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CONCEPT OF JATHARAGNI AND AVASTHAPAKA (PHASES OF DIGESTION)

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Abstract:

Background: Agni, help to get nourishment to the body. It is very clear that any of the body cell cannot do anything without the help of Agni, this can be understood in the terms of digestion & metabolism processes at gross and cell level. Each cell of the body gets nourishment from digested food and utilizes it according to its own necessity. therefore, a Vaidya should always take care of Agni as the Prashama or Prakopa of Dosha, datu and Mala are depended on the status of Agni. Jatharagni is the most important one as all other Agnis are depended upon Jatharagni. Avastha paka Different three phase of Digestion that takes place within the GIT i.e. stomach, small intestine & large intestine, each stage correspondingly producing Kapha, Pitta & Vata.

Keywords : Agni, Jatharagni, Avastha paka, Phases of Digestion

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Introduction:

Agni is believed to be the agency for any kind of transformation. It is a known fact that at each and every second multiple procedures of transformations take place in the body. These may be bio chemical or bio physical or any other type of bio transformations. Due to these constant transformation procedures, body grows, develops and lastly destroys too. Thinking on this line; it can be said that life is nothing but a constant process of transformations. Diseased state of the body is also some pathological changes either functional or structural. Thus the principle of Agni becomes vital as either the healthy or the diseased state can only be understood with understanding of changes and according to Ayurvedic principles, all these procedures cannot be possible without Agni. The word Agni in this context does not mean fire with flame and smoke. According to Acharya Chakrapani, it is in the form of Pittoshma. Acharya Charaka describes 13 types of Agnis, according to its place and actions during food digestion, assimilation and metabolism. They are grouped under three broad headings, single Jatharagni, five types of Bhutagnis and seven types of Dhatvagnis. These 13 types are mentioned for clinical purpose. These 13 types of Agnis perform their function at

different level, right from Ahara Grahana to Dhatu Nirmana.(1)

Agni and pittoshma:

According to Maharshi Sushruta, Agni is a kind of energy which can't be seen independently. It always resides in some substratum. Agni is engulfed and controlled by the Apya portion of Pitta. Whenever this Apya portion is excluded or minimized, the functions of Agni are manifested with full capacity and then such Pitta which is devoid of Dravatva is metaphorically termed as Agni. Agni is expressed by the term Ushma many a times in Ayurveda. This suggests that Ushma i.e. heat and thus temperature is one form of Agni. Acharya Chakrapani added on this issue that Agni in living body is in the form of Pittoshma i.e. Ushma of Pitta. (2) Bhela Samhita has explained using the terms Agni and Soma the present in the Sūryamandala of Nabhi, covered with Somamandala which regulates Agni. This is quite in accordance with the concept of Pittoshma. (3) The concept of Pittosma can be correlated with the modern concept of enzymes required for any reaction along with the energy which combinedly digest the food. Thus, Ayurvedic concept of Jatharagni is best explained in the terms of Pittoshma, unlike the Ushma form of

Agni in the animate world, because Pitta is a speciality of the living body. In Ashtanga Samgraha Vriddha Vagbhata quotes that according to a group of Acaryas; Agni is nothing but combined heat of Dosa, Dhatu and Malas. (4)

Seat of Jatharagni(5) (6)

According to Acharya Charaka seat of Jatharagni is Grahani because of its power to restrain of food. It is located above the Umbilical region. Maharshi Sushruta indicates the seat of Jatharagni is in between Amashaya and Pakvashaya. Maharshi Vagbhata combines both of the opinion and says that seat of Agni is same only names are different. In Vimana Sthana 6th chapter, according to Bala (strength) of Agni, Acharya Charaka has divided Jatharagni into 4 types(7). 1) Tikshnagni 2) Mandagni 3) Samagni 4) Vishamagni

Tikshnagni: Due to Pitta predominance whatever the person eats whether it may be Guru dravya or Laghu dravya, Agni digests it in a very short time.

Mandagni: Due to Kapha predominance the person cannot digest even a small quantity of otherwise even easily digestible food.

Samagni: Due to Tridoshika balance whatever the person eats Agni digests the

food if it is consumed in proper quantity and at proper time, with following of rules regulations of taking food.

