ROLE OF MANTRA CHIKITSA IN AYURVEDIC TOXICOLOGY

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ABSTRACT
Poison is a reality of our world and the ancients understood that being poisoned or otherwise harmed by the external environment posed a very real harm to the human body. Toxins from snakes, animals and plants were believed to have possessed a fire that would severely harm one’s well-being. One of the suggested antidotes to poison was the use of sound. In ancient classical ayurvedic texts the use of sounds in the form of chanting Mantra or hymes was very common for various types of ailments along with poison. The theories behind the working mechanism of mantras are common discussion in today’s era and it is found to some extend it works very effectively. Use of mantras in field of toxicology has a special place because poison affects not only body but also the mind of a person. The deep rooted fear of poison makes it difficult to treat. The ancient seers of Ayurveda clearly understand the impact of psychological variations on physical symptoms and thus they have mentioned various mantras for different type of poisons.

KEYWORDS: Poison is a reality of our world ayurvedic of poisons.

INTRODUCTION
The fear of poison is so much deep rooted in humans that even a simple prick in the darkness or even the touch of a snake merely is enough to produce the symptoms. In Ashtang Ayurveda, Agadtantra is a specialized branch which mainly deals with poison their manifestations and treatment. In Ayurveda, the treatment is basically divided as daivavyaprasraya yuktivyaprasraya and sattvavajay. Among them daivavyapashrayya is well known by the use of Mantra, bali, yadnya, uphar, upwas, tapas etc.[1] Mantra is included as

one of the process of *chikitsa* in Ayurveda. It is *adravyabhuta* and *daivavyapasraya chikitsa paddhati*. As the name suggest it is without any medicine or any material. Though it is without any material it is explained in *Ayurveda* as major role in various places. *Mantra* is a religious or mystical syllable or poem mainly from the Sanskrit language. They are primarily used as spiritual conduits, words or vibrations that in still one-pointed concentration in the devotee. *Mantras* originated in the Vedic religion of India, later becoming an essential part of the Hindu tradition and a customary practice with Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism.

**The Mantras**

A "*Mantra*" is a sacred utterance, a numinous sound, a syllable, word or phonemes, or group of words in Sanskrit believed by practitioners to have psychological and spiritual powers. A *Mantra* may or may not have syntactic structure or literal meaning.\(^2\) *Mantra* Treatment is based on chanting Vedic *Mantras* and awakens the body's natural healing mechanisms. The right and systematic chanting of Vedic *Mantras* produces a state where the end user receives positive energy allows the body came back to a natural state these *Mantras* are chanted between 10,000 - 100,000 times in a systematic manner. Vedic *Mantras* are energy based sounds and Vedic *Mantra* treatment is a great solution to treat physical and mental illnesses.\(^3\)

The effects of *Mantras* largely pertain to the mental, emotional and spiritual realms of life. *Mantras* inspire positive and penetrating thoughts and enlighten the emotional and deeper levels of consciousness. 'Mananat-trayate iti Mantraḥ' - By the *Manana* (constant thinking or recollection) of which one is protected or is released from the round of births and deaths, is *Mantra*. That is called *Mantra* by the meditation (*Manana*) on which the *Jiva* or the individual soul attains freedom from sin, enjoyment in heaven and final liberation, and by the aid of which it attains in full the fourfold fruit (*Chaturvarga*), i.e., *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksha*. A *Mantra* is so called because it is achieved by the mental process. The root 'Man' in the word *Mantra* comes from the first syllable of that word, meaning 'to think', and 'Tra' from 'Trai' meaning 'to protect' or 'free' from the bondage of *Sasara* or the phenomenal world. By the combination of 'Man' and 'Tra' comes *Mantra*. Rhythmical vibrations of sound give rise to forms. Recitation of the *Mantras* gives rise to the formation of the particular figure of the deity.\(^3\)

A *Mantra* may have a meaning, or it may not have one. It may be sublime thought, or it may not be. Many times, the arrangement of its syllables is such as to give out a meaning, while at
other times, this construction is so haphazard that no intelligible meaning can be made out of it. Each Mantra whether it has meaning or not but has a particular wavelength or frequency. Each sound vibration from the Mantra chanting enlivens a specific part of the human body. The rhythm and the dynamics of these sounds in the body are just phenomenal and very conducive for the mind to slip into meditation and go into total rest.

**Mantra as medicine**

From the ancient time the Mantras have been used for healing purposes. In Vedas and upnishad, various types of Mantras are described to overcome various ailments. Atharva veda had numerous hymns addressed to Indra, Varuna, Agni and other Gods for relief from a variety of ailments such as fever, leprosy, jaundice, urinary obstruction and diarrhea diseases were looked upon as punishments awarded by Gods who were angered by human transgressions. The hymns invariably accompanied with various rituals mentioned in kaushika sutra of Atharva veda.[4] Mantra is explained in Ayurveda as foremost role in various places.[5] It is explained in various events both in healthy and unhealthy conditions. It is equally useful in healthy people to maintain the health and to treat the diseases hence it is explained under the code of virtuous conduct (sadvritta) also.[6] As per Karma phala siddhanta, diseases may be a sign of wrong action in present or previous life.[7] It requires spiritual re-examination of lives, particularly if the disease is severe. Mantra provides a mental empowerment in harmony with the rhythm of the cosmos to facilitate the cosmic healing force.[8] In Ayurveda, apart from herbal remedies for diseases; a stress is laid on Mantra recitation also to enhance the healing. In samhitas we got various references, in concern with the uses of Mantras. E.g.

