

THE TENETS OF MENTAL HEALTH IN AYURVEDA**Dr. Mamta Tiwari***

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Article Received on
26 June 2015,

Revised on 16 July 2015,
Accepted on 11 Aug 2015

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ABSTRACT

The basic concept of Ayurveda is preservation and promotion of health, and prevention and cure of diseases through the concepts of positive physical and mental health. Balanced equilibrium in mind and body is important. The mind-body connection is very important in *Ayurveda*. Physical imbalances can disturb mental state while mental illness leads to disruption of body functions. It is widely recognized that health is maintained and improved through the efforts and intelligent lifestyle choices of the individuals and society. Ayurveda has discussed Sadvritta, Achara Rasayan, Dharniya Vega as social, emotional, psychological, ethical codes of conduct for the individual for better harmony between the inner and outer self for true happiness and contentment in life.

KEYWORDS: *Achara Rasayan, Ayurveda, Sadvritta.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades there is increasing scientific interest for non pharmacological approaches to brain body disorders especially psychological diseases. In India, philosophy and medical science have developed with the same idea. Therefore Ayurveda is largely related to Indian philosophy. The effective treatment for mental diseases with minimal side effect and high compliance rate is still elusive. Recently the brain and its functions have been considered to be closely linked to lifestyle. This important impression is dissipated throughout Ayurveda, the science of life. But no systemic account on the subject of mental health, its philosophical basis and practical ways for maintenance and promotion of mental health is available in classical texts.

2. AYURVEDA AND PHILOSOPHY

Ayurveda is applied science and its basic concepts are based upon the elemental sciences called *Darshans*. The basic aim of Ayurveda and *Darshans* is similar i.e to get rid of sorrows. The concept of life (Ayu) and definition of swastha (health) in Ayurveda is not limited to physical and mental planes only but touches the spiritual level as well. Ayurveda defines life as union of body, cognitive organs, mind and soul.^[1] Besides the concept of life Ayurveda as well admits the happiness of the senses, mind and soul to be key to perfect health for the full development of human potentials and achieving higher order of harmony in life.^[2] The purpose of Ayurveda is to protect the health of healthy and elimination of ailments.^[3] Health is the means to achieve dharma, artha, kama and moksha, the four arthas of life. Moksha is the ultimate pursuit of life “mokse nirvrttir nissesa”.^[4] These two common aims hold Ayurveda indifferent from the treasure of Darsans. To understand Ayurveda principles in real spirit, the concepts of bharatiya darshans should be learned. Ayurveda indeed is a synthesis of Indian darshans like Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya and Vaisheshika.

3. FUNDAMENTALS OF MENTAL HEALTH IN AYURVEDA

In its holistic approach, Ayurveda gives prime importance to positive mental health. Psychiatry in Ayurveda integrates mind, body and soul. The mind-body connection is considered important in Ayurveda as physical imbalances can disturb mental state while mental illness leads to disruption of body functions.^[5] The mental component of disease represents unstable equilibrium of Rajas and Tamas the two manasika dosas.^[6] The Satva is the factor responsible for mental equipoise. The person with satva guna predominance faces challenges and hardships bravely and successfully while Rajasik and tamasic are prone to get afflicted by mental diseases. The man who uses whole some diet and behaviour, moves cautiously, unattached to sexual pleasure, donates practises equality is truthful and forbearing and devoted to respectful persons remains free from disease. One who is endowed with intellect, speech and action leading to happy consequences, submissive mind clear understanding knowledge and penance does not fall a victim to disease.^[7]



There are four interacting information processing systems in humans the mind, the endocrine system, the nervous system and the immune system are crucial in conquering stress and helping the people stay healthy. The concepts of Sadvritta, Acharya Rasayan, Dharniya Vega incorporated in Ayurveda are social, emotional, psychological, ethical codes of conduct for the individual. These concepts have great influence on the pscho-endo-neuro-immunology of the body. They have more of preventive importance than curative aspect for pscyo-somatic diseases.

4. SADVRITTA (CODE OF GOOD CONDUCT)

One who desires to promote his own well being should follow the entire code of good conduct fully invariably and cautiously.^[8] These codes are described in authoritative Ayurvedic text. It includes personal, social, emotional and ethical norms.

i. PERSONAL

One should wash twice day, clean excretory passages and feet frequently, apply oil to head, ear, nose & feet daily and cut hairs and nail thrice a fortnight. Always wear good clothes, use flowers & fragrance, dress should be gentle & style of hair as commonly practiced. Do not indulge in undue courage, excessive sleep, night vigils, bath, drinks and food. Avoid move towards fierce animals and those having prominent teeth and horns or any life threatening condition. One should abstain from easterly wind, the sun, dewes and excessive winds and should not initiate quarrels. One should not perform sexual intercourse with a women having menses or some disease, impure, in auspicious with undesirable appearance, behavior and attendance, unskilled, not favorable, having no lust or lust with another person, other's

women, in female organ (by artificial means), in sacred place. One should not eat without washing hands, feet and face, with unclean mouth or without taking bath, with damaged clothes, without reciting mantras, without offering oblation to Gods, without making offerings to forefathers, without offering food to preceptor, guests and dependents, without purifying fragrance and garland, facing towards north, depressed in mind, having disloyal, in disciplined, unclean and hungry attendants, in unclean plates in improper place, untimely and in crowded surroundings, without purifying with mantras, with contempt, dirty meal served by the opponents. Avoid consuming stale things except meat, salad, dry vegetables, fruits & hard eatables.

