



## Review Article

### A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW ON AGNI

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#### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the science of life is based on several concepts. Concept of *Agni* is one of them. This study aims to explore the knowledge on *Agni* and mainly based on the authentic Ayurveda texts. Ayurveda has given prime importance to *Agni* (digestive fire) as it is one of the basic biologic elements of the living body. *Agni* has its own physical characteristics, location and functions in the body. Ayurveda emphasized that the balance state of *Agni* is essential to maintain the health of an individual. If *Agni* devoid of its normal functions it will leads to diseases. Different views have been suggested regarding *Pitta* and *Agni* by different *Acharyas*. Some *Acharyas* consider *Pitta* to be *Agni* while others speak *Pitta* is different from *Agni*. Although different types of *Agnis* are described in Ayurveda, thirteen types of *Agnis* viz 7 *Dhatvagnis*, 5 *Bhutagnis* and 1 *Jatharagni* are mostly considered. *Jatharagni* is also classified into four categories according to its performance of digestion in the human being namely *Vishamagni*, *Teekshanagni*, *Mandagni* and *Samagni*. *Agni* converts food in the form of energy, which is responsible for all the vital functions of our body.

**KEYWORDS:** *Agni*, *Pitta*, Diseases, Health.

#### INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda *Agni* has been stated as one of the seats of the *Prana* viz life or vital energy<sup>1</sup>. In the text Bhagavat Geeta it is mentioned that the Lord Krishna says that he lives in the *Agni*. According to Charaka Acharya *Kaya* (body), represents the process of *Agni* in the human body<sup>2</sup>. He also described *Agni* as *Mool* (root) of life. Chakrapani the great commentator on Charaka Samhita has described that the *Chikitsa* is based on the concept of *Agni*<sup>3</sup>. All these emphasize the vitality of *Agni*.

In Ayurveda point of view human body is considered as a replica of the universe. According to that whatever is available in the universe will represent in the human body. The physical *Agni* is directly linked up the biological *Agni* inside the body<sup>4</sup>.

The theory of digestion and metabolism in Ayurveda is based on its concept of *Agni*. In Samkhya view, *Agni* is potentially present in the *Rajoguna* of the *Mulaprakruti*<sup>5</sup>. All the active and productive aspects of evolution at the micro and macro cosmic levels are due to *Rajas* (energy). Ingested food must be digested and metabolized properly to maintain a healthy life. The main function of *Agni* is to digest food with the help of *Samana Vayu* and *Kledaka Kapha*. Maintenance of the physiological actions is depends on the normal state of *Agni* while the abnormal state of *Agni* contribute pathological changes in living body<sup>6</sup>. When this fire extinguishers, man dies when a man is endowed with it adequately he lives long with good health and when it is deranged he falls ill<sup>7</sup>.

#### MATERIALS & METHODS

This study is mainly based on Authentic Ayurveda Texts. Data were collected and analyzed.

#### RESULTS

##### Relation of *Pitta* with *Agni*

According to Charaka *Agni* is located in *Pitta*<sup>8</sup>. *Agni* is reflected mostly in the concept of *Pitta* since it performs fire like actions. Chakrapani said that the *Pitta* of the body is *Agni* (flaming fire) and it only refers to the phenomenon of heat which is associated with fire. By implication, heat is seen to be associated with the function of *Pitta*<sup>9</sup>.

*Sushruta* has mentioned that there cannot be any *Agni* without *Pitta*. *Pitta* is the same as *Agni*, since it possesses the properties of *Agni* and performs similar actions as performed by the *Agni* (digestive fire) itself<sup>10</sup>. According to Bhoja, digestive fire is included within *Agni*. Therefore he considered *Pitta* as same as *Agni*<sup>11</sup>.

##### Derivation of *Pitta*

The term *Pitta* is derived from the root "*Tap*" which gives the meaning of "to heat" or "to burn". It comprises three different meanings.

