



Review Article

A REVIEW ON PHYSIOLOGY OF MANASA (PSYCHE) IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Mental health is given equal importance at various places in Ayurvedic texts. Ayurveda emphasizes that *Sharira* (body) and *Sattva* (mind) both interact with one another in all spheres of life. The Ayurvedic approach towards health and disease is entirely psychosomatic in its nature. Ayurveda greatly emphasizes on the phenomena of mind than that of the body. This can be expounded by the definition of health, the causes of disease, the approach to the examination of the patient, the concept of the psychosomatic constitution i.e. *Prakruti*, the regimen of mental and physical hygiene. Therefore it is imperative to understand about the physiology, functions and enactments of Mind i.e. *Manasa* in Ayurveda. This review article is based upon the fundamentals describing *Manasa* and its functions and physiology. It is very important to understand each and every aspect of *Manas* for an Ayurvedic scholar or physician for complete knowledge of human body and behavior.

KEYWORDS: *Manasa, Sattva, Triguna, Physiology.*

INTRODUCTION

Acarya Caraka conceives *Ayu* i.e. life as a combined state of *Sharira* (body), *Indriya* (senses), *Sattva* (psyche) and *Atma* (soul)¹. The first two are grosser entities and are very easy to understand while the later two are subtler and difficult to understand as they are beyond the sensory experience. '*Manasa*' is the important connecting link between *Sharira* and *Atma*. The concept of *Ayu* is based upon the state of '*Manasa*', as it is chiefly responsible for *Sukha, Dukha, Hita, Ahita*. Human beings are the most intelligent species on earth till date. To be born human is a privilege because only humans have the capability and responsibility of living a conscious and controlled life but this may not happen without *Manasa* and *Atma*. The fundamental definition of 'Health' by *Acarya Sushruta* has explained that – "A '*Swastha Purusha*' comprises of balanced '*Dosha*', '*Agni*', '*Dhatu*', '*Mala*' and '*Kriya*', as well as *Prasanna* (sound/happy) '*Atma*', '*Indriya*' and '*Manasa*'²." Therefore sound '*Manasa*' is highly responsible for attaining complete health.

Materials & Methods

The classical texts of Ayurveda with their commentaries, other Ayurvedic texts and journals,

relevant websites, articles and presentation were referred.

Definition of '*Manasa*'

- An entity which is responsible for the presence or absence of the knowledge or cognition.³
- An entity which establishes the contact between the soul and body and also regulates the functions of the *Indriyas*.⁴

Synonyms of '*Manasa*'

- *Sattva, Cetaḥ, Cittam, Cetaḥ, Hrudayam, Svantam, Hrut, Manasam, Manah.*

Seat of '*Manasa*'

In Ayurvedic classics seat of '*Manasa*' has been described at various places with different views which are given as under:

1. Indefinite

Mind is continuously active i.e. *Cañcala*;⁵ so it cannot stay at one particular place. Hence it is very difficult to say about the seat of '*Manasa*'.

2. *Hrudaya*

Many references are available in *Caraka* and *Sushruta Samhitas* regarding the seat of '*Manasa*'. Both *Acaryas* have mentioned that only

Hrudaya is the seat of *Cetana*⁶ in the body. It indicates that *Hrudaya* is the actual seat of 'Manasa'.

3. Shira

Caraka has explained that *Prana* and all *Indriyas* are situated in *Uttamanga* i.e. among all *Indriyas*, 'Manasa' is situated in *Uttamanga* i.e. *Shira*.⁷

4. Sarva Sharira

Acarya Caraka states that *Sarva Sharira* is *Adhishtana* of *Atindriya* i.e. mind. All the above said references regarding the seat of 'Manasa' suggest various places but majority of *Acaryas* confirm that the actual seat of 'Manasa' is *Hrudaya* and its transportation channel is *Sarva Sharira*⁸

Characteristics of 'Manasa'

Anutvam (Atomic dimension) and *Ekatvam* (Oneness) are considered to be the two characteristics of 'Manasa'⁹. These are very basic characteristics of mind. If it was not so all kind of perceptions would have occurred at same time.

Physiology of 'Manasa'

The physiology of 'Manasa' is a vast topic. The objects, functions, mode of actions, *Manovaha Strotas* and *Vyapar* are included in the study of physiology of 'Manasa'.

Objects of 'Manasa'

Cintyam (Things requiring thought), *Vicaryam* (Consideration), *Uhyam* (Hypothesis), *Dhyeyam* (Emotional thinking), *Samkalpyam* (Determination) or whatever that can be known by mind is regarded as its objects.¹⁰

Functions of 'Manasa'

Indriyabhigraha (control of sense organs), *Svasya nigraha* (self restraint), *Uha* (hypothesis) and *Vicara* (consideration) represent the functions of mind.¹¹

Indriyabhigraha- 'Manasa' is called the controller of *Indriyas* because it indicates to send and receive impulses and inspirations to the cognitive senses; so as to facilitate them for the perception of objects.

Svasya Nigraha- 'Manasa' has got a specialty that is of *Svasya nigraha* i.e. self control. It is necessary to have right orientation towards desired objects and restraining from those after the purpose is fulfilled.

Uha - *Acarya Cakrapani* has explained that the knowledge of perceived objects obtained by complete examination by mind is called *Uha* or simply it means the *Jnana* of *Indriyas*.

