



## Research Article

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# Ayurveda in Marma Therapy

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## Abstract

*The subject of this article is one of the unconventional forms of Marma treatment selected from among other Ayurvedic therapies. This article was written in response to the growing popularity of alternative treatments from different cultures. The author briefly presents Ayurveda, in particular Marma, and other selected concepts and assumptions about this form of treatment ("Dhatu" means "what supports the body" Mala "malas" means "what pollutes the body" are byproducts of metabolism, Ama are toxic substances, Agni in the human body is the force responsible for metabolism, Ojah (Ojas) means "endurance", "strength" or "resistance", triguna are the three qualities of the mind). The presentation aims to show the accessibility of this philosophy, which undoubtedly affects its reception. According to the author's assumption, the interest in Ayurveda results from a concise and understandable way of describing the subject of health, which is presented by this concept, which is described in various publicly available publications. In addition, the alternative therapy discussed in the article is a response to many ailments that affect modern society, especially stress. In conclusion, the author states that the presentation of the therapy confirms the thesis that the consistent and understandable approach to health according to the Ayurvedic concept contributes to the popularity of selected therapies.*

**Keywords:** Ayurveda, Marma, health, lifestyle

## 1. Introduction

The common belief is that there is a very popular statement: *health is the most precious treasure of every human being*. We live in times when the economic opportunities are increasing, and therefore the desire to have goods is increasing. In the rush of life and the stress that accompanies us, we forget about health. Technological progress does not serve us, increasing environmental pollution has a negative impact on our well-being. Oxidative stress reduces immunity, which in turn translates into the ease of suffering from various diseases. It is timeless, as evidenced by the fact that unconventional forms of treatment have a centuries-old tradition. From the perspective of cultural anthropology, they constituted an important element in the life of societies already in pre-Christian times. Information on the natural way of healing has already been written before Christ in Indian Vedas, Egyptian papyri, Chinese, Greek and Roman books.

Currently, we are dealing with a return to natural methods of treatment, alternative medicine more and more often becomes complementary, i.e. it combines knowledge from different cultures.

Man has been fascinated by nature since the dawn of time, it used to be an integral part of it and drew from its benefits what was most valuable. Living in harmony with the gifts of the Earth kept the balance and provided the body with essential minerals and vitamins. In the world of plants, he was looking for medicines to soothe his ailments. This is evidenced by the increase in offers related to this subject on the market, for example in bookstores there are many publications covering such knowledge as: herbal medicine, Chinese massage, shiatsu, reiki, pranic healing, reflexology, homeopathy, yoga, rites and many others.

Books that answer the question of what life is and what rules govern it are becoming more and more popular on the market. According to the message of one of such publications, the body, sensory organs, psyche and soul constitute an inseparable whole. If one of the elements stops functioning properly, it causes imbalance and disruption of the work of the entire human body. The human body is a reliably designed machine, but when we ignore the basic principles of life, the body gets sick.

These guides emphasize the claim that the form, methods and nature of medical science have changed over the years, but that the fundamental principles have remained the same. Science reveals the secrets of the physical, material and mortal world, while "metaphysics tries to interpret its true meaning," the author states. Hundreds of years ago, Ayurveda contained the unique concept that man is whole. According to the message contained in the publication of the Ayurvedic medicine graduate at Delhi University - Partapa Chauhan, it can be used by anyone who strives to improve their health.

The popularity of the author and the Ayurvedic courses and trainings organized by him proves the demand for various forms of supporting treatment with the use of natural substances. The form in which Ayurveda presents health and its conditioning factors makes it more and more popular in Western culture. This concept of health and therapy primarily treats the human body as a whole, and takes into account the mental aspect of diseases.

According to it, each of us has a hidden, inner beauty that can flourish under favorable conditions. When the mind is calm and the body is relaxed, we not only feel but also look better. It is the concise approach to the subject of health, understandable for recipients, as opposed to many areas of conventional medicine, that contributes to the popularity of selected Ayurvedic therapies. In addition, the proposed therapies are a response to many ailments affecting modern society. In order to find harmony and inner balance, many people use various manual therapies. One of them is the Marma Therapy, which this article is devoted to. Marma points are places of concentration of vital energy on the human body and their description is an essential part of Ayurvedic anatomy. They mark the places of connection of the body with the mind, therefore skilful interaction with them gives a reaction harmonizing the whole organism. These key places guide unconscious physiological processes, responses to sensory stimuli, and emotional responses. Treating these areas can release negative emotions and remove mental blocks, including those of an unconscious nature, e.g. addictions. Therefore, treatment with this method has an important psychological aspect.

