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# A conceptual study on *Marma* and its practical application in *Chikitsa*

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## ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda* is a living science that believes in treating the mind, body, and spirit to achieve total health, and this ancient wisdom is mirrored in the unique idea and composition of *Marma* as well. *Marma* is not just anatomical markers, but also locations where the *Tridosha*, in its subtle forms *Prana*, *Ojusa* (*soma*), and *Tejas*, may be found (*Agni*). They also have three *Gunas*: *Sattva*, *Raja*, and *Tamas* (*Manas* contents) as well as the soul or life force (*Bhutatma*). *Sushruta Samhita* and *Siddha*, respectively, include detailed descriptions of *Marma* and *Marma Chikitsa*. *Marma Chikitsa* / Therapy are the manipulation or stimulation of *Marma* in the treatment of different ailments. The *Prana* (vital energy) present in *Marmas* may be directed to eliminate blockages (even in distant locations) and promote energy flow, resulting in a state of healthy body, mind, and spirit, through various ways of *Marma* stimulation. The purpose of this page is to give a general understanding of *Marma* and *Marma* treatment. Ancient science literature, *Ayush* physicians/surgeons, the internet, and personal experience are all used to gather information.

**Key words:** *Marma*, *Marma Chikitsa*, *Marma point*, *Prana*

## INTRODUCTION

*Marma* is an anatomical location that connects muscles, veins, ligaments, bones, and joints.<sup>[1]</sup> There are 107 *Marmas* (vital spots) in total, with eleven in each limb, twenty-six in the trunk (three in the belly, nine in the thorax, fourteen in the back), and thirty-

seven in the head and neck area.<sup>[2]</sup> They are also the places where not just *Tridosha*, but also their subtle forms *Prana*, *Ojus*, and *Tejas*, as well as *Sattva*, *Raja*, and *Tama*, may be found.<sup>[3]</sup> *Marma*, according to *Vagbhata*, is the meeting point of *Mamsa*, *Asthi*, *Sira*, *Snayu*, *Damni*, and *Sandhi*, as well as the location of *Prana*. However, it is also believed that *Marma* can be made up of any or all of the aforementioned.<sup>[4]</sup>

Though *Marma* is mentioned and described in the *Charaka Samhita*, no specifics are provided. *Marma*, according to *Sushruta*, is the site of convergence of all the *Dhatus* save *Dhamani*.<sup>[5]</sup> He utilized the term *Marma* to describe both disorders of the vital organ system and topographical cure points, implying that topographical cure points should be stimulated to rescue the *Marma* in the system. *Marma* spots, according to *Siddhar*, are the locations in the body where the subtle *Marma* energy may be detected.<sup>[6]</sup>

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*Marma* is the location on the body where an energy obstruction is perceived. It is the nexus of physiology and awareness, and touching it modifies the biochemistry of the body, allowing profound and alchemical changes to occur in one's makeup.<sup>[7]</sup>

The body is signalled to manufacture exactly what it needs, including hormones and neurochemicals that repair the body, mind, and awareness when these inner pharmacy pathways are stimulated.<sup>[8]</sup> *Marma* points are unique places on the body that are linked to various internal organs, *Doshas*, and *Srotas* via *Pranic* channels. To activate internal organs, these spots are employed during *Abhyanga*, coupled with the administration of various types of medicinal and fragrant oils.

*Marma* is a subtle energy that, according to *Siddhar*, aids in the healthy functioning of the body and life force. *Marmas* are imperceptible, yet they may be tracked to a place where the energy of the body, mind, and spirit are all gathered together. These points can be found on *Nadis*, nerves, blood vessels, bone, muscle, and tissue junctions, and are found throughout the body. Even though *Marma* books indicate 8000 *Marma* points in the body, the common consensus is that 108 *Marma* points serve as the foundation for the art of *Marma*. They are divided into 12 *Padumarma* (points that are directly or indirectly connected to the nerves of the brain and help in the relief of brain-related diseases) and 96 *Thodu Marma*.

