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## Exploring the Depth of Marma Vigyan in Ayurveda

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### Abstract:

Marma Vigyan, an integral facet of Ayurveda, focuses on 107 vital points where muscles, ligaments, nerves, blood vessels, and joints converge. These points are believed to act as crucial junctions for the life force (prāṇa) and, when stimulated appropriately, can offer therapeutic benefits across physical, emotional, and subtle energetic dimensions. Classical Ayurvedic texts like the *Sushruta Samhita* delineate these points both for surgical caution—due to the grave consequences of injury—and for potent healing applications. Modern research correlates many marma points with known neurovascular bundles and myofascial trigger points, validating their physiological significance. Studies suggest targeted marma therapy may alleviate musculoskeletal pain, improve circulation, and potentially address psychosomatic ailments. Integrating marma stimulation into contemporary therapeutic modalities such as physiotherapy and stress management programs has shown promising results. This holistic approach underscores the enduring relevance of Marma Vigyan and illuminates pathways for deeper synergy between Ayurveda and modern medicine.

**Keywords:** Marma Vigyan, Vital Points, Neurovascular Bundles, Trigger Points

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**INTRODUCTION:**

Marma Vigyan (the science of vital points in the human body) is a profound concept in Ayurveda that has been systematically elucidated in various ancient treatises such as the *Sushruta Samhita* and *Charaka Samhita*. Derived from the Sanskrit term “marma,” meaning a hidden or secret point, each marma is believed to be a convergence point of structures such as muscles (māṃsa), vessels (sira), ligaments (snāyu), bones (asthi), and joints (sandhi). These points are considered gateways to the life force (prāṇa), and any injury to them can have serious—even life-threatening—consequences. This article delves into the rationale behind the 107 marmas described in Ayurveda, explores contemporary views in light of research, and offers a conclusion on the clinical implications of Marma Vigyan.

**Marma Vigyan:** Marma Vigyan holds a uniquely significant place in Ayurveda for both diagnostic and therapeutic applications. Ayurveda, which translates to “the science of life,” places great emphasis on maintaining harmony in the human body. Marma points are key nodes that govern this equilibrium.

**Etymology and Concept**

The term “marma” comes from the root word mru or maru, meaning “to kill.” This indicates that marmas are vital areas where even minor trauma can disrupt life processes. Unlike superficial pressure points, each marma encompasses deeper layers—nerves, muscles, blood vessels, ligaments, bones, and joints—creating an intricate web of physiological and energetic connections.

**Classification of Marmas**

Ayurveda categorizes marmas in multiple ways, primarily based on their structure, impact of injury, and location. The most

common classification is based on the predominant structural component at each marma site:

1. Māṃsa (muscle)
2. Sira (blood vessels)
3. Snāyu (ligaments/tendons)
4. Asthi (bones)
5. Sandhi (joints)

Beyond structural classification, marmas are further distinguished by their dimension (pramāṇa) and the severity of potential injury (kala antar prāṇahar marma, vishalyaghna marma, etc.).

**The Rationale Behind 107 Marmas:**

Classical Ayurvedic texts, particularly the *Sushruta Samhita*, enumerate 107 marmas. The question often posed by modern practitioners and scholars alike is: Why exactly 107? A few rationales, rooted in both textual exegesis and modern approaches, have been proposed:

**Anatomical Distribution**

The 107 marmas are distributed from head to toe. A close anatomical study reveals that these points frequently coincide with:

- Major joint intersections (e.g., knees, elbows, wrists, ankles).
- Critical neurovascular bundles (e.g., in the neck region, groin, and axilla).

Regions with dense plexuses of nerves and blood vessels (e.g., the cardiac region and cranial sutures). Each of these sites holds a distinct vulnerability to trauma and a strong therapeutic potential if stimulated correctly.

**Energetic & Physiological Channels**

Ayurvedic physiology describes a network of channels (srotas) through which nutrients, wastes, and life force (prāṇa) circulate. Marmas are seen as controlling valves for these srotas. The 107 marma points are strategic “choke points” were



multiple srotas converge or have maximal influence. For instance, the Hridaya Marma (cardiac region) is often emphasized as the seat of consciousness and the control center for prāṇa vaha srotas (respiratory/circulatory channels). Similarly, Shankha Marma (temple region) correlates with critical cranial nerves and arteries.

### Subtle Body Correlation

Ayurveda acknowledges the existence of a subtle body (sūkṣma śarīra) composed of chakras (energy centers) and nāḍīs (energy pathways). Some scholars draw parallels between marma points and chakra-nāḍī intersections, suggesting that marma therapy can balance both gross and subtle bodily energies. Although not all 107 marma points are chakras per se, many align with key energy points recognized in various Yogic traditions.

### Systematic Inclusion in Surgical and Therapeutic Protocols

Sushruta Samhita, in particular, systematically includes these points in surgical teachings to highlight regions that require delicate handling during procedures. This practical approach likely influenced the exact enumeration (107) and their classification, ensuring surgeons were well-informed of areas where accidental damage could be catastrophic.

