

AMA AND ASSOCIATED DISEASES: AN AYURVEDA PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Ama is an important concept described by *Ayurvedic Acharyas* which is responsible for many diseases. All diseases are originated from *Aamdoshha*, vitiation of *Agni* i.e. malfunction of *Agni* produces *Ama*. *Ama* is a Sanskrit word that translates literally to mean things like unripe, uncooked, raw or undigested. The formation of small amounts of *Ama* is a normal part of the digestive process, provided it is efficiently removed. But when it is not regularly cleared and eliminated, *Ama* becomes hugely problematic. In fact *Ama* is said to be the root cause of all disease and *Amaya*, a Sanskrit word for disease literally means that which is born out of *Ama*. The connection between *Ama* and the disease process makes perfect sense because the qualities of *Ama* are in direct opposition to those of *Agni*.

KEYWORDS: *Ama*, *Agni*, *Aamdoshha*.

INTRODUCTION

Ama is one of the most discussed terms in *Ayurveda*. The term *Amaya* is a synonym of disease, which literally means that it is born out of *Ama*. *Ama* is a Sanskrit word that translates literally to mean things like “unripe,” “uncooked,” “raw,” “immature,” or “undigested.” Essentially, it is a form of un-metabolized waste that cannot be utilized by the body. To some degree, the formation of small amounts of *Ama* is a normal part of the digestive process, provided it is efficiently removed. But when it is not regularly cleared and eliminated, *Ama* becomes hugely problematic. In fact, *Ama* is said to be the root cause of all disease. The connection between *Ama* and the disease process makes perfect sense because the qualities of *Ama* are in direct correlation with the *Agni*. When *Agni* is compromised and when *Ama* accumulates, our health suffers, and the two situations are mutually reinforcing.

DEFINITION

भउषणोऽल्पबलत्वेन धातुमाद्यमपाचितम् ।
दुष्टमामाशयगतं रसमामं प्रचक्षते ।।
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Due to hypo-functioning of *Ushma* the first *Dhatu* is ‘*Rasa*’ is not properly digested, instead the ‘*Anna Rasa*’ undergoes fermentation being retained in the *Amashaya*. This *Rasa* is called as *Ama*.^[1]

According to *Bhavaprakash* and *Vijay rakshita* the food residue which is not digested due to hypo-functioning of *Agni* is known as *Ama* and it is the root cause of all disease.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AMA AND DISEASES

In *Ayurveda*, the root cause for all diseases is *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*, as mentioned by *Sushruta*.^[2] *Prakupita doshas* mix with *Ama* and produces its *Sama Awastha*. Particular symptoms of each *Dosha* according to *Sama* and *Niram Awastha* also mentioned in *Samhita*.

Ama is identified as unripe or unprocessed entity in *Ayurveda*. The normally digested food is easily absorbed in the gut and takes its final outcome. But it is slippery heavier and sticky in nature. When the *Ama* is absorbed into the gut it produces obstruction in different channel or *Strotas* of the body and plays an important role in the pathophysiology of various diseases.

ALSAKA AND VISUCHIKA^[3]

According to *Acharya Charka*, *Ama* plays an important role in the formation of *Alsa* and *Visuchika*. Both occur due to *Agnimandya* which further produce *Amavish*. *Rasa dhatu dushti* occurs due to *Amavish* and lead to *Alsa* and *Visuchika*.

AJIRNA

Digestion is performed by various digestive juices which in *Ayurveda* are termed as *Pachaka Pitta*. In modern sense these are called Enzymes. Thus *Ajirna* is caused due to the deficient functioning of the *Pachaka Pitta*, a state known as *Mandagni* and it is responsible for causation of *Ajirna* and when food eaten is not digested properly that lead to formation of *Ama* which is root of *Ajirna*.

JWARA^[4]

Due to hypo-functioning of *Ushma* (digestive Fire), Food which is not properly digested results in formation of immature *Rasa* in *Amashya* and this *Rasa* is spoken as *Ama*. *Ama* is unable to nourish the *Dhatu*. The causative factors of *Jwara* will increase *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* in the body. These increase *Dosha* reach the *Amashya*, they combine with *Ama* along with *Rasa Dhatu* and circulate all over the body by the *Kaphagni* will also mixed with this *Rasa Dhatu* and circulates all over the body along with increases *Doshas* and produce the fever.

