

THE PSYCHOSOMATIC CONCEPT IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

The psychosomatic approach to the health and disease has occupied the central stage in current health scenario of the world. Though the body – mind issue has remained a subject of interest for long time but it has gained maximum attention recently. Grossly speaking, it has been clearly formulated that human beings cannot be studied on one single parameter. One needs separate parameters for evaluating the body as well as mind for complete knowledge. However it is also believed that man is a composite psychosomatic entity and therefore it should be studied or evaluated on one parameter which of course has to be comprehensive enough to include both body and mind as a whole. Thus man being a psychosomatic organism is naturally prone to psychosomatic disorders. Though in general every disease is psychosomatic in nature but in limited terms a psychosomatic disease is one whose main cause is in the psyche and the manifestations are predominantly visible in the body. It has been established that probably after bacteriological and immunological aetiology of disease, psychological factors are the most widely applicable causes of disease. In Ayurveda health and disease both are described on the basis of the fundamental of psychosomatism. There are many instances found in Ayurvedic literature supporting the psychosomatic concept. This review article is aimed to highlight the psychosomatic approach of Ayurveda and to highlight the role of various *manasa bhavas* in the etiology and symptoms of diseases.

KEYWORDS: Psychosomatic disease, *Manasa Bhava*, *Prajñāprādha*.

INTRODUCTION

Āyurveda lays emphasis on total health i.e. state of physical, sensorial, mental and spiritual wellbeing called *Arogya* i.e. absence of disease. The word 'Swāsthya' refers to the state of an individual being seated in himself i.e. he is in his most original or natural state. According to *Ācārya Suśruta* an individual is considered as *Swastha* whose *Doṣas*, *Agnis*, *Dhātus* and *Malas* are in state of *Sāmya* i.e. equilibrium, balance or normalcy

and who is mentally, sensorially and spiritually in the state of calmness.¹ This touches all the four aspects of *Āyu*.

In *Āyurveda* the evolutionary process of life is a complex phenomenon and accordingly the concept of disease especially the psychiatric disease is also very complex. *Ācārya Charaka* has opined that *Manasa* (mind) and *Śarīra* (body) along with *Indriyas* (senses) are the *Adhiṣṭhāna* (site) of *Vedana*² (suffering). It is therefore clear that

Āyurvedic concept of disease is both mental as well as physical. 'Manasa' has been regarded as the substratum of *Rogas* along with *Śārīra*³. Thus grossly there are two types of diseases i.e. *Śārīrika* & *Mānasika*. *Āyurveda* has stressed on the inter-relationship between the mental and physical diseases. According to *Ācārya Charaka*, the psychic diseases like *Kāmādi* and physical diseases like fever etc. follow each other and occasionally occur together also⁴. In this context, *Acharya Chakrapani* postulates the psychosomatic concept of *Āyurveda* very clearly. According to him:

1. Physical diseases affect the physical diseases.
2. Mental diseases affect mental diseases.
3. Mental diseases affect the physical diseases.
4. Physical diseases affect the mental diseases.

Out of these four sets the third one is most important and it is known as psychosomatic aspect.

PSYCHOSOMATIC CONCEPT IN AYURVEDA

Though the psychosomatic approach has attained the current thought, it is relatively a recent development in modern system of medicine where it has been the basis of *Āyurvedic* fundament from the very start. It can be further elaborated by following points:

- i) The very genesis of *Āyurveda* revolves around the psychophysical concept of the evolution of universe i.e. *Srṣṭi Utpatti Krama* and the concept of *Puruṣa* which is the object of action of this science i.e. *Karma Puruṣa* or *Cikitsā Puruṣa*. It is postulated that *Puruṣa* consist of the *Sattva*

(mind), the *Ātmā* (soul) and the *Śārīra* (body) and thus a psychosomatic entity.

- ii) The acceptance of 'Mānasa' as an *Aśrya* of *Roga* and the inter-relationship of somatic and mental diseases re-affirm the psychosomatic approach of *Āyurveda* towards all diseases.⁵ In the same way, the effects of body and mind have been described in terms of 'Śārīra' and 'Mānasa' *Doṣas* i.e. *Vāta*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* and *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*.⁶

- iii) The Health and disease both are described on the basis of the fundamental of psychosomatism. In *Āyurveda* the morbid action of *Doṣa*, *Dhātu* and *Mala* is responsible for the diseases. When they move normally in their *Srotasas* (channels) the harmonious condition remains and the person stays healthy but when due to some defects in *Srotasas* they are obstructed then that part of the body becomes morbid. The disease is called *Doṣa- Dūṣya Samūrccchanā* in *Āyurveda*. The *Doṣas* are not only somatic but *Mānasika Doṣas* are also present known as *Rajasa* and *Tamasa*. Therefore *Mānasika Doṣas* are also very important in the pathogenesis.

