

CONCEPT OF MENTAL HEALTH IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, offers a holistic approach to mental health that integrates the mind, body and soul. Ayurveda is described mental health in Atharva Veda and in subsequent treatises by *Charak*, *Susrut*, and *Vagbhata*, containing the details of etiology, symptoms, diagnosis, and therapy for afflictions in humans and animals. The science of mental disorders describes extensively conditions from mild anger and greed to severe psychoses. Simultaneously the whole world is looking for the solutions of the inner conflicts afflicting in mental health sector. Ayurvedic theory of mental health is based on combination of The three *gunas*, *tridosha*, and *panchabhuta*, The combination of these *doshas* and three *gunas*

inherited at birth indicates an individual's called Prakriti. The dynamic balance of these above elements creates a good mental health. *Daiva vyaprashraya*, *Yuktivyapashrya*, *Satvavajaya cikitsa*, *Aachara Rasayana*, *Dinacharya* and *Yoga* therapy is described in *Ayurveda* for resolving these ailments.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda*, *Manas Dosha*, Mental health.

1. INTRODUCTION

*"Samadosha samagnishcha, samadhatu malakriyah,
prasannatmendriya manah, svastha ity abhidhiyate."*

"The one whose 'doshas' are balanced, whose metabolism is balanced, whose tissues and eliminations are normal, and whose senses and mind are centered in the Self, is considered healthy and remains full of bliss.^[1]"

In its holistic approach, Ayurveda gives prime importance to positive mental health. Vishada and Avasada are two conditions which are closely similar to depression in the form of mental health. The great Ayurvedic Acharya Charaka quotes '*Vishado Rogavardhananam Agrya*:'^[2] in his commentary, mean Vishada is the foremost factor to worsen the disease condition. This is the first principle regarding mental health in Ayurveda. Psychiatry in Ayurveda integrates mind, body and soul. The mind-body connection is very important in Ayurveda. Physical imbalances can disturb mental state while mental illness leads to disruption of body functions.

2. Concept of Mind in Ayurveda

Dhi, Dhruti and Smruti

Manas or the physical mind is directly connected to Dhi^[3] (intellect), Dhruti^[4] (processing information) and Smruti^[5] (memory). The Dhi is the intelligence which helps to learn, focus and understand. The *Vata dosha* should be balanced for the optimal functioning of *Dhi*.^[6] *Dhruti* involves the chemical and electrical processing of information and is therefore related to Pitta dosha. *Smruti* is the ability remembers. *Kapha dosha* should be balanced for proper functioning of *Smruti*.^[7] When there is proper co-ordination between these three factors, the mental health is perfect. When there is lack of co-ordination between these above factors leads to a condition called Mantel disease. The process of memory comes under the gradation of Physical mind or objective mind but there is another subjective part of mind called *Chitta* which carries subconscious memories and also known as the karmic mind. This is the subconscious mind which is believed to have memories from past lives.

3. Concept and Body Mind constitution

1. Tridosha - According to Ayurveda, Vata, Pitta and Kapha are the three main psychobiological expressions of Nature, individually and cosmically.

The *Vata dosha* is dry, dispersing, subtle, cold, mobile,^[8] minute and changeable, and therefore when vata is vitiated than our body is associated with conditions such as attention deficit, bi-polar disease, delusions, irrelevant talk, social anxiety, auditory hallucinations fears and phobia also. Vata governs all movement and nervous system functions. The *Pitta dosha*^[9] being hot, sharp, penetrating, and spreading is responsible for comparison, anger, rage, violence, jealousy, frustration, and visual hallucinations. Pitta is more associated with digestive and hormonal functions hence regulates metabolism and brings about transformation in the body. The *Kapha dosha*^[10] is more slow, cool, heavy, inert, smooth,

gross, soft and immobile, and is therefore associated with sadness, melancholia, stubbornness, dark depression, hoarding, catatonia, overeating and kinesthetic hallucinations. Kapha mainly provides stability and is involved with building up of tissues.

