UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF SHUKRA DHATU

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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“ pratayaya with the use of Sutra “Rijendragravcceti”and makes the word „Shukra“.

"Shukram kli (Shuch klete + Rijendragravcceti una iti ran pratyyen sadhu.)³

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 person¹. So the formation of dhatu also good indicative good health there are seven dhatus explained in Samhitas, those are Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa ,Meda, Ashti, Majja and Shukra² among all dhatus, Shukra is considered as the Sara of all other dhatus. 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.

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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.
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.
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.*”

**Synonyms of Shukra:**

- Pumsatvam (Manliness), Paurusam (Nritility)
- Beejam (Sperm), Retas (Semen), Veeryam (Potency)
- Tejah (Resplendic), Anand Samudbhav (Born out of pleasure)
- Majja Samudbhava (Derived from marrow)
- Kitta Varjitam (contains no waste materials)
- Majjarasa (Essence of Marrow)
- Balam (Strength)

**Panchamahabhautic Composition:**

Acharya Charaka considers that *Shukra* is composed of all the *Bhuta* except Akasha Mahabhuta i.e. Vayu, Agni, Jala and Pruthvi. 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.

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.7

**Embryological origin:**
According to Acharya Charaka, Shukra is considered as Pitruja Bhava.8

**Doshik configuration:**
Acharya Vagbhatta stated Shukra as Ashraya Sthana of Kapha Dosha.9

**Rasa of Shukra:**
As per Acharya Charaka, Shukra Dhatu contains all the Shadrasa.10

**Shukra is one of vital spots of life:**
Shukra Dhatu is one of Pranayatanas of Sharira.11

**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.12

**Production Shukra from Soma:**
As described earlier Bhautic origin of Shukra is considered to be Soma or Jala mahabhuta13. 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 Dhatu14 by the action of Shukradhatvagni on Majja Dhatu. Shukra is produced from prasada bhaga of Majja Dhatu15. 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 body16.

**Production of Shukra from Ahara Rasa:**
Begining 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.\(^{17,18,19}\)

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 *Kedarakulya 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 pegion. As the pegion fly from the fields with food grains towards their respective nests, the pegion whose nest would be nearer would reach earlier. In the similar fashion, the nearest Dhatu would get nutrition earlier in comparision 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\(^1\).

1 Month: Kshiradadi nyaya, 6 day: Kedarikullya nyaya, 1 day, Immediately: Khalekapota nyaya

**Upadhatu of Shukra Dhatu:**
Sharangadhara has mentioned Ojas as Upadhatu of Shukra\(^2\).

**Shukra Mala:**
Ojas\(^3\)

**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 Chakrapani\(^4\) 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. It is the only visible part of the Shukra Dhatu. The formation of the “Rupadravya” takes place in the Vrishana, the Moolasthana of Shukravaha Strotas.

**Explosion 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:**
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-vrittasamhata-Dasanaha (teeth which are unctuous, round, strong, dense, even), Prasanna - Snigdhavarnasara (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 (Rupadravya) 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 Rupadravya 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,

**Shukravaha strotas:**

A concept of *Strotas* is unique contribution of *Ayurveda* to medical system. *Strotas* are minute hollow pathways or passages through which *Parinamita Dhatus* 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.

### PHYSICAL CHARACTERS OF SHUKRA DHATU

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<td>2. <em>Kshaudranibham</em> (resembling oil or Honey)</td>
<td>2. <em>Ghrita tailakshoudra anyatamavarna</em> (resembling ghee, oil or honey etc.)</td>
<td>2. <em>Ghritakshikaitalabham</em> (resembling ghee, honey or oil)</td>
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6. *Guru* (heavy)  
7. *Pichchilam* (slimy)  
8. *Bahu* (large in quantity)  
9. *Ghanam* (dense)  
10. *Sphatika sannibham* (crystalloid)  
11. *Sarattvam*

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

**SHUKRAVAHA SIRAS:**
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 Erythropoisis, 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 *dhatus* and contents all panchaboutika 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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