

CONCEPT OF PAIN IN AYURVEDA – A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda explains human physiology and anatomy in a very unique way. Philosophy forms an inseparable language of *Ayurveda* through which many basic concepts are well explained. It incorporates the philosophical outlook along with life science. Being a life science, it majorly mentions about health and disease of a living system. *Swasthya* or health has been considered as the normalcy of body humours whereas, any imbalance will lead to an unhealthy condition. These unhealthy conditions are explained by numerous words like *ruk*, *vedana*, *daha*, *toda*, *soola* etc. each are very specific entities pertaining to some specific sites or manifesting during some specific conditions. Here an attempt has been done to analyse the various aspects of pain mentioned in *Ayurveda* and possible interpretations has been drawn from the classics. Thus it can be summarised that these various interpretations of pain specifies its specificity.

Keywords: Pain, *Vedana*, Concept, *Ayurveda*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, amalgamates to philosophy in all aspects. Ayurvedic principles can be better understood with the basis of philosophical ideas. *Ayurveda* describes an applied philosophy which confines to the medical science. It is pertinent and makes the core ideas of science more interesting and liable to a scholar. ^[1] Hence it will be better to have a view over *utpatti-jnana-bheda* of pain considering the basic ideas in philosophy.

Interpretations of pain

In *Ayurveda*, a variety of terms are used to explain pain. This shows the peculiarity of pain in different clinical conditions. The study drug *Ashoka* belongs to *Vedanasthapana Mahakashaya* mentioned by

Acharya Charaka. *Acharya Chakrapani* explains that this group of drugs possess the quality to reduce *vedana* and to restore *prakruthi*.^[2] The word *vedana* comes out from 'vid dhatu'. It means knowledge, perception, feeling, sensation, pain etc. Basically, the perception can be divided into two, *dukha* (feeling of sorrow) and *sukha* (feeling of happiness).^[3] *Acharya Chakrapani* opines that the one which produces *anukula vedana* (pleasant sensation) is *sukha* and the one which produce *pratikula vedana* (unpleasant sensation) is *dukha*. Here, *sukha* stands for *arogya* (health) whereas, *dukha* stands for *anarogya* (disease).^[4]

Vedana jnana (Manifestation of pain): Pain manifests only after *samsparsha* (contact) with *sparshanendriya* (tactile sense organ) and *manas* (mental contact). *Sparshanendriya* possess *vyapti* in all sense organs, hence *dukha jnana* through all sense organs happens through *sparshanendriya*. In mental contact there is no need for tactile sensation. Whatever the thought, it is automatically presented and perceived through mind.^[5]

Vedana adhishtana (Substratum for pain): Perception of *sukha-dukha jnana* happens with *mano-indriya-indriyarthartha sannikarsha* [conjunction of mind, sense organ and stimulus for perception]. *Satwa* and *sareera* are the substrata for these perceptions.^[6] In *sareera sthana*, *Acharya* further explains that mind along with body and sense organs are the *adhishtana* for *vedana* (sites for manifestation of pain).^[7] *Kesa* (hair), *loman* (small hair), *nakhagra* (tip of nail), *anna* (ingested food), *mala* (excreta), *drava* (excretory fluids) are mentioned as exceptions for site of pain sensation.^[7]

Synonyms of vedana: Various terms depicting *vedana* can be traced from ancient books. In *Amarakosha*, *manyu*, *shuk* are said as synonyms of *vedana*. *Shabdataravali* explains *suchs*, *nisham* as the synonyms.^[8] *Acharya Hemachandra* explains *sochanam*, *kheda* as synonyms for *vedana*. Interpretation of terms can be explained as follows,

1. *Manyu*: It is explained as grief, sorrow^[9]
2. *Shuk*: It means the one which produce *soka*^[10]
3. *Sucha*: It is explained as pain, sorrow, grief or regret. It also depicts purity of a substance.^[11]
4. *Nisham*: It means the feeling to be perceived or known.^[12]

Ruja as roga: *Roga*'s are classified in innumerable ways based on nature, site, symptoms and causative factors.^[13] All *roga*'s have *ruja* as a common *lakshana*.^[14] Synonyms of *roga* contains many terms equivalent to *vedana or ruja*.^[15] It includes,

