

CHAPTER-14

AN INTRODUCTION TO AYURVEDIC PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda defines Ayu or life as the combination of Sareera (Physical body), Indriya (Sense organs), Satva (Mind) and Atma (Consciousness). The health and diseases of an individual mainly depends on these factors. Ayurveda gives much importance to the strong interrelationship between the psyche and the body. Mental status of an individual reflects on the physical body as response to handle or to overcome the stress caused by the situation. Among the eight branches of Ayurveda, Graha chikitsa deals with psychology and psychiatry. Sattvavajaya therapy mentioned in Charaka Samhita is used as new concept of psychotherapy in Ayurveda. Achara rasayana has a significant role in prevention of diseases and also helps in maintaining psychosomatic harmony

Keywords: Ayurveda, Psychotherapy, Graha chikitsa, Satvavajaya, Achara rasayana.

1. INTRODUCTION

'Ayu' means life and 'Veda' means knowledge. *Ayurveda*, the science of life, involves the care of physical, mental and spiritual health of human being. *Ayurveda* defines Ayu or life as the combination of Sareera (Physical body), *Indriya* (Sense organs), *Satva* (Mind) and *Atma* (Consciousness). The health and diseases of an individual mainly depends on these factors. *Ayurveda* gives much importance to the strong interrelationship between the psyche and the body. The beautiful metaphor given *Acharya 'Taptaajya ghatoriva'* shows how the mind and body are interconnected (1). Mental status of an individual reflects on the physical body as response to handle or to overcome the stress caused by the situation and vice versa. . The harmonious union of the mind, body, and spirit is the definition of health according to *Ayurveda*. Since the time of the *Vedas*, ancient India had comprehended the idea of mind. The *Vedas* describes mind as the functional component of the *Atma* or Soul (2). Among the eight branches, *Graha chikitsa* deals with psychology and psychiatry. *Sattvavajaya* therapy mentioned in *Charaka samhita* is used as a new concept of psychotherapy in *Ayurveda*. In modern, mental-health, psychotherapy is defined as the treatment by psychological means, of problems of an emotional nature in which a trained person deliberately establishes a professional relationship with the patient with the object of (3) removing and modifying or retarding existing symptoms (4) of mediating disturbed pattern of behavior (5) of promoting positive personality growth and development..

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data were collected from the data sources pub med, Google scholar, DHARA, AYUTEXT and hand books.

3. DISCUSSION

Acharya Charaka while describing the signs of good mental health included good memory, taking the right food at the right time, awareness of one's responsibilities, awareness of the self and beyond self, maintaining cleanliness and hygiene, doing things with enthusiasm, cleverness and discrimination, being brave, perseverance, maintaining cheerfulness irrespective of the situation, fearlessness in facing situations, sharp intellectual functioning, self-sufficiency, following a good value system, ability to proceed steadfastly against all odds (3). Mind and emotions plays a significant role in structuring a good mental health of an individual.

3.1 Manas

Mind means *Manas*. *Manas* have one *guna* that is *Satva* and two *dosas*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. Imbalance of the *rajas* and *tamas* which vitiates the mind resulting in emotional imbalances; hence they are called as *mano dosha*. This emotional imbalance leads to negative feelings which will accumulate in the mind. If they exceed for a long period of time can lead to chronic mental disorders like anxiety, neurosis, depression, insomnia, etc. if untreated further can result in permanent disorders like *Unmada*; unreasonable and irrational state of mind like hysteria, *Apasmara* (epilepsy) is also categorized as a mental disorder, *Atatwaabhinivesha* and other *manasika roga* under the *manovaha srotas* or psyche centre. Long term uncontrolled or depressed emotions in turn will results in behavioral alterations. *Kama*, *krodha*, *Lobha*, *Bhrama*, *Tandra*, *Murchha*, *Sanyasa* and *Maddattaya* etc are the other types of behavioral alterations mentioned in *Ayurveda*. (2)

