



# Ascertaining Role of 'Agni' in the Intervention of Health and Disease

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## Research Article

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## Abstract

All eight branches of Ayurveda encompass a common fundamental line of treatment known as *Kayachikitsa*, which literally means "treatment of Agni" (*Kaya* means Agni, *Chikitsa* means treatment). The classical Ayurvedic texts have postulated the role of a balanced state of Agni for sustaining life, imbalanced state of Agni for causing disease, and diminished state of Agni for leading to the diminishment of life. The Classics have designated critical terminology pertaining to relevant outcome criteria to explicitly express the significance of Agni in nourishing life and intervening health, disease as well as death. For example, *Sama* (balanced state of Agni) signifies traits of health; *Dushti* (imbalanced state of Agni affected by one, two or all the three dosha) signifies the diseases; and *Shant* (diminished/vanished Agni) reveals the cause and symptom of death. For diagnostic accuracy in the management of health and disease, practitioners should rely on assessments of Agni. Ascertaining the role of Agni is needed within any system of medicine, beginning with patient assessment and continuing through differential diagnosis of the disease, and therapeutic absorption of medicine to treatment outcome. Incorporating evidence of Agni strength into the diagnosis of disease provides vital information about treatment outcome criteria and recovery markers. Identifying Agni has implications for herbal combinations, pharmaceuticals used in *Panchakarma* (*Pancha* means five, *karma* means procedures, *Panchakarma* means five detoxification procedures), supplementary pharmaceuticals, and specific applications for clinicians, pharmacists and researchers. Further research into Agni may provide insights into autoimmune disease and sustainable health that could have been previously unrecognized by much of the medical community. This research article aims to break the language barrier by clearly defining classical Sanskrit words, providing authentic, approachable Ayurvedic information, and making such concepts accessible globally for both Ayurvedic and non-Ayurvedic scholars.

Dosha are the Ayurvedic functional anatomical considerations; they have the ability to contaminate in an imbalance state. Vata, Pitta and Kapha are the three dosha; collectively called as Tridosha and independently can be addressed as dosha.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda; Agni; Health; Disease; Kayachikitsa; Bala; Digestion; Nidra-Sleep; Food; Disease; Panchakarma

## Objective

Agni, the energy responsible for digestion, must be understood and defined before proceeding to treatment in any direction from any system of medicine. Still, it is not well

identified by healthcare practitioners [1-8]. The display and propagation of the role of Agni in the intervention of health and disease has not yet occurred. Other ancient systems of medicine could integrate this vision and tool to help heal humankind [9-12]. Hence, this study has been undertaken. In

this paper, we describe the role of Agni as a critical function of health and disease. Classical references address health and healing outcomes associated with Agni [13]. We hope to provide clarity on the classical perspective of Agni to make it relevant for students, academicians, clinicians, researchers, pharmacists, manufacturing companies, and to whomever else it may be beneficial.

Ayurved's approach of eliminating the root cause of the disease is outstanding. Conservation of health, prevention and treatment of disease are the objectives of Ayurvedic System of Medicine [1-14]. Ayurvedic medicine is focused on detoxification, rejuvenation, and empowering the foundational elements of the perception centers, in addition to organs of perception, mind, entire physique, and vital parts. It works as a preventative for emotional and seasonal outbreaks [15]. Assessment and treatment of

Agni is indicated within each objective to prevent and treat various diseases and conditions [8]. The scientific approach of Ayurvedic concept of Agni has been clinically evident.

## Methodology

The scholarly literature research of Dr. Savita Rajurkar on the symptoms associated with Agni on the basis of *Brihatrayee* (Greater Trilogy) in the context of Lakshanakosha; brings in the comparative authentic data from these classical texts in the context of Agni [7]. They are rigorously studied from the Sanskrit version of the Classics as well as their most authentic Sanskrit commentaries and Lakshanakosha within this research. Therefore, this work provides the basis of this manuscript. Details of the Classics used for reference are presented in Table 1.

Name of the ancient Classical Ayurvedha Text	Name of the Autjour Honorable scholar	Name of the Commentary	Name of the Commentator
Charak samhita	Written by Agnivesa revised by charak & Dhruhabala	Ayurveda Deepika	Chakrapani
Charak samhita	As mentioned above	Jalpa-kalpa-taru	Gangadhar
Sushrut Samhita	Acharya Sushrut	Nibandha-samgraha	Dolhana
Astanga Samgraha	Acharya Vagbhat	Shashilekha	Indu
Astanga Hrudaya	Acharya Vagbhat	Sarvanga-sundara	Arundatta
Astanga Hrudaya	Acharya Vagbhat	Ayurveda Rasayana	Hemadri

