

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW ON VYADHIKSHAMATVA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHARAKA SAMHITA

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ABSTRACT

The modern understanding of immunity fits in the broad aspect of *Vyadhikshamatva* in Ayurveda. The process of prevention of disease development and capacity to resist disease are jointly known as *Vyadhikshamatva*. *Acharya Charak* has explained *Vyadhikshamatva* for the first time in Ayurveda. *Chakrapani* has defined *Vyadhikshamatva* as it denotes the resisting power of the body which reacts to arrest the progress occurrence or reoccurrence of the disease. He has described this in two aspects– antagonistic to the strength and virulence of disease (*vyadhi Bala Virodhitvam*) and the capacity to inhibit, contain or bind the causes on factors of disease (*vyadhi utpadaka vibandhakatva*). In ayurvedic *samhitas*, the natural inherent strength or power of the body which is responsible for health is termed as *Bala*. *Bala* depends upon the health status of normal *Dosha*, equilibrium state of *Dhatu*, normal functioning of *Agni*, the potency of *Srotasa*, *Prakruti*, *Desha*, *Kala* and *Ojas*. This *Bala* is classified into three

types- *Sahaja*, *Kalaja*, and *Yuktikrita*. Innate immunity can be correlated to *Sahaja Bala* described in Ayurveda. *Kalaja* and *Yuktikrita Bala* may be correlated to acquired immunity. The present article throws light on the Ayurvedic concept of immunity i.e., *Vyadhikshamatva* from *Charaka Samhita*.

Keywords: *Vyadhikshamatva*, *Sahaja Bala*, *Kalaja Bala*, *Yuktikrita Bala*, *Charaka Samhita*.

INTRODUCTION

Human life is always surrounded by many obstacles. Our environment allows the presence of innumerable viruses, bacteria, etc. microorganisms that are responsible to cause many disruptive diseases like *Rajayakshma*, *Antrajwara*, *Shwasanakajwara*, etc. We enter these microorganisms through various body movements like respiration. Even then we do not always fall prey to those diseases. Therefore, this incident gives us an indication of the presence of an element inside the body which keeps us safe from these disasters. Examinations and investigations of body components have shown that *Rasa* and *Rakta dhatu* have the power to destroy the pathogenic bacteria and their poisons that enter the body from the external environment, which keeps the body safe from diseases caused by their effects. This natural power is called *kshamata* by modern scientists. In the same sense, the term *Vyadhikshamatva* is also used in Ayurveda. In *Charaka Samhita*, *Vyadhikshamatva* term is used to indicate the presence or absence of *Vyadhi Bala* in the human body¹. *Vyadhikshamatva* denotes the first resistance power of the body or defence of the body against the occurrence of any disease. Also, in the second term it indicates that if the body once is being encountered by some disease, it will not allow the disease to be manifested because of possessing a specific resistance power.

OBJECTIVE:

To understand the concept of *Vyadhikshamatva* and its influencing factors described in *Charaka Samhita*.

MATERIAL AND METHODS: This is a literary research study. In this research, all the references are selected from *Charaka Samhitas* and its respective commentaries regarding the concept of *Vyadhikshamatva*.

CONCEPT OF VYADHIKSHAMATVA:

The term *Vyadhikshamatva* is made of two words *Vyadhi* + *Kshamatva*. The meaning of the word *vyadhi* is to harm, to injure, to damage or to hurt. The word *Kshamatva* means to suppress anger or to resist. So, the word means to be patient towards resisting the disease. *Vyadhikshamatva* was first defined by *Chakrapani*¹ in a very scientific manner in terms of -

- ***Vyadhi Bala virodhatvam***- Capacity of the body to fight against the manifested diseases, and
- ***Vyadhi utpad pratibandhkatvam***- Capacity of the body to not allow provenance of disease or pathogenesis.

The characteristics of *Vyadhikshamatva* explained by *Chakrapani* closely resemble *prakruta kapha*, *oja* as well as *Bala*². Here, *prakruta kapha* and *oja* are *karana* for their *karya* in the form of *Bala*. In other words, the state of *Bala* depends on both these factors. This allows us to infer that *vyadhi Balavirodhitwa* and *vyadhi – utpada pratibandhakatwa* can be understood as *oja* and *Bala* respectively. Thus, *Bala* resists the diseases along with maintaining stability in the body³. It is also explained in ayurvedic treatises that the human body sustains only based on *Bala*-including *sharira* as well as *manasa Bala*. The ultimate objective of this science that is the treatment of the diseases is achieved by conserving and also by improving this, *Bala*. This potency in the form of *Bala* is established in our body by virtue of *Vyadhikshamatva*. *Bala* in the form of *Vyadhikshamatva* is categorized into three types *Sahaj Bala*, *Kalaj Bala* and *Yuktikrut Bala*⁴.

