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Concept of 'Agni' in Ayurveda

By Dr.Shashikant Patwardhan

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Being one of the panchamahabhoota, agni (fire) has the characteristic that it cannot exist without a base. In the body it exists in pitta dosha.

Agni is responsible for the following functions:

Digestion – indigestion (Pakti– Apakti)

Vision– absence of vision (Darshanam– Adarshanam)

Degree of heat (Matra– Amatravamushmanala)

Normal –abnormal complexion (Prakrit – Vikarit varnam)

Prowess– fear (Shaurya– Bhaya)

Anger – exholoration (krodham– Harsham)

Confusion– clarity of mind (Moha– Prasadana)

For the metabolic processes in the body, there are three main groups of biological factors, probably exhibiting enzymatic functions (agnis).

Jatharagni or Koshthagni:

Present in the pachak pitta. It is responsible for the digestion and the absorption of nutritious substances during this process.

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The process of digestion (ahar pachan) is divided in three stages, which collectively is called awastha paka and can be divided in the following.

Amavstha (Madhuravastha) Paka – in stomach

Pachymanavastha (Amlavstha) Paka – in 'grahani' (Duodenum)

Pakavstha (Katuavstha) Paka – in small and large intestine

As the rasa changes in different phase of digestion these phase of digestion are called avsthapaka. At the end of the digestion the digested food have their original rasa which is in accordance with the rasa of the ingested food. This is called as Nistha paka .It is also called popularly as Vipaka.

Madhur rasa & Lavan rasa have Madhura Vipaka, Amla rasa have amla vipaka and Katu, Tikta &

Kashaya rasa have Katu vipaka.

Panchabhutagnis :

In ayurveda it is believed that everything is made up of five elements and so is the body. These five elements are the panchmahabhoota and are responsible for constituting every living being in the world. Agni transforms the Asharir Mahabhoota (external mahabhoot) to Sharir Mahabhoota. Example – When we drink water Jala Mahabhoota (water) dominates and later the water is transformed by Jala Mahabhoota agni to the Sharir Jala Containing five types of biological factors, it is responsible for the processing of the five basic elements into a composition useful to the body.

Dhatvagnis : The third group contains seven types, each for the assimilation of the seven tissues This assimilation takes place successively. From the absorbed nutritious substance, plasma (rasa) is produced first; from plasma, blood (rakta) is formed, then muscular tissue (mamsa), adipose tissue (meda), bony tissue (asthi), bone marrow (majjan) and the reproductive cells (shukra).

Besides performing all the metabolic functions agni takes care of digestion (ahar pachan) and in the absence of ahara it acts on the ama pachan i.e. properly metabolize the improper metabolites. When ahara and ama are absence Agni does the function of dhatu i.e. rasa, rakta etc. Digestion of dhatu is a fatal condition in which dhatus are broken down to get energy. The reduction or deficiency of the quantum of dhatu in the human body leads to the disease called 'Kshaya roga'.

In ayurveda it is believed that all the pathology occurs due to the impairment in Agni (Kaya). Hence the correction of Kaya i.e. Agni is called the treatment or 'Kaya Chikitsa' in ayurveda

Agnis are also classified into four categories according to how they manifest in the human being:

Tikshnagni –sharp,

Mandagni – mild,

Vishamagni – irregular, and

Samagni – regular or Balanced.

Dr. Shashikant Patwardhan is practicing as 'Ayurvedic Consultant' for last 25 years at the city – Sangli, Maharashtra – India. He has done his graduation in Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery [B.A.M&S] and post graduate Fellowship of Faculty of Ayurvedic Medicine [F.F.A.M.] From Tilak Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Pune University, India, during the years 1970–1976. He is a chief editor and Ayurvedic Consultant of a 'Comprehensive website on Ayurveda –

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author of many books on Ayurveda and is first to publish them in ebook format. Up till now he has written four ebooks – 1. Ayurvedic Cure of Diabetes 2. Home Remedies in Ayurveda 3. Treat Common Diseases with Ayurveda & Yoga and 4. Ayurvedic Principles Revealed. He regularly writes articles on various topics in Ayurveda in Ayurvedic health magazines and alternative medicine sites.

Benefits of Ayurveda

By Dr. Tarun Sachdeva

Ayurveda is the essence of old Hindu Medicare techniques, which are based on curing the diseases from the roots. In Ayurveda, whole body is supposed as a mutually responding system. A single part not responding well may cause a disturbance in all body. Ayurveda works for the aim of complete health.

Allopathic techniques are based on the concept of sudden and instantaneous relief, so often the patient gets rid of his problem for a short period, but the origin of disease is not eliminated, finally there comes the probability in future for that origin to be worse. Allopathic techniques use antigen that introduces a chemical, having opposite effect of what the body is producing. So there is always a risk with the power and supplied quantity of the drug.

On the other hand, Ayurvedic Medicare is based on natural and herbal techniques and supplements, which are 100% side effect free. Ayurveda does not believe in antidotes and antigens, very rarely those techniques are used, Ayurveda works not to suppress the system of body, but to go to the origin and cure the basic disturbing element. In such treatments there are very low chances of side effect and the benefit of the body is forever. It gives you a complete health treatment, which works on the complete body system so it makes you feel better in your entire body.

If you eat 1 apple a day and one day suddenly eat 3, it'll not cause any problem for you, but if you take 2 sleeping pills a day and one day you take 4, it'll be dangerous; most of the supplements of Ayurveda are essence of fruits, vegetables and jadi–booties, which are nature's gift to human. Jadi–booties are some of the rarely found wild plants and fruits, which are very effective in some diseases. In old age, students of Ayurveda were taught the classification of every single kind of plants; they used to give long time to find those jadi–booties in jungles, rocks & mountains. In modern

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age of globalization some of the companies and groups are doing that work collectively, so now it is easy for us to use those techniques, which were once very costly even for the kings.

Ayurveda works in all directions, it not only gives the body what it wants but it prevents harmful supplements. The concept of `Parheja', in Ayurveda, is the concept restricting the harmful food and supplements that disturbs the treatment.

Ayurvedic techniques are developed in ashramas of Hindu saints and researchers. This Medicare is the result of long time, generation-to-generation research work. It is well tasted and well proven in the history of India that is one of the worlds oldest cultures, In modern age, when pollution and effects of intoxications are disturbing the systems of the body and a normal human is getting weaker due to luxurious life; Ayurveda, along with yoga and exercises is the way to have a healthy body and a sound mind.

Taking in to account all the benefits of ayurveda we can expect a rise in the popularity of ayurvedic medicines in the forthcoming year. Surveys have showed that many patients have received positive results from ayurvedic treatment, thus in a few years ayurveda is sure to bring about a revolution in the field of medicines.

Dr. Tarun Sachdeva writes on ayurveda at

– Treating diseases with the

magic of ayurveda, also lists many

.

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