

**A BRIEF POSTULATION OF THEORY OF AGNI IN AYURVEDA****Dr. Sachin Prabhakar Nirgude\***

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**ABSTRACT**

According to the fundamental principles of Ayurveda, Agni has an important role to play in the physiological functioning of the body. It is the cause of life, complexion, strength, health, nourishment, lustre, Oja, Teja (energy), and Prana (life energy). Ayurveda has described an important factor of digestion and metabolism in our body as Agni. Ingested food is to be digested, absorbed and assimilated, which is important for the maintenance of life. The term “Agni” is used in the sense of digestion of food and metabolic products. Agni converts food in the form of energy, which is responsible for all the vital functions of our body. 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.

**KEYWORDS:** Agni, Dhatvagni, Jathargni, Metabolism, Digestion.**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda is the ancient Indian system of life sciences and Medicine, its historicity going back to the Vedas. Its classical knowledge and practice is based on its own physics and biology, its unique pro-nature holistic health and disease concepts and diagnostics as well as its own material medica. The entire basic physics and biology of Ayurveda are greatly different from the modern basic sciences and the understanding of the structure and function of human body, the pathology and diagnostics are based on its own theories of Triguna (Sattva- Raja-Tama), Tanmatra, Panchamahabhuta, Tridosha (Vata-Pitta-Kapha) and Agni.

Ayurveda has described an important factor of digestion and metabolism in our body as Agni. 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. Agni converts food in the form of energy, which is responsible for all the vital functions of our body. About the importance of Agni, Acharya Charaka 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.

In Ayurveda, the term “Agni” is used in the sense of digestion of food and metabolic products. Agni converts food in the form of energy, which is responsible for all the vital functions of our body. This agni is not in the form of flame as the terrestrial fire but is in the form of liquid which is called as Pitta in Ayurveda. There is no agni apart from pitta and pitta itself is agni asserts Charaka. Consumption of food may be various forms i.e. eatables, beverages, linctus (licked) and masticable foods, which is wholesome if consumed in suitable quantity and free from contamination. These substances undergo metabolic transformation by the effect of Jatharagni, Bhutagni and Dhatvagni.

Jatharagni is the main principal substance responsible for disease and health. During its normalcy it is responsible for longevity, complexion, strength, health, enthusiasm, well built, luster, immunity (ojas), temperature, other Agni's (bhutagni and dhatvagni) and other vital functions all are dependent on jatharagni. Therefore healthy state of body and diseased condition is entirely dependent on status of agni.

### CONCEPT OF AGNI

Ayurveda has described an important factor of digestion and metabolism in our body as Agni. Agni has been meant to be a sign of life in the body. Agni moves everywhere and metamorphoses substances, burns, assimilates, glitters and grows. Agni is a pivot around which the remaining factors responsible for the maintenance of health and causation of disease as well as decay revolve. In Shabdakalpa druma, 61 synonyms of Agni have been compiled. These synonyms help in explaining the nature and functions of the Agni e.g. Vaishvanara, Sarva Paka, Tanoonpata, Amivachatana, Vishwambhar, Rudra etc.

### Importance of Agni

Bala (strength), varna (colour), swasthya (health), utsaha (enthusiasm), upachaya (development of the body), prabha (complexion), ojas (strength), tejas (valour), vaya (age), and even ayu (life), all depend on Agni and its function (fire-like activity). So long as agni is normal, man can have a healthy and long life, loss of Agni leads to loss of life. Foods containing the nutrient materials of the dhatus can be of help to the dhatus, only after they are digested and absorbed well by the Agni.

### Types of Agnis

Charaka - 13 Agnis

1. Jatharagni – 1
2. Bhutagni – 5
3. Dhatvagni – 7

Sushruta – 5 Agnis

1. Pachakagni
2. Ranjakagni
3. Alochakagni
4. Sadhakagni
5. Bhrajakagni.

Vagbhata – 24 Agnis

1. Aaudaryagni - 1
2. Bhutagnis - 5
3. Dhatvagnis - 7
4. Dhoshagni - 3
5. Malagni - 3
6. Pitta - 5

Sharangadhara - 5 Pittas

1. Pachak
2. Bhrajak
3. Ranjak
4. Alochaka
5. Sadhak

Bhavamishra has mentioned according Acharya Charaka and Vagbhata.

Agni has also been divided into 13 types according to the function and site of action like-

1. Jatharagni – One. Agni present in the stomach and duodenum.
2. Bhutagni – Five. Agni from five basic elements.
3. Dhatwagni – Seven. Agni present, one in each of the seven dhatus.

### **Physiological and Pathological State of Agni**

#### **(a) Samagni**

This is not associated with any dosha and it is called samagni. 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 Dhatus (supportive tissues of the body). Persons having Samagni are always healthy.

#### **(b) Vishamagni**

This is the state in which improper digestion and metabolism takes place which manifest flatulence, abdominal pain, upward movement of vata inside the kosta, 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. Tikshnagni state gives rise to manifestation of vatavyadhi.

#### **(d) Mandagni**

“Mand” means slow. The meaning of the Mandagni is slow / low 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 vyadhi.

## CONCLUSION

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. 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. Further Dhatwagni and bhutagni help for the digestion, absorption and assimilation of food substances into the body. According to Ayurveda, disturbed function of Agni is the root cause of all diseases.

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