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# Review Study on Concept of Sharir in Ayurveda

Dr. Lahange Sandeep Madhukar<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Sunil Kumar Yadav<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Bhangare Archana Nivrutti<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1, 2</sup>Associate Professor P. G. Department of Sharir Rachana, Deemed to be University NIA, Jaipur.

<sup>3</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Balroga, Mahatma Jyotiba Fule Ayurved College and Hospital, Chomu Jaipur

**Abstract:** The word 'Sharir' stands for Rachana (anatomy) along with Kriya (physiology). The science which deals with the knowledge of Sharir i.e. human body is called as Sharir. It is also known as Sharira Rachana Vigyana or Sharira Shastra. For better understanding of etiopathogenesis and treatment of various disorders, the knowledge of Sharir is absolute vital and necessary Ayurveda classics give emphasis on applied aspects of science and thus instead of describing micro structures, they described Sharir wherever required. Birth i.e. Formation of fetus and diseases i.e. various Vikruti (deformities) or Vikara (diseases) which lead to destruction of the body; it is all mentioned in this part of the science. The detailed knowledge of the human body is necessary for the well-being of the body. After getting knowledge about the entities of the body, one is able to know about the factors which are useful to the body; hence the detailed knowledge of the body is recommended by the experts.

The physician having good knowledge of Sharira can enlighten the Ayurveda for the welfare of the universe. In the knowledge of Ayurveda, Sattva, Aatma and Sharir- these three are tripods for the life. The entire universe is based on these three basic units. The Sharir a branch of medical science that deals with the structural and functional aspects of a living body is importance for the achievement of the goals of the medical branches and the prevention and the treatment of diseases of entire human kind.

**Keypoints:** Sharir, Rachana, Shadanga, Marma, Purush, Aatma, Karm purush Sthula Sharir, Sukshma Sharir, Karan Sharir

## I. INTRODUCTION

The word Sharir is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Shru' which means disintegration or destruction because of constant movements. Sharir is an object which gradually disintegrates or degenerates at every moment and destroys at the end. Physiologically, in the human body metabolic process is carried out continuously. It includes anabolism (Chaya) and catabolism (Apachaya). The catabolic process is destructive process that is why the term Sharira is coined. Sharir (the body) is defined as the seat of Chetana (consciousness) composed of conglomeration of Vikara (products) of Panchamahabhata and carrying on in the state of equilibrium. Shukra and Shonita present in the Garbhashaya (uterus) combined with Aatma (Soul), Prakruti (primary matter stuff) and Vikara (primary evolutes) is known as Garbha (embryo). Vayu Mahabhata divides this mass possessing Chetana (consciousness/properties of life); Teja Mahabhata doing Parinaman it; Aap Mahabhata moistens it; Pruthvi mahabhata hardens it and Akasha mahabhata enlarges it. It Developed in this manner and becomes endowed with various Anga Pratyanga like hands, feet, tongue, nose, ears, buttocks etc.

It gets definite shape and size; after that it is called as Sharir (the body). Dosha, Dhātu and Mala are the foundations of the body, so together they form the Sharir. Dosha are three viz. Vata, Pitta and Kapha; dhātu (tissues) are seven viz. Rasa (Plasma), Rakta (Blood), Mamsa (Muscle), Meda (Fat), Asthi (Bone) Majja (Bone Marrow) and Shukra (reproductive A tissue). There are some upadhatu (secondary s tissues) also. Mala (waste products) are mainly three viz. Purisha (faeces), Mutra (urine) and Sweda (sweat). So all these basic elements form the pillars of the body; hence called as Sharir. Deha, Kaya, Vapu, Gatra, Bodhi, Varshma, Kalevar these are all synonyms of sharir.

The science which deals with the knowledge of Sharir i.e. human body is called as Sharir. It is also known as Sharira Rachana Vigyana or Sharira Shastra. Birth i.e. Formation of fetus and diseases i.e. various Vikruti (deformities) or Vikara (diseases) which lead to destruction of the body; it is all mentioned in the part of the science called as Sharira sthana or Sharira.

