

## UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF SHUKRA DHATU

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### ABSTRACT

In *Ayurvedic* Science the one who has balanced *Doshas*, balanced *Agni*, properly formed *Dhatus*, proper elimination of *Malas*, well-functioning of bodily processes and whose mind, soul, senses are full of bliss is called a healthy person<sup>1</sup>. So the formation of *dhatu* also good indicative good health there are seven *dhatu*s explained in *Samhitas*, those are *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Ashti*, *Majja* and *Shukra*<sup>2</sup> among all *dhatu*s, *Shukra* is considered as the *sara* of all other *dhatu*s. *Shukra* is located in entire body and it is the substance which is responsible for all systemic body activities including metabolic functions and part of which comes out of the body at the time of sexual act and performs specific functions of reproduction.

**KEY WORDS:** *Shukra dhatu*, *Shukra utpatti*, *Rupadravya*, *Shukra karma*.

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Shukra dhatu:**

According to *Ayurveda*, *Shukra* is the terminal tissue element of the body. It is considered as the *Sara* of all other *Dhatus*.

#### **Grammatical Consideration:**

Grammatically the word „*Shukra*“ is derived as follows:

From the *Dhatu* "Shuch" the word „*Shukra*“ is derived which means cleanliness or Kledana. Then it is joining with "ran" pratyaya with the use of Sutra "Rijendragravcceti" and makes the word „*Shukra*“.

"*Shukram kli (Shuch klete + Rijendragravcceti una iti ran pratyayen sadhu.)*"<sup>2</sup>

The derived word Shukra is having multiple meanings.

They include:

Bright, White, Resplendent

**Definition:**

*Shukra* is the substance which is responsible for all systemic body activities including metabolic functions and part of which comes out of the body at the time of sexual act and performs specific functions of reproduction. Various *lexicographers* have elucidated definition of word "SHUKRA" according to different contexts,

1. A name of fire.
2. The planet Venus (*Shukra graha*).
3. Preceptor of Daityas.
4. A disease of the eye.
5. Silvery white substance that is ejaculated
6. The substance which is white and potent.
7. A very pure and taintless substance.
8. Seventh *Dhatu* of the body.
9. Gold.
10. Tree of *Ricinus communis*.

Among all of these, "seventh *Dhatu* of the body", "ejaculatory silvery white substance" and "disease of eye" are related to *Ayurveda*. But in present context the "Seventh *Dhatu* of the

body" and "ejaculatory silvery white substance" appears to be most relevant and acceptable.

It is clarified from the following reference:

1) "*Aharasya param dhamam Shukram tadrakshya atmanam.*"<sup>4</sup>

**Synonyms of Shukra:**

*Pumsatvam* (Manliness), *Paurusam* (Virility) *Beejam* (Sperm), *Retas* (Semen), *Veeryam* (Potency), *Tejah* (Resplendid), *Anand Samudhbhav* (Born out of pleasure), *Majja Samudbhava* (Derived from marrow), *Kitta Varjitam* (contains no waste materials), *Majjarasa* (Essence of Marrow), *Balam* (Strength) *Dhatura*, *Roopadravya*.

**Panchamahabhautic**

**Composition:-**

*Acharya Charaka* considers that *Shukra* is composed of all the *Bhuta* except *Akasha Mahabhuta* i.e. *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Jala* and *Pruthvi*<sup>5</sup>. *Chakrapani* clarifies that *Akasha Mahabhuta* also dwells in *Shukra* due to its pervasive nature but during the ejaculation this *Mahabhuta* is absent in the *Shukra* and thus supports the *Charaka* statement.<sup>6</sup>

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, *Shukra* is principally *Saumya (Jala Mahabhuta)* as well as other *Mahabhuta* are also

present in it, which can be proved by their function. *Pruthvi, Jala, Agni, Vayu* and *Akasha* perform the functions *Dharana* (to hold), *Samhanana* (binding), *Parinama* (metamorphosis), *Vyuha* (blow), *Avakasha* (spatial provision) respectively.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Embryological origin:**

According to *Acharya Charaka*, *Shukra* is considered as *Pitruja Bhava*.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Doshik configuration:**

