

Significance of *Agni* in *Ayurveda* and Its Impact on Human Body

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ABSTRACT

According to *Ayurveda*, *Agni* is important for maintaining bodily homeostasis, bodily functioning, bodily metabolism, and bodily proper functioning. In *Ayurveda*, *Agni* is associated with the body's ability to digest food. *Agni*, or the body's digestive power, is maintained in *Ayurveda* for a variety of reasons. It is maintained primarily because it aids in the body's growth and development. *Agni* is essentially classified into three types, each of which has subtypes. The three primary types that preserve bodily equilibrium are *Jhataragni* (digestive fire), *Bhutagni*, and *Dhatuvagni* (cellular metabolism). Since *Jhataragni* maintains metabolism and *Bhutagni* and *Dhatuvagni* maintain cellular metabolism, they cooperate to keep the body in balance. The primary cause of *Ama* formation, which is the root cause of many diseases, is an imbalance in the physiology of *Agni*. So *Agni* is important for every function of body. About the impact on human body of *Agni*, According to *Acharya Charak*, a person dies when their *Agni* function stops, but when their *Agni* is *Sama*, they are completely healthy and will live a long, happy, healthy existence. However, a person's entire metabolism would be disrupted if his *Agni* were vitiated, leading to illness and poor health. *Agni* is therefore regarded as the *Mool* of life.

KEYWORDS: *Agni, Jhataragni, Bhutagni, Dhatuagni, Ama, Pitta, digestion, Absorption.*

I. INTRODUCTION

According to *Ayurveda*, *Agni* has many derivatives that promote longevity. If *Agni* functions properly, the human life span *Varna* (complexion) maintains the body's color, *Bala* (strength), and person's physical and mental well-being. *Upachaya* (body metabolism) helps to maintain the digestive system and metabolism. *Prabha* (luster) maintains a gentle sheen and glow on the body. *Ojas*, or tissue essence, helps maintain immunity. *Agnayah* supports digestive health, *prana* (life), it maintains the stable life of human being. When a body's *Agni* is

extinguished, it is considered dead (Sharir). Maintaining proper *Agni* levels in the body can lead to long-term health and disease-free living ^[1]. *Agni* is associated with *Pitta*, specifically *Panchakpitta*. The explanation is based on the way it performs *Pakadi Karmas*, which involves digesting food and separating *Sara* from *Kitta*. It's known as *Pachakpitta*. ^[2] *Agni* is having both *Subha Asubha Karma*. As *Subha Karma* is *Pakati, Darshanam, Prakriti, Varan, Moha, Harsha* and *Asubha Karma* are *Apakti, Adarshnam, Bhaya, Vikrta Varan* etc. ^[3] Its seat is *Grahani*, located between *Amashya* and *Pakwashaya*. Food can be consumed in a variety of ways, including drinks, eatables, licked food, and masticable food. The effects of *Jatharagni, Bhutagni*, and *Dhatvagni* cause these substances to undergo metabolic transformation. Since the food being consumed is *Panchabhattika*, *Jatharagni* first stimulates *Bhutagni*; however, it must first be transformed by the corresponding *Bhutagni*. *Dhatvagnis* facilitates tissue metabolism. This promotes tissue growth as well as development, strength, complexion, and happiness. Following the receipt of the appropriate nutrients from metabolized food substances, dhatus continue to function normally. The primary substance that causes both health and disease is *jatharagni*. In its normal state, *jathargni* is in charge of longevity, complexion, strength, health, vigor, well-builtness, luster, immunity (*ojas*), temperature, other *Agni*'s (*bhutagni* and *dhatvagni*), and other essential functions. As a result, the state of *Agni* is the sole determinant of both a healthy and diseased body .

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The main *Ayurvedic* texts used in this study are *Charak Samhita, Susruta Samhita, Astang Sangraha, Astang Hridaya, Bhavprakash, Yogaratnakar, Parameswarappa's Ayurvediya Vikriti Vigyan and Roga Vigyan*, commentaries of *Samhita*'s and current articles.

Concept Of *Agni*-

Agni is a very important factor of our body's digestion and metabolism, according to *Ayurveda*. In *Ayurveda*, the term "*Agni*" refers to the process of breaking down food and metabolic products. Ingestion of food must be digested, absorbed, and assimilated; this is an inevitable part of maintaining life. *Agni* transforms food into energy, which powers all of our body's essential processes.

Regarding the significance of *Agni*, *Acharya Charak* stated that a person dies when their *Agni* function is stopped, and that they would be completely healthy and live a long, happy, and healthy life when their *Agni* function is *sama* (normal). However, a person's entire metabolism would be disrupted if his *Agni* were vitiated, leading to illness and poor health. *Agni* is therefore referred to as the pedestal (*Mool*) of life [4].

According to *Brahmasutra*, *Agni* is a symbol of bodily life. *Agni* travels everywhere, changes materials, burns, absorbs, glitters, and develops. The remaining elements that are in charge of preserving health and causing illness and decay center on *Agni*.