Because of the properties of *Ama* such as *Snigdha*, *Pichhila*, it will obstruct the *Swedvaha Strotas*. The absence of Sweating also increases the body temperature, hence caused *Jwara*.

STHAULYA

Sthaulya is a predominant metabolic disorder. It is described by *Acharya Charka* in *Ashtaninditiya Adhyaya*.^[5] Absence of physical activity sleeping during day and intake of food which increases *Kapha*, make the end product of digestion to become sweet which is turn causes increases of *Medas* and *Ama*.

Ama is one of the causative factor of obesity in certain instance since it blocks *Strotas*, accumulation of *Strotas* cause *Prakopa* of *Vata Dosha*, this *Prakupita Vata Dosha* increases *Agni* which enhances appetite resulted condition like, obesity.

TAMAKA SHWASA^[6]

Tamaka Shwasa is a disease of *Pranvaha Strotas*. The disease arises due to some *Aaharaj Nidana*, which causes *Agnimandya* which leads vitiates *Jatharagni* resulted formation of *Ama* which causes vitiates *Prana Vayu* leads to broncho-constriction and aggravates *Kapha Dosha* which further leads to *Aavrana* of *Vayu*, obstruction of *Vata*, occurs in *Pranvaha Strotas* due to *Ama* leads to the narrowing of airways and *Vayu* gets vitiates with *Ama* resulted *Stambha* and *Sankocha*. This *Vayu* also produces *Ruksvata* in *Pranvaha Strotas* leads further broncho-constriction which causes *Pratiloma Gati* of *Prana Vayu* resulted *Shotha* in the *Pranvaha Strotas*, *Shotha* is a *Strotodushti* present in *Tamaka Shwasa* due to *Ama*.

The role of *Ama* in the pathogenesis of *Tamaka Shwasa* is very significant since *Ama* triggers the *Dosha* through its various properties, *Dravya Guna*, *Snigdha*, *Picchila Guna* of *Ama* vitiates *Pitta Kapha* and *Rasadi Dhatus* and these factors trigger obstruction of *Pranvaha Strotas*.

GRAHANI ROGA^[7]

Grahani is described as an *Agni Adhithana* in *Ayurveda*. *Ama Dosha* is responsible for many diseases including *Grahani Roga*. Due to the causative factors like *Diwaswapan* and *Vega Vidharana*, vitiation of *Dosha*, resulted in *Agni Dushti* which leads accumulation of *Ama* and disease prognosis. Vitiation of *Agni* leads to

Agni unable to digest even the light food and the food being undigested gets acidified and toxic i.e. *Ama* which play significant role in pathophysiology of *Grahani Roga*.

The weak digestive fire burns the food incompletely which goes either upward or downwards. When it moves out downwards in ripe or unripe condition, it is known as disorder of *Grahani*. Investigations confirm *Mithya Aahar Vihara* as main cause of the *Agni Dushti* which leads *Ama Dosha* resulted in *Grahani Roga*.

AMAVATA^[8]

Ama is considered as responsible factor for the disease of *Amavata*. It produces weakness and heaviness of the heart, which becomes the main cause of the disease. Abnormal functioning of *Agni* resulted in improper digestion and immature *Rasa* in *Amashya* which undergoes fermentation produces, *Ama* which absorbed in the system and taken up by the aggravated and vitiated *Vayu* especially to the *Kapha Sthanas* mainly *Amashya*, *Sandhi*, *Uras*, *Kantha* etc.

This circulatory *Ama* along with *Vata* gets aggravated and enters *Koshtha*, *Sandhi*. It also affects simultaneously the joints in the body such as waist, neck etc. It producing stiffness of the body becomes a cause of many other diseases also.

CONCLUSION

Ama formed at the levels of *Jatharagni* and *Dhatvagni* and initiated many pathological events inside the body. *Ama* has been described in two states i.e. *Sama* and *Nirama Awastha* which set a specific strategy for finding particular disease. By knowing these *Awastha* of *Ama* we can specify different stages of diseases. *Ama* further deteriorates digestive and metabolic activities, blocks *Strotas*, vitiated *Dhatus* and *Rakta* therefore causes various diseases including auto-immune disorders.

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