Vicara - *Cakrapani* has stated that thinking upon perceived objects for its reception (*Upadeya*) or rejection (*Heya*) is *Vicara*.

Mode of Action

The *Manasa* acts in three stages-

1. Perception (Cognitive or Sensory)
2. Discussion and Determination.
3. Stimulation or Initiation (Conation or Motor Reflex).

1. Perception (Cognitive or Sensory)- In this stage *Indriya* (sense organs) receives *Artha* (objects of sense organs) if it is stimulated by 'Manasa'¹². *Caraka* also explains that 'Manasa' is a key factor to *Indriya* for the reception of *Arthas*. For the occurrence of perception the connection among *Atma*, *Indriya*, 'Manasa' and *Arthas* is very essential.¹³

2. Discussion and Determination- After the perception the procedure of the actual analysis starts. These processes i.e. *Cintyam*, *Vicaryam*, *Uhyam*, *Dhyeyam*, *Samkalpyam* etc. highlight the various objects of mind according to its capacity. It gives the determination to the perception.

3. Stimulation or Initiation (Conation or Motor Reflex) - This part of the physiology of 'Manasa' is related to *Karmendriyas*. 'Manasa' is called *Ubhayendriya* because it connects *Jnanendriyas* and *Karmendriyas*. After the determination of knowledge perceived by *Jnanendriyas*; further necessary and desired actions are to be done by *Karmendriyas*. In this way beginning from the cognitive and sensory perception up to the stimulation of motor reflexes 'Manasa' performs whole process of knowledge.

Mano - Vyapara

This term is coined by philosophy. It describes the various mental activities.

There are two types of *Mano Vyapara* -

1. *Paridrushta* (perceivable)
2. *Aparidrushta* (inferable)

Paridrushta karmas are those which are visible, perceivable and cognitional. Under this five types of mental operations (*Citta Vruttis*) are incorporated which are - *Pramana* (real cognition), *Viparyaya* (pervasive cognition), *Vikalpa* (imagination), *Nidra* (sleep), *Smruti* (memory). Out of these 'Viparyaya' is of special significance in psychology.

Aparidrushta (inferable) mental transactions are: *Nirodha* (restraint), *Dharma* (peculiarity), *Samskara* (habit), *Parinama* (change), *Jivana* (life

force), *Ceshta* (activity), *Shakti* (power). These can be understood only by means of *Anumana* or *Aptopdesha*. 'Manasa' acts in such a speed that the sequence of transactions cannot be traced out.

Manovaha Srotasa

Acarya Caraka has mentioned that the channels of the whole body transport the *Tridoshas*; similarly 'Manasa' is transported through same channels to provide *Cetana* to all the living cells of the body¹⁴. These are called *Manovaha Srotasas* in Ayurvedic texts but separate description regarding this topic is unavailable in any ancient text. The most renowned commentator of *Caraka Samhita*, *Acarya Cakrapani* stated that *Manovaha Srotasas* are spread all over the body but *Hrudaya* and *Dasha Dhamanis* can be considered as the main *srotasa*. They can also be called as 'Manovahi Srotamsi'^{15,16}, 'Cetanavahi srotasa' or 'Samjnavahi Srotasa'¹⁷ etc particularly with reference to the context of *Unmada*, *Apasmara*, *Mada*, *Murccha* and *Samnyasa*.

Manasa Doshas

Ayurveda defines *Doshas* as "Dushyantiti Doshah" i.e. which vitiate or get vitiated are known as *Doshas*. In case of *Manasika Vyadhi* the factors responsible are 'Manasa' *Doshas*¹⁸. Three psychic factors *Shudhha amsha* or *Sattvika amsha*, *Rajasika amsha* and *Tamasika amsha* have been recognized in *Ayurveda* but *Shudhha amsha* has not been admitted as *Manasika Dosh* because it has been considered without any taint and represents *Kalyanamsha* i.e. beneficial aspect of mental state. *Ayurveda* considers the rest of two *Manasa amshas* as *Manasika Doshas*. *Acarya Caraka* considers them as morbid factors affecting the mind. *Rajasa* and *Tamasa Dosh* produces all kind of mental fluctuations through which the pathogenesis of various diseases can develop. Among disorders caused by *Rajasa* and *Tamasa Doshas* are *Kama* (desire), *Krodha* (anger), *Lobha* (greed), *Moha* (delusion), *Irshya* (jealousy), *Mana* (pride), *Shoka* (grief), *Cittodvega* (anxiety), *Bhaya* (fear), and *Harsha* (exhilaration). *Rajasa* and *Tamasa* are two psycho-pathogenic factors causing mental diseases. These are emotional instincts but when disturbed, result in mental diseases.

CONCLUSION

Manasa is most important entity in human beings. Now a day's psychosomatic and psychiatric diseases are prevalent. For understanding psychosomatic and psychiatric aspect it is necessary to understand human psyche. Human

psyche is all about *Manasa*, its behavior, actions, reactions etc. Sound and thorough knowledge of *Manasa*, its functions and physiology is mandatory for any physician who is willing to treat the psychological aspect of his patients along with physical one. Therefore an attempt to elaborate the physiology and mode of action of *Manasa* is made in this article to facilitate the better understanding of human psychology. This in turn will help the Ayurvedic scholars as well as physicians to treat psychosomatic and psychiatric diseases.

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