Types of *Agnis* - (Importance of *Agni* and its Impact on Human Body)

Number of *Agnis* varies in various classical *Ayurvedic* texts, as shown below

Charaka has mentioned about 13 *Agnis*. *Jatharagni* – 1 *Bhutagni* – 5, *Dhatvagni* – 7. [5]

- According to *Sushruta*, five types of *Agnis* are illustrated, viz. *Pachakagni*, *Ranjakagni*, *Alochakagni*, *Sadhakagni* and *Bhrajakagni*^[6]. However, there is an indirect reference of five *Bhutagnis* underlying in the brief description made to the transformation of food stuff [7].
- Vaghbata* has described different types of *Agni*, viz. – *Aaudaryagni*-1, *Bhutagnis*^[8]–5, *Dhatvagnis* – 7, *Dhoshagni* – 3 and *Malagni*^[9]–3, *Pitta* -5 .
- Sharangadhara* has recognized five *pittas* only (*Pachak*, *Bhrajak*, *Ranjak*, *Alochaka* and *Sadhak*)^[10].
- Bhavamishra* has followed *Acharya Charaka* and *Vaghbata*^[11]. *Agni* has been divided into 13 types according to the function and site of action. These are:
(a). *Jatharagni* – One *Agni* present in the stomach and duodenum.
(b). *Bhutagni* – Five *Agni* from five basic elements.
(c). *Dhatwagni* – Seven *Agni* present, one in each of the seven *dhatus*.

Accordingly, they are classified into three groups, namely *Jatharagni*, *Bhutagni* and *Dhatvagni*

(a) *Jatharagni*-This *Agni* is considered the *Pradhyantam* (principal fire) of all *Agnis*. This *Agni* is located in *Amashya* and contains food. This stimulates the digestive functions. The *Kala* at the *Pakvashya*'s entrance is *Pittdhara*, which serves as a pathway for food to enter the stomach. *Jatharangni* is the energy that fuels the *Paka* of *Dhatus* process, which occurs during tissue metabolism. It regulates and balances the other twelve *Agni* in the body, all of which are equally important. *Chakrapani* explains that *Jatharagni* is a treatment for the body. Its primary function is the digestion of food. *Agni* converts *Ahaar* to *Ahaar Rasa*^[12]. The *Ahara Rasa* will form the remaining *Dhatus*. Modern *Jatharagni* refers to the process of food digestion in the stomach and intestines through chemical reactions and peristaltic movements.

(b) *Bhutagni*-The *Agni* acts at the cellular level of the body. The body is composed of *Panchmahabutas*, which include *Akasha* (vacant spaces) and *Vayu* (air). *Agni* (digestive fire), *Jala* (watery material in the body, such as lymph and blood), and *Pritivi* (solid material in body organs) are the three types of spaces in the tissues. *Butagni* is categorized into five types that target *Panchmahabutas*. They include *Parthivagni*, *Aappyagni*, *Agneyagni*, *Vayavyagni*, and *Nabhasagni*. *Agni* are the building blocks of all body cells and tissues. These are the fundamental building blocks of the body's structure. *Agni* particles made of *Panchmahabutas* only affect specific parts of food. After digestion, these elements in food nourish the body's own *Bhutas*.^[13] The liver's enzymatic functions in food digestion, including carbohydrate, protein, and fat metabolism, provide energy for the body's biochemical functions.

(c) *Dhatvagni*-*Dhatvagni* is used in the formation of *Dhatu*.
seven types of *Dhatvagni* : *Rasagni*, *Raktagni*, *Maansagni*, *Medo*, *Agni*, *Ashthyagni*, *Majagni*, and *Shukragni*. All the seven *Dhatus* (seven element tissues of the body) contain their own *Agni* to metabolize the nutrient materials supplied to them through their own *Srotas*.

(a). *Rasagni* present in the *Rasa Dhatu*.

(b). *Raktagni* present in the *Rakta Dhatu*.
(c). *Mamsagni* present in the *Mamsa Dhatu*.
(d). *Medagni* present in the *Meda Dhatu*.
(e). *Asthayagni* present in the *Asthi Dhatu*.
(f). *Majjagni* present in the *Majja Dhatu*.
(g). *Shukragni* present in the *Shukra Dhatu*.
The bioenergy in each *Dhatu* synthesizes and transforms the necessary *Rasa Dhatu* for that cell from the basic nutrients in the *Anna Rasa*, or diet essence. Each *Dhatvagni* specializes in synthesizing and transforming constituents specific to their *Dhatu*. This is an example of selective action. According to *Acharya Charaka*, each of the seven *Dhatus* in the body has its own *Agni*, which digests and transforms materials for assimilation and nourishment [14].

Physiological and Pathological State of *Agni*

Excessive fasting, indigestion, irregular eating, inappropriate food, improper use of *Panchakarma*, disease-induced emaciation, seasonal perversion, and suppression of natural urges. This condition causes difficulty digesting even light foods. Undigested food tastes sour, acts as a poison, and causes a variety of diseases. Curing the vitiation or *Dushti* of *Agni* alone will not cure these diseases. *Ayurveda* offers a variety of herbs, remedies, and *yoga* to treat diseases caused by *Agni*.