ii. ETHICAL

One should speak useful, measured, sweet and meaningful words. One should be self controlled, self-virtuous, jealous in cause and not in effect, free from anxiety, fearless, shy, wise, great courageous, skilful, forbearing, religious, positives, devoted to teachers, accomplished persons and who are superior in modesty, intellect, learning and age.

iii. EMOTIONAL

One should adopt auspicious conduct should behave like kith and kin to all living beings, pacify the angry, console the frightened, help the poor, be truthful, peaceful, tolerant of other's harsh words, remover of intolerance, should always look at the qualities of peaceful life should alleviate the cause of attachment and aversion. One should not be impatient or over-exhilarated. One should be supportive his attendant and kins, and avoid unpleasant conduct, behavior & attendance. One should not confide or suspect on all nor should one be critical at all times. One should not give up courage nor should one remember his scandals. One should not be submissive to his sense organs nor should one turn his unstable mind round. One should not over border the sense organs

iv. SOCIAL

One should not give up the traditional practices, excessively nor should one be in habit of breaking rules. Importance to be given to the company of the person should not make friendship with the greedy, the fools, the effected and the enunds. One should not disclose secrets nor should one insult anybody. Not to be conceited, unskilled, unfavorite and envious. Never insult the Brahmins or accomplished persons and who are superior in modest, intellect, learning calm and age. One should be devoted to celibacy, knowledge's charity, friendship, compassion, and cheerfulness, indifference & calmness.

v. ACHARYA RASAYAN

Some of the social conduct and behaviour will be endowed with the virtues mentioned in Acharya Rasayan. One should always speak truth; refrain from anger, alcohol, sexual act and violence. One should be peaceful, avoid exertion, speak sweetly, practicing of chanting of god names and cleanliness, generous, perform penance, respect god, Brahmin, preceptors and elders, be away from cruelty and always kind to all. One should sleep and get up at proper time, take milk and ghee every day, have knowledge about place, time, should have proper planning with intelligence, not egoistic, have good conduct, be devoid of wrong thoughts, inclined towards philosophy, have belief in god, serve elders, read religious books. He always will be endowed with qualities of rejuvenation therapy.

vi. DHARNIYA VEGAS (SUPPRESSIBLE URGES)

For maintenance of proper mental health or to remain mentally fit in all way one should hold up the urges of evil ventures relating to thought, speech & action. The various suppressible urges are:-

- Urges of greed, grief, fear, anger, vanity and also of shamelessness, envy, excessive, attachment and desire of taking another's property should be held up by the wise.
- One should avoid speech which is harsh, betraying, lie and untimely used.
- The action of violence against other's desire for other women & stealing should be controlled.^[9]

Vagbhatta discussed ten vices which he proposed to be avoided.^[10] They are more or less similar to those described by Charak under the head of suppressible urges. All these are emotional tendencies that are not to be suppressed rather meant to be overcome, when they cross the physiological barrier lest they turn violent and end up as major psychological ailments.

vii. AVOIDING PRAJNAPARADHA (INTELLECTUAL BLASPHEMY)

Prajnaparadha is considered as the most potent cause of all the diseases, more for psychological ones. Prajna has three components Intellect(Dhi), patience(Dhiriti) and Memory(Smriti).^[11] Any improper action committed bereft of intelligence, patience and memory is Prajnaparadha. It means any pseudo conception or improper assessment and in its manifestation is an impulse to improper conduct that aggravates all the dosas.^[12] Acharya Charaka has considered Prajnaparadha as the root cause of all exogenous and psychological

disorders. Doing away with it will go a long way in prevention and treatment of psychological disorders.

5. DISCUSSION

The knowledge of authorities instructions of Apta purustha (noble person) and its correct application is the important for the prevention and cure of ailments. Sadvritta is a preventive notion that emphasis the personal cleanliness of body and mind. It helps to restrain the individual from the stressors of day to day life. Adopting these practices will help to enhance the level of sattva guna of the person and bring awakening of inner soul, better harmony between the inner and outer self for true happiness and contentment in life. This will help the individual to have better control over the emotional impulses as anger, greed, sorrow, jealousy, fear and excessive attachment which are primordial features of suboptimal mental health. The conducts advocated may help to up heave the immunological status of the individual through improved functioning of pscho-endo-neuro-immunological axis. Thus may be used as non pharmacological rejuvenation therapy.

6. CONCLUSION

The health is the level of functional and metabolic efficiency of a living organism. The WHO in its definition of health mentioned physical, mental and social “well being”. The well being is subtotal of physical, sensory, mental, emotional and spiritual elements of mind-body complex. The basic fundamentals for codes of conduct for the individual are stated in Ayurveda under different headings. Adopting these practices will improve the well being and the ability of the person to respond flexibly to experience of life and with sense of purpose.

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