**Table 1:** The Details of Sanskrit Classics.

*Brihatrayee*, called the Greater Trilogy being the most ancient and authentic classical texts of Ayurved, is selected for this literature research. The Greater Trilogy includes *Charak Samhita* (Charak is name of the author, samhita means book), *Sushrut Samhita* (Sushrut is name of the author), *Ashtanga Hridaya Samhita* (Ashta means eight, anga-parts or branches, Ashtanga means eight parts or eight branches; Sanskrit word Hridaya literally means 'heart' and can be explained as a core), or *Vagbhata Samhita* (Vagbhata is name of the author), and *Ashtanga Sangraha Samhita* (Ashtanga means eight parts or eight branches, Sangraha means collection) Various information from each book of *Brihatrayee* -- The Greater Trilogy -- is the main source of knowledge in Ayurveda. *Triskandhakosha* has systematically compiled the references from *Brihatrayee*.

The term [5] '*Triskandhakosha*' refers to a compilation of every sutra-verse from the *Brihatrayi*-greater trilogy, *Charaka*, *Sushruta* and *Vagbhata Samhitas*. This has resulted in the following publications: *Hetukosha* in 3 volumes (3200 pps.), *Lakshanakosha* in 3 volumes (3200 pps.) and *Aushadhakosha* in 7 volumes (8000 pps.), together with

diagnostic and treatment software. The whole information is classified into three databases.

- *Hetukosha*, which elaborates on the spectrum of causative relationships between diet, behavior etc. and health and disease.
- *Lakshanakosha*, which elaborates symptom-disease-health relationships.
- *Aushadhakosha*, which elaborates all such relationships from the perspective of treatment. *Triskandhakosha* thus involves a blend of Ayurveda, Sanskrit and information technology. It comprises a complete listing of textual information classified according to causes (*Hetu*), symptoms (*Lakshana*) and treatments (*Aushadha*) of health and disease.

This manuscript includes English script for the Devanagari script from Sanskrit language verses in order that the readers who are unfamiliar with the Sanskrit language could read it with a Sanskrit accent. Selected relevant classical verses in Sanskrit language are included within this manuscript in the interest of introducing the reader to the original verses from Ayurvedic Classic literature. English

words for each Sanskrit word are meticulously assessed to facilitate optimum understanding. This research article elaborates authentic Ayurvedic information for the Ayurvedic and non-Ayurvedic readers/ scholars.

## Introduction

With this paper, we seek to bring the concept of Agni to a wider audience. However, we have found that non-Ayurveda doctors or scholars have difficulties with Sanskrit and accessing mentors or the classical texts of Ayurveda. To alleviate this, we introduce Agni, one of the basic concepts in Ayurved, which is easily applicable to all other medicines. Our hope is that this will open up the use of Agni within medicines outside of Ayurveda and encourage non-Ayurved doctors and scholars to investigate other aspects of Ayurved.

What is Ayurved/Ayurveda? Ayurved is a full-fledged system of medicine that offers wisdom and specific practices to live life in health and harmony with Mother Nature [1]. 'Ayurved' is a sister science of 'Yoga', classified among the revered sciences, and is considered as part of the ancient literature Atharvaved [2]. The word 'Ayurved' comes from the Sanskrit language. It's made up of two words, viz., "Ayu" and "Veda." "Ayu" means "life" and "Veda" means a science, or to learn systematically [1]. Thus, Ayurved literally means life science. Ayurved defines life as an ideal and consistent union of physical body, organs (sense & motor organs), mind, and 'atma'- 'atman' [2]. A specific equivocal word is not observed for the Sanskrit word Atma. Therefore, we refer to this word as Atma. However, for others' understanding, it can be referred to as spirit or soul. It indicates that Atman must be present within the physical body to keep life intact.

At its core, Agni is digestive fire. Indeed, the Vedas -- sacred Hindu scriptures -- consider Agni a deity. It transforms food into living bodies. As doctors, we work with Agni -- eating the right things for the person and season at the appropriate times in the appropriate amounts -- to maintain health and discourage disease. Below, we delineate the subtleties of Agni to facilitate a general understanding of the important role that Agni plays in health and treatment of disease.

## Introduction to AGNI

**Etymology** - नरिक्त-अङ्गत ऊर्ध्वं गच्छति इति। (नरिक्त)

Nirukti - Angati urdhwam gacchati iti.

Meaning - One which moves upward.

The concept of Agni is first encountered in the first वेद \*veda, ऋग्वेद 'Rigveda'. Agni is described in Rigveda as a supernatural power, considered a deity. Veda - the most ancient Hindu scriptures, written in early Sanskrit and containing hymns, philosophy, and guidance on ritual for

the priests of Vedic religion -- are believed to have been directly revealed to seers among the early Aryans in India, and preserved by oral tradition. The four chief collections are the Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda, and Atharva Veda [7]. Ayurveda being an upaveda-sub-branch of the fourth veda अथर्ववेद 'Atharvaveda', also presents the Agni in deity form having a Godly nature.