*Acharya Vagbhatta* stated *Shukra* as *Ashraya Sthana* of *Kapha Dosha*.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Rasa of Shukra:**

As per *Acharya Charaka*, *Shukra Dhatu* contains all the *Shadrasa*.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Shukra is one of vital spots of life:**

*Shukra Dhatu* is one of *Pranayatana*s of *Sharira*.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Shukra is one and ultimate Dhatu of body:**

In order of the *Dhatu Utpatti*, *Shukra* is seventh and last *Dhatu* of the body as an essence of all *Dhatu*. *Shukra* is produced as a result of successive evaluative metamorphosis of *Ahara Rasa*.

#### **Quantity of Shukra:**

Quantity of *Shukra* in human body is half *Anjali*.<sup>12</sup>

#### **Physiological Consideration Of Shukra**

#### **Production Shukra from Soma:**

As described earlier *Bhautic* origin of *Shukra* is considered to be *Soma* or *Jala mahabhuta*.<sup>13</sup> As *Soma* or *Jala mahabhuta* is the predominant basic element from which *Kapha* is derived. So it can be said that *Shukra* has originated from *Jala* or *Soma mahabhuta*.

#### **Production of Shukra from Majja Dhatu:**

*Shukra* is seventh in order of *Sapta Dhatu* and is quoted to be produced from evaluative metamorphosis of *Majja Dhatu*<sup>14</sup> by the action of *Shukradhatvagni* on *Majja Dhatu*. *Shukra* is produced from *prasada bhaga* of *Majja Dhatu*.<sup>15</sup> *Vayu* and *Akasa*. *Mahabhuta* produce porosity in *Asthi Dhatu*. From this pores, *Shukra* oozes out like water from a new earthen pot and spreads all over body.<sup>16</sup>

#### **Production of Shukra from Ahara Rasa:**

Beginning from *Rasa Dhatu* upto *Shukra* all the *Dhatu* are produced in a fashion of progressive evolutive metamorphosis. This means that *Rasa Dhatu* is basically produced from *Ahara rasa* which is ingested by the action of *Jatharagni*. *Rasa Dhatu* gets

converted into *Rakta Dhatu* and so on. Previous *Dhatu* is precursor to next and higher by the action of respective *dhatvagni* in it. So from *Majja Dhatu*, *Shukra Dhatu* is produced.<sup>17,18,19</sup>

The mode of conversion of *Ahara rasa* into *Shukra* is explained by three hypotheses namely -

1. *Ksiradadhi Nyaya*,
2. *Khalekapota Nyaya*,
3. *Kedarakulya Nyaya*

According to *Kedarikulya Nyaya* each *Dhatu* is nourishing by *Ahara Rasa* individually in the sequence, the same way as one single canal supplies water to all plants, planted in rows. *Khalekapota Nyaya* explains different pattern for the same. *Khala* means nest and *Kapota* means pegin. As the pegin fly from the fields with food grains towards their respective nests, the pegin whose nest would be nearer would reach earlier. In the similar fashion, the nearest *Dhatu* would get nutrition earlier in comparison to the distal *Dhatu* from the *Ahara Rasa*.

In *Kshiradadhi Nyaya*, the *Ahara Rasa* converts itself into *Rasa Dhatu*, then *Rasa Dhatu* converts in to *Rakta Dhatu* as a whole with help of the concerned *Agni*. In the end *Majja*

*Dhatu* converts itself completely to the *Shukra Dhatu*. This phenomenon is exemplified by explaining the conversion of milk (*Kshira*) in to curd (*Dadhi*), *Dadhi* in to *Navnita* and lastly *Navnita* in to *Ghrita*. *Acharya Arunadatta* has also mentioned *Ek Kala Dhatu Poshana Nyaya* in his commentary on *Astanga Hridaya* hold the opinion that all *Dhatu* are simultaneously nourished by the *Ahara Rasa*.