*Ayurveda* is a living science that believes in treating the mind, body, and spirit to achieve total health. *Marma Chikitsa* is the art of manipulating or stimulating *Marma* points for the treatment of ailments, and it is the human body's natural ability to cure itself through these points. The *Prana* (vital energy) present in *Marma* may be directed to eliminate blockages (even in distant locations) and boost energy flow, resulting in a state of healthy body, mind, and spirit, by many ways and procedures.<sup>[9]</sup> Properly applied pressure on suitable *Marma* can restore normal *Prana* functioning (in sick body parts), but inappropriate manipulation can result in extreme discomfort, incapacity, deformity, and even death.

## METHODOLOGY

The material has been collected from different articles, literature, and different websites like (NCBI, PubMed, AYU, etc).

### History of Marma

*Marma* is a branch of Vedic science. Naturally, it has affected all other sciences mentioned in the Veda (400BC), such as *Ayurveda*, *Yoga*, Martial Arts, and the *Sidha* medical system. The first mention of *Marma* or *Drapi*, which is some form of body Armor or corselet to guard the body against the onslaught of enemy weapons, can be found in the *Rig Veda*. The phrase *Kavacha*, corselet, or breastplate for protection is also mentioned in the *Atharva-Veda*. Many allusions to *Marma* or *Varma* may be found throughout the *Mahabharata*, the ancient epic. Because monks were able to defend themselves against weapons thanks to their mastery of *Marma*, martial arts became effective and popular for self-defence.<sup>[10]</sup>

### Types of Marmas and their significance in Ayurveda

Several ancient *Ayurved Acharya* have described *Marma*, including *Charaka* and *Vagbhata*, among others. In the *Sushruta Samhita*, *Sushruta*, the 'father of surgery,' gives the finest description. In this centuries-old treatise, he covers many topics of anatomy and surgery. *Marma* points, according to *Sushruta*, are the seats of life. The three *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*), as well as their subtle versions, are present in *Marma* (*Prana* or vital force, *Tejas* or inner radiance, and *Ojas* or essence of life). There are also the three *Gunas* of *Satva* (beingness), *Rajas* (activity), and *Tamas* (darkness).<sup>[11]</sup>

*Marma* is defined by *Acharya Sushruta* as the key area of the body that produces numerous deadly signs and symptoms in the event of catastrophic damage. The location or flow of *Prana* (vital energy). Despite its prominence, *Ayurvedic* literature makes no clear reference to therapeutic application. Various forms of *Marmas* are discussed in *Ayurveda* based on traumatic consequences and prognosis.

#### 1. Sadhyapranahara

2. *Kalantarpranahara*
3. *Vaikalyakara*
4. *Vishalyaghna*
5. *Rujakara*

**These are body locations that are both superficial and deeply rooted.**

- *Mamsa* (10 numbers)
- *Sira* (41 numbers)
- *Snayu* (27 numbers)
- *Asthi* (8 numbers)
- *Sandhi* (20 numbers)

**The Marma opinions**

Here's how the 107 Marma points are classified based on one's constitution, or the primary tissue or physical matrix present.

- In the muscular tissue, there are 11 Marma points. *Mamsa Marma* is the name for these.
- In the blood arteries, 41 Marma points are prevalent. *Sira Marma* is the name for them.
- In the ligaments and tendons, 27 Marma points are prevalent. *Snayu Marma* is the name for them.
- In the bones, eight Marma points are very prominent. *Asthi Marma* is the name given to them.
- In the joints, there are 20 *Sandhi Marmas* or Marma points.

**Location**

- In both upper limbs, there are 22 Marma points (11 Marma in each upper limb).
- In both lower limbs, there are 22 Marma points (11 Marma in each lower limb).
- In the thorax and abdomen, there are 26 Marma points.
- In the head and neck, there are 37 Marma points.