Agni, like fire, tends to move upward. Agni produces enthusiastic energy for every activity [7]. जाठरो भगवानग्निश्चरोऽन्नस्य पाचकः। [8] (Jatharo bhagavanaagnireeshwaroannasya pachakaha.) Agni, with respect to health, is responsible for digestion and offers health to all. [8] जाठरः प्राणनिमग्नः काय इत्यभधीयते। यस्तं चकित्सेत सीदन्तं स वै कायचकित्सकः। [9] (Jatharaha praninamagnihi kaya ityabhidheeyate, yastam chikitset seedantam sa vai kayachikitsakaha.)

The treatment for abnormality of Agni to bring it back to normal functioning is the *Kayachikitsa* – Internal Medicine. The physician who treats Agni appropriately becomes successful in their treatments.

Almost all the diseases are created due to *manda agni* (*manda* meaning low). Protection of Agni is very essential in treatment of all diseases [10] if increase in Agni is done then relief in the disease takes place. [11].

**Agni's reflection in a balanced state:** Agni is reflected as heat and pitta as well [7].

**Agni's subtle nature:** सूक्ष्मत्वम् sukshmatwa-This functional energy Agni cannot be physically put forth because of its subtle nature. Its presence is felt, reflected as a symptom but cannot be seen or presented as one particular object [13].

**Seat of Agni-location of Agni in the living body:** Agni resides at the naval [13]. Pittadhara Kala and Grahani are explained as places of Agni's existence. The seat of Agni is mentioned within the description of the organ Grahani (small intestine) [14], (Grahani is small intestine where main digestive juices are secreted from Liver and Pancreas having properties of the *Pachaka pitta*.) [15,16] and in the description of Pittadhara Kala (the membrane or layers which hold pitta) [17]. Strong Agni is the strength of Grahani (small intestines) [18-20].

**Responsibility of Agni:** To nourish Pittadhara Kala (the membrane or layers which hold pitta) is the function and responsibility of Agni [21].

**Holding Agni in place within the body:** To hold the Agni is the property of purisha. Purisha means the solid waste feces [22].

**Agni's examination and inference:** Agni is examined and judged by its digestive power [18]. Recurrence of normal functioning or favorable functioning of Agni is described as a symptom that is obtained after achievement of proper Virechana-therapeutic purgation [11,23].

**Agni's activation:** To activate Agni is the character or nature of Vayu-vata dosha [24].

**Agni's role with respect to Vata dosha:** Normal state of Agni is an indicative symptom of normal vata [25]. Agni's strength and saman vata-Strength of Agni is the character of Samanvata. Saman vata is one of the five types of vata dosha [26].

**Agni's role with respect to Pitta dosha** - To produce pitta is the property of Agni [18].

**Normal due rise or increase of Agni:** 'Udeernatwam' is the classical term used to indicate the proper rise of Agni, which occurs when the meal is consumed in a timely manner. When the food supply to Agni is insufficient, the intensity of the power of Agni increases to receive food. When the previous food is digested, Agni becomes excited to receive new food. It is found as a Lakshana-symptom according to Ashtangasangraha and Vagbhata [27]. Maximum strength of Agni is obtained due to the effect of cold weather in the winter season. This condition of Agni is the specific effect of the winter season. Scholar Charaka says it is a property, and capability of Agni to digest the heavy food in the winter season. Agni becomes low in Rainy season and Spring season [28].

**Maintenance of uninterrupted functioning of Agni:** To maintain uninterrupted functioning of Agni is the characteristic of shuddha rakta-pure blood. A person with unvitiated blood has normal digestion [29].

### Significant role of Agni in the intervention of health and sustenance of life

आयुर्वरणो बलं स्वास्थयमुत्साहोपचयौ प्रभा । ओजस्तेजोऽग्नयः  
प्राणाश्चोक्ता देहाग्निरहेतुकम् ॥३॥  
चरक संहिता चिकित्सा स्थान अध्याय १५ / श्लोक ३ (Charak  
Samhita Chikitsa section chapter 15 verse 3)  
Ayurvarno balam swasthyamutsahopachayau prabha |  
Ojastejoagnayaha praanaashchokta dehaagnihetukaaha ॥3॥

'Dehagni' is the root cause for the intervention of sustenance of life leading to longevity, appropriate complexion, appropriate strength, optimum health, motivation, optimum growth, appropriate radiance, optimum *ojas*, optimum glow and optimum functioning of other Agni in the body. The sustenance of an individual's life

is said to be because of *dehagni* (deha means body and Agni means the entity or faculty responsible for the digestion and metabolism) [12].