## 2. Ayurveda

"Ayur" literally means life, and "veda" means science or knowledge. Ayurveda is an ancient knowledge of life, it tells what rules to follow and what to avoid in order to live healthy, happy, comfortable and ready to take up challenges on all levels: physical, mental and social. The science says that prevention is better than cure.

The body, sense organs, psyche and soul constitute an inseparable whole. If one of the elements stops functioning properly, it causes imbalance and disruption of the work of the entire human body. It is worth mentioning again that hundreds of years ago, Ayurveda contained a unique concept that a person is a whole. The depth of this philosophy allows you to go beyond the limits and has a lot to offer in the field of medical and aesthetic art. It can be used by anyone who strives to improve their health, inner harmony and beauty. Ayurveda as a concept of health and therapy has been recognized since 1979 by the World Health Organization.

It is derived from the Indian philosophy, which are the Vedas, or the four sacred philosophical treatises: Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharva Veda. Ayurveda comes from the latter and is over 5000 years old.

Ayurveda proposes a lifestyle that includes spiritual and psychological aspects based on the rules of sathwic life, spiritual development; exercise (yoga); meditation; negative emotion control; diet; dream; relaxation; cleansing therapies; regulated sexual activity. Balance is the key to health and happiness, so we need to remember that each activity should not be at the expense of another. A balanced, systematic life increases the possibility of longevity and good health.

Full health and true satisfaction with life is possible when we follow Ayurvedic principles because Ayurveda gives guidance on every aspect of life. To achieve full health, a balance must be struck between the needs of the body, mind and soul.

According to Ayurveda, everything in the universe, dead or alive, is a combination of the three basic elements known as Pancha Maha Bhoothas. This means that every cell in our body contains all of these elements. The only thing that distinguishes the human body from its surroundings is Chaitanya, or consciousness, life spark, soul. The five basic elements are earth, water, fire, air, and space. They appear in the body as energy, or doshas.

## 2.1 Doshas

"Dosha" literally means "what the body controls." These energies are: Vata, Pitta and Kapha. Elements: air and space (aether) make up Vata energy, fire into Pitta energy, and water and earth into Kapha energy. These three energies are responsible for all biological, physiological and physiological functions of the body, mind and consciousness. Each dosha has its own distinctive features, dominant elements, localization, role, reference to the senses, reference to emotions and the reasons that disturb it, specific symptoms of these disorders, ailments, diseases, ways to balance, divisions and types.

The combination of these five primal elements and the energy of the doshas manifests itself at conception which makes up our psychosomatic nature known as Prakruti. After we are born, we can no longer change our Prakruti (genetic code). It remains unchanged.

According to Ayurveda, there are seven main types of Prakruti:

1. Vata
2. Pitta
3. Kapha
4. Vata - Pitta
5. Pitta - Kapha
6. Kapha - Vata
7. Vata - Pitta - Kapha

## 2.2 Selected topics from Ayurveda

### 2.2.1 Tissues (dhatus)

"Dhatus" means "that which supports the body". Both solid and liquid tissues form and nourish all organs and systems. Ayurveda distinguishes seven Dhatus:

1. Rasa - plasma
2. Ratha - blood
3. Mamsa - muscles
4. Medas - fat
5. Ashtl - bone
6. Majja - marrow
7. Sukla - sperm and egg

Tissues, like the three doshas, are made up of the five basic elements. The food we eat is their

basic building block, and when food is digested, it is divided into two parts: waste (*mala*) and nutrients (*ahararasa*).

### 2.2.2 *Mala (malas)*

Mala "*malas*" means "what pollutes the body". These are by-products of metabolism eliminated from the body as sweat, urine and feces, they are natural products resulting from the digestive process, metabolism, and are excreted through their respective channels. A certain amount of them is needed for the proper functioning of the body.

