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Current significance of *Gara Visha* and *Dooshi Visha*

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ABSTRACT

In *Ayurveda* it has been described that the external use of powder of body parts of various insects can act as *Gara Visha*, here we can say about different cosmetics which contain various hazardous chemicals. Studies conducted have already confirmed that the external application of these products on the skin will absorb. Apart from air pollution and water pollution, these are thousands of harmful environmental toxins some of which we are aware of such as pesticides, chemicals, household cleansers, fertilizers etc. These are in generally everyday being absorbed into our body through various means. These toxins are having their effect on different systems of the body which will not be potent enough to cause acute ill effect, but may cause ill effect after a long duration by getting deposited inside the body. These toxins are nothing but *Gara Visha* which after a long period of exposure i.e., in chronic stage acts like *Dooshi Visha*.

Key words: *Gara Visha*, *Dooshivisha*, toxins, latent poison.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is one of the most ancient systems of medicine in the world. Its origin goes back to *Vedas*. It is based on a very sound tradition of science and philosophy with unique fundamental principles of its own. In the view of changing concepts of health and disease in modern time and with the emerging scenario of modern health hazards, attention has been drawn to the holistic approach of *Ayurveda*. *Ayurveda* is essentially a health-oriented system of medicine and gives greater importance to promotion of health and prevention of diseases rather than diseases and cure. Similarly, *Ayurveda* gives more weightage to the life style and dietary care than the

drug therapy. Here comes two popular concepts of *Ayurveda* i.e., *Gara Visha* and *Dooshi Visha*,^[1] which in turn may be made responsible for the maximum diseases prevalent in today's modernized materialistic world as underlying cause and pathogenesis. By looking superficially these two concepts especially the *Gara Visha* may be prompted to be sceptical and superstitious. Similar is in the case of *Dooshi Visha*^[2] also. But when the modernized society is being looking through and also the modern life style, then it can be concluded that not only these concepts are alive today, but they are more significant from the clinical aspect as most of the diseases prevailing today can be treated successfully on the basis of these two concepts.

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GARA VISHA AND DOOSHI VISHA

Gara Visha is something other than *Sthavara* and *Jangama Visha* and it is produced due to the combination of different substances. Chakrapani explains that *Gara Visha* is combination of *Savisha* and *Nirisha Dravyas*. It is always *Chirakari*, *Rogajanaka* which does not prove fatal immediately. *Acharya Sushruta* has mentioned additionally that these *Garayogas* cannot only use internally, they are capable of producing of diseases when applied

externally. *Indu* in his commentary states that *Gara* is a special type of *Visha* which is usually given along with food and it includes *Sakalamapi Vastujaatam'* i.e. combination of any type of substances. The effect of *Gara* can be acute subacute, chronic and others viz. *Shoth, Pandu, Udara, Unmada* etc.^[3] contrary to the common belief, *Gara Visha* is not only used intentionally, a person can be exposed to *Gara Visha* accidentally also.

Dooshi Visha is such a special concept of *Ayurveda* that is universally accepted by all most all the *Acharyas* in general sense the name *Dooshi Visha* indicates its *Dooshana Swabhava* means inside the body the main action is to vitiate *Dhatus*. It is not a type of poison rather it is a transformatio n or latent stage which any type of poison can attain.

Signs and symptoms produced by *Gara Visha* and *Dooshi Visha*

As a result, exposure to *Gara Visha* the following disease can be seen

- Paleness (*Pandu*)
- Emaciation (*Krishna*)
- Weak digestive capacity (*Alpagni*)
- Cough, dyspnoea, fever (*Kaasa, Shwaasa, Jwara*)
- Upward movement of *Vaata* (*Pratiloma Vaayu*)
- Increased sleep and worry (*Swapnachintaaparaayana*)
- Ascites, liver and spleen diseases (*Mahodara Yakritpleehi*)
- Weak, lethargy and difficulty in speech (*Deenavag Durvalolasa*)
- Inflammation, swelling (*Sophavaan*) Flatulence (*Aadhmaana*)
- Numbness of extremities (*Shushkapaadakara*)
Reduced body bulk (*Kshayee*)

Psychological disturbances

- Disturbances with dreams etc.