**The Marma points to the effect of Injury**

This description was more appropriate in ancient times when people lived in forests and tribes and there were conflicts and warfare. It is no longer valid in current

times since medical care of wounds and injuries has evolved dramatically with the introduction of modern surgery, trauma management, life-saving equipment, drugs, and procedures.

These Marma, on the other hand, might be seen as those who require protection against unintentional accidents. These Marma require rapid medical treatment and management if they are harmed, to reduce death and morbidity.

- *Sadhya Pranahara Marma* - Marmas that induce instant death when afflicted with damage.
- *Kaalantar Pranhar Marma* - When these Marma are harmed, they die slowly and gradually.
- *Marma Vishalyaghana* - If these Marma are damaged, they may die.
- If these 44 *Vaikalyakar Marma* are harmed, deformity and suffering may follow.
- *Rujakara Marma*, when these eight Marma are harmed, it causes agony.

**Marmabhighata Lakshana<sup>[12]</sup>**

Shakha Marma (44)	Marma	Location of Marma	Marmabhighat Lakshan
1	<i>Kshipra</i>	<i>Angusta Anguli Madhaya</i>	<i>Aakashepaen Maranam</i>
2	<i>Talhritya</i>	<i>Madyamaangulim Anupurvaena Talasaya Madyae</i>	<i>Rujabhi Marnam</i>
3	<i>Kurcha</i>	<i>Kshiprasayopari stat Ubhayatah</i>	<i>Bhramana, Vaepanae</i>
4	<i>Kurchasira</i>	<i>Gulpha Sandhaeraadha Ubhyatah</i>	<i>Ruja, Shofa</i>
5	<i>Gulfa (Manibandha Upper Limb)</i>	<i>Paadjangyo Sandhanae</i>	<i>Ruja, Stabda Padata, Khanjata</i>

6	<i>Inderavasti</i>	<i>Janga Madhyae</i>	<i>Shonit Kshyae Maranam</i>
7	<i>Janu (Kurpar)</i>	<i>Jangourvu Sandhanae</i>	<i>Khanjata</i>
8	<i>Aani</i>	<i>Jaanunurdavam ubyat Trayangulam</i>	<i>Shophabhivridhi, Stabdha Sakthi</i>
9	<i>Urvi</i>	<i>Urumadhyae</i>	<i>Shonitkshyata Sakthishosh</i>
10	<i>Lohitaksha</i>	<i>Urvyourdavamadhovankshan Sandhaer Moolae</i>	<i>Lohikshyan Pakshaghata</i>
11	<i>Vitap (Kakshadhar)</i>	<i>Vankashana Vrishanyor Antarae</i>	<i>Shandaya, Alpasukarata</i>
<b>Udarar-Ura Marma (12)</b>	<b>Marma</b>	<b>Location of Marma</b>	<b>Marmabhighat lakshan</b>
1	<i>Guda</i>	<i>Vatavarchonirnam, Sthulantra Pratibadham</i>	<i>Sadyomarnam</i>
2	<i>Vasti</i>	<i>Alpamansashonito Abhyantartah Katyam Mutrashayo</i>	<i>Sadyomarnam</i>
3	<i>Nabhi</i>	<i>Pakvaamashayormadhyae Shira Prabhava</i>	<i>Sadyomarnam</i>
4	<i>Hridya</i>	<i>Stanyormadhyam, Satvarajatama Adhistanam</i>	<i>Sadyamamarnam</i>
5	<i>Stanamool (2)</i>	<i>Stanyoradastad Dwayangulam Ubayataha</i>	<i>Kaphapuran Kostataya Kasa Swasabhyam Mriyatae</i>

6	<i>Stana Rohit(2)</i>	<i>Stanachuchakayorurdhavam Dwayangulam Ubayataha</i>	<i>Lohitapuranaakostaya Kasa Swasabhyam Mriyatae</i>
7	<i>Aplap (2)</i>	<i>Ansakutyoadastad Pasharvo Upari Bhag</i>	<i>Raktaenpuyabhavam Marnam</i>
8	<i>Apstambha (2)</i>	<i>Urso Ubhya, Nadyo Vatavahae</i>	<i>Vatapurankostaya Kasaswasabhyam Marnam</i>

