

Psychospiritual Dimensions of Health in Ayurveda

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Abstract

Ayurveda views the physical body as a crystallization of deep-seated mental tendencies carried over from the previous lives. It regards the mind as the reflection of the body and storehouse of the impressions we access through the senses. It recognizes our true self and immortal nature beyond the mind-body complex, in which we can transcend all mental and physical difficulties. The ancient Vedic tradition, brought to this world by the great sages of India, willingly offers us a wealth of practical knowledge on how to live a healthy and meaning full life. Vedic wisdom is timeless and unbounded and, therefore, it is relevant in this modern age. Ayurveda looks at individual not as a separate physical, mental and spiritual entity but as a whole physio-psycho-spiritual holistic individual. That's why Ayurveda defines definition of health describing all the dimensions, causes with multidimension vision and at last prescribes holistic management of various psychospiritual anomalies as per time, state and stage of the disorder. This all makes Ayurveda eternal, natural and holistic medicine system of living, that is absolute solution for all the human problems and capable of taking the human existence to higher levels of evolution.

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Introduction:

The uniqueness, what makes Ayurveda the eternal science of life is that it imparts knowledge of life along with guidance for living healthy life. The word *Ayu* is defined in Ayurveda as the agreement between body, senses, mind and soul, which results in the state of living.

Shariendriya satvaatma sanyogo dhaari jeevitam (Ch. Su. 1/42)

Health has been defining with *prasnnaatmendriyamanah*, so preference of Ayurveda is to maintain health holistically from the multidimensions perspectives of physique, psyche and soul.

Samdosha samagnischa samdhatu malahkriyah|

Prassnaatmendriyemanah swasthityebhidiyte|| (Su. Su 15/41)

The Ayurveda has a significant contribution towards the preventive, curative and promotive aspects of bodily and psychic disorders. Mind has got vivid description and importance in making physical disorders as well as mental disorders. Ayurveda views the physical body as a crystallization of deep-seated mental tendencies carried over from the previous lives. It regards the mind as the reflection of the body and storehouse of the impressions we access through the senses. It recognizes our true self and immortal nature beyond the mind-body complex, in which we can transcend all mental and physical difficulties (Frawley, D 1991) During ancient times, due to following of *satvika vicharas*, *achar* and *chintan*, the physical disorders were limited. But the present modern scientific advancement of life, vast industrialization, pollution, economic situation, increasing pollution, mental stress and

psychological turmoil's have become contributing factors for many somatic and psychosomatic disorders in the world. The more technological advancement of life higher intellectual knowledge, superiority has broadened the socioeconomic crisis and thirst to conquer the world, creating religious discrepancies, politics are directly or indirectly affecting the mind of the human beings.

Ayurveda classification of diseases: In general diseases have been classified as physical diseases like *jwara*, *chardi*, *atisara*, *pandu* etc. mental disorders like *kama*, *krodha*, *shoka*, and psychosomatic diseases like *unmada*, *apasmara*, *mada*, *murchha* and *sanyasa* etc. These disorders are integrated and difficult to differentiate between them and dependent on the whole in the living person which is a combination of *sharir*, *indriya*, *satwa* and *atma*.

Te ch vikarah parasparanuvartmana kadachitnubandhananati kamadayo jwaradaysch (Ch. Vi. 6/8)

Shariramapi satvamnuvidhiyete satvam ch shariram (Ch. Sha. 4/36)

In physical diseases *Shariraja* gets affected first and the *Manas* next. In *Manas Vikaras* such as *udvega*, *bhaya* and *kama*, the *manas* is affected first and *sharira* later. In psychosomatic diseases like *unmada*, *apasmara* both the *sharir* and *manas doshas* gets affected. In *Shokaja Atisara* or *kroadhaja jwara*, first start the impairment of *Rajas* and *tamas* but they present as a physical disorder.