Vishamagni: Food gets digested normally on some occasion and poorly digested in other occasion though the food is taken in proper quantity and at proper time. According to Maharshi Charaka, This strength of Agni or type of Agni can be evaluated by the power to digest the food i.e. Jaranashakti,

Jatharagni karma

ni situated below the Amashaya in Grahani is activated by Samana Vayu and digests the food which is taken in proper Matra and in proper manner observing all the Aharavidhivisheshayatanas and Ahara Vidhividhana, in order to increase the longevity of life. (8) Agni located in the Adhoamashaya helps in digestion of the food and produces the Anna Rasa (essence and useful part of the food) and the Kitta Bhaga (waste part of the food).(9)

1) Sara Bhaga – Then passes to the Bhutagnis where digestion is going on into minute level.
2) Kitta Bhaga – Sthula Malas like Mūtra, Purisha and Sweda excrete from their respective pathways. Sweda, Mūtra, Purisha etc. get their nourishment from the Kitta

Bhaga of the Anna. (10) Purisha and Mūtra are told as Malas of the Anna. Among them the clear or transparent liquid part is Mūtra and the solid one is Purisha. So, it can be concluded here that, at the level of Jatharagni, Ahara is divided into two parts: the Annarasa which is subjected to the Bhutagni and Sthula Anna Mala i.e. Purisha, Mūtra and Vata which are excreted by the body.

Avastha Paka:

Ingested Ahara Dravya passes through different stages of Paka kriyas. In other words, digestion of the food stuff in the Kosṭha in various stages is called as Avasthapaka. Acharya Charaka has described two terms, Prapaka and Vipaka, Prapaka has been defined as Prathama Paka(11) i.e. first outcome of Paka or chemical actions (Chakrapanidutta). Vipaka has been defined as the outcome of the actions of Jatharagni on the Ahara which has already subjected to the Prathama Paka. Thus Vipaka is judged from the Rasa assumed by the end products of Gastro-intestinal digestion viz. Madhura, Amla and Katu. All Dravyas have been described to be Pancabhautika in their origin; it is the number in which the different kinds of Bhuta Paramanus combine and their special

relationship with each other that confers on the compound thus formed, its characteristic Rasa, Virya, Vipaka and Prabhava. (12) The digressions into the nature of Dravyas become necessary in view of the description of the products which present the final outcome of the Jatharagni Paka in terms of Rasa. The main point to note here is the fact that changes in Rasa are directly correlated to the changes in composition of Dravyas, are brought under the influence of Jatharagni. Thus the digestion of food stuff (Ahara Paka) in the Kosṭha may be stated to proceed in the order as Madhura, Amla and Katu Bhavas.

1. Madhura Bhava (Avastha Paka): As soon as the food enters the mouth, it comes into contact with the Bodhaka Kapha which leads to the perception of taste. The property of Bodhaka Kapha, which is mainly fluid, is to dissolve food substances, otherwise the sensation of taste cannot be noticeable. The outcome of the action of Bodhaka Kapha on food especially that fraction of its composition which is essentially Madhura in taste, is seen to be continued and completed in the upper portion of Amashaya. In this stage insoluble Madhura portion of food sufficiently soluble and mixed up with the Kledaka Kapha present in the Urdhwa

Amashaya. The fraction of Ahara dravyas which is meant to undergo Amlabhava remains in this stage up to mixed with Kledaka Kapha and still it is digested. Kledaka makes Klinnata to the food particles. Thus Aharadravyas of all kinds attain Madhurabhava, as soon as they reach Adho Amashaya.

2. Amla Avastha Paka: Amla Avastha Paka is the second stage or step of Avastha Paka. This is brought about by the secretion of Accha Pitta in the Adho Amashaya. This stage is not related to have anything to do with the digestion of substances which remain partially digested i.e. the digestion is still incomplete. Acharya Charaka stated this stage as Vidagdha Avastha. (13) Acharya Cakrapani interpreted this term as Pakvapakvama or Kincidpakvama Kincidapakvama. The Ahara in this stage is not yet fit for absorption and utilization for Bhutagni Paka or Dhatvagni Paka. The Ahara which has attained Amlabhava is propelled into the next lower portion of the Mahasrotas, where Acchapitta is stated to be secreted. The term Accha has been interpreted by Cakrapani Dutta and Gangadhara as Aghana and Swaccha; means thin and clear respectively, Accha Pitta would therefore,

represent a total concept; possibly it forms part of the much wider concept- Jatharagni or Pachaka Pitta.

