



ISSN 2456-3110

Vol 4 • Issue 2

Mar-Apr 2019

Journal of **Ayurveda and Integrated Medical Sciences**

www.jaims.in

JAIMS



Charaka
Publications

Indexed

Literary review of *Manas* in Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

Manas is the chief component of life (Ayu) which is the combined state of *Sharira* (body), *Indriya* (senses), *Satwa* (psyche) and *Atma* (Soul). The study of *Manas* (psychology) is an integral part of the basic thought of Ayurveda. Mind, Soul and body are the tripod on which life depends. In *Bhela Samhita*, *Shira* (brain) has been described as the abode of *Manas*. *Manas* is stated to be under the control of *Vata*. It has been stated that *Manas* and *Vata* work as synergism. Understanding the concept of mind is the ultimate source of health. Mental fitness of patient can be assessed with the help of *Satwa* examination. Depending upon its strength, it is of three types, viz. *Pravara*, *Madhyama* and *Avara Satwa*. *Satwajaya* therapy is to restrain mind from desire for unwholesome objects.

Key words: *Manas*, *Triguna*, *Sharir*, *Indriya*, *Atma*.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the concept of mind is the ultimate source of health. Modern science has started to emphasize on the concept of mind and psychosomatic disorders in last century. However Ayurveda has realized importance concept of mind in maintaining health of individual for thousands of years. *Manas* is an *Ubhayatmaka Indriya* i.e. both *Jnanendriya* and *Karmendriya*. Also known as *Antarindriya* or *Antahkarana*. The source from which knowledge and thoughts arrive is called *Manas*. *Manas* is without any *Rupa*. It is *Nirvikara*. As it is an *Atindriya Swaroopa* could be understood through *Lakshanas*. *Manas* is exposed to *Vedanas* like *Sukha*, *Dukha*, *Vichara*,

Krodha, *Kama* etc. only through *Manas*. Charakacharya has mentioned *Manas* in *Sharirsthan*^[1] along with functions of *Manas*. In *Vimansthan*^[2] he has not mentioned *Manovaha Srotas* separately but in *Indriyasthan* and *Chikitsasthan*^[3] *Manovaha Srotas* is mentioned. *Manas* which is known as mind is very well described in Ayurveda.

Swaroopa of Manas

Manas is without any *Rupa*. It is *Nirvikara*. As it is an *Athindriya Swaroopa* could be understood through *Lakshanas*. *Manas* is exposed to *Vedanas* like *Sukha*, *Dukha*, *Vichara*, *Krodha*, *Kama* etc. only through *Manas*.

Acharya Sushruta^[4] says that we can't learn without co-ordination between *Manas*, soul, sense organs and subjects.

Seat of Manas in Ayurvedic Literatures

Various references are available regarding the seat of *Manas* which are being discussed as here under.

1. Indefinite Mind is continuously active, so it cannot stay at one particular place. Hence, it is very difficult to say about the seat of *Manas*.
2. Many references are available in *Charaka* and *Sushruta* regarding the seat of *Manas* in *Hridaya*.^[5] Both *Acharyas* have mentioned that

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Submission Date: 13/03/2019 Accepted Date: 20/04/2019

Access this article online

Quick Response Code



Website: www.jaims.in

DOI: 10.21760/jaims.4.2.23

only *Hridaya* is the seat of *Chetana* in the body. *Vagbhatt* also indicates that, the *Hridaya* is the actual seat of *Manas*. *Hridaya* is considered to be the seat of *Trigunas*.

3. *Acharya Charaka* has explained that *Prana* and *Indriyas* are situated in *Uttamanga*^[6] i.e. *Shira*. Among the whole *Indriyas*, *Manasa* is the supreme because it is the controller of them.
4. The whole of the body is the seat of mind. All the references regarding the seat of *Manas* suggest it as *Hridaya*.

Manas Gunas

Anutva and *Ekatva*^[7] are the qualities of mind. *Anu* means *Sukshma*, subtle or in other words mind is so minute that it cannot be seen. Due to its micro size mind can move in the body very fast. Due to subtleness, it conjugates with different sense organs to perceive knowledge rapidly. Mind conjugates with sense organs so rapidly that visualization, hearing and perceiving the smell, all these processes seem to occur at one time. *Manas* is only one but because of its extra ordinary speed we feel as if there are numerous *Manas*. We feel that *Manas* operates through all organs at the same time but logically it is impossible because all our *Indriyas* are away from one another and are of different nature. We are able to see an object and same time we can touch it and smell it because of unimaginably high speed and subtleness of *Manas* are two qualities of *Manas* means *Manas* perceive only one *Indriyarth*^[8] at a time. *Satva*, *Raja* and *Tama* are the normal characteristics of *Manas*.

