

CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF ASHAYA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SUSHRUTA SAMHITA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient science of life. Principles of Ayurveda are eternal. Every concept has its own importance. It should be understand with the help of references in different *samhitas*. While doing such study, one should refer the particular *Samhita* only, from which we got the reference to be studied. Meaning of same word may differ in each *samhita*. There are many conflicted concepts or terminologies which should be clarified for better understanding of *samhitas*. One of these is the concept of *ASHAYA* described in *Sushrut Samhita*. In this study, attempt is made to explore the concept of *Ashaya* in *Sushrut Samhita* and interpret it anatomically. This will help to explain the exact meaning of *Ashaya*.

Keywords : *Ashaya, Sankhya Sharir, Sushruta Samhita*

INTRODUCTION

In Sharir sthana of *Sushrut Samhita*, seven *Ashayas* are described in the body.¹ It is need to explore the concept of *Ashaya* for better understanding. *Tridoshas* are very much important entities for the normal functioning of the body. They are considered as primary and most essential factors in situation of human organism. A deranged condition of these three fundamental humors may bring about its dissolution or death,² while on their continuance in a normal state depends the vitality of organism. So, firstly *Ashaya* related to *Tridosha* is mentioned in Sushrut Samhita. Even though *tridoshas* are important; they are unable to work separately³. They circulate along with Blood in the body.⁴ *Sushrut Samhita* has given equal importance to Blood. Three humors in combination with a

fourth (Blood), determine the origin, preservation and dissolution of organism and permeate it with their respective properties till the moment of death So after the *Tridosha*, *Ashaya* for Blood is mentioned.

Anna rasa nourishes *Dhatus*. During process of digestion, *Ahara* undergoes two stages, *Amavastha* i.e. partially digested food, and *Pakwa Awastha* i.e. Digested food. So, next *Ashaya* given for *Ama Anna* (*Amashya*) and *Pakwa Anna* (*Pakwashaya*). After *Pachana*, *Sara* and *Kitta Vibhajan* takes place. *Sara* is absorbed for nourishment while *Kitta* again differentiate into *Purish* and *Mutra*. *Purisha* remains in *Pakwa-shaya* i.e. Large intestine. It is the remains of *pakwa anna*. So *Ashaya* for *purisha* is not mentioned separately, but *Mutra* is stored in different site, so next *Ashaya* is mentioned for *Mutra*. As the Uterus is the main site for Foetal development which is present in Fe-

male, additional *Ashaya* is explained in Females for Foetus. From above, it is noticed that if these seven entities i.e. *Vata Pitta, Kapha, Rakta, Ahara* containing *Ama and pakwa anna* and *mutra* are present in their *Ashaya* then the systemic functions will be performed smoothly. According to Dalhana, commentator of Sushruta Samhita, the meaning of *Ashaya* is the site or place in body.⁵

Accordingly, sutra can be studied as follows:

Vatashaya: Means the site of *Vata* in the body.

Vata is described as energy. Its existence can be judged by its normal functions.⁶ *Vata* is superior to all doshas.⁷ It controls all other entities in the body, also it helps in perception of knowledge by *Indriyas*.⁸

Pittashaya: Means site of *pitta* in the body. Main function of *Pitta* is related to *Pachana (sthula and sukshma)* including digestion and cellular metabolism.

Kaphashaya: Means site of *Kapha* in the body. Main function of *Kapha* is like functions of water in the body⁹ eg.- *snehan, avalamban, Sandhi sanshleshana*

Raktashaya: Means site of Blood storage in the body.

It is mainly present in *Yakrut and Pleeha*.¹⁰

Amashaya: Means the site of partially digested food in the body

Pakwashaya: Means site of fully digested food in the body.

Mutrashaya: Means site of Urine storage in the body. According to Sushrutacharya, Its shape is like a gourd¹¹. *Basti* can be considered as site of *Mutra* where *mutra* is continuously stored.¹²

Garbhashaya: Means site of *Garbha* in the body. It is additional *ashaya* present in female for *Garbha*. It can be considered as

Garbhashaya where *garbha* remains till *prasava avastha* starts.