There are 3 types of Sharir according to ayurveda concept

### A. Sthula Sharir (Gross or Physical Body)

Sthula Sharira (Gross or Physical Body) is the visible material aspect and outer-most aspect of a thing. Sthula Sharir can be defined as the 'coarse body' which the physical frame is having mortality. We have full information about importance of food stuffs we consume. Do's and don'ts have vital significance in Ayurveda way of treatment. Despite knowing the fact, sometimes we consume foods habit are harmful for the human-body. Repeated intake of unhealthy foods, acts result to a lowered immunity weakened body, and disease. The big deal is result of the wrong actions, which does not manifest quickly.

### B. Sukshma Sharir (Subtle Body)

Sukshma Sharir comprises of the intuitive level of mind and individual mind, the entire psycho-mental apparatus which can exist independently of the Sthula Sharir (Gross or Physical Body). Although Sukshma Sharir cannot be seen with the naked eyes, yogis, via high level of intuition are in a position to have seen it. Over the centuries, Sukshma Sharir has been proven to exist as in direct linkage to Sthula Sharir (Gross or Physical Body). In fact, Sukshma Sharir has great impact on Sthula Sharir in many ways. Just as the Sthula Sharir has three Nadi as Ida, Pingala And Sushumana, Sukshma Sharir has its own Nadi channels or nerves. It is estimated that Sukshma Sharir contain approximately 3, 64,000 Nadis. On daily basis we inhale and breathe vast quantities of air. Likewise we experience sounds and sights through various mediums.

### C. Karan Sharir (Causal Body)

If we study the teachings of Yoga and Indian Philosophy, we encounter the concept of the 'beyond on regular basis. In beyond, the very much essence of the mystery of the Jeeva or individual soul is hidden and it is known without words. The mysterious aspects of the absolute are represented by the potential that permeates space and time. This represents the very much essence of the essentials (the causal body or essence), which embodies the seed of all the seeds.

## II. SHARIR SWAROOPA IN AYURVEDA

Swaroopa is mentioned as Nature or Character or Pattern, of an individual. Sharir Swaroopa is divided broadly in two types- external and internal on anatomical aspect as mentioned by Acharya Sushruta. Bahya Swaroop of 'Sharir' is represented by 'Murta', 'Sthoola Avyava', or 'Aakriti' form i.e. Presentation of external physical features from top to toe of an individual as described by Sushrut. It is formed by the body parts collectively called as 'Shadanga Sharir', having subparts called as Pratyanga. 'Garbha' is getting as the term 'Sharir' only after significant differentiation into various body parts like hand, feet, tongue, ears, buttock etc. Hence, we can understand external 'Swaroopa' as formed by union of external body parts in specific order, which is perceived by our eyes. Acharya Sushrut described various internal parts of the body and their 'Swaroopa' such as Asthi, Sandhi, Peshi Snayu, Sira etc. and at last he concluded that whatever 'Murta Avayava' are present in body, are counted and described here while some are not seen yet due to subtle form such as Aatma. Acharya Kashyap described 'Sharir Swaroopa' by giving an example of a hut, where the bones are compared with pillars; 'Snayu' with grass cord and external soil coat with skin. The similar description of 'Sharir Swaroopa' is also given by Sushurat, while describing various components of the body as 'Asthi' forms skeleton of the body covered by 'Mamsa' (Lepana), giving them a different look. Acharya Sharangdhar also described Swaroopa of Dhatu & Updhatu in Purvakhand chapter (5/19-24.11). Hence, 'Aantarika swaroop' is formed by internal body organs all together, which can be perceived by necked eyes on dissection, up to some extents are called Murta Avyava. Acharya Kashyapa mention 'Sharir Sanhanan' is different in different stage of life as well as different period. It gives an idea that 'Sharir swaroopa' is changed according to time, era or Yuga. Acharya Charaka also affirmed that  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 'Guna' are diminished in each Yuga.<sup>1</sup>

## III. CONCEPT OF SHADANGA SHARIR

For the purpose of study, Acharya Sushruta has divided the human body into 06 Anga (major parts). The 06 Anga (major parts) are as follows,