1. *Vyadhi*: The one which cause *vividha dukha*. (*vividham dukham aadatititi vyadhi*)
2. *Aatanka*: The one which causes *krichra jeevitam* with *dukha*. (*Aatanka krichra jeevane*)

3. *Vikara*: *Vyadhi* which resides both on *sareera* and *manas*. (*sareera manasor anyadhakaranatwam vyadher darshayati; budheendriya mana sareeranam vikruti*)
4. *Roga*: The one which imparts *ruja*. (*ruja karthrutwam; rujatititi roga*)
5. *Papma*: It occurs as a result of *papa karma*. (*pa-pasya karmanaha phalamiti krutwa roga*)
6. *Dukha*: The one which results in a feeling of *upatapakatwa*. (*dukhamityanenopatapakatwamanubhavam janayati*)
7. *Abadha*: The one which causes *abadha* for *kaya* and *manas*. (*aasamantaat kaya manorbhadhanam*)

Karana for vedana: *Roga and vedana* exists in *samavaya sambandha*. Hence *roga karana*'s can be inferred as *karana* for *vedana*.^[16] *Acharya Charaka* states that *asatmendriyardha samyoga* (unwholesome conjunction of sense organs with respective objects), *pranajaparadha* (intellectual error) and *parinama* (transformation) are the three main causes for *roga*. Among them *atiyoga-ayoga-mithyayoga* of *indriya* with *indriyarthartha* constitute *asatmendriyardha samyoga*. *Pranajaparadha* includes *atiyoga-ayoga-mithyayoga* of *karma* performed by *vakmana-sareera*.

Relation between vedana and dosha's: In our science combination of *panchamahabhoota sareera* and *sarreeeri* (soul) forms the substratum for *chikitsa* (treatment). *Sareera* has its origin from *dosha - dhatu* and *mala*'s. Among them three *dosha*'s forms the vital forces for life. Any alteration in the *dosha - dhatu*'s will lead to a *Vikara* (disease) and normalcy will be the *Prakruthi* (healthy state).^[17] Just as the bird flying for the whole day throughout the sky will not be able to avoid its own shade, just as all the things in universe cannot exist apart from three *guna*'s (*Satwa, rajas and tamas*), similarly different kinds of diseases are inseparable from *dosha*'s.^[18]

Acharya Susruta explains that '*vatadrute nasty ruja*', which means there is no pain without involvement of *vata dosha*. It is a unique quality attributed to *vata dosha*.^[19] Due to *yogavaahitwa*

(ability to join with other dosha and attribute it's qualities without losing own quality) nature, *vata dosha* always manifests along with *pitta* or *kapha*. When combines with *pitta* it becomes *dahakrut* and along with *kapha* it becomes *sheetakrut*.^[20] Earlier it is mentioned that *vedana jnana* occurs through *sparshanendriya*. It is found that *sparshanendriya* is the abode of both *vata* and *pitta dosha*. *Sarvendriya abhivahanam* (control and co-ordination of sense organs) and *akshanam patavam* (keenness of sense organs) has been included as *prakruta karma* (normal functions) of *vata dosha*. Among the five divisions of *Vata*, *indriyapravrutti* (maintenance of sense organs) is the *karma* of *Prana vayu*, *Manobodhana* (awakening of mind) is the *karma* of *Udana vayu* and *gati* (movement) is the *karma* of *Vyana vayu*. This explains the specific role of *vata dosha* in *vedana jnana*. *Acharya Vagbhata* also opines that *soola* is nothing but *viguna anila*.^[21] Alterations for *samya avastha* of *dosha*'s are mentioned at various instances in classics. They are majorly included as *Vruddha dosha karma*'s and *Nanatmaja Vyadhi*'s of respective *dosha*'s. A wide array of terms which depicts pain are included under these two aspects. *Vruddha dosha karma*'s perceived as *vedana vishesha* can be classified as per *dosha vishesha*. It can be summarised as follows, *Vruddha dosha karma*'s perceived as *vedana vishesha* includes,

- Due to *vata*:^[22]
 1. *Vyadha*: Pain as if pricked by needle. (*thadanamiva mudgaradina;suchi vidhasyeva vyadha*)

