

EMPOWERING THE MIND WITH THE HELP OF AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

The concept of relation of sound body and mind in Ayurveda is well known. No one is taught in life, how to handle mind and to take care of it properly. Almost all miseries in human life can perhaps be attributed to the mishandling of mind. A proper understanding of mind and cognitive process, will help in mastering mind. In Ayurveda Sareera and Manas both are abode of diseases. Raga, Krodha, Moha, Bhaya etc are considered as Mano viakaras. Two strategies that can be adopted in preventive health care are avoiding exposure to risk factors and reducing the susceptibility of mind by empowering the mind.

Satwajaya is to hold back the mind from undesirable activities. By satwavajaya only psychological imbalance can be tackled. The strength of mind can be increased by increasing level of satwaguna, which is nothing but purity and contentment.

KEYWORDS: Sareera, Manas, Satwavajaya, Satwaguna.

INTRODUCTION

Ayu which is the adhikarana of ayurveda is a harmonious blend of Sareera, Indriya, Satwa, and Atma.^[1] Satwa is Manah (mind) and it controls and directs the Sareera in conjunction with Atma.^[2] It is responsible for the functioning of Indriyas. Indriyas are capable of perception only in the presence of mind.^[3] It act as the connecting link between Indriya and Atma. Jnanasyabhava or abhava is considered as the lakshana of mind, as Jnana is the the consequence of interaction of Indryartha, Indriya, Manah and Atma.^[4] According to Acharya Susrutha mind is a Karmendriya as well as Jnanendriya- Ubhayatmaka.^[5] Happiness and unhappiness are the favourable and unfavourable perceptions in life, which are direct objects

of mind. Controlling the Indriyas and mind itself^[6] are considered as Karmas of mind. Hridaya is considered as adhishtana of Manah.^[7] Acharya Bhela has a different opinion. He locates mind in shiras and thalu^[8] In, Unmada Chikitsa Adhikarana Acharya Charaka mentions about Manovaha Srotas which is pervading all over body.

ROLE OF MIND IN HEALTH

According to WHO 'Health is a state of complete physical, mental, social well being and not merely the absence of absence of disease or infirmity'.^[8]

Mental health: Manasika karmas which are not desirable like Lobha, Soka, Bhaya, Krodha which are considered as Kevala Manovikaras.^[9] These are negative emotions in response to various stimuli in life, are categorised as Dharaneeya Vega^[10] or suppressible urges which are undesirable activities of mind which influences social life of a person.

Mental health is an integral and essential component of health. An important implication of this definition is mental health is more than just the absence of mental disorders. Mental health is a state of well being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities can cope up with the normal stress of life, can work productively and is able to keep contributing to his or her community. Mental health and well-being are fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, emote, interact with each other, earn a living and enjoy life. On this basis, the promotion protection and restoration of mental health can be regarded as a vital concern of individual, communities and societies throughout the world.

Role of mind in ill-health

In Ayurveda there are two Adhistana for Rogas, Sareera and Manas.^[11] Prajnapradha is considered as one of the basic causes of Rogas. Prajnapardha is considered as one of the basic causes of Roga. Prajaparadha^[12] is the improper knowledge and activities due to improper budhi for which mind is also responsible. Kevala Manovikaras are the conditions affecting Manas only. There are condition which can affect both mind and body. Psychosomatic illness are physical disorder caused by or notably influenced by emotional factors (For which no specific cause is identifiable eg; Fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome. Psychic manifestation of systemic illness is also there. Eg; All chronic diseases are often associate with depression. Arathi. Mano Avasadam, Abudhitwam are some of the nonsomatic symptoms of Bahudoshadusti which are indications for Sodhana Chikitsa.^[14]

Need for empowerment

Multiple social, psychological, and biological factors determine the level of mental health of a person at any point of time. For example, persistent socio-economic pressures are recognized risks to mental health for individuals and communities. The clearest evidence is associated with indicators of poverty, including low levels of education.

Poor mental health is also associated with rapid social change, stressful work conditions, gender discrimination, social exclusion, unhealthy lifestyle, risks of violence, physical ill-health and human rights violations. Loss of moral and culture values in education and result oriented activities deserves special mentioning in this context.