Agni vitiation can be classified into four types:

- i. ***Vishamagni-Vata*** in this case disrupts the digestive fire. *Vata*'s variability can cause alternating periods of strong and weak appetite.
- ii. ***Tikshanagni-Pitta*** in this case disrupts the digestive fire. This type of *Agni* can easily digest large amounts of food. In the absence of fuel, the body may begin to consume its own tissues (*Dhatu*).
- iii. ***Mandagni***-In this instance, *Kapha* disturbs the digestive fire. Periods of low appetite, a slow metabolism, and a propensity to gain weight despite eating the right foods are caused by variations in

Kapha. Slow metabolism turns food into *Vidagadh*.

- iv. ***Samagni (Normal)***- Normal digestive fire is characterized by a strong appetite that can be easily satisfied with regular foods. The digestive system is functioning properly, with no gas colic, or constipation. *Samagni* is responsible for human body nutrition and establishing a strong foundation of seven tissues.

III. DISCUSSION

Importance of *Agni*-*Agni* plays a significant role in maintaining health, as many *Samhitas* explain. Since *Agni* is the primary cause of numerous illnesses. According to the *Vedas*, *Agni* is fire that provides heat, light, and the capacity to cook food. However, *Agni* is taken to a higher plane in *Ayurveda*, where it is composed of *Panchmahabutas*, which are the building blocks of the body's cellular and tissue-level formation. Numerous illnesses will result from this imbalance if it is not functioning correctly.

Agni and Pitta

The two terms "*Pitta*" in *Ayurveda* mean "metabolism" and "maintain the body's homeostasis," or "maintained heat." By breaking down the food, metabolism will give the body energy. It will also keep the body warm, which will give it luster and vitality [15]. Certain texts of *Ayurveda* explain that the body does not contain a distinct *Agni*. *Pitta* is the fundamental *Agni* in the body that produces heat and performs metabolic tasks. Although this *Pitta* has numerous *Gunas*, *Ushana Guna*, its principal *Guna*, symbolizes *Agni* and its bodily function. [16]

Physiological significance of *Agni*^[17]

The majority of illnesses result from the *Agni*'s malfunction, which is appropriately referred to as the "central root of health." *Agni* does more than just play essential function in the absorption of both macro and micronutrients, but it also kills pathogens. According to *Ayurveda*, "*Ama*" is the term for improperly digested food, which is merely a toxin or pathogen that causes *illnesses*. Normal circulatory and digestive system tone, robust immunity or resistance to illness, appropriate tissue growth, and a healthy body complexion all indicate that the digestive fire is operating properly. Additionally, it is the body's source of awareness, nutrition, and intelligence. It coordinates various physiological

processes in the body, including digestion, reabsorption, sensations, and energy production. This has an impact on both the physical and mental health of humans. Coordination between them promotes a healthy lifestyle.

Pathological significance of *Agni*

Improper digestive fire can lead to poor digestion, poor blood circulation, a dull complexion, low energy, and flatulence. *Ayurvedic* principles suggest that promoting proper digestion addresses the root cause of diseases. Impaired *Agni* leads to the production of *Ama*, creating a vicious cycle. Understanding the relationship between *Ama* and *Agni* is crucial for effective disease treatment. Maintaining a healthy appetite, using digestive stimulants, and having regular bowel movements are crucial for promoting digestion and preventing the root cause of diseases, *Ama*.

Agni plays a crucial role in maintaining the body's *Dosha* *Dhatu* balance, which can lead to diseases when imbalanced. According to *Ayurveda*, a decrease in the functions of the thirteen types of *Agni* leads to disease.

IV. CONCLUSION

Following a brief overview of *Agni*, *Ama*, and *Pitta* and their relationships, this article demonstrates the significance of *Agni* for cellular digestion and metabolism as well as for physiological and pathological levels. *Agni*, which is *Samagni* (normal), is one of the 13 types that keep the body's metabolism in balance and preserve human health. Numerous digestive enzymes found in *Agni* support the body's metabolic and digestive processes. Indigestion brought on by an imbalance in *Agni* results in *Ama*, which causes illnesses. Any *Pakavastha* level of the food can result in the formation of this *Ama*. *Agni Dhusti* management can therefore result in a healthy life. It is concluded in this article that diseases will arise if there is an imbalance in *Agni*. Thus, *Agni* is crucial to the human body and its healthy operation, according to *Ayurveda*. In a brief explanation of *Agni*'s metabolic and digestive processes, *Acharya Charaka* stated that different kinds of dietetic materials are broken down by their own *Agni*.

(*Bhutagni*), supported and strengthened by *Antaragni* (*Jatharagni*), and further broken down and metabolized by *Dhatvagni* to give the seven *Dhatus* energy and link the body with nutritional strength, complexity, and a happy life.

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