DISCUSSION

Ashaya means not a single organ but the site in the body where seven entities, *Vata, Pitta, Kapha, Blood, Partially digested, fully digested food* and *Store of Urine* are predominantly present, so as to maintain normal functioning in the body. *Tridoshas* are functional entities which are carried with *Blood* all over the body. Their presence in the *Ashaya* is very important. Without their contribution, not a single process can start. These sites can be considered as the prime functional areas in the body.

Vatashaya: If we observed the functions of *Vata*, it is as similar as nervous system in modern science. Our nervous system, coordinates and controls every function in the body through vital nerve messages and is responsible for all healing, repair and regeneration in your body.

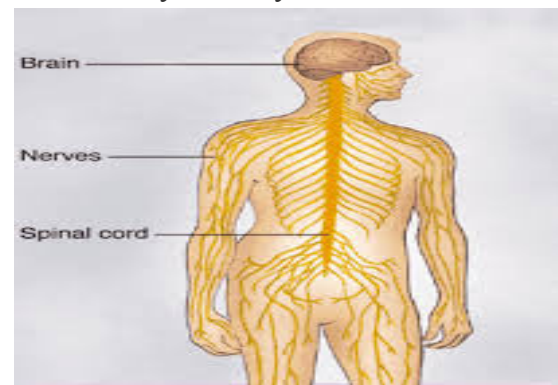
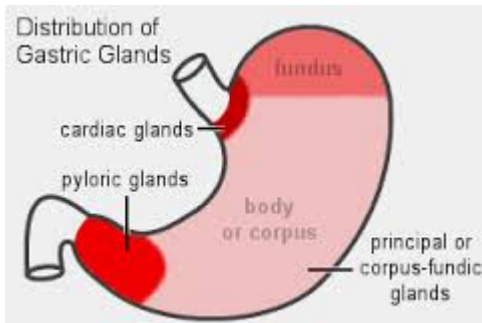


Figure 1. Nervous System

The current level of health is the result of the quality and quantity of nerve messages. When you have a healthy nerve system, you are better able to handle the challenges of life because you are able to adapt, heal and recover at your optimal best.¹⁴ So we can consider nervous system as *Vatashaya*..

Pittashaya: If we observed the function of *Pitta*, it is mainly related to *pachana* which includes the digestion, transformation. *Pitta* prepares material to be absorbed or metabolized at macro or micro levels.¹⁵ This function is seen in chemical activities like digestion and assimilation.

Figure 2. location of digestive Glands



Hormones are essentially chemical molecules (proteins for example), which cause a change in cellular metabolism,¹⁶ The hormones are produced by endocrine glands. Hormones are responsible for various metabolism.

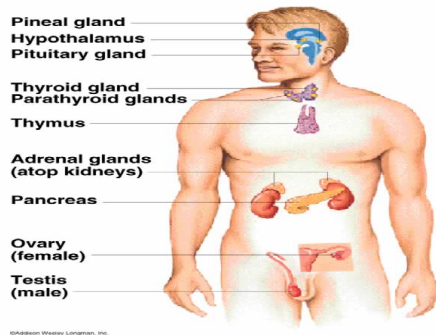


Figure 3 location of Endocrine glands

So, we can consider all digestive glands present in alimentary canal, gall bladder and endocrine glands as *Pittashaya*

Kaphashaya: Properties of *Kapha* is given as, oily, liquid, whitish in colour.

If we observed the functions of *Kapha*¹⁷, it is mainly related to various secretions in the body either watery or mucous.

From properties and function of *Kapha*, we can compare with :

- 1) The serous and mucous secretions produced by serous and mucous glands in the body.

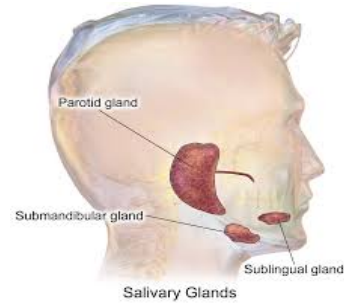


Figure 4 Salivary glands

- 2) synovial fluid in synovial cavity is the main cause for free movement of joints in the body. Its function and properties can be compared with *Kapha dosha*.