There are also specific psychological and personality factors that make people vulnerable to mental disorders. Lastly, there are some biological causes of mental disorder including genetic factors which contribute to chemical changes in the brain. Promotive empowerment for those who are healthy, apparently healthy and not healthy deserve empowerment. In 2013, the World Health Assembly approved a “comprehensive mental health action plan for 2013-2020”. The plan is a commitment by all WHO’s member states to take specific actions to improve mental health and to contribute to the attainment of a set of global targets. In this plan, special emphasis is given to promotive and preventive aspects of mental health. Empowering of mind has got three aspects: promotive, preventive, and curative. The preventive and promotive empowering of mind will be our subject of concern. For an illness to occur, there should be two factors basically: Cause, Susceptibility of the host. In a preventive aspect, we can adopt two strategies: Avoiding the risk factors (Nidanparivarjana) and reducing the susceptibility of the host. Mind is that entity which is involved in everything that we do. All miseries in life are ultimately due to our ignorance in handling mind.

Concept of prajnaparadha

Prajnaparadha is the term used to denote all the undesirable activities due to improper functioning of the cognitive system. All the mistakes in our life are basically due to the intellectual faculties like reasoning and memory, and they come under prajnaparadha. The elements of prajnaparadha are Manas, Budhi, and Karmendriya. Prajnaparadha can occur in three levels – Manasikam, Vachikam, and Kayikam.

Manasika Prajnapardha

The negative emotion like krodha, soka, bhaya, dwesha, eeshya, lobha etc are undesirable mental activities and these are called the mano Vikaras. In our daily life we are so caught up in the activities of mind that we do not have time to discover what the mind itself is. To understand learn to be a passive observer of mind. Then we can perceive the fluctuations of mind in thoughts feelings and emotions. Our mind is not same as us. Differentiate ourselves from our mind. Learn to use mind as an instrument. One should learn to care as well as properly use the mind. Master the mind and never let it master you. Mind is nothing but the totality of our thought process. We should always maintain the attitude of witnessing the mind. The sense organs are constantly bringing in a variety of sensory impulses from the external world impresses the mind which causes us to want them and make us think that our happiness depend on them. This is called desire or Upadha.^[15] As highlighted by Acharya Caraka desire is a strong cause of psychological imbalance^[16] This happens in two ways. When we are not able to attain our desire and when we are forced to go with something we don't want. The result is negative emotions like Soka, Krodha, Dwesha, Eershya which are categorized as Dhareneeyavegas the urges that are to be controlled they will flare up and gain strength enough to seize the the mind. Then it will manifest in the thoughts, behaviour and relationship with others. This itself is Manasika Pranjapaparadha.

Vachika Prajnapardha

All undesirable use of speech and language including telling lies, abusing, harsh and hurting words, speaking in inappropriate place and time are prajnaparadhas. According to Ayurveda one of the basic causes for ill health is prajnaparadha. So in the preventing strategy of nidanaparivarjana the first step is identification of prajnapardhas the cause. Satwavajaya is a concept of controlling the mind from undesirable objects. If we are able to control mind, we are able to refine our manshika, vachik karmas as mind is mind is responsible for the functioning of mind as well as karmendriyas (which include vak). Acharyas gives us the guidelines of controlling the sense organs from undesirable objects. Limiting the desire. and Controlling the emotion-for this purpose.

Role of budhi in prajnapardha

It is not always possible to selectively expose ourselves to positive experience in daily life. Here comes the relevance of budhi who screens and ward off the negative experiences. Intelligence or budhi digest the the perceptions and turns them into impression which are

stored as memories in the deeper levels of mind. The perception are scanned by the faculty of intelligence Dhriti which decide good and bad. Here budhi plays the role of a door keeper. The proper functioning of buddhi helps us to discern the truth of our experience from its outer names and forms. It enable us to store only the good impression and to discard the unwanted. When there is a defect in the budhi what we call prajnaparadha, we mistake the appearance of thing of things for their meaning or truth context.