3.2 Emotions

Emotions are the response to the stimuli which is happening inside or outside the body. Emotions can be broadly divided into to Positive emotions and negative emotions. Based on the *manoguna* and *manodosha* predominance in the mind, emotions are developed. If mind having a predominance of *Satva guna* the person will have Positive emotions like Happiness, contentment, ecstasy, empathy, interest, joy, love, trust, calmness, clarity. Negative emotions are due to *rajas* and *tamas*. if *Rajas* is more it will lead to the emotions like Anger, annoyance, contempt, disgust, envy, outrage, frustration, Hostility, rage, heartedness, resentment, irritation, greed. Fear, sadness, anticipation, apathy, boredom, horror, despair, disappointment, grief, stupor, surprise, loneliness, anxiety, panic, shock, shyness, wonder, humiliation, pity, shame, sorrow, suffering, confusion, depression, nervousness can be seen when there is a predominance of *tamo guna*. Negative emotions are necessary for our life but should not

continue after a stipulated period. So we can say that emotions are the primary cause of diseases.

4. PSYCHOTHERAPY

4.1 Sattvavajaya

The term '*Satva*' is mostly used to indicate *manas*. Due to the influence of the *rajas* and *tamas*, *manas* become the seat of the diseases. In such conditions *Satvavajaya chikitsa* is used. While describing the *nidana* of *roga*, *Acharya* has mentioned *Asatmyaindriyarthasamyoga*. When mind interact with the sense organs, perceptions of sensory objects takes makes, which in turn lead to formation of corresponding *indriya buddhi*. But during *Asatmyaindriyarthasamyoga* abnormal or unhealthy *indriya buddhi* will get developed, which interacts with the mind and cause imbalance of *rajas* and *tamas*. If the *manasika dosa* stays imbalanced beyond a limit it will vitiate the *vatadi sareerika dosas*. If an *indriya buddhi* is developed which has a tendency to vitiate *rajas* in the mind will vitiates *vata* and *pitta* in the body. If *tamas* is increased in the mind it will vitiate *kapha* in the body (6).

Acharya charaka has mentioned *satvavajaya chikitsa* as withdrawal of mind from unwholesome or harmful objects of senses. *Acharya* also states that understanding of *jnana* (spiritual knowledge), *Vijnana* (Spiritual knowledge), *Dhairya* (Fortitude), *Smrti* (Memory), *Samadhi*(Intense concentration) helps to replace the negative emotions with opposite qualities are the major components of *Satvavajaya chikitsa* (7). Mode of action of *sattvavajaya chikitsa* is by replacing negative emotions with positive emotions, providing assurances. In case of severe manifestations psycho therapy shock is also indicated. In *Sattvavajaya chikitsa*, the *Vaidya* should understand the state of emotions of the patient, associated illness and develop treatment strategies to replace pathogenic emotions with the opposite quality.

4.2 Achara Rasayana

While describing *Satoritta*, *Acharya* has mentioned *Acharya rasayana*. *Acharya rasayana* means good conduct which has a significant role in prevention of diseases and also helps in maintaining psychosomatic harmony. A person should be truthful, devoid of anger, alcohol and sexual indulgence, should not indulge in violence or exhaustion. A person who offers regular prayer to the Gods, teachers, preceptors and old people. The person should be absolutely free from barbarous acts, regular sleep and awakening, regular intake of milk and ghee should be free from ego. Having a good conduct, should not be a narrow minded, should possess interest towards spiritual knowledge, must have

excellent sense organ, self control, regularly read scripture (7). While discussing the qualities of *Acharya rasayana*, most of them are associated with *mana*, *dhi*, *dhrti*, by practicing *Acharya rasayana* such person will achieve longevity and will be devoid of physical and mental illness and enjoys his life.

5. CONCLUSION

A perfect combination and coordination of *Mana*, *Sareera* and *Atma* is responsible for the perfect health. Uncontrolled, disturbed or depressed negative emotions which accumulated in the mind have simultaneous effect on each cell of the body and can lead to physical manifestations like diseases. *Sattvajaya*, one of the treatment modality is applicable in such kind of diseases, especially mental diseases. In *Sattvajaya chikitsa*, the *vaidya* should understand the state of emotions of the patient, associated illness and develop treatment strategies to replace pathogenic emotions with the opposite quality. *Acharya rasayana* has a significant role in prevention of diseases and also helps in maintaining psychosomatic harmony.

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