- In Jaatakarma that is the reciting of Mantras in the newborn's right ear, requesting the Gods to protect the newborn from evil spirits.[9]
- In the treatment of Jwara (fever),[10]
- In Unmada (Insanity) and Apasmara (Epilepsy).[11]
- In treatment of aagantuja shopha (exogenous oedema).[12]
- During the labour (Prasuti)[13]
- Aapo hi siha mentioned in Sadvritta (Code of conduct)of Ayurveda is originally from Rig-Veda.[14]

In this way the role of Mantra is better described and well defined in many places. Other than this, it is described in Vamana (Emesis) and Virecana (Purgation) procedures etc.[15]
In Ayurveda Mantras are considered to be like foods and herbs as they have particular energetic effects as mentioned. They can be expanding or contracting, heating or cooling, light or heavy, soft or harsh in their effects. The overall energetic of Mantra depends upon following factors viz. Sound factor, pronounce the Mantra correctly and force, intensity, velocity or life force, which will alter its energy, meaning and impact, different tones, thought, meaning, intention, emotion and most important is faith of that person who is chanting it.[16]

**Mantra in Ayurvedic toxicology**

Ashtang Ayurveda is having its specialised branch of Agad tantra or dramshta chikitsa for dealing with poisons. This branch deals with treatment of various natural toxins resulting from wild lives such as animals, insects, or birds, herbs, vegetables, plants, minerals, artificial poisons, water and air pollution. Agada Tantra also includes the negative effects of bad food habits and drugs, which could lead to chronic poisoning symptoms. Agada Tantra describes two types of poisons[17] “the ‘natural poison’ and the ‘artificial poison’. The natural poison is classified as inanimate (Sthaavara), and the animate (Jangama). The inanimate poisons are those of plant origin and toxic minerals, metals, and others found within the earth. Among the animate poisons are venoms of animals such as scorpions, insects, snakes, etc. Artificial poisons are the poisons prepared by combining various kinds of animate and inanimate poisons.

From the ancient time it is known that being poisoned posses’ very harm to health. Thus from the pre historic period the means and methods to tackle poison were discovered. In Vedas and puranas, various hymes are mentioned to overcome the poisonous conditions. During that period the use of Mantras or hymes were more popular than the use of medicines or procedures. Latter on, during the samhita period the use of mantras became limited. Along with the development of ayurvedic literature in the form of samhitas, dravyabhut chikitsa became more popular than adravyabhu chikitsa. Still the use of mantras remains prevalent in ayurvedic toxicology. According to Acharya Vagbatt “poison is full of tejas…… it does not get warded off by the administration of drugs as quickly as by the use of Mantras, full of satya, brahmcharya and tapas of the priest.”[18]

Under the 24 modalities for the treatment of poison acharya Charak mentioned mantras on the first place.[19] Mantra chikitsa should be practiced by individual who abstaining from women, meat & wine. Person should take little food, maintain hygiene of body & should
sleep on mattress made with _kusha_ grass. He should please god by offerings sacrifices for _mantra siddhi_. It is also said that if _mantras_ are not practised properly or narrated in improper manner they may not be effective. Thus one should use _mantra_ very consciously.

Use of _mantras_ can be seen in _ayurvedic_ toxicology in various places like

- While applying the tourniquet, especially in snake bites
- During preparation of various _agad yoga_ such as _Mahagandhhasti agad_ one should chant _mantras_.
- In _alark visha chikitsa_.
- In doubtful conditions of poison, water treated with _mantras_ should be used.

**DISCUSSION**

Psychotherapy works more in many cases of poisons. In many cases, more than the toxic effects, fear and anxiety causes much severe damages. Chanting of _mantras_ in specific manner helps to improve the confidence of patient and reduces anxiety in major cases. In modern toxicology also reassurance of the patient is must as it stimulates sympathetic nervous system and strengthens the peripheral blood vessels, which help in maintaining the normal blood flow to vital organs. Use of _abhimanrit jala in shanka visha_ is a good example of that. Thus _mantra_ has a role in reassuring the victim. On other hand the energy level in the surrounding varies while chanting _mantras_. A well chanted _mantra_ is very effective better than that done by drugs. The vibrations caused by the _mantras_ in surroundings tune up with the rhythm of human body. Because, human body has rhythmic contents of heart beat, the lung functions, the intestinal functions and the mind function too. Each _mantra_ has some contents of the words, the sounds, the vibrations, the tone, the rhythm, the tune, definite pitch and certain intensity of frequency. This content of _mantras_ has making particular impact on human body and helpful in correcting the de-arranged rhythm of body as well as mind. Now a day, effects on various types of sounds has been studied on human body and it is clearly demonstrated by various researches that sounds of different frequencies exerts different effects on livings. This was known by the great Indian philosophers from the very beginning and thus the _mantras_ were very specifically designed so that while chanting them properly they are capable to exert specific effect.

**CONCLUSION**

_Mantras_ remain the eternal part of _ayurvedic_ treatment from the very beginning. They were developed, used and adopted as a part of _daivavyapashrayya chikitsa_ and acquire special
places in all the samhitas in various places including toxicology. As the main hazard in the
treatment of the poisons is the enrooted belief related to poison which is responsible for the
anxiety and fear in patient and ultimately causes more damages than expected. Chanting of
mantras can be proved helpful in such conditions to relieve the fear and anxiety of patient
and relax him so that unwanted symptoms can be avoided. The need of the hour is to
understand and explore more the mechanism of mantras and use them effectively in the
treatment.

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