- 1) Dakshin Urdhva Shakha (upper extremities)
- 2) Vaam Urdhva Shakha (upper extremities)
- 3) Dakshin Adha Shakha (Lower extremities)
- 4) Vaam Adha Shakha (Lower extremities)
- 5) Madhya sharir (middle part or trunk)
- 6) Shir (Head & Neck)

## IV. IMPORTANCE OF SHADANG SHARIR<sup>2</sup>

All the Organs and structures controlling main life activities are located in the Shadanga. Shakha (Limbs) help in all the activities of daily living and also in locomotion. Shir is the control centre of all the activities of the body (brain) including control stations for thoughts, memory, emotions, judgment, etc, is located in the Shiras (head). Shiras is also a place where all our sensory and motor activities are blended into synchronized life activities, is also a site of Mana (mind) and Indriya (sense organs). The Antaradhi or Madhya Sharir (middle portion of the body, Trunk) comprises of many organs related to important life – processes and are found located in Urah / Vaksha (chest cavity) and Udara (abdominal and pelvic cavity).



Vaksha is comprised of vital organs of circulation and ventilation, namely heart and lungs and other organs like trachea, esophagus, pharynx, etc, gives origin to aorta (greatest artery) and receives deoxygenated blood from all parts of the body through great veins i.e. superior and inferior vena cava. The Udara and Kati (abdomen and pelvic cavity) have important organs of digestion, urinary and genital apparatus (reproduction), immunity etc.

#### A. Clinical Aspect of Shadanga Sharir

Dosha, Dhātu and Mala belong to the Shadanga. Hridaya (heart, brain) being a site of Mana (mind) is located in the Urah / Shir which parts of Shadanga Sharir. 107 Marma or vital areas of the body which on getting injured or damaged either take away the life or cause temporary or permanent damage of the organs and tissues are scattered all through the Shadanga. The endocrine system, the circulatory system, lymphatic systems are found scattered in all the Shadanga.

#### B. Importance of Shadanga Sharir

The core concepts of Rachana Sharira or Anatomy in Ayurveda are exemplary. Ayurvedic seers have made anatomy easy by firstly classifying the human body into 6 broad landmark parts as seen from outside. They named them Shad Anga. Later the smaller landmarks or associated Anga were described and were called Pratyanga. Then the core interior of the body was described and each and every anatomical aspects were explained in depth namely Ashaya (viscera's), Koshta (large spaces), Koshtanga (visceral organs), Shrotas (channels of circulation), Sira and Dhamani (blood vessels and nerves, lymphatic's) etc. were dealt with precision. It is always easy to learn things in step – ladder pattern

### V. DHATU BHEDEN PURUSHA SANGATHANA

'Pura' means town (here body) and 'Shete' mean living. Just like person who lives in the town, Aatma (soul) resides in the panchabhoutika Sharar. This Aatma (soul) is called Purusha.

In Darshana Shastra also the word 'Purush' is used in same reference. As per above etymology only Aatma (soul) will get the term 'Purusha' which is not true. Combination of Mana, Aatma and Panchabhautik Sharir is called as Purusha for which knowledge of Ayurveda has been described. This Purusha is of two types 1) Shuddha Purusha 2) Karma Purusha. Shuddha Purusha is the only Aatma Tatva which is free from Panchabhautik Sharir. Chetana dhātu (consciousness) alone is considered as Purusha, it means the Aatma alone is termed as Ekdhatuja Purusha. Karma Purusha is the Combination of Aatma and Panchabhautik Sharir. It is also called as Chikitsadhikrit Purusha. The tissues or factors which maintain the body integrity are known as Dhātu.

These entities perform the function of retaining Sharira or Purusha. With the help of knowledge of these factors we can get the description of various types Dhātu Purusha like Ekdhatvatmak, Dwidhatvatmak, Tridhatvatmaka, Panchadhatvatmaka, Shaddhatvatmaka, Saptadhatvatmaka, Dvadasha Dhatvatmaka, Trayodasha Dhatvatmaka etc. Out of these Ekdhatvatmaka Purusha is only Shuddha Purusha rest of all are Rashi Purusha (conglomerated).