#### **Time Required For Production Of *Shukra Dhatu*:**

*Sushrutaacharya* says that nearly one month is required for metamorphosis of *ahara rasa* on to *Shukra*. *Vagbhataacharya* quoted all the view of different authors, either it may take twenty four hours or six days or one month. *Chakrapani* has correlated all the above opinions and brought the concept according to status of *Dhatvagni*.

According to *Cakrapani*, if *dhatvagni* is at optimum level, then process of *Shukra* production occurs at speed of '*Archi*' and produced within eight days. If *dhatvagni* is at moderate level, *Shukra nirmana* takes place at the speed of '*Shabda*' and produces *Shukra Dhatu* within two to three

weeks. If *Dhatvagni* is at mild level, the process of *Shukra* production takes place at the speed of '*Jala*' and it takes one month<sup>21</sup>.

1 Month: *Kshiradadhi nyaya* , 6 day:  
*Kedarikullya nyaya* , 1 day,  
Immediately: *Khalekapota nyaya*

### **Upadhatu of Shukra Dhatu:**

*Sharangadhara* has mentioned *Ojas* as *Upadhatu of Shukra*<sup>22</sup>.

### **Shukra Mala:**

*Ojas*.<sup>23</sup>

### **Physiological Stages of Formation of Shukra:**

From the above descriptions the formation of *Shukra* may be understood in different stages. On the basis of following explanations of *Chakrapan*<sup>24</sup> and *Dalhana* the formation of *Shukra* can be divided into the following stages.

#### **1. Shukrajanana (production of Shukra)**

A. Production of *Shukra Dhatu* (pervaded all over the body and invisible)

B. Transformation of *Shukra Dhatu* into *Rupadravya* (visible)

#### **2. Shukra pravartana (Ejaculation of Shukra – Rupa dravya)**

##### **A. Production of Shukra Dhatu:**

The production of *ShukraDhatu* from *Ahara rasa* and the time taken for it has been already explained production of *shukra* from *soma,majjadhatu* and from *ahara rasa* . *Cakrapani* clarified the different opinions regarding the time taken for production of *Shukra* as follows. The time for transformation of tissue elements depends on *Agni*. As described by *Sushruta* in the context of movement of *Rasa* three grades of speed can be imagined for the transformation:

a) Waves of water (*Jala*), b) Waves of sound (*Shabda*), c) Waves of Fire/light (*Arci*)

The transformation take place in slow speed as of water wave in the case of power of *Agni* is less, in moderate speed as of sound wave in a better status of *Agni* and will be fastest as that of light in the excellent status of *Agni*.

The *Shukra Dhatu* formed by the evolutionary metamorphosis of *Shukra* pervades all over the body in the *Shukradhara Kala*. *Shukradhara Kala* performs the following functions.

1. Abode for the pervading *Shukra Dhatu*. : It holds and provides the abode for performing the whole body (*Sarvadaihika*) functions of *Shukra*.

2. Helps further transformation of *Shukra Dhatu* into *Rupadravya*

**Transformation of *Shukra Dhatu* into *Rupadravya*:**

The ejaculated part of *Shukra* is termed as *Rupadravya*<sup>25</sup>. It is the only visible part of the *Shukra Dhatu*. The formation of the "*Rupadravya*" takes place in the *Vrishana*, the *Moolasthan* of *Shukravaha Strotas*.

**Expulsion of *Rupadravya*:**

The formed *Rupadravya* is expelled out from the tip of the *Sepha* (penis) by physical, physiological and psychological varieties of stimuli.

**Characters of *Shukra*:**

There are two important features of *Shukra* namely:

1. *Sarva Sariragata Shukra*
2. Functions of Ejaculatory or *Rupadravya*.

**Feature of *Sarva Shariragata Shukra*:**<sup>26</sup>

The attributes of *Shukra* Sara individual can be considered as *Sarvasariragata Shukra Saumya* (gentleman), *Saumyapreksinaha* (gentlelook), *Ksirapurnalocana* (eyes appearing filled with milk), *Praharsha bahula* (cheerfulness), *Snigdha-vrittisamhata-Dasanaha* (teeth which are unctuous, round, strong, dense,

even), *Prasanna - Snigdha-varnasara*(pleasant - unctuous voice and complexion), *Bhrajisnuta* (dazzling appearance), *Mahaspica* (large buttocks), *Stri-priya* (loved by women), *Upabhoga balavana* (virile), *Sukha* (endowed with happiness), *Aishwarya* (prosperity), *Arogya* (health), *Vitta* (money), *Sammana* (honour), *Apatyabahula* (many offspring).