### Proper Quality of Food is Responsible to Elevate the Agni

यदन्नं देहधात्वोजोबलवर्णादपिषकम् ॥  
तत्राग्निरहेतुराहारान्नं ह्यपक्वाद्रसादयम् ॥५॥  
yadannaM dehadhAtvojobalavarNAdipoShakam |  
tatrAgnirheturAhArAnna hyapakvAdrasAdayaH ॥5॥ Charak  
Samhita Chikitsasthana15/5

The food one consumes becomes capable of nourishing the body tissues and of promoting the *ojas* (vital essence), strength, complexion, etc., only in the presence of normally functioning Agni. In the absence of normal digestion (and metabolism), the normal body tissues starting from *rasa* cannot be formed nor nourished [30].

### How to Nurture Agni?

Rules and regulations of the process of consumption of food if properly performed are responsible for the rise and maintenance of Agni. Thus, for nurturing the proper functioning of Agni, it should be always maintained by consuming proper food in the proper manner, quantity, quality and time. Consumption of food in an improper way, quantity, quality and time leads to disease and reduction in lifespan [31].

**Types of Agni:** Total thirteen types are described in classics. Jatharagni-abdominal digesting faculty, five Agni of five elements *Panchamahabhoota*, collectively called bhutagni, and seven Agni of seven dhatus are called Dhatwagni.

**Significance of Jatharagni:** Jathar-abdomen/stomach, Abdominal Agni/King Agni  
अन्नस्य पक्ता सर्वेषां पक्त्राणामधिपि मतः  
तन्मूलास्ते हि तद्वृद्धिक्षयवृद्धिक्षयात्मकाः ॥३९॥  
Annasya pakta sarvesham paktroonamadhipomataha |  
Tanmoolstahi tadvrudhdhikshyayavrudhdhikshayatmakaha  
॥३९॥  
*Jatharagni* is known as the King among all the forms of Agni. The intensification and diminution of all other twelve forms of Agni are in fact dependent on this *Jatharagni*.

**Bhutagni:** Agni of elements

There are five types of Agni of five mahabhuta-elements. They are one of each *mahabhuta*; namely, *bhauma-agni* earth-agni, *apya-agni* water-agni, *agneya-agni* fire-agni, *vayavya-agni* air-agni, and *nabhasa-agni* space-agni. These five are collectively called '*bhutagni*' and transform/metabolize those components of the food that are homologous to them

in their composition of structure of human organism (such as *parthiva*, *apya*, etc.) [32]. Specific categories of entities in the body having specific attributes can be nourished by only those substances that belong to the same category having those same attributes. This means that *parthiva*-earth element dominant entities in the body (one that is dominated by *prithvi*-earth *mahabhuta*-element in its composition) can be nourished only by the *parthiva*-earth element dominant substances in the food and so on. The same rule applies to the whole body [32].

**Dhatvagni:** Tissue transformers - Agni of body constituents-dhatu

Each *dhatu*-body constituent has its own transforming Agni and *srotas* or micro channels. They are one of each *dhatu* and named after that *dhatu* (body constituents), viz. *rasa dhatu agni/rasadhatvagni*, *rakta dhatu agni/raktadhatvagni*, *mamsa dhatu agni/mamsadhatvagi*, *meda dhatu agni/medodhatvagni*, *asthi dhatu agni/asthdhatvagni*, *majja dhatu agni/majjadhtvagni*, *shukra dhatu agni/shukradhatvagni*. *Srotas* or micro channels of *dhatu* have two functions; one function of carrying the *dhatu* nourishing relevant components, *dhatu* and second function of transforming the tissues with the help of their specific *dhatu*-agni/*dhatvagni*.

### Process of Digestion

The ingested food is carried to *koshtha*-gut by *prana vata*-one of the five types of *vata*. The food disintegrates because of the liquids, and further it becomes soft because of the fatty substances. The *samana vata* is one of the five types of *vata*, that has an inherent ability to intensify the Agni. This *Samana Vata* intensifies the Agni and then Agni properly digests the food that one consumes timely and in an appropriate quantity, thus leading to longevity. This process of digestion by Agni in the gut which leads to the formation of *rasa* and *mala* is comparable to the process of cooking of the raw rice kept in an earthen vessel containing water on a fire [33].

**Five bhutagnis:** Agni of elements, one for each *mahabhuta*, transforms their element dominant nutrients into the body tissues and organs. Further, the seven components that sustain the body, known as *dhatu* (tissues), are metabolized/transformed into two kinds of products known as *sara* (nutrition) and *kitta* (waste). This process is the function of seven specific entities known as *dhatvagn*-agni of body constituents. Each *dhatvagni*- *dhatu* transformer Agni is specific for its corresponding *dhatu* [34] within the third phase of digestion and metabolism at level of *dhatu*, *Rakta* is produced after *rasa* and then *mamsa*. After *mamsa* the *meda* is formed and then *asthi* is produced. After *asthi* the *majja* is derived and then *shukra* is produced and finally fine *shukra* leads to *garbha* [35].