According to Ayurveda, after the Purusha (Aatma / soul) enters into the union of Panchamahabhuta, the living human embryo is produced, grows steadily and becomes a living human being, who is known as Karma Purusha (active living human being). He is to be treated for his discomfort and diseases, hence also known as 'Chikitsadhikrit Purusha'.

This world is of two kinds, Sthavara (immobile) and Jangama (mobile) and also as Agneya (fire/ hot) and Soumya (moist/cold) due to their predominance.

In the world there are four kinds 3 of living beings viz, Swedaja (born from seat), Jarayuja (born in the womb), Andaja (born from egg) and Udbhija (born by piercing ground). Among these all Karma Purusha (human being) is the most important, all other are tools for him: hence Purusha is the basis (subject).

### VI. PROPERTIES OF KARMA PURUSHA

Sukha (feeling of happiness), and Dukha (grief), - Ichha (likes) and Dvesha (dislikes), Prayatna (attempt for action), Prana (inhaling) and Apana - (exhaling), Unmesha-Nimesha (opening and closing of eyelids), Buddhi (intelligence), Mana (activities of mind), Sankalpa (determination), Vicharana (discrimination), Smriti (memory), Vigyana (special knowledge), Adhyavasaya (mental effort, resolution) and Vishayopalabdhi (obtaining knowledge of all things through sense organs), these are the qualities of Karma Purusha. These are the functions being carried out by all living human beings throughout their life time.

In Ayurveda, formation of Purusha in different perception is referred to Karma Purusha only and not for Shuddha Purusha. This Karma Purusha is made of different Dhātu, so it is described in up various ways.

#### A. Sharirasya Panchabhoutikatvam

According to Ayurveda, each and every object on the earth is formed by Panchamahabhuta, similarly Sharir and its Anga-Pratyanga has been also formed by panchamahabhuta; hence the Sharir is said to be Panchabhoutika.

#### B. Sharirasya Trigunatmakatvam

Sharir is formed by Avyakta and avyakta is of three Guna (qualities) i.e. Sattva, Raja and Tamas. These three Gunas form Panchamahabhuta. Sharir is said to be Panchamahabhoutika, similarly it can be said that Sharir is formed from these three Guna; Sattva, Raja and Tamas. Sharir is formed by Panchamahabhuta similarly we can say that Sharir is formed by three Doshaalso. These three Dosha are responsible for all the physiological processes in the body. In this way it is clear that Sharir is 'Tridoshamaya'.

#### C. Sharirasya Dosha-Dhatu-Mala-Mulakatvam

Dosha, Dhatu and Mala are the foundations of the body. Sharir is made up of three Dosha, seven Dhatu and three Mala. Various physiological processes in the body are related to Dosha, Dhatu and Mala. These are the basic and biological elements of the body. The healthy and unhealthy condition of the body mainly depends upon the Prakruta (normal) and Vikruta (abnormal) Dosha, Dhatu and Mala. If these are vitiated then it is state of unhealthy, but if these are in normal state then it is called healthy. The roots of the tree are necessary for the growth and nourishment of the tree similarly Dosha, Dhatu and Mala are necessary for the body. Dosha gets vitiated and leads to vitiation of the body. There are three Dosha in the body viz. Vata, Pitta and Kapha. Dhatu are the entities which retain the body. There are seven Dhatu in the body viz. Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Asthi, Majja and Shukra. These Dhatu gets vitiated by Dosha hence they are also known as 'Dushya'. There are three types of Mala in the body viz. Sweda (sweat), Mutra (urine) and Purisha (faeces). They become harmful to the body when get stagnated for long period. Dosha, Dhatu and Mala, these entities are cause for the formation, retention and destruction of the body. Out of these three entities, dosha are superior. All the physiological processes are carried out by Dosha, Dhatu and Mala, hence it is said that Dosh- Dhatu- Mala-Mulam hi Shariram.

Sharir Bhava and Panchamahabhuta

Parthivabhava-

Sthool, Sthira, Murtiman, Guru, Khara, Kathina(hard parts of the body), Nakha, Asthi, Dant, Mansa, Charma, Varcha, Keshha, Shmashru, Loma, Kandara, Gandha, Ghrana etc.