*Tap Santape*- generation of heat<sup>12</sup>

*Tap Dahe*- burning of the nutrition consumed<sup>13</sup>

*Tap Eishcharye*- factor which is responsible to make one achieve the eight kinds of benefits.<sup>13</sup>

### Derivation of Agni

*Agi Gatau- Teja Padartha Visheshah* (a kind of heat)<sup>14</sup>

### Synonyms for Pachaka Pitta

*Jathara* (Stomach) being its chief site *Pitta* is known as *Jatharagni*. *Jatharagni* is called as *Koshthagni* due to its site being *Koshtha* (Alimentary tract)<sup>15</sup>. *Pitta* is the fire like agency present in the body hence it as

named as *Kayagni (Dehagni)*. It attends to do the important functions of *Ahara paripachana* (digestion of the food). Therefore it is called *Pachakagni*. *Pitta* is also describes in the terms of *Audaryagni*, *Audarya Tejas* and *Vaishvanara*<sup>16</sup>.

### Physical Properties of Agni/ Pitta

Some Acharyas has stated that *Pitta* and *Agni* has similar properties. The general physical properties are explained in Authentic Ayurveda texts in following manner as given in Table No 01.

**Table 1: Physical properties of Agni/ Pitta**

	CS	SS	AH	KS	Sh S	BP
Varna (Colour)	Shukla Aruna Varja (colours other than white & red)	Neela (blue), Peeta (yellow)	-	Shukla Arunahruta (colours other than white & Red)	Neela (blue), Peeta (yellow)	Neela (blue), Peeta (yellow)
Rasa (Taste)	Amla, Katu	Katu, Amla	Teekshna, Ushna	Katu, Amla	Katu, Tikta, Amla	Katu, Amla
Guna (Attributes)	Sara, Laghu, Teekshna, Ushna	Teekshna, Drava, Ushna	Laghu, Drava, Sara	Laghu, Teekshna, Ushna	Ushna, Drava	Ushna, Drava, Sara, Teekshna, Laghu, Snigdha
Gandha (Odour)	Visra (fleshy)	Puti (putrid smell)	Visra (fleshy)	Vaigandhya (unpleasant smell)	-	-
Other properties	Sattva, Sasneha	Vidagdha	Sasneha	Eshath Sneha	Sattva, Vidagdha	Sattva

CS- Charaka Samhita<sup>17,18</sup>, SS- Sushruta Samhita<sup>19</sup>, AH- Ashtanga Hrudaya Samhita<sup>20</sup>, KS- Kashyapa Samhita<sup>21</sup>, Sh S- Sharangadhara Samhita<sup>22</sup>, BP- Bhava Prakasha<sup>23</sup>

### Functions of Pachaka Pitta

*Pachaka Pitta* performs actions similar to *Anala* (fire), in the course of the process of digestion, largely due to the actualization of the *Tejas* component discarding its *Dravatva* (liquidity). It digests food, separates *Sara* (nutrient fraction or essence) from *Kitta* (indigestible or undigested residue) of the food. Though *Pitta* is a liquid with the predominant qualities of *Teja Bhuta* it does not possess *Snigdha* (visciduity), *Sheeta* (coolant) and such other qualities of *Ap Bhuta*.

It directly participates in the digestion of food and at the same time lends support to and augments the functions of the remaining *Pittas viz Ranjaka, Alochaka, Sadhaka* and *Bhrajaka* present elsewhere in the body<sup>24</sup>. In natural state *Pitta* helps in the digestion and metabolism of living beings. So it is called *Dehoshma*. If it is become morbid, it causes various diseases<sup>25</sup>.

### Agni and Five Maha Bhutas

The general concept of *Teja* has two aspects viz *Ushna* (heat) and *Bhashvara* (a light). The *Pittas* of the body shares these two aspects of *Tejas*. The qualities of *Teja* are *Samtapa* (heat), *Bhragishnuta* (splendour) and *Pakti* (digestion)<sup>26</sup>.

*Bhutas* are transformations of *Prakruti* and as such have the same attributes; they in turn, produce variously the entire group of beings having the same features<sup>27</sup>. *Agni* is predominant in *Sattva* and *Rajas* because it is enlightens and moves<sup>28</sup>.

### Types of Agni

According to the classical texts the enumeration of the number of *Agni* is different.

Acharya Charaka has mentioned 13 types of *Agnis viz*, 1 *Jatharagni*, 5 *Bhutagni* and 7 *Dhatvagni* according to the function and site of their action<sup>29</sup>.