2. *Swapa*: Unable to know any sensation (*supti; sparsha ajnanam*)
 3. *Saada*: Unable to perform normal functions (*sadanam; swakaaryakshamatwam*)
 4. *Ruk*: Pain pertaining always (*satatam soolam; soolam*)
 5. *Toda*: Intermittent pricking pain (*vichinam soolam; totrenea vyadha*)
 6. *Bhedana*: Tearing pain (*bhedo; bhidyamanasyeva vyadha*)
 7. *Anga bhanga*: Piercing pain on thigh and calf region. (*jangha-uruprabhruteenam choornanamiva; unmargagamanam angergatyardhatwaat*)
 8. *Samkocha*: Pain as if the *sira*'s are squeezed. (*siradeenam sankochanam; aprasaryatwam*)
 9. *Kampa*: Unusual movement (*ati vepanam; chalanam*)
 10. *Veshtana*: Pain as if *anga*'s are tightly fastened. (*gradhanamivangasya; valanam*)
 11. *Sthambha*: Pain as if *bahu-uru-jangha* are unable to perform normal functions. (*bahu-urujanghadenam;nishkriyatwam*)
- Due to *pitta*^[23]
 1. *Daha*: Burning sensation pertaining to whole body. (*sarvangeenam santapa daha; santapa*)
 2. *Sadanam*: Unable to perform normal function. (*sada*)

Similarly, *Nanatmaja dosha vikara*'s perceived as *vedana vishesha* includes, *Nanatmaja vikara*'s of *vata* perceived as *vedana vishesha*^[24]

Table 1: *Nanatmaja vikara*'s of *vata* perceived as *vedana vishesha*

Sl. No.	<i>Nanatmaja vikara</i> 's	CS	AS	KS	Sha.Sam
1	<i>Angabheda</i> (breaking pain in body)				+
2	<i>Angapeeda</i> (pain all over body)				+
3	<i>Angasoola</i> (Pricking pain over body)				+
4	<i>Akshibheda</i> (pain in eye)	+	+	+	
5	<i>Akhisoola</i> (Pricking pain in eye)	+			
6	<i>Dantabheda</i> (tooth ache)	+		+	
7	<i>Gridhrasi</i> (sciatica)	+	+	+	+

8	<i>Gudarathi</i> (tenasmus)	+	+	+	
9	<i>Gulpha graham</i> (stiff ankle)	+		+	
10	<i>Hanubheda</i> (pain in jaw)	+	+	+	
11	<i>Janubheda</i> (genu varum)	+	+	+	
12	<i>Januvishlesha</i> (genu valgum)	+	+	+	
13	<i>Kroshtukasheersha</i>				+
14	<i>Karna soola</i> (otalgia)	+	+	+	
15	<i>Lalata bheda</i> (pain in frontal region)	+		+	
16	<i>Nakha bheda</i> (cracking pain on nails)	+	+	+	
17	<i>Oshtabheda</i> (cracking pain in lips)	+	+	+	
18	<i>Pada bhramsha</i> (foot drop)	+			
19	<i>Pada soola</i> (pain in foot)	+		+	
20	<i>Pada suptata</i> (numbness of foot)	+	+	+	+
21	<i>Parsvamarda</i> (pain in the chest)	+	+	+	+
22	<i>Pindikodweshtana</i> (cramps in calf)	+	+	+	
23	<i>Prasupti</i> (Numbness)				+
24	<i>Pratuni</i> (Upward stabbing pain in anus and genitalia)				+
25	<i>Prushtagraha</i> (stiffness of back)	+			
26	<i>Sankhabheda</i> (Pain in temporal region)	+	+	+	
27	<i>Sarvanga roga</i> (Pain all over body)	+			
28	<i>Sephastambha</i> (stiffness of penis)	+			
29	<i>Siro ruk</i> (head ache)	+	+	+	+
30	<i>Sronibheda</i> (pain around pelvic girdle)	+	+	+	
31	<i>Trikagraha</i> (arthritis of sacroiliac joint)	+			
32	<i>Toda</i> (pricking pain)				+
33	<i>Tuni</i> (downward stabbing pain around anus and external genitalia)				+
34	<i>Udavartha</i> (Reverse peristalsis)	+		+	
35	<i>Udaraveshta</i> (gripping pain in abdomen)	+	+	+	
36	<i>Urusada</i> (pain in thigh)	+			
37	<i>Urustambha</i> (stiffness of thigh)	+			
38	<i>Vankshananaha</i> (tension of groin)	+			
39	<i>Vakshastoda</i> (stabbing pain in chest)	+		+	
40	<i>Vaksha-uddharsha</i> (rubbing pain in chest)	+	+	+	
41	<i>Vaksha uparodha</i> (impairment of thoracic movement)	+			
42	<i>Vatakhuddata</i> (club foot)	+	+	+	
43	<i>Vrushanakshepa</i> (pain in scrotum)	+	+	+	