Seven *dhatvagni* or tissue transformers, form the tissue components of seven *dhatu*-body constituents by their needed nutrients. After formation of *dhatu*, the *srotas*-microchannels permeate them into the organs for functioning. During this transformation process, *upa-dhatu* or sub-tissues and *dhatu-mala* or waste products are formed. *Updhatu*-sub tissues of *rasa dhatu* are breast milk and menstrual blood, *upa dhatu*-of *rakta* are tendons and *upa dhatu*-sub tissue of *mamsa dhatu* is six layers of skin, etc.

### Importance of Agni

The functions of the gut are vital for maintenance and preservation of health. *Jatharagni*, the king and abdominal agni is the initiator of the digestive process and strengthens the other twelve Agni. *Jatharagni*-the abdominal agni transforms food into biological substance *ahara rasa*-chyle. Which is further trifurcated into *madhura*-sweet, *avastha paka* - state of digestion, (*avastha*-state, *paka*- digestion) sweet taste state of digestion, *amla*- sour taste state of digestion and *katu*- pungent taste state of digestion which gets transformed into three biological energies *kapha*, *pitta* and *vata* respectively. From the physiological point of view, the *Jatharagni* or the active form of *pachaka pitta* is responsible for the digestion of all kinds of foods in the gut. Therefore, this should include all amylolytic, proteolytic and lipolytic enzymes secreted by various kinds of exocrine glands in the gut, which actually cause digestion, i.e., breaking down of different macromolecules into their constituent units.

There are five *bhutagnis*- Agni of five elements and their function is to metabolize *panchabhautic*-five elemental components of the food that are homologous to them in their composition. *Bhutagnis*- elemental agni act on the products of digestion. (*Jatharagni paka*-(*paka*-cooked, processed) the product obtained from the digestion of food by abdominal agni) Hence, must be acting after the absorption of the nutrients, but before the action of *dhatvagni*- *dhatu* transformers. The major site where the absorbed nutrients undergo biochemical transformation is in the liver, which plays an important role in metabolism, wherein several processes such as trans-amination, de-amination, beta-oxidation of fatty acids, glycolysis etc. take place. Therefore, the overall intermediary metabolism (involving fats, carbohydrates and proteins) can be understood as the functioning of the *bhutagni*-elemental agni.

*Dhatvagni*-*dhatu* transforming *dhatu* Agni act at tissue-level (in fact, at cellular level) upon the products of *bhutagni paka*- the product obtained from the digestion of food by each elemental agni and are responsible for the building of the respective *dhatu*-body constituents-tissues. In other words, the bio-energetic processes of a cell seem to be under the regulation of *dhatvagni*-agni of body tissues.

**Agni's role in intervention of disease:** Agni is presented in four patterns - Sama is the normal condition indicative of state of balance, Vishama-irregular functioning, Manda-Slow, Teekshna-excess are the conditions indicative of state of imbalance. Agni gets affected by doshas and becomes Vishama due to vata, Teekshna due to pitta and Manda due to kapha and gives rise to diseases [36,37].

### Determination of Agni by Means of the Duration Required to Complete the Process Of Digestion

When the food is digested in four yamas i.e. twelve hours and the medicine is digested in six hours the Agni can be said Sama Agni. Vishama Agni digests the food some times in a scheduled time or sometimes fails to digest even an improperly consumed improper food in improper quality, quantity, time and method. Sometimes it digests the food in a very short span or sometimes takes a longer duration of time. Invariably if the food and the medicine are digested after a very long time the Agni can be said to be Manda. If Ajeerna and Aamadosh is existing and if the medicine is given the Agni fails to digest either the food or the medicine it is a Durbal Agni. In the same situation Sanna Agni also fails to digest either food or medicine irrespective of scheduled time described for the process of digestion. Teekshna Agni digests even an improperly consumed improper food in improper quantity, quality and time. Atyagni ends up with the process of digestion even faster than Teekshna Agni [38].

**Prakrut:** Normal - Sama Agni – Sama means even, in the state of equilibrium. The state and functions of Agni in the state of equilibrium is called as Sama Agni. It is the symptom of healthy. It exists in samaprakruti-the body type based on the equilibrium of tridosha, viz. vata, pitta, kapha [38]. The Sama Agni when maintained properly remains normal but misbehavior regarding food gives rise to Vikrutagni [39].

**Vikrut:** Changed, unnatural. Vikrutatwa- unnatural state of Agni is the root cause of disease. Vishama-irregular, Manda-slow and Teekshana- excess are vikruti-unnatural states of Agni [40].