- iv) Similarly, *Sukha* (a feeling of well being) and *Dukha* (a feeling of ill being) have been described as the features of health and disease respectively.⁷ The use of the terms *Sukha* and *Dukha* implicates the psychosomatic approach. The inclusion of *Kāma*, *Krodha*, *Rāga*, *Dveṣa* and similar other *Mānasika Bhavas* or emotions into the category of *Roga* again reaffirm the psychosomatic approach of *Āyurveda*.

- v) The fundamental of the constitution or *Prakṛti* is considered the sum total of the physique, physiology and psychology of the man. It can be understood on different bases

such as *Garbha Śārīra Prakṛti* or *Doṣa Śārīra Prakṛti* and *Jāta Śārīra Prakṛti* corresponding to *Jāti*, *Kula*, *Vaya*, *Deśa* etc.⁸

vi) The fundamental causes of disease as per *Āyurveda* are:

1. *Prajñāprādha* 2. *Asātmendriyārtha Saṃyoga* 3. *Pariṇāma*. This highlights the relevance of the relationship of the psychosomatic factors with the causes of every disease. On keen observation one can easily find the basic underlying role of one or other type of stress caused to the body and mind in the fundamental causes of a disease. *Asātmendriyārtha Saṃyoga* describes all kinds of physical incompatibilities which can be conceived in terms of deficient, excessive or altered use of different *Indriyas*. These are nothing but different kinds of stressful states. The prolonged and increased stressful state may lead to the failure of the adaptive mechanism both in the body as well as in mind. This leads to the development of disease. So, it can be hypothesised that a disease may not be the direct result of stress factor but is the result of the bodily failure to adapt with the respective stressful state. Secondly, *Prajñāprādha* is nothing but an action taken by an individual due to the lack of *buddhi* or intellect, *Smṛti* or memory, and other mental factors. This again confirms the psychic involvement in the aetiology of disease. *Pariṇāma* includes the stressful state caused by the seasonal and climatic variations.

vii) The role of mental and physical stress is further consolidated when *Ācārya Charaka* mentions that *Adharma* or moral misconduct is the essential cause of disease.⁹

viii) *Charaka* considers psychic stress and anxiety as a cause and aggravator of disease. While describing the *Agraya Dravyas* he states that '*Viṣāda*' or Depression is the most important among the factors aggravating a disease¹⁰ in contrast to *Harṣa* or happiness which has been named as the most important among the factors causing growth and nourishment.¹¹

ix) *Charaka* very clearly establishes that under circumstances a mental disease may be converted into a bodily illness and vice versa.¹² According to *Charaka* the psychic diseases like *Kāmādi* follow the physical diseases like *Jvara* and vice versa and occasionally occur together also.¹³ In this context, *Chakrapani* opines four possibilities i.e. 1. *Śārīrāṇām Śārīrena* 2. *Mānasānām Mānasena* 3. *Śārīrāṇām Mānasena* 4. *Mānasānām Śārīrena*. The third category among these four i.e. *Mānasika* diseases give rise to *Śārīrika* disease is most important. *Charaka* has finely described the contribution of psychological factors in vitiating the *Śārīrika Doṣas* viz. *Kāma*, *Śoka* and *Bhaya* vitiate the *Vāta Doṣas* and *Krodha* vitiates *Pitta Doṣa*.¹⁴ Thus psychological factors give rise to somatic problems and even aggravate them too and vice versa.

x) The concept of *Guru* and *Laghu Vyādhita Puruṣa* itself reaffirms the psychic involvement in the manifestation of any disease. Any disease presents itself in two forms- 1. *Guru* 2. *Laghu*. This demarcation is based on the Psychological strength of the *VyādhitaPuruṣa*.¹⁵ The concept of three types of *Sattva* also depicts the role of psychology in the disease.¹⁶

THE ROLE OF MĀNASIKA BHĀVAS:

Before understanding the psychiatric involvement in the pathogenesis of diseases, the various *Mānasika Bhāvas* as described in *Āyurvedic* texts should be explored. *Ācārya Charaka* and *Suśruta* has very keenly described the psychiatric involvement in various diseases. Various psychological factors known as *Mānasika Bhāvas* play a pivotal role both in development of any physical or psychiatric or psycho-somatic disease or in maintenance of health. In the '*Navegān Dhārṇīyam Adhyāyam*'; *Ācārya Charaka* proclaims that *Mānasa Vikāras* like '*Īrṣyā*', '*Śoka*', '*Bhaya*', '*Krodha*', '*Māna*', '*Dveṣa*' etc. are originated by '*Prajñāprādha*'.¹⁷ In *Vimāna Sthāna* again, *Charaka* explains that *Rajasa* and *Tamasa* are two *Doṣas* of *Mānasa* and '*Kāma*', '*Krodha*', '*Lobha*', '*Moha*', '*Īrṣyā*', '*Māna*',