The diseases that can be produced after an exposure to *Dooshi Visha* are:

- Diarrhoea (*Bhinnapureesha*)
- Diseases related to vitiated blood (*Dushtaasarogi*)
- Thirst (*Trishnan*)
- Faints (*Murchha*)
- Vomiting (*Vamana*)
- Stammers (*Gadgada Vaak*)
- Loss of consciousness (*Vimuhyan*)
- Diseases of digestive system (*Dushyodara*) etc.^[4]

A view through modern vision

While the effect of industrialization and commercialization are widely and rapidly spreading in the society, the chances of contacts with toxins are also increasing. With the change in life style of modern civilized man, the risk of getting exposure to the poisons like *Gara Visha* and *Dooshi Visha* are also increasing day by day. There are so many sectors that can be compared to *Gara Visha* in today's society, the prevalence of which is very high. The sectors are:

1. Adulteration / preservatives
2. Cosmetics
3. Psychoactive drugs
4. Occupational poisoning
5. Toxicity by improper preparation of different *Bhasmas* (nanotoxicology)

In today's society many food items are adulterated by many factors. Even milk, what we know as the purest is also adulterated. Now-a-days, food preservatives have a very extensive use. Many of these appear to be innocuous but there is danger in continuous use of food preserved by these agents. Carbonated cold drinks are actually a combination of phosphoric acid, sugar, caffeine, colouring agent, heavy metals and flavouring agents. Now-a-days vegetables and fruits also contain chemicals beyond permissible limits. In agricultural practice also the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides^[5] etc. pollute their growing land, poison the nearby water source and leave their residues in the food stuff. By taking these food

products many harmful chemicals enter into the body which can cause acute, chronic or cumulative toxicity, transdermally causing local as well as systemic problems

Under the concept of *Gara Visha* we can also include psychoactive drugs the use of which is in the peak level in today's society. For e.g., various sedatives, allopathic medicines, alcohol, drugs^[6] etc. these are having direct toxic effect on certain tissues like brain and liver and in psychological cause mood alteration, anxiety, irritability, depression, cerebral atrophy etc.

Another sector in modern field i.e., occupational poisoning can also be comparable to *Gara Visha* It is occurring due to the accidental exposure to poison through skin, eyes, nose, mouth etc. It may simulate many other disorders. It usually lacks a unique pathology and marked by long latent period between exposure and manifestation. It chiefly embraces the employment in industries, factories, mines, forestry and agriculture which are very common in the current scenario.

As per the texts various *Bhasmas* can be used as *Gara Visha*. Effect of these *Bhasmas* can be understood in nanotoxicology level⁷. This technique of using nano materials for therapeutic purposes is used in *Ayurveda* to prepare herbomineral preparations. Of these will not be prepared in a proper way which is very commonly happening now-a-days, it will produce toxic symptoms.

After getting inside the body either *Gara Visha* or *Dooshi Visha* cannot be fully metabolized and undergoes improper digestion and improper assimilation. As a result, it cannot be properly expelled out from the body and get accumulated as toxins. As inside the body liver performs the detoxification function ultimately these toxins affect the liver. Being the major drug metabolizing and detoxifying organ the liver is subjected to potential damage from these toxins and thus ultimately diseases related to liver is being produced. Now-a-days also the diseases like hepatic failure, hepatic encephalopathy, drug and toxic induced liver diseases and alcoholic liver diseases are very common not only

whose signs and symptoms resemble to *Gara Visha* but in aetiology also this concept is very much responsible for hepatopathy.^[8]

As it is known that *Dooshi Visha* as such after getting inside the body immediately cannot manifest. Any poison (may be *Sthavara*, *Jangama* or *Kritrima Visha*) after exposure remain inside the body and in favourable conditions only get vitiated and manifest the symptoms. These favourable conditions include *Dushita Desha*, *Kaala*, *Anna*, *Jatharaagni*, *Divaswapna*, *Ahitashana* etc. In recent days already pollution has taken as an important risk factor for mankind, it includes pollution of land, air and water, the factors responsible for aggravation of *Dooshi Visha*. The pollution of all these factors and use of fertilizers,^[9] chemicals, pesticides etc. in agriculture ultimately leads to the deposition of toxins in foods which in turn get into the body. Alteration of living style, food habits, exposure to different toxins etc. interfere in the digestive power of a person and due to all these factors the *Jatharaagni* become weak which even cannot be able to digest light food particles thus giving rise to *Amadosha*, the root cause of various illnesses. In today's youth, it is the general trend to remain awake up to late night and to sleep in the day time and also taking fast foods, cold drinks, different food combinations which are nothing but *Viruddha Ahara*. All these altered faulty modern life style only leads to aggravation of toxins present inside the body giving rise to different simple to grave disuses.