<b>Prista Marma (14)</b>	<b>Marma</b>	<b>Location of Marma</b>	<b>Marmabhighat lakshan</b>
1	<i>Kukunder</i>	<i>Parsharvajagha nbahirbagae Pristavanshamu byataha Natinimnae</i>	<i>Saparshagyana m, Adhakayae Chesto Upgataha</i>
2	<i>Nitamba</i>	<i>Sronikandyauparyashayaaachadanae Parshavaantar Pratibadho</i>	<i>Adhakayashosho Daurbalyanch Cha Marnam</i>
3	<i>Parshava Sandhi</i>	<i>Jagahan Parsharvamadhoyo Tiryak Udharvam Cha Jaghanat</i>	<i>Lohitapurnakostaya Mriyatae</i>
4	<i>Katikaturuna</i>	<i>Pristavanshamu bayataha Pratishronikandam Asthini</i>	<i>Shonitakshayata Panduvivrano, Heenaroopa Mriyatae.</i>
5	<i>Vrihati</i>	<i>Stanmoolatubayata Pristavanshasya</i>	<i>Shonit Atipravriti Nimitair Updravye Mriyatae</i>
6	<i>Ansaphalaka</i>	<i>Presto Upari Pristavansham Ubayata</i>	<i>Bahvo Swapa Shosho</i>



		<i>Trikasambdhae Ansapalaka</i>	
7	<i>Ansa</i>	<i>Bahumurdha Grivamadhyae Nibandhanansa peethaskandha</i>	<i>Stabadha Bahuta</i>
<b>Udarva jatrugat Marma (37)</b>	<b>Marma</b>	<b>Location of Marma</b>	<b>Marmabhighat lakshan</b>
1	<i>Dhamaninela Manya - 4</i>	<i>Kanthanadimau bayatochatsro Damnyo</i>	<i>Mookta, Swaravaikritam, Ras Agraphita</i>
2	<i>Siramatrika - 8</i>	<i>Grivayam Ubayatah</i>	<i>Sadhyo Marnam</i>
3	<i>Krikatika - 2</i>	<i>Shiro Grivyo Sandhanae</i>	<i>Chalmurdhvata</i>
4	<i>Vidura - 2</i>	<i>Karnapristto Adhah</i>	<i>Badhirta</i>
5	<i>Fana - 2</i>	<i>Ghranamargaub ayatah Srotomargapratibadhae Abyantartah</i>	<i>Gandhaagyana m</i>
6	<i>Apanga - 2</i>	<i>Brupuchantayo Akshanobahyato</i>	<i>Aandhya, Dristiupghato</i>
7	<i>Aavarta - 2</i>	<i>Bruvoupari Nimnayor</i>	<i>Aandhayam, Dristiupghato</i>
8	<i>Shankha - 2</i>	<i>Bruvoantryoupari Karnlatmadhaya</i>	<i>Sadhyomarnam</i>
9	<i>Utkshap - 2</i>	<i>Shankhyo Upari Keshanta</i>	<i>Sashalyojivetpa katpatita Shalyova, Na Udrith Shalya</i>
10	<i>Sthapani - 1</i>	<i>Bruvo Madhyae</i>	<i>Like Utkshap Marma</i>

11	<i>Simanta - 5</i>	<i>Pancha Sandhyah Shirsi Vibhakta</i>	<i>Unmad, Bhaya, Chitanasha</i>
12	<i>Shringataka - 4</i>	<i>Ghranashrotaks hijihva Santarpaninama</i>	<i>Sadhyomarnam</i>
13	<i>Adhipati - 1</i>	<i>Mastakabyantar atuparistata Sirasandhisannipato Romavartavata</i>	<i>Sadhyomarnam</i>

**Trimarmam**

Eminent scholars place a premium on *Basthi*, *Hrudaya*, and *Siras* (*Trimarma*) among the 107 *Marmas* described previously in *Sutrasthana*. The reason for this is because these three *Marmas* are *Sthana* for *Prana*, and any form of *Pida* (physical or mental harm) might result in the patient's death.