The door keeper can control those things that enter into the mind. This depends on the principles according to which our reasoning ability is trained to work. If our reasoning faculty of buddhi is not virtuous then it rationalize our likes and dislike rather than discerning the truth of things. Derranged budhi just like a bribed door keeper lets any influence into the mind and then seeks a reason to justify. The egoistic intelligence is perhaps the most dangerous enemy of human being because turns the instrument of understanding truth into one of the importance of budi in mental health.

A very disciplined life with proper fitness of body, proper sleep, practicing concentration techniques, medhasookta, and use of medya rasayanas can help in sharpening budhi.

Concept of reinforcing the mind –Satwabalavardhanam

Satwa Rajas and Tamas are the Trigunas. Satwam(mind) is Trigunatmakam. The proportion of these gunas decide the basic traits responsible for the individuality of a person. A mind with predominance of satwaguna is called shudhaSatwam, those with the predominance of Satwguna is called SudhaSatwam, and those with predominance of Rajoguna and Tamoguna are Rajasika and Tamasika Satwas respectively. The level these gunas in the same person may vary from time to time.

The perceptions from the external world once filtered and processed by mind with the help of budhi will be stored as permanent impression in deeper mind which links with the Atman. These impression absorbed in the deeper mind becomes part of consciousness just as assimilated food becomes part of our body. These impression grow like seeds and eventually compel us to act according to their nature. These impressions will decide the gunas of the satwa and produce various tendencies which result in karmas which decide our life. So it is very important that allow only positive impression to reach the core. Here comes the importance of right association or interactions with environmental-satsangam.

To some extent who we are psychologically is the result of our interaction with the environment. That is we can develop satwabala in life-yuktikritbala. All those factors which can calm down and purify both mind and body can help in this development.

Satwaguna is of nature of pleasure in various forms as, purity, transparency, lightness and joy. According to Acharya Susruta –Satyam, Dharmam, Dhriti, Smriti, Medha are attributed to satwa. Rajas is responsible for chalatwa and preraktwa. It act as a stimulus for bringing and maintaining activity in all animate and inanimate objects. Although Satwa and Thomas have their own functions, they are unable to avaranaka and vishadaswabhav. Some sort of inhibition is also necessary. So it is always ideal to have a satwa predominance support by rajas and a minimal amount of thamas. A proper balance is to be maintained for which the principle of sarvadharmeshumadhyamamis to be adopted.

Ahara, vihara and aushadha.

Milk and ghee are medhyadravyas. According to Ayurveda diet regimen these are to be included in daily diet of person especially for children. Thiktarasa (bitter) is designated as Medhyarasa and madhurarasa is ayusyam. All those foods that are Ojasya can have a positive influences on mind.

Viharas include dincharyas, sadvaruthanustanam, dharmadhistitakarma etc. specific like waking at brahmamuhurta, nityaabhyangyasnana are said to be Ayushyam. Sadvirtha in sadvritha includes a code of conduct for good mental social and physical life. It includes the guidelines like.

Associate with virtuous people only and keep away from the vice., never overstrain mind and body., Never overburden or pamper your senses, Keep away from alcohol., Acharya susrutha group enlight activities as Medhakaragana. It includes Satataadhayayanam, vadam, Paratantravalokanam, Tadvidya and Acharyaseva. Right from the infancy we can adopt measures for enhancing mental power and intellect. Hemadirprashana and various ghrita yogas are used as apart of balopacharam. The prakriti of a person is influenced by the ahara and vihar of mother during pregnancy.

In adults Panchkarma chikitsa can be adopted which is having the benefits of Indriya, mana and budhi prasadam. The attainment of prakritavastha after sodhana chikitsais characterised bysatwasampat.

After Sodhanachikitsa, Rasayanas can be administered. Rasayanas are oushadh yogas having a positive effect on Meha, smriti aznd Ayu. Even the practice of wearing some herbs (Prasasthaoushadidharanam) are said to have such effects.eg;Vacha. Some of the Medhyaa rasayana oushadhis are Brahmi, Sankhapushi, Yastimadhu, Vacha, and Mandookaparni.

CONCLUSION

Achrya caraka concisely states that avoiding prajnaparadha, controlling the sence,proper recollection of previous experience, proper awareness of self with orientation of place and time, following sadvritha are measures for preventing ill health of mind.

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