



### MANASIKA VEGAS: THEIR CAUSES, EFFECTS AND PSYCHO SPIRITUAL TREATMENT

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#### ABSTRACT

*Manasika Vega* is the intensification of *Dharaniya Vega* – *Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Mada, Matsarya*, etc. This happens due to the intensification of *Raga* and *Dvesha*, which is triggered by the vitiation of *Rajas* and *Tamas* due to *Asatmyaendriyarthasamyoga, Prajnaparadha* and *Parinama*. When *Raga* and *Dvesha* get intensified, it leads to strengthening of desires, which in turn leads to a series of associated emotions of anger, fear, greed, delusion, etc. Scriptures identify *Manasika Vega* as a disease in themselves because they affect the functioning and health of the mind when left unchecked and divert the mind from the purpose of life – which is the pursuit of the fourfold goals of *Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha*. As a result, they cause an imbalance in the three legs of life – body, mind and soul, leading to physiological diseases, psychological diseases and *Vasanas*, that are the impressions from previous births which affects health as well. Therefore, Ayurvedic and Allied Scriptures recommend addressing the root cause, controlling the senses, cleaning the mind and the intellect through lifestyle modification, diet and psycho spiritual practices. These practices are listed in several different scriptures at philosophical and practical levels and need regular practice to have an effect. With regular practice aimed at restoring *Sattva*, the third Guna that is considered the purest, *Rajas* and *Tamas* can be destroyed, leading to detachment to sensorial pleasures and a steady, well-regulated and healthy mind.

**KEYWORDS:** *Manasika Vegas, Dharaniya Vegas*, Psycho Spiritual Treatment.

#### INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, healthcare technologies have improved. Life expectancy has increased, and ironically, so have healthcare costs. This is because of the several chronic diseases that man suffers today, chief of them being cardiac problems and diabetes at the physiological level, and anxiety, depression and personality disorders at the psychological level. Most modern treatment aim only at control and not prevention or complete cure.

*Ayurveda* is the science of life and health and a storehouse of knowledge on diseases, their causative factors and treatment. In conjunction with other Allied Scriptures, *Ayurveda* provides insight into the diseases man suffers from at not just the physiological level but at the psychological level as well. The scriptures recognize the intimate relationship between the components that constitute the mind and body and how they impact and influence each other.

They establish that the root cause of several diseases lies in the intensification of *Dharaniya Vega* such as *Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha* etc. The intensified *Dharaniya Vega* are nothing but *Manovega* or *Manasika Vega*, which disturb the functioning of the mind and so are called diseases in themselves. Subsequently, they cause other diseases of the mind if left unchecked and also physiological diseases such as cardiac problems, diabetes etc.

#### MANASIKA VEGA – A DISEASE

From a reading of Bhagawan Dash's<sup>[1]</sup> interpretation of *Caraka Samhita*, it can be understood that the primary objective of the mind is deliberation. When there is right perception, there is correct awareness. But, from Srinivasa Rao's<sup>[2]</sup> translation, we see that there can be excessive, deficient or erroneous perceptions, and these cause disorders of the mind and wrong awareness.

Ramachandra Rao<sup>[3]</sup> points out that non-deliberation, excessive deliberation or wrong deliberation of its objects causes the mental awareness to be disturbed. Such a mind develops *Manasika Vega* and is clouded by ignorance, which is in itself a disease and a cause for disease.

*Manasika vega* are caused by vitiation of the mental *Doshas*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, which cause both bodily and mental sufferings. Rao<sup>[4]</sup> justifies this with *Caraka's* view as, both bodily and mental sufferings are a result of derangement of intelligence, will and memory, unwholesome climatic conditions, effects of previously committed evil actions and unwholesome contact of sense faculties with their objects. Thus, one can understand that *Manasika Vega* are a result of vitiated *Rajas* and *Tamas* that cloud the mental faculties and cause it to form unwholesome association with objects due to an impairment of the intellect and the other regulating factors.

Srinivasa Rao<sup>[5]</sup> elaborates that diseases produced by emotional disturbances having *Manas* as their *Adhishthana*, are caused by the initial impairment of the *Manodosha* viz., *Rajas* and *Tamas*. Secondly, they affect the *Shariradosha*, and though they may present themselves clinically as physical illness, they can be treated only when the causative emotional disturbance is relieved. These conditions are similar to psycho somatic illnesses.