**Feature of Ejaculatory (*Retas*)**

**Part:**

*Shukra* is the representative principle of (*Roopadravya*) of *Visvarupa (Atma)* in human body. To achieve this *Visvarupa (Sharirarupa)*, *Shukra* is principal cause for it. As *Shukra* is also covert form, but this *Shukra* trickles down during copulation between a man and woman, caused by *Chesta* (physical stimulus), *Sankalpa* (desire), and *Pidana* (stimulation of erogenous area of body).

As a result of *Harsa* (stimulation (harsa), *Tarsa* (longing for women) *Sarattva* (fluidity), *Picchilata* (slimness), *Gaurava* (heaviness), *Anuttva* (automicity), *Prvanattva* (tendency to flow out) and *Drutattvat Marutasya* ((pace of motion of Vata) covert *Shukra* is ejaculated out of body as *Roopadravya* or Semen.

**Shukra dhara kala:**

It is the seventh *Kala* and is pervaded in the entire body of living beings. *Shukra* pervades all over body in *Shukradhara Kala* in such a way *ghrita* is present in milk and *iksu rasa* present in *iksu*. *Shukradhara Kala* is not an anatomical entity present in body, but is a physiological phenomenon taking place in males, which has two main functions,

A concept of *Strotas* is unique contribution of *Ayurveda* to medical system. *Strotas* are minute hollow pathways or passages through which *Parinama Dhatu*s are transported across body. Any *Vikriti in Strotas* leads to diseases. All the *Brihatrayis* have mentioned *Shukravaha Strotas*. *Acharyas* have differently opined about the *Moolasthana* (root) of *Shukravaha Strotas*. It can be explained as under.

**Shukravaha strotas:**

<b>Charaka</b>	<b>Sushruta</b>	<b>Astanga Samgraha</b>
<i>Vrishna</i>	<i>Sthana</i>	<i>Mushka</i>
<i>Shepha</i>	<i>Vrishna</i>	<i>Sthana ,majja</i>

**PHYSICAL CHARACTERS OF SHUKRA DHATU <sup>27</sup>**

Characteristics	Charaka	Sushruta	Astanga Sangraha	Astang Hrdaya
A. Colour	1. <i>Shukla</i> (white)	1. <i>Taila Nibham</i> 2. <i>Kshaudranibham</i> (resembling oil or Honey)	1. <i>Shuklam</i> white) 2. <i>Ghrita tailakshoudra anyatamavarna</i> (resembling ghee, oil or honey etc.)	1. <i>Shuklam</i> (white) 2. <i>Ghritamakshika tailabham</i> (resembling ghee, honey or oil)
B. Taste	2. <i>Madhuram</i> (Sweet)	3. <i>Madhuram</i>	3. <i>Madhuram</i>	4. <i>Madhuram</i>
C. Smell	3. <i>Avisram</i> (not having bad odour)	4. <i>Madhugandhi</i> (smell of honey)	4. <i>Madhungadhi</i>	-----
D. Consistency	4. <i>Bahalam</i> (thick) 5. <i>Snigdham</i> (unctuous)	5. <i>Dravam</i> (fluid) 6. <i>Snigdham</i> (unctuous) 7. <i>Sphatikabham</i> (crystalloid in	5. <i>Saumyam</i> (Jala predominant) 6. <i>Snigdham</i> (unctuous)	5. <i>Guru</i> (heavy) 6. <i>Snigdham</i> (unctuous) 7. <i>Bahalam</i> (thick)

6. <i>Guru</i> (heavy)	appearance) (Su.Sha.2/11)	7. <i>Guru</i> (heavy)	8. <i>Bahu</i> (Large quantity)
7. <i>Pichcchilam</i> (slimy)		8. <i>Pichcchilam</i> (Slimy)	
8. <i>Bahu</i> (large in quantity) (Cha.Chi.2-4/50)		9. <i>Bahu</i> (large amount)	
9. <i>Ghanam</i> (dense)		10. <i>Bahalam</i> (thick)	
10. <i>Sphatika sannibham</i> (crystalloid) [Cha.Chi.30/145]			
11. <i>Sarattvam</i>			

**SHUKRAVAHA DHAMANI:<sup>28</sup>**

There are two pairs of *Shukravaha dhamanis*, out of which one pair does *Shukra pradurbhava*, others do *Shukravisarga*.

