abstinence from disease-causing factors has preventive and curative aspects. Nidana parivarjana plays a vital role in breaking down the pathogenesis at every stage of 'Shat – kriyakala'.<sup>[11]</sup>

It can be included under non-drug therapy '(adravyabhoota chikitsa)'. It can easily conceal the manifestation of vishama *dhatu*s and break the chain of pathogenesis.<sup>[12]</sup> The concept of Swabhavoparama vada helps to accomplish Dhatusamyata. The same elements, whose wholesome combination gives rise to the well-being of human beings (purusha), bring about various kinds of diseases when combined in an unwholesome manner. Qualities of the fundamental elements (*panchamahabhuta*) are responsible for the equilibrium state of all the units of the body, thus maintaining the state of equilibrium of *dhatu*s. While the negative (opposite) qualities of the same mahbhuta lead to various diseases. It is in accordance with the theory of 'Swabhavoparama vaada'. A physician must know the characteristics of panchamahabhuta, body components, food, and various therapeutic medicines. Observation of the changes in characteristics with an objective to maintain equilibrium status makes a successful treatment. The destruction of previously vitiated *dhatu*s will take place by swabhava. Further continuous consumption of a wholesome diet will lead to the formation and maintenance continuum of the equilibrium state of *dhatu*s (sama dhatu santan-parampara).

#### **\*Sharira as an example**

As per the definition of *sharira* (body), it naturally degenerates every moment. This supports the theory of natural destruction.

**\*Application in understanding the root cause of disease-** Manifestation of any disease has a specific cause. This reminds of *Buddha's* philosophy's theory of impermanence and momentariness. Simultaneously, there is an *vriddhi* and *kshaya* in the *dhatu*s of opposite *Guna*'s. The natural factors maintain the state of '*Dhatusamyata*'. When some factors



increase *dhatu*, the other opposite factors in the body reduce them up to normal level. When properly administered *Chikitsa* bring both the reduced and increased *dhatu*s to their normal states by reducing the increased ones and increasing the diminished ones.

**\*Application in the preservation of 'Dhatusamyata'** - When treatment is given conducive to the continuity of health, the pleasure (*sukha*) is continued. Natural destruction destroys suffering which is in the form of disease. Due to the absence of a cause of suffering, the disease (illness) will not arise. Because of the momentary nature of elements (*bhava – padarth*), neither the state of equilibrium of *dhatu*s, nor the imbalanced state of *dhatu*s is brought to normalcy. The causative factors determine the equilibrium or imbalance of the *dhatu*s.

**\*Relation with vishesha principle.** The *Swabhavoparama vada* can be considered in the light of another principle quoted by *Acharya Charaka* i.e. *Hraasa hetuh visheshaccha. (cha su 1/44)*. The dis-similar or opposite substance or action or properties cause a reduction. At first sight, these two principles seem contradictory because if destruction is the natural process, then what is the need for the *visheshaprinciple*? If *dhatu*s are vitiated due to excessive increase (*dhatu vriddhi avastha*), the physician will use the *vishesha tatva* to resume the *Dhatusamyata*. As per the *swabhavoparama vada*, natural destruction is a continuous process due to the momentary nature of *dhatu*s. Hencefor destruction, no medicine is needed. But intervention is required to break the chain of manifestation of *prakupita dhatu*s. In the present case, the *vishesha tatva* should be used to restore the *Dhatusamyata*. *Charaka* illustrates the same in the explanation of *Swabhavoparama vada*.

**\*Swabhavika vyadhi (Naturally Occurring Diseases)**

*Swabhava* (nature) is a cause behind many specific phenomenon. Death is a natural phenomenon. Naturally occurring diseases due to *swabhava* (nature) depend on *kaala* (time). Examples are *kshudha* (hunger), *pipasa* (thirst), *jaravastha* (aging), and *mrityu* (death). *Sushruta* states that the *swabhavik vyadhi* (natural diseases) like *jara* (ageing), *mrityu* (death) occur without reason as the time (*kala*) proceeds. These are unavoidable. *Swabhavoparama vada* is the doctrine used to explain the destruction phenomenon.