'*Mada*', '*Śoka*', '*Cinta*', '*Udvega*' or '*Cittodvega*' and '*Bhaya*', '*Harṣa*' etc are its *vikāras*.¹⁸ *Ācārya Suśruta* has also very minutely calculated the '*Mānasa*' Rogas as '*Krodha*', '*Śoka*', '*Bhaya*', '*Harṣa*', '*Viṣāda*', '*Īrṣyā*', '*Abhyasuyā*', '*Dainya*', '*Mātsarya*', '*Kāma*', '*Lobha*' etc.¹⁹ *Ācārya Chakrapani Datta* in his '*Bhānumati*' commentary on *Sūtra sthāna* of *Suśruta Saṃhitā* again subdivides them into two parts i.e. *Ichhā* and *Dveṣa*. *Ichhābheda* are *Śoka-Harṣa-Dainya-Lobhādi* and *Krodha-Īrṣyā-Asuya-Madādi* is considered as *Dveṣabheda*. *Charaka* has again explained these *Mānasa Bhāvas* with their methods of examination²⁰. A brief compilation of the involvement of the psychological factors in the aetiology and symptoms of various diseases as per *Charaka Saṃhitā* is shown in the table 1&2.

Table 1. Symptomatic Involvement of MānasBhāvas in Disease as per Charaka Saṃhitā

S.No.	Vyādhi	MānasaBhāva	Citation
1.	Jvara	Vaikritam Alpam Śīlam	Cha.chi.3/12
2.	Jvara	Vaicitayam, Arati, Glāni	Cha.chi.3/26
3.	Kāmaja Jvara	Dhyān	Cha.chi.3/122
4.	Śokaja Jvara	Vāṣpa Bahulam	Cha.chi.3/123
5.	Bhayaaja Jvara	Trāsaprāyam	Cha.chi.3/123
6.	Unmāda	Dhī Vibhrama, Sattva Pariplava	Cha.chi.9/5
7.	Unmāda	Mūḍha-Chetasa, Smṛti -Buddhi-Chetasa Bhrama,	Cha.chi.9/7,8
8.	Unmāda	Buddhi-Smṛti Nāśa	Cha.chi.9/9
9.	Apasmāra	Mūḍha-Alpa Chetana	Cha.chi.10/59
10.	Atattvabhīniveśa	Nityānitye-Hitāhite Viśamabuddhi	Cha.chi.10/60
11.	Kṣataksīṇa	Vyathā Mano-Dainyam	Cha.chi.11/10
12.	Viśajanyaupdrava	Mada, Murchha, Viṣāda	Cha.chi.23/43
13.	Śamka Viṣa	Glāni, Moha	Cha.chi.23/222
14.	Mada	Sāttvika- Harṣa, Tarṣa, Rati, sukha.	Cha.chi.24/39
15.	Mada	Rājasika & Tāmasika- Moha, Nidrā	Cha.chi.24/40
16.	Prathama Mada	Lack of Buddhi - Smṛti Harṣa, Sukha, Nidrā Prabodha	Cha.chi.24/43
17.	Ma. ma Mada	MuhurSmṛti -Muhurmoha, Vyaktāvyakta Vāka	Cha.chi.24/44
18.	Tr̥tīya Mada	Mada Mohāvṛta	Cha.chi.24/48

19.	Madātya	Mānasika Kṣobha	Cha.chi.24/53
20.	Madātya	Moha, Bhaya, Śoka, Krodha	Cha.chi.24/56

Table 2 Aetiological Involvement of Mānasa Bhāvas in Disease as per Charaka Saṃhitā