3. Katu Avastha Paka: When the food reaches Pakvashaya it dries by the heat of Jatharagni and renders it in the form of lumps. In this stage, the Ahara assumes Katubhava and formation of Vayu takes place. Acharya Chakrapani commented on the above clearly as in this words “Paripindita Pakvashaya|| Means the change of material present in the formation of Mala. (14)

Nishtha Paka: Even though the clear definition of this is not mentioned in Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita but detailed description is there. By the word Vipaka itself means it is different from other Pakas —Vishishta Paka - Vipakaha||. Acharya Vagbhata in Ashtanga Hridaya has explained that the Rasa which is converted into another Rasa after Jatharagni Paka is called as Vipaka. The commentator Aruna Dutta has clearly described it by supporting Vagbhata’s statement. (15) The difference between Avastha paka and Nishtha paka is described by Hemadri, another commentator of the same treatise. The description mentioned all above, describes the complete action of Jatharagni. Vipaka is formed after the

completion of Jatharagni Paka. According to Chakrapani, after the coherence of Jatharagni into the food the Guna, produced in the Nishthakala (at the last stage), is called as Vipaka. (16)

DISCUSSION

All the classical texts of Ayurveda unanimously accept the importance of Jatharagni for the maintenance of health as well as manifestation of diseases. It is also an important factor to be considered while prescribing treatment. It is known fact that at each and every second multiple process of transformation take place in human body, these may be Bio-physical, bio-chemical or any other type of transformation process. The media or agency responsible for all these process is Jatharagni in human body, There are two types of procedures continuously going on in human body which are Chaya and Apachaya and for that the body has got two synonym Deha and Sharira. Deha means which continuously gets nourishment from food and on performing the essential activities living body wears out some of its portion continuously is called Sharira and this wear and tear phenomenon is balanced by Jatharagni. Importance of Agni has been seen in both the healthy and diseased condition. In

healthy condition it is necessary for maintenance of health while in diseased condition it is important for diagnosis as well as treatment of the particular disease. Acharya Vagbhata in Ashtanga Samgraha says that epitome of all the managements is nothing but preservation of Agni. The digestion of food by Jatharagni results in the breakdown of food into five distinct bhautika or physico-chemical groups viz., Parthiva, Apya, Agneya, Vayavya and Akashiya and the activation of the Agni present in each one of these bhautika groups. In Madhur avasthapaka Carbohydrates are almost totally converted into maltose, sucrose and lactose before passing beyond the duodenum and upper jejunum. These glucose polymers are sweet in nature, so this stage of digestion is called as madhur avastha pak. Amla avastha paka is taken place in Grahani Pepsin converts the protein to proteoses, peptones and a few polypeptides. Most of protein digestion occurs in small intestine under the influence of proteolytic enzymes from pancreatic secretions, viz., chymotrypsin, trypsin, carboxypolypeptidase, elastases. Also Emulsification of fat occurs in the duodenum under the influence of bile. The third avasthapka, digested food materials

reaches to pakvashaya. Residual products of the food undergo fermentation by the intestinal bacteria. This stimulates the production of vayu.

CONCLUSION : Agni is also said the root of the Bala of the Sharira. Ahara is necessary for life as Acharya Charaka says Anna is Prana and by the action of Agni, Anna is converted into Ahararasa. With further action of different Dhatvagnis, Ahararasa nourishes respective Dhatu and body gets strength complexion, longevity etc. Jatharagni Paka leads to the break down or Samghata Bheda of different proximate components of the food and renders them fit for Shoshana or Absorption. Avasthapaka is a series of changes which Ahara dravyas (food) undergo in the Kostha (alimentary tract). Agni is the only chemical agency responsible for Ahara Pachana (digestion) in the kostha.

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