

# Anatomical Insights into the Heart: Unveiling the Structure and Significance of *Hridaya* in *Ayurveda*

Dr. Arvind Kumar<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Shyoram Sharma<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Amit Gehlot<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>P.G. Scholar, P.G. Department of Rachana Sharir, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Rajasthan Ayurved University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, INDIA.

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, P.G. Department of Rachana Sharir, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Rajasthan Ayurved University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, INDIA.

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, P.G. Department of Rachana Sharir, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Rajasthan Ayurved University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, INDIA.

Corresponding Author: Dr. Arvind Kumar

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## ABSTRACT

According to *Ayurveda*, the heart, or *Hridaya*, is one of the body's essential organs. Any harm to the *Hridaya* causes serious illnesses, serious complications, or even death because it is one of the *Trimarams* and is considered *Dasha pranaayatana*. According to a careful investigation, two organs have about equal claims to be referred to as *Hridaya*, which designates an organ that regulates *Prana* passage by gathering and distributing in a rhythm. The idea that *Hridaya* is the brain is at one extreme of the spectrum, while the idea that *Hridaya* is the heart is at the other. *Hridaya Marma* is 4 *Anguli* in size, located close to the stomach's cardiac opening, between two breasts. It resembles an inverted lotus and is made up of the physiological entities *Tama*, *Raja*, and *Satwa*. It is a hollow, muscular pumping organ that resembles *Adhomukha Kamala* and is composed of *Mamsapeshi* (*hritapeshi*). *Jivashaya* is another name for *Hrudaya*, according to Acharya *Bhavaprakash*. It indicates that life resides there. *Ashaya* signifies *Avastana Pradesh*; it denotes *Hrudaya's* atrium and ventricles, which are cavities in it. *Acharya Vagbhata* claims that *Hrudaya's Samrutasamrutadwaram* signifies the heart's valves. *Acharya Charaka* claims that it has eleven *MoolaSiras*. *Vyana Vaayu*, *SadakaPitta*, *Avalambaka Kapha*, *ParaOjus*, *Chetana*, and *Manas* are all housed at *Hrudaya*. *Hrudaya* is one of the *Kostanga*, according to *Acharya Charaka* and *Acharya Sushruta*. *Charaka* claims that For *PranavahaSrotus* and *Rasavahasrotas*, *Hrudaya* is the *MoolaSthana*. Since it serves as *Chetana's* seat, life continues there. With *Vyanavayu's* assistance, *RasaraktaDhatu* is ejected and received. According to *Manas* and *SadakaPitta*, it governs human brain activity and intellectual capacity.

**Keywords:** *Ayurveda*, *Hridaya*, *Trimarma*, Anatomy, *Prana*

## INTRODUCTION

In *Ayurveda*, *Hridaya* (the heart) is regarded as one of the essential organs and a primary seat of life. It is considered a vital *Marma* (vital point) and part of the *Dasha Prana Ayatana* (abode of the ten vital forces)<sup>1</sup>. Any damage to *Hridaya* leads to severe

complications, often resulting in life-threatening conditions. The *Charak Samhita's* "*Arthe Dash Mahamuliya Adhyaya*" and "*Trimarmiya Adhyaya*" as well as *Sushruta Sharira Sthana* "*Garbh Vyakarana Shariropkramnitya Adhyaya*" both effectively depict the idea of *Hridaya*.

According to the constitution, *Siramarma* is a form of the *Hridaya*.<sup>2</sup> This article explores the anatomical and physiological considerations of *Hridaya Marma*, delving into its structure, function, and significance in *Ayurveda*.

### Aim

To explore the anatomical, physiological, and clinical aspects of Hridaya (heart) in Ayurveda, comparing its descriptions in classical texts with modern anatomical and physiological concepts, thereby emphasizing its significance in maintaining life and health.

### Objectives

1. To analyze the concept of Hridaya as described in classical Ayurvedic literature, focusing on its role as a vital Marma (vital point) and a seat of consciousness (Chetana).
2. To correlate the structural descriptions of Hridaya in Ayurveda with modern anatomical understanding of the heart.
3. To examine the physiological functions associated with Hridaya, including its relationship with Vyana Vayu, Sadaka Pitta, and Avalambaka Kapha.
4. To highlight the clinical significance of Hridaya Marma, including its implications in health and disease management from an Ayurvedic perspective.

## METHOD AND MATERIALS

### Materials:

- Classical Ayurvedic texts such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Astanga Hridaya*.
- Modern anatomical references for comparative analysis.

