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A review on Ayurvedic concept of Mind with emphasis on *Medhya Rasayana*

Zhillika¹, Smitha R. Nair², Sanuj Muralidharan³, Saranya S. Kumar⁴

¹Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Dravyaguna Vigyan, Shri Dhanwantry Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Chandigarh, India.

²Medical Officer (ISM), Govt. Ayurveda Dispensary, Kakkayar, District Idukki, Kerala, India.

³Associate Professor, Department of Dravyaguna Vigyan, Shri Dhanwantry Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Chandigarh, India.

⁴Assistant Professor and Psychiatric Consultant, Department of Kayachikitsa, Shri Dhanwantry Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Chandigarh, India.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, a five-millennium-old science rooted in the *Vedas*, encompasses profound insights into health and healing. The traditional Indian medical system perceives the mind and body as complementary parts of one's entity and purports to preserve the balance between the duo for enhanced quality of life. Moreover, the World Health Organization defines health as a condition of whole physical, mental, and social well-being rather than only the absence of illness or disability, indicating the significance of mind covering the mental health component. The term mind in *Ayurveda* is referred to as the *Manas*, and it is one among the *Tristhuna*, the three pillars quintessential for a healthy life. *Acharya Caraka* has included *Manas* in *Adhyatama Dravya Guna Sangraha*, since true perceptions occur only when *Manas* is actively engaged with the body and senses. *Satva* and *Chetas* are considered as synonyms of *Manas*. Also, *Rashipurusha* involved in *Srishti Utpatti* is depicted as an amalgamation of *Atma*, *Buddhi*, *Indriya*, *Manas*, *Indriyaartha*, and *Mano-Vishyas*. The *Satva* is considered as unique *Guna* entity of *Manas* while *Rajas* and *Tamas* are *Mano-Doshas*. *Swastha Avastha* of *Sareera* is invariably linked to *Satva Guna* where on the contrary *Mano-Doshas* manifest as diseases. *Acharya Caraka* emphasizes that whatever comes under the purview of *Manas* and its knowledge are all its *Vishayas*, *Chintana* being the most important. The use of *Medhya Rasayana* has been advocated in *Ayurveda* in this regard for its supreme functioning and to ward off diseases caused by *Sareerika* and *Manasika Doshas*.

Key words: *Manas*, *Indriya*, *Medhya Rasayana*

INTRODUCTION

In *Caraka Samhita*, *Ayu* is defined as a continuum of infinite consciousness that appears as a complete, harmonious, and well-balanced combination of four

dimensions: *Sharira*, *Indriya*, *Satva* and *Atma* with *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha* as their respective goals.^[1] Ever since ancient times, researchers from diverse fields have endeavored to comprehend the mind and all of its facets. The existence of the mind has always been assumed; it has never been a tangible object. It is regarded by *Ayurveda* as a sense organ - a super sense, to be more exact as all of the sensory and motor organs are controlled by this entity. The characteristics of mind are enumerated through a number of names which are termed as synonyms of mind viz, *Samgya*, *Gyan*, *Vigyan*, *Medha*, *Dristi*, *Dhriti*, *Smriti* and *Sankalpa*.^[2]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The manuscript has incorporated references from Ayurvedic primary texts, scholarly research articles,

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Zhillika

Post Graduate Scholar, Department of Dravyaguna Vigyan, Shri Dhanwantry Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Chandigarh, India.

E-mail: drzhillikadg@gmail.com

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and peer-reviewed journals to support its assertions and findings.

Origin of Mind

In *Ayurveda*, the *Purusha* and *Prakriti* combine to create intelligence known as *Mahat*, which gives rise to the *Ahankara*. Eleven senses make up one half of the ego component, while the other half is divided into *Panchmahabhutas* and *Panchtanmatras*. The mind has been identified as one of the eleven senses, originating from the *Satvika* feature of the ego factor. The three terms *Manas*, *Citta* and *Satva* have been employed in *Ayurveda* texts to denote mind.

Etymology and Definition

Manyate Jñayate Anena Iti Manah

Manyate Buddhyate Anena Iti Manah

The expression *Mana* is derived from *Unadi* aphoristic rule with the addition of the suffix *Asun*. It has two roots:

1. *Mana-Jnane (Manyate)* belongs to *Divadi* class. *Manana* is applied to mean, to think, to suppose, to imagine, to concentrate and to meditate. *Jnana* is applied to know, to learn, to be aware, to be familiar or acquainted with, to ascertain, to investigate, to feel, to comprehend, to apprehend or to cognise.^[3]
2. *Manu-Avabodhane (Manute)* is of the class of *Tanadi*. *Avabodhana* refers to knowledge, perception, teaching, informing, indicating or showing. *Buddhyate* refers to comprehending, perceiving, discriminating, recognizing or judging.

