

A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW ON BALA IN AYURVEDA

Lipsa Das¹, Abhilasha Singh²

^{1,2}Assistant Professor, Department of Kriya Sharir, Gangasheel Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Bareilly, Uttarpradesh, India

²Assistant Professor, Department of Kayachikitsa, Gangasheel Ayurvedic Medical College & Hospital, Bareilly, Uttarpradesh, India

Email: lipsa93@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The core factor responsible for providing strength to the body as well as mind is generally known as Bala. It includes those components that are required for nourishment, stability, vitality and viability from the commencement of birth till death. It is present in intrauterine life though, needs to be acquired during whole period of extra uterine life. In Ayurveda, the concept of Bala has a wide spectrum, in terms of prakrita kapha, oja, sara etc. However the latter are roots or the cause (karana) and bala is their concomitant outcome (karya). This Bala also have a direct relationship with vyadhikhyamatva or immune response of body. On a whole Bala is responsible for nourishment, Immunity and sustenance of life. Through this article an attempt has been made to review the vast concept regarding bala for its better understanding and implication towards maintenance of health.

Keywords: *Bala, Oja, Kapha, Immunity, Vyadhikhyamatva*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is based on the principle of dhatu samya. It is so popular because of possessing an unique quality i.e. prevention or maintenance. It holds the concept that body and mind has inherent power to tackle the imbalanced homeostatic conditions spontaneously by auto healing process called sawabhoparamvad inclusive of diet, drug and total lifestyle management. It provides holistic and personalized healthcare strategies

with wide range of treatment principles though. It is often observed that besides having all the essential belongings people are still prone to diseases or they find difficult to cope up with day today life whether it is because of financial burden or personal stress. Also even if same morbid condition arises some people still not get afflicted by diseases. It is so because of Bala that one could sustain through morbid condition

or maintain a healthy life. Through this factor a person tends to perform his/her work both physically (sharirik) and mentally (manasika). It could be the inner strength/ stamina or the exterior one in form of physical strength. It is the vital source of energy required for nourishment, development, defense mechanism of body and that which helps in sustenance of life. Now the question arises what in our body is responsible for bala, from where it comes and how it is capable of performing such beneficial effects on human life. A review through samhitas could clarify the notion of achrayas regarding the concept of bala and its importance towards human health.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

This article has been explored from Ayurvedic samhitas along with their commentaries. Relevant references and reviews are taken to compile and analyse the topic.

Acharya Charak has described that 'Kapha' in its normal state is responsible for bala which is ultimately known as oja.¹ In general normal attributes of kapha dosha are Guru guna, it facilitates anabolism and hence increases strength. Sheeta guna arrests over activity of organs and muscles thereby provide stability. Mridu guna is responsible for bringing softness to body, Snigdha gunu maintains moisture and lubrication, Madhura guna is a strengthening attribute, Sthira guna provides durability/ retention and Pichila guna is responsible for binding structures and acts as protective coat. All these attributes directly indicate towards nourishment of body.² Prakrita kapha generates bala that acts as nourishing component of the body.

Ayurveda also describes a unique entity 'Oja' which has the strength to keep body, senses, mind and soul together in functional harmony

and guards against adverse conditions in body. Qualitatively and quantitatively it is of two types. The prime production in intrauterine life, following generation of Prakrita dosha called Para oja. Prana resides in it and is essential for survival of human. It is the chief participating entity during proper union of ovum (*shonita*) and sperm (*shukra*) by means of its excellence, helps in development of the zygote and present as the excellent part of Sara of fetus (*garbha*). Para oja take its place in heart and is responsible for viability of the fetus. Within heart it remains constant in astabindu pramana, having slight red and tinged yellowish colour (*raktaishatsapitakam*). With its destruction body also dies. After birth the saptadhatu gets nourished by undergoing digestion and metabolism under the influence of Agni and Ahara rasa. Aparaj oja is generated as a biofactor that is the quintessence of Saptadhatu, gets nourished by ahara just like dhatus and is like ghee, sweet in taste and smells like parched cereal (*sarpivarna, madhuras, laja gandhi*).³ It is of ardhanjali pramana. This unctuous entity is primely related to the biological and immune strength in the body. Unlike Para oja it undergoes variations. Certain diseases like HIV, Diabetes, Tuberculosis etc. patient gradually decreases stamina and strength with increase susceptibility towards infection. The root cause is unstable Aparaj oja. Oja works parallel with Bala. Oja is the cause and bala is the effect. The excellent quality of oja induces bala due to which individual shows well-nourished fleshy body and durability indicating healthy status of all seven dhatus, all types of movements become smooth without any obstruction, voice and complexion become pleasant and functions of external sense organs along with organs of functions are smooth.⁴ All

these functions again indicate nourishment of body by bala.