### Hridaya: Organ of Vitality

*Hridaya* is described in classical *Ayurvedic* texts as an organ that governs the passage of *Prana* (life force), rhythmically gathering and distributing it to sustain life. It has been debated whether *Hridaya* refers to the heart or the brain, as both play crucial roles in

regulating life functions. However, the heart is predominantly recognized as the *Hridaya* due to its association with the rhythmic pumping of blood and life-giving functions.

### Anatomical Location and Description

According to *Ayurveda*, *Hridaya Marma* is situated near the cardiac opening of the stomach, between the two breasts.<sup>3</sup> It is described as resembling an inverted lotus (*Adhomukha Kamala*) and is composed of *Hritapeshi* (heart muscles)<sup>4</sup>. *Hridaya* is hollow, muscular, and functions as a pumping organ, aligning with modern anatomical descriptions of the heart.

*Acharya Bhavaprakash* refers to *Hridaya* as "*Jivashaya*," meaning the abode of life. This aligns with the notion that the heart houses the essence of life (*Chetana*). Furthermore, the term "*Ashaya*" refers to the cavities within the heart, i.e., the atria and ventricles, as described in *Ayurvedic* texts.

### Size:

*Acharya Charaka* explains the size of *Hridaya* as 4 *Angula*.<sup>5</sup> *Vagbhata* has the same views in *Ashtanga Samgraha* as well. *Hridaya Marma* takes up four *Angula* dimensions, which is roughly equivalent to the width or horizontal dimension of the middle segment of one's own middle finger.

### Physiological Constituents of Hridaya

The physiological aspects of *Hridaya* include

1. *Vyana Vayu*: This type of *Vata* governs the circulation of blood and nutrients throughout the body.<sup>6</sup>
2. *Sadaka Pitta*: It regulates emotions and intellect, linking *Hridaya* to mental functions.<sup>7</sup>
3. *Avalambaka Kapha*: It provides structural support and stability to the heart.<sup>8</sup>
4. *Para Ojus*: Considered the essence of vitality and immunity, residing in *Hridaya*.<sup>9</sup>
5. *Chetana*: The seat of consciousness and life force.<sup>10</sup>

### **Hridaya's Role in Srotas (Channels)**

Acharya Charaka<sup>11</sup> and Acharya Sushruta<sup>12</sup> describe *Hridaya* as a *Kostanga* (organ within the abdominal cavity). It serves as the *Moola Sthana* (root) for the *Pranavaha Srotas* (respiratory channels) and *Rasavaha Srotas* (circulatory channels).

The heart's role in ejecting and receiving *Rasarakta Dhatu* (nutrient-rich plasma and blood) is facilitated by *Vyana Vayu*. This function aligns with modern descriptions of systemic circulation. Additionally, the coordination of *Manas* (mind) and *Sadaka Pitta* highlights the heart's influence on cognitive and emotional processes.

### **Hridaya's role as Marma**

*Hrudaya* is composed of *Mamsapeshi* (*Hritapeshi*), who resembles *Adhomukha Kamala*, according to Acharya Arunadatta. *Hrudaya's Samruta Asamruta Dwaram*, according to Acharya Vagbhata, signifies the heart's valves. Acharya Charaka claims that it contains 10 *Moola Siras*.<sup>13</sup>

*Hridaya Rachananusara* is a *Sira Marma*. *Mamsa, Sira, Snayu, Asthi*, and *Sandhi* will all combine at *Marma*, which is regarded as the crucial moment. There are *siras* all throughout the body. These comprise a network that is further segmented into smaller vessels. If any of these *Sira* are damaged at a critical location, the crucial part's ability to receive nutrients is compromised, which eventually results in loss of function, pain, and occasionally even death—a condition known as necrosis. It is an *UroSthita Marma, Anganusara*. One of the *Sadhya Pranahara Marmas* is *Parinamanusara*.<sup>14</sup>

### **Hridaya's Clinical Significance**

As a *Trimarama* (one of the three vital *marmas*), *Hridaya* is critical for sustaining life. Injuries to *Hridaya Marma* can lead to severe physiological disruptions or fatal outcomes. Therefore, maintaining the health of this *Marma* is paramount in *Ayurvedic* practice. *Ayurvedic* therapies often focus on strengthening *Hridaya* using herbal

formulations, lifestyle modifications, and *pranayama* (breathing exercises).

### **CONCLUSION**

*Hridaya Marma* holds a central place in *Ayurveda* as the seat of life, consciousness, and vitality. Its anatomical and physiological descriptions in classical texts closely align with the modern understanding of the heart. By bridging ancient *Ayurvedic* wisdom with contemporary knowledge, we can deepen our understanding of the heart's holistic functions and enhance its care. This detailed exploration underscores the importance of *Hridaya* in maintaining overall health and emphasizes its role as a cornerstone of *Ayurvedic* medicine.

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