

CONCEPT OF EMBRYOGENY IN AYURVEDA- A REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Every individual spends the first nine months of his life within the womb (uterus) of its mother. During this period, it develops from a one celled structure to an organism having billions of cells. The most spectacular of these changes are in the first two months: the unborn baby acquires its main organs and just begins to be recognizable as human. During these two months, we call the developing individual, an embryo. Ayurveda has its own axiom of embryogeny discussed here.

KEYWORDS: Embryo, Garbha, Shukra, Shonita, Garbhavakranti.

INTRODUCTION

The upveda of Atharvaveda, Ayurveda is a complete holistic science of life, health and cure. Embryology is important discipline of Ayurveda.

The Garbha Sharira has been well propounded in our literatures. Elucidating Garbha, acharya Sushruta affirms that Shukra and Shonita along with Atma, Prakriti and when reside in Garbhashaya (uterus) then it is alleged as Garbha.

All erudite of Ayurveda unanimously defined Garbha. The combined semen and ovum in the womb; amalgamated with Prakriti (eight categories) and Vikara (sixteen modifications) and ridden in by Atma is designated as Garbha and there is consciousness in embryo. Harita has given the exemplar of mango seed formation from the conjugation of pollen and female flower for the conceiving of Garbha. Kashyapa annexed the union of Mana and Buddhi with others to fabricate Garbha. The Garbha is forced by God due to previous Karmaphal of Jeeva.

ETYMOLOGY

The word Garbha is derived from “Garbha Giryate, Udgiryate, Shabdayate, Va Gr Nigarane”. Gr has the Sanskrit root (Krawyadi group) means to sound and Gr has the Sanskrit root

(Tudadi group) and is used to mean Nigarana i.e. to engulf (to take inside) The above mentioned etymology interprets that which makes sound or which assimilates is Garbha.

SYNONYMS

Ksetragya, Vedayita, Sprasta, Ghrata, Gana, Drasta, Srota, Purusa, Vaka, Kukshou, Dimba. Bhruna are few Synonyms of Garbha discussed in our classics.

PROCREATION OF GARBHA

By the postulate of Srasti Utpatti Krama the association of Prakriti and Purusa begin the succession of matter; similarly the concourse of Shukra and Shonita is requisite for the creation of Garbha.

The Garbha is constituted out of the conjunction of Matrija, Pitraja, Atmaja (soul), Satmyaja (wholesomeness), Rasaj (digestive product of mother's food) and Satvaja (mind) bhavas named as Shadabhavas. The soft organs of Garbha are supposed to be Matrija while the hard ones are of Pitraja bhava. For the development of healthy progeny it is requisite to have all the above six factors healthy. Ayurveda believes that these six bhava can play a vital role in development of healthy offspring. Genes of mother and Father, their food habit, mental condition, life style are all covered in these six bhavas.

Acarya Sushruta asserted that a co-ordination of four factors of Ritu (menstrual period), Kshetra (healthy womb), Ambu (nutrient liquid i.e. Chyle of digested food), Bija (healthy semen) is necessary for the conception and development of healthy child and designated them as Garbha-Sambhava substantiality.

Acarya Charaka also opines that the Garbha represents the combination of five Mahabhutas and is also receptacle of consciousness.

The properties of Akasha are sound, sense of hearing, porosity and differential evolution of the veins, ligaments etc. into their characterized species. The properties of Vayu are touch, skin, all function activities of organism, throbbing of the whole body (Spandana) and lightness. The properties of Teja are form, the eyes, colours, heat, illumination. digestion, anger, generation of instantaneous energy and valour. The properties of Apa are taste, the tongue, fluidity, heaviness, coldness and semen.

The properties of Prithvi are smell, nose, embodiment (modification) and heaviness.