### 2.2.3 *Ama*

Ama are toxic substances made from undigested food that do not have excretory channels to leave the body.

### 2.2.4 *Agni*

Agni in the human body is the force responsible for metabolism. This energy is needed to digest the eaten food, which is converted into nutrients that reach the body's cells.

### 2.2.5 *Odjah (Ojas)*

Odjah (Ojas) means "endurance", "strength" or "resistance". It is the vital energy of the seven tissues that reside in the heart and takes up nutrients just like tissues from food processed by digestion in the form of nutrients and the sathwic lifestyle. It gives tissue stability and is responsible for immunity.

### 2.2.6 *Trigun (Trigunas)*

Trigun is the three qualities of the mind:

1. Satwa - purity, faith in god, love of truth, morality and intelligence.
2. Rajas - talkativeness, ego, anger, unhealthy competition.
3. Tamas - anxiety, lack of knowledge, insufficient knowledge,mdrowsiness, laziness, depression.

## 3. **Marm**

Marma therapy can be used to purify, revitalize, strengthen, rejuvenate and relax, and to unlock energy. Through these points, we can stimulate the functioning of internal organs, strengthen the self-healing power and harmonize the mind and body.

Marma points are places of concentration of vital energy on the human body and their description is an important part of Ayurvedic anatomy. They mark the places where the body connects with the mind, so touching them has a positive effect on our body. These key places guide physiological processes.

The marma (vital points) is described in the 6th chapter of the Suśruta Samhita, the oldest surgical treatise known in the world, dated between 3000 and 300 B.C.E. It is not only a treasury of surgical knowledge, but also describes knowledge in the field of anatomy, pathology, toxicology, diseases of the eyes, nose, throat, obstetrics, and medical ethics.

The Sushruta Samhita states that there are 107 vital points in the human body, which are the source of energy, 108 marma points in the Tamil tradition, and 365 points in the Kalari tradition. In modern writings, Vasant D. Lad and Anisha Durve refer to 117 marma points.

There are several definitions of marma points, but they all indicate that they are points related

to the energies of the body and mind, prana and doshas (vata, pitta, kapha). They combine all forms of energy from innermost consciousness to organs in our body and nervous systems.

Ayurveda recommends the use of marma therapy as a prophylaxis not only in the case of diseases, but in order to maintain health, using cleansing and rejuvenating treatments that restore vitality and life, improving the general physical and mental condition of a human being. A proper diet is needed for complete harmony, balance, health and beauty. Bad eating habits cause malaise, toxin deposition, lack of vitality and increased susceptibility to diseases. In Ayurveda, a vegetarian diet with the use of spices and herbs is recommended. A proper diet is the basis of all therapeutic treatments.

In addition to diet, a healthy lifestyle is complemented by physical activity. Ayurveda is related to yoga. They can function as separate systems or complement each other.

All yoga practices directly or indirectly affect marma points. A properly selected yoga position in combination with marma points, which are located on the body and participate in the performance of a specific asana (yoga position), connect the body with the mind, thanks to which there is a balance between ojas (resistance), tajas (the essence of digestive fire) and prana (breath) ), which in turn brings balance and allows you to keep the body in good condition. Maintain the flow of energy through the body, maintaining the correct position, which in turn allows us to maintain the flexibility of the body and thus youth. Since each asana stimulates several marma points, yoga can be a form of self-therapy.

### 3.1 *Aromatherapy in marma*

Aromatherapy is a method of healing with the help of natural essential oils introduced into the body through the respiratory tract (sniffing, inhaling, inhalation) and through the skin (massage, bath or compress).

Tanmatra promotes health and healing disease through the five senses. Among them, aromatherapy known as Gandha chikitsa or therapy based on the sense of smell. It is an ancient art of using essential oils for therapeutic purposes. Essential oils can come from roots, leaves, bark, seeds, stems, fruit or flowers, herbs, plants and trees. They have concentrated healing properties, have strong, strong fragrances through which they affect the mind, body and spirit in many ways. They can raise or calm the dosha. They provide pain relief, stimulate circulation, have an antiseptic effect or can act as an aphrodisiac.