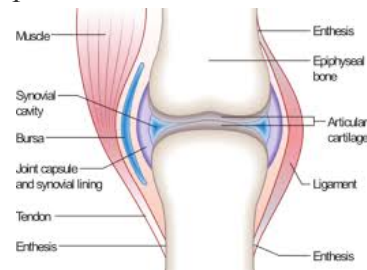
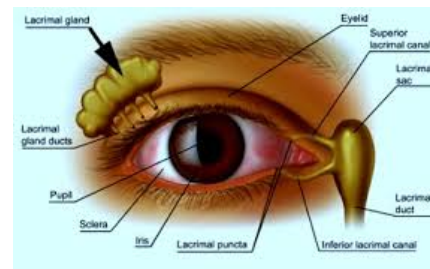


Figure 5 Synovial cavity in joint

- 3) aqueous and vitreous humour in chambers of Eye
- 4) Secretion of Lacrimal gland



- 5) CSF in ventricles is important for nutrition of nervous system. It also acts

as a shock absorber for CNS. These function are similar to *Kapha dosha*

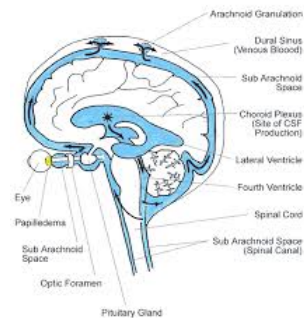


Figure 6 CSF IN VENTRICLES

6) fluid in pleural, peritoneal and pericardial cavities avoids friction between two layers. Also it provides protection to internal viscera.

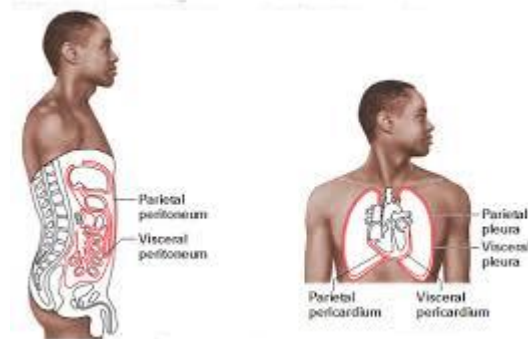


Figure 7 peritoneal, pleural and pericardial cavities.

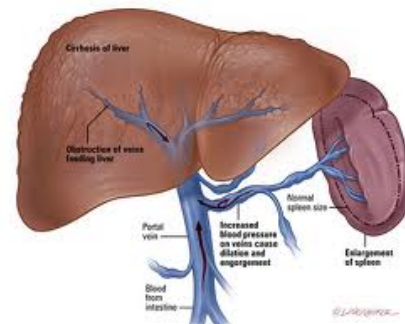
So, we can consider serous and mucous glands, synovial cavities, chambers of Eye, Lacrimal gland, ventricles in brain, pleural, peritoneal and pericardial cavities as *adhishthana of Kapha*.

- **Raktashaya:**

Yakrut and Pleeha are given as *adhishthan of Rakta*.

As per modern science, Blood is stored in Liver. In foetal life it is also stored in Spleen. After birth, this function of spleen is

seen only in



animals.

Figure 8 Liver and spleen

So, Liver and Spleen can be considered as *site of Rakta*.

- **Amashaya:**

Site where Undigested food is present during process of *pachana*. It is seen in *Amashaya* and *Grahani*. According to modern science, digestion is completed in duodenum. So, *Amashaya* and *grahani* i.e. stomach and duodenum respectively can be considered as site of partially digested food.

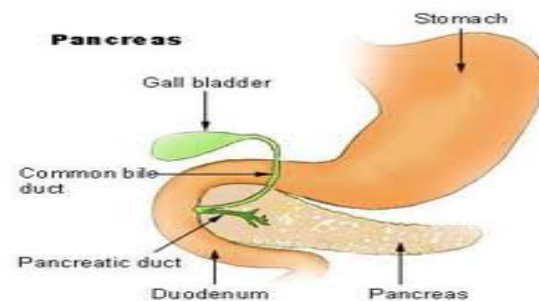


Figure 9 Site of partially digested food

- **Pakwashaya :**

Site where digested food is present during process of *pachana*. It is seen in *Antra*. According to modern science, digested food is propelled in jejunum from duodenum. So, part of Small intestine except duodenum and whole large intestine can be considered as site of fully digested food.