Nanatmaja vikara's of pitta perceived as vedana vishesha

Table 2: *Nanatmaja vikara's of pitta perceived as vedana vishesha* [25]

Sl. No.	<i>Nanatmaja vikara's</i>	CS	AS	KS	Sha.Sam
1	<i>Angavadarana</i> (cracking pain in body)	+			+
2	<i>Amsadaha</i> (burning sensation in shoulder region)	+		+	
3	<i>Angadaha</i> (intense burning sensation in body parts)		+		
4	<i>Antardaha</i> (burning sensation inside <i>koshta</i>)	+			
5	<i>Carmadalana</i> (cracking over skin)	+	+	+	

6	<i>Daha</i> (burning sensation all over body parts)	+	+		
7	<i>Dava</i> (burning sensation over mouth, palate & lips)	+		+	
8	<i>Davathu</i> (burning sensation over <i>chakshuradi indriya</i> 's)	+		+	
9	<i>Dhumaka</i> (fuming sensation over <i>siro-greeva-kantha-talu</i>)	+	+	+	+
10	<i>Osha</i> (burning sensation associated with <i>sweda</i> and <i>arati</i>)	+	+	+	
11	<i>Plosa</i> (burning sensation pertained to a region without <i>sweda</i>)	+	+	+	
12	<i>Twak avadarana</i> (cracking of skin due to putrefaction)	+		+	
13	<i>Twak daha</i> (burning sensation in skin)	+	+	+	
14	<i>Ushmadhikya</i> (excessive temperature)	+	+	+	+
15	<i>Vidaha</i> (burning sensation over <i>pani-pada-amsamoola</i>)	+		+	+

Vedana vishesha due to rakta Acharya Sharngadhara specifically mentions about peculiar *vedana* due to *rakta*. It is specified as '*peeda*', the one which causes uneasiness or restlessness to body. [26] **Vedana as a lakshana in dhatu-pradoshaja vyadhi:** *Dosha*'s

vitiated and cause *vyadhi*, it is often perceived as *vedana*. [27] When these *dosha*'s occupy different *dhatu*'s different symptoms are manifested. *Vedana vishesha*'s occurring as per the *adhishtana dhatu* are described as follows. [28]

Table 3: *Vedana vishesha* as per *adhishtana dhatu*

<i>Adhishtana dhatu</i>	<i>Vedana vishesha</i>
<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Angamarda</i>
<i>Rakta</i>	<i>Asrugdhara</i>
<i>Asthi</i>	<i>Asthi bheda & soola</i>
<i>Majja</i>	<i>Parva ruk,</i>

Sthanagata vedana vishesha

Dosha's are designated to locate in specific sites inside body. In general, *kapha* occupy the space above *hrudaya*, *pitta* in between *hrudaya* and *nabhi* and *vata* below *nabhi*. [29] Additional to these, specific sites are mentioned for each *dosha*'s. Specific sites of *vata* includes – *Pakwashaya* (large intestine), *Kati* (waist), *Sakthi* (thigh), *Srotra* (ear), *Asthi* (bone),

Sparshanendriya (skin), *Vasthi* (urinary bladder), *Pureeshadhana* (rectum) and *Pada* (lower limb). [30] During *roga samprapthi*, *vata* gets dislodged from these sites and occupy other sites. This will manifest as disease. [31] Depending on the site of manifestation *lakshana*'s will be different. [32] These *lakshana*'s explained as *vedana vishesha* as per *sthana gata vata* are enumerated as follows.

