



# Agni's Ayurvedic Philosophy: Insights from Vedic to Ayurvedic Texts

Suhag Raval<sup>1\*</sup>, Nisha Parmar<sup>2</sup>, Manisha Vadhel<sup>3</sup>, and Kiran Mouri<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Professor, Dept. of Basic Principles, Inst. of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (ITRA),  
Jamnagar, India

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, Dept. of Basic Principles, ITRA, Jamnagar, India

<sup>3</sup>Ph.D. Scholar, Dept. of Basic Principles, ITRA, Jamnagar, India

<sup>4</sup>Postgraduate student, Dept. of Basic Principles, ITRA, Jamnagar, India

**Abstract.** This perspective study delves into Agni within the context of Ayurvedic philosophy. The paper explores Agni's portrayal in Vedic and Ayurvedic texts, examining its perspective in processes such as metabolism and digestion, for which the study encompasses Agni's representation in Vedas, Upanishads, Nyaya Darshan, and specific terminologies and key Ayurvedic texts. The analysis reveals the intricate relationship between Agni and concepts like Pitta dosha, digestion, and bodily development.

**Keywords.** Agni, Ayurvedic philosophy, Vedic texts, digestion, metabolism.

## \*CORRESPONDENCE

*Address* \*Professor, Dept. of Basic Principles, Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda, Jamnagar, India  
+91 7984837835

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## Introduction

Agni, often depicted as hearth fires, sacrificial flames, the radiant sun, and the powerful thunder, serves as the bridge between the divine and human realms. Within the Vedas, Agni is recognized as the sustainer and bestower of life [1].

Yagya reflects individual Devas nourish via Soma Rasa (specific herbal juice) and hawan dravya (herbal mixtures). Yagya in vedic literature paints a diverse picture of Agni's multifaceted roles in the context of Ayurvedic contexts. Under these Ancient Indian writings, Ayurvedic principles are resonated, emphasizing and acknowledging Agni for dietary choices and digestive processes, which needs to be looked at carefully [2]. The present perspective aims to explore Agni's Ayurvedic philosophy both in Vedic and Ayurvedic literature.

## Ayurvedic Philosophies In Vedic texts

Agni, intricately woven into the ancient wisdom, is vividly portrayed within the initial nine verses of the inaugural Sukta in the Rigveda's Mandal 1 Sukta 1 [1]. Originating from the archaic practice of igniting fire through Aranyamanthan [3], the term "Agni" encapsulates its literal meaning and specialized role in fundamental processes such as Dahana (metabolism) and Pachana (digestion) [4]. The Ashtanga Samgraha further enriches this concept, equating Agni with the combined heat generated by the friction of Dosha, Dhatu, and Malas—a continuous force shaping life's journey [5].

The Vedas resonate with almost 2500 Mantras dedicated to Agni, illustrating its multifaceted nature. This reveals a profound comprehension of Agni's Sthana (location), Gati (movement), Guna (qualities), and Karma (functions) during the Vedic age [4].

## Upanishads

Mandukya Upanishad offers a threefold portrayal of Agni—nurturer of the body, mind, and aid in waste elimination. Mandukya Upanishad's enumeration of seven Agni flames—Kali, Karali,

Manojava, Sulohita, Visvarupadevi, Sphulingini, and Sudhumravarna—paints a vivid picture of Agni's multifaceted aspects [6].

Chhandogya Upanishad's depiction of three digestion phases mirrors Dhatvagni's metabolic transformations [7].

While Kathopanishad presents Agni as formless, Saddhatuja Purusha encapsulates Agni's diverse roles through essential functions like Dahana and Pachana [8, 9].

## Nyay Darshan

Within Vaisheshika and Nyaya Darshanas, Agni finds resonance through "Pilu Paka" and "Pithara Paka" [10].

## Selected terminologies

Vedantasutra and Sabdakalpadrum unveil Agni as a transformative entity, omnipresent and facilitating all. Much like comprehending electricity's nuances, harnessing Agni requires an intricate understanding of its dynamics, akin to maintaining a well-functioning electrical grid. Under the term "Tanunpatana," Agni safeguards youthful vitality by sustaining Ushma's pervasive presence. This very essence fosters longevity and vigor. With "Amivachatana," Agni embodies the destruction of adversaries. Echoing sacrificial fires that vanquish external foes, Agni's intrinsic attributes resonate with countering internal threats, symbolizing its role in battling pathogenic microorganisms [11].