S.No.	Vyādhi	Mānasa Bhava	Citation
1.	Abhiṣangaja Jvara, Jvara	Kāma, Śoka, bhaya, Krodha	Cha.chi.3/114, Cha.chi.3/115
2.	Raktpitta	Śoka	Ca. Ci. 4/62
3.	Gulma	Śoka, Krodha,	Cha.chi. 5/5,9,12,18
4.	Kuṣtha	Bhaya, Pāpakarma	Ca. Ci. 7/6,8
5.	Kilāsa	Asatyabhāṣaṇa, Kṛtghna, Ninda, Gurudharṣana, Pāpakriya	Cha.chi.7/117
6.	Rājayakṣmā	Kāma, Krodha, Lajjā (Hṛmati), Ghrṇa, Bhaya, Īrṣyā, Utkaṇṭhā, Trāsa, Śoka	Cha.chi. 8/3,4,20,24
7.	Aruchi	Dviṣṭārtha Mānasa	Cha.chi. 8/60
8.	Unmāda	Deva – Guru – Dviṣa Pradharṣana Bhaya, Harṣa, Mano-abhighāta, Alpa Sattva, Chinta, Iṣṭadravyavināśa	Cha.chi. 9/4,5,9,85
9.	Apasmāra	Dhī-Sattva Samplavam, Vihata Rajasa- Tamasa, Cinta, Kāma, Bhaya, Krodh, Śoka, Udvega, Vriddha Rajas-Tamasa, Āvṛta Buddhi – Mānasa	Cha.chi. 10/3,4,5,59
10.	Udara Roga	Papa Karma	Cha.chi.13/15
11.	Vatarsa, Pittarsa	Śoka, Krodha, Asuya	Cha.chi.14/13,15
12.	Grahani	Lolya	Cha.chi.15/40
13.	Pandu Roga	Kāma, Cinta, Bhaya, Krodha, Śoka	Cha.chi.16/9
14.	Pittaja Kasa	Krodha	Cha.chi.18/14
15.	Pittatisara, Saniipatika Atisara, Agantuka Atisara	Krodha, Īrṣyā, Bhaya – Śhoka - Chittodvega Atiyoga	Cha.chi.19/6,8,11
16.	Chhardi	Śoka, Roga Bhaya	Cha.chi.20/7
17.	Tṛṣṇa	Krodha, Bhaya, Śoka	Cha.chi.22/4
18.	Vataja Madātya, Pittaja Madātya	Śoka, Bhaya, Krodha, Gadāticāra	Cha.chi.24/89,92
19.	Hrdroga	Cinta, Bhaya, Trāsa	Cha.chi.26/77
20.	Pratiśyāya	Krodha	Cha.chi.26/104
21.	Aruci	Śoka, Bhaya, Atilobha, Krodha, Manoghna Aṣan, Gandha, Rūpa.	Cha.chi.26/124
22.	Urustambha	Bhaya	Cha.chi. 27/9
23.	Vāta Vyādhi	Cinta, Śoka, Krodha, Bhaya	Cha.chi.28/16,17
24.	Vāta śonita	Krodha	Cha.chi.29/7
25.	Śukra Duṣṭi	Cinta, Śoka, Bhaya, Krodha	Cha.chi.30/137
26.	Bijopghātaja Klaibya	Śoka, Cinta, Bhaya, Trāsa	Cha.chi.30/158

27.	Kṣyaja Klaibya	Ati Chintana, Śhoka, Krodha, Bhaya	Cha.chi.30/181
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DISCUSSION

The body and mind relationship has been an important principle in Ayurveda. The intermingling of *Sharirika* and *Manasa Doshas* plays an important role in the pathogenesis of any disease. The role of *Manasa Bhavas* in the *Nidana* (etiology) and pathogenesis (*Samprapti*) of the disease is of great significance. It needs to be explored and should be kept in mind by every physician while making the diagnosis and deciding the line of treatment. Various factors influencing the *Sharirika doshas* will ultimately vitiate *Manasika doshas* too and vice versa. Therefore no disease can be purely physical or psychological disease. As sooner or later both of these will get involved with each other and hence there is some sort of psychosomatic phase in every disease. *Manasa* is never in same state. It is always being influenced by one or another *manasa bhavas* as described above. The great founders of Ayurveda discovered this aspect centuries ago. But in actual practice in general OPDs the physicians whether Ayurvedic or from other streams seem to ignore this very fact and keep treating the visible symptoms of the patients while ignoring the underlying psychic factor in every patient which in turn results in long untreated diseases, increasing agony of the patients, everlasting quest to be completely healthy which never ends. Acarya Charaka had pronounced *Vishada* (Depression) has the greatest disease intensifying factor²¹. This itself explains how important is the psychological involvement in any disease. The chronicity, the fear to be never free from underlying disease, the less psychological strength etc. are some related

factors which are influenced by the *manasa bhavas*. Therefore this aspect is very significant in any patient.

CONCLUSION

Āyurveda has not only conceived but has laid great emphasis on psychosomatic basis of health. The role of psychological factors in the aetio-pathogenesis of various diseases reflects the Ayurvedic approach towards this very important aspect of disease. There is extensive description regarding the psychosomatic approach to the prevention and treatment of diseases described under the terms of *Ācāra Rasāyana* and *Sadvṛtta* while dealing *Anāgatabādhā Pratiṣedha* and *swasthvṛtta* regimen besides *Sattvāvajaya*, *Yoga*, *Mantra*, *Japa*, *Samādhi* etc. and the use of psychotropic drugs described as *Medhya Dravyas* and *Medhya Rasāyanas*. Thus it can be concluded that *Āyurveda* has given priority to the psychosomatic basis of health and disease including the prevention and treatment of various disorders.

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