Aetiological factors:

According to *Mahrishi Charaka* the root cause of all the mental disorders is *Pragyaapardha*, literally means crime against wisdom. We can define *pragyaapardh* as loss of sense of

discrimination between what is beneficial and what is non-beneficial and not following the proper rules of physical, mental and social conduct.

Ershyashokbhayakroadhamaandweshadyacha ye| Manovikarasteapyuktah sarve pragyaparadhjah || (Ch. Su. 7/52)

Dhi dhriti smriti vibhrashta karm yat kurute ashubham Pragyapradha tam vigyaat sarvdoshprakopnam (Ch. Sha. 1/102)

This verse from Charaka explains significantly the causes behind all mental disorders. Whenever there is any impairment in differentiation between right and wrong and inability to take right decision regarding diet, behavior and ethics, there are more chances of mental disorders. The virudhhahar , vegavrodh and emotional disturbances are some of the prominent causes lucidly described in ayurveda.

Na vegaan dhaaryedhwimaan jaatanmutra purishyao|

Na retso na vaatsya va vamyah shwarthorn ch||

Nauuudgarsya na jrubhyaah na vegaan kshutpipaasyaoh|

Na vashpasya na nindraya nihshwasya shramen ch || (Ch. Su. 7/ 2,3)

Pathogenesis:

The person whose personality is alpsattwa are more prone to get psychic disorders. In addition to these, if the causative factors aggravate the vitiation of manasika doshas or sharir doshas, which in term disturbs the manovaha srotas and causes various mental disorders.

Yada tu raktvahini rassangyavahaani ch |

Prithak prithak samsta va srotansi kupitah malah ||

Malinahaarsheelasya rajomohavritatmanah|

Pratihatyavtishtante jaayente vyadhystada|

Madmurchaysanyaasatesham vidyaad vichakshanh || Ch. Su. (24/ 25-27)

Ayurveda Management of Psychospiritual disorders:

Ayurveda prescribes the three ways of treatment for mental disorders:

Trividhamaushadhamiti – daivvyapshryam, yuktivyapshrayam, satvavjayasch (CH. Su. 11/54)

Daivvyapshraya Chikitsa: (Sprituo-psychotherapy)

Yuktivyapsharaya Chikitsa (Medicine and diet therapy)

Satvavajaya Chikitsa (Mind strengthening therapy)

Daivvyapshraya Chikitsa: (Sprituo-psychotherapy):

Mantra chanting, Aushadhi (use of sacred herbs), Mani (precious herbs), Mangala(offering), Bali(sacrifice), homa(oblations), upahara(gifts), niyama(vows), prayaschta(ceremonial penitence, upvasa(fasting), swastyayana(prostrations), pranipata(surrender), yatragamana(pilgrimage) are suggested. These are the remedies for all the psychic disorders from the multidimensional perspectives.

Daivvyapashrayamaushadhimanimangalbalyu pahaarhomniyamprayaschitoupvasswastayaya npranipatgamanaadih| (Ch. Su. 11/54)

Ayurveda works on the mind and senses to promote the right intake of impressions through

various methods. Ayurveda works to increase satva in our consciousness through spiritual living principles, mantra and meditation (Frawley, D.1991)

Yuktivyapshraya chikitsa: (Medicine and diet therapy):

In this category of treatment, the Ayurveda physician administers the ahara, aushadhi based on the constitution, severity, nature and faith. Generally, milk, ghee, grapes and medicines like Brahmi, Vacha, Jyotishmati, Ashwagadha, etc. are used. As a procedure before the administration of medicine, it is advisable to provide purification with the samshodhana karma. Snehana (oiling), swda (diaphoresis), vamana (Emesis), Virechana (purgation), Asthapana (Enema), Anuvasana (Oil enema), Nasya Karma (Nasal administration) etc. are performed according to the body, mind state and strength of the patient. After these applications of rasayana drugs are performed that used to rejuvenate and normalizes the mental equilibrium.