## Agni through Ayurvedic Texts Sushruta Samhita

In Maharshi Sushruta's teachings, Agni transcends the perceptible, manifesting as latent energy beneath the surface. This underlying fire finds a physical manifestation within the Pitta in the human body, wherein its external embodiment as heat or Ushma becomes apparent. Drawing parallels with Kayagni, where Ushma resides in Pitta, Agni's universal essence shines through [12].

The Sushruta Samhita, delves into the intriguing inquiry of whether Agni (digestive fire) and Pitta (one of the three doshas) share synonymous traits or stand as distinct entities. Within

the text, a detailed explanation emerges, highlighting the intricate interconnectedness of Agni and Pitta. The text emphasizes that Agni's very existence is intertwined with Pitta, a concept thoroughly explored within the same chapter. It is noted that Pitta embodies the sharpness (Tikshna) and heat (Ushna) attributes intrinsic to Agni. Instances of excessive Pitta functions, encompassing Dahana (metabolism) and Pachana (digestion), mirror the approach taken to manage imbalances related to Agni. This intricate correlation underscores the notion that Pitta can indeed be equated with Agni [11].

### Charak Samhita

Charaka Samhita underscores the indispensable role of Agni in effectively digesting Anna (food), fostering the development of qualities such as Bala (strength), Varna (complexion), and Deha-Dhatu Poshana (nourishment of bodily tissues) [12].

### Harita Samhita

In the third chapter of the Sixth Sthana, Harita Samhita introduces a unique perspective wherein Agni is intrinsically connected to the living organism right from the moment of fertilized ovum. Throughout the process of conception, five distinct Agni variations metamorphose ejaculated sperm into the Kalala form within the Yoni. As the journey of pregnancy unfolds, Agni's transformative influence shapes this Kalala into Pinda, ultimately contributing to the development of specific bodily components through the amalgamation of the five elements. The emergence of the five Bhavas—Pitta, Neta, Darkness, Anger, and Affection—can be attributed to the Agni Tattva. Intriguingly, the eighth month of pregnancy witnesses the materialization of Jatharagni, a concept uniquely unveiled by Harita, setting it apart from other Samhitas. Furthermore, Harita's third Sthana, in its sixth chapter, elaborates on four distinct Agni variations: Sama, Vishama, Tikshna, and Manda [13].

### Bhela Samhita

Bhela Samhita presents the pivotal role of Pittosma in the digestive process. The enlight-

ened Agni finds its abode within the core of the Surya Mandala, nestled within the Soma Mandala, both centered within the Nabhi. The comprehensive digestive process is orchestrated by the enlightened Hutashana, whose intrinsic nature revolves around the efficient digestion of food [14].

### Kashyapa Samhita

Kashyapa Samhita aligns closely with the Sutra Sthana account of Agni, consistent with the portrayal in other Samhitas. Due to the fragmentary state of the original Samhita, the comprehensive focus on Agni may have been initially omitted [15].

### Ashtanga Hridaya

Acharya Vagbhatta continues the trajectory set by Charaka Samhita in numerous contexts. Within the Sutrasthana and Shari-rasthana, Vagbhatta delves into Agni's concept, unveiling that Pitta resides between Pakvashaya and Amashaya, guided by Tejoguna despite its Panchabhutatmaka essence. Under the influence of Tejoguna, Pitta relinquishes, perseveres, and spearheads the process of digestion, earning the titles "Anala" or "Agni." This specialized form of Pitta breaks down food into Sara and Kitta, subsequently nourishing other bodily Pittas. Referred to as Pachakagni or Jatharagni, this Pachaka Pitta assumes the role of nurturing and maintaining digestion. The nomenclature "Pachaka Pitta" effectively encapsulates this concept [5].

### Sharangdhara Samhita

Within the realm of Sharangdhara Samhita, Agni is depicted through the prism of five Pittas. While the text does not introduce groundbreaking concepts related to Agni, it aligns with the broader understanding of its multifaceted presence [16].

### Modern Period in Ayurvedic texts

The modern era, spanning from the 16th century onwards, introduces influential texts such as Bhavaprakasha, Bhaisajyaratnaveli, and Yogaratnakara. While diverse subjects are explored,

unique contributions to the discourse on Agni remain relatively sparse during this period [4].

## Conclusion

Incorporating the wisdom of ancient texts, Agni emerges as a multifaceted force that shapes existence on numerous levels. The Vedic roots, teachings of Maharshi Sushruta, insights from Charaka Samhita, and perspectives from various Samhitas provide a comprehensive tapestry that underscores Agni's significance in Ayurvedic thought. From cosmic symbolism to physiological embodiment, Agni remains an enduring symbol that resonates across time and knowledge, offering timeless insights into life's intricate dynamics.

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**Conflict of interest** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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