About *Dooshi Visha* it can be told that the toxins, which are exposed in present world, are having their effects on different systems of the body. As these are low potency poisons, cannot harm to the body as such and once absorbed after improper metabolization, remain as such or in the form metabolites within the body for variable periods and gradually distributed to various organs, thus of causing organic systemic disorders of various ranges. All most all the poisons can act as *Dooshi Visha*. The following sectors in present modern world may attribute to *Dooshi Visha* in greater extent.

1. Insect bite
2. Inanimate poison
3. *Viruddhahara* and *Ahitahara*
4. Fast foods and cold beverages like colas
5. Alcohol, tobacco etc.
6. Drugs like quinine, NSAIDS, steroids etc.
7. Pesticides, heavy metals, minerals, pollutants etc.^[10]

Current scenario in clinical practice

As per WHO data

- One in five deaths in the world is of a child under the age of 5yrs. Due to many infections during prenatal, natal and antenatal periods either to mother or the child itself.
- 28% of death was in between 15 - 59 yrs, the main cause is due to infectious diseases, cancer, respiratory infections and diseases, digestive diseases and neuropsychiatric disorders.
- Leading causes of death in all ages are IHD (12.2%), cerebrovascular disease (9.7%), lower respiratory tract infection (7.1%). COPD (5.1%), diarrhoeal diseases (3.7%). TB (2.5%), lung cancer (2.3%), stomach cancer (1.4%), liver cirrhosis (1.3%), nephritis and nephrosis (1.3%).^[11]
- Among cancers the leading sites are colon and rectum, liver and stomach in case of males.
- Diarrhoeal diseases are the most common cause of illness worldwide.
- In prevalence rate of the diseases, highest is stomach cancer followed by colon and rectum cancer and then liver cancer.
- The factors mainly responsible for disabling conditions by age for low- and middle-income Countries are depression, alcohol dependence, asthma, schizophrenia and drug dependence.^[12]

In general practice also the most commonly seen disorders now-a-days which can also be a manifestation of *Gara Visha* and *Dooshi Visha* are;

- Asthma-eczema syndrome
- Urticaria
- Scleroderma
- Skin diseases
- Allergic manifestation
- Auto-immune diseases

Importance of these two concepts

Apart from air pollution and water pollution, these are thousands of harmful environmental toxins some of which we are aware of such as pesticides, chemicals, household cleansers, fertilizers etc. These are in generally everyday being absorbed into our body through various means. These toxins are having their effect on different systems of the body. These will not be potent enough to cause acute ill effect, but may cause ill effect after a long duration by getting deposited inside the body. These toxins are nothing but *Gara Visha* which after a long period of exposure i.e., in chronic stage acts like *Dooshi Visha*.

Many-a-times a person is not aware of all these things and as these diseases are generally being manifested in a later stage only, the physicians will not think about this aspect and the treatment will continue in a general manner only. But *Ayurveda* tells '*Nidaana Parivarjanam*' as the first line oil treatment for each and every disease. In spite of this as the treatment will not be in a proper way will not be fruitful. So, in these cases where a long term of treatment is not successful a physician should think of these two concepts *Gara Visha* and *Dooshi Visha* and after taking a detailed history when the patient will be treated as per these principles definitely result will be there.

Treatment aspect

So many diseases are prevailing today which if treated as per the principle of treatment of *Gara Visha* and *Dooshi Visha*, a better result can be obtained. There are so many medicines present in *Agada* including single drugs which are proved to be effective in clinical practice such as *Dooshi Vishari Agada*.^[13]

- Vilwadi Agada^[14]
- Vishaghna Ajey Agad^[15]
- Champakagad^[16]
- Dashanagad^[17]
- Single drugs viz. *Dashapuspa* (Sahadevi, Sasashruti, Durvaa, Bhringaraja, Mushali, Vishnukraantaa, Bhadraa, Lakshmanaa, Shakralataa, Samangaa), Sariva, Chitrak.

CONCLUSION

The concepts of *Gara Visha* and *Dooshi Visha* are gaining importance in present era. Both these may be the causes for the decreasing health status of the society. The holistic approach of *Ayurveda* and its unique fundamental principles on one hand and the safe nutraceuticals remedies of *Ayurveda* on the other, if pooled to the main stream of world medicine of today, it can bring a big positive revolution to the quality of health care for the suffering humanity world over. Hence applying these two basic principles of *Ayurveda* from the treatment aspect as well as from the preventive aspect by enhancing the immunity, the main goal of *Ayurveda* can be achieved.

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