2. Trigunas

The significance of Trigunas were emphasized by Charaka in his renowned commentary. He observed that *Rajas* and *Tamas* have taken possession of an individual, here involves from birth to death like a wheel^[11] and *Moksha* is described as the state devoid of *Rajas* and *Tamas*.^[12] Though in general *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are concerned with the mental faculties and *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* with the anatomical and physiological entities, and latter affect the psyche of an individual. The characteristic features of *trigunas* separately, The *Sattva* having quality of intelligence, virtue and goodness and creates harmony, balance and stability. It is light and luminous in nature. Responsible for inward and upward motion and brings about the awakening of the soul. It provides happiness and contentment hence we can say the *sattva* is the principle of clarity, wideness and peace. The *Rajas* having quality of change, activity and turbulence and introduces the disequilibrium that upsets an existing balance. *Rajas* are stimulating and provide pleasure, owing to its unbalanced nature it quickly results in pain and suffering. Similarly the *Tamas guna* responsible for dullness, darkness, and inertia and heavy or obstructing in its action. It has depressed mood, lack of faith in God, lack of Good conducts, intellectual lacking, ignorance, not attending to duties and sleepiness. *Sattva* is considered as pure and is not the cause of diseases. *Rajas* and *tamas* are the vitiators responsible for the manifestation of mental illness. Each individual has different temperament and mental personality based on the predominance of these universal attributes, along with the body humors, *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*. Thus all these *doshas* can be regarded as factors having psychosomatic role to play.

3. Manovaha Srotas

There is no any detailed description found in the respect of *Manovaha Shrotas* but when we go through systemic literal review of *Shrotas*^[13] by *Sroto-Viman* Chapter elaborated in *Charak Samhita Viman Sthan*, It is said that *vata*, *pitta* and *slesma* traverse the entire body through kinds of *srotas* along with the *manasika dosas*, which are beyond sense perception. Hence the entire sentient body is their vehicle and field of the operation.^[14]

4. Ojus and Manas

The relation between *manas* and *ojus* is very relevant in the manner of *Manas Roga* because both *ojus* and *manas* are seated in heart.^[15] Ojus is depleted by mental emotions such as anger and grief and the person becomes fearful, worried and his faculties will not be functioning properly. He will lack enthusiasm. Fainting, confusion, delirium and even death may occur if ojus is highly depleted.^[16] When ojus is denatured from the body, some psychological symptoms such as laziness, stupor, sleep are may occurs.^[17] On the contrary, increase of ojus is conducive to the proper functioning of mind

5. Asatmendriyarthasamyoga

In the classical texts of *Ayurveda* the *Charak Samhita* has Prime importance because of his highly relevance to *Mental health* with the challenge to other pathy who wrote on the relative manners. In *Ayurveda*- Sensory perception which are not congenial with sensory organs called *asatmendriyarthasamyoga*. In short it is called unwholesome contact with the objects. They may be in the form of excessive or over utilization called *atiyoga*, hypo utilization or non utilization called - *ayoga* and non judicial or wrong utilization called *mithyayaog*.^[18]

6. Causes of Mental Illness

When we are going through systemic way the *Ayurveda* provokes numerous etiological factors of Mental Illness. The main three commentary of *Ayurveda* called *Brihatryee* one most Acharya *Bagvatt* told in his valuable commentary that an individual should control his senses and negative thoughts in mind like greed, irritability, anger, competition and attachment.

“Dharayaet tu sada vegan hitaishi pretya cheha cha
Lobha irshya dvesha matsarya ragaadeenam jitendriya”^[19]

Several causes are responsible for mental health some are - Social circumstances, Hereditary factors, Traumatic incidents, Personality of the person, Biological reasons, Improper diet, Physical illnesses and overindulgence, Severe mental or physical stress, Unfavorable - personal, familial and social environment. According to *Ayurveda* there is an imbalance in *Tridos* and *trigunas* of mind has causative factor. Excess of *shoka* (sorrow), *krodha* (anger), *chinta* (unnecessary thinking), *kama* (lust), *krodha* (anger), *lobh* (greed), *moha* (delusion), *irshya* (jealousy), *abhimana* (pride), *mada* (euphoria), *shoka* (sorrow) and *bhaya* (fear) are some of the negative emotions which can contribute to mental imbalance.^[20]

7. Other Psychiatric conditions in Ayurveda

Several terms are used in traditional Indian Medicinal system called Ayurveda. The some are below