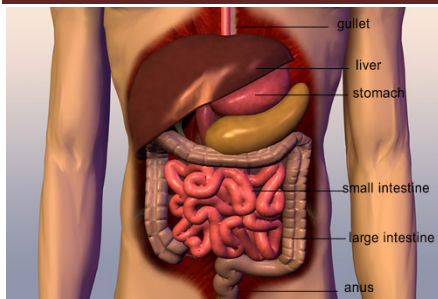


Figure 10 Intestine -site of fully digested food

• **Mutrashaya:**

According to Sushrutacharya, *Basti* is the site of *Mutra*. From the shape and function of *Basti*, it can be compared with Urinary bladder which continuously stores urine. So, Urinary bladder can be considered as *adhishtan* of *Mutra*.

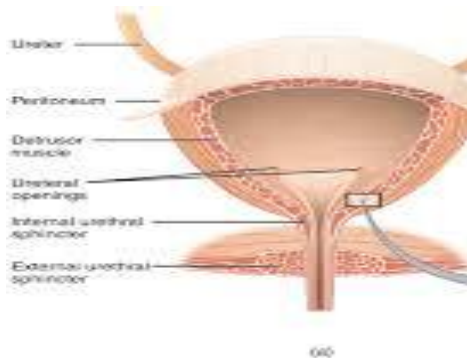


Figure 11 Urinary bladder

• **Garbhashaya:**

Site in the body which provide space for *Garbha*. According to Sushrutacharya, *Garbhashaya* is *adhishtan* of *Garbha*. From the description of *Garbhashaya*, we can compare it with Uterus. where normally Foetus remains till full gestational period, So, Uterus can be considered as site of *Garbha*.

CONCLUSION

1) *Ashaya* means not a single organ but it is the site in the body where seven essential entities should be predominantly present.

2) *Vatashaya* can be considered as nervous system.

3) *Pittashaya* can be considered as all digestive glands, gall bladder and endocrine glands in the body.

4) *Kaphashaya* can be considered as serous and mucous glands in the body, synovial cavities, chambers of Eye, Lacrimal gland, ventricles, pleural and pericardial, peritoneal cavities.

5) *Raktashaya* can be considered as Liver and Spleen in foetal life, Only liver after birth.

In developing embryos, blood formation occurs in aggregates of blood cells in the yolk sac, called blood islands. As development progresses, blood formation occurs in the spleen, liver and lymph nodes. When bone marrow develops, it eventually assumes the task of forming most of the blood cells for the entire organism. However, maturation, activation, and some proliferation of lymphoid cells occurs in secondary lymphoid organs (spleen, thymus, and lymph nodes). In children, haematopoiesis occurs in the marrow of the long bones such as the femur and tibia. In adults, it occurs mainly in the pelvis, cranium, vertebrae, and sternum.^[6]

6) *Amashya* can be considered as Stomach and duodenum. Food eaten starts to arrive in the Small intestine after one hour, and after two hours the stomach has emptied. Until this time the food is termed a bolus. It then becomes the partially digested semi-liquid termed Chyme. In the small intestine, the pH becomes crucial; it needs to be finely balanced in order to activate digestive enzymes. The chyme is very acidic, with a low pH, having been released from the stomach and needs to be made much more alkaline. This is achieved in the duodenum.

7) *Pakwashaya* can be considered as jejunum, ileum and Large intestine where fully

digested food is stored. Necessary nutrients and vitamins are also absorbed.

8) *Mutrashaya* can be considered as urinary bladder where continuous storage of urine take place.

9) *Garbhashaya* can be considered as Uterus where the full development of foetus takes place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge all colleagues, parent and teachers who helped a lot in making this article very effective in very short time. I acknowledge co-author for his valuable contribution.

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