**Hrudaya:** The ten vessels, *Prana Vayu*, *Apana Vayu*, *Manas*, *Buddhi*, awareness, and *Mahabhutas*, are connected to the heart in the same way as the spokes of a wheel are connected to the centre.

**Siras:** As the sun is the dwelling of its beams, the head is the habitation of senses, sensory channels, and conduits conveying elen vitae.

**The urinary bladder**, which is situated in the middle of the *Sthula Guda* (rectum), (testicles), *Sevani*, and seminal as well as urinary channels, is the receptacle of urine into which all of the body's liquid-carrying channels converge, just like all of the world's rivers pour into the ocean.

**Samanya Lakshanas**

Because the destruction of the *Asrayas* leads to the destruction of superstructures, serious harm to *Trimarma* causes the body to be destroyed. Partially injuring these organs causes major disorders, thus they should be specifically safeguarded against external harm and *Vayu* application, among other things.

**Role of Marma Therapy in Chikitsa**

- Clears clogs in energy pathways (*Srotas*).

- Calms the *Doshas* and restores the body's natural balance (especially *vyānāvāyu* which controls the autonomic nervous system).
- Develops physical, mental, and emotional adaptability.
- Establishes a positive relationship with the unconscious mind, allowing for tremendous and dynamic development on a physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual level.

## DISCUSSION

The science of *Marma* is one of *Ayurveda's* unique notions that has been thoroughly developed via careful study, particularly during surgical treatments. These are unique and crucial superficial spots that may be found throughout the body. They are unique because they are the '*Prana*' locations (Life processes). Furthermore, *Vishama Spandana* is one of these *Marma* points' most remarkable properties.<sup>[13]</sup> In their *Marma Adhyaya*, *Acharya Charaka* in his *Trimarmiya Siddhi Adhyaya*, and *Chikitsa Adhyaya*, *Ashtanga Hridayam* in his *Marma Vibhaga*, *Acharya Sushruta*, *Acharya Charaka*, and *Chikitsa Adhyaya*, *Ashtanga Hridayam* in their *Trimarmiya Siddhi Adhyaya* from a traumatological standpoint, the *Marmas* are crucial.<sup>[14]</sup>

Any trauma at this point has been demonstrated to be more dangerous or to cause a delay in healing from injuries. In *Marmabhigta Lakshanas*, *Acharya Sushruta* mentions this. *Marma's Lakshanas* following trauma or damage is also affected by its structural kind.

## CONCLUSION

*Marmas* are key locations and *Prana* centres. They can be used to diagnose and cure illness, or they can be utilized to promote overall health and lifespan. When the human body is subjected to trauma, it exhibits a variety of signs and symptoms, which vary depending on the intensity and kind of damage. When 107 deep or superficial locations on the human surface are injured, they create varied indications and symptoms according to the sort of injury as well as its contents, according to *Acharya Sushruta*. Our bodies are made up of veins, muscles, bones, joints, nerves, ligaments,

and other structures that are distributed throughout the body in varying degrees of proportion. *Marma*, according to *Acharya Sushruta*, is the location where all of the aforementioned structures unite and are the source of *Prana* (vitality). *Marma's* primary components are "*Agni Soma Vayu*." Anatomical knowledge was stressed in *Ayurveda* as part of diagnosis and treatment. Surgical operations need careful evaluation of anatomical perspectives; any misunderstanding of the anatomical framework may result in medical treatment failure. All *Ayurvedic* remedies, from basic self-treatments to complicated clinical procedures, rely on *Marmas*. They are one of the most important aspects of *Ayurvedic* philosophy and practice. This article discussed the *Marma* points that must be covered during *Marmaghatha* to avoid deadly situations.

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