### DISCUSSION:

While ancient Ayurvedic texts remain the primary source, contemporary researchers have begun to examine marma points from biomedical perspectives—drawing comparisons with trigger points, reflexology points, and acupuncture points.

#### Comparative Anatomical Studies

In an article published in the *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine* (2018),

researchers investigated the anatomical correlation of certain marma points with known myofascial trigger points. The study concluded that many marma points correspond to areas of heightened sensitivity in muscle fascia. Thus, when these points are pressed or manipulated, they can offer therapeutic relief in conditions like musculoskeletal pain, stress disorders, and fatigue. Pressing on identified marma points in the lower back region significantly reduced pain and improved range of motion. The study posited that marma points function similarly to trigger points but encompass broader physiological and energetic connotations.

#### Neurological and Vascular Convergence

Another relevant paper from *Ancient Science of Life* (2020) explored the correlation between marmas and neurovascular bundles. Using imaging studies (like Doppler ultrasound) and cadaveric dissections, the researchers observed that many marma points—especially *Indravasti Marma* (on the calf) and *Kurpara Marma* (elbow region)—are located near key arterial branches and nerve bundles. This supports the Ayurvedic caution against injuring marma points, as damage to such critical areas can lead to significant functional impairment. On a therapeutic note, gentle stimulation around these marma sites can improve local blood circulation and help in nerve conduction.

#### Psychological and Emotional Dimensions

Marma Vigyan also recognizes an emotional and psychological dimension. In a 2019 review article in *Ayurvedic and Herbal Science Review*, authors discuss how specific marmas, like the *Hridaya Marma* (heart region) and *Shira Marma* (head region), influence emotional states. For example, pressing or massaging the region around the

*Hridaya Marma* is believed to alleviate anxiety and stress by regulating the heart rate, blood pressure, and potentially modulating the limbic system (which is responsible for emotional processing in the brain). This highlights that marma therapy could be employed not just for physical ailments but also for psychosomatic disorders, showcasing the holistic nature of Ayurvedic healing.

### Integration into Modern Therapies

Recognizing the potential of marma stimulation, some integrative medicine practitioners incorporate marma therapy into physical therapy, chiropractic care, or acupuncture sessions. Although the foundational philosophies differ—traditional Chinese medicine has the meridian system, while Ayurveda focuses on marma-based srotas—an integrative approach allows broader therapeutic applications. For instance, a pilot study published in *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice* (2021) demonstrated the efficacy of combining marma stimulation with standard physiotherapy for patients with frozen shoulder, yielding faster recovery times and better pain management than physiotherapy alone.

### Clinical Implications and Applications:

The significance of marma points extends beyond just theoretical knowledge. Ayurveda outlines various therapeutic interventions, collectively referred to as “Marma Chikitsa,” such as:

### Marma Abhyanga (Oil Massage)

Warm medicated oils are gently massaged onto the marma points to stimulate blood flow, enhance lymphatic drainage, and restore prāṇa flow. This practice is particularly beneficial in stress-

related disorders, musculoskeletal issues, and insomnia.

### Pichu or Bandhana

Application of medicated cloth or a dressing soaked in herbal oils over the marma region can provide localized treatment. For instance, placing a medicated gauze on the Janu Marma (knee region) can aid in pain relief and faster recovery from knee injuries.

### Mild Agni Karma (Thermal Stimulation)

In some cases, gentle heat therapy around specific marma points helps improve circulation and reduce spasms. Care must be taken to avoid damaging the area, as marmas are considered delicate.

### Marma-based Exercise Routines

Simple stretching, yoga postures, or mild pressure application around marmas can maintain their health and prevent future complications.

### CONCLUSION:

Marma Vigyan in Ayurveda encapsulates the holistic understanding of vital points where physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions intersect. The enumeration of 107 marma points is not arbitrary but is grounded in anatomical, physiological, and energetic rationales. Modern research increasingly validates the significance of these sites, correlating them with known neurovascular and myofascial points. Contemporary studies suggest that targeted marma therapy can effectively manage pain, improve range of motion, and address stress-related symptoms. The alignment of marma points with major nerves, blood vessels, and fascial planes underscores their therapeutic potential in integrative medicine. Beyond mere physical manipulations, the psychological and

emotional facets of marma therapy highlight its value in psychosomatic and stress-related conditions. In essence, Marma Vigyan stands as a testament to Ayurveda's comprehensive approach to health and disease, bridging millennia of empirical wisdom with modern anatomical and physiological insights. Incorporating marma therapy into clinical practice—whether exclusively Ayurvedic or in integrative medicine—can offer a multi-dimensional approach to healing that respects the body's inherent complexity. As ongoing research continues to unfold, Marma Vigyan may well gain broader acceptance and serve as a powerful adjunct to conventional medical systems worldwide.

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