The special properties of essential oils affect the doshas and the organs associated with them. For example, applying tea tree oil to Ajna marma (third eye) and Shankha marma (temple) has a cooling effect on the whole body.

Oils that have a warming and grounding effect are best for calming Vata dosha: chamomile, eucalyptus, ginger, clove, cinnamon, gardenia.

Cooling and soothing oils calm down Pitta doshas and are anti-inflammatory. These include sandalwood, lavender, jasmine, mint, rose, and coriander.

Kapha is calmed down by warming and energizing essential oils such as saffron, camphor, clove, nutmeg, eucalyptus and pine.

The therapist selects oils in accordance with the need to use them in the required therapies in order to restore the body's balance.

### 3.2 *Marma in holistic health management (prevention and treatment)*

Marma chikitsa (therapy) restores the balance of the body by influencing selected vital points on the head, neck, lower and upper limbs and body, thus balancing the nervous, central and peripheral systems, which causes the body to focus on restoring the balance in the most important places at the moment they need it.

We use whole hands, thumbs and index fingers for therapy. By appropriate hand positioning and light pressure on the indicated place, we gently stimulate these areas. Use your thumbs and

index fingers to press the selected marma points continuously or clockwise.

Marma can be used as an independent form of treatment or in combination with other Ayurvedic therapies. It can be helpful in the treatment of acute and acute diseases, it can bring immediate relief in pain, fever and nosebleeds. It is a kind of first aid or long-term therapy.

### 3.3 *Marma as a response to the health problems of modern society*

Stress is inevitable in everyone's life. It is caused by many factors, which consequently leads to many disorders, worries and diseases. Every day we struggle with stressful situations, which causes nervousness and emotional tension in our body, thus disturbing the proper balance of the body. It is worth recalling the statistical research illustrating the scale of this problem:

Research suggests that work-related stress and psychosocial risks may account for 50–60% of all sickness absences 8. It is the second most frequently mentioned work-related health problem in Europe, after musculoskeletal disorders. Over the nine years, almost 28% of European workers reported being exposed to psychosocial risks that affect psychological well-being.

So it is a very common problem. Many people turn to psychological counseling or psychotherapy, while Ayurveda offers another way to deal with this problem. By means of marma, yoga, meditation and pranayama therapy, one can consciously relax the body and mind.

If the stress is short-term and transient, it is harmless and sometimes even motivating. But persistent, too long, chronic stress leads to all sorts of mental and health disorders, which adversely affect our body. It cannot be avoided, but its negative impact can be eliminated. How we react to stressful situations is extremely important. The stimulation of marma points has an effect on muscle relaxation, which makes the body relaxed and the mind calm, which makes it much easier to perceive stressful situations and react to them in a calm manner.

## 4. Summary

Marma is a therapy that attracts interest due to its clear and simple description of its use and a wide spectrum of action. However, in many publications there are guidelines for its use, according to them, in order to be effective, it should be performed by persons qualified in this field, having appropriate competences or properly trained persons in the case of self-therapy. In modern times, it appears to the society as a simple and effective method that gives positive results in the holistic management of our health.

After all, marma therapy is supposed to restore balance in the whole organism. In line with the philosophy of this concept, as can be read in many studies; it allows the body to transform "negative energy" into "positive energy". On a physical level, it allows you to regain vitality and nourish body tissues. At the cellular level, it improves digestion, respiration, blood circulation and excretion. On a mental level, it improves mental abilities. It harmonizes the functioning of the nervous and endocrine systems.

Its popularity is undoubtedly increased due to the fact that marma chikitsa (therapy) is accessible to all interested parties, and that when used as self-therapy, it can be practiced by all of us, it is a drug-free and non-surgical method, and this shapes the perception that it can be a great way to life and bring beneficial effects to the whole family. According to this claim, marma is a "beneficial system" in managing disease and alleviating symptoms, it has no negative side effects, and enables you to maintain your health and vitality on a daily basis. It allows you to regain the balance of both body and mind.

The presented characteristics of this therapy confirms the thesis that the consistent and understandable approach to health according to the Ayurvedic concept contributes to the popularity of selected therapies.

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