Apyabhava-

Drava, Snigdha, Sara, Manda, Mridu, Pichhila, Avayava, Rasa, Rudhira, Vasa, Kapha, Pitta, Mutra, Sweda, Rasa, Rasana etc.

Agneya Bhava-

Pitta, Ushma, Rupa, Agni, and Darshan etc. are the Agneya Bhava

Vayaviyabhava-

Shwash, Prashwash, Unmesha, Nimesha, Akunchana, Prasarana, Gamana, Prerana, Dharana, Sparsha, Sparshana etc. are the Vayaviyabhava.

Antariksh bhava- Vivikta Avayava, Vachan, Strotas Shabda, Shrotras are the Antariksh bhava.

#### D. Marma Sharir

Marma is the unique concept of Sharir mention in Ayurveda by different Acharya. Acharya Charaka explained the Marma points where the symptoms of injury are felt more intensively comparing to other parts of the body. Raj Nighantu mentioned that the Marma is the seat for Jeeva. In places of Marma, any abnormality causes more pain comparing to that of any other place. Marma is defined as the places where, an injury leads to irregular pulsations, Peeda. Further, it classified that the misery is equal to that of death. Arundatta commented the Marma as 'which leads to death or the part of body, which, on injury causes to death, is called as 'Marma'. Charaka has given special importance to Shir, Hridaya and Vasti, among all the Marma. It is the conglomeration of the five elements as; Mamsa, Sira, Snayu, Asthi, and Sandhi. As a natural phenomenon, Prana is seated at these places; hence, any injury to these places leads to consequences depending on the structure.

## VII. IMPORTANCE OF KNOWLEDGE OF SHARIR

The detailed knowledge of the human body is necessary for the well-being of the body. After getting knowledge about the entities of the body, one is able to know about the factors which are useful to the body; hence the detailed knowledge of the body is recommended by the experts. Without knowledge of normal anatomy we cannot understand the normal physiology, so the physician must get the knowledge of the body first.

One cannot understand the vikruti (abnormality) without prior knowledge of normal anatomy and physiology of various Anga-Pratyanga in the body. In case of surgical treatment, surgeon must have basic knowledge of various Anga Pratyanga and their correlation while performing any kind of surgery. Sharir is the seat for all kinds of treatment it is often called as 'Chikitsashastradwara.' Keeping in the view of Sharira, all the divine and human resources pertaining to the Sharir are being discussed in this part; hence it is called as Sharir.

Physician who is well acquainted with all aspects of the entire body and all the diseases manifested there in will seldom commit mistake in treatment. The physician having good knowledge of Sharira can enlighten the Ayurveda for the welfare of the universe. In the knowledge of Ayurveda, Sattva, Aatma and Sharir- these three are tripods for the life. The entire universe is based on these three basic units. The Sharir a branch of medical science that deals with the structural and functional aspects of a living body is importance for the achievement of the goals of the medical branches and the prevention and the treatment of diseases of entire human kind.

### VIII. DISCUSSION

The concepts of Rachana Sharir described in Ayurveda are exemplary. All components, tissues, organs and organ systems of the body fall within this broad group called as Shadanga. Sharir Rachana is the branch of Ayurveda which states a detailed description of the structures in human body. This branch consist knowledge about bones, muscles, blood vessels, strotas, joints, vital organs etc. It also gives knowledge of Garbhasharir, Kala and Marma. Acharya Sushruta, Charaka and Vagbhata have given importance to the knowledge of Rachana Sharir. This Human body is mainly made up of 6 main parts or segments called as Shadanga sharir.

The key feature of Philosophy of Sharir is that Sthula Sharir, Sukshma Sharir and Karana Sharir, either work in harmony, or disconnected in a relative sense. When these connections between Sthula Sharir, Sukshma Sharir and Karana Sharir are unempowered or blocked then depression, stress, conflict, rage, confusion, and disease manifest themselves. Yoga helps by opening the blocked pathways. The main goal of yoga sciences is to open up the blocked passages, or channels of circulation. Thus rejuvenate and harmonize the network bwtween Sthula Sharir, Sukshma Sharir and Karana Sharir. Since this is an interconnected system, Sthula Sharir, Sukshma Sharir and Karana Sharir are connected to each other. The acts of the Sthula Sharir (physical body) are influenced by the subtle functioning of the Sukshma Sharir (energy body) as well as the fineness of the channels to the Karana Sharir (causal body) and vice versa. In other words, there is existence of two way street between Sthula Sharir, Sukshma Sharir and Karana Sharir.