**SHUKRAVAHA SIRAS:<sup>29</sup>**

There is one pair of *Shukravaha Sira*, filling of which with blood facilitates erection of penis, enables to have sexual intercourse.

**SHUKRAVAHA NADI:**

For the ejaculation of semen to the out of body, there is *Shukravaha nadi*. Explanation of this *nadi* is available in *Charaka Samhita*. In the context of *Shukrashmari*, *Charakacharya* mentioned *Shukra kshaya* and

*Sushruta Acharya* explains *Shukraharini*.

**Functions of Shukra:**

Besides the prime function of reproduction, *Shukra* possesses other functions too, which can be grouped as under -

- (1) *Sarvadaihika* i.e., systemic function
- (2) *Maithunagata* i.e., related with sexual act
- (3) *Rupa Dravyagata* i.e., functions related to seminal fluid

**1) Sarvadaihika - Systemic Function:**

The *Shukradhara Kala* is said to pervade the whole body and hence,

the *Shukra* is spread throughout the body just as ghee in milk and jaggery in sugarcane juice. This *Shukra* performs certain functions like- *Dhairyam, Dehabalam, Ojoposaka* etc

## 2) *Maithunagata Karma*-Functions

### Related Sexual Behaviour:

The functions of *Shukra* pertaining to the sexual act are not par independent to *the Sarvadaihika Shukra* and these are –*Priti, Chyavan, Harsha* etc.,

### DISCUSSION

*Shukra* is the *Param Sara* of *ahara rasa*. The function attributed to *Shukra Dhatu* as well as the semen is *Garbhotpadana*. Because of the similarities in the qualities as well as the functions of both *Shukra* and the semen, as explained below, the *Shukra* mentioned in *Ayurveda* can be compared easily to that of semen of modern medicine.

*Sphatikabham* indicates the colour of semen which is white and translucent. *Bahala* and *Bahu* indicate the adequate volume of semen and the sperm count respectively. In Modern Medicine also, it is told that the sperm count should be more than 20 million with adequate volume and motility to get a progeny. *Madhugandhi* is the special odour

imparted to *Shukra*. *Madhura rasa* of *Shukra* is due to fructose of the seminal plasma. pH of the semen may be referred to the term *Avidahi* of *Shukra* i.e., not causing burning sensation during ejaculation indicating neither acidic pH, nor highly alkaline. Normal consistency of *shukra* is indicated by the characters like *Drava* (liquid), *Picchila* (viscous), *Snigdha* (unctuous) and *Sara* (fluid) due to various constituents of seminal plasma.

*Majja Dhatu* is responsible for *Shukrotapatti*, this may be justified by *Erythropoiesis*, which takes places in Red Bone Marrow along with *Leucopoiesis*; this is having same bearing on the *Shukrotapatti*. The cells of the sertoli or substentacular cells of seminiferous tubules may be getting some stimulus from the *Majja dhatu*. Thus the latter may be responsible for the production of *shukra*. The sperm and semen are produced in the testes and accessory sexual glands. They are transported to the vagina through the penis. Thus *Shukra vaha Srotas* can be correlated with the Sperm- Semen producing and transporting system.

### CONCLUSION

*Shukra* is the substance which is responsible for all systemic body activities including metabolic functions and part of which comes out of the body at the time of sexual act and performs specific functions of reproduction. It is considered as essence of all *dhatu*s. and contains all panchabhootika components, it is sarvadaihika. Hence its level in body has to be maintained very carefully by consuming nourishing foods, leading a healthy life and practicing healthy sexual life.

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