The soul desirous of creating another body, first of all, unites with the Akasha and then with other four bhutas, whose attributes are more and more manifested successively. All this action (association of soul with five mahabhutas) takes place in a very short time.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROCREATION OF GARBHA

When a man with unimpaired sperm and a woman with unaffected genital tract, ovum and uterine bed cohabit during the period of fertilization, the Jeeva (Soul) along with the mind descends into the zygote lodged inside the uterus. This results in the formation of embryo. It grows unafflicted, being nourished by the wholesome rasa and being managed by proper regimen. There-after the foetus is formed with all the sensory and motor organs, possessed of all the limbs of the body and endowed with excellence of strength, complexion, mental faculties and compactness for delivery in time.

Giving the exemplar of coloring of a spotless good cloth with coloring substance and transformation of milk into curd only by adding few drops of curd, acharya Charaka propounded here that when a man and woman cohabit after purifying their bodies, the unimpaired sperm unites with undiminished ovum in the unenervated womb lying within an unblemished genital tract. Then this definitely results in formation of embryo.

GARBHA PARIVRADDHI

Sushrutacharya asseverated that the combined Shukra (semen) and Shonita in the womb form foetus when it attains consciousness. This vital Garbha is acted upon by Panchamahabhuta. Vayu divides it, Teja Mahabhuta is concerned with digestion, Apa Jala bedews it, Prithvi condenses the Garbha while Akasha Mahabhuta increases the Garbha. In this way, the grown up embryo is now furnished with hand, leg, tongue, nose and ears etc and is designated as Sharira.

Acharya Charaka says that Garbha is formed by Panchamahabhuta viz. Akasha, Vayu, Agni, Jala and Prithvi and is receptacle of consciousness. The soul constitutes the sixth dhatu responsible for formation of embryo.

Ashtanga hrdaya annexed that the embryo fabricated from causative and subtle Mahabhuta (Panchamahabhuta) later associates with Satva (Soul) grows gradually in the womb of mother, nourished by the essence of the food of the mother. The Satva (Atma) enters into the

womb as rays of sun are invisible while getting in to the fuel. The Satva takes on different Yoni and Akriti just like the molten metal.

Ashtanga Sangraha quite clearly depicted the building of garbha. The old menstrual blood has been cleared and now the uterus and the passage for Shukra (vagina) is clear, the Soul and Beeja i.e. the unvitiated Shukra motivated by adroit Vayu subsequence by other Mahabhuta amalgamate with Artava (ovum), away from the obligation of Ragadi distress, delighted by actions then the life (Garbha) is created in the Garbhashaya.

Acharya Bhavaprakasha clearly narrated the process of conception. When the union of Shukra Artava occurs, the soul enters in the womb as the rays of sun enter the lens (Suryamani) and get the fire in the fuel without perception; similarly the Atma enters the Shukra Artava united in the womb.

Harita asserted that the body is constituted with Jeeva, Mana, Akasha and Triguna. It arises from Shukra and Shonita full of Panchamahabhuta and divisible by dosha.

Parishadyam Shabdārtha Shariram asserted that the foetus emanate from confederation of Shukra and Raja. These are the innovators of all elements of the body. Each and every component can only be generated when they reside in the seed. It is only possible when whole body takes part in the formation of Shukra and Shonita. Therefore the Shukra is accepted as existing in whole body and essence of body.

The Garuna Purana has a scientific vision for manifestation of foetus. The soul liberated from Svarga or Naraka due to its Purvakarma approaches in the womb of mother. In spite of getting ruined there, it attains the conformation of two seeds. After that it takes the shape of Kalal (gelatinous material) and later changes to bubble (Budbudakara); subsequently muscles (manshapeshi) are created from that bubble blood. From the form of elongated muscle it now adorn to oval mould. From this oval egg, sprouts of body parts originate. Thereafter; fingers, eyes, nose, mouth, ears etc. parts are manifested. Furthermore; creative power is generated in these sprouts, so nails, skin, hairs etc. are configured. In this way the developed embryo resides in uterus in vertex presentation for nine months and then takes birth in tenth month.