Acharya Shusruta has described five types of *Agnis* as the variety of *Pitta* namely, *Pachakagni, Ranjakagni, Alochakagni, Sadhakagni* and *Bhrajakagni*. There is an indirect reference in Susruta Samhita to five *Bhutagnis* underlying in the brief description made to the transformation of food stuff. If these five *Bhutagnis* are taken into consideration the total number of *Agni* would be ten<sup>30</sup>.

Vagbhata is given 5 *Bhutagni*, 7 *Dhatvagni*, 3 *Dhoshagni* and 3 *Malagni*. Bhava Misra has expressed similar to Acharya Charaka and Vagbhata<sup>31</sup>. Sharangadhara has described only five *Pittas*. Those are *Pachaka, Bhrajaka, Ranjaka, Alochaka* and *Sadhaka*.

### Agni Adhishtana (Place of Agni)

In the view of Vagbhata, *Agni* (power of digestion) is located in *Jathara* (Stomach) or *Koshtha* (Alimentary tract). *Pachaka Pitta* is in area between *Pakvashaya* (large intestine) and *Amashaya* (stomach and small intestines)<sup>32</sup>.

*Grahani* is located between *Pakvashaya* (large intestine) and *Amashaya* (stomach and small intestines). *Agni* supports the functions of *Grahani* and *Grahani* supports the functions of *Agni*<sup>33</sup>. *Grahani* is considered as *Shashti Pittadhara Kala*. It holds the

ingested food for the duration of its digestion, before the *Kitta* (undigested food) is propelled in to the *Pakvashaya* (large intestine).

Identification of *Kala* is different according to Acharyas. It is variously identified as coverings, sheaths, aponeuroses, lining membranes and secreting membranes. In *Ashthanga Samgraha* the sixth *Kala* is named as *Pittadhara Kala* and it is located in between the *Pakvashaya* (large intestine) and *Amashaya* (stomach and small intestines). Being the abode of *Agni* it withhold by force, the movement of food material passing from *Amashaya* (stomach and small intestines) into the *Pakvashaya* (large intestine). Digests the food by the heat of the *Pitta*; absorbs the *Sara* and allows the digested food to move further. This is known as *Grahani* in view of its function of withholding the food. Its strength is from *Pitta* itself. Thus activated by the *Agni* it maintains the welfare of the body<sup>34</sup>.

*Charaka* has localized the seat of *Agni* in the region above *Nabhi* (umbilicus). The seat of *Agni* is also terms as *Grahani* because it receives and retains the food till it is fully digested. The *Grahani* as such is said to be supported by *Agni*. Functionally, the *Grahani* retains the food which is still to be digested, while, the digested portion of it is moved down to the *Pakvashaya* (large intestine) on either side<sup>35-37</sup>. Seven *Kala* appear as structure intervening between *Dhatu* and their *Ashaya* (viscera).

The sixth *Kala* is called *Pittadhara* as it supports *Pitta*. It holds four types of food viz *Ashita* (soft and hard eatables), *Khadita* (chewable), *Peeta* (drinkable) and *Leedha* (lickables) released from *Amashaya* and directed towards the *Kshudrantaya*<sup>38</sup>.

### Functions of *Jatharagni*

*Jatharagni* performs fire like actions in the body viz *Pachana* (digestion), *Dahana* (burning), *Bhinna Samghata* (splitting), *Tapana* (heat production), *Parinamana* (conversion), *Paravrutti* (transformation), *Prakashana* (illumination), *Ranjana* or *Varnakara* (colouration) and *Prabhakara* (to cause luster)<sup>39</sup>.

According to *Charaka*, *Jatharagni* is responsible for, *Ayu* (longevity), *Varna* (colour), *Bala* (strength), *Svasthya* (health), *Utsaha* (enthusiasm), *Upachaya* (plumpness), *Prabha* (complexion), *Ojas* (essence of all *Rasas*), *Tejas* (bodily heat or semen) and *Prana* (life/vital breath)<sup>40</sup>.

According to *Maricha*, *Agni* represented *Piita* in the body brings about *Pakti* (digestion and metabolism) in its normal states and *Apakti* (indigestion) in its abnormal condition<sup>41</sup>.

*Charaka* mentioned again *Bala* (strength), *Arogya* (health), *Ayu* (longevity) and *Prana* (vital breath) are dependent upon the *Agni* (power of digestion). When the food articles are taken in quantity commensurate with the *Agni* (power of digestion), it is properly maintained and resulting the maintenance of health too<sup>42</sup>.