1. ***Sahaj Bala***: - The constitutional strength present since birth. It depends on the healthiness of *shukra* and *artava*. According to the Ayurvedic concept of genetics, if two parents' genetic makeup is healthy, similar health status is ac-

quired by the children. On the other hand, if the genetic makeup of parents is susceptible to certain diseases, those diseases may be carried over into the next generation⁵. This concept indicates congenital abnormalities which occur due to abnormal changes at genes or chromosomal levels.

2. **Kalaj Bala:** - Encompassing the time of day, season, age etc. factors for enhancing immunity. Strength is assumed to be greater in the early morning (*pratah kala*), the spring season (*vasanta ritu*), and young age (*yuvavastha*) as compared to in the evening (*sandhya kala*), summer season (*grishma Ritu*) and old age (*vardhakya*).

It can be divided into two parts:

A. According to Ritu (Seasonal variations): -

Minimal strength (*Bala*) at the beginning of the *Visarga kala* and the end of the *Aadana kala*; Medium strength at the mid-season of *Visarga kala* and *Aadana kala*; and, at the end of the *Visarga kala* and the beginning of *Aadana kala* there is good or maximum strength⁶.

This kind of *Bala* will be obtained naturally according to the seasons and there will be a greater increase in strength if daily routines are properly executed according to the seasons. Thus, *Vyadhikshamatva* can be acquired by maintaining a lifestyle as per changing of the seasons.

B. According to Vaya (Age): -

- a) *Balyavastha:* - “*Sukumaram akleshasaham asampurna Balam |*”

In childhood, a person is tender (*sukumara*) and unable to bear tribulations (*a-kleshasaha*), due to which the body lacks strength. Hence, we are more prone to be diseased during childhood and if so, the diseases are difficult to cure.

- b) *Madhyamavastha:* - “*Madhyam samatvagata Balam |*”

By mid-age, the strength reaches its peak. The *vyadhikshamatva* is also at the peak due to which humans suffer less from diseases

- c) *Vridhnavastha:* - “*Jirna hiyamana dhatwagni-indriya Balam |*”

In old age, the strength of *dhatu* and *indriya* (senses) decreases. So, the *Vyadhikshamatva* is also low.

Which tend to many geriatrics as well as other severe systemic diseases in this age. Therefore, the strength in humans increases and decreases as per the seasons and age. This strength has a strong effect on the development of immunity in response to various diseases.

3. **Yuktikrita Bala:** - Ayurveda focuses on the following plans for acquiring *Bala* or enhancing immunity: -

- a) **Ahar (Diet):** - Regular consumption of substances like *ghrita*, *mamsarasa* increases strength.
- “*Sarva rasabhyaso Balakaranam |*” The practice of intake of all rasas increases strength.
 - “*Matravat ashan. Bala-Varna-Sukhayushya |*” Eating food in proper quantity increases the strength of the body, which leads to health.
 - “*Kukkuto Balyanam |*” – Poultry meat in various formulations is the best food for the improvement of strength.
 - Hence, by regular consumption of a healthy diet, the body grows healthily and so the immunity.
- b) **Cheshta (Exercise):** - In Ayurvedic literature *vyayama* is mentioned to be responsible for improving all three kinds of *Bala* (*Sahaja*, *Kalaja* and *Yuktikrita Bala*)

Exercises in the form of *Vyayam*, *Yoga*, *Pranayam* etc. should be done properly and regularly to make the body strong and immune.

- c) **Chikitsa Yoga (Medicines):** - Use of medicinal *yogas* which increase *Vyadhikshamatva*. Such as *Rasayana*, *Vajikarana* dravya. Thus, due to the combination of proper *ahar*, *cheshta* and *chikitsa yoga*, there is an increase of *yuktikrut Bala* in the person.

DISCUSSION

❖ **Bala parikshana (Physical Examination for the presence of Bala):** - The presence and quality of *Bala* can be examined by –

- a. *Vyayama Shakti* (physical strength)
- b. *Vyadhikshamatva* in durations of pandemics, epidemics etc.
- c. *Manas Bala* (mental endurance)

❖ **Factors contribute to improving Vyadhikshamatva: -**

Balavruddhikara bhava explained in *samhita* are also responsible for improving *Vyadhikshamatva*⁷.