Harita has its own opinion for embryogeny. The Panchabhutagni acts upon seed and manifests Kalal (jelly like). It is modified to Budbudakara (bubble) by internal Vayu. Furthermore; this jelly like Kalal is moulded to Pinda by Panchabhutagni. The Pinda is

condensed by action of Vyana Vata., the Panchatatva create hand, leg and head in it. The Antahastha Vayu taking shelter in various parts of the body provides shape to the body. The Udana Vayu situating in the neck and heart region discloses the mouth opening. Apana Vayu lying below reveals the Apana dvara (Anal opening). In this way the internal Vata (Antahastha Vayu) creating diverse passages goes out of the body. External Navadvara i.e. mouth, nose, ear, eyes, anus, urethra become manifested due to Vata. All parts and organs of the body are thus, in turn brought forth by the Antahastha Vayu.

GARBHA LINGOTPATTI KARANA

Charakacharya ponders that dominance of ovum during conception results in the procreation of female child and dominance of sperm of a male child. Moreover, he asserts when that portion of sperm and ovum of parents responsible for creation of genital cell of foetus is vitiated and these sperm and ovum undergo equal division then offspring becomes hermaphrodite. Further, he annexed that as an unimpaired seed sown in a fertile land germinates bearing its own characteristic features e.g. paddy from paddy seed and barley from barley seed; so the male and female characteristics of the embryo are determined by those of the parents.

By the same doctrine (of the effect being similar to the cause), a male child will be produced when Shukra (semen) is in abundance, a female when Rakta (menstrual blood) is surfeit and a eunuch when both are equal.

Annotating on acharya Sushruta's verse Dalhana narrated that calculating the quantity as illustrated in our classics Artava is in four anjali pramana while Shukra is only one prasriti in amount which is quite less than Artava, so how can Shukra be more in male child. He further affirmed that Sushruta may signify the power of Shukra or Shonita in spite of quantity and also the quantity of virtuous Shukra and Shonita may vary.

Arunadutta in his interpretation on Ashtanga Hrdaya cited that by alleging Bahutayata acharya indicates the masculine or feminine power of Shukra and Artava seed.

Sharangadhara propounded that along with the volume of Rajas and Shukra, the god's wish is also responsible for lingotpatti in foetus.

A few learned of Ayurveda has calculated the days of conception for male and female child. Manusmriti says conception on even nights of month causes male while on odd nights creates female child.

Sushruta Samhita avowed that husband's visit to his wife on fourth, sixth, eighth, tenth or twelfth night of her menses engender the male child. A visit on fifth, seventh, ninth and eleventh day of her flow leads to the conception of female child.

Shri Variyara in his book Vrihada Shariram has written that seeds emanating from right side of male and female partner breed male foetus while that from left side produces female child.

Ghanekara abets him by saying that the ovum from right ovary is male procreator and that from left is female former.

Vagbhatta depicted Karya-Karana bhava (effect are similar to cause) accountable for creation of male and female child.

Acharya Bhavaprakasha cited that three special Nadi are there in the vagina of woman, namely Samirana, Gauri, and Candramasi. When the semen falls of Samirana, it is futile; when it drops on Gauri Nadi then the male child is formed and upon sinking on Candramasi Nadi semen creates the female child.

Arunadutta in his explanation of Ashtanga Hrdaya asseverated that the attaining of orgasm by male and female partners decide the sex of child. Similarly Bhela Samhita delineates that during copulation when male reveals the desire first then foetus is male resembling father and if female achieves orgasm first the embryo analogues mother and is female.

CONCLUSION

The quotations of our erudites show that Embryogeny is well delineated in Ayurveda. The Ayurveda has its own theory of Garbhotpatti, Sex determination, organ development and Garbha parivraddhi. Shukra, Shonita, Atma, Shadbhava, Panchamahabhuta play a vital role in the procreation of an embryo. Shadbhava and Panchamahabhuta are responsible for manifestation of different organs of the Garbha. Atma or Jiva provide consciousness to the foetus. Ayurveda opines that quantity of Shukra or Shonita, time and day of copulation, dispatch of ovum from right or left ovary decide the linga of the Garbha.

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