According to *Vagbhata Pakti* (digestion and metabolism), *Ushma* (production of body heat) *Darshana* (enables visual perception), *Prabha* (lusture of the body), *Kshut* (hunger and appetite), *Ruchi* (relish for food), *Tanumardava* (suppleness of the body), *Dhairya* (courage and valour) and *Buddhi* (wisdom) are given by the *Pitta*<sup>43</sup>.

### Factors influence the action of *Jatharagni*

1. *Prana Vayu*- responsible for *Anna pravesha* (swallowing of food).<sup>44</sup>
2. *Samana Vayu*- It is located near to the *Agni* and move throughout the *Koshtha*. It is responsible for the *Anna Grahana* (reception of the food), *Anna Pachana* (digestion of the food), *Anna Vivechana* (separation of *Sara* from *Kitta*) and *Anna Munchana* (propulsion of the food).<sup>45</sup>
3. *Apana Vayu*- responsible for the *Shakruth Nishkramana* (evacuation of bowels).<sup>46</sup>
4. *Bodhaka Kapha*- *Bodhaka Kapha* is located in the *Mukha* (mouth). It is important to *Rasa Bodhana* (perception of taste) and initiation of the digestion.<sup>47</sup>
5. *Kledaka Kapha*- is located in *Amashaya* (stomach) and helps to *Anna Samghata* (disintegration of food) and *Anna Kledana* (liquefaction of food). Benefits the remaining *Kapha Sthanas*. Its cooling property countering the heat of *Pitta Dosha*, protecting *Amashaya*.<sup>48</sup>
6. *Pachaka Pitta*- *Pachaka Pitta* is located between *Pakvashaya* and *Amashaya*. It performs action like *Anala* (fire). It helps to digest the food and separate in to *Sara* (nutritious part) and *Kitta* (waste products).<sup>49</sup>

### Importance of *Jatharagni*

*Pachakagni (Jatharagni)* is the leader of all *Agnis*. It is the main converting agent while the others viz *Bhutagni* and *Dhatvagni* are always depend on it. As long as the *Jatharagni* is in its normal state other *Agnis* viz *Bhutagni* and *Dhatvagni* also will be in equilibrium. If there is deficiency of *Jatharagni* other *Agnis* would also become less active.

As *Charaka* expressed, extension of the *Jatharagni* leads to death while its proper maintenance helps a person to live a long life and its impairment give rise to diseases<sup>50</sup>.

To protect and maintain appetite and digestive power is essential to defense from all health problems. Therefore an individual must keep priority to attain normalcy in appetite. If *Agni* is maintained several other diseases are automatically controlled.

Even when a number of ailments attack an individual, he can protect his life if he maintains a regulated digestion. In other words, no number of diseases can harm an individual if he has proper digestion<sup>51</sup>.

**Ahara Pachana (Digestion of food)**

As described in Charaka Samhita the life of all living beings is food and the world seek food<sup>52</sup>. Food must be properly digest to support *Deha Dhatu* (tissue elements), *Ojas* (essence of all *Dhatus*), *Bala* (physical strength) and *Varna* (complexion) and it depends upon *Agni*.<sup>53</sup>

The food ingested at the proper time, is drawn into the *Maha srotas* (Alimentary tract) by the *Prana Vata*. The big masses of food are divided into small pieces and become soft by the liquid. Then the food is presented to the *Amashaya*. Then the *Jatharagni* activated by *Samana Vata* cook the food just similar to external fire cooks the rice and water kept in the pot<sup>54</sup>.

**Agni and Avasthapaka**

Changes that *Ahara* (food substrate) undergo in *Koshtha* (Alimentary tract) are known as *Avasthapaka*. There are two phases in *Avasthapaka* viz *Prapaka* or *Prathama Paka* (first outcome) and *Vipaka* (chemical actions). *Vipaka* has been defined as the

outcome of the action of *Jatharagni* on *Ahara* (food substrate) (*Jatharagni Paka*)<sup>55</sup>.