Objects of Manas

The objects^[9] of *Manas* are *Chintya* (things requiring thought), *Vicharya* (consideration), *Uhya* (hypothesis), *Dhyeya* (emotional thinking), *Sankalpya* (determination) or whatever can be known by mind, are regarded as its subjects.

1. *Chintya*: Thing requiring thought, to think about to do or not to do with purposeful or purposeless manner.

2. *Vicharya*: It is a distinct analysis, which enough to direct the mind to accept or reject a thing.
3. *Uhya*: It is a speculation, hypothetical self-discussions and logical thinking about a thing.
4. *Dhyeya*: It is an emotional thinking about distinct thing.
5. *Samkalpya*: It is consideration, determination of mind about a thing.
6. Other Subjects: Any other knowledgeable entity.

Functions of Manas

The functions of *Manas* are;

1. *Indriabhigraha* - *Manas* is called as the controller of senses because it indicates to receive and send the impulse and impels to cognitive senses for perception of objects.
2. *Svasyanigraha* - Controlling of own function or self control is another function of *Manas*. It is called *Chanchala*, so it is necessary to have *Svasyanigraha* to have right orientation towards desired objects and retraction from those after the purpose is fulfilled.
3. *Uhya* - *Chakrapani* explained in favor of *Uhya* that knowledge of imaginary objects, which produced by complete examination by mind is *Uhya*. It can be labeled as *Alochana Gyana* and it is in form of '*Nirvikalpa Gyana*'.
4. *Vichara* - *Chakrapani* stated that thinking upon perceived object for its reception (*Upadeya*) or rejection (*Heya*) is *Vichara*.

Satwa / Manas Pariksha (Psyche-Examination of mental faculties)

Satwa is mind and it regulates the body because of it is associated with soul. Mental fitness of patient can be assessed with the help of *Satwa* examination.

Modern concept of Manas

Although all functions of Central Nervous System (CNS), Autonomous Nervous System (ANS) are mentioned as functions of *Vata Dosh* the anatomical description of CNS, ANS is very rarely found.

Yogshastra has mentioned mainly *Sushumna*, *Ida*, *Pingala* and many *Nadis*. These *Nadis* can be considered as of nervous system. Control of sense organs, self-restraint, hypothesis and consideration represent the action of the mind. Beyond that flourishes the domain and intellect. Heart does not have any cognitive, intellectual or psychological function whereas brain performs many functions including cognitive, psychological functions.

Satvavajaya Chikitsa

Satvavajaya is that typical Ayurvedic approach which not only prevents the impairment of intellect, patience and memory but also brings them back to a normal state, plays a significant role in the maintenance of a harmonious state between these 3 factors ultimately leading to a happy healthy state of the individual. *Acharya Charaka* says that it is *Dhruthi* that restrain the mind from its harmful objects. It is not only helpful in psychiatric also in somatic disorders. Ayurveda explains each and every parts of evolution of a body like, *Mahat*, *Ahamkara*, *Purusha* etc, where it clearly explains about the role of *Manas* and its importance. So if this type of *Chikitsa* studied and practiced thoroughly it can be boon to the mankind and could be a revolution in the field of psychology and psychiatry.

CONCLUSION

Charaka Samhita gives a very good description of *Manas Siddhanta* including its normal and abnormal states, but all these descriptions are highly scattered. Seeds of Ayurvedic concept of *Manas* are found in different philosophical texts, but Ayurveda considers it in an applied way. *Manas* is the connecting link between the *Atma* with *Sharir* and hence influences both. *Manas* also play a role in keeping healthy status as well as in disease production. *Rajas* and *Tamas* are

the two *Dosha* of *Manas* which play a major role in causing the diseases both psychological and somatic.

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How to cite this article: Dr. Rachin Shivgotra, Dr. Rahul Kumar Gupta. Literary review of Manas in Ayurveda. J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci 2019;2:118-120. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21760/jaims.4.2.23>

Source of Support: Nil, **Conflict of Interest:** None declared.