Rao<sup>[6]</sup> emphasises that, sometimes primary impairment of *Sharirika* Dosha leads to the impairment of *Manodosha*, such as *Nanatmaja Mano Vikara* where the *Manodosha* viz., *Rajas* and *Tamas* is also involved. This can be considered as *Ubhayatmaka Vikara*. Thus the interrelationship between the physical and mental diseases can be surmised.

Rao<sup>[7]</sup> explains this as, when only the mind is affected directly, it is called *Kevala Manovikara* and causes: *Kama* (Passion), *Lobha* (Greed), *Mana* (Pride), *Shoka* (grief), *Krodha* (Anger), *Irshya* (Envy), *Mada* (Arrogance), *Cittodvega* (Anxiety), *Bhaya* (fear), *Vishada* (Anguish), *Abhyasuya* (Jealousy), *Dainya* (Inferiority Complex). These emotions are broadly classified under *Ichha* (like) and *Dvesha* (dislike). *Ichha* referred here is nothing but *Raga*, which is also called attachment. Some of the factors that cause *Manasika Vega* are: accrual of undesired objects; unfulfilled desires; and *Alpasattva* (weak psyche).

Mind is made of three *Gunas*, *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. Suresh Babu<sup>[8]</sup> calls these three *gunas* operational qualities viz., *Sattva* or *Kalyanabhaga*, *Raja* or *Roshabhaga* and *Tamas* or *Mohabhaga*. *Sattva* is characterized by self-control, knowledge, discriminating ability, power of exposition, etc., *Rajas* is given to violence, despotic envy, authoritativeness, self-admiration etc. *Tamas* tends towards dullness, non-action, sleep etc. These three qualities are the functional indicators of *Manas*.

*Bh.G*<sup>[9]</sup>, which has several verses dedicated to the causes and treatment of *Manasika Vega*, triggered by *Raga* and *Dvesha*, establishing why it is a disease and how it causes other diseases. Mahadeva<sup>[10]</sup> quotes a reference of *Gita* as, it is said that when a man thinks of objects, attachment for them arises. From this attachment arises desire; from desire arises wrath. From wrath arises when desire is frustrated. From wrath arises delusion; from delusion, failure of memory; from failure of memory, loss of conscience; from loss of conscience he is utterly ruined.

Bhagawan Dash's<sup>[11]</sup> interpretation of *Caraka Samhita* stresses that those who want to remain in good health in the lifetime and after should suppress urges relating to rashness and evil deeds mentally, orally and physically. Not all urges have to be satisfied. In fact, some urges which need to be suppressed as otherwise they can be harmful.

Dash<sup>[12]</sup> further indicates *Caraka's* views as, *Rajas* and *Tamas* cause morbidity such as *Kama* (passion), anger, greed, attachment, envy, ego, pride, grief, worry, anxiety, fear, excitement etc.

The diseases that follow the vitiation of *Rajas* and *Tamas* and triggering of *Manasika Vega* are fever, diarrhoea, oedema, consumption, dyspnoea, *Meha* (obstinate urinary disorder including diabetes), *Kustha* (obstinate skin diseases including leprosy) etc.

Murthy's<sup>[13]</sup> interpretation of *Ashtanga Hridaya* shows that one of the synonyms for *Roga* is '*Ragadi*', which includes *Raga* (attachment), *Dvesha* (unhealthy aversion), *Lobha* (greed), *Moha* (confusion), *Mada* (vanity) and *Matsarya* (competitive mentality). *Raga*, which causes excessive desire towards worldly affairs, stains the mind which is pure due to vitiation of *Rajas* (aversion/ action) and *Tamas* (confusion/ fear). *Dvesha* is the aversion towards the unpleasant. *Lobha* is the excessive greed. *Moha* is the inability to take appropriate decisions at the

right time, it is confusion due to clouded conscience, this being a property of *Tamas*. *Mada* means vanity/ pride/ egotism, leading to underestimation of opponent's strength. *Matsarya* is hostile competitive deeds without proper thinking. It is a condition associated with terminal illness and is ominous, heralding death. *Arati* means restlessness, inability to be comfortable in any posture. *Apurva* means one who is the pioneer, the foremost, the first one to whom there is no antecedent.