**\*Padamshika krama (sequence to adopt good habits and discard bad habits)**

This is a good example of *Swabhawoparama vada*. A sequential regimen is prescribed to adopt good habits and gradually give up bad habits. By gradually reducing unwholesome practices

and adopting the wholesome practices in proper sequence, the unwholesome practices will not recur and wholesome will be fully adopted. The continuum of the disequilibrium stage of *dhatu* (*vishama dhatu*) will be destroyed. This will prevent the recurrence of vitiated *dosha* and expedite recovery from the *disease* state. Such practice establishes the need and importance of maintaining the continuum of wholesome practices.<sup>[13]</sup>

**\*Karmaja vyadhi (diseases due to deeds in a previous life)**

This is a group of diseases caused by the sinful acts of the previous *life*. The causative factors for this category of diseases are not at all traceable. The diseases caused by providence (actions of past life) will be relieved only after the effect of such actions, comes to an end (decay of *karma*).<sup>[14]</sup> The theory of natural destruction appropriately explains the rationale behind this concept.

**\*Application in langhana chikitsa and upawasa (reduction therapies and fasting)**

Fasting is one of the methods of *langhana* therapy, which is efficacious in treating many disorders.<sup>[15]</sup> It prevents most chronic degenerative and chronic inflammatory diseases. Fasting-induces neuroendocrine activation and hermetic stress response, increased production of neurotrophic factors, reduced mitochondrial oxidative stress, general decrease of signals associated with aging, and promotion of autophagy.<sup>[16]</sup>

Fasting is a powerful approach to ignite digestion, which removes accumulated toxins in the body, removes the obstruction of the *srotas*, and ignites the *agni* (digestive capacity). This process helps to combat illness. Fasting therapy works on the fundamentals of *Swabhavoparama vada*. In the absence of cause (unwholesome food), the future manifestation of *vishama dhatu* is prohibited by abstaining from food intake. The destruction of previously formed '*Aam* and *vishama dhatu*' takes place naturally.

**\*Application in the cause of diseases**

The doctrine of causation (*karya-karana siddhanta*) has a vital role in the philosophical foundation. The cause-effect theory is accepted by all philosophical schools, including *Ayurveda*, with different viewpoints. For every manifestation, a specific cause is essential. The same is applicable to the continuation of human health. *Dhatu vaishamya* (disequilibrium state of *dhatu*) is an effect of exposure to *vishama hetu* (unwholesome regimens).

Thus all beings have a cause for their creation, but they have no reason for their destruction.



The annihilation or destruction of beings is a natural phenomenon. All the things are produced in the first moment due to certain causative factors. Still, they perish naturally in the very second moment without expecting any cause or causative factor. *Swabhava* is the cause behind destruction. Thus, the disturbance in the state of equilibrium of *dhatu*s by certain causative factors will be momentary. Automatically it will be destructed in the next moment without the help of any therapeutic intervention. So, any deviation from the state of equilibrium of the *dhatu*s be treated as a momentary one. The view of the doctrine mentioned above of continual decay of things (*kshanikavada*) is being acknowledged to construct the role and utility of the treatment. Although the imbalance of *dhatu*s is destroyed transiently, the role of *chikitsa* is admitted necessary to produce homogeneous *dhatu*s. Thus, based on the theory of causation, the role of treatment could be established to disrupt the disequilibrium and restore and maintain the continuum of *sama dhatu*.

*Swabhavoparama vada* explains the importance of intervention and continuous practices of good diet and lifestyle to preserve health and manage diseases.

## DISCUSSION

*Swabhavoparama vada* is adamant about sustaining *Dhatu*s since the alignment will go away after being destroyed by nature. While '*hetu avartanam*', emphasizes getting rid of the *hetu* thus causing *hetu* to disappear which will result in diseases cure.

## CONCLUSION

The rules for the fundamentals of science are provided by the ancient *Darshana*'s. The numerous *Vaada*'s outlines the procedure for deriving laws and explaining various processes. The *Swabhavoparama vaada* places a strong focus on *Dhatu*s and prohibits *hetu* from creating illness. Understanding the aetiopathogenesis and management of illness requires knowledge of *hetu*.

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