Location of mind

Acharya Bhela locates mind between *Siras* and *Talu*. *Acharya Caraka*, *Acharya Susruta* and *Acharya Vagbhata* have indicated *Hridaya* as the seat of mind in association with *Buddhi* and *Atma*. *Acharya Caraka* also excludes the idea that the consciousness is located in organs such as *Nakhagra*, *Loma* and *Kesh*.^[4] The mind and the tactile sense organ, or skin; appear to be closely connected through the use of terms like *Maanasa Sparsha* and its close relationship with *Vayu*, which is found in the skin.

Structure of mind

As mind is so subtle, it is thought to be more of a functional than a structural entity. The body is a gross matter, and *Ayurveda* describes its structure in terms of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*. *Caraka Samhita* contains a particular chapter titled *Sareeravicaya*, which lists many bodily parts such bones, muscles, blood vessels, tissue elements, etc. But there isn't a distinct description for *Manovicaya*. An analysis of the literature of ancient India reveals that the mind is made up of distinct parts, including sense organs, characteristics, impressions, feelings, and sensations.

Attributes of Mind

The mind is *Eka* and *Anu* which refers to the mind's ability to be too subtle to be recognized by the usual senses. All of the faculties could have experienced simultaneous sensory perception if it were gross or omnipresent (like the soul). *Trigunas*, namely *Satva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*, make up the mind, which is known as *Triguṇatmaka*. According to *Cakrapani*, a man is *Rajasika* when he is mindful toward passion, *Tamasika* when he becomes entangled in delusion and *Satvika* when he is peaceful. *Acharya Sushruta* explained the concept of *Manas Kaya* as *Satvika kaya*, *Rajasika kaya* and *Tamasika Kaya*.

Functions

Ayurveda talks about four mental activities: self-control, self-direction of the senses, speculation, and reflection along with mental objects which includes consideration, speculative thought, focus, and determination.^[5] *Indriyabhigraha* is considered to be the sense organ's controller and motivator. Only when the mind is actively engaged can sense organs comprehend their respective objects. *Acharya Caraka* refers to the state of *Indriya* as *Cestapratyayabhuta*, but *Cakrapani* calls *Indriyaadhishtaayaka*. *Caraka* has also referred to it as *Sareeratantraka*, highlighting the mind's function in the body's regulation. *Svanigraha* is very hard for any other faculty or organ to regulate the mind. Only the mind can exercise self-control as it has a tendency to divert towards its objects for worldly enjoyments and only *Dhrti* can help it to restrain from the harmful objects. *Caraka* is more specific while

advising replacement of emotions as a measure of pacifying aberrated emotions. *Sattvavajava*, in fact, is precisely defined as the diversion of mind from unwholesome objects. Further, *Uhya* is application of science of logic to make a conjecture about the possible outcome in a given situation. *Vicarya* is a deliberation of reason about the applicability or non-applicability of a thing in a given instance. It is knowledge, distinct enough to direct or reject. *Cintya* is the first and the most important object of mind. Whatever that is perceived by mind independent of sensory apparatus is *Cintya*. Even if the sensory faculty is involved, if it can be perceived by mind independent of sensory assistance then it should be termed *Cintya*. Any thought process undertaken by mind as a matter of obligation or otherwise is *Cintya*. *Dhyeya* on a given object with concentration is *Dhyana*. *Dhyana* refers to the effort, while *Dhyeya* refers to the destination to be finally arrived at, through the abstract meditation. *Samkalpa* is a will or a mental resolve commissioned after ascertaining the virtues and faults of the object perceived by the sensory faculty. The idea thus conceived is to be placed before the *Buddhi* which is the ultimate decision maker.

Relation between body and mind

Ayurveda states that the three *Upastambha - Ahara, Brahmacharya* and *Nidra* are necessary for the upkeep of the human body and have a reciprocal relationship with the mind. Food influences a person's mental state through physiological processes, and the decision about what to eat is heavily influenced by that mental state. It is believed that the body and the psyche are where the ailment resides. The appearance of ailments in both the body and mind is thought to have three psycho-physical causes: *Asatmayendriyarthasamyoga, Kala* and *Prajnaparadha*. In the 25th chapter, *Caraka Samhita Sootrasthana*, *Caraka* considers *Visada* as the potent cause of aggravator of diseases whereas *Harsa* as the best nourishing agent and *Shoka* as the cause for emaciation.