- i. *Unmada*^[21] (psychosis)
- ii. *Apasmara*^[22] (convulsive disorder)
- iii. *Bhrama*^[23] (illusion)
- iv. *Atatvabhinivesham*^[24] (Obsessive Disorders)
- v. *Prajnaparadha*^[25] (lack of coordination between dhi,dhruti and smruti)
- vi. *Tandra*^[26] (drowsiness)
- vii. *Klama*^[27] (neurasthenia)
- viii. *Mada*^[28] (loss of perception)
- ix. *Apatantrakam*^[29] (hysteria)
- x. *Avasada*^[30]- (Depression)
- xi. *Citto Udvega*- (Anxiety neurosis)
- xii. *Manasa Mandata*-(Mental Retardation)
- xiii. *Madatyaya*^[31] – (Intoxication etc)

8. Sign of Mental Health

- ❖ Healthy memory
- ❖ Awareness of responsibilities
- ❖ Following good values
- ❖ Self- awareness and responsibilities and beyond self
- ❖ Maintaining self-hygiene and cleanliness
- ❖ Staying active
- ❖ Fearlessness
- ❖ Doing things enthusiastically
- ❖ Perseverance
- ❖ Taking the proper diet at the proper time according to the body type.

9. Remedies for Mental Illness

In *Ayurveda* the therapeutics for Mental Illness is divided in to three, *Daivavyapashraya*, *Yuktivyapashraya*, and *Sattvavajaya Chikitsa* and it's a general principles of management for Mental Illness.^[32]

Daiva Vyaprashraya: These methods create confidence and pessimistic tendencies. It includes *Mantras* (Chanting of Hymns), *Aushadha* (Sacred Herbs), *Manimangala* (Auspicious offerings), *Bali*, *Upadhan*, *Homa* (Yajna), *Niyama* (Regulations), *Prayascita* (Atonement), *Upavasa* (Fasting), *Pranipata*, *Yatragaman*, Chanting of *Mantras*, Spiritual, healing, Religious rites etc.

Yukti vyaprashraya: These methods explore the uses of Medicines by two principles i.e. *Shodhana* and *Shamana*. Medicinal Preparations are -

Single Herbs (Medhya Drugs) - Brahmi, Mandukaparni, Ashwagandha, Jatamamsi, Shankapushpi etc.

Ghritas (Medicated Ghee) - Panchgavya ghrita, Brahme ghrita, Maha kalyanaka ghrita etc.

Herbomineral Preparations - Brahme vati, Vata Kulantaka Rasa, Smriti Sagar Rasa, Yogendra rasa, Manasamitra vatakam.

Satwaavajaya:- (Psychotherapy) It aims to control of mind i.e. one should keep himself establish in his oneself after knowing real nature of soul and attaining height of spiritual wisdom. Its techniques are: *Gyan* - Spiritual Knowledge, *Vignana* - Educating the Patient, *Dhairya* - Moral Boosting, *Smruti* - Reviving the Knowledge, *Samadhi* - Abstaining from Over Indulgence in Materialistic world.

Yoga therapy- '*Yoga moksho pravarkak*' i.e. by practice of Yoga, One can attain state of *Moksha*. Process of increasing *Sattva* and decreasing *Raja* and *Tama* leading to *Karmakshaya* (loss of deeds) is way of attaining *Moksha*.^[33]

Aachara Rasayana – It's a totally Drug less treatment maintains total life process. One who speaks truth, free from anger, abstains from alcohol and over indulgence. He maintains Hygiene, taken regular sleep and wholesome Diet. Controls over his Sense organs etc for Physical, Mental and Spiritual Wellbeing.^[34]

Dinacharya - Beginning the daily habits with awareness, rising with the sun, cleaning the body and beginning our personal practice of worship helps recognize our place in the family, community and cosmos. Choosing right foods for our appetite and metabolic needs is a fundamental alignment to show respect of our body and life. 'Right use of time' means to eat when hungry, rest when fatigued and make time to play for nurturing creativity. If any of these important psychobiological needs is unfulfilled or over fulfilled, imbalance occurs.

Circadian rhythms become disturbed by sleeping late, eating stale foods, having sex at a wrong time such as during the menses, with an inappropriate partner or for inappropriate reasons such as self-indulgence. Misuse of any of the senses leads to imbalance, as does the misuse of the mind, such as wishing another ill.^[35]

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