**Jatharagni Paka**

The term *Jatharagni Paka* implies the meaning of digestion of food under the influence of *Jatharagni*. It describes the intestinal digestion and process involve in it. The place of *Jatharagni Paka* is *Adho Amashaya*. As described by Chakrapanidatta the terms *Agniyashaya* and *Pachyamanashaya* (large intestine) also considered as *Adho Amashaya* because it is the organ of *Agni* where the food is cooked or digested. It is also known as *Kshudranta* or *Grahani*. The outcome of *Jatharagni Paka* is known as *Vipaka*. It is of three types *Madhura* (sweet), *Amla* (sour or acidic) and *Katu* (pungent or acrid) according to Charaka and Vagbhata while according to Susruta only two viz, *Madhura* (sweet) and *Katu* (pungent or acrid)<sup>56</sup>.

At the end of the *Jatharagni Paka* all the six *Rasas* (tastes) of *Ahara* get reduced into above *Vipakas*. Outcome of *Vipaka* is tabulated below. [Table No 02]

**Table 2: Outcome of Vipaka**<sup>57</sup>

Avastha Paka	Place where started	Place where ending	Doshas Influencing	State of Anna	Outcome of Vipaka
Madhura bhava of Prapaka	Mukha (oral cavity)	Upper portion of the Urdhava Amashaya	Bodhaka Kapha	Madhura	Madhura
Amla bhava of Prapaka	Urdhava Amashaya	Adho Amashaya (Pachyamanashaya)	Pachaka Pitta	Vidagdha (Kinchit Pakva Kinchit Apakva)	Amla
Jatharagni Paka	Adho Amashaya (Pachyamanashaya)	Pakvashaya	Pachaka Pitta, Kledaka Kapha, Samana Vataya	Pakva	Madhura, Amla or Katu

**Relationship in between Rasa (taste) and Vipaka (end result of the digestion)**

There are different views regarding the *Vipaka* and six *Rasas*. These are given in Table No 03.

**Table 3: Relationship in between Rasa (taste) and Vipaka (end result of the digestion)**

Rasa (taste)	Vipaka (end result of the digestion)				
	CS	SS	AS	AH	PC on AS
Madhura	Madhura	Madhura	Madhura	Madhura	Madhura
Amla	Amla	Amla	Amla	Amla	Amla
Lavana	Madhura	Lavana	Madhura	Madhura	Madhura
Katu	Katu	Katu	Katu	Katu	Katu
Tikta	Katu	Tikta	Katu	Katu	Madhura
Kashaya	Katu	Kashaya	Katu	Katu	Madhura

CS- Charaka Samhita<sup>58</sup>, SS- Sushruta Samhita<sup>59</sup>, AH- Ashtanga Hrudaya Samhita<sup>60</sup>, AH- Ashtanga Samgraha<sup>61</sup>, P S on AS- Parashara Commentary on Ashtanga Samgraha<sup>62</sup>

**Different states of Jatharagni**

*Jatharagni* is classified into four categories according to its performance of digestion in the human being namely *Vishamagni* (irregular), *Teekshnagni* (sharp), *Mandagni* (mild) and *Samagni* (regular)<sup>63-65</sup>.

*Samagni- Agni* which digests the consumed food within an appropriate period is called *Samagni*. It is due to the equilibrium state of *Tridosha* (body humours) viz *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*. This thus increases the

quality of the *Dhatus* (supportive tissues of the body). Persons having *Samagni* are always hale and healthy.

*Vishamagni* (irregular state of *Agni* )- The *Agni* which sometimes digests food well and sometimes produce *Adhmana* (flatulence), *Shula* (colic), *Udavarta* (constipation), *Ateesara* (diarrhoea), *Jathara Gaurava* (heaviness in the abdomen), *Antra Kujana* (borborygmi) and *Pravahani* (tenesmus) is known as *Vishamagni* (irregular digestive power). When the *Agni* is affected by the *Vata Dosh* *Vishamagni* is manifested.

*Teekshnagni* (sharp state of *Agni*) – *Agni* which digests food taken even in excessive quantities is called *Teekshnagni* (sharp digestive power). In *Teekshnagni* the action of *Jatharagni* is in the state is influenced predominantly by *Pitta*. The *Agni* of this condition is excessively excited and hence it is known as *Teekshnagni*. This *Agni* easily digests even a very heavy meal in a very short time. It causes voracious hunger; a condition usually spoken of as *Atyagni* (*Bhashmakagni*).