The *Doshas* undoubtedly affect one another in a variety of ways. *Vata* is physiologically in charge of mental processes such as *Utsaha*. *Kapha* is for *Ksama*,

Dhrti, and *Alobha* and *Pitta* is for *Prabha, Prasada* and *Medha*. *Pranavayu* is connected to *Chitta* and *Buddhi*, while *Udanavayu* is associated to *Vakpravrthti* and *Prayatna*. *Sadhakapitta* to *Buddhi, Medha, Abhimaana*, and *Tarpaka Kapha* to *Aksatarpana* are among the factors that comprise *Smrti*. There's also the idea of *Taptajya Ghata Nyaya*, in which the mind is represented by *Ajya* and the body by *Tapta*. The mind heats up in tandem with the pot, and vice versa. In a similar way, when the mind is upset, the body follows suit, and vice versa.

Effect of Medhya Rasayanas on Mind

Medhya Rasayanas are a class of medicinal herbs that have multiple uses and are mentioned in *Ayurveda*. Frequent practice of these improves immunity, longevity, nutrition, health, memory, and cognition. *Medhya Rasayana* comprises the following plants: *Shankhapushpi (Convolvulus pleuricaulis* Chois), *Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia)*, *Yastimadhu (Glycyrhiza glabra* Linn.), and *Mandukaparni (Centella asiatica* Linn.), which are specifically specified and have a wide variety of applications on diverse systems as already evaluated in previous studies.

Medhya Rasayana	Effects on Mind	Mode of Action [6]
<i>Shankhapushpi</i>	Nootropic, Sedative, ^[7] Mental stimulant, Memory and intellect enhancer, ^[8] CNS depressant activity, Anti-anxiety effect ^[9]	<i>Sankhapushpi</i> has <i>Kashaya Rasa</i> and <i>Ushna Guna</i> , which may enhance the alertness and quick understanding and retention of experiences.
<i>Guduchi</i>	Anti-stress, Nootropic, Adaptogenic, ^[7] Enhances cognition ^[10]	<i>Guduchi</i> has <i>Katu, Tikta Rasas</i> which help in keeping the mind alert, so that things can be remembered properly. By <i>Tridosahara</i> property, it helps to establish a balance and a good coordination of grasping, retention, and recall of memory.

<i>Yastimadhu</i>	Anti-stress, Nootropic, Adaptogenic, ^[7] Cognitive enhancing activity ^[11]	<i>Madhura, Shita</i> and <i>Vatapittashamaka</i> qualities and <i>Rasayana</i> effects of <i>Yastimadhu</i> bring about soothing effect, and probably this helps in bringing about <i>Sthairya</i> and <i>Dhriti</i> to establish stability of mind and for enhancing memory.
<i>Mandukaparni</i>	Memory & Cognitive function enhancer, ^[12] Brain tonic ^[13]	<i>Mandukaparni</i> is <i>Medhya</i> by <i>Prabhava</i>

However, a few more medications used for the same purpose are described in the classical textbooks on Ayurveda. They are *Jatamansi* (*Nardostachys jatamansi*), *Vacha* (*Acorus calamus*), *Kushmanda* (*Benincasa hispida*), *Jyothishmati* (*Celastrus panniculata*), and *Aindri* (*Bacopa monniera*).^[14] One can use *Medhya Rasayana* alone or in combination with other herbs as they show specific effect on mental performance by enhancing the functions of *Buddhi* and *Manas* by correcting the disturbances of *Rajas* and *Tamas*.^[15]

CONCLUSION

The science of the self, lead to the science of mind, and *Ayurveda* provides a thorough explanation of the idea of mind, or *Manas*. The mental faculties can be easily classified into three groups: *Tamasika*, *Rajasika*, and *Sattvika*. Since *Indriyas* are only able to perceive their respective *Indriyarthas* when the mind is present, the mind's primary job is to activate and govern the functioning of *Indriyas*. The mind is also in charge of its own actions. Since the fundamental notion of health requires that the body, mind, and soul be in harmony, there is a great room for research into the discipline of Ayurveda psychiatry along with herbs mentioned in the classics.

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