Table 4: *Vedana vishesha* as per the *sthana vishesha* of *vata dosha*

<i>Sthana</i>	<i>CS</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>AS</i>
<i>Koshta</i>	<i>Parswa soola</i>		
<i>Amasaya</i>	<i>Hrit-nabhi-parswa-udara ruk</i>	<i>Parswa vedana</i>	
<i>Pakwasaya</i>	<i>Soola, trika vedana</i>	<i>Nabhou soola</i>	<i>Soola,</i>
<i>Srotradi indriyas</i>	<i>Indriyavadha</i>	<i>Indriyavadha</i>	<i>Indriyavadha</i>
<i>Twak</i>	<i>Toda-aatanyate-parva ruk</i>	<i>Sphurana, supti, chumu chumayanam, nistoda, twakbheda, paripotana</i>	<i>Sphutana</i>
<i>Rakta</i>	<i>Teevra ruja sa santapa</i>		<i>Teevra ruja, swapa</i>

Mamsa	<i>Atyrdha toda as if dnda mushi hatasa ruk</i>	<i>Sa soola granthi</i>	<i>Todadhya granthi</i>
Medas	<i>Atyrdha toda as if dnda mushi hatasa ruk</i>	<i>Granthi with manda ruja</i>	<i>Todadhya granthi</i>
Asthi	<i>Bheda on asthi-parva, sandhi soola, santata ruk</i>	<i>Soola, prabheda</i>	<i>Mushti dandahatopama ruk, soola in sakthi-asthi-sandhi</i>
Majja	<i>Bheda on asthi-parva, sandhi soola, santata ruk</i>	<i>Ruk kadachit na prashamyati</i>	<i>Satata ruja</i>
Snayu	<i>Khalli, bahyayama, antarayama, sarvanga roga, ekanga roga</i>	<i>Sthambha, kampa, soola while ak-shepana</i>	<i>Grudhrasi, Ayama</i>
Sandhi	<i>Vedana in prasarana-akunjana pravrutti</i>	<i>Soola on sandhi's</i>	<i>Savedana Pravrutthi</i>
Sira	<i>Manda ruk, spandanam, suptata</i>	<i>Soola while akunjana of sira</i>	
Guda	<i>Soola</i>		
Sarvanga	<i>Gaatra sphurana-bhanjana-vedana pareeta-sphutana</i>		<i>Toda, Bheda, sphurana, bhanjana, Kampana, akshepana</i>

Vedana vishesha in Vrana: While describing about *vrana srava's* (exudates from wounds), *Acharya Susruta* describes different varieties of *vedana vishesha's* ^[33]. *Vedana vishesha's* based on *dosha* predominance can be described as follows.

Vedana vishesha due to *vata* includes ^[34],

1. *Todana*: Pain as if pricked with a needle. (*so-ochibhiriva bhedanam*)
2. *Bhedana*: Pain as if a tissue gets tiered (*twagvidaranamiva*)
3. *Taadana*: Hitting pain as if beaten with sticks. (*dandhadibhirahanyata eva*)
4. *Chedana*: Cutting pain similar to that produced on surgical incision. (*kriyate iva shastradibhihi*)
5. *Aayamana*: Pain produced during dilatation of an orifice. (*aayamanam samkuchitangadeshasya deerghikaranamiva*)
6. *Mandhana*: Pain produced as if an ulcer is churned. (*mandhanakaadibhir vranantarmadhyate eva*)
7. *Vikshepana*: Pain produced as if something getting thrown out. (*preryate iva*)
8. *Chumu chumayana*: Irritating pain as if coated with paste of mustard. (*sarshaparajika kalka lip-tairiva*)
9. *Nirdahana*: Pain produced when completely burnt with fire. (*nihishesham vahnina dahyate iva*)
10. *Avabhanjana*: Pain produced when something is completely broken (*samchoornyate eve*)
11. *Sphotana*: Pain produced when a stone is stricken (*sphotanam paashanadibhiriva*)
12. *Vidarana*: Pain caused as if made an incision with nail (*nakhadibhir seeryate iva*)
13. *Utpaatana*: Pain produced as if something is pulled up from body (*urdhwamakrushyate iva*)
14. *Kampana*: Pain associated with shivering. (*kampanam vepiyate eva*)
15. *Vividha soola Vishesha*: Feeling of body as if various kinds pain is manifesting. (*vividha soola visheshanam nanaprakararthisoolahata gaatrasyeva vedana visheshaha*)
16. *Vikirana*: As if the pain radiates in all direction from the wound. (*vranavayava nanasthaneshu vikeeryanta eva*)
17. *Sthambhana*: Pain produced due to stiffness. (*stabdhata*)
18. *Poorana*: Pain produced on forced filling. (*bharanam*)
19. *Swapna*: Pain produced while as if the organ is numb. (*prasupthi*)