Most of these can be related to the problems man faces in the modern world where competitiveness, vanity, greed for wealth and fame etc. drive their actions. As a result, he develops Stress and Anxiety, unstable behavior leading to physiological and psychological diseases.

Ayurveda therefore lays stress on first reestablishing the Sattva, Rajas, Tamas balance to restore holistic health.

### TREATING MANASIKA VEGAS

Having established Manasika Vega as a disease which further causes other physical and mental diseases, it was also observed that it is caused because of the vitiation of Rajas and Tamas, which triggers Raga and Dvesha, which intensify Dharaniya Vega into Manasika Vega.

Therefore, Ayurveda's approach to treating Manasika Vega is to restore the balance between Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. This is also prescribed as the method by Madhavananda<sup>[14]</sup> in *Vi. Cu* as, *Tamas* and *Rajas* are destroyed by *Sattva*, and Prabhupada's<sup>[15]</sup> interpretation of Bh.G., which explains that under the influence of *Sattva*, the mind is steady and will constantly reflect on the Self.

Vimalananda<sup>[16]</sup> stresses on the purification of the mind at multiple levels – physical, mental, *Prana* and spiritual. These lead to internal and external cleansing using a four-pronged approach. Here, we use a four-pronged approach at physical, behavioural, intellectual and spiritual levels.

At the physical level Prabhupada<sup>[17]</sup> emphasizes stresses on moderation in food and recreation, exertion at work, sleep and wakefulness.

Jnanaesvara<sup>[18]</sup> lays down eight steps one must practice to improve physical and mental health. These are codes of self-regulation or restraint (*Yamas*), observances or practices of self-training (*Niyamas*), postures (*Asana*), expansion of breath and *Prana* (*Pranayama*),

withdrawal of the senses (*Pratyahara*), concentration (*Dharana*), meditation (*Dhyana*), and perfected concentration (*Samadhi*).

Secondly, for behavioural approach, one can observe from the interpretation given by Sharma and Dash<sup>[19]</sup> that *Caraka* recommends: perform one's duties after duly considering their pros and cons with the help of the intellect together with the sense faculties applied to their respective wholesome objects and by acting in contradistinction with the qualities of place, season and one's own constitution including temperament. Further it can be seen that *Caraka* has a long list of virtuous behaviour that improves *Sattva*.

Jnanaesvara<sup>[20]</sup> points out that, one can understand that mind that is clouded by ignorance or *Avidya* can be rectified through the Intellect, which is a regulating component of mind, and can be used to free the mind of ignorance.

*Madhavananda*<sup>[21]</sup> highlights the importance of intellectual development and right discrimination for controlling the senses and preserving mental health.

Prabhupada<sup>[22]</sup> too stresses on the need for steady wisdom, as it helps one rise above desires and develops righteousness.

Jnanaesvara<sup>[23]</sup> recommends *Dhyana* for spiritual cleansing.

Through this four-pronged approach, the *Sattva* is strengthened and the attachment to sensual objects reduced. However, it is strongly recommended that mind being capable of distraction, regular practice is needed to achieve the desired goal. Also, an understanding of one's nature will enable one to adopt those practices that help in the initial days before graduating to the other methodologies.

### CONCLUSION

From an analysis of Ayurvedic and other allied scriptures, it can be seen that the root cause for lifestyle diseases is *Manasika Vega*, which is itself a disease as it is the intensification of *Dharaniya Vega* due to strong formation of *Raga* and *Dvesha*, triggered by vitiation of *Rajas* and *Tamas*. To restore the *Sattva*, *Rajas*, *Tamas* balance is the one of the key solutions to develop detachment and control the *Manasika Vega*. A four-pronged approach involving internal and external cleansing through physical, behavioural, intellectual and spiritual practices as recommended in the various scriptures can help restore the balance and regain holistic health.

Since *Karma* plays an important role in causing diseases, the practice may not completely cure a person, but can help alleviate symptoms and reduce the *Vasanas*. Willingness and awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses can help one pursue these practices diligently and benefit from them in the long term.

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