*Mandagni* (feeble state of *Agni*) - The digestive power which takes a long time to digest even a very

small quantity is named as *Mandagni*. At the same time it produces *Udara Gaurava* (heaviness in the abdomen), *Shiro Gaurava* (heaviness of the head), *Kasa* (cough), *Shvasa* (dyspnoea), *Praseka* (excessive salivation), *Chardi* (vomiting) and *Gatrasada* (lassitude) in the body. If *Kapha Dosha* overpowers *Agni*, *Mandagni* will be resulted.

*Mandagni* gives rise to *Kaphaja* diseases, *Teekshnagni* to *Piitaja* diseases and *Vishamagni* to *Vataja* diseases<sup>66</sup>. Diseases due to different states of *Jatharagni* are listed in table No 04.

**Table 4: Diseases due to different states of *Jatharagni***

States of <i>Agni</i>	Diseases
<i>Mandagni</i>	<i>Arshas</i> (piles), <i>Udara</i> (abdominal distention), <i>Kushtha</i> (dermatitis), <i>Jvara</i> (fever), <i>Ama Ajeerana</i> (type of indigestion), <i>Grahani</i> (sprue), <i>Ateesara</i> (diarrhoea), <i>Visuchika</i> (choleric diarrhoea), <i>Alasaka</i> (intestinal torper) <sup>67-74</sup>
<i>Teekshnagni</i>	<i>Grahani</i> (sprue) <sup>75</sup>
<i>Vishamagni</i>	<i>Grahani</i> (sprue) <sup>75</sup>
<i>Bhashmakagni</i>	<i>Athi Sthaulya</i> (obesity)
<i>Vidagdha Agni</i>	<i>Rakta Pitta</i> (bleeding disorders) <sup>76</sup> , <i>Amlapitta</i> (hyperacidity), <i>Vidagdha Ajeerna</i> (type of indigestion), <i>Kamala</i> (jaundice)

#### ***Bhutagni* and *Bhutagni Paka***

Ayurveda recognize five basic elements called *Pancha Maha Bhuta* viz, *Akasha* (ether), *Vayu* (air), *Teja* (heat), *Ap* (water) and *Pruthuvi* (earth)<sup>77</sup>. Human body as well as the dietary articles is composed of these five *Maha Bhutas* (five basic elements)<sup>78</sup>. This each of *Bhuta* contains their own *Agnis* named as *Bhutagni*. For an example *Akasha Dravya* contains *Akashagni*, *Vayavya Dravya* contains *Vayavyagni*.

Ultimate products of *Jatharagni Paka* are suitably processed by *Bhutagni Paka*. *Bhutagni Paka* is commenced in the *Adhah Amashaya* or *Kshudrantra* (small intestines) it is continued and completed in *Yakrut* (liver).

As Acharya Charaka described, five *Bhutagnis* digest their own part of the substances present in the food materials. After the digestion digested materials containing the elements and qualities alike to each *Bhutas* nourish their own specific *Dhatu*s of the body<sup>79</sup>.

Both Charaka and Susruta directly mentioned about *Bhutagni Paka*. But Acharya Susruta has given indirect reference only. The food which consists of five *Maha Bhutas* is digested in its turn by the five *Bhutagnis* and each of principle proceeds to augment its own homologue in the human organism.

#### ***Dhatvagni* (Bio energy in the cells) and *Dhatvagni Paka***

All the seven *Dhatu*s contain their own *Agni* to metabolize the nutrient materials supplied to them through their related *Srotas*. These are called *Dhatvagni*<sup>80</sup>. *Rasa Dhatu* contains *Rasagni*, *Rakta Dhatu* contains *Raktagni* and *Mamsa Dhatu* contains *Mamsagni* and so on so forth.

By *Dhatvagni Paka* food substances are made alike to assimilation and nourishment for *Dhatu*s. The

*Rasa* essence circulated through the body and supplies nutritive elements to all parts viz *Dhatu* (tissues) viz again are made up of five *Maha Bhutas*. *Dhatvagni* regulate the metabolism thus performing all the functional activities from an individual cell to the entire body.