### Consumption of Water and its Relationship with Agni

It is observed that consumption of water has got quite a close impact over the Agni and it's functioning. It is expressed in several references concerned with many symptoms associated with Agni as follows [41].

1. Water consumption within the consumption of meal helps to bring about equilibrium of dhatu-the tissue/body tissues
2. Water consumed just before the meals leads to Sada of Agni.

3. Similarly the quality of water and the temperature of water also carries the effect on Agni.
4. The quantity of water also affects or facilitates the functioning of Agni
5. Water consumption as per the disease or conditions reflects various symptoms with respect to Agni.e.g water consumed in the condition of thirst in Jwara leads to AgniSada.
6. If due to any reason Agni gets disturbed, the generation of Aama-(undigested food toxin) starts. Aama is responsible for the creation of Aamaya, i. e. disease. Therefore Agni appropriate behavior regarding food consumption is the key to Agni management [41].

### The Concept of Aama

Impaired or weak Agni becomes unable to perform the function of proper digestion of the food. The undigested content which gathers into amashaya-stomach due to impairment or weakness of Jatharagni is called 'Aama' [42] (ama-undigested food toxin).

- आमवस्था-Amavastha-Aama-avastha: (Ama-undigested food toxin, avastha-state) State of dosha, dhatu, mala and disease after getting associated with this aama is called as aamavastha.
- Saama state-with aama-The dosha, dhatu and mala associated with Aama are called saama; and diseases generated from it are called saama disease.
- Niraama state-free of aama-The state of dosha, dhatu, mala and disease when become free of aama are called niraama [43].

शान्तेऽग्नौ म्रियते, युक्ते चरि जीवत्यनामय  
रोगी स्यादविकृते, मूलमग्नसितस्मान्नुच्यते॥ चरक Charak  
संहिता samhita चिकित्सा chikitsa स्थान sthana १५ अध्याय  
chapter / श्लोक verse 4  
Shanteygnau mriyate, yukte chiranjeevatyanamayaha|  
Rogisyadvikrute, moolamagnistasmanniruchyate ||4||

When the Agni stops functioning, the individual dies. If the Agni functions normally, the individual can lead a healthy, disease-free and long life. Similarly, if the Agni becomes abnormal, the individual suffers from various diseases; and hence, the Agni is said to be the root cause of health and longevity. If Agni is proper, the person lives a long life with health. If Agni vanishes, life vanishes [44].

### Signs and Symptoms of Ajirna (Indigestion)

This poisonous substance (*amavisha*) manifests clinical features like flatulence, uncomfortable physical and mental miseries, headache, altered consciousness, giddiness, stiffness of back and lumbar region, yawning, body-ache,

malaise, morbid thirst, fever, vomiting, tenesmus, anorexia and indigestion and it is similar to antigenic poison [45].

### Associated Disorders of *Annavisha- ann-visha-anna - food, visha-toxin/poisonous substance*

The *anna-visha* when associated with *pitta* causes *daha*, morbid thirst, oral diseases, *amlapitta* (acid peptic disorders) and various other *pitta* related disorders. The same *anna-visha* when gets associated with *kapha* it leads to condition like *yakshma* (phthisis), *peenas* (coryza) and *prameha* (20 types of diabetes) and various other *kaphaja* disorders-(*kaphaja*-arising from , whereas several *vatika* disease are caused by association of *vata* with the *annavisha*. The *annavisha* when enters renal system, urine related disorders occur; similarly, *kukshigata roga* (ailments related to abdomen) have their origin when *sakrita* (feces) is involved. *Rasadi pradoshaja vikara* (tissue related ailments) occur when *rasadi srotas* are involved [46,47].

### Effects of *Vishamagni (irregular agni)* and *Tikshanagni (excessive Agni)*

The *vishamagni* (improper *agni*) causes irregularity in digestion and therefore defective formation of *dhatu* takes place whereas, *tikshanagni* (excessive *agni*) when associated with little quantity of fuel (in the form of food) causes depletion of *dhatu* (tissue elements) [48].

***Samagni:*** If *Agni* is *sama* i.e. in balanced condition and correct diet regimen [49] are also followed then there is proper digestion of food which helps in maintaining proper balance within the *dhatu* [50].

***Durbala (weak) Agni:*** *Durbala* (weak) *agni* brings about partial digestion of food. These partially digested bio substances then enter in circulation, which may move either in upward or downward direction [47,51]

### Causes of Vitiating of *Agni*

Excessive starvation, indulging in food intake although there is indigestion, overeating, irregular habit of eating, eating unwholesome food, indulging in food which is heavy to digest or having excessive nutritional value, food which is having cold qualities or eating chilled or frozen items, food which is dry in nature or food which brings about emaciation, contaminated food, perversion of procedures like *vamana*, *virechana* and *sneha*, emaciation of body due to disease, sudden migration to unsuitable place and of time and of season, suppression of natural urges are causes for vitiating of *Agni*. Thus, vitiating *Agni* is unable to digest even the light food [52].