*Yuktivyapshrayam-
punarahaaraushadhravyanaam yojna| (Ch.
Su. 11/54)*

Application of Anjana (collirium), Dhumpana (medicinal smoking), Abhyanga (Oil application), pradeha (plastering), parisheka (Bath), Anulepana (Uction), Vadh (Paralyzing some parts of the nerve centers), bandhana (Chaining), Avarodhana (Seclusion), Vithrasan (Frightening), Vismapan (surprising), Siravedh (bloodletting), bhojan vidhan (diet regulation) are to be followed strictly according to the condition of the patient.

Ayurveda have lot of herbal and herbomineral combinations for the mental disorders like Panchgavya ghritam, bhrami ghritam, kalyana ghritam, brahma rasaynam, Ksheerbala tailam, smritisagar rasa, unmadgajkesari rasa, bala, vacha, jatamansi, sarp Gandha .

Satvavajaya Chikitsa (Mind strengthening therapy):

The aim of Satvavajaya chikitsa is to restrain mind from the unwholesome objects and to get mental peace, harmony and normalizes mental doshas. It involves sadachara, sadvritta, achar rasayana, and methods to strengthen manonigraha.

*Satvaavjayah punarhitebhayiarthebhayo
manonigrah (Ch. Su. 11/63)*

Satvavajaya is the fine communication counselling between Ayurveda physician and client to analyze and motivate for the cultivation of understanding by strengthening of the mind. Ayurveda counseling is educational in nature. The therapist helps the client learn how the mind and body work so that we can use them properly. The patient is student and therapy is a learning process. Ayurveda looks upon someone suffering from a psychological problem not as a bad or disturbed person, but as someone who does not understand how to use the mind properly. (Frawley, D. 1991)

Prevention of Psychospiritual disorders:

Daily practices and knowledge of principles of ahara, vihara and the dietetic incompatibilities, sadvritta methods, sadachara principles, achara rasayana methods and the use of medhya rasyana herbs, dincharya, ritucharya etc. if followed properly can prevent mental disorders.

*Tatrabuddhimata maanasvyaadhiparitenaapi
sta buddhya hitaahitamvekshyaavekshya
dharmaarthkaamaanaaamhitamupsevane
hitaanam chaupsevane prayatitavyam, na
hyaanteraan loke trayemetatamaansam
kinchininnishpadayate sukham va dukham vah
tasmadetcchhnushtheyam- tadvidyaanaam
chaupsevane prayatitavyam,
aatamdeshkulkaalbalshaktigyaane
yathaavcheti ||*

(Ch. Su. 11/46)

Promotion of mental health:

According to Charak Samhita the administration of Rasayana helps to improve Smriti (good memory), medha (intelligence), Arogya (disease free state), along with other good qualities of the life and longevity. First the person in a normal state of health may undertake panchkarma therapy (internal purification), and then use the Rasayana, particularly medhya rasayana, they are mandookparni, guduchi, yashtimadhu and shankhpushpi.

Mandukparnyah swarasah prayojyah ksheeran yashtimadhkasya churnam

Raso guduchyastu samoolpushpayah kalah prayojyah khalu shankhpushpayah

Aayuh pradanyaamayanaashnanni balagnivarnswarvardhnaani

Medhyaani chetaani rasayanaani medhya visheshen ch shankpushpi || (Ch. Chi. 1:330-31)

The person who undertakes the achar rasayana (Behaviourial discipline) and medhya rasayana herbs regularly, his mental faculties can lead a long, healthy and peaceful life in the society.

Conclusion:

Conclusively we can say that the Ayurveda looks at individual not as a separate physical, mental and spiritual entity but as a whole physiopsychospiritual holistic individual. That's why Ayurveda defines definition of health describing all the dimensions, causes with multidimension vision and at last prescribes holistic management of various psychospiritual anomalies as per time, state and stage of the disorder. This all makes Ayurveda eternal, natural and holistic medicine system of living, that is absolute solution for all the human problems and capable of taking the human existence to higher levels of evolution.

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