As described in Chakrapani, *Dhatu* is of two types viz *Asthai* (*Poshaka*; unstable) and *Sthai* (*Poshya*; stable). With the influence of their own *Agni* (*Dhatvagni*) *Asthai* or *Poshaka Dhatu* are undergone *Paka* (digestion) and transported via their own *Srotas* viz *Rasavaha*, *Raktavaha* and so on to nourish *Sthai Dhatu*<sup>81</sup>.

During the process of *Dhatvagni Paka*, *Anna Rasa* is divided into *Prasada* and *Kitta*. *Asthai* or *Poshaka Dhatu* of all *Dhatu*s are formed by *Prasada Bhaga* while all the *Mala* (waste products) of *Dhatu*s by *Kitta Bhaga*. *Mala* (waste products) resultant from each *Dhatu* is given in the following table. [Table No: 05]

**Table 5: *Mala* (waste products) resulting out of *Dhatvagni Paka*<sup>82</sup>**

<i>Dhatu</i>	<i>Mala</i>
<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Malabhuta Kapha</i> (phlegm)
<i>Rakta</i>	<i>Malabhuta Piita</i> (bile)
<i>Mamsa</i>	<i>Kha Mala</i> (excreta of the ear, eyes, nose, mouth and root of hair)
<i>Medas</i>	<i>Sveda</i> (sweat)
<i>Asthi</i>	<i>Kesha, Loma</i> (hair and nails)
<i>Majja</i>	<i>Vit Sneha</i> (the unctuous substances present in the eyes, stool and the skin)
<i>Shukra</i>	No waste produces

**Table 6: Diseases due to Dhatvagni Mandya**

State	Diseases
Dhatvagni Mandya	Prameha (polyuria) <sup>83</sup> , Galaganda (goiter) <sup>84</sup> , Madhumeha (diabetes mellitus), Medo Vruddhi (hyperlipidaemia), Atisthaulya (obesity)

**Effect of Agni on Dhatu**

*Jatharagni* digests the food and prepares nutrient materials required for all the *Dhatu*s. Each one of the *Dhatu* within it has an *Agni* like portion which is described as the portion of *Jatharagni*.

*Kayagni* contributes the moieties of itself to the seven *Dhatvagni* and support and augments the functions of *Dhatvagni*. Their decrease and increase in quantity quality or functions give rise to increase and decrease of the *Dhatu*s respectively.

Due to the identical functions this *Agni* present in *Dhatu* (*Dhatvagni*) also digests the nutrient materials prepared by the *Jatharagni* and transforms it so as to become suitable to the *Dhatu*. In this connection *Dhatvagni* receives strength from *Jatharagni* and both work in unison. If the *Jatharagni* very strong, the *Dhatvagni* will acts similarly and vice versa. Very strong *Agni* overcooks the food and thereby making available very little amount of nutrient. It leads to *Dhatu Kshaya* (decrease or loss of tissues). Very weak *Agni* fails to cook food properly and allows *Ama* (uncooked nutrients) to accumulate in the *Dhatu* leading in to *Dhatu Vruddhi* (abnormal increase of the tissues). Either these *Kshaya* or *Vruddhi* of *Dhatu*s are abnormal conditions and give rise many diseases in the body.

Each preceding *Dhatu* helps the succeeding *Dhatu*. If the preceding *Dhatu* undergoes either *Vruddhi* or *Kshaya* by the effect of *Agni* the succeeding *Dhatu* will also undergoes similar changes respectively.

Impairment of *Agni* is responsible for the creation of diseases.

**Effect of Agni on Mala**

The ingested food stuff having reached the *Pakvashaya* is dehydrated and converted into lumps by the *Agni*. In the process *Vayu* become *Katu Bhavita*.

**Relation between Agni and Vata Dosha**

*Vata Dosha* in balance state will maintains the equilibrium of *Dosha*, *Dhatu* and *Agni* together <sup>85</sup>. *Samana Vayu* is being associated with *Agni* helps to ingestion, digestion and separation of food <sup>86</sup>.

**Relation between Agni and Purisha**

*Purisha* in normal state supports the body and maintain the *Agni*.

**Agni and Panchakarma**

*Panchakarma* therapy is meant for *Samshodhana* (purification) of the body through the elimination of *Doshas* which are vitiated and accumulated in *Srotas* (body channels). *Purva Karma*

(preparatory procedures) are required to be undertaken before the *Panchakarma* is done. *Pacana* is the very first therapeutic procedure administered under *Purva Karma* to normalize the deranged *Agni*. It is necessary to examine the state of *Agni* prior to perform *Panchakarma*.