This vitiating digestive agent forms an intermediate substance called *ama*, which turns sour (*shukta*) during fermentation and finally turns in poisonous substance (*amavisha*) [53].

तस्मात्तं वधिविद्युक्त्तैरन्नपानेनूधनैरहति  
पालयेत् प्रयतसत्स्य स्यात्तौ ह्ययुरबलस्थितिः॥४०॥ Charak  
Samhita Chikitsasthana 15/40

Tasmattam vidhivadyuktaierannapanendhanairhitaihi,  
Paalayata prayatastasya shtithauhyayaur balasthithi.  
An individual should take utmost care to maintain the *Agni* by providing fuel in the form of food and drinks which should be taken as per the rules mentioned, because life and strength of an individual depends on *Agni* [54-65].

### Discussion

Medical practitioners who are interested in incorporating personalized medicine may benefit from understanding how *Agni* functions in their patients. This knowledge allows the practitioner to take into account the patient's constitutional picture, in addition to their symptom picture, which can be important for differentiating the root cause of the illness. In addition, it allows the medical practitioner to expand their treatment plan toolkit for a patient who is unable or unwilling to follow the standard allopathic/naturopathic treatment plan [66-75].

The purpose of conducting integrative medical research is to incorporate complementary and natural medicine into medical practice. Some Ayurvedic perspectives have been written off prior to investigation from the research community. Challenging the status quo and investigating novel approaches are at the forefront of cutting edge research. One example where Ayurved can be utilized in a randomized controlled trial (RCT) pertaining to a particular disease and treatment. Adding *Agni* as a variable inclusive of subjective as well as objective parameters would allow research to assess the validity of Ayurvedic practices, and in turn draw from the depth of resources available through treatment practices. Students of medical research that desire to be a part of a scientific community open and willing to test new ideas, also want to incorporate these practices into studies.

The master key of health is anchored in its conservation. Empowerment of health by augmenting its development has been a topic of ongoing discussion in the enrichment of the medical field. It is our mission as medical practitioners to navigate stakeholders towards understanding the basics and progressive aspects of health. It is observed that Ayurvedic treatment is currently explored either as a substitute or a counter medicinal dose within the mainstream medicinal

treatment. However, it is noteworthy that the Ayurvedic inputs about Agni's role and corrective measures in food and lifestyle for conservation of Agni's health are user friendly and approachable for any integrated medicine practitioner or modern medicine practitioner. Hence, this understanding can be a boon in modern day practice if the threads from existing knowledge of digestion and nutrition are taken forward with the help of thorough study and experiential learning. Food and lifestyle has a direct influence on the efficiency of Agni. Management of food and lifestyle can be the fundamental requirement within any treatment of any disease from any medicinal system [75-90].

Ayurved is the science legendary for the wisdom of living life. The Ayurvedic concept of Agni is a 'Brilliant Gift' to grace humankind with the optimum Health. It is hoped that this article would help motivate elder and newer generations of academicians, clinicians, researchers, pharmacists, and manufacturer companies to come forward, refresh, and update Ayurvedic ancient practices to provide formulations, tools and virtues on 'Agni' management and enhancement, upgrade pedagogics for standardizing and instigating an urge to research various aspects of this topic [91-120]. It is expected to bring in the due change, advancement and standardization for expounding the diet and lifestyle prescriptions and, for recognizing the intrinsic and upcoming challenges like autoimmune conditions, contagious diseases, chronic diseases, and the community health needs [121-130].

Classical texts and commentaries reflect a similar approach in the application of diagnosis and treatments focused on Agni. The Classics describe Agni, its types, significance, role in the intervention of health and disease, along with selected relevant signs and symptoms associated with Agni. Causes of vitiation of Agni include factors associated with food and lifestyle. Agni gets vitiated when food is not consumed even when hungry, when food is irregularly consumed, and when food is taken in improper quantities and when the quality of the foods is inappropriate. Additionally, suppression of natural urges vitiates Agni. Quality, contents and time of food consumption all play a part in the proper functioning of Agni [52]. This vitiated digestive faculty becomes functionally slow and weaker and becomes unable to properly digest different forms of food. This is an intermediate substance called *ama*-the undigested food, which turns sour (*shukta*) during fermentation and finally turns into a poisonous substance (*amavisha*) [53]. It leads to innumerable pathologies [46]. Symptomatic treatment should be superseded by the treatment of the root cause associated with Agni.