We know Hathayogic principles and practice them in order to tone up the internal organs and the muscles. Through the process of pranayama, one comes to know subtleties of the Sukshma Sharir (Subtle or Pranic Body) and they start cleansing the Nadi of the energy channels. In this process doing, one reactivates the circuits that have become dormant subsequently; the circuits undergo alignment in a harmonious fashion via the regulation of the breath. As the effect of yoga is visible, the circuit becomes reactivated, re-empowered and reactivated.

During the meditation, one starts from the Sukshma Sharir (Subtle or Pranic Body). This allows one to flush out the most of the subtle channels that lead to the Karana Sharir (Causal Body) as the connections between the Sukshma Sharir (Subtle or Pranic Body) and the Karan Sharir (Causal Body) are cleansed, it results in a coherent fashion and attunement between Sthula Sharir, Sukshma Sharir and Karana Sharir, which has anatural flow, decision and will.

Acharya Charaka tells that each physician should possess comprehensive knowledge of Shareera, i.e. well versed in Sharir Shastra. Only the physician who has a good knowledge of Sharir (body structure and functions), will be able to teach preach and handle Ayurveda precision. Only he or she can help in giving to the world a true knowledge of Ayurveda in its right sense. To achieve unparalleled success in medical science all physicians want good proportion of success in medical practice. This doesn't come easily without the physician having a thorough theoretical and practical knowledge of the medical science in its true terms. The foundation of comprehensive medical knowledge lay in comprehensive understanding of anatomy and physiology of the human body i.e. Sharir Shastra. Sharir is a section which deals with the construction and working of human body. The knowledge of this science is needed for achieving important goals of the medical science, and for the prevention of diseases and treatment of diseases of the entire mankind and also for gaining unparalleled success as a physician in medical practice.

Sattva (mind), Aatma (soul or life element) and Sharir (living human body) are the tripods for the life and its existence in the universe. The entire universe is based on these 3 basic pillars or units of life. If they are well balanced, the life is steady and keeps going. If there is an imbalance in any of the 3 elements, there is a collapse and destruction of life. Sharir is one among the tripod of life and the knowledge of Sharir is obtained by Rachana Sharir (study of construction of the body or anatomy of the human body) and Kriya Sharir (functions of the human body or physiology of the human body), both of which constitute a science called Sharir Tantra (comprehensive study of human body).

So by understanding Components of Tridand Sharir we understand life and by understanding life, we in turn understand the modes and methods of keeping the life element in balance and in equilibrium such that each one of us enjoy a comprehensive health. Hence, we can say that the concept of Tridand Sharir is a basement sources for Clinicians and Researchers to improve and establish the knowledge of Ayurveda philosophy for the benefits of mankind in present and even in future era.

## IX. CONCLUSION

Sharir comprises of Rachana Sharir (anatomy) and Kriya Sharir (physiology). Importance in studying Sharir is to understand the body, its components, their structures, their numbers, their normal proportions, size, shape, mutual relationship and the functions they serve in the best possible way. Charaka further tells that the factors responsible for the well-being of an individual can only be understood after having procured a comprehensive knowledge of Sharir, which in turn is the study of Sharir. Thus the importance of learning about Ayurveda Sharir and its consequential knowledge helps in understanding the basic factors and proportions of the body and its components which are essential to keep the physical wellness at optimum levels. Only after knowing what are normal dimensions, mathematics (anatomy) and chemistry (physiology) we can know about the disturbances (pathology) occurring in them, which in turn becomes the root secret of the Ayurveda science. Knowing the basic knowledge of Ayurveda Sharir helps Academicians, Researchers as well as Medical Practitioner in handling the Ayurveda science firstly in terms of Protection and maintenance of health in an already healthy individual and second is combating and effectively treating and eliminating the diseases in the diseased.

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