**DISCUSSION**

Solar energy is the source of any kind of conversion in the living beings. Like ripening of fruit results in the changes of colour, taste and smell. *Agni* represents this solar energy in living body. *Agni* has the capacity to convert a substance into any form due to its occult power.

*Agni* is reflected mostly in the concept of *Pitta*. But in fact as a matter of principle, *Pitta* and *Agni* both are supposed to be separate body constituents. Though both are separate substances, however on the basis of similar functioning like *Dahana* and *Pachana* both can be correlated together. The commentator Dalhana has interpreted the term *Dahana* and *Pachana* as *Daha* (burning) and *Paka* (chemical actions).

*Agni* is not different from *Pitta* due to its *Agneya* property. In the conditions of depletion of *Antaragni* substances having *Katu* (pungent), *Amla* (sour), *Lavana* (salty) *Rasa*, *Teekshna* (sharp), *Ushna* (hot) *Guna* used to enhance *Agni*. Therefore it can be justified that *Agni* is not different from *Pitta*. In the context of origin of different *Doshas* it has been mentioned that *Pitta* is supposed to be a substance, which is *Agneya* (fiery) and whose actions and properties are identical with those of *Agni*.

In modern physiological perspective the action of *Jatharagni* can be equated with the digestion in stomach, intestines and the liver. As the food consumed are foreign to the body (*Vijateeya*) they should be processed to convert organism specific form (*Sajateeya*) to get absorbed. *Dhatvagnis* support *Dhatu*s to nourish and constitute themselves via nutrient stuff. A decrease or an increase of *Dhatu*s occurs according to the *Teekshna* or *Mandata* of the aspects of *Pachakagni* present in *Dhatu*s.

Out of the four different *Agni*, *Samagni* is the best. The remaining three *Agnis* produce illnesses. The majority of the illnesses are produced by *Mandagni*. *Kapha* and *Agni* are having opposite attributes and as a result of this duality the process of digestion slows down in *Mandagni*. In the young age, the stage of *Agni* is *Manda* due the influence of *Kapha Dosha* and as age advances the power of *Agni* increases thus resulting in better digestion and metabolism. This helps an increase in the size of the body.

*Jatharagni Paka* results the breakdown of food into five distinct groups viz *Parthiva*, *Apya*, *Agneya*, *Vayavya* and *Akashiya*. *Bhutagni Paka* completes the intestinal digestion. It is only after the completion of this *Bhutagni Paka* the formation of *Ahara Rasa* accomplishes and its absorption starts. The *Bhutagni* is thus activated and digests the substance of that

particular group. By this process of digestion the characteristic qualities of each *Mahabhuta* component get transformed and assumed *Vilakshana Gunas*.

The *Dhatvagni* or enzymes are located in the tissue elements of the body. They help in the assimilation and transformation of the nutrient materials received after the *Bhutagni Paka* into substance homologous to the tissue elements. During the process of assimilation through the help of *Dhatvagni* many waste products are produced.

Diseases are caused by the obstruction of the channels of the body. The obstruction is due to the accumulation of waste products. These waste products can be eliminated if the *Agni* or the enzymes of that locality are stimulated. Thus the concept of *Agni* or the process of the digestion and metabolism is given lot of importance in Ayurveda.

Before starting the treatment of any disease in the first instance, the defects in these *Agnis* are located and efforts are made to correct them. It is true also that the body elements remain deprived of nutrients, unless and until the food is properly digested by *Agni*. When the vital air goes out of the body viz. when the individual dies the functioning of the *Agni* will stop.

Chakrapani described that the use of the word *Shareereshu* indicate that the *Agni* residing all over the body. However, in subsequent elaboration *Agni* is residing in the gastro intestinal tract are described.

## CONCLUSION

*Agni* is an important entity in Ayurveda. The *Prana* (life forces) of an individual depends on *Agni*. *Agni* is one of the basic constitute of the body, which has an important role to play in conversion and is helpful in the maintenance and growth of the human body.

*Agni* is not stimulated by non eating or taking less quantity of food or by over eating just as the physical fire is not kindled without fuel or with too much of fuel or with dispropostate to its small burning capacity.

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