Ayurved is a time-tested, long-lived medicine. It has been a hub of creativity and intellectual ideas from doctor

- patient interactions with experience-based knowledge as our currency. Integrating Ayurvedic treatment based on the foundational concept of Agni, along with the corrective measures in food and lifestyle, has a great potential to be a vital tool which can add value to the management and planning of health care in populations, communities, and families. Continued Agni imbalance can cause fatal diseases, but Agni balance can be instrumental in reversing challenging medical conditions and mind-body disorders. Development of information forum and education with experiential learning of systematic, authentic classical references would need a broader outreach to recognize benefits of Ayurvedic therapy. We hope to see a more open minded approach to the discourse around Ayurvedic practice both from practitioners within the field and those in other medical disciplines. Providing research to the public is the beginning to opening the door between allopathic medicine and ancient practices.

## Summary

Investigative tools at the levels of clinical assessments of Agni, technical ground work, and the incorporation of herbs or pharmaceuticals add to the maintenance of the proper functioning of Agni daily. This knowledge combined with food and lifestyle corrections establish an integral daily regimen. Healthy practices are most welcome by the community when they are well understood and practicable. With the advancement of technology in today's era, the procedure for cultivating awareness in the management of Agni for health could be made easy and user-friendly. Modern busy life is further becoming time demanding, with stressful commitments and adventures. To summarize, we realize the scientific benefits of understanding the Ayurvedic concept of Agni [131-146]. The overall combined effect of utilizing this offering is health and longevity. At the same time, any food and lifestyle that upsets Agni can bring about disease and potentially lead to a reduction in lifespan. Food and lifestyle corrections by assessment of Agni can be a healthy tool and therapy (Table 2).

1	Nature, Seat, and Functions of Agni
2	Types of Agni
3	Digestion
4	Causes of Vitiation
5	Interventions for Health
6	Susceptibility of Disease

**Table 2:** Research parameters regarding Agni.

## Conclusion

This literature research article unwraps ancient concepts written in Sanskrit that stimulate scholars and



intrigue those unfamiliar with the concept of Agni. It is our intention that by regularly translating Sanskrit from the Classics, a consensus may be formed on the proper way to translate Sanskrit words into other more globally accessible languages. Ayurvedic classical references reflect a distinctive approach about Agni's role in understanding health as well as disease [147-151].

1. Significantly common description is found in all the classics. Some references are identical with Charak Samhita in Sushrut Samhita and Ashtanga Hridaya Samhita. Some additional references are provided by Sushrut and Ashtanga Hridaya Samhita. It can be understood that chronologically the Charak Samhita time frame is prior to Sushrut Samhita and Ashtanga Hridaya Samhita. Therefore, the later authors could have assessed and accepted the findings from Charak Samhita and they could have added the current.
2. Guidelines for the diagnosis of state of health, reestablishment of Agni at the state of achievement of samyak yoga-proper state of Virechana-therapeutic purgation, Symptoms associated with Agni can be used as guidelines for the diagnosis of disease primordial symptoms, Agni offers health and sustenance of life leading to optimum lifespan.
3. Agni plays a vital role as a causative factor in disease creation
4. Normal functioning of Agni maintains the dosha balance.
5. Symptoms associated with Agni can be used to diagnose disease stages, creating treatment protocol planning, identifying recovery markers, and recognizing state of disease progression as well as rishtalakshana-symptoms indicative of near death state of a patient [55].
6. Food is the fuel that nurtures Agni.
7. Food consumed in proper quantity, quality, contents and time can be instrumental to conservation of Agni's strength and function.
8. All the classical authors described Agni functions management on a daily basis within diurnal and nocturnal regimen of dietetics and lifestyle in the condition of health and as the therapy in various diseases.
9. Agni is subtle and can't be physically presented. However, Agni's existence can be inferred by heat and pitta and it can be examined by strength of digestion of the food and medicine which can be assessed by time required to digest them.
10. All the classics described
  - Four states of Agni, viz. sama-in balance, normal Agni, vishama-state of imbalance where Agni is irregularly functioning, manda-slow functioning state, teekshna-excess functioning, and atyagni as an hyper agitated state.
  - Thirteen types of Agni, viz. five Agni of elements, seven Agni of dhatu-body constituents and Jatharagni or dehani as the head.

- Originating from Jatharagni, functioning and strength of other twelve Agni ( five elemental, + seven dhatu) depend upon the functioning and strength of Jatharagni.

11. Water consumption influences Agni functioning and strength.
12. Students and researchers reviewed this manuscript and found it accessible.
13. Students and researchers in the USA reviewed and they are able to read and chant the Sanskrit verses pronunciations by reading English script. They described that it was quite motivating for them.

### Disclaimer

This article is not intended to treat, diagnose or prescribe any herb or process or treatments. Information given herein is no way to be considered as a substitute for the consultation with a duly licensed healthcare professional.

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