1. *Balavat Purushe Deshe Janma*- People born in regions like Sindh or Punjab will have higher immunity.
2. *Balavat Purushe Kale*- Being born in a healthier era will also earn more power.
3. *Sukhakaraka kala yoga*- If a person always lives in a pleasing and healthy environment, then with the attainment of health in him, disease resistance will also prevail.
4. *Guna sampat Bija-Kshetra*- Neonates born from the conception of good quality *Shukra* and *Shonit* will be strong by birth and will have strong immunity.
5. *Ahar sampat*- Always eating nutritious food will increase body strength. This growth will be beneficial in increasing disease resistance for any disease.
6. *Sharir sampat*- If the body factors, like physical strength, are well organized, then there will be no invasion of any *nija* or *agantuj vyadhi*.
7. *Satmya sampat*- If a person is *sarva rasa satmya* (habit of taking food of all the tastes), he becomes capable of tolerating any disease. Hence, a wholesome diet is useful in increasing *Vyadhikshamatva*.
8. *Sattva sampat*- To the mind having good qualities, mental and physical diseases will not arise quickly.
9. *Swabhava samsiddhi*- Naturally, the anti-immune ability of many diseases remains in our body.
10. *Youvana avastha*- It is natural to have more immunity as the strength is high in mid-age.
11. *Karma*- Through regular *vyayamadi karma* (exercise), the body continues to receive good strength.
12. *Sanharsha*- If the mind is always happy and not bereaved the disease can never occur.

❖ **Balakshayakara bhava (Factors which reduce immunity)-**

- a) *Vego hi doshanam*- Acute vitiation of *doshas* leads to the manifestation of diseases.
- b) *Bhutopaghata*- Contamination of body by external infectious agents.
- c) *Apdhatu kshaya*- Excess fluid loss leads to dehydration which brings imbalance in body micro-nutrients.
- d) *Vyadhi karshanat*- Depletion of strength by chronic illness.
- e) *Ati vyayama*- Excessive, vigorous exercise leads to *Bala kshaya* (weakness) and then low immunity.
- f) *Ati madyapana*- The properties of *Madya* are opposite to that of *Oja*. *Oja kshaya* will lead to low immunity.
- g) *Ratrijagarana*- Keeping awake at night increases *vata dosha* rapidly. That will ultimately reduce *Kapha* dosha and thereby *Bala* and *Vyadhikshamatva*.
- h) *Manovyatha*- Mental stress, anger, fear etc. mental disturbances increase *vata dosha* in the body. Hence, low *Vyadhikshamatva*.

❖ **Samyak Bala Purusha Lakshana (Characteristics of a person having good strength)⁸**

- 1) The person whose body is in proportion with reference to BMI.
- 2) The organization of the body is in a proportion - the body should not be agnostic or gross.
- 3) Well-functioning of all the senses - whose all *ekadasha indriya* (sense organs and senses) functions properly.
- 4) *Vikaranam cha Balena abhikhuyate* - A body with expansive qualities is not defeated by the power of any diseases.
- 5) *Kshut saha*- Can easily tolerate hunger.
- 6) *Pipasa saha*- Can easily tolerate the thirst.
- 7) *Sheeta-Vyayama sansaha*- Can tolerate extreme cold and vigorous exercise/exertion.
- 8) *Samapkta* - The digestion of food ingested should be done properly at the appointed time by *Jatharagni*.

❖ **Heen Bala Purusha Lakshana (Characteristics of a person having low strength)¹: -**

Acharya Charaka enumerated people who are having low immunity and are prone to various types of infections or recurrent diseases as follows:

- 1) *Atisthoola*= Over obese individual,
- 2) *Atikrisha*= Over emaciated person,
- 3) *Anavasthit mamsa-shonita-asthini*=Whose muscles and blood are diminished markedly,
- 4) *Durbala*= Debilitated person,
- 5) *Asatmya aharasevi*= One who consume unwholesome food,
- 6) *Alpa bhoji*= One who consume less amount of food, and
- 7) *Alpasattva*= Whose mental faculties are weaker.

❖ **Therapeutic regimen to boost Immunity: -**

1. Maintaining tripods of life- *Ahara*(food), *Nidra* (Sleep), *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy).
2. Following *Dinacharya* (Daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (Seasonal regimen), *Sadvritta* (Codes of conduct) for a healthy life.
3. Use of *Rasayana* (Rejuvenating therapy), *Vajikarana* (Aphrodisiac therapy) and *Kaale Shodhana* (doing purification processes of Panchakarma as per season and disease conditions).
4. Maintaining a balanced state of *Agni* (digestive fire).

CONCLUSION

Arriving at the pinnacle of technology, at this age every human being has to suffer from various ailments. Instead, modern science is proven to be incapable of preventing these diseases. The scientists are now having the hope of boosting immunity only. Hence, the immunity should be understood in terms of Ayurveda by studying the concepts of *Sharira-Manasa Bala*, *Oja*, *Agni*, *Dhatukshaya* etc. Also, by adopting the ayurvedic remedies as described above, we can be able to establish and increase immunity (*vyadhikshamatva*) naturally. By using these modalities, we can again succeed in establishing the foundation of a healthy world.

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