20. *Aakunjana*: Pain caused due to twitching or contraction of organ. (*kutileekaranamiva*)
 21. *Ankushikaiva*: Pain as if pierced with hooks. (*khalli vishesha; ankusha nipatakarshanamivamkushika*)
 22. *Animitta vividha vedana pradurbhaava*: Pain developing without any apparent cause.
 23. *Muhur muhur vedana aagachanti*: Frequent appearance and disappearance of pain.
- Vedana vishesha* due to *pitta* includes,
1. *Osha*: Burning sensation pertaining to an area. (*eka deshiko daha*)
 2. *Chosha*: Pain produced when something getting sucked out of the body. (*aachushana samatvadityeke*)
 3. *Paridaha*: Burning sensation over a large area around a vrana. (*pari samantat daha*)
 4. *Dhoomayana*: Pain produced as if fumes arise from organs. (*dhoomodvamanamivangaanam*)

Vedana vishesha due to *kapha*

1. *Suptatvam*: As unable to perceive any mode of sensation (*nakhamakshikamashakadi damsa vedananam anabhijnatvam*)
2. *Alpa vedanatvam*: Mild pain *Vedana vishesha* due to *rakta*, This will be similar to the *vedana vishesha*'s due to *pitta*.

Vedana vishesha as Sroto-dushti lakshana: *Purusha* has been considered as a *samudaya* (conglomeration) of *srotas* (channels). They are *sarvagata* (pervade all over), *sarvasara* (move through entire body) and responsible for *dosha prakopa* and *prashamana*.^[35] As long as the *srota*'s performs their normal functions, the body is free from *Vikara*(diseases). Any alteration will lead to *Vikara* which can be manifested as *vedana vishesha*'s.^[36] So *Sroto dushti lakshana*'s manifesting as *vedana vishesha* are compared and tabulated below.^[37,38]

Table 5: *Sroto dushti lakshana*'s manifested as *vedana vishesha*

Sl. No	Srotas	CS	SS
1	Prana	Sa soola uchvasam	Aakroshana, bhramana, vepana
2	Udaka	-	-
3	Anna	-	Soola
4	Rasa	Angamarda, saada	Aakroshana, bhramana, vepana
5	Rudhira	Asrugdhara, Guda-medra-aasya paka	Daha
6	Mamsa	Galasaaluka-sundika, Upajihwika	-
7	Medas	-	-
8	Asthi	Danta bheda, asthi soola	Not mentioned
9	Majja	Parva ruk	Not mentioned
10	Sukra	Uddhana asakthi	-
11	Mutra	Sa soola mutratvam	Medhra stabdhata
12	Pureesha	Sa sabda pureesha nirharanam	Gradhitantrata
13	Sweda	Angasya Paridaha, romaharsha	Not mentioned
14	Arthava vaha	-	Maidhuna asahishnutvam

Symptoms explained in the *dushti lakshana* of *srotas* of *dhatu*'s are similar to the *lakshana*'s of corresponding *dhatu* vitiation. It is explained that *Sookshma Pareeksha* of *Vedana vishesha* in *sroto dushti lakshana* is essential for determining the prognosis of a disease. By examining the quality of *vedana vishesha*, *Salya tantra* experts

should ascertain the *sadhya sadhyata* of a *niyata desha vidha* and *Kaya Chikitsa* experts should ascertain the *sookshma jnana* of *sadhya sadhyata* of *roga*.^[39]

CONCLUSION

The concept of pain is a vast and relevant topic in a medical science. In Ayurveda innumerable types of pain are explained with unique salient features. This explains the specificity of scientific explanations in classics.

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