This *apara oja* is also responsible for the immune strength i.e. *Vyadhikhyamatva*. It is an attribute of body that allows inherent vital strength required to cope of with day today wear and tear process. Moreover it is body's self designed defense mechanism that has the capacity involved to oppose the genesis of new disease and retards the progress of the existing one.⁵ All bodies are not capable to fight against diseases. It all depends upon *Oja bala*. This *oja bala* may undergo some abnormal changes. There are three categories of *Bala dosha* comparable to three categories of immune disorders. 1.) *Oja vyapat* immune related allergies. It needs to curb the excessive immune response. 2) *Oja-visramsas* auto immune disorders. A *samsodhan* plan that can restore the dislodged *oja* is required to treat this type. 3) *Oja kshaya* immunodeficiency.⁶ certain *rasayan* and *vajikarana* therapies could be administered to correct the *kshaya*.

The homeostatic balance between body's biological entities viz. *dosha*, *dhatu*, *mala*, *agni* and psychological entities viz. *Atma*, *indriya*, *mana* ultimately responsible for the *vyadhikhyamtva*. The *bala* is of three types a) *Sahaja bala*/ natural bio strength, b) *Kalaja bala*/ acquired immunity through external factors like age, climate etc. and c) *Yuktikruta bala* /acquired bio strength artificially.⁷ *Sahaj bala* is inherited from parents to offspring. It is the innate immunity. The genetic or chromosomal diseases are the outcome of defect in this type of *bala* and there is less scope of treatment. *Kalaj bala* is the one which is inclusive of time in terms of day, night, age, season etc. These factors have a great impact on enhancing *bala*. During early morning *kapha* is predominant so strength is more. A youth is

stronger than a child or old. A person has more strength between the end of *visarga kala* and starting of *adana kala* etc. *Yuktikruta bala* represents acquired immunity. It could be gained by adapting certain rules and regimens as described in *Ayurveda*. A) Following the *dincharya*, *ritucharya* along with non suppression of *Adharaniya* and suppression of *dharniya* *vega*. B) *Vyayam* exercising in a routine way. C) Eating wholesome and avoiding unwholesome i.e. knowing and implying *satmya* to one's own body. D) *Rasayan* therapy that acts as immune modifier by removal of free radicals and toxins from the body promoting optimal strength, vitality to the entire body. Some works through balancing *rasa*, *agni* like *sunthi*, *pippali* or some acts as *srotoprasadana* like *guggulu*, *haritaki* E) Certain herbal and herbomineral formulations like *ashwagandha*, *amalaki*, *guduchi*, *lauha* etc. also promote immunity. A strong mind is oriented towards increment of *oja*. Besides these *Acharya Charak* has also described *balavriddhikara bhava* that includes, factors responsible for strength in one's body viz. birth in strong place like *Punjab* etc., community, time like *visarga kala*.

DISCUSSION

Considering the description of *bala* it was found that this concept of *Ayurveda* truly swings around the body's own capacity of performing activities and maintaining health. The *bala* that is possessed by a viable entity since birth till death is responsible for maintenance as well as sustenance of life. This *Bala* is mainly obtained by certain components in body viz. *Prakrita kapha*, *Oja*, *Pusta dhatu*. They exhibit *balya karma* and by means of some exterior factors their functions get intensified. Nourishment of *dhatu* leads to increase in physical strength and

stability of body. Prakrita kapha mainly protects the body by preventing it from the wear and tear process. Oja is considered to be the utmost component of vitality along with that it provides physical and mental resistance against diseases i.e. vyadhikhyamatva. It has also been described that balavriddhikara bhava plays an important role for strength in one's own body. Besides that, bala could be acquired by following various rules and regimens like dietary habits, dincharya, rirtucharya, vyayam, rasayan therapy, sadvritta etc.

CONCLUSION

Bala refers to the outcome of certain components that are responsible for nourishment, stability of body, defense mechanism and sustenance of life. Bala is the functional effect of prakrita kapha, oja, and pusta dhatu. The concept of oja and vyadhikhyamta are the key root in enhancing or degrading bala in a person. Bala that is necessary